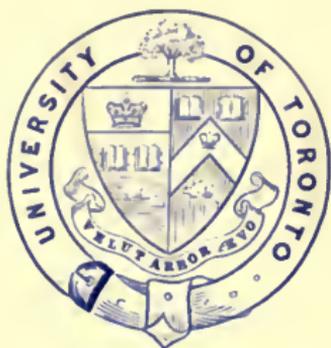




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THE  
POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING,  
FROM  
1826 to 1844.



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THE  
POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING,

FROM  
1826 TO 1844.

EDITED,  
WITH A MEMOIR,  
BY  
JOHN H. INGRAM.

BRITISH MUSEUM  
LONDON

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WARD, LOCK, AND CO.,  
LONDON, NEW YORK, AND MELBOURNE.

PR  
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## MEMOIR OF

# ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

---

THE life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the greatest female poet England or any country has produced, remains to be written. Nothing even claiming to be a biography of her has been published in her native land, and such essays upon her personal history as have appeared, either in England or elsewhere, are replete with mistakes or misstatements. Within the limited space at my disposal a correct if short memoir shall be attempted.

Elizabeth Barrett Barrett was the eldest daughter of Edward Moulton-Barrett, otherwise Barrett-Moulton, a scion of a wealthy West Indian family. Mr. Barrett can have barely attained his majority when he married Mary, daughter of Mr. J. G. Clarke, of Fenham Hall, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, a lady several years his senior in age. Elizabeth, their second child, was born in London, on Saturday, the 4th of March, 1809.

Soon after the birth of their daughter the Barretts removed to Herefordshire, taking up their residence at Hope End, near Ledbury. Hope End, previously the country seat of Sir Henry Vane Tempest, was charmingly located in a secluded valley in the vicinity of the Malvern Hills. The adjacent hills; the picturesque pieces of water fronting the house, and the well-wooded deer park surrounding it, combined to render Hope End as beautiful as it was comfortable.

The convenient modern residence he found upon his newly-

acquired estate did not satisfy the semi-tropical taste of Mr. Barrett, so he had it pulled down and an oriental looking structure, bedecked with Turkish turrets and windows, erected in its stead. After a time this quaint dwelling reëchoed to the prattle of little tongues—the patter of little feet—for a large family of sons and daughters sprang up rapidly around the wealthy West Indian. Ever foremost of the flock, and first favourite of the father, was Elizabeth. Mr. Barrett was proud of his daughter's precocious talent and spared no means to foster it; indeed, it is not improbable that her chronic delicacy of constitution was increased if not engendered by overstudy, although Elizabeth in after life, attributed her own chronic ill health to the effects of a neglected cold.

Those who would gain an intimate knowledge of Miss Barrett's early life must study her works: they are filled with vivid glimpses of her happy but imaginative girlhood. Many are the autobiographical allusions to her home at Hope End made in "The Lost Bower" and other of her poems. The beauties of the country of her childhood made a lasting impression upon her mind and were often the theme of her later life, for,—

" Green the land is where my daily  
Steps in jocund childhood played—  
Dimpled close with hill and valley,  
Dappled very close with shade."

Among the few facts known of Elizabeth's youth is that she wrote verses at a very early age. "I wrote verses," she says, "at eight years old and earlier," and, what is noteworthy about the matter is that her father encouraged her poetic aspirations. Before she was eleven, inspired by a perusal of Pope's Homer, she composed an epic poem in four books on "The Battle of Marathon," and Mr. Barrett was so proud of his little daughter's achievement, that he actually had fifty copies of it printed!

From reading Homer paraphrased she longed to read him in his own tongue. "The love of Pope's Homer," she

remarks, "threw me into Pope on the one side and Greek on the other, and into Latin as a help to Greek." At first, it would appear, it was Pope who exercised the greater influence upon her plastic mind, and her earlier writings are little more than a reproduction of the see-saw metre of the Twickenham poet.

From writing birthday odes to her father and childish epics for the edification of friends, Elizabeth Barrett began to aspire to a larger audience. As early as 1825 she had contributed verses to periodicals, and in 1826 appeared her first published volume, "An Essay on Mind with Other Poems." Of this initial work little need be said; it is chiefly of interest as the earliest efflorescence of her genius. The "Essay" is fluently written, and not without some touches of talent, but, as an Edinburgh Reviewer has pointed out, is principally "remarkable for the precocious audacity with which she deals with the greatest names in the whole range of literature and science." Several of the "Other Poems" are made of more durable material, and are not unworthy of their author.

Reading, close and continuous, now became second nature with Miss Barrett. "I read," she says, "books bad and good," in fact, anything in the shape of a book. Her father may not have altogether encouraged this indiscriminate reading, but he certainly helped her to study, notwithstanding her feeble health which, as she told Mr. Horne, was so precarious that at fifteen she nearly died. It is said that Mr. Barrett was a man of intellect and culture and, therefore, able to direct his daughter's education, but, be that so or not, he obtained for her the tutorial assistance of the well-known Greek scholar, Hugh Stuart Boyd. Boyd, although blind, was not only a profound Hellenic scholar, but, also, a writer of fluent verse, and his influence and instruction doubtless confirmed Miss Barrett in her poetic aspirations. Her gratitude to this,—

"Steadfast friend

Who never did my heart or life misknow,"—

for his priceless aid in her studies, never ceased nor wavered.

Her first real trouble was the loss of her mother, who died, after a long continuance of ill health, on the 1st October 1828. This sorrow was speedily followed by another of a less irreparable but still trying character. Owing to a great decrease of income, attributed to the Emancipation of the Slaves, Mr. Barrett was forced to leave Hope End and reduce his style of living. His daughter bade farewell to her beloved Malvern Hills with a heavy heart, and for ever. "Beautiful, beautiful hills, they are!" she exclaims, "and yet, not for the whole world's beauty, would I stand in the sunshine and the shadow of them any more. It would be a mockery, like the taking back of a broken flower to its stalk."

From Hope End the Barretts removed to Sidmouth and spent two years there, during which time Elizabeth published, in 1833, her second volume of poems, "Prometheus and Other Poems." Thence they removed to London, where Mr. Barrett took a house in Gloucester Place. His daughter's health continued to fail, although she wrote incessantly for contemporary publications and, in 1838, collected and re-published much of her poetry in a new volume, as "The Seraphim and Other Poems." Her health was now so shattered that her medical adviser counselled immediate departure from London to a more southerly place.

Edward Moulton Barrett, the eldest of the family, and Elizabeth's favourite brother, gave up his own occupation to take charge of his invalid sister, and travelled with her to Torquay. For a time the warm breezes of the southern coast appeared to revive the young poetess, and hopes were entertained of her health's revival when a dreadful catastrophe took place and, in her own words, "gave a nightmare to her life for ever." Mr. Edward and two friends, accompanied by a sailor, went out for a few hours' sail. They did not return in the evening as expected, but it was not for some days that all hope of their safety was lost; at last the news was received and, ultimately, confirmed that the boat had been upset just off Teignmouth, by a sudden squall, and that all on board had perished. The long suspense and then the

terrible certainty of her loss had a most disastrous effect upon Miss Barrett. For months her own life was despaired of, and it was not until long after the expiration of another year that the medical advisers would permit of her removal from the now hateful sea-side being risked.

By easy stages Miss Barrett at last reached London, where a house in Wimpole Street had been purchased by her father, whose fortune had been considerably augmented by his accession to the property of his only brother Richard, for many years Speaker of the House of Assembly at Jamaica. For some few years after her return to London, Miss Barrett was confined to her room through feeble health, seeing very few persons beyond her nearest relatives, but continuing to take a lively interest in the literary and social subjects of the day.

In 1844 she collected such of her poetical writings as had not already appeared in book form and published them in two volumes. This collection, which contained much of her best and most matured work, increased her reputation considerably, in the United States as well as in the British Empire. Chief among the literary friends who assisted her with advice and aid was her cousin, John Kenyon, a literary man himself, and the personal friend of all worth knowing in the world of letters. Mr. Kenyon frequently introduced to Miss Barrett's personal notice the best new books and their authors, amongst the latter being Mr. Robert Browning, the son of an old school-fellow of his. A sympathy intenser than friendship rapidly sprang up between the two poets, and on the 12th September, 1846, Miss Barrett, whose health had been gradually improving for some time past, was married to Mr. Browning.

A warmer climate than England's being deemed requisite for the health of the poetess, her husband took her to Italy where, after some travelling, the congenially mated couple found a suitable residence in Florence. Mrs. Browning's subsequent history consists chiefly of the publication of various new poems, some of which, being more cosmopolitan than insular in their political view of things, exposed her to severe criticism in England, which, however, she soon lived down.

In March 1849, Mrs. Browning's only child Robert, now a well known artist, was born in Florence. In 1851, she issued a new edition of her poems in three volumes. In company with her husband she occasionally visited England, but the delicacy of her constitution forced her always to leave her native land at the approach of winter.

Mrs. Browning took intense interest in the struggles for freedom made by Italy, and most of her later poems refer to events in connection therewith. From this, however, must be excepted her longest production, "Aurora Leigh," a novel in verse, a work which, despite numerous defects, raised her contemporary reputation to a higher pitch than any of her other productions.

Early in 1861, Mrs. Browning's health gave way entirely, and in June of that year she died at Florence, in the Protestant cemetery of which city a massive tomb, designed by Sir Frederick Leighton, marks the spot where rests all that is earthly of England's great poetess.

JOHN H. INGRAM.

PART 1.

---

THE SERAPHIM

AND

OTHER POEMS.

---

1838.



## THE SERAPHIM.

"I look for angels' songs, and hear Him cry."

GILES FLETCHER

---

### PART THE FIRST.

*It is the time of the Crucifixion: and the Father of the Crucified has directed towards earth the angels of His heaven, of whom all have departed except the two Seraphim, Ador and Zerah. The place is the outer side of the shut heavenly gate. There stand the Seraphim. Ador the Strong has unfurled the thunder-cloud of his wing; but Zerah the Bright One lingers still, now looking backward to his heavenly habitation, and now upward to his brother's face.*

*Ador.* O SERAPH, pause no more!

Beside this gate of Heaven we stand alone.

*Zerah.* This gate of heaven!

*Ador.* Our brother hosts are gone—

*Zerah.* Are gone! the golden harps, as ne'er before,  
Still burning from our clasp'd motion,  
And tun'd breath of rapt devotion,  
Lie without a touch or tone,  
Or canopy of angel wing,  
Upon the glass-sea shore!

*Ador.* Instead of sounding, glittering  
In the shadow from the throne—

The shadow without form, that resteth on

The broad and crystal sea—

Awfuller than light derived,

And red with primal heats, whereby all life hath lived.

*Zerah.* Our visible God! our heaven! and we  
Go thus!

*Ador.* Thus, now, beloved! unpausingly.

Beneath us sinks the pomp angelical—

The roar of whose descent hath died

To a still sound, as thunder into rain!

Th' immeasurabl' espace seems magnified

## THE SERAPHIM.

With that thick life ; whereof we nought retain  
 In visions, save the pale and eddying fall  
 Of wings innumerable, brightly crossed  
 By lines of hair that hath not lost  
 The glitter of the God-smile shed  
 Last, on the bow'd angel's head !  
 And gleamed between by hands that fling  
 Homages like upward rays,  
 From constant habitude of praise  
 And high instinct of worshipping.  
*Zerah.* Rapidly they drop below us.  
 Pointed palm and wing and hair,  
 Indistinguishable, show us  
 Only pulses in the air  
 Throbbing with a fiery beat—  
 As if a new creation heard  
 (Late unhearing, still unseeing)  
 Some divine and plastic word,  
 And trembling at its proper being,  
 Did waken at our feet.

*Ador.* *Zerah!* stand not lingeringly.  
 His voice—the voice that thrills us so  
 As we our harpstrings—uttered *Go*,  
*Behold the Holy in his woe—*  
 And all are gone, save thee and—

*Zerah.* Thee !

*Ador.* I stood the nearest to the throne,  
 What time the voice said *Go*.  
 And whether I was shook  
 By the storm-pathos of the tone  
 Which swept thro' Heaven the alien name of woe,  
 Or that the subtle glory broke  
 Thro' my strong and shielding wings,  
 Bearing to my finite essence  
 Incapacious of their presence,  
 Infinite imaginings—  
 None knoweth save the Throned who spoke !  
 But I, who, years ago, stood upright while th' eternal  
 Breath did move,  
 Shaping the words that lightened—" Let light be,"—  
 Nor trembled but with love ;  
 Now fell down tremblingly,  
 My face upon the pavement floor ;  
 Without the praise that evermore  
 In music gusheth there !  
 As if mine immortality  
 O'erpowered by God's eternal were !

Thou—wherefore dost thou wait ?  
 Oh ! gaze not backward, brother mine ;  
 The deep love in thy mystic eyne  
 Deepening inward, till is made  
 A copy of the earth-love shade—  
 Oh ! gaze not thro' the gate !  
 God filleth heaven with God's own solitude  
 Till all its pavements glow !  
 His Godhead being no more subdued  
 By itself, to glories low  
 Which seraphs can sustain,  
 What if thou in gazing so,  
 Should behold but only one  
 Attribute, the veil undone—  
 And that the one to which we press  
 Nearest, for its gentleness—  
 Ay, His love !  
 How the deep ecstatic pain  
 Thy being's strength would capture !  
 Without a language for the rapture,  
 Without a music strong to come  
 And set th' adoring free ;  
 For ever, ever, wouldst thou be  
 Amid the general chorus dumb—  
 God-stricken in seraphic agony !——  
 Or, brother, what if on thine eyes  
 In vision bare should rise  
 The life-fount whence His hand did gather  
 With solitary force  
 Our immortalities !—  
 Straightway how thine own would wither,  
 Falter like a human breath,—  
 And *shrink into a point like death,*  
 By gazing on its source !  
 My words have mirrored dread.  
 Meekly hast thou bent thine head,  
 And o'er each dropp'd lid, hast bowed  
 Another broader silver cloud,  
 A languid wing—as if the glory  
 Of the God's throne were before thee !  
 Yet not—not so,  
 O loving spirit and meek, dost thou fulfil  
 All motions of the one pre-eminent Will  
 Which stirreth unto will and act our natures  
 As human souls do stir the fleshly creatures.  
 Not for obeisance, but obedience,  
 Give motion to thy wings ! Depart from hence—

The voice said "Go."

*Zerah.* Belovèd, I depart !  
 His will is as a spirit within my spirit ;  
 A portion of the being I inherit—  
 His will is mine obedience. I resemble  
 A flame all undefilèd though it tremble—  
 I go and tremble ! Love me, O beloved !  
 O thou, who stronger art,  
 And standest ever near the Infinite,  
 Pale with excelling light !  
 Love me, belovèd ! me, more newly made,  
 More feeble, more afraid—  
 And let me hear with mine thy pinions moved,  
 As close and gentle as the loving are ;  
 That love being near, heaven may not seem so far !

*Ador.* I am near thee, and I love thee !  
 Were I loveless, from thee gone,  
 Love still is round, beneath, above thee—  
 God, the omnipresent One.  
 Spread the wing, and lift the brow—  
 Well-beloved, what fearest thou ?

*Zerah.* I fear, I fear—

*Ador.* What fear ?

*Zerah.* The fear of earth.

*Ador.* Of earth, the God-create, the beautiful ?  
 From whence the sweet-sea music hath its birth,  
 And vernal forests lift their leaves in tune  
 Beneath the gracious, water-leading moon ?  
 Where every night, the stars do put away  
 Meekly its darkness dull,  
 And look their spirit-light into the clay ?  
 Where every day, the kingly sun doth bless  
 More lovingly than kings,  
 And stir to such harmonious happiness  
 All leafed and reeded things,  
 It seems as if the joyous shout which burst  
 From angel lips to see him first,  
 Had left a silent echo in his ray ?

*Zerah.* Of earth—the God-create but God-accurst :  
 Where man is, and the thorn !  
 Where winds and waves have borne,  
 Where sun and star can roll,  
 No tune, no shining to the human soul !  
 Where Eden's lapsing rivers all are dry,  
 And in their stead, do flow perpetually,  
 Do flow and flow hot streams of human tears—  
 Where Eden's tree of life no more upears

Its spiral leaves and fruit ; but in its stead  
The cypress bows its melancholy head,  
And all the undergrasses kills and seres !

*Ador.* Of earth, the very weak ?  
Where men that faint, do strive for crowns that fade ;  
And stoop to clasp metallic heaps conveyed  
From the green sward their delving labour scars—  
When upright they might stand, and view the stars !  
Where, having won the winning that they seek,  
They lie beside the sceptre and the gold,  
With fleshless hands that cannot wield or hold ;  
And the stars shine in their unseeing eyes ?

*Zerah.* Of earth the terrible !

Where the blind matter brings  
An awful potency out of impotence,  
And all the spiritual prostrated lies,  
Before the things of sense :  
Where the strong human will saith “ ay ” or “ no,”  
Because the human pulse is quick or slow—  
Where stronger Love succumbeth unto Change,  
Only his own memories, for revenge !  
Where is the root of tears—the mystery of woe ;  
And one yet fearfuller—

*Ador.* Thou meanest Death ?

*Zerah.* Nay ! Death is fearful ; but it hath  
A sound more comprehensible.  
*That* fearfuller thou knowest well,  
Tho' its utterance be not for thee,  
Lest it blanch thy lips from glory—  
Ay ! the cursèd thing that movèd  
Its shadow of ill, long times ago,  
Across our heaven's own shining floor !  
And when it passèd, some who were  
On thrones of holy empire there,  
Did reign—were seen—were—never more.—  
Come nearer, O beloved !

*Ador.* I am near thee. Thou hast seen  
This earth, whereof thy words have been ?

*Zerah.* I have seen it—I have trod—  
When thrilling from the touch of God  
It flowèd from His hand along  
Its lustrous path with spheric song,  
Woeless, deathless, errorless !  
And fearless, angel feet did press  
The grasses brightening with their feet—  
For God's own voice did mix its sound  
In a solemn confluence oft

With the rivers' flowing round,  
 And the life-tree's waving soft.  
 Beautiful new earth, and strange!

*Ador.* Hast thou seen it since—the change?

*Zerah.* Asketh thou? I fear—I fear—  
 To look upon it now!

I have beheld the ruined things  
 Only in the picturings  
 Of angels sent on earthward mission!  
 Strong one, e'en upon thy brow—  
 When, with task completed, given  
 Back to us from earthly vision,  
 I have beheld thee silent stand,  
 Abstracted in the seraph band—  
 Without a smile in heaven.

*Ador.* Then thou wert not one of those

Whom the loving Father chose,  
 In pomps of dreams to sweep  
 O'er Judæa's grassy places,  
 O'er the shepherds and the sheep?  
 The clear, calm starlight dimming,  
 All except one secret star,  
 With their brighter kinder faces;

And using heaven's own tune in hymning,—  
 While deep response from earth's own mountains ran,—  
 "Peace on earth—goodwill to man."

*Zerah.* "Glory to God!"—I said Amen afar.

And they who from that earthward mission are,  
 Within mine ears have told,

That the seven everlasting Spirits did hold  
 With such a sweet and prodigal constraint,  
 The meaning yet the mystery of the song,  
 The while they sang it, on their spirits strong;  
 That, gazing down on earth's dark steadfastness,  
 And speaking the new peace in promises,  
 The love and pity made their voices faint  
 Into that low and tender music, keeping  
 The place in heaven, of what on earth is weeping!

*Ador.* Peace upon earth! Come down to it!

*Zerah.*

Ah me!

I hear thereof uncomprehendingly.  
 Peace where the tempest—where the sighing is—  
 And worship of the idol, 'stead of His?

*Ador.* Yea, peace, where *He* is.

*Zerah.* *He!*

Say it again.

*Ador.* Where *He* is.

*Zerah.* Can it be  
 And is it sooth that earth retains a tree  
 Whose leaves, like Eden foliage, can be swayed  
 By breathing of His voice, nor shrink and fade?  
*Ador.* There is a tree!—it hath no leaf or root!  
 Upon it hangs a curse for all its fruit:

Its shadow lies on *Him*—  
 But what if He, the crownèd Son,  
 Hath left His crown upon His throne,—  
 Walks earth in Adam's clay,  
 Eve's serpent to confound and slay—

*Zerah.* In clay—in clay!

*Ador.* And walking in the clay which He created,  
 Shall thro' it touch the death!  
 What do I utter? what, conceive? Did breath  
 Of demon howl it in a blasphemy?  
 Or was it mine own voice, informed, dilated,  
 By the seven confluent Spirits?—Speak—answer me!  
*Who* said man's victim was his deity?

*Zerah.* Beloved, beloved, the word came forth from  
*thee.*  
 Thine eyes are rolling in tempestuous light,  
 Above, below, around,  
 As putting thunder-questions without cloud,  
 Reverberate without sound,  
 To universal nature's depth and height.  
 The tremor of an unexpressèd thought  
 Too self-amazed to shape itself aloud,  
 O'erruns the awful curving of thy lips:  
 And while thine hands are stretched above  
 As newly they had caught  
 Some lightning from the Throne—or flashed abroad  
 Some Eden-guarding sword—  
 Thy brows do alternate with wild eclipse  
 And radiance—with contrasted wrath and love—  
 As God had called thee to a seraph's part,  
 With a man's quailing heart!  
*Ador.* O heart—O heart of man!  
 O ta'en from human clay,  
 To be no seraph's, but Jehovah's own!  
 Made holy in the taking,  
 And yet unseparate  
 From death's perpetual ban,  
 And human feelings sad and passionate!  
 Still subject to the treacherous forsaking  
 Of other hearts, and its own steadfast pain!  
 O heart of man—of God! which God hath ta'en

From out the dust, with its humanity  
 Mournful and weak and soft yet holy round it,  
 And bade its many pulses beating lie  
 Beside that incommunicable stir  
 Of Deity wherewith He interwound it!  
 O man! and is thy nature so defiled,  
 That all that holy Heart's devout law-keeping,  
 And low pathetic beat in deserts wild,  
 And gushings pitiful of tender weeping  
 For cruel ones who smote it into woe—  
 That all could cleanse thee not—without the flow  
 Of blood—the life-blood—*His*—and streaming *so*?  
 O earth, the thundercleft, windshaken!—where  
 The louder voice of "blood and blood" doth rise—  
 Hast thou an altar for this sacrifice?

O heaven—O vacant throne!

O crown'd hierarchies, that wear your crown  
 When His is put away!

Are ye unsham'd, that ye cannot dim  
 Your alien brightness to be liker Him,—  
 Assume a human passion—and down-lay  
 Your sweet secureness for congenial fears—  
 And teach your cloudless ever-burning eyes

The mystery of His tears?

*Zerah.* I am strong, I am strong!

Were I never to see my heaven again,  
 I would wheel to earth like the tempest rain  
 Which sweeps there with exultant sound  
 To lose its life in the reach'd ground.

I am strong, I am strong!

To mine inward vision waxeth dim  
 The shining seat of my heavenly birth—  
 I see but His, I see but Him—  
 The Maker's steps on His cruel earth!  
 Will the bitter herbs of earth grow sweet  
 To me, as touch'd by His feet?  
 Will the vex'd, curst humanity,  
 As worn by Him, begin to be  
 A bless'd, yea, a holy thing,  
 For love, and awe, and ministering?

I am strong, I am strong!

By our angel ken, shall we survey  
 His loving smile through his woeful clay?

I am swift, I am strong—

The love is bearing me along.—

*Ador.* My wings with thine! At once we go  
 To see the Holy in His woe!

## PART THE SECOND.

*The place is mid-air, above Judæa. Ador and Zerah are a little apart from the visible Angelic Hosts.*

*Ador.* BELOVED! dost thou see?—

*Zerah.* Thee,—thee!

Thy burning eyes already are  
Grown wild and mournful as a star,  
Whose occupation is for aye  
To look upon the place of clay,  
Whereon thou lookest now!

The crown is fainting on thy brow  
To the likeness of a cloud—  
Thy forehead's self, a little bowed  
From its aspect high and holy,—  
As it would in meekness meet  
Some seraphic melancholy.

Thy very wings that lately flung  
In heavenly airs, an outline clear,  
Flicker in their glory here;  
And wear to each a shadow hung,  
Dropped across thy feet.

And in these strange contrasting glooms,  
Stagnant with the scent of tombs,  
Seraph faces, O my brother,  
Show awfully to one another!

*Ador.* Dost thou see? dost thou see?

*Zerah.* Yea! our heaven's bright company;  
Alone the memory of their brightness  
Left in them, as in thee!

The circle upon circle, tier on tier—  
The sea of living Ones, afar, anear,  
Above us, and around!

Their songful lips divorc'd from all sound;  
A darkness gliding down their silvery glances,—  
Bowing their steadfast solemn countenances,  
As if they heard God speak, and could not glow!

*Ador.* Look downward! dost thou see?

*Zerah.* And wouldst thou press *that* vision on  
my words?

Hath not the chang'd Earth  
A voice enough, of her own change, for thee—  
Whose voice is in her waters, moaning ever  
In every azure sea and silver river,  
And all her leaping rills!

That break abruptly from their forc'd mirth,  
 With a long sigh across the pastoral swards?  
 Be satisfied! I see her vales, ungreen

Where steps of man have been!

Her thunder-riven hills,

That shake their piney heads, as who would say  
 "We are too beautiful for our decay."

Shall seraphs speak of these things? Let alone  
 Earth, to her earthly moan.

*Voice of all things.* Is there no moan but *hers*?

*Ador.* Hearest thou the attestation

Of the rous'd Universe,

Like a desert lion shaking

Dews of silence from its mane—

With an irrepulsive passion,

Rising up and witness making

To the earth-commingled pain

Of Him who stands (O patience sweet!)

In His own hand-prints of creation,

With human, bleeding feet?

*Voice of all things.* Is there no moan but *ours*?

*Zerah.* O meek, insensate things!

O congregated matters! who inherit

Instead of motive powers,

Impulsions God-supplied—

Instead of vital spirit,

A clear informing beauty—

Instead of creature-duty,

A motion calm as rest!

Lights, without feet or wings,

In golden courses sliding!

Broad glooms! 'neath masses, hiding,

Whose lustrous heart away was prest

Into the argent stars!

Ye crystal, firmamental bars,

That hold the skyey waters free

From tide or tempest's ecstasy!

Airs universal! thunders lorn,

That wait your lightning in cloud-cave

Hewn out by the winds! O brave

And subtle Elements! the Holy

Hath charged me by your voice with folly.\*

Enough! the mystic arrow leaves its wound!

Return ye to your silences inborn,

Or to your inarticulated sound!

*Ador.* Zerah!

\* "His angels He charged with folly."—*Job* iv. 18.

*Zerah.* Wilt thou rebuke ?  
 God hath rebuked me, brother!—I am weak.  
*Ador.* Zerah, my brother Zerah!—could I speak  
 Of thee, 'twould be of love to thee.

*Zerah.* Thy look  
 Is fixed on earth, as mine upon thy face!—  
 Where shall I seek *Him*?—

I have thrown  
 One look upon earth—but one—  
 And therewith was sought and seen  
 Where her grasses show'd green,  
 Streaked with fairest flowers that grew;  
 And among her trees was hidden  
 Some remembrance of her Eden,  
 Wept over by the dew.  
 Beloved! He is not there!  
 Flowers, grasses, are too dull to bear,—  
 Feet, before which, bowed adown,  
 I would fain quench my starry crown  
 Upon the wormy clay.  
 Where shall I seek Him?

No reply?  
 Hath language left thy lips, to place  
 Its vocal in thine eye?  
 Ador, Ador! are we come  
 To a double portent, that  
 Dumb matter grows articulate,  
 And songful seraphs dumb?  
 Ador, Ador!—

*Ador.* I constrain  
 The passion of my silence. None  
 Of those places sweet and lone,  
 Are dull enow to fit His pain!  
 Unto Him, whose forming word  
 Gave to Nature flower and sward,  
 She hath given back again,  
 Instead of flowers, the thorn;  
 Instead of sylvan calms, the human scorn.  
 Still, still, reluctant Seraph, gaze beneath!  
 There is a city—

*Zerah.* Could its throne remain,  
 (Those very clouds are motioned by our breath—)  
 And fade not to a dream, when He touch'd it?

*Ador.* Ah me! ah me!  
 The victim seeks no throne!—  
 And THOU who hangest mute of speech,  
 'Twixt heaven and earth, with forehead yet

Stain'd by the bloody sweat—  
 God ! man ! Thou hast foregone thy throne in each !  
*Zerah.* Ador ! thine eyes behold Him ?

*Ador.* Yea !

Track the gazing of mine eyes,  
 Naming God within thine heart,  
 That its weakness may depart,  
 And the vision rise.

Seest thou yet, beloved ?

*Zerah.* I see

Beyond the city, crosses three,  
 And mortals three that hang thereon,  
 'Ghast and silent to the sun !

And round about them sweep and press  
 Living multitudes, whose father  
 Adam was—whose brows are dark  
 With his Cain's corroded mark ;  
 Who curse with looks. Nay—let me rather  
 Turn unto the wilderness.

*Ador.* Turn not. God dwells with men.

*Zerah.* Above

He dwells with angels ; and they love.  
 Can these love ? With the living's pride  
 They stare at those who die : the streak  
 O' the cross's shade on brow and cheek,  
 Though falling there so wild and wide,  
 Being not dark enow to hide—a triumph upon both—

*Ador.* The cross—the cross !

*Zerah.* A woman doth

Kneel the mid cross under—  
 Meekly with her lips asunder,  
 And a motion upon each :  
 Too fast to show or suffer speech—  
 With folded lids as close as sleep,  
 Yet not tranquil—for the eyes  
 That dream within have room to weep  
 Drop after drop—

*Ador.* Weep blood ! Weep blood,

All women, yea ! all men !  
 These water tears are vain—  
 They mock like laughter !

*Zerah.* O passionate heaven-dweller !

*Ador.* Shall the flood  
 Of curses salt, whose foam is darkness, roll  
 Forward from 'parted years—  
 And backward from the terrible hereafter—  
 And upward from the present's bitter spring ;

Yea, downward, haply from the Father-King  
To meet upon His soul?—

And men weep only tears?

*Zerah.* All-givers need no gifts.

And if that Voice said "Give," its sound would slay  
Immortals, and its echo sweep away  
The universe it made. What seraph lifts

A song so subtly wrought,

It is not in His hearing less than nought,

Or is more than a woman's weeping? So  
Words soft as tears, above thee would I speak.

Thou woman, weep thy woe!

I, the tearless and pure, am but loving and weak.

*Ador.* Speak low—and not of love,

Or human or angelic! Rather stand  
Before the throne of that Supreme above,

In whose infinitude, the secrecies

Of thine own being lie hid,—and lift thine hand

Exultant, saying, "Lord God, I am wise!"—

Than utter *here*, "I love."

*Zerah.* And yet thine eyes

Do utter it. They melt in tender light—

The tears of Heaven.

*Ador.* Of Heaven. Ah me!

*Zerah.* Ador!

*Ador.* Say on.

*Zerah.* The crucified are three.

Beloved, they are unlike.

*Ador.* Unlike.

*Zerah.* For one

Is as a man who sinned, and still

Doth wear contrastingly the wicked will—

The hard malign life-energy,

Stamped inward, in the parting soul's disdain,

On brow and lip that cannot change again.

\* \* \* \*

*Ador.* And one—

*Zerah.* Is also a sinful man;

And yet, (O marvel!) of a spirit clear!

Death upon his face

Is rather shine than shade,

A tender shine by looks beloved made.

He seemeth dying in a blessed place,

And less by iron wounds in hands and feet

Than heart-broke by new joy too sudden and sweet.

*Ador.* And ONE!—

*Zerah.* And ONE—

*Ador.* Why dost thou pause?  
*Zerah.* God! God!

Spirit of my spirit! who movest  
 Through seraph veins in burning deity,  
 To light the quenchless pulses!—

*Ador.* But hast trod  
 The depths of love in Thy peculiar nature;  
 And not in any Thou hast made and lovest  
 In narrow seraph hearts!—

*Zerah.* Above, Creator!  
 Within, Upholder!—

*Ador.* And below, below,  
 The creature's and th' upholden's sacrifice!

*Zerah.* Why do I pause?—

*Ador.* There is a silentness

That answers thee enow;  
 That like a brazen sound  
 Excluding others, doth ensheathe us round:  
 Hear it! It is not from the visible skies,

Though they are very still,  
 Unconscious that their own dropped dews express  
 The light of heaven on every earthly hill.  
 It is not from the hills; though calm and bare

They, since their first creation,  
 Through midnight cloud or morning's glittering air,  
 Or the deep deluge blindness, up toward  
 The place whence issued the creating word,

And whence again shall come  
 The word that uncreates;  
 Have lift their brows in voiceless expectation  
 It is not from the places that entomb  
 Man's dead—though common Silence there dilates  
 Her soul to grand proportions, worthily

To fill life's vacant room!  
 Not there—not there!  
 Not yet within their chambers lieth He,  
 A dead One in His living world! His south  
 And west winds blowing over earth and sea,  
 And not a breath on that creating Mouth!

But now,—in living pang—  
 A silentness doth hang  
 Upon the lips whose lightest word  
 Might in reverberate thunders roll abroad!

Silent art Thou, O my Lord,  
 Bowing down Thy stricken head!  
 Fearest Thou, a groan of Thine  
 Would make the pulse of Thy creation fail

As Thine own pulse?—would rend the veil  
Of visible things, and let the flood  
Of th' unseen Light, th' essential God,  
Rush in t' o'erwhelm the undivine?—  
Thy silence, to my spirit, seems as dread!

*Zerah.* O silence!

*Ador.* Doth it say to thee—the NAME,  
Slow-learning Seraph?

*Zerah.* I have learnt.

*Ador.* The flame

Perisheth in thine eyes.

*Zerah.* He opened His—

And looked.—I cannot bear——

*Ador.* Their agony?

*Zerah.* Their love. God's depth is in them. From  
his brows

White, terrible in meekness, didst thou see  
The lifted eyes unclose?

He is God, seraph! Look no more on me,  
O God! *I am not God!*

*Ador.* The loving is

Made awful in them by the sorrowful.

In heaven we could sustain them.

*Zerah.* Heaven is dull,

Mine Ador, to man's earth. The light that burns  
Unquenchably along the crystal ocean;

The lifting of the golden harps between  
The silver wings, outshaking lovely sound—

The winding, wandering music that returns  
Upon itself, in starry course, self-bound

To praise, and praise, and praise, in blessed round—

The God-thoughts in our midst that intervene,

And glide like rays from out the supreme Throne,  
More sensible than visible; each one

The separate presence of a new delight!

My heaven! my home of heaven! my fair and bright

Heaven-throne! what are ye to this dust and death,

This cloud, this cold, these tears, this failing breath,

Where God's immortal love is glorified

In this MAN'S mortal woe?

*Ador.* His eyes are very deep yet calm——

*Zerah.* No more

On me, Jehovah-man——

*Ador.* Calm-deep! They show

A passion which is silent. Grief is still,

By its own weight, within them. They are seeing

No earth, no heaven! no men, that slay and curse—



The love, mine Ador !

*Ador.*

Do we love not ?

*Zerah.*

Yea,

But not as man shall ! not with life for death  
New throbbing through the startled being ! not  
With strange astonished smiles, that ever may  
Gush passionate like tears, and fill their place !  
Nor yet with speechless memories of what  
Earth's winters were, deepening th' eternal green

Of every heavenly palm,

Whose windless, shadeless calm

Moves only at the breath of the Unseen !

Oh ! not with this blood on us—and this face,—

Still, haply, pale with sorrow that it bore

In our behalf, and tender evermore

With nature all our own,—toward us gazing !

Nor yet with these forgiving hands upraising

Their unreprouchful wounds, alone to bless !

Alas, Creator ! shall we love Thee less

Than mortals shall ?

*Ador.*

Amen ! so let it be !

We love in our proportion—to the bound

Thine infinite, our finite, set around,

And that is finitely,—Thou, infinite

And worthy infinite love ! And our delight

Is watching the dear love poured out to Thee,

From ever fuller chalice. Bless'd they,

Who love Thee more than we do ! bless'd we,

Beholding that out-loving lovingness,

And winning in the sight, a double bliss,

For all so lost in love's supremacy !

The bliss is better ! only on the sad

Cold earth, there are who say

It seemeth better to be great than glad.

The bliss is better ! Love Him more, O man,

Than sinless seraphs can.

*Zerah.* Yea, love Him more.

*Voices of the angelic multitude.* Yea, more !

*Ador.*

The loving word

Is caught by those from whom we stand apart :

For Silence hath no deepness in her heart,

Where love's low name low breathed, would not be heard

By angels, clear as thunder.

*Angelic voices.*

Love him more !

*Ador.* Sweet voices, swooning o'er

The music which ye make !

Albeit to love, there were not ever given

## THE SERAPHIM.

A mournful sound, when uttered out of heaven,  
 Ye fitly would that angel-sadness take.  
 Of love, be silent now ! we gaze adown  
 Upon th' incarnate Love who wears no crown.

*Zerah.* No crown ! the woe instead  
 Is heavy on His head,  
 Pressing inward on His brain,  
 With a hot and clinging pain,  
 Till all tears are prest away,  
 And clear and calm His vision may  
 Peruse the long abyss !  
 No rod, no sceptre is  
 Holden in His fingers pale.  
 They close instead upon the nail,  
 Concealing the sharp dole—  
 Never stirring to put by  
 The fair hair streaked with blood,  
 Drooping forward from the rood,  
 Helplessly—heavily—  
 On the cheek that waxeth colder,  
 Whiter ever,—and the shoulder  
 Where the government was laid !  
 His glory made the Heavens afraid  
 His pity makes His piteous state :  
 Will He be uncompassionate  
 Alone to His proper soul ?  
 Yea ! will He not lift up  
 His lips from the bitter cup,  
 His brows from the dreary weight,  
 His hands from the clenching rood—  
 Crying, “ My Father, give to me  
 Again the joy I had with Thee,  
 Or ere this earth was made ? ”  
 No stir—no sound—  
 The love and' woe being interwound,  
 He cleaveth to the woe ;  
 And putteth forth heaven's strength below—  
 To bear.

*Ador.* And that creates His anguish now,  
 Which made His glory there !

*Zerah.* Shall this indeed be so ?  
 Awake, thou Earth ! behold !  
 Thou, uttered forth of old,  
 In all thy life-emotion,  
 In all thy vernal noises ;  
 In the rollings of thine ocean,  
 Leaping founts, and rivers running ;

In thy woods' prophetic heaving,  
 Ere the rains a stroke have given ;  
 In thy winds' exultant voices  
 When they feel the hills anear !  
     In the firmamental sunning,  
     And the tempest which rejoices  
 Thy full heart with an awful cheer !  
     Thou ! uttered forth of old  
 And with all thy musics, rolled  
     In a breath abroad,  
     By the plastic Word !  
 Awake He is here ! behold !—  
     Even *thou*—

  beseems it good  
 To thy vacant vision dim,  
 That the deathly ruin should,  
 For thy sake, encompass Him ?  
 That the master-word should lie  
 A silence—while His own  
     Proceeded harmony—  
 The faintest echo of His lightest tone  
 Is sweeping in a choral triumph by ?——  
     Awake ! emit a cry !  
     And say, albeit used  
     From Adam's ancient years  
     To falls of briny tears,—  
     To frequent sighs unloosed,  
     Caught back to press again  
     On bosoms zoned with pain—  
     To corsees still and sullen  
     The shine and music dulling  
     With closed eyes and ears,  
     That nothing sweet can enter—  
 Commoving thee no less  
 With that forced quietness,  
 Than earthquakes in thy centre—  
 Thou hast not learnt to bear  
 This new divine despair !  
 These tears that sink into thee,  
 These dying eyes that view thee,  
 This dropp'd blood from lifted rood,  
 They darken and undo thee !  
 Thou canst not, presently, sustain this corse !  
 Cry, cry, thou hast not force !  
 Cry ; thou wouldst fainer keep  
 Thy hopeless charnels deep—  
 Thyself a general tomb—

## THE SERAPHIM.

Where first and second Deaths  
 Sit gazing face to face,  
 And mar each other's breaths—  
 While silent bones through all the place,  
 'Neath sun and moon do faintly glisten,  
 And seem to lie and listen  
 For the tramp of the coming Doom.

Is it not meet  
 That they who erst the Eden fruit did eat,  
 Should champ the ashes ?  
 That they who wrapt them in the thunder-cloud,  
 Should wear it as a shroud,  
 Perishing by its flashes ?  
 That they who vexed the lion, should be rent ?  
 Cry, cry—" I will sustain my punishment,  
 The sin being mine ! but take away from me  
 This visioned Dread—this Man—this Deity."  
*The Earth.* I have groaned—I have travailed— I am  
 weary—

I am blind with mine own grief, and cannot see,  
 As clear-eyed angels can, His agony :  
 And what I see, I also can sustain,  
 Because His power protects me from His pain.  
 I have groaned—I have travailed—I am weary,  
 I am very dreary

Hearkening the thick sobs of my children's heart :  
 And can I say " Depart,"

To that Atoner making calm and free ?  
 Am I a God as He,

To lay down peace and joy as willingly ?

*Ador.* He looked for some to pity. There is none !

All pity is within Him, and not for Him !

His earth is iron under Him ; and o'er Him

His skies are brass !

His seraphs cry ' Alas '

With hallelujah voice that cannot weep ;

And man, for whom the dreadful work is done—

*Scornful voices from the Earth.* If verily this be th'  
 Eternal's Son—

*Ador.* Thou hearest !—man is grateful !

*Zerah.*

Can I hear,

Nor darken into man ? nor cease for ever

My seraph-smile to wear ?

Was it for such,

It pleas'd Him to overleap

His glory with His love, and sever

From the God-light and the throne,

And all angels bow'd down,  
 For whom His every look did touch  
 New notes of joy from th' unworn string  
 Of an eternal worshipping ?

For such He left His heaven ?

There, though never bought by blood  
 And tears, we gave Him gratitude !  
 We loved Him there, though unforgiven !

The light is riven

Above, around,

And downwardly, in lurid fragments flung,  
 That catch the mountain pinnacle and stream,

With momentary gleam,

Then perish in the water and the ground !

River and waterfall,

Forest and wilderness,

Mountain and city, are together wrung

Into one shape, and that is shapelessness—

The darkness stands for all.

*Ador.* The pathos hath the day undone :

The death-look of His eyes

Hath overcome the sun,

And made it sicken in its narrow skies—

But not to death !—

*Zerah.* He dieth. Through the dark,

He still, He only, is discernible—

The bar'd hands and feet transfixed stark,—

The countenance of patient anguish white,

Do make, themselves, a light

More dreadful than the glooms which round them dwell,

And therein do they shine.

*Ador.* God ! Father-God !

Perpetual Radiance on the radiant throne !

Lift up the lids of inward Deity,

Flashing abroad

Thy burning Infinite !

Light up this dark, where there is nought to see,

Except the unimagined agony

Upon the sinless forehead of Thy Son !

*Zerah.* God ! tarry not ! Behold, enow

Hath He wandered as a stranger,

Groan'd as a victim. Thou,

Appear for Him, O Father !

Appear for Him, Avenger !

Appear for Him, just One and Holy One ;

For He is holy and just !

At once the darkness and the evil scatter,

And from His being strike and break  
 And hurl aback to ancient dust,  
 These mortals that make blasphemies  
 With their made breath ! this earth and skies  
     That only grow a little dim,  
     Seeing their curse on Him !  
     But Him, of all forsaken,  
     Of creature and of brother,  
     Never wilt Thou forsake !

Thy living and Thy loving cannot slacken  
 Their firm essential hold upon each other—  
 And well Thou dost remember how His part  
 Was still to lie upon Thy breast, and be  
 Partaker of the light that dwelt in Thee  
     Ere sun or seraph shone !

And how while silence trembled round the throne,  
 Thou countedst by the beatings of His heart,  
 The moments of Thine own eternity !

Awaken,

O right Hand with the lightnings ! Again gather  
 His glory to thy glory ! What estranger—  
 What ill most strong in evil, can be thrust  
 Between the faithful Father and the Son ?

Appear for Him, O Father !

Appear for Him, Avenger !

Appear for Him, just One and holy One !—

For He is holy and just.

*Ador.* Thy face, upturned toward the throne, is  
 dark—

Thou hast no answer, Zerah.

*Zerah.* No reply,—

O unforsaking Father ?—

*Ador.* Hark !

Instead of downward voice, a cry

Is uttered from beneath !

*Zerah.* And by a sharper sound than death,

Mine immortality is riven !

The heavy darkness which doth tent the sky,  
 Floats backward as by a sudden wind—

But I see no light behind !

But I feel the farthest stars are all

Pierc'd and shaken—

And I know a shadow sad and broad,

Doth fall—doth fall

On our vacant thrones in heaven !

*Voice from the Cross.* MY GOD, MY GOD,

WHY HAST THOU ME FORSAKEN ?

*The Earth.* Ah me! ah me! ah me! the dreadful  
why!

My sin is on Thee, sinless One! Thou art  
God-orphaned, for my burden on Thy head.  
Dark sin! white innocence! endurance dread!  
Be still, within your shrouds, my buried dead—  
Nor work with this quick horror round mine heart!

*Zerah.* He hath forsaken *Him!*—I perish—

*Ador.*

Hold

Upon His name! We perish not. Of old  
His will ———

*Zerah.* I seek it through the mysteries dim—  
My God, my God! where is it? Doth that curse,  
Reverberate, spare seraph or universe?

*He hath forsaken Him.*

*Ador.* And He is true!

*Angel voices.* We faint—we droop—

Our love doth tremble like fear—

*Voices of Fallen Angels, from the earth.* Do we pre-  
vail?

Or are we lost;—Hath not the ill we did  
Been heretofore our good?

Is it not ill, that One, all sinless, should  
Hang heavy with all curses, on a cross?  
Nathless, *that cry!*—with huddled faces hid  
Within the empty graves which men did scoop  
To hold more damnèd dead, we shudder through  
Our triumph, or—our loss!

*Voice from the Cross.* IT IS FINISHED.

*Zerah.*

Hark, again!

Like a victor, speaks the Slain—

*Angel voices.* Finished be the trembling vain!

*Ador.* Upward, like a lovèd Son,

Looketh the erst orphaned One—

*Angel voices.* Finished is the mystic pain!

*Voices of Fallen Angels.* His deathly forehead at the  
word,

Gleameth like a seraph sword!

*Angel voices.* Finished is the demon reign!

*Ador.* His breath, as living God, createth—

His breath, as dying man, completeth!

*Angel voices.* Finished work His hands sustain!

*The Earth.* In mine ancient sepulchres,  
Mine Adam, dead six thousand years,  
Unwakened by the universe's  
Everlasting moan

## THE SERAPHIM.

Aye his ghastly silence, mocking—  
 Unwakened by his children's knocking  
 'Gainst his old sepulchral stone—  
 "Adam, Adam! thou didst curse us—  
 Thy curse is on us yet!"——  
 Unwakened by the ceaseless tears  
 Wherewith they made his cerement wet—  
 Starts with sudden life, and hears  
 Through the slow dripping of the caverned eaves,—  
*Angel voices.* Finished is his bane!  
*Voice from the Cross.* FATHER! TO THINE HANDS MY  
 SPIRIT IS GIVEN!

*Ador.* Hear the wailing winds that be  
 By spirits of unclean spirits made!  
 They, in that last look, surveyed  
 The love they lost in losing heaven,—  
 And passionately flee!  
 With a cry that threadeth clear  
 The natural storms—though *they* are lifting  
 God's strong cedar-roots like leaves—  
 (What time from a hundred graves  
 Gleamingly the Dead arise,  
 Viewing, with their death-calmed eyes,  
 The wild turmoil)—and downward rifting  
 Mountain rocks to valley swards,  
 There to meet the earthquake sound  
 Hurling 'neath the hollow ground!—  
 Hear the wail o' the spirits! hear!

*Zerah.* I hear alone *the memory of His words!*

---

 THE EPILOGUE.

My song is done!  
 My voice that long hath faltered shall be still.  
 The mystic darkness drops from Calvary's hill,  
 Into the common light of this day's sun!  
 I see no more Thy cross, O holy Slain!  
 I hear no more the beat and turbulence  
 Of startled elements,  
 That felt thy countenance *too still*,—nor yell  
 Of demons sweeping past it to their prison!

The skies, that turned to darkness with Thy pain,  
 Make now a summer's day,—  
 And on my chang'd ear, that Sabbath bell  
 Recordeth CHRIST IS RISEN !

And I—ah ! what am I  
 To counterfeit with faculty earth-darkened  
 Seraphic brows of light,  
 And seraph language never used or hearkened ?  
 Ah me ! what word that Seraphs say, could come  
 From mouth so used to sighs—so soon to lie  
 Sighless, because then breathless, in the tomb ?

Bright ministers of God and grace !—of grace  
 Because of God !—whether ye bow adown,  
 In your own heaven, before the living face  
 Of Him who died, and deathless wears the crown—  
 Or whether at this hour, ye haply are  
 Anear, around me, hiding in the night  
 Of this permitted ignorance, your light,  
 This feebleness to spare,—

Forgive that my low earthly heart should dare  
 Shape images of unincarnate spirits,  
 And lay upon their burning lips a thought  
 Damp with the weeping which mine earth inherits !  
 And while ye find in such hoarse music wrought  
 To copy yours, a cadence all the while  
 Of sin and sorrow—only pitying smile !—  
 Ye know to pity, well !

I too may haply smile another day,  
 At the far recollection of this lay,  
 When God may call me in your midst to dwell,  
 To hear your most sweet music's miracle,  
 And see your shining faces ! May it be !  
 For His remembered sake—the Slain on rood—  
 Who rolled His earthly garment in red blood,  
 That feeble ones, the frail and faint like me,  
 Before His heavenly throne should walk in white !



## THE POET'S VOW.

"O be wiser thou,  
 Instructed that true knowledge leads to love."  
 WORDSWORTH.

## PART THE FIRST.

SHOWING WHEREFORE THE VOW WAS MADE.

## I.

EVE is a twofold mystery—  
 The stillness Earth doth keep ;  
 The motion wherewith human souls  
 Toward each other leap !  
 As if all spirits, which Earth inherits,  
 Foreknew they part in sleep.

## II.

The rowers lift their oars to view  
 Each other in the sea ;  
 The landsmen watch the rocking boats,  
 In a pleasant company ;  
 While up the hill go gladlier still  
 Dear friends by two and three.

## III.

The peasant's wife hath looked without  
 Her cottage door and smiled ;  
 The peasant, 'stead of scythe or spade,  
 Doth clasp his youngest child,  
 Which hath no speech, but its hands can reach  
 And stroke his forehead mild.

## IV.

A poet sate that eventide  
 Within his hall alone,  
 As silent as its ancient lords  
 In their coffined place of stone ;  
 When the bat hath shrunk from the praying monk—  
 And the praying monk is gone.

## V.

Nor wore the dead a stiller face  
 Beneath the cerement's roll :

His lips seemed carved to an endless thought  
No language dared controul :  
And his steadfast eye burnt inwardly,  
As gazing on his soul.

## VI.

You would not think that brow could e'er  
Ungentle moods express :  
Yet seemed it in this troubled world,  
Too calm for gentleness !  
The very star, that shines from far,  
Shines trembling ne'ertheless.

## VII.

It lacked—all need—the softening light  
Which other brows supply :  
We should conjoin the scath'd trunks  
Of our humanity,  
That each leafless spray entwined may  
Look softer 'gainst the sky.

## VIII.

None gazed within the poet's face—  
The poet gazed in none !  
He threw a lonely shadow aye  
In light of moon and sun,  
Affronting nature's heaven-dwelling creatures  
With wrong to nature done.

## IX.

Yea, and this poet daringly,  
The nature at his heart,  
And that quick tune along his veins  
He could not change by art,  
Had vowed his blood of brotherhood  
Unto a lonely part.

## X.

He vow'd not in fear, or wrath,  
Or grief's fantastic whim ;  
But when the weights and shows of things  
Too closely compassed him,  
On his soul's eyelid the pressure slid,  
And made its vision dim.

## XI.

He held his soul above his clay  
 'Twixt earth and sea and sky,  
 T' imbue with shade and wave and cloud  
 Its immortality—  
 But the mortal things  
 Fell from its wings  
 And left them hot and dry.

## XII.

He cried—"O touching, patient Earth,  
 That weepest in thy glee!  
 Whom God created very good,  
 And very mournful, we!  
 Thy voice of moan doth reach His throne,  
 As Abel's rose from *thee*.

## XIII.

"O deep unsensual sea of thought,  
 That darkenest to and fro—  
 Whose waters are unsilent clouds  
 Where eagles dare not go!  
 O motion wild! O wave defiled!  
 Our curse hath made thee so.

## XIV.

*We!* and *our* curse! Do *I* partake  
 The dreary, cruel sin?  
 Have *I* the apple at my lips?  
 The money-lust within?  
 Do *I* human stand with the wronging hand,  
 To the blasting heart akin?

## XV.

"Thou solemn pathos of all things!  
 Ye things of sense and mind!  
 Behold! subdued to your cause,  
 An holy wrath I find;  
 And for your sake the bondage break,  
 That knits me to my kind.

## XVI.

"Hear me forswear man's sympathies,  
 His pleasant yea and no—

His riot on the piteous earth  
 Whereon his thistles grow—  
 His changing love—with stars above!  
 His pride—with graves below!

## XVII.

“Hear me forswear his roof by night—  
 His bread and salt by day—  
 His talkings at the lighted hearth—  
 His greetings by the way—  
 His musing looks—his systemed books—  
*All man*, for aye and aye!

## XVIII.

“That so my purged, once human heart,  
 From all the human rent,  
 May gather strength to pledge and drink  
 Your wine of wonderment;  
 While you pardon me, all blessingly,  
 The woe mine Adam sent.

## XIX.

“And I shall feel your unseen smiles  
 Innumerable, fixed, deep,  
 As soft as haunted Adam once,  
 Though sadder, round me creep;  
 As slumbering men have mystic ken  
 That others watch their sleep.

## XX.

“And ever, when I lift my brow  
 Toward the setting sun,  
 No voice of woman or of child  
 Recording ‘Day is done,’  
 Your silences shall a love express,  
 More deep than such an one!”

---

## THE POET'S VOW.

## PART THE SECOND.

## SHOWING TO WHOM THE VOW WAS DECLARED.

## I.

THE poet's vow was inly sworn—  
 The poet's vow was told :  
 He parted 'mong his crowding friends  
 The silver and the gold.  
 They clasp'd bland his gift,—his hand,  
 In a somewhat slacker hold.

## II.

They wended forth, the crowding friends,  
 With farewells smooth and kind—  
 They wended forth, the solaced friends,  
 And left but twain behind :  
 One loved him true as brothers do,  
 And one was Rosalind.

## III.

He said—" My friends have wended forth,  
 With farewells smooth and kind.  
 Mine oldest friend ! my plighted bride,  
 Why linger ye behind ?  
 For Roland, let my fair bride be  
 And mine house and lands of ancestry  
 A dower for Rosalind.

## IV.

" And when beside your wassail board  
 Ye own a bless'd lot,  
 I charge you, that the giver be  
 In all his gifts forgot !  
 Or alone of all his words recall  
 The last,—Lament me not."

## V.

She look'd at him silently,  
 With her large, doubting eyes,  
 Like a child that never knew but love,  
 Whom words of wrath surprise ;  
 Till the rose did break from either cheek,  
 And the sudden tears did rise.

## VI.

She lookèd at him mournfully,  
 While her large eyes were grown  
 Yet larger with the steady tears ;  
 Till, all his purpose known,  
 She turnèd slow, as she would go—  
 The tears were shaken down.—

## VII.

She turnèd slow as she would go,  
 Then quickly turned again ;  
 And gazing in his face to see  
 Some little touch of pain—  
 " I thought," she said,—but shook her head,—  
 The trièd speech was vain—

## VIII.

" I thought—but I am half a child,  
 And very sage art thou—  
 That looking on the heaven and earth  
 Did keep us soft and low.  
 They have drawn *my* tears, i' the springs of years,  
 Or ere I wept—as now.

## IX.

" But now that in thy face I read  
 Their cruel homily,  
 Before their beauty I would fain  
 Untouched, unloving be,—  
 Could I look upon the senseless sun,  
 As *thou* canst look on *me*.

## X.

" And couldst thou as calmly view  
 Thy childhood's far abode,  
 Where little footsteps mixed with thine  
 Upon the grassy sod ?  
 And thy mother's look on holy book  
 Fell, like a thought of God ?

## XI.

" O brother !—called so, ere her last  
 Explaining words were said !

O fellow-watcher in her room,  
 With hush'd voice and tread !  
 What friend did stand with clasp'd hand  
 In thine, beside the dead ?

## XII.

" I will not live Sir Roland's bride,—  
 Nor rule that castle old !  
 Thus crush I 'neath my parting feet,  
 The deeds of hill and wold.  
 The tears I weep, are mine to keep,  
 And worthier than thy gold."

## XIII.

The poet and Sir Roland stood  
 Alone, each turned to each ;  
 Till Roland brake the silence left  
 By that soft-throbbing speech—  
 " Poor heart ! " he cried, " it vainly tried  
 The distant heart to reach !

## XIV.

" And thou, O distant, sinful heart,  
 That climbest up so high.  
 To wrap and blind thee with the snows  
 That cause to dream and die—  
 What blessing can, from lips of man,  
 Approach thee with his sigh ?

## XV.

" Ay ! what, from earth—create for man,  
 And moaning in his roan ?  
 From mystic truths revealed to man,  
 That use his human tone ?  
 Where the Spirits seven,  
 That show in heaven,  
 A MAN upon the throne ?—

## XVI.

" A man on earth HE wandered once,  
 All meek and undefiled :  
 And those who loved Him, said He wept—  
 None ever said He smiled ;  
 Yet there might have been  
 A smile unseen,  
 As He clasped that bless'd child.

## XVII.

“And now HE pleadeth up in heaven  
 For our humanities,  
 Till the ruddy light on seraph's wings  
 In pale emotion dies.  
 They can better bear His Godhead's glare,  
 Than the pathos of His eyes !

## XVIII.

“I will go pray that God in man,  
 With bow'd face and knee,  
 To teach thee on the earth HE made,  
 His finger's print to see ;  
 But plainer yet  
 The blood-stain wet  
 His manhood left for *thee* !

## XIX.

“So, for the sake of that dear blood  
 God shed, and human e'er,  
 Tears, like it, moist and warm with love,  
 Thy reverent eyes may wear,  
 To see i' the face of Adam's race  
 The nature God doth share.”

## XX.

“I heard,” the poet said, “thy voice  
 As dimly as thy breath !  
 It sounded like the noise of life  
 To one anear his death—  
 Or of waves that fail to stir the pale  
 Sere leaf they roll beneath.

## XXI.

“For while it sounded, I was 'ware,—  
 Stretched round me like a mist  
 Of white cold palms of creatures nigh,  
 Confused and never wist !  
 O'er mine heart they bowed  
 Their foreheads proud,  
 And stilled it while they kist.

## XXII.

The castle and its lands are thine—  
 The poor's—thy wish be done !  
 Go, *man* ! go, Roland ! I abide

## THE POET'S VOW.

I' the ruined hall, alone—  
 The wind and rain have washed the stain  
 Men work'd in its stone."

---

## PART THE THIRD.

SHOWING HOW THE VOW WAS KEPT.

## I.

HE dwelt alone, and sun and moon,  
 Perpetual witness made  
 Of his repented humanness;  
 Until they seem'd to fade.  
 His face did so; for he did grow  
 Of his own soul afraid.

## II.

The self-poised God may dwell alone  
 In inward glorying;  
 But raptest angel waiteth for  
 His brother's voice to sing.  
 And a lonely creature of sinful nature—  
 It is an awful thing!

## III.

Ee'n to himself an awful thing,  
 While many years did roll,—  
 He bore that crushing solitude—  
 A part beneath the whole—  
 That pressure of God's infinite  
 Upon his finite soul.

•        •        •        •        •

## IV.

The poet at his lattice sate,  
 And downward look'd he:  
 Three Christians pass'd by to prayers,  
 With mute ones in their ee.  
 Each turned above a face of love,  
 And call'd him to the far chapelle  
 With voice more tuneful than its bell—  
 But still they wended three!

## V.

There passèd by a bridal pomp,  
 A bridegroom and his dame—  
 She speaketh low for happiness,  
 She blusheth red for shame,—  
 But never a tone of benison  
 From out the lattice came !

## VI.

A little child with inward song,  
 No louder noise to dare,  
 Stood near the wall to see at play  
 The lizards green and rare—  
 Unblessed the while for his childish smile  
 Which cometh unaware !

---

 PART THE FOURTH.

SHOWING HOW ROSALIND FARED BY THE KEEPING OF THE VOW.

## I.

IN death-sheets lieth Rosalind,  
 As white and still as they ;  
 And the old nurse that watcheth her bed,  
 Rose up with " Well-a-day !"  
 And oped the casement to let in  
 The sun, and that sweet doubtful din  
 Which droppeth from the grass and bough  
 Sans wind and bird—none knoweth how—  
 To cheer her as she lay.

## II.

The old nurse started when she saw  
 Her sudden look of woe !  
 But the quick wan tremblings round her mouth  
 In a meek smile did go ;  
 And calm she said, " When I am dead,  
 Dear nurse, it shall be so !

## III.

" But now, shut out those sights and sounds,  
 And pray God pardon me,  
 That I without this pain, no more

## THE POET'S VOW.

His bless'd works can see !  
 And lean beside me, loving nurse,  
 That thou mayst hear, ere I am worse,  
 What thy last love must be."

## IV.

The loving nurse leant over her,  
 As white she lay beneath ;  
 The old eyes searching—dim with life—  
 The young ones dim with death,  
 To read their look, if sound forsook  
 The trying, trembling breath.

## V.

"When all this feeble breath is done,  
 And I on bier am laid,  
 My tresses smoothed for never a feast,  
 My body in shroud arrayed ;  
 Uplift each palm in a saintly calm,  
 As if that still I prayed.

## VI.

"And heap beneath mine head the flowers  
 I lov'd when a child,—  
 The little white flowers from the wood,  
 Which grow there thick and wild—  
 Which I plucked for *thee*,  
 And thy gramercy,  
 The pleasant toil beguiled

## VII.

"Weep not! *I* weep not. Death is strong ;  
 The eyes of Death are dry ;  
 But lay this scroll upon my breast  
 When hushed its heavings lie ;  
 And wait awhile for the corpse's smile  
 Which shineth presently.

## VIII.

"And when it shineth, straightway call  
 Thy youngest children dear,  
 And bid them gently carry me  
 Barefac'd on the bier—  
 But bid them pass my kirkyard grass  
 That waveth long anear.

## IX.

“And up the bank where I used to sit  
 And dream what life would be,  
 Along the brook, with its sunny look  
 Akin to living glee;  
 O'er the windy hill, through the forest still,  
 Let them gently carry me.

## X.

“And when they near the ruined hall,  
 In silence let them lay  
 The bier before the barrèd door,  
 And silent wend away.  
 For there, alone with the lifeless one,  
 The living God must stay.”

The old nurse lookèd in her eyes,  
 Whose mutual look was gone:  
 The old nurse stoopèd to her mouth,  
 Whose answering voice was done.  
 And nought she heard, till a little bird  
 Upon the casement's woodbine swinging,  
 Broke out into a loud sweet singing  
 For joy o' the summer sun!  
 “Alack! alack!”—she watched no more—  
 With head on knee she wailèd sore;  
 And the little bird sang o'er and o'er  
 For joy o' the summer sun!

---

 PART THE FIFTH.

## SHOWING HOW THE VOW WAS BROKEN.

## I.

THE poet oped his barrèd door,  
 The midnight sky to view,  
 A spirit-feel was in the air  
 Which seemed to touch his spirit bare  
 Whenever his breath he drew:  
 And the stars a liquid softness had,  
 As alone their holiness forbade  
 Their falling with the dew,

## THE POET'S VOW.

## II.

They shine upon the fix'd hills,  
 Upon the running tide ;  
 They shine upon the forest leaves,  
 And the little mosses pied !  
 They shine on' every lovely place—  
 They shine upon the corpse's face,  
 As *it* were fair beside.

## III.

It lay before him, humanlike,  
 Yet so unlike a thing !  
 More awful in its shrouded pomp  
 Than any crown'd king !  
 All calm and cold, as it did hold,  
 Some secret, glorying.

## IV.

A heavier weight than of its clay  
 Clung to his heart and knee !  
 As if those join'd palms could strike,  
 He staggered groaningly,  
 And then o'erhung, without a groan,  
 The meek close mouth that *smiled alone*,  
 Whose speech the scroll must be.

## THE WORDS OF ROSALIND'S SCROLL.

" I LEFT thee last, a feeble child,  
 In those remembered years :  
 I come to thee, a solemn corpse,  
 Which neither feels nor fears !  
 They laid the death-weights on mine eyes,  
 To seal them safe from tears.

" Look on me with thine own calm look—  
 I meet it calm as thou !  
 No look of thine can change *this* smile,  
 Or break thy sinful vow.  
 My silent heart  
 Of thine earth, is part—  
 It cannot love thee now.

" But out alas ! these words are writ  
 By a living, loving one,

Adown whose cheeks, the proofs of life,  
 The human tears do run.  
 Ah, let th' unloving corpse controul  
 Thy thought toward the loving soul,  
 Whose place of rest is won !

" I have prayed for thee with the wailing voice,  
 Thy memory drew from me !  
 I have prayed for thee with moveless lips,  
 In the anguish none could see !  
 They whispered oft, ' She sleepeth soft '—  
 But I only prayed for thee.

" Go to ! I pray for thee no more—  
 The corpse's tongue is still :  
 Albeit its palms may point to heaven,  
 They point there stiff and chill !  
 No farther woe,  
 From the sin below  
 Its tranquil heart can thrill.

" I charge thee, by the living's prayer,  
 The corpse's silentness,  
 To wring from out thy proper soul,  
 A prayer our God shall bless !  
 Lest the heaven palm droop within my hand,  
 And pale among the saints I stand,  
 A saint companionless."

---

 v.

Bow lower down before the throne,  
 Triumphant Rosalind !  
 He boweth on thy corpse his face—  
 He weepeth as the blind.  
 'Twas a dread sight to see them so—  
 For the senseless corpse rocked to and fro,  
 With the wail of his living mind.

## vi.

But dreader sight, could such be seen,  
 His inward mind did lie ;  
 Whose long-subjected humanness  
 Gave out its lion cry,  
 And fiercely rent its tenement  
 In a mortal agony !

## VII.

I tell you, friends, had you heard his wail,  
 'Twould haunt you in court and mart,  
 And in merry feast, until you set  
 Your cup down to depart—  
 That weeping wild of a griev'd child  
 From a proud man's broken heart.

## VIII.

O broken heart! O broken vow,  
 That wore so proud a feature!  
 God, grasping as a thunderbolt  
 His own renounc'd nature,  
 Smote him therewith—i' the presence high  
 Of his so worshipp'd earth and sky  
 That looked on all with silent eye—  
 A wailing human creature.

## IX.

Yea! and a human one too weak  
 To bear his human pain—  
 (May Heaven's dear grace have spoken peace  
 To his dying heart and brain!)  
 For when they came at dawn of day  
 To lift the lady's corpse away,  
 Her bier was holding twain.

## X.

They dug beneath the kirkyard grass,  
 For both one dwelling deep:  
 And after many years were done,  
 Sir Roland brought his little son  
 To watch the funeral heap.  
 And, when the happy boy would rather  
 Turn upward his blithe eyes to see  
 The wood-doves nodding from the tree—  
 "Nay, boy, look downward," said his father;  
 And hold it in thy constant ken,  
 That God's own everlastingness  
 (One making one with strong compress)  
 Man's sympathies doth keep!  
 Thou mayst not *smile* like other men,  
 Yet, like them, thou must *weep*."



## THE ROMAUNT OF MARGRET.

"Can my affections find out nothing best,  
But still and still remove?"

QUARLES.

## I.

I PLANT a tree whose leaf  
The cypress leaf will suit;  
But when its shade is o'er you laid,  
Turn ye and pluck the fruit!  
Now reach my harp from off the wall  
Where shines the sun aslant:  
The sun may shine and we be cold—  
O hearken, loving hearts and bold,  
Unto my wild romaunt,  
Margret, Margret.

## II.

Sitteth the fair ladye  
Close to the river side,  
Which runneth on with a merry tone,  
Her merry thoughts to guide.  
It runneth through the trees,  
It runneth by the hill,  
Nathless the lady's thoughts have found  
A way more pleasant still.  
Margret, Margret.

## III.

The night is in her hair  
And giveth shade to shade,  
And the pale moonlight, on her forehead white,  
Like a spirit's hand is laid:  
Her lips part with a smile,  
Instead of speakings done—  
I ween, she thinketh of a voice,  
Albeit uttering none!  
Margret, Margret.

## IV.

All little birds do sit  
With heads beneath their wings:  
Nature doth seem in a mystic dream,  
Apart from her living things.

## THE ROMAUNT OF MARGRET.

That dream, by that ladyè,  
 Is certes unpartook ;  
 For she looketh up to the high cold stars,  
 With a tender human look !  
 Margret, Margret.

## V.

The ladye's shadow lies  
 Upon the running river :  
 It lieth no less in its quietness,  
 For that which resteth never :  
 Most like a trusting heart  
 Upon a passing faith,—  
 Or as upon the course of life,  
 The steadfast doom of death !  
 Margret, Margret.

## VI.

The ladye doth not move—  
 The ladye doth not dream,—  
 Yet she seeth her shade no longer laid  
 In rest upon the stream !  
 It shaketh without wind ;  
 It parteth from the tide ;  
 It standeth upright in the cleft moonlight—  
 It sitteth at her side.  
 Margret, Margret.

## VII.

Look in its face, ladye,  
 And keep thee from thy swound !  
 With a spirit bold, thy pulses hold,  
 And hear its voice's sound !  
 For so will sound thy voice,  
 When thy face is to the wall ;  
 And such will be thy face, ladye,  
 When the maidens work thy pall—  
 Margret, Margret.

## VIII.

" Am I not like to thee ?"—  
 The voice was calm and low—  
 And between each word, there seem'd heard  
 The universe's flow !  
 " *The like may sway the like !*  
 By which mysterious law,

Mine eyes from thine, my lips from thine.  
 The light and breath may draw.  
 Margret, Margret.

## IX.

"My lips do need thy breath,  
 My lips do need thy smile,  
 And my pale deep eyne, that light in thine,  
 Which met the stars erewhile;  
 Yet go with light and life,  
 If that thou lovest one  
 In all the earth, who loveth thee  
 More truly as the sun,  
 Margret, Margret."

## X.

Her cheek had waxed white,  
 As cloud at fall of snow;  
 Then like to one at set of sun,  
 It waxed red also!  
 For love's name maketh bold,  
 As if the loved were near!  
 And sighd she the deep long sigh  
 Which cometh after fear.  
 Margret, Margret.

## XI.

"Now, sooth, I fear thee not—  
 Shall never fear thee now!"  
 (And a noble sight was the sudden light  
 Which lit her lifted brow!)  
 "Can earth be dry of streams;  
 Or hearts, of love?" she said—  
 "Who doubteth love, can know not love:  
 He is already dead!"  
 Margret, Margret.

## XII.

"I have" . . . and here her lips  
 Some word in pause did keep;  
 And gave the while a quiet smile,  
 As if they paused in sleep!—  
 "I have . . . a brother dear,  
 A knight of knightly fame!

I broidered him a knightly scarf  
 With letters of my name.  
 Margret, Margret.

## XIII.

"I fed his grey goss hawk ;  
 I kissed his fierce bloodhoùnd ;  
 I sate at home when he might come,  
 And caught his horn's far sound ;  
 I sang him songs of eld,  
 I poured him the red wine—  
 He lookèd from the cup and said,  
*I love thee, sister mine !*"  
 Margret, Margret.

## XIV.

IT trembled on the grass,  
 With a low, shadowy laughter !  
 The sounding river which rollèd ever,  
 Stood dumb and stagnant after.  
 "Brave knight thy brother is !  
 But better loveth he  
 Thy pourèd wine than chanted song,  
 And better both, than thee !"  
 Margret, Margret."

## XV.

The ladye did not heed  
 The river's silence, while  
 Her own thoughts still, ran at their will,  
 And calm was still her smile.  
 "My little sister wears  
 The look our mother wore !  
 I smooth her locks with a golden comb—  
 I bless her evermore !"  
 Margret, Margret.

## XVI.

"I gave her my first bird,  
 When first my voice it knew ;  
 I made her share my posies rare,  
 And told her where they grew :  
 I taught her God's dear name  
 God's worthy praise, to tell—

She looked from heaven into my face,  
 And said, *I love thee well.*"  
 Margret, Margret.

## XVII.

IT trembled on the grass,  
 With a low, shadowy laughter :  
 You could see each bird, as it woke and stared  
 Through the shrivelled tree leaves after !  
 " Fair child thy sister is !  
 But better loveth she  
 Thy golden comb than thy posied flowers—  
 And better both, than thee !  
 Margret, Margret."

## XVIII.

The lady did not heed  
 The withering on the bough !  
 Still calm her smile, albeit the while  
 A little pale her brow.  
 " I have a father old,  
 The lord of ancient halls :  
 An hundred friends are in his court,  
 Yet only me he calls.  
 Margret, Margret.

## XIX.

" An hundred knights are in his court,  
 Yet read I by his knee ;  
 And when forth they go to the tourney show,  
 I rise not up to see.  
 'Tis a weary book to read—  
 My tryst's at set of sun !  
 But, dear and loving 'neath the stars,  
 His blessing when I've done."  
 Margret, Margret.

## XX.

IT trembled on the grass,  
 With a low, shadowy laughter :  
 And moon and star, most bright and far,  
 Did shrink and darken after.  
 " High lord thy father is !  
 But better loveth he

## THE ROMAUNT OF MARGRET.

His ancient halls than his hundred friends,—  
 His ancient halls, than thee,  
 Margret, Margret."

## XXI.

The ladye did not heed  
 That the far stars did fail :  
 Still calm her smile, albeit the while—  
 Nay !—but she is not pale !  
 " I have a more than friend  
 Across the mountains dim !  
 No other's voice is soft to me,  
 Unless it nameth *him*."  
 Margret, Margret.

## XXII.

" Though louder beats mine heart,  
 I know his tread again !  
 And his far plume, aye, unless turned away,  
 For tears do blind me then.  
 We brake no gold, a sign  
 Of stronger faith to be ;  
 But I wear his last look in my soul,  
 Which said, *I love but thee !*"  
 Margret, Margret.

## XXIII.

IT trembled on the grass,  
 With a low, shadowy laughter ;  
 And the wind did toll as a passing soul  
 Were sped by church-bell after !  
 And shadows, 'stead of light,  
 Fell from the stars above,  
 In flakes of darkness on her face  
 Still bright with trusting love !  
 Margret, Margret.

## XXIV.

" He *lovèd* none but thee !  
 That love is transient too.  
 The wild hawk's bill doth dabble still  
 I' the mouth that vowed thee true.  
 Will he open his dull eyes,  
 When tears fall on his brow ?

Behold! the death-worm to his heart  
 Is a nearer thing than *thou*,  
 Margret, Margret.

## XXV.

Her face was on the ground—  
 None saw the agony!  
 But the men at sea did that night agree  
 They heard a drowning cry.  
 And when the morning brake,  
 Fast rolled the river's tide,  
 With the green trees waving overhead,  
 And a white corse lain beside.  
 Margret, Margret.

## XXVI.

A knight's bloodhound and he  
 The funeral watch did keep:  
 With a thought o' the chase, he stroked its face,  
 As it howled to see him weep.  
 A fair child kissed the dead,  
 But shrank before the cold.  
 And alone yet proudly, in his hall,  
 Did stand a baron old.  
 Margret, Margret

## XXVII.

Hang up my harp again—  
 I have no voice for song!  
 Not song but wail, and mourners pale  
 Not bards, to love belong!  
 O failing human love!  
 O light by darkness known!  
 O false, the while thou treadest earth!  
 O deaf, beneath the stone!  
 Margret, Margret.

## ISOBEL'S CHILD.

“— so find we profit,  
By losing of our prayers.”

SHAKESPEARE.

To rest the weary nurse has gone ;  
An eight-day watch had she,  
Rocking 'neath the sun and moon  
The baby on her knee :  
Till Isobel its mother said  
“The fever waneth—wend to bed—  
And mine the watch shall be.”

Wearily the nurse did throw  
Her pallet in the darkest place  
Of that sick room, and dreamed.  
And as the gusty wind did blow  
The night-lamp's flame across her face,  
In her dream the poplars seemed,  
The dark tall poplars on the hill,  
To clasp the sun in a weird constraint  
Till his rays dropped from him, pined and still  
As blossoms in frost :  
And he wanëd faint  
To the colour of moonlight which doth pass  
Over the dank ridged churchyard grass !  
The poplars held the sun, and he  
The eyes of the nurse that they should not see,  
Not for a moment the babe on her knee,  
Though she shuddered to feel that it grew to be chill  
And lay too heavily.

She only dreamed : for all the while  
'Twas Lady Isobel that kept  
The little baby ; and it slept  
Fast, warm, as if its mother's smile,  
Full of love's unmeted weight,  
And red as rose of Harpocrate  
Dropt upon its eyelids, pressed  
Lid to cheek in that sweet rest !

And more and more smiled Isobel  
To see the baby sleep so well—

She knew not that she smiled !  
 Against the lattice, dull and wild,  
 Drive the heavy droning drops,  
 Drop by drop, the sound being one—  
 As momentarily time's segments fall  
 O' the ear of God who hears through all,

Eternity's unbroken monotone.  
 And more and more smiled Isobel  
 To see the baby sleep so well—

She knew not that she smiled !  
 The wind in intermission stops  
 Down in the beachen wood,  
 Then crieth aloud  
 Self-stung, self-driven,  
 And riseth upward to its tops,  
 Stiffening erect the branches bowed ;  
 Dilating with a tempest-soul  
 Of gathered sound, the trees that break  
 Through their own outline with dark hands, and roll  
 A shadow, massive as a cloud,  
 Vocal as thunder-clouds in heaven,  
 Across the castle lake.

And more and more smiled Isobel  
 To see the baby sleep so well ;  
 She knew not that she smiled—  
 She knew not that the storm was wild.  
 Through that uproar she could not hear  
 The castle clock which struck anear—  
 She heard the low, light breathing of her child.

O sight for wondering look !  
 While th' external nature broke  
 Into such abandonment ;  
 While the very mist, heart-rent  
 By the lightning and the shadow,  
 Shed distortedly above  
 Sloping hill and lake and meadow,  
 Seem'd as they all did move  
 Against nature, with a din—  
 A sense of silence seem'd to come  
 From things without, and enter in  
 The human creature's room.

So motionless she sate,  
 The babe asleep upon her knees,  
 You might have dreamed their souls had gone

Away to things inanimate,  
 To work in such, to live a life and moan ;  
 And that their bodies had ta'en back,  
 In mystic change, all silences  
 That cross the sky in cloudy rack,  
 Or haply dwell beneath the ground  
 In waters safe from their own sound.

Only she wore  
 The deepening smile I named before,  
 And *that* a deepening love expressed—  
 And who at once can love and rest ?

In sooth the smile that then was keeping  
 Watch upon the baby sleeping,  
 Floated with its tender light  
 Downward from the dropp'd eyes,  
 Upward from the lips apart,  
 Over cheeks which had grown white  
 With an eight-day weeping.  
 All smiles come in such a wise,  
 Where tears shall fall, or have of old—  
 Like northern lights that shoot athwart  
 The heavens to token cold !

Motionless she sate :  
 The hair had fallen by its weight  
 On either side the smile, and lay  
 Very blackly on the arm  
 Where the baby nestled warm ;  
 Pale as baby carved in stone  
 And seen by glimpses of the moon  
 In a dark cathedral aisle !  
 But, through the storm, no moonbeam fell  
 Upon the child of Isobel—  
 I ween you saw it by the ray  
 Alone of her still smile.

'Tis aye a solemn thing to me  
 To look upon a babe that sleeps—  
 Wearing in its spirit-deeps  
 The unreveal'd mystery  
 Of its Adam's taint and woe,  
 Which, when they reveal'd be,  
 Will not let it slumber so :  
 Lying new in life beneath  
 The shadow of the coming death,

With that soft, low, quiet breath,  
 As if it felt the sun!  
 Knowing all things by their blooms,  
 Not their roots; yea,—sun and sky,  
 Only by the warmth that comes  
 Out of each;—earth, only by  
 The pleasant hues that o'er it run;  
 And human love, by drops of sweet  
 White nourishment still hanging round  
 The little mouth so slumber-bound.  
 All which broken sentiency  
 Will gather and unite and climb  
 To an immortality  
 Good or evil, each sublime,  
 Through life and death to life again!  
 O little lids, now closèd fast,  
 Must ye learn to drop at last  
 Our large and burning tears?  
 O warm quick body, must thou lie,  
 When is done the round of years,  
 Bare of all the joy and pain?  
 Dust in dust, thy place upgiving  
 To creeping worms in sentient living?  
 O small frail being wilt thou stand  
 At God's right hand,—  
 Lifting up those sleeping eyes,  
 Dilated by sublimest destinies,  
 In endless waking? Thrones and Seraphim,  
 Through the long ranks of their solemnities,  
 Sunning thee with calm looks of Heaven's surprise—  
*Thy look alone on Him?—*  
 Or else, self-willèd to the Godless place,  
 (God keep thy will!) feel thine own energies,  
 Cold, strong, objectless, like a dead man's clasp,  
 The sleepless deathless life within thee, grasp?  
 While myriad faces, like one changeless face,  
 With foe *not love's*, shall glass thee everywhere,  
 And overcome thee with thine own despair?

More soft, less solemn images  
 Drifted o'er the lady's heart,  
 Silently as snow:  
 She had seen eight days depart  
 Hour by hour, on bended knees,  
 With pale-wrung hands and prayings low  
 And broken—through which came the sound  
 Of tears that fell against the ground,

Making sad stops :—" Dear Lord, dear Lord !"  
 She aye had prayed—(the heavenly word,  
 Broken by an earthly sigh !)  
 " Thou, who didst not erst deny  
 The mother-joy to Mary mild,  
 Bless'd in the bless'd child,  
 Harkening in meek babyhood  
 Her cradle-hymn, albeit used  
 To all that music interfused  
 In breasts of angels high and good !  
 Oh, take not, Lord, my babe away—  
 Oh, take not to thy songful heaven,  
 The pretty baby thou hast given ;  
 Or ere that I have seen him play  
 Around his father's knees, and known  
 That *he* knew how my love hath gone  
     From all the world to him.  
 And how that I shall shiver, dim  
 In the sunshine, thinking e'er  
 The grave-grass keeps it from his fair  
 Still cheeks ! and feel at every tread  
 His little body which is dead  
 And hidden in the turfy fold,  
 Doth make the whole warm earth a-cold !  
 O God, I am so young, so young—  
 I am not used to tears at nights  
 Instead of slumber—nor to prayer  
 With shaken lips and hands out-wrung :  
 Thou knowest all my prayings were  
 ' I bless thee, God, for past delights—  
 Thank God ! ' I am not used to bear  
 Hard thoughts of death. The earth doth cover  
 No face from me of friend or lover :  
 And must the first who teacheth me  
 The form of shrouds and funerals, be  
 Mine own first-born belov'd ? he  
 Who taught me first this mother-love ?  
 Dear Lord, who spreadest out above  
 Thy loving, pierc'd hands to meet  
 All lifted hearts with blessing sweet,—  
 Pierce not my heart, my tender heart,  
 Thou madest tender ! Thou who art  
 So happy in thy heaven away,  
 Take not mine only bliss away ! "

She so had prayed ! And God, who hears  
 Through seraph-songs the sound of tears,

From that belovèd babe had ta'en  
 The fever and the beating pain.  
 And more and more smiled Isobel  
 To see the baby sleep so well—  
 She knew not that she smiled !  
 Until the pleasant gradual thought  
 Which near her heart, the smile, enwrought,  
 Soon strong enough her lips to reach,  
 Now soft and slow, itself did seem  
 To float along a blessèd dream,  
 Beyond it, into speech !—

“ I prayed for thee, my little child,  
 And God hath heard my prayer !  
 And when thy babyhood is gone,  
 We two together will kneel down  
 Upon His earth which will be fair  
 To both of us not covering thee :  
 And give Him thankful praise.”

The rain drives dull and wild !  
 Against the lattice it drives.

“ I thank Him now, that I can think  
 Of those same future days,  
 Nor from the harmless image shrink  
 Of what I there might see—  
 Strange babies on their mothers' knees,  
 Whose innocent soft faces might  
 From off mine eyelids strike the light,  
 With looks not meant for me !”

A sound from sound outlives—  
 Know ye the wind from the rain ?

“ But now, together, baby mine,  
 We turn this hope of ours again  
 To sun's 'neath which we shall entwine  
 Our spirits, and so teach each other  
 The blessèd loves of child and mother !—  
 Two human loves make one divine.”

A sound from sound outlives—  
 Know ye the rain from the thunder ?

" My little child, what wilt thou choose ?  
 What gladness, from the gladnesses  
 Futurity is spreading under  
 Thy gladsome sight ? Beneath the trees,  
 Wilt thou sit all day and lose  
 Thy spirit with the river, seen  
 Intermittently between  
 The winding beechen alleys ?  
 Like a shepherd keeping sheep,  
 Thou, with only thoughts to keep  
 Which no bound will overpass,  
 And which are innocent as those  
 That feed upon the dewy grass  
 Among Arcadian valleys ? "

The large white owl that with age is blind,  
 That hath sate for years in the old tree hollow,  
 Is carried away in a gust of wind !  
 His wings could bear him not as fast  
 As he goeth now the lattice past—  
 He is borne by the winds ! the rains do follow !  
 His white wings to the blast out-flowing,  
     He hooteth in going,  
 And in the lightnings coldly glitter  
     His round unblinking eyes !

" Or, baby, wilt thou think it fitter  
 To be eloquent and wise ?  
 One upon whose lips the air  
 Turns to solemn verities,  
 For men to breathe anew, and win  
 A deeper-seated life within ?  
 Wilt be a philosopher,  
 By whose voice the earth and skies  
 Shall speak to the unborn ?  
 Or a poet, broadly spreading  
 The golden immortalities  
 Of his own soul on natures lorn  
 And poor of such ; them all to guard  
 From their decay ? beneath his treading,  
 Earth's flowers being streaked by hues of Eden ;  
 And stars, drawn downward by his looks  
 To shine more brightly in his books ? "

The tame hawk in the castle-yard,  
 How it screams to the lightning, with its wet

Jagged plumes o'erhanging the parapet !  
 And at the lady's door the hound  
 Beateth with a crying sound !

" But, O my babe, thy lids are laid  
 Close, fast upon thy cheek !  
 And not a dream of power and sheen  
 Can make a passage up between :  
 Thy heart is of thy mother's made,—  
 Thy looks are very meek !  
 And it will be their chosen place  
 To rest on some belovèd face,  
 As these on thine—and let the noise  
 Of the whole world go on, nor mar  
 The tender silence of thy joys ;  
 And when the silentnesses are  
 Too tender for themselves, the same  
 Yearning for sound,—to look above,  
 And utter their one meaning, LOVE,—  
 That *He* may hear His name !"

No wind—no rain—no thunder !  
 The waters dropped not slowly,  
 The thunder was not spent,  
 The wind died not away !  
 No wind—no rain—no thunder !  
 Their noises dropped asunder  
 From th' earth and firmament,  
 Abrupt and echoless,  
 As ripe fruits on the ground, unshaken wholly—  
 As life in death !  
 And like a stroke the sudden silentness  
 Sudden and solemn fell,  
 It starts the shut heart of Isobel,  
 As tempests could not, from its dreams !  
 Against the door doth pant the breath  
 O' the hound whose cry is still—  
 And *she* uplifts the lidded gleams  
 Of her clear eyes, and see the moon  
 Looking out of heaven alone  
 Upon the poplared hill !  
 Seeming a calm of God, made visible  
 That men might find it fair !

The moonlight on the baby's face  
 Falleth clear and cold.  
 The mother's looks are falling there—

## ISOBEL'S CHILD.

Because the beauty of the skies,  
 Have not power long to hold  
     Our loving human eyes !  
 We still revert to this dark place,  
 And weep our natures into light

The moonlight on the baby's face  
     Cold and clear remaineth !  
 The mother's looks do shrink away,  
 The mother's looks return to stay,  
     As charm'd by what paineth.  
 Is it dream or is it sight ?  
 Hath the change upon the wild  
 Elements, that signs the night,  
     Passed upon the child ?  
 It is not dream, but sight !—

The babe hath awakened from sleep,  
 And toward the gaze of its mother,  
 Bent over it, turned another !  
 Not the baby-looks that go  
 Unaimingly to and fro ;  
 But an earnest gazing deep,  
 Such as soul gives soul at length,  
 When through work and wail of years,  
 It hath won a solemn strength,  
     And mourneth as it wears !  
 A strong man could not brook  
 With pulse unstirred by fears,  
 To meet that baby's look  
 O'er glazed by manhood's tears—  
 The tears of the man full grown,  
 With the power to wring our own,  
 (The silent power) that lie  
 In the eyes all undefiled  
 Of a little three months' child !  
 To see that babe-brow, wrought  
 By witnessings of thought,  
 And the small soft mouth unweaned,  
 (By mother's kiss o'erleaned  
 To put the sound of loving  
 Where no sound else was moving,  
     Except the speechless cry)  
     Carv'd to mind's expression,  
     Shaped to articulation—  
 Yea ! speaking words—yea ! naming woe  
 In tones that with it strangely went,

Because so baby-innocent,  
As the child spake to the mother so!—

“O mother, mother, loose thy prayer!  
Christ's name hath made it strong!  
It bindeth me, it holdeth me  
With its most loving cruelty,  
From floating my new soul along  
The blessèd heavenly air!  
It bindeth me, it holdeth me  
In all this dark, upon this dull  
Low earth, by only weepers trod!—  
It bindeth me, it holdeth me!—  
Mine angel looketh sorrowful  
Upon the face of God.\*

“Mother, mother! can I dream  
Beneath your earthly trees?  
I had a vision and a gleam—  
I heard a sound more sweet than these  
When lifted by the wind!  
Did you see the Dove, with wings  
Overdropt with glisterings  
From a sunless light behind,  
Falling on mine heart from sky,  
Soft as mother's kiss, until  
I seemed to leap, and yet was still?  
Saw you how his love-large eye  
Lookèd on me mystic calms,  
Until the power of his divine  
Vision was indrawn to mine?

“Oh, the dream within the dream!  
I saw celestial places even.  
Oh, the high and vista'd palms,  
Making finites of delight  
Through the heavenly infinite—  
Lifting up their green still tops  
To the heaven of Heaven!  
Oh, the sweet life-tree that drops  
Shade like light across the river  
Glorified in its for ever  
Flowing from the Throne!  
Oh, the shining holinesses

\* “For I say unto you that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven” (Matt. xviii. 10).

Of the thousand, thousand faces  
 God-sunned by the throned ONE!  
 Overspread with such a love,  
 That though I saw them turned above,  
 Each, loving, seemed for also me!  
 And, oh, th' Unspeakable! the HE,—  
 The manifest in secrecies,  
 Yet of mine own heart partaker!  
 With the overcoming look  
 Of one who hath been once forsook,  
 And blesseth the forsaker!  
 Mother, mother, let me go  
 Toward the face that looketh so!  
 Through the mystic, living Four  
 Whose are inward, outward eys  
 Dark with light of mysteries,  
 And the restless evermore  
 "Holy, holy,"—through the crowned  
 Stately elders, white around,—  
 Through the sworded Seraphim—  
 Suffer me to go to Him!

"Is your wisdom very wise,  
 Mother, on the narrow earth?  
 Very happy, very worth  
 That I should stay to learn?  
 Are these air-corrupting sighs  
 Fashioned by unlearned breath?  
 Do the students' lamps that burn  
 All night, illumine death?  
 Mother, albeit this be so,  
 Loose thy prayer and let me go  
 Where that bright chief angel stands  
 Apart from all his brother bands,  
 Too glad for smiling! having bent  
 In angelic wilderment  
 O'er the depths of God, and brought  
 Reeling, thence, one only thought  
 To fill his whole eternity!  
 He the teacher is for me!—  
 He can teach what I would know—  
 Mother, mother, let me go!—

"Can your poet make an Eden  
 No winter will undo?  
 And light a starry fire, in heeding

His hearth's is burning too?  
 Drown in music the earth's din?—  
 And keep his own wild soul within  
 The law of his own harmony?  
 Mother! albeit this be so,  
 Let me to mine Heav'n go!  
 A little harp me waits thereby—  
 A harp whose strings are golden all,  
 And tuned to music spherical,  
 Hanging on the green life-tree,  
 Where no willows ever be.  
 Shall I miss that harp of mine?  
 Mother, no!—the Eye divine  
 Turned upon it, makes it shine—  
 And when I touch it, poems sweet  
 Like separate souls shall fly from it,  
 Each to an immortal fyte!  
 We shall all be poets there,  
 Gazing on the chiefest Fair!

“And love! earth's love! and *can* we love  
 Fixedly where all things move?  
 Can the sinning love each other?  
 Mother, mother,  
 I tremble in thy close embrace—  
 I feel thy tears adown my face—  
 Thy prayers do keep me out of bliss—  
 O dreary earthly love!  
 Loose thy prayer, and let me go  
 To the place that loving is,  
 Yet not sad! and when is given  
 Escape to *thee* from this below,  
 Thou shalt see me that I wait  
 For thee at the happy gate;  
 And silence shall be up in heaven,  
 To hear our meeting kiss!”

The nurse wakes in the morning sun,  
 And starts to see beside her bed,  
 The lady, with a grandeur spread  
 Like pathos, o'er her face; as one  
 God-satisfied and earth-undone!—  
 The babe upon her arm was dead!  
 And the nurse could utter forth no cry,—  
 She was awed by the calm in the mother's eye.

"Wake, nurse!"—the lady said:  
 "We are waking—*he* and I—  
 I, on earth, and he, in sky!  
 And thou must help me to o'erlay  
 With garment white, this little clay  
 Which needs no more our lullaby.

"I changed the cruel prayer I made,  
 And bowed my meekened face, and prayed  
 That God would do His will! and thus  
 He did it, nurse! He parted *us*.  
 His sun is showing on mine arm,  
 The dead calm face:—and *I* am calm.

"This earthly noise is too anear,  
 Too loud, and will not let me hear  
 The harp new stricken! Death will soon  
 Make silence!"

And a sense of tune,  
 A satisfied love, meanwhile,  
 Most like the lost one's living smile,  
 Sang on within her soul!

Oh ye!  
 Earth's tender-hearted! may ye be  
 Made confident, to yield your love  
 To the so Named, who throned above  
 Shall all its ends fulfil;  
 Breaking the narrow prayers that may  
 Befit your narrow hearts, away  
 In, His broad, loving will!



## A ROMANCE OF THE GANGES.

“When thy light perisheth,  
That from thee issueth,  
Our life evanisheth.”

TENNYSON.

THEY stand beneath the midnight,  
Beside the river-sea,  
Whose water sweepeth white around  
The shadow of the tree.  
The moon and earth are face to face,  
And earth is trancēd deep!  
The wave-voice seems the voice of dreams  
That wander through her sleep.  
The river floweth on.

What bring they 'neath the midnight,  
Beside the river-sea?  
They bring that human heart, wherein  
No nightly calm can be—  
That droppeth never with the wind,  
Nor drieth with the dew—  
Oh, calm it, God! *Thy* calm is broad  
To cover spirits, too.  
The river floweth on.

The maidens lean them over  
The waters, side by side,  
And shun each other's deepening eyes,  
And gaze adown the tide:  
And each within a little boat  
A little lamp hath lit;  
If bright it move, her loved doth love,  
And love doth fail with *it*—  
The river floweth on.

The stars are strong above us,  
To symbolise the soul;  
Whereby a tempest-wind may rush,  
Nor dim them as they roll.  
And yet the soul, by instinct sad,  
Doth stoop to symbols low—  
To that small flame, whose very name,  
Breathed o'er it, shakes it so.  
The river floweth on.

Go, little boats, go softly,  
 And guard the symbol spark!  
 The little boats go soft and safe  
 Across the waters dark.  
 And Luti's eyes have caught the fire  
 They watch; and unawares,  
 That bless'd while, she lets a smile  
 Creep silent through her prayers!  
 The river floweth on.

The smile—where hath it wanderd?—  
 She riseth from her knee;  
 She holds her dark, wet locks away—  
 There is no light to see!  
 She cries a quick and bitter cry—  
 "Nuleeni, launch me thine!  
 We must have light abroad to-night,  
 For all the wreck of mine!"  
 The river floweth on.

"I do remember watching  
 Anear this river-bed,  
 When on my childish knee was laid  
 My dying father's head.\*  
 I turn'd mine, to keep the tears  
 From falling on his face—  
 What doth it prove, when Death and Love  
 Choose out the self-same place?"  
 The river floweth on.

"They say the dead are bless'd,  
 The death-change here receiving.  
 Who, say—ah, me!—do *any* say  
 Where bless'd are the living?  
 Thy boat, Nuleeni!—look not sad—  
 Light up the waters rather!  
 I weep no faithless lover where  
 I wept a loving father!"  
 The river floweth on.

"My thought was of his falsehood,  
 Ere my flame had wax'd dim;  
 And though I closed mine eyes to dream  
 That one last dream of *him*,

\* The Hindoos carry their dying friends to the banks of the Ganges, believing in the after-blessedness of those who die there.

They shall not now be wet to see  
 The shining vision go.  
 From earth's cold love, I look above  
 To the holy house of snow."  
 The river floweth on.

"Come *thou*—thou never knewest  
 A grief, that thou shouldst fear it—  
 Thou wearest still the happy look  
 That feels another's near it!  
 Thy humming-bird is in the sun,†  
 Thy cuckoo in the grove;  
 And all the three broad worlds, for thee,  
 Are full of wandering love."  
 The river floweth on.

The little maiden cometh—  
 She cometh shy and slow—  
 I ween she seeth thro' her lids,  
 They drop adown so low!  
 Her tresses near her small feet bare—  
 She stands, and speaketh nought;  
 Yet blusheth red, as if she said  
 The name she only thought.  
 The river floweth on.

She kneelèd by the water—  
 She lighteth up the flame—  
 And o'er her youthful forehead's calm  
 The trembling radiance came.  
 Go, little boat; go, soft and safe,  
 And guard the symbol spark!  
 Soft, safe, doth float the little boat  
 Across the waters dark.  
 The river floweth on.

Glad tears her eyes have blinded—  
 The light they cannot reach—  
 She turneth with that sudden smile  
 She learnt before her speech.  
 "I do not hear his voice; the tears  
 Have dimmed my light away;  
 But the symbol light will last to-night—  
 The love will last for aye."  
 The river floweth on.

\* *Hamadeva*, the Indian god of Love, is imagined to wander through the three worlds, accompanied by the humming bird, cuckoo, and gentle breezes.

Then Luti spake behind her—  
 Out spake she bitterly :  
 " By the symbol light that lasts to-night,  
 Wilt vow a vow to me ?"  
 She gazeth upward in her face ;  
 Soft answer maketh she :  
 " By loves that last when lights are past,  
 I vow that vow to thee."  
 The river floweth on.

An earthly look had Luti,  
 Tho' her voice was deep as prayer.  
 " The rice is gathered from the plains,  
 To cast upon thine hair.\*  
 And when *he* comes, his marriage band  
 Around thy neck to throw ;  
 Toward his gaze thy bride-smile raise,  
 And ask of . . . *Luti's woe.*"  
 The river floweth on.

" And when, in seasons after,  
 Thy young bright-fac'd son  
 Shall lean against thy knee, and ask  
 What deeds his sire hath done ;  
 Press deep adown thy mother-smile  
 Upon his ringlets long—  
 View deep his pretty childish eyes—  
 And tell of—' *Luti's wrong.*'"  
 The river floweth on.

She look'd up in wonder,  
 Yet softly answered she—  
 " By loves that last when lights are past,  
 I vowed that vow to thee !  
 But why glads it thee, that a bride-day be  
 By a word of woe defiled—  
 That a word of wrong take the cradle song  
 From the ear of a sinless child ?"  
 " *Why !*" Luti said, and her laugh was dread—  
 Her laugh was low and wild—  
 " That the fair new love may the bridegroom prove,  
 And the father shame the child !"  
 The river floweth on.

\* The casting of rice upon the head, and the fixing of the band about the neck, are parts of the Hindoo marriage ceremonial.

"Thou flowest still, O river!  
     Thou flowest 'neath the moon—  
 Thy lily hath not changed a leaf,  
     Thy charm'd lute a tune! \*  
*He* mixed his voice with thine—and *his*  
     Was all I heard around!  
 But now, beside his chosen bride,  
     *I hear the river's sound!*"  
                                 The river floweth on.

"I gaze upon her beauty,  
     I feel her happy breathing:  
 The light above thy wave is hers;  
     And mine, the rest beneath them.—  
 Oh! give me back the dying look  
     My father gave thy water!  
 Give back!—and let a little love  
     O'erwatch his weary daughter!"  
                                 The river floweth on.

"Give back!" she hath departed—  
     The word is wandering with her,  
 And the stricken maidens hear afar  
     The step and cry together.  
 O symbols! none are frail enow  
     For mortal joys to borrow!  
 While bright doth float Nuleeni's boat,  
     She weepeth, dark with sorrow!  
                                 The river floweth on.

\* The Ganges is represented as a white woman, with a water-lily in her right hand, and in her left, a lute.



## THE ISLAND.

"Pleasing myself with phantasms sweet  
Methinks the time runs very fleet."

BURTON'S *Abstract of Melancholy*.

"All goeth but Goddis will."

ANON.

A BOON, O world, a boon of thee!  
Now turn away thy face,  
And loosen from thy clasp mine hand,  
And let me dream a space!  
A little space! Mine after years  
May pay thee all the price, in tears.

I crave it by thy forehead's crown  
Thine hands conceal'd dart;  
By the sweet honey of thy speech,  
The fierce sting of thine heart—  
Thy darksome palls from shining looms,  
Thy mincing steps on hollow tombs—

Thy wreath'd form of aconite,  
Thy smile of poison worse—  
Yea! by thy soft-toned benison  
That curseth more than curse!  
Fair world! my dreams shall cease to be,  
And I, have bitterer tears for thee!

My dream is of an island place  
The distant seas are folding;  
And over which, the only watch  
Those troop'd stars are holding.  
Those bright still stars! they need not seem  
Brighter or stiller in my dream!

Hills questioning the heavens for light—  
Ravines too deep to scan!  
As if the wild earth mimick'd there  
The wilder heart of man:  
Only it shall be greener far  
And gladder, than hearts ever are.

More like, perhaps, some mount sublime  
 Of starry paradise,  
 Disrupted to an hundred hills,  
 In falling from the skies—  
 Bringing within it, all the roots  
 Of heavenly trees, and flowers, and fruits.

For saving where yon spectral heights  
 Denude their rocky whiteness,  
 Or ragged fissures, miser-like,  
 Hoard up some fountain brightness—  
 (And e'en in them—stoop down and hear—  
 Leaf sounds with water in your ear!)

Around, above, the plum'd trees  
 Their gracious shadows throw;  
 Through whose clear fruit and blossoming,  
 Whene'er the sun may go,  
 The ground beneath he deeply stains,  
 As shining through cathedral panes.

But little needs the ground beneath,  
 That shining from above her,  
 When many Pleiades of flowers  
 (Not one lost) star her over:  
 The rays of their unnumbered hues  
 Being refracted by the dews.

Wide petalled plants, that boldly drink  
 Th' Amreeta of the sky;  
 Shut bells, all heavy with delight,  
 Whose faces earthward lie—  
 I cannot count them: but between,  
 Is room for grass, and mosses green,

And rapid brooks, that bear all hues  
 Reflected in disorder!  
 Or, gathering up their silver lengths  
 Beside their winding border,  
 Sleep, haunted through the slumber hidden,  
 By lilies white as dreams in Eden.

Nor think each arch'd tree with each  
 Too closely interlaces,  
 T' admit of vistas opening broad,  
 And sweet sun-basking places,

Upon whose sward the antlered deer  
View their own image long and clear.

Unless they fainer would behold  
That image on the seas,  
Whene'er's a way through shelving rocks,  
And over branching trees,  
Whose doves from half-closed lids espy  
The green and purple fish go by.

One mateless dove is answering  
The water every minute,  
Thinking such music could not be  
Without *his* cooing in it !  
So softly doth earth's beauty round  
Infuse itself in ocean's sound.

My soul in love bounds forwarder,  
To meet the bounding waves !  
Beside them is the home for me,  
Within the coral caves—  
And near me two or three may dwell,  
Whom dreams fantastic please as well.

High winding caverns ! not uncleft  
In all their sparry ceilings ;  
Through which may shine the earnest stars,  
In prophet-like revealings,  
And down their slanted glory, move  
Scents from the flowers that grow above.

I said that two or three might choose  
Their caves beside mine own :  
Those who would change the din of man,  
For Nature's nobler tone—  
Man's veering heart and careless eyes,  
For Nature's steadfast sympathies.

And we to meet her faithfulness,  
Shall play a faithful part :  
Her beautiful shall ne'er surprise  
The monstrous at our heart—  
Her musical shall ever touch  
Something within us also such.

Yet shall she not our mistress be,  
As is the moon of ocean ;

Though gently as the moon she give  
 Our thoughts a sheen and motion!—  
 More like a harp of many lays,  
 Moving its master while he plays.

\* \* \* \*

No sod in all that island hath  
 Been opened for the dead—  
 No island wind hath borne a sound  
 Of sorrow utter'd—  
 We cannot say by water clear  
 Or spreading tree—"I suffered *here!*"

Our only "farewell" shall be breathed  
 Toward the setting light,  
 When every star by day concealed,  
 Will make us welcome night:  
 Our only use of tears—'t' express  
 The sense of too much happiness.

Our fancies shall their plumage take  
 From fairest island birds  
 'That shine and dart from earth to heaven!  
 And then in turn, our words  
 Unconsciously shall take the dyes  
 Of those encolored fantasies.

Yea! soon, no consonant unsmooth  
 Our smile-tuned lips shall reach,  
 But softer than Hellenic sounds  
 Shall glide into our speech—  
 (What music did you ever find  
 So soft as voices glad and kind?)

And often by the joy without  
 And in us, overwrought,  
 We shall sit voicelessly, and read  
 Such poems in our thought,  
 As Pindar might have writ, if he  
 Had tended sheep in Arcady!

Or Æschylus—the pleasant fields  
 He died in, longer knowing—  
 Or Homer, had he heard no tone  
 More loud than Meles flowing—  
 Or poet Plato, had th' undim  
 Unsetting Godlight broke on him!

Choose me the loftiest cave of all,  
 To make a place for prayer ;  
 And I will choose a praying voice  
 To pour our spirits there.  
 How silverly the echoes run—  
*Thy will be done—Thy will be done !*

Gently yet strangely uttered words !—  
 They lift me from my dream.  
 It perisheth—the island place  
 That did no more than seem !  
 The streams are dry, no sun could find—  
 The fruits are fallen, without wind !—

So oft the doing of God's will  
 Our foolish wills undoeth !  
 Yet softly breaks an idle dream  
 The morning light subdueth ;  
 And happier 'tis, to see the sun,  
 Than sleep, and dream a brighter one.

Perchance my happy island dream  
 Was made of foolishness !  
 Why every thought of earthly joy  
 Is foolish, not the less ;  
 Our thoughts being stain'd ! Lord, with **THEE**  
 Were innocence and agony.

Shall I go backward to the World,  
 When Thou art very nigh ?  
 And pay the price I promised her  
 For vision pass'd by,  
 What time Thy covenant's controul  
 Would break all others from my soul ?

Nay ! I endure : but not because  
 The World imposeth woe ;  
 But rather that Thine hands perform  
 The thing appointed so ! \*  
 Those kindly wounding hands did brave,  
 Themselves, a deeper wound—to save.

We must endure—but not because  
 The World imposeth woe.  
 Prayers hold a better power than dreams  
 And leave her far and low :

\* " He performeth the thing that is appointed for me : and many such things are with Him " (Job xxii. 15).

We cannot meet her cruel eyes,  
 When ours are lifted to the skies—  
 When ours are lifted to the cross,  
     The love-in-sorrow reading!  
 Lord! teach Thy will *beside Thy cross*;  
     That while our hearts are bleeding,  
 The droppings of Thy blood may fall  
 Still faster on them, soothing all!

That when Thy lips, grown pale for us,  
     Have taught we dream in vain  
 Of happiness beneath a sun  
     Which darkened with Thy pain,—  
 They still may tell us, “You shall be  
 Anon in Paradise with Me!”



## THE DESERTED GARDEN.

“Since that I saw this gardine wasted.”

SPENSER.

I MIND me in the days departed,  
 How often underneath the sun,  
 With childish bounds I used to run  
     To a garden long deserted.

The beds and walks were vanished quite;  
 And wheresoe'er had fallen the spade,  
 The greenest grasses Nature led,  
     To sanctify her right.

I callèd it my wilderness,  
 For no one entered there but I.  
 The sheep looked in, the grass t' espy,  
     And passèd ne'ertheless.

The trees were interwoven wild,  
 And spread their boughs enough about  
 To keep both sheep and shepherd out,  
     But not a happy child.

Adventurous joy it was for me!  
 I crept beneath the bough, and found  
 A circle smooth of mossy ground  
     Beneath a poplar tree.

## THE DESERTED GARDEN.

Old garden rose-trees hedged it in—  
 Bedropt with roses waxen-white,  
 Well satisfied with dew and light,  
     And careless to be seen.

Long years ago it might befall,  
 When all the garden flowers were trim,  
 The grave old gardener prided him  
     On these the most of all ;

And Lady, stately overmuch,  
 Who movèd with a silken noise,  
 Blushed near them, dreaming of the voice  
     That likened her to such !

And these to make a diadem,  
 She may have often plucked and twined ;  
 Half smiling as it came to mind,  
     That few would look at *them*.

Oh ! little thought that Lady proud,  
 A child would watch her fair white rose,  
 When buried lay her fair white brows,  
     And silk was changed for shroud !—

Nor thought that gardener, full of scorns  
 For men unlearn'd and simple phrase,  
 A child would bring it all its praise,  
     By creeping through the thorns !

To me upon my low moss seat,  
 Though never a dream the roses sent  
 Of science or love's compliment.  
     I went they smelt as sweet.

Nor ever a grief was mine, to see  
 The trace of human step departed—  
 Because the garden was deserted,  
     The blyther place for me !

Friends, blame me not ! a narrow ken  
 Hath childhood 'twixt the sun and sward !  
 We draw the moral afterward—  
     We feel the gladness then !

And gladdest hours for me did glide  
 In silence at the rose-tree wall :  
 A thrush made gladness musical'  
     Upon the other side.

Nor he nor I did e'er incline  
 To mar or pluck the blossoms white—  
 How should I know but that they might  
     Lead lives as glad as mine ?

To make my hermit-home complete,  
 I brought clear water from the spring  
 Praised in its own low murmuring,—  
     And cresses glossy wet.

And so, I thought my likeness grew,  
 (Without the melancholy tale)  
 To gentle hermit of the dale,  
     And Angelina too!

For oft I read within my nook  
 Such minstrel stories ! till the breeze  
 Made sounds poetic in the trees,—  
     And then I shut the book.

If I shut this wherein I write,  
 I hear no more the wind athwart  
 Those trees !—nor feel that childish heart  
     Delighting in delight !

My childhood from my life is parted ;  
 My footstep from the moss which drew  
 Its fairy circle round : anew  
     The garden is deserted !

Another thrush may there rehearse  
 The madrigals which sweetest are—  
 No more for me !—myself afar  
     Do sing a sadder verse !

Ah me ! ah me ! when erst I lay  
 In that child's nest so greenly wrought,  
 I laugh'd to myself and thought  
     " The time will pass away."

I laugh'd still, and did not fear  
 But that, whene'er was past away  
 The childish time, some happier play  
     My womanhood would cheer.

I knew the time would pass away—  
 And yet beside the rose-tree wall,  
 Dear God !—how seldom, if at all,  
     I look'd up to pray !

## THE SOUL'S TRAVELLING.

The time *is* past!—and now that grows  
 The cypress high among the trees,  
 And I behold white sepulchres  
     As well as the white rose—

When wiser, meeker thoughts are given,—  
 And I have learnt to lift my face,  
 Remembering earth's greenest place  
     The colour draws from heaven.—

It something saith for earthly pain,  
 But more for Heavenly promise free,  
 That I who was, would shrink to be  
     That happy child again!



## THE SOUL'S TRAVELLING.

I DWELL amid the city.  
 The great humanity which beats  
 Its life along the stony streets,  
 Like a strong unsunn'd river  
 In a self-made course, is ever  
     Rolling on, rolling on!—

I sit and hear it as it rolls,  
     That flow of souls!  
     The infinite tendencies,  
 In the finite, chafed and pent,—  
 In the finite, turbulent!—  
     The long, drear monotone,  
 Made of many tones that rise  
 Each to each as contraries!—  
     The rich man's ambling steeds—  
 Lolling their necks as the chariot comes  
 With its inward gleam of the eddying plumes!—  
     The poor man's abject needs—  
 The feet that wearily, wearily roam,  
 Unquickened by thoughts of the fire at home—  
 The cry of the babe unheard of its mother,  
 Though it lie on her breast, while she thinks of the other  
     Laid yesterday in tomb!—

The whine of voices that have made  
 Their own grief's sacredness a trade—

The curse that ringeth hollowly  
 The crime against the misery—  
 The haggling talk—the organ's grinding—  
 The grinder's face being o'er it leant,  
 Most vacant even of woe,—  
 While the children's hearts leap so  
 At the merry music's winding!—  
 The rapid pace of the business men  
 Whose eyes do glitter cold,  
 As still they saw the gold!—  
 The funeral's long slow train  
 Plum'd black, beside  
 Many a house where the rioters laugh  
 And count the beakers they shall quaff  
 At the morrow's festivals—  
 Many a house where sits a bride  
 Trying the morrow's coronals,  
 With a red blush, ev'n today!—  
 Slowly creep the funerals,—  
 As none should hear the noise and say,  
 The living, the living, must go away  
 To multiply the dead!  
 Hark! an upward shout is sent!  
 In grave strong joy from tower to steeple  
 The bells ring out—  
 The trumpets sound, the people shout,  
 The young Queen goes to her parliament!—  
 She turneth round her large blue eyes,  
 More bright with childish memories  
 Than royal hopes, upon the people—  
 On either side, she bows her head  
 Lowly, with a queenly grace,  
 And smile most trusting-innocent,  
 As if she smil'd to her mother!  
 The thousands press before each other  
 To bless her to her face—  
 And booms the deep majestic voice  
 Through trump and drum—"May the Queen rejoice,  
 In the people's liberties!"  
 I dwell amid the city,  
 And hear the flow of souls!  
 I do not hear the several contraries—  
 I do not hear the separate tone that rolls  
 In act or speech,  
 For pomp or trade, for merrymake or folly—  
 I hear the confluence and sum of each,

And that is melancholy !—  
 Thy voice is a complaint, O crown'd city,  
 The blue sky covering thee, like God's great pity !—

O blue sky ! it mindeth me  
 Of places where I used to see  
 Its vast unbroken circle thrown  
 From the far pale peak'd hill  
 To the last verge of the ocean—  
 As by God's arm it were done  
 Then first, or as it felt th' emotion  
 Of that first impulse on it still !—  
 Oh, we spirits fly at will ;  
 Faster than the wing'd steed  
 Whereof in our book is read,  
 With the sunlight foaming back  
 From him to a misty track,  
 And his nostril reddening proud  
 As he breasteth the steep thundercloud !  
 Smoother than Sabrina's chair  
 Gliding up from wave to air,  
 While she smileth debonair  
 Yet holy, coldly, and yet brightly,  
 Like her own mooned waters nightly,  
     Through her dripping hair !

Very vast and smooth we fly,  
 Spirits, though the flesh be by,  
 All looks feed not from the eye,  
 Nor all hearings from the ear :  
 We can hearken and espy  
 Without either ! we can journey,  
 Bold and gay, as knights in tourney ;  
 And though we wear no visor down  
 To dark our countenance, the foe  
 Shall never chafe us as we go.

I am gone from peopled town !  
 It passeth its street-thunder round  
 My body ; wakening not to sound—  
 Its palace splendour, gloom of prison  
 And mart-throng ; wakening not to vision !  
 For now another sound, another  
 Vision, my soul's senses have.  
 O'er a hundred valleys deep,  
 Where the hill's tall shadows sleep,—  
 Scarce known because the valley trees  
 Cross their mountain images—

O'er a hundred hills, each other  
 Watching to the western wave—  
 I have travelled,—I have found  
 The silent, lone, remembered ground.

I have found a hollow green,  
 From the hill top, which doth lean  
 Toward the sea,—as if the hill  
 Had dropt his brow in reverence  
 Of the grandeur seen from thence—  
 A little nook, the cloud would fill,  
 Which sometimes lieth by the moon  
 To beautify a night of June—  
 A nook that openeth unto  
 The glorious ocean's steadfast view ;  
 Being most closely shut from all  
 Its kindred earth's sweet pastoral !—  
 And yet its banks (too smooth and steep  
 To be o'erbrowz'd by the sheep)  
 Withal are slanted very greenly ;  
 And flowers and grasses so serenely  
 Grow up them, that I ween the sea  
 Whereunto their dewed faces be,  
 Doth serve them for another sky,  
 As warm and blue as that on high !—

And in this hollow is a seat ;  
 And when that you have crept to it,  
 Sit adown the banks that are  
 Fashioning that quaintest chair—  
 Do not think—though at your feet  
 The cliff disrupts—you shall behold  
 The line where earth and ocean meet.  
 You can hear them as they greet !  
 You can hear that evermore  
 Distance-softened noise, more old  
 Than Nereid's singing—the wave leant  
 And joining soft up till the shore  
 In harmony of discontent !  
 Nathless you sit too high to gaze  
 Save on each separate element—  
 On earth, that nearly round you lays  
 Green guardianship—and ocean broad  
 To the next side o' the world o'erflowed :  
 Earth, ocean—seeming as they were  
 Each one a separate hemisphere,  
 Scarce more than earth and sky, anear !

But when you hearken to the grave  
Lamenting of the underwave,  
You must believe in their communion,  
Albeit you witness not their union!

Except that sound, the place is full  
Of silences, which when you cull  
By utterances, it thrills you so  
That presently you let them grow  
As long and deep as thought, and roll  
With a soul's strength above your soul!  
And as they touch your soul, they borrow  
As of its grandeur, of its sorrow,  
That deathly odour which the clay  
Leaves on its deathlessness away.

Alway! alway! must this be?  
Rapid Soul from city gone,  
Dost thou carry inwardly  
What doth make the city's moan?  
Must this deep sigh of thine own  
Haunt thee with humanity?  
Green visioned banks that are too steep  
To be o'erbrowzèd by the sheep,  
May all sad thoughts adown you creep  
Without a shepherd?—mighty sea,  
Can we dwarf thy magnitude,  
And fit it to our straightest mood?  
O fair, fair Nature! Are we thus  
Impotent and querulous  
Among thy workings glorious,—  
Among thy fulnesses that still  
Leave us vacant and defiled,  
And wailing like a kissèd child,  
Kissèd soft against his will?

God, God!—

With a child's voice I cry,

Weak, sad, confidingly—

God, God!

Thou knowest eyelids raised not always up  
Toward Thy love (as none of ours are) droop,  
As ours, o'er many a tear!  
Thou knowest, though Thy universe is broad,  
Two little tears suffice to cover all!—  
Thou knowest—Thou, who art so prodigal  
Of beauty—we are oft but stricken deer.

Expiring in the woods—that care for none  
Of those delightful flowers they die upon !

O blissful mouth, which breathed the mournful breath  
We name our souls ! (self-spoilt !) by that strong passion  
Which paled thee once with sighs—by that strong death  
Which made thee once unbreathing—from the wrack,  
Themselves have called around them, call them back  
Toward Thee in continuous aspiring !

For here, O Lord,  
For here they travel vainly ; vainly pass  
From city pavement to untrodden sward,  
Where the lark finds her deep nest in the grass  
Unswept of its last dew !—Yea, very vain  
The greatest speed of all these souls of men,  
Unless they travel upward to Thy Throne !  
There sittest THOU, the satisfying ONE,  
With blood for sins, and holy perfectings  
For all requirements—while th' archangel, raising  
Toward Thy face his full ecstatic gazing,  
Forgets the rush and rapture of his wings !



## MEMORY AND HOPE.

### I.

#### BACK-LOOKING Memory

And Hope prophetic sprang from out the ground !  
One, where the flashing of Cherubic sword  
Fell downward, sad and broad ;  
And one, from Eden earth, within the sound  
Of the four rivers lapsing pleasantly,  
What time the promise after curse was said—  
“Thy seed shall bruise his head.”

### II.

Memory is very wild,  
As moonstruck by Cherubic flashings near  
When she was born. Her deep eyes shine and shone  
With light that conquereth sun  
And stars to wanner paleness year by year.  
With sweetest scents she mixeth things defiled—  
She trampleth down earth's grasses green and sweet.  
With her far-wandering feet.

## III.

She plucketh many flowers,  
 Their beauty on her bosom's coldness killing.  
 She teacheth every melancholy sound  
 To winds and waters round.  
 She droppeth tears with seed where man is tilling  
 The rugged soil in yet more rugged hours.  
 She smileth—ah me! in her smile doth go  
 A mood of deeper woe

## IV.

Hope seemed of happier sprite.  
 Crowned with an Eden wreath she saw not fade,  
 She went a-nodding through the wilderness  
 With brow that shone no less  
 Than sea-bird's wings, by storm more frequent made,—  
 Searching the treeless rock for fruits of light ;  
 Her white feet being armed from stones and cold,  
 By slippers all of gold.

## V.

And Memory did her wrong,  
 And, while she dreamed, her slippers, stole away !  
 But still she wended on with mirth unheeding,  
 The while her feet were bleeding,  
 Until she met her on a certain day,  
 And with her evil eyes did search her long  
 And cruelly, whereat she sank to ground  
 In a stark deadly swound.

## VI.

And so my Hope were slain,  
 Had it not been that THOU wert standing near,  
 Oh Thou! who saidest, " Live," to spirits lying  
 In their own blood, and dying !  
 For Thou her forehead to Thine heart did'st rear  
 And make its silent pulses sing again.—  
 Pouring a new light o'er her darkened eyne,  
 With tender tears from Thine !

## VII.

Therefore my Hope arose  
 From out her swound and gazed upon Thy face !  
 And meeting there that soft subduing look  
 Which Peter's spirit shook,

Sank downward in a rapture to embrace  
 Thy pierc'd hands and feet with kisses close,  
 And prayed Thee to assist her evermore  
 To "reach the things before."

## VIII.

Then gavest Thou the smile  
 Whence angel-wings thrill quick like summer lightning ;  
 Vouchsafing rest beside Thee, where she never  
 From Love and Faith may sever !  
 Whereat the Eden crown she saw not whitening  
 A time ago, though whitening all the while,  
 Reddened with life, to hear the Voice which talked  
 To Adam as he walked !

## THE EXILE'S RETURN.

## I.

WHEN from thee I did part away,  
 And from my land for years,  
 I did not think to come again  
 With those same parting tears.  
 I come again to hill and lea,  
 Weeping for thee !

## II.

Thine hand was clasp'd warm in mine  
 When I was standing last  
 Upon the shore of cheerful green,  
 Our vessel neareth fast.  
 I shall be there—no longer *we*—  
 No more with thee !

## III.

Had I beheld thee still and dead,  
 I might more clearly know,  
 How heart of thine could turn as cold  
 As hearts by nature so ;  
 How change could touch the falsehood-free  
 And changeless *thee* !

## THE SLEEP.

## IV.

But, now thy last-seen tender looks  
 Within my soul remain,  
 As it is hard to think that *they*,  
 Will shine no more again!  
 That I shall vainly wait—ah me!  
 A word from thee!

## V.

I could not bear to look upon  
 That mound of funeral clay,  
 Where one sweet voice is silentness  
 And one fair brow decay.  
 Where all thy mortal I might see,  
 But never thee!

## VI.

For thou art where the loving are,  
 Whose parting pain is o'er!  
 And I, who love and weep alone.  
 Where thou wilt weep no more,  
 Weep bitterly not selfishly,  
 For *me*, not *thee*!

## VII.

I know that thou canst never know  
 The anguish which I feel;  
 Because upon no brows in Heaven,  
 An earthy grief may steal—  
 And grief thou knewest mine would be  
 Still shared by thee!



## THE SLEEP.

“He giveth His beloved sleep.”—PSALM cxxvii. 2.

## I.

OF all the thoughts of God that are  
 Borne inward unto souls afar,  
 Along the Psalmist's music deep,  
 Now tell me if that any is,  
 For gift or grace, surpassing this—  
 “He giveth His beloved, sleep”?

## II.

What would we give to our beloved ?  
 The hero's heart, to be unmoved,  
 The poet's star-tuned harp, to sweep,  
 The senate's shout to patriot vows  
 The monarch's crown, to light the brows ?—  
 "He giveth His beloved, sleep."

## III.

What do we give to our beloved ?  
 A little faith all undisproved,  
 A little dust to overweep,  
 And bitter memories to make  
 The whole earth blasted for our sake !  
 "He giveth His beloved, sleep."

## IV.

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes say,  
 But have no tune to charm away  
 Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep.  
 But never doleful dream again  
 Shall break the happy slumber when  
 "He giveth His beloved, sleep."

## V.

O earth, so full of dreary noises !  
 O men, with wailing in your voices !  
 O delv'd gold, the wailers heap !  
 O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall !  
 God makes a silence through you all,  
 And giveth His beloved, sleep.

## VI.

His dews drop mutely on the hill ;  
 His cloud above it saileth still,  
 Though on its slope men sow and reap !  
 More softly than the dew is shed,  
 Or cloud is floated overhead,  
 "He giveth His beloved, sleep."

## VII.

Yea ! men may wonder while they scan  
 A living, thinking, feeling man  
 In such a rest his heart to keep ;  
 But angels say, and through the word  
 I think their bless'd smile is *heard*—  
 "He giveth His beloved, sleep."

## VIII.

For me, my heart that erst did go  
 Most like a tired child at a show,  
 That sees through tears the jugglers leap,  
 Would now its wearied vision close,  
 Would childlike on His love repose,  
 Who giveth His belovèd, sleep!

## IX.

And, friends! dear friends,—When it shall be  
 That this low breath is gone from me,  
 And round my bier ye come to weep,  
 Let one, most loving of you all,  
 Say, 'Not a tear must o'er her fall';  
 "He giveth His belovèd, sleep."

◆

 MAN AND NATURE.

A SAD man on a summer day  
 Did look upon the earth and say:  
 "Shining cloud, the hill-top folding—  
 Kingly hills the valleys holding—  
 Valleys, with the streams among you—  
 Streams, with trees that grow along you—  
 Trees, with many birds and blossoms—  
 Birds, with music-trembling bosoms—  
 Blossoms, casting dews that wreathe you,  
 To your fellow flowers beneath you—  
 Flowers, that bring down stars on earth—  
 Earth, that shakest to the mirth,  
 Of the merry Titan ocean,  
 All his shining hair in motion!—  
 Why am I thus the only one  
 Who can be dark beneath the sun?"

What time the summer day was past,  
 He looked to Heaven, and smiled at last!  
 Self answered so:

"Because, O cloud,  
 Pressing with thy crumpled shroud  
 Heavily on mountain top—  
 Hills that almost seem to drop,  
 Stricken with a misty death,  
 To the valleys underneath!—

Valleys, sighing with the torrent—  
 Waters, streaked with branches horrent,—  
 Branchless trees, that shake your head  
 Wildly, o'er your blossoms spread,  
 Where the common flowers are found!—  
 Flowers with foreheads to the ground—  
 Ground, that shriekest while the sea  
 With his iron smitest thee—  
 I am, besides, the only one,  
 Who can be bright *without* the sun."



## THE SEA-SIDE WALK.

WE walked beside the sea  
 After a day which perished silently  
 Of its own glory—like the Princess weird  
 Who, combating the Genius, scorched and seared—  
 Uttered with burning breath, "Ho! victory!"  
 And sank adown, an heap of ashes pale:  
 So runs the Arab tale!

The sky above us showed  
 An universal and unmoving cloud  
 On which the cliffs permitted us to see  
 Only the outline of their majesty,  
 As master-minds when gazed at by the crowd!  
 And, shining with a gloominess the water  
 Swang as moon had taught her.

Nor moon nor stars were out;  
 They did not dare to tread so soon about,  
 Though trembling, in the footsteps of the sun:  
 The light was neither night's nor day's, but one  
 Which, life-like, had a beauty in its doubt,  
 And silence's impassioned breathings round  
 Seemed wandering into sound.

O solemn beating heart  
 Of Nature! I have knowledge that thou art  
 Bound unto man's by cords he cannot sever;  
 And, what time they are slackened by him ever,  
 So to attest his own supernal part,  
 Still runneth thy vibration fast and strong  
 The slackened cord along:

## THE SEA-MEW.

For though we never spoke  
 Of water colourless and the shaded rock,  
 Dark wave and stone unconsciously were fused  
 Into the plaintive speaking that we used  
 Of absent friends and memories unforsook ;  
 And had we seen each other's face, we had  
 Seen haply each was sad.



## THE SEA-MEW.

"And me they found (O wofull tale to tell)  
 Whose harmlesse hart perceivde not this deceit."  
GASCOIGNE & Steele Glas.

How joyously the young sea-mew  
 Lay dreaming on the waters blue,  
 Whereon our little bark had thrown  
 A forward shade—the only one—  
 (But shadows aye will man pursue !)

Familiar with the waves, and free,  
 As if their own white foam were he:  
 His heart upon the heart of ocean,  
 Learning all its mystic motion,  
 And throbbing to the throbbing sea !

And such a brightness in his eye,  
 As if the ocean and the sky,  
 Within him had lit up and nurst  
 A soul God gave him not at first,  
 To comprehend their majesty.

We were not cruel, yet did sunder  
 His white wing from the blue waves under,  
 And bound it—while his fearless eyes  
 Shone up to ours in calm surprise,  
 As deeming us some ocean wonder !

We bore our ocean bird unto  
 A grassy place where he might view  
 The flow'ers bending to the bees,  
 The waving of the tall green trees,  
 The falling of the silver dew.

But flowers of earth were pale to him  
 Who had seen the rainbow fishes swim ;

And when earth's dew around him lay,  
He thought of ocean's wing'd spray,  
And his eye wax'd sad and dim.

The green trees round him only made  
A prison, with their darksome shade :  
And drooped his wing, and mourn'd he  
For his own boundless glittering sea—  
Albeit he knew not they could fade !

Then One her gladsome face did bring,  
Her gentle voice's murmuring,  
In ocean's stead his heart to move,  
And teach him what was human love—  
He thought it a strange, mournful thing !

He lay down in his grief to die,  
(First looking to the sea-like sky,  
That hath no waves !) because, alas !  
Our human touch did on him pass,  
And with our touch, our agony.



## THE LITTLE FRIEND.

WRITTEN IN THE BOOK WHICH SHE MADE AND SENT TO ME.

“—το δ' ἤδη εἰς οφθαλμῶν ἀπεληλυθεν.”

MARCUS ANTONINUS.

THE book thou givest, dear as such,  
Shall bear thy dearer name ;  
And many a word the leaves shall touch,  
For thee who form'dst the same !  
And on them, many a thought shall grow  
'Neath memory's rain and sun,  
Of thee, glad child, who dost not know  
That thought and pain are one !

Yes ! thoughts of thee, who satest oft,  
A while since, at my side—  
So wild to tame,—to move so soft,  
So very hard to chide :  
The childish vision at thine heart,  
The lesson on the knee ;  
The wandering looks which *would* depart  
Like gulls, across the sea !

## THE LITTLE FRIEND.

The laughter, which no half-belief  
 In wrath could all suppress ;  
 The falling tears, which looked like grief,  
 And were but gentleness :  
 The fancies sent, for bliss, abroad,  
 As Eden's were not done—  
 Mistaking still the cherub's sword  
 For shining of the sun !

The sportive speech with wisdom in't—  
 The question strange and bold—  
 The childish fingers in the print  
 Of God's creative hold :  
 The praying words in whispers said,  
 The sin with sobs confest ;  
 The leaning of the young meek head  
 Upon the Saviour's breast !

The gentle consciousness of praise  
 With hues that went and came ;  
 The brighter blush, a word could raise,  
 Were *that*—a father's name !  
 The shadow on thy smile for each  
 That on his face could fall !  
 So quick hath love been, *thee* to teach,  
 What soon it teacheth all.

Sit still as erst beside his feet !  
 The future days are dim,—  
 But those will seem to thee most sweet,  
 Which keep thee nearest *him* !  
 Sit at his feet in quiet mirth,  
 And let him see arise  
 A clearer sun and greener earth  
 Within thy loving eyes !—

Ah loving eyes ! that used to lift  
 Your childhood to my face—  
 That leave a memory on the gift  
 I look on in your place—  
 May bright-eyed hosts your guardians be  
 From all but thankful tears,—  
 While, brightly as ye turned on *me*,  
 Ye meet th' advancing years !

## TO MISS MITFORD

IN HER GARDEN.

WHAT time I lay these rhymes anear thy feet,  
 Benignant friend! I will not proudly say,  
 As better poets use, "These *flowers* I lay;"  
 Because I would not wrong thy blossoms sweet,  
 By spoiling so their name. Yet think it meet—  
 Thou, overleaning them this springtime day,  
 With heart as open to love as theirs to dew,—  
 That even my verse like them, if nature-true  
 Low-rooted may attain some heavenly heat!  
 Ah, friend! *without* that word, it must seem good  
 That women in their songs be mindful oft  
 Of thee, whose genius walketh mild and soft  
 As Una's lion, chainless though subdued,  
 Beside thy purity of womanhood!



## THE STUDENT.

MY midnight lamp is weary as my soul,  
 And being unimmortal, has gone out.  
 And now alone yon moony lamp of heaven,  
 Which God lit and not man, illuminates  
 These volumes, others wrote in weariness  
 As I have read them; and this cheek and brow,  
 Whose paleness burn'd in with heats of thought,  
 Would make an angel smile to see how ill  
 Clay thrust from Paradise consorts with mind—  
 If angels could, like me, smile bitterly.

"Yet must my brow be paler! I have vowed,  
 To clip it with the crown which cannot fade,  
 When *it* is faded. Not in vain ye cry,  
 O glorious voices that survive the tongues  
 From whence was drawn your separate sovereignty—  
 For I would reign beside you! I would melt  
 The golden treasures of my health and life  
 Into that name! My lips are vowed apart  
 From cheerful words; my ears, from pleasant sounds;  
 Mine eyes, from sights God made so beautiful,—  
 My feet, from wanderings under shady trees;

Mine hands, from clasping of dear loving friends—  
 My very heart, from feelings which move soft !  
 Vowed am I from the day's delightsomeness,  
 And dreams of night ! And when the house is dumb  
 In sleep, which is the pause 'twixt life and life,  
 I live and waken thus ; and pluck away  
 Slumber's sleek poppies from my pain'd lids—  
 Goading my mind with throngs wrought by herself,  
 To toil and struggle along this mountain-path  
 Which hath no mountain-airs ; until she sweat  
 Like Adam's brow, and gasp and rend away  
 In agony, her garment of the flesh !”

And so his midnight lamp was lit anew,  
 And burned till morning. But his lamp of life  
 Till morning burned not ! He was found embraced  
 Close, cold, and stiff, by Death's compelling sleep ;  
 His breast and brow supported on a page  
 Charactered over with a praise of *fame*,  
 Of its divineness and beatitude—  
 Words which had often caused that heart to throb,  
 That cheek to burn ; though silent lay they now,  
 Without a single beating in the pulse,  
 And all the fever gone !

I saw a bay  
 Spring verdant from a newly fashioned grave.  
 The grass upon the grave was verdanter,  
*That* being watered by the eyes of One  
 Who bore not to look up toward the tree !  
 Others looked on it—some, with passing glance,  
 Because the light wind stirr'd in its leaves ;  
 And some, with sudden lighting of the soul  
 In admiration's ecstasy !—Ay ! some  
 Did wag their heads like oracles, and say,  
 “'Tis very well !”—but none remember'd  
 The heart which housed the root, except that one  
 Whose sight was lost in weeping !

Is it thus,

Ambition, idol of the intellect ?  
 Shall we drink aconite, alone to use  
 Thy golden bowl ? And sleep ourselves to death—  
 To dream thy visions about life ? O Power  
 That art a very feebleness !—before  
 Thy clayey feet we bend our knees of clay,  
 And round thy senseless brow bind diadems  
 With paralytic hands, and shout “ A god,”

With voices mortal hoarse ! Who can discern  
 Th' infirmities they share in ? Being blind,  
 We cannot see thy blindness : being weak,  
 We cannot feel thy weakness : being low,  
 We cannot mete thy baseness : being unwise ,  
 We cannot understand THINE idiocy !



## A SONG AGAINST SINGING.

TO E. J. H.

## I.

THEY bid me sing to thee,  
 Thou golden-haired and silver-voic'd child,—  
 With lips by no worse sigh than sleep's defiled,  
 With eyes unknowing how tears dim the sight,  
 And feet all trembling at the new delight,  
 Treaders of earth to be !

## II.

Ah no ! the lark may bring  
 A song to thee from out the morning cloud ;  
 The merry river from its lilies bowed ;  
 The brisk rain from the trees ; the lucky wind,  
 That half doth make its music, half doth find !  
 But I—I may not sing.

## III.

How could I think it right,  
 New-comer on our earth as, Sweet, thou art,  
 To bring a verse from out an human heart  
 So heavy with accumulated tears ;  
 And cross with such amount of weary years,  
 Thy day-sum of delight ?

## IV.

E'en if the verse were said ;  
 Thou, who wouldst clap thy tiny hands to hear  
 The wind or rain, gay bird or river clear,  
 Would'st, at that sound of sad humanities,  
 Upturn thy bright uncomprehending eyes  
 And bid me play instead.

## STANZAS.

## V.

Therefore no song of mine !  
 But prayer in place of singing ! prayer that would  
 Commend thee to the new-creating God,  
 Whose gift is childhood's heart without its stain  
 Of weakness, ignorance, and changing vain—  
 That gift of God be thine !

## VI.

So wilt thou aye be young,  
 In lovelier childhood than thy shining brow  
 And pretty winning accents make thee now.  
 Yea ! sweeter than this scarce articulate sound  
 (How sweet !) of " father," " mother," shall be found  
 The ABBA on thy tongue !

## VII.

And so, as years shall chase  
 Each other's shadows, thou wilt less resemble  
 Thy fellows of the earth who toil and tremble,  
 Than him thou seest not, thine angel bold  
 Yet meek, whose ever-lifted eyes behold  
 The Ever-loving's face !



## STANZAS.

I MAY sing ; but minstrel's singing  
 Ever ceaseth with his playing.  
 I may smile ; but time is bringing  
 Thoughts for smiles to wear away in.  
 I may view thee, mutely loving ;  
 But *shall* view thee so in dying !  
 I may sigh ; but life's removing,  
 And with breathing endeth sighing !  
 Be it so !

When no song of mine comes near thee,  
 Will its memory fail to soften ?  
 When no smile of mine can cheer thee,  
 Will thy smile be used as often ?  
 When my looks the darkness boundeth,  
 Will thine own be lighted after ?  
 When my sigh no longer soundeth,  
 Wilt thou list another's laughter ?  
 Be it so !

## THE YOUNG QUEEN.

"This awful responsibility is imposed upon me so suddenly, and at so early a period of my life, that I should feel myself utterly oppressed by the burden, were I not sustained by the hope that Divine Providence which has called me to this work, will give me strength for the performance of it."—*The Queen's Declaration in Council, 1837.*

THE shroud is yet unspread  
To wrap our crown'd dead ;  
His soul hath scarcely hearkened for the thrilling words of  
doom :

And Death that makes serene  
Ev'n brows where crowns have been,  
Hath scarcely time to meeten his for silence of the tomb.

St. Paul's king-dirging note  
The city's heart hath smote,—  
The city's heart is struck with thought more solemn than the  
tone !

A shadow sweeps apace  
Before the nation's face,  
Confusing in a shapeless blot, the sepulchre and throne.

The palace sounds with wail—  
The courtly dames are pale—  
A widow o'er the purple bows, and weeps its splendour dim :  
And we who hold the boon,  
A king for freedom won,  
Do feel eternity rise up between our thanks and him.

And while all things express  
All glory's nothingness,  
A royal maiden treadeth firm where *that* departed trod !  
The deathly scented crown  
Weighs *her* shining ringlets down ;  
But calm she lifts her trusting face, and calleth upon God.

Her thoughts are deep within her :  
No outward pageants win her  
From memories that in her soul are rolling wave on wave—  
Her palace walls enring  
The dust that was a king—  
And very cold beneath her feet, she feel's her father's grave.

And One, as fair as she  
Can scarce forgotten be,—  
Who clasped a little infant dead. for all a kingdom's worth !

The mourn'd, bless'd One,  
 Who views Jehovah's throne,  
 Aye smiling to the angels, that she has lost a throne on earth.

Perhaps our youthful Queen  
 Remembers what has been—  
 Her childhood's rest by loving heart, and sport on grassy sod—  
 Alas! can others wear  
 A mother's heart for her?  
 But calm she lifts her trusting face, and calleth upon God.

Yea! call on God, thou maiden  
 Of spirit nobly laden,  
 And leave such happy days behind, for happy-making years!  
 A nation looks to thee  
 For steadfast sympathy:  
 Make room within thy bright clear eyes, for all its gathered  
 tears.

And so the grateful isles  
 Shall give thee back their smiles,  
 And as thy mother joys in thee, in them shalt *thou* rejoice;  
 Rejoice to meekly bow  
 A somewhat paler brow,  
 While the King of kings shall bless thee by the British  
 people's voice!



### VICTORIA'S TEARS.

"O MAIDEN heir of kings!  
 A king has left his place!  
 The majesty of Death has swept  
 All other from his face!  
 And thou upon thy mother's breast,  
 No longer lean adown—  
 But take the glory from the rest,  
 And rule the land that loves thee best."  
 The maiden wept;  
 She wept to wear a crown!

They decked her courtly halls—  
 They reined her hundred steeds—  
 They shouted at her palace gates,  
 "A noble Queen succeeds!"  
 Her name has stirred the mountain's sleep,  
 Her praise has filled the town!

And mourners God had stricken deep,  
 Looked hearkening up, and did not weep.  
 Alone she wept,  
 Who wept to wear a crown !

She saw no purples shine,  
 For tears had dimmed her eyes ;  
 She only knew her childhood's flowers  
 Were happier pageantries !  
 And while her heralds played the part,  
 For million shouts to drown—  
 "God save the Queen," from hill to mart,—  
 She heard through all her beating heart,  
 And turned and wept ;  
 She wept to wear a crown !

God save thee, weeping Queen !  
 Thou shalt be well beloved !  
 The tyrant's sceptre cannot move,  
 As those pure tears have moved !  
 The nature in thine eyes we see,  
 That tyrants cannot own—  
 The love that guardeth liberties !  
 Strange blessing on the nation lies,  
 Whose Sovereign wept—  
 Yea ! wept to wear its crown !

God bless thee, weeping Queen,  
 With blessing more divine !  
 And fill with happier love than Earth's,  
 That tender heart of thine !  
 That when the thrones of earth shall be  
 As low as graves brought down ;  
 A pierc'd hand may give to thee  
 The crown which angels shout to see !  
 Thou wilt not *weep*,  
 To wear that heavenly crown !

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◆

VANITIES.

'From fading things, fond men, lift your desire.'  
 DRUMMOND.

COULD ye be blest in hearkening  
 Youth's often danced-to melodies—  
 Hearing it pierc'd, the midnight darkening  
 Doth come show the starry skies,—

To freshen garden-flowers, the rain ?  
It is in vain, it is in vain !

Could ye be very blest in urging  
A captive nation's strength to thunder  
Out into foam, and with its surging  
The Xerxean fetters break asunder ?  
The storm is cruel as the chain !  
It is in vain, it is in vain !

Could ye be very blest in paling  
Your brows with studious nights and days,  
When like your lamps your life is failing,  
And sighs, not breath, are wrought from praise ?  
Your tombs, not ye, that praise retain—  
It is in vain, it is in vain !

Yea ! but ye *could* be very blest,  
If some ye nearest love were nearest !  
Must *they* not love when lov'd best ?  
Must *ye* not happiest love when dearest ?  
Alas !—how hard to feel again,  
It is in vain, it is in vain !

For those ye love are not unsighing,—  
They are unchanging least of all :  
And ye the loved—ah ! no denying,  
Will leave your lips beneath the pall.  
When passioned ones have o'er it sain—  
"It is in vain, it is in vain !"

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### BEREAVEMENT.

WHEN some Belov'eds, 'neath whose eyelids lay  
The sweet lights of my childhood, one by one  
Did leave me dark before the natural sun,  
And I astonied fell, and could not pray,  
A thought within me to myself did say,  
"Is God less God, that *thou* art mortal, sad ?  
Rise, worship, bless Him ! in this sackcloth clad,  
As in that purple !"—But I answer, nay !  
What child his filial heart in words conveys,  
If him for very good his father choose  
To smite ? What can he, but with sobbing breath  
Embrace th' unwilling hand which chasteneth ?—  
And *my* great Father, thinking fit to bruise,  
Discerns in silent tears, both prayer and praise.

CONSOLATION.

ALL are not taken! there are left behind  
 Living Belovēds, tender looks to bring,  
 And make the daylight still a blessēd thing,  
 And tender voices, to make soft the wind.  
 But if it were not so—if I could find  
 No love in all the world to answer me,  
 Nor any pathway but that rang hollowly,  
 Where "dust to dust" the love from life disjoined—  
 And if with parchēd lips, as in a dearth  
 Of water-springs the very deserts claim,  
 I uttered to those sepulchres unmoving  
 The bitter cry, "Where are ye, O my loving?" . . .  
 I know a Voice would sound, "Daughter, I AM.  
 Can I suffice for HEAVEN, and not for earth?"

A SUPPLICATION FOR LOVE.

HYMN I.

GOD, namēd Love, whose fount thou art,  
 Thy crownless Church before thee stands,  
 With too much hating in her heart,  
 And too much striving in her hands!

O loving Lord! O slain for love!  
 Thy blood upon thy garments came—  
 Inwrap their folds our brows above,  
 Before we tell Thee all our shame!

"Love as I loved you," was the sound  
 That on Thy lips expiring sate!  
 Sweet words, in bitter strivings drowned!  
 We hated as the worldly hate.

The spear that pierced for love thy side,  
 We dared for wrathful use to crave;  
 And with our cruel noise denied  
 Its silence to thy blood-red grave!

Ah blood! that speaketh more of love  
 Than Abel's!—could we speak like Cain,  
 And grieve and scare that holy Dove,  
 The parting love-gift of the Slain?

Yet Lord, thy wrong'd love fulfil!  
 Thy Church, though fallen, before Thee stands—  
 Behold, the voice is Jacob's still,  
 Albeit the hands are Esau's hands!  
 Hast Thou no tears, like those besprent  
 Upon Thy Zion's ancient part?  
 No moving looks, like those which sent  
 Their softness through a traitor's heart?  
 No touching tale of anguish dear;  
 Whereby like children we may creep,  
 All trembling, to each other near,  
 And view each other's face, and weep?  
 Oh, move us—THOU hast power to move—  
 One in the One Beloved to be!  
 Teach us the heights and depths of love—  
 Give THINE—that we may love like THEE!

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## THE MEDIATOR.

### HYMN II.

"As the greatest of all sacrifices was required, we may be assured that no other would have sufficed."

*Boyd's Essay on the Atonement.*

How high Thou art! our songs can own  
 No music Thou couldst stoop to hear!  
 But still the Son's expiring groan  
 Is vocal in the Father's ear.  
 How pure Thou art! our hands are dyed  
 With curses, red with murder's hue—  
 But He hath stretched His hands to hide  
 The sins that pierced them from thy view.  
 How strong Thou art! we tremble lest  
 The thunders of Thine arm be moved—  
 But He is lying on Thy breast,  
 And Thou must clasp Thy best Beloved!  
 How kind Thou art! Thou didst not choose  
 To joy in Him for ever so;  
 But that embrace Thou wilt not lose  
 For vengeance, didst for love forego!  
 High God, and pure, and strong, and kind!  
 The low, the foul, the feeble, spare!  
 Thy brightness in His face we find—  
 Behold our darkness only *there!*

## THE WEeping SAVIOUR.

### HYMN III.

Whether his countenance can thee affright,  
Tears in His eyes quench the amazing light.”

DONNE.

WHEN Jesus' friend had ceased to be,  
Still Jesus' heart its friendship kept—  
“Where have ye laid Him?”—“Come and see!”  
But ere His eyes could see, they wept.

Lord! not in sepulchres alone,  
Corruption's worm is rank and free;  
The shroud of death our bosoms own—  
The shades of sorrow! Come, and see!

Come, Lord! God's image cannot shine  
Where sin's funereal darkness lowers—  
Come! turn those weeping eyes of Thine  
Upon these sinning souls of ours!

And let those eyes, with shepherd care,  
Their moving watch above us keep;  
Till love the strength of sorrow wear,  
And as Thou weepedst, *we* may weep!

For surely we may weep to know,  
So dark and deep our spirit's stain;  
That had Thy blood refused to flow,  
Thy very tears had flowed in vain.

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## THE MEASURE.

### HYMN IV.

“He comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure.”—ISAIAH xl.  
“Thou givest them tears to drink in a measure.”—PSALM lxxx.

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#### I.

GOD, the Creator, with a pulseless hand  
Of unoriginated power, hath weighed  
The dust of earth and tears of man in one  
Measure, and by one weight,  
So saith His holy Book

## COWPER'S GRAVE.

## II.

Shall we, then, who have issued from the dust,  
 And there return,—shall we, who toil for dust,  
 And wrap our winnings in this dusty life,  
     Say, "No more tears, Lord God!  
 The measure runneth o'er"?

## III.

Oh, Holder of the balance, laughest Thou?  
 Nay, Lord! be gentler to our foolishness,  
 For His sake who assumed our dust and turns  
     On Thee pathetic eyes  
 Still moistened with our tears.

## IV.

And teach us, O Father, while we weep,  
 To look patiently upon earth and learn—  
 Waiting, in that meek gesture, till at last  
     These tearful eyes be filled  
 With the dry dust of death.



## COWPER'S GRAVE:

## I.

It is a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's decaying—  
 It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their praying—  
 Yet let the grief and humbleness, as low as silence, languish;  
 Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave her  
     anguish.

## II.

O poets! from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless  
     singing!  
 O Christians! at your cross of hope, a hopeless hand was  
     clinging!  
 O men! this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,  
 Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye  
     were smiling.

## III.

And now, what time ye all may read through dimming tears  
     his story,  
 How discord on the music fell, and darkness on the glory,  
 And how, when one by one, sweet sounds and wand'ring  
     lights departed,  
 He wore no less a loving face because so broken-hearted.

## IV.

He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,  
 And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker adoration ;  
 Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken ;  
 Named softly as the household name of one whom God hath  
 taken.

## V.

With sadness that is calm, not gloom I learn to think upon  
 him,—  
 With meekness that is gratefulness on God, whose heaven hath  
 won him,  
 Who suffered once the madness-cloud towards his own love  
 to blind him,  
 But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could  
 find him ;

## VI.

And wrought within his shattered brain such quick poetic  
 senses !  
 As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious influences.  
 The pulse of dew upon the grass, his own did calmly number,  
 And silent shadows from the trees fell o'er him like a slumber.

## VII.

The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's chill  
 removing,  
 Its women and its men became, beside him, true and loving !  
 And timid hares were drawn from woods to share his home-  
 caresses,  
 Uplooking in his human eyes with sylvan tendernesses.

## VIII.

But while, in blindness, he remained unconscious of the  
 guiding,  
 And things provided came without the sweet sense of providing,  
 He testified this solemn truth, though phrenzy desolated,  
 —Nor man nor nature satisfy whom only God created.

## IX.

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she  
 blesses,  
 And droppeth on his burning brow the coolness of her  
 kisses ;  
 That turns his fevered eyes around—"My mother ! where's  
 my mother ?"—  
 As if such tender words and looks could come from any  
 other !—

## X.

The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending o'er  
 him,  
 Her face all pale from watchful love, th' unwearied love she  
 bore him!—  
 Thus, woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever  
 gave him,  
 Beneath those deep pathetic eyes, which closed in death, to  
 save him.

## XI.

Thus? oh, not *thus!* no type of earth could image that  
 awaking,  
 Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs, round him  
 breaking;  
 Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body parted,  
 But felt those eyes alone, and knew,—“*My Saviour! not*  
*deserted!*”

## XII.

Deserted! Who hath dreamt that when the cross in dark-  
 ness rested,  
 Upon the Victim's hidden face, no love was manifested?  
 What frantic hands outstretched have e'er th' atoning drops  
 averted?  
 What tears have washed them from the soul, that *one* should  
 be deserted?

## XIII.

Deserted! God could separate from His own essence  
 rather;  
 And Adam's sins *have* swept between the righteous Son  
 and Father.  
 Yea! once, Immanuel's orphaned cry his universe hath  
 shaken—  
 It went up single, echoless, “*My God, I am forsaken!*”

## XIV.

It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,  
 That of the lost, no son should use those words of desola-  
 tion;  
 That earth's worst phrenzies, marring hope, should mar not  
 hope's fruition,  
 And I, on Cowper's grave, should see his rapture in a vision!

## THE WEAKEST THING.

## I.

WHICH is the weakest thing of all  
 Mine heart can ponder ?  
 The sun, a little cloud can pall  
 With darkness yonder ?  
 The cloud, a little wind can move  
 Where'er it listeth ?  
 The wind, a little leaf above,  
 Though sere, resisteth ?

## II.

What time that yellow leaf was green,  
 My days were gladder ;  
 Now on its branch each summer-sheen  
 May find me sadder !  
 Ah me ! a *leaf* with sighs can wring  
 My lips asunder—  
 Then is mine heart the weakest thing  
 Itself can ponder !

## III.

Yet, Heart, when sun and cloud are pined  
 And drop together ;  
 And at a blast which is not wind,  
 The forests wither ;  
*Thou*, from the darkening deathly curse,  
 To glory breakest,—  
 The Strongest of the universe  
 Guarding the weakest !

## THE NAME.

“—— the name  
 Which from THEIR lips seemed a caress.”  
 MISS MITFORD'S *Dramatic Scenes*

## I.

I HAVE a name, a little name,  
 Uncadenced for the ear,  
 Unhonoured by ancestral claim,  
 Unsanctified by prayer and psalm  
 The solemn font anear,

## THE NAME.

## II.

It never did, to pages wove  
 For gay romaunt, belong.  
 It never dedicate did move  
 As "Sacharissa," unto love—  
 "Orinda," unto song.

## III.

Though I write books, it will be read  
 Upon the leaves of none,  
 And afterward, when I am dead,  
 Will ne'er be graved for sight or tread,  
 Across my funeral-stone.

## IV.

Whoever chanceth it to call,  
 May chance your smile may win ;  
 Nay, do not smile ! mine eyelids fall  
 Over mine eyes, and feel withal  
 The sudden tears within !

## V.

Is there a leaf that greenly grows  
 Where summer meadows bloom,  
 But gathereth the winter snows,  
 And changeth to the hue of those,  
 If lasting till they come ?

## VI.

Is there a word, or jest, or game,  
 But time encrusteth round  
 With sad associate thoughts the same ?  
 And so to me my very name  
 Assumes a mournful sound.

## VII.

My brother gave that name to me  
 When we were children twain ;  
 When names acquired baptismally  
 Were hard to utter, as to see  
 That life had any pain.

## VIII.

No shade was on us then, save one  
 Of chesnuts from the hill—

And through the word our laugh did run  
As part thereof ! The mirth being done,  
He calls me by it still !

## IX.

Nay, do not smile ! I hear in it  
What none of you can hear !  
The talk upon the willow seat,  
The bird and wind that did repeat  
Around, our human cheer !

## X.

I hear the birthday's noisy bliss,  
My sisters' woodland glee,—  
My father's praise, I did not miss,  
What time he stoop'd down to kiss  
The poet at his knee,—

## XI.

And voices—which, to name me, aye  
Most tender tones were keeping—  
To some I never more can say  
An answer, till God wipes away  
In heaven these drops of weeping !

## XII.

My name to me a sadness wears,  
No murmurs cross my mind.  
Now God be thanked for these thick tears,  
Which show, of those departed years,  
Sweet memories left behind !

## XIII.

Now God be thanked for years enwrought  
With love which softens yet !  
Now God be thanked for every thought  
Which is so tender it has caught  
Earth's guerdon of regret !

## XIV.

Earth may embitter, not remove,  
The love divinely given ;  
And e'en that mortal grief shall prove  
The immortality of love,  
And lead us nearer Heaven !

THE VIRGIN MARY TO THE CHILD  
JESUS.

" But see, the Virgin blest  
Hath laid her Babe to rest."

MILTON'S *Hymn on the Nativity*.

SLEEP, sleep, mine Holy One !  
My flesh, my Lord ! What name ? I do not know  
A name that seemeth not too high or low,  
Too far from me or Heaven.  
My Jesus, *that* is best ! that word being given  
By the majestic angel, whose command  
Was softly as a man's beseeching said,  
When I and all the earth appeared to stand  
In the great overflow  
Of light celestial from his wings and head.  
Sleep, sleep, my saving One !

And art Thou come for saving, baby-browed  
And speechless Being ? Art Thou come for saving ?  
The palm that grows beside our door is bowed  
By treadings of the low wind from the south,  
A restless shadow through the chamber waving :  
Upon its bough a bird sings in the sun,  
But Thou, with that close slumber on Thy mouth,  
Dost seem of wind and sun already weary.  
Art come for saving, O my weary One ?

Perchance this sleep that shutteth out the dreary  
Earth-sounds and motions, opens on Thy soul  
High dreams on fire with God ;  
High songs that make the pathways where they roll  
More bright than stars do theirs ; and visions new  
Of Thine eternal Nature's old abode.  
Suffer this mother's kiss,  
Best thing that earthly is,  
To glide the music and the glory through,  
Nor narrow in Thy dream the broad upliftings  
Of any seraph wing !  
Thus, noiseless, thus ! Sleep, sleep, my dreaming One !

The slumber of His lips meseems to run  
Through *my* lips to mine heart, to all its shiftings  
Of sensual life, bringing contrarioussness  
In a great calm. I feel I could lie down  
As Moses did, and die,\*—and then live most.

\* It is a Jewish tradition that Moses died of the kisses of God's lips.

I am 'ware of you, heavenly Presences,  
 That stand with your peculiar light unlost,—  
 Each forehead with a high thought for a crown,  
 Unsunned i' the sunshine! I am 'ware. Ye throw  
 No shade against the wall! How motionless  
 Ye round me, with your living statuary,  
 While through your whiteness, in and outwardly,  
 Continual thoughts of God appear to go,  
 Like light's soul in itself! I bear, I bear  
 To look upon the dropped lids of your eyes,  
 Albeit their outward shining testifies  
 To that beatitude within which were  
 Enough to blast an eagle at his sun!  
 I fall not on my sad clay face before ye,—  
     *I look on His!* I know  
 My spirit which dilateth with the woe  
     Of His mortality,  
     May well contain your glory!  
     Yea, drop your lids more low—  
 Ye are but fellow-worshippers with me!  
     Sleep, sleep, my worshipped One!

We sate among the stalls at Bethlehem;  
 The dumb kine from their fodder turn'd them,  
     Soften'd their horn'd faces  
     To almost human gazes  
     Toward the newly Born:  
 The simple shepherds from the starlit brooks  
     Brought visionary looks,  
 As if in their astonied ears were rung  
     The strange, sweet angel-tongue:  
 The Magi of the East, in sandals worn,  
     Knelt reverent, sweeping o'er  
 With long pale beards, upon the floor,  
     And myrrh and heap'd gold  
 These baby hands were impotent to hold:  
 So let all earthlies and celestials wait  
     Upon Thy royal state.  
     Sleep, sleep, my kingly One!

I am not proud—meek angels, put ye on  
 New meeknesses to hear such utterance rest  
 On mortal lips,—“I am not proud”—*not proud!*  
 Albeit in my flesh God sent His Son,  
 Albeit over Him my head is bowed  
 As others bow before Him, still mine heart  
 Bows lower than their knees! O centuries

That roll in vision your futurities  
 My grave athwart,  
 Whose murmurs seem to reach me while I keep  
 Watch o'er this sleep,  
 Say of me as the Heavenly said—"Thou art  
 The blessedest of women!" blessedest,  
 Not holiest, not noblest, no high name  
 Whose height misplaced may pierce me like a shame  
 When I sit meek in heaven!

For me—for me—  
 I often wandered forth, more child than maiden,  
 Among the lonely hills of Galilee,  
 Whose summits looked heaven-laden,  
 Listening to silentness that seemed to be  
 God's voice, so soft yet strong, so fain to press  
 Upon my heart as Heaven did on the height,  
 And waken up its shadows by a light,  
 And show its vileness by a holiness.  
 Then I knelt down as silent as the night,  
 Too self-renounced for fears,  
 Raising my small face to the boundless blue,  
 Whose stars did mix and tremble in my tears:  
 God heard *them* falling after with His dew.

So, seeing my corruption, can I see  
 This Incorruptible now born of me,  
 This fair new Innocence no sun did chance  
 To shine on erst (for Adam was no child)  
 Created from my nature all defiled,  
 This mystery, from out mine ignorance,  
 Nor feel the blindness, stain, corruption, more  
 Than others do, or *I* did heretofore?  
 Can hands wherein such burden pure has been  
 Not open with the cry, "Unclean! unclean!"  
 More oft than any else beneath the skies?

Ah King! ah Christ! ah Son!  
 The kine, the shepherds, the abas'd wise,  
 Did all less lowly wait  
 Than I upon Thy state.  
 Sleep, sleep, my kingly One!

Art Thou a King, then? Come, His universe,  
 Come, crown me Him a King!  
 Pluck rays from all such stars as never fling  
 Their light where fell a curse,  
 And make a crowning for this kingly brow!  
 What is my word? The stars roll on afar—

The crowning is unmade—  
The child-brow keepeth its unchildlike shade.  
Sleep, sleep, my crownless One !

Unchildlike shade ! No other babe doth wear  
An aspect very sorrowful, as Thou.  
No small babe-smiles my watching eyes have seen  
To float like speech the speechless lips between ;  
No dovelike cooing in the golden air ;  
No quick short joys of leaping babyhood.

Alas ! our earthly good,  
In heaven thought evil, seems too good for Thee :  
And then the drear sharp tongue of prophecy,  
Doth smite me inly, like a sword : a sword ?  
*That* smites "the Shepherd." Then I think aloud,  
The words "despised"—"rejected"—every word,  
Recoiling into darkness as I view

The Loving on my knee !  
Bright angels, move not, lest ye stir the cloud  
Betwixt my soul and His futurity !  
I must not die, with mother's work to do,  
And could not live—and see !

It is enough to bear  
This aspect still and fair ;  
This holier in sleep  
Than a saint at prayer ;  
This aspect of a child  
Who never sinned or smiled ;  
This sadness most like love,  
A love than love more deep,  
Wandering like a smile,  
(*Sans* its joy meanwhile,)  
Meek and mystical above  
The gentle, sleeping face !  
Awful is this watching place !  
Awful what I see from hence—  
A weakness, which my strength doth part  
From me, like omnipotence !  
A king without his throne—  
A child without the leaping heart  
That smiles the lips asunder !  
Yea ! a Creator, cast away  
On His own world, for me alone  
To hold in hands created, crying—Son !

That tear fell not on Thee,  
Beloved, yet Thou stirrest in Thy slumbers !

Thou, stirring not at all the merry numbers  
 Of tree summer and bird  
 Hast Thou so quickly heard  
 A tear fall silently?  
 Wak'st Thou, O loving One?



## MY DOVES.

My little doves have left a nest  
 Upon an Indian tree,  
 Whose leaves fantastic take their rest  
 Or motion from the sea;  
 For, ever there, the sea-winds go  
 With sunlit paces, to and fro.

The tropic flowers looked up to it,  
 The tropic stars looked down;  
 And there my little doves did sit  
 With feathers softly brown,  
 And glittering eyes that showed their right  
 To general Nature's deep delight.

And God them taught, at every close  
 Of water far, and wind,  
 And lifted leaf, to interpose  
 Their chanting voices kind;  
 Interpreting that love must be  
 The meaning of the earth and sea.

Fit ministers! Of living loves,  
 Theirs hath the calmest sound—  
 Their living voice the likest moves  
 To lifeless noises round—  
 In such sweet monotone as clings  
 To music of insensate things!

My little doves were ta'en away  
 From that glad nest of theirs,  
 Across an ocean foaming aye,  
 And tempest-clouded airs.  
 My little doves, who lately knew  
 The sky and wave by warmth and blue.

And now, within the city prison,  
 In mist and chillness pent,

With sudden upward look they listen  
 For sounds of past content,  
 For lapse of water, swell of breeze,  
 Or nut-fruit falling from the trees !

The stir without the glow of passion—  
 The triumph of the mart—  
 The gold and silver's dreary clashing  
 With man's metallic heart—  
 The wheelèd pomp, the pauper tread—  
 These only sounds are heard instead.

Yet still, as on my human hand  
 Their fearless heads they lean,  
 And almost seem to understand  
 What human musings mean  
 (With such a plaintive gaze their eyne  
 Are fastened upwardly to mine !)

Their chant is soft as on the nest,  
 Beneath the sunny sky :  
 For love that stirred it in their breast  
 Remains undyingly,  
 And 'neath the city's shade can keep  
 The well of music clear and deep.

And love that keeps the music, fills  
 With pastoral memories ;  
 All echoings from out the hills,  
 All droppings from the skies,  
 All flowings from the wave and wind,  
 Remembered in their chant I find.

So teach ye me the wisest part,  
 My little doves ! to move  
 Along the city ways, with heart  
 Assured by holy love,  
 And vocal with such songs as own  
 A fountain to the world unknown.

'Twas hard to sing by Babel's stream—  
 More hard, in Babel's street !  
 But if the soulless creatures deem  
 Their music not unmeet  
 For sunless walls—let *us* begin,  
 Who wear immortal wings, within !

To me, fair memories belong  
 Of scenes that erst did bless,

For no regret—but present song  
 And lasting thankfulness,  
 And very soon to break away,  
 Like types, in purer things than they!

I will have hopes that cannot fade,  
 For flowers the valley yields—  
 I will have humble thoughts instead  
 Of silent, dewy fields!  
 My spirit and my God shall be  
 My seaward hill, my boundless sea!



## STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF MRS. HEMANS.

(TO L. E. L., REFERRING TO HER POEM ON THE SAME  
SUBJECT.)

### I.

THOU bay-crown'd living One, that o'er  
 The bay-crown'd Dead art bowing!  
 And o'er the shadeless, moveless brow,  
 The vital shadow throwing—  
 And o'er the sighless, songless lips,  
 The wail and music wedding—  
 Dropping above the tranquil eyes  
 The tears not of their shedding!

### II.

Go! Take thy music from the dead,  
 Whose silentness is sweeter!  
 Reserve thy tears for living brows,  
 Where all such tears are meeter;  
 And leave the violets in the grass  
 To brighten where thou treadest,  
 No flowers for her! no need of flowers—  
 Albeit "bring flowers," thou saidest.

### III.

Yes! flowers to crown the "cup and lute,"  
 Since both are nigh to breaking:  
 Or flowers, to greet the "bride"—the heart's  
 Own beating works its aching;

Or flowers, to soothe the "captive's" sight,  
 From earth's free bosom gathered,  
 To mind him of his earthly hope,  
 Then wither as it withered.

IV.

But bring not near her solemn corse  
 The type of human seeming!  
 Lay only dust's stern verity  
 Upon her dust undreaming!  
 And while the calm perpetual stars  
 Shall look upon it solely,  
 Her spherèd soul shall look on *them*  
 With eyes more bright and holy.

V.

Nor mourn, O living One, because  
 Her part in life was mourning.  
 Would she have lost the poet's fire  
 For anguish of the burning?  
 The minstrel harp, for strainèd string?  
 The tripod, for th' afflated  
 Woe? or the vision for those tears  
 In which it shone dilated?

VI.

Perhaps she shuddered while the world's  
 Cold hand her brow was wreathing:  
 But never wronged that mystic breath  
 Which breathed in all her breathing,  
 Which drew from rocky earth and man,  
 Abstractions high and moving—  
 Beauty, if not the beautiful—  
 And love, if not the loving!

VII.

Such visionings have paled in sight!  
 The Saviour she descrieth,  
 And little recks *who* wreathed the brow  
 Which on His bosom lieth!  
 The whiteness of His innocence  
 O'er all her garments flowing;  
 There learneth she the sweet "new song"  
 She will not mourn in knowing.

## VIII.

Be happy, crown'd and living One !  
 And as thy dust decayeth,  
 May thine own England say for thee,  
 What now for Her it sayeth—  
 "Albeit softly in our ears  
 Her silver song was ringing,  
 The footfall of her parting soul  
 Is softer than her singing."

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 NIGHT AND THE MERRY MAN.

## NIGHT.

'NEATH my moon what doest thou,  
 With a somewhat paler brow  
 Than she giveth to the ocean ?  
 He without a pulse or motion,  
 Muttering low before her stands,  
 Lifting his invoking hands  
 Like a seer before a sprite,  
 To catch her oracles of light,  
 But thy soul out-trembleth now  
 Many pulses on thy brow.  
 Where be all thy laughter clear,  
 Others laughed alone to hear ?  
 Where thy quaint jests, said for fames ?  
 Where thy dances, turned with games ?  
 Where thy buxom companies,  
 Mooned o'er with ladies' eyes,  
 All more bright for thee, I trow ?  
 'Neath my moon what doest thou ?

## THE MERRY MAN.

I am digging my warm heart  
 Till I find its coldest part ;  
 I am digging wide and low,  
 Deeper than a spade will go,  
 Till that when a pit is shaped  
 Large enow that shall be heaped  
 Therein present pain and past  
 Joys, dead things that look aghast  
 By the daylight—now 'tis done.  
 Throw them in, one by one !  
 I must laugh, at rising sun !

Memories—of fancy's golden  
 Treasures which my hands have holden,  
 Till the chillness made them ache ;  
 Of childhood's hopes that used to wake  
 If birds were in a singing strain,  
 And for less cause, sleep again ;  
 Of the moss-seat in the wood  
 Where I trysted solitude ;  
 Of the hill-top, where the wind  
 Used to follow me behind,  
 Then in sudden rush to blind  
 Both my glad eyes with my hair,  
 Made the gladder for the snare !  
 Of the cawing of the rooks—  
 Of the dreaming 'neath the oaks  
 Which retain beneath them now  
 Only shadow of the bough ;  
 Of the lying on the grass  
 While the clouds did overpass,  
 Only they, so lightly driven,  
 Seemed between me and heaven ;  
 Of the little prayers serene,  
 Murmuring of earth and sin ;  
 Of large-leaved philosophy  
 Leaning from my childish knee ;  
 Of poetic book sublime  
 Soul-kissed for the first dear time,  
 Greek or English !—ere I knew  
 Life was not a poem too :—  
 Throw them in, by one and one !  
 I must laugh, at rising sun !

Of the glorious ambitions  
 Yet unquenched by their fruitions ;  
 Of the labouring out the nights ;  
 Sweet as slumber's lost delights ;  
 Of achievements less descried  
 By a dear few than magnified ;  
 Of praises from the many earned  
 When praise from love was undiscerned ;  
 Of the sweet reflecting gladness  
 Softened by itself to sadness :—  
 Throw them in by one and one !  
 I must laugh, at rising sun !

What are these ? More, more than these !  
 Throw in dearer memories !—

Of voices whereof but to speak  
 Makes mine own all sunk and weak ;  
 Of smiles the thought of which is sweeping  
 All my soul to floods of weeping ;  
 Of looks whose absence fain would weigh  
 My looks to the ground for aye ;  
 Of clapsing hands—ah me, I wring  
 Mine, and in a tremble fling  
 Downward, every passioned paining !  
 Partings, with the sting remaining,  
 Meetings with a deeper throe  
 Since the joy is altered so,  
 Changes with a fiery burning,  
 (Shadows upon all the turning !)  
 Thoughts of—with a storm they came—  
*Them* I have not breath to name :  
 Downward, downward, be they cast  
 In the pit ! And now at last,  
 My work beneath the moon is done,  
 And I shall laugh, at rising sun !

But let me pause or ere I cover  
 All my spoilings darkly over :  
 I will speak not in thine ears,  
 Only tell my beaded tears  
 Silently, most silently !  
 When the last is calmly told,  
 Let that same moist rosary  
 With the rest sepulchred be,  
 Finish'd now ! The darksome mould  
 Sealeth up the darksome pit.  
 I will lay no stone on it,  
 Grasses I will grow instead,  
 Fit for Queen Titania's tread ;  
 Flowers encoloured with the sun,  
 And *ai ai* written upon none ;  
 Thus, whenever saileth by  
 The Lady World of dainty eye,  
 Not a grief shall here remain,  
 Silken shoon to damp or stain :  
 And while she lisps, " I have not seen  
 Any place more smooth and clean."  
 Here she cometh ! Ha, ha ! Who  
 Laughs as loud as I can do ?

## EARTH AND HER PRAISERS.

The Earth is old ;  
 Six thousand winters make her heart a-cold :  
 The sceptre slanteth from her palsied hold.  
 She saith, " 'las me ! God's word that I was ' good '  
 Is taken back to heaven,

From whence when any sound comes, I am riven  
 By some sharp bolt. And now no angel would  
 Descend with sweet dew-silence on my mountains,  
 To glorify the rivers and the fountains

That gush along their side :  
 I see O weary change ! I see instead  
 This human, mournful pride,  
 These thrones and tombs, their tearfulness and blood ;  
 And bitter words are poured upon mine head—

" O Earth ! thou art a stage for tricks unholy,  
 A church for all remorseful melancholy ;  
 Thou art so spoilt, we should forget we had  
 An Eden in thee *wert thou not so sad.*"  
 Sweet children, I am old ! ye, every one,  
 Do keep me from a portion of my sun.

Give praise in change for brightness !  
 That I may shake my hills in infiniteness  
 Of breezy laughter, as in youthful mirth,  
 To hear Earth's sons and daughters praising Earth.\*

Whereupon a child began,  
 With spirit running up to man  
 As by angel's shining ladder,  
 (May he find no cloud above !),  
 Seeming he had ne'er been sadder  
 All his days than now—  
 Sitting in the chestnut grove,  
 With that joyous overflow  
 Of smiling from his mouth o'er brow  
 And cheek and chin, as if the breeze,  
 Leaning tricky from the trees  
 To part his golden hairs, had blown  
 Into a hundred smiles that one.

" O rare, rare Earth ! " he saith,  
 " I will praise thee presently ;  
 Not to-day ; I have not breath !  
 I have hunted squirrels three—  
 Two ran down in the furzy hollow  
 Where I could not see nor follow,

One sits at the top of the alder-tree,  
 With a yellow nut and a mock at me !  
     Presently, presently—  
 When I see which way those two have run,  
 When the mocking one at the alder-top  
 Shall leap adown and beside me stop,  
     Then, rare Earth ! rare Earth !  
 Will I pause in all my mirth,  
     To say ! all good of thee ! ”

Next a lover, with a dream  
 'Neath his waking eyelids hidden,  
 And a frequent sigh unbidden,  
 And an idlesse all the day  
 Beside a wandering stream,  
 And a silence that is made  
 Of a word he dares not say,  
 Shakes slow his pensive head :  
     “ Earth, Earth ! ” saith he,  
 “ If spirits, like thy roses, grew  
 On one stalk, and winds severer  
 Could but only blow them nearer,  
     To share each other's dew ;—  
 If, when all the summers be  
 Verduring the hills, I knew  
 Looking off them I might see  
     Something beauteous too—  
     Then Earth,” saith he,  
 “ I would praise—nay, nay—not *thee* ! ”

Will the pedant name her next ?  
 Crabbèd, with a crabbèd text,  
 Sits he in his study nook,  
 With his elbow on a book,  
 And with stately-crossèd knees,  
 And a wrinkle deeply thrid  
 Through his droppèd brow,  
 Caused by making proofs enow  
 That Plato in *Parmenides*  
 Meant the same Spinoza did,—  
 Or, that an hundred men like him  
 Himself, had made one Homer,  
*Homeros* being a misnomer.  
 What hath *he* to do with praise  
 Of Earth or aught ? Whene'er the sloping  
 Sunbeams through his window dim  
 To his cold eyes the learned prose,  
 Straight he draws the curtain close.

May abstraction keep him dumb !  
 Were his thin lips to open,  
 " Derivatum est " would come.

Then a mourner moveth pale  
 In a silence full of wail,  
 Raising not his sunken head,  
 Because he walkèd last that way  
 With that one beneath the clay :  
 Weeping not, because that one,  
 The only one who would have said,  
 " Cease to weep, beloved ! " has gone  
 Whence returneth comfort none.  
 The silence breaketh suddenly,—  
 " Earth, I praise thee ! " crieth he,  
 " Thou hast a grave for also *me*."

Ha, a poet ! Know him by  
 The ecstasy-dilated eye,  
 Not uncharged with tears that ran  
 Upward from his heart of man ;  
 By the cheek, from hour to hour,  
 Kindled bright or sunken wan  
 With a sense of lonely power ;  
 By the brow uplifted higher  
 Than others, for more low declining ;  
 By the lip which words of fire  
 Overflowing burnèd white,  
 While they gave the nations light :  
 Ay, in every time or place  
 Ye may know the poet's face  
     By the shade or shining.

'Neath a golden cloud he stands,  
 Spreading his impassioned hands.  
 " O God's Earth ! " he saith, " the sign  
 From the Father-soul to mine  
 Of all beauteous mysteries,  
 Of all perfect images  
 Which, divine in His divine,  
 In my human only are  
 Very excellent and fair !  
 And in thy Maker almost nought  
 If not suggestive unto thought !  
 Think not, Earth, that I would raise  
 Weary forehead in thy praise,  
 (Weary, that I cannot go  
 Farther from thy region low,)

If were struck no richer meanings  
 From thee than thyself. The leanings  
 Of the close trees o'er the brim  
 Of a sunshine-haunted stream  
 Have a sound beneath their leaves,  
     Not of wind, not of wind,  
 Which the poet's voice achieves :  
 The faint mountains, heaped behind,  
 Have a falling on their tops,  
     Not of dew, not of dew,  
 Which the poet's fancy drops :  
 Viewless things his eyes can view,  
 Driftings of his dream do light  
 All the skies by day and night,  
 And the seas that deepest roll,  
 Carry murmurs of his soul.  
 Earth, I praise thee ! praise thou *me* !  
 God perfecteth His creation  
 With this recipient poet-passion,  
 And makes the beautiful to be.  
 I praise thee, O beloved sign,<sup>1</sup>  
 From the God-soul unto mine !  
 Praise me, that I cast on thee  
 The cunning sweet interpretation,  
 The help and glory and dilation  
     Of mine immortality !”

There was silence. None did dare  
 To use again the spoken air  
 Of that far-charming voice, until  
 A Christian resting on the hill,  
 With a thoughtful smile subdued  
 (Seeming learnt in solitude)  
 Which a weeper might have viewed  
 Without new tears, did softly say—  
 And lookèd up to heaven alway  
 While he praisèd Earth—

    “ O Earth !  
 I count the praises thou art worth,  
 By thy waves that move aloud,  
 By thy hills against the cloud,  
 By thy valleys warm and green,  
 By the copses' elms between,  
 By their birds which, like a soul  
 Scattered in a strong delight  
 Into fragments musical,  
 Stir and sing in every bush ;

By thy silver founts that fall,  
 As to 'tice the stars at night  
 To thine heart; by grass and rush,  
 And little weeds the children pull,  
 Mistook for flowers!

“ Oh, beautiful  
 Art thou, Earth, albeit worse  
 Than in heaven is call'd good!  
 Good to us, that we may know  
 Meekly from thy good to go;  
 While the holy, crying blood  
 Puts its music kind and low  
 'Twixt such ears as are not dull,  
 And thine ancient curse!

“ Prais'd be the mosses soft  
 In thy pathways very oft,  
 And the thorns, which make us think  
 Of the thornless river-brink  
 Where the heavenly tread!  
 Prais'd be thy sunny gleams,  
 And the storm, that worketh dreams  
 Of calm unfinish'd:  
 Prais'd be thy cheerful days,  
 When by household faggot's blaze,  
 In God's dear book we read,  
 ‘*No night shall be therein:*’  
 Prais'd be thy dwellings warm,  
 Where, to hear of pardoned sin,  
 Pauseth oft the merry din,  
 Save the babe's upon the arm  
 Who croweth—learning his first mirth  
 And laughter from the crackling hearth!  
 Yea, prais'd be thy dwellings cold,  
 Underneath the churchyard mould,  
 Where the bodies of the saints,  
 Separate from earthly taints  
 Lie adown in blessing bound,  
 Waiting for the trumpet's sound  
 To *free* them into blessing! None  
 Weepeth more beneath the sun,  
 Be graven words of human love  
 Be graven very near, above!

“ Earth, let Christians praise thee thus!  
 Even for the change that comes  
 With a grief from thee to us:

## STANZAS TO BETTINE.

For thy place of tombs !  
 For the pleasant corn and wine  
 And summer green ; and also for  
 The frost upon the sycamore  
     And hail upon the vine !  
 But the praise that best shall win thee,  
 Is—to praise thy Maker in thee !”



## STANZAS TO BETTINE,

THE FRIEND OF GOETHE.

“I have the second sight, Goethe !”—*Her Letters.*

## I.

OUR Goethe's friend, Bettine,  
*Hadst* thou the second sight—  
 Upturning worship and delight,  
     So lovingly and sheenly,  
 Toward his face, as women will ;  
 The childhood 'neath thine eyelid still ?

## II.

Before his shrine to doom thee,  
 Using the same child's smile,  
 That heaven and earth, beheld erewhile  
     For the first time, won from thee ;  
 Ere star and flower, grew dim and dead,  
 Save at his feet, and o'er his head !

## III.

Digging thine heart and throwing  
 Away its childhood's gold ;  
 That so its woman-depth might hold  
     His spirit's overflowing !  
 For surging souls no worlds can bound,  
 Their channel in the heart have found.

## IV.

O child, to change appointed,  
 Thou hadst not second sight !  
 What eyes the future view aright  
     Unless by tears anointed ?  
 Yea ! only tears themselves can show  
 The burning ones that yet shall flow.

## V.

O woman, deeply loving,  
 Thou hadst not second sight!  
 The star is very high and bright,  
 And none can see it moving.  
 Love looks around, below, above,  
 Yet all his prophecy is—love.

## VI.

O changing child and woman,  
 Thou hadst not second sight!  
 Or bending down thy forehead white,  
 The human to the human,  
 The idol's shadow would have made  
 Its light to vanish like a shade.

## VII.

Thy spirit was foreknowing  
 Change to the patriot dead;\*  
 The changing of their battle bed  
 For meadows ever blowing;  
 But ne'er a vision didst thou see  
 Of death and change to *him* and thee!

## VIII.

Our Goethe's friend, Bettine!  
 What chanceth with thee now?  
 The funeral stone is on his brow,  
 The funeral earth between ye!  
 And, haply, he who left the sun,  
 For thee hath left a funeral one.

## IX.

I never shall behold thee—  
 Thou hast the stranger's face!  
 Thy smile may keep its ancient place,  
 And living loves enfold thee;  
 Yet dost thou change, as others must,  
 Whose souls have been baptized in dust.

## X.

I ween thy smile is graver—  
 Paler thy cheek, I ween:  
 For thou the mystic sight hast seen,  
 Which maketh quail the braver—  
 The crowned and loved go naked down  
 Without the love, without the crown!

\* The patriot Tyrolese.

## . XI.

The bird thy childhood's playing  
Sent onward o'er the sea,  
Thy dove of hope, came back to thee  
Without a leaf. Art laying  
Its wet cold wing, no sun can dry,  
Still in thy bosom, secretly ?

## XII.

Or hast thou found another :  
With plumes thy God hath given,  
To leave the wave and meet in heaven  
(As brother meeteth brother)  
Th' eternal Dove who downward flings  
His glory on its mounting wings ?

## XIII.

Such glory rest upon thee,  
Our Goethe's chang'd friend !  
For earth's, that cometh to an end,  
Hath faded and foregone thee—  
And thou, the worshipper, hast spread  
Thine idol's ashes o'er thine head !

## A DRAMA OF EXILE.

### Persons of the Drama.

ADAM. EVE. GABRIEL. LUCIFER.		Angels. Eden Spirits. Earth Spirits and Phantasms.
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### CHRIST in a Vision.

SCENE.—*The outer side of the gate of Eden shut fast with clouds. from the depth of which revolves the sword of fire self-moved. A watch of innumerable angels, rank above rank, slopes up from around it to the zenith; and the glare, cast from their brightness and from the sword, extends many miles into the wilderness. ADAM and EVE are seen in the distance, flying along the glare. The ANGEL GABRIEL and LUCIFER are beside the gate.*

*Lucifer.* Hail, Gabriel, the keeper of the gate!  
 Now that the fruit is plucked, prince Gabriel,  
 I hold that Eden is impregnable  
 Under thy keeping.

*Gabriel.* Angel of the sin,  
 Such as thou standest,—pale in the drear light  
 Which rounds the rebel's work with Maker's wrath,—  
 Thou shalt be an Idea to all souls;—  
 A monumental melancholy gloom  
 Seen down all ages; whence to mark despair,  
 And measure out the distances from good!  
 Go from us straightway.

*Lucifer.* Wherefore?

*Gabriel.* Lucifer,  
 Thy last step in this place, trod sorrow up.  
 Recoil before that sorrow, if not this sword.

*Lucifer.* Angels are in the world—wherefore not I?  
 Exiles are in the world—wherefore not I?  
 The cursed are in the world—wherefore not I?

*Gabriel.* Depart.

*Lucifer.* And where's the logic of "depart"?  
 Our lady Eve had half been satisfied  
 To obey her Maker, if I had not learnt

To fix my postulate better. Dost thou dream  
Of guarding some monopoly in heaven  
Instead of earth? Why, I can dream with thee  
To the length of thy wings.

*Gabriel.*

I do not dream.

This is not Heaven, even in a dream; nor earth,  
As earth was once,—first breathed among the stars,—  
Articulate glory from the mouth divine,—  
To which the myriad spheres thrilled audibly,  
Touched like a lute-string,—and the sons of God  
Said AMEN, singing it. I know that this  
Is earth, not new created, but new cursed—  
This, Eden's gate, not opened, but built up  
With a final cloud of sunset. Do I dream?  
Alas, not so! this is the Eden lost  
By Lucifer the serpent! this the sword  
(This sword, alive with justice and with fire!)  
That smote upon the forehead, Lucifer  
The angel! Wherefore, angel, go . . . depart—  
Enough is sinned and suffered.

*Lucifer.*

By no means.

Here's a brave earth to sin and suffer on!  
It holds fast still—it cracks not under curse;  
It holds, like mine immortal. Presently  
We'll sow it thick enough with graves as green  
Or greener, certes, than its knowledge-tree—  
We'll have the cypress for the tree of life,  
More eminent for shadow—for the rest  
We'll build it dark with towns and pyramids,  
And temples, if it please you:—we'll have feasts  
And funerals also, merrymakes and wars,  
Till blood and wine shall mix and run along  
Right o'er the edges. And good Gabriel,  
(Ye like that word Heaven!) I too have strength—  
Strength to behold Him, and not worship Him;  
Strength to fall from Him, and not cry on Him;  
Strength to be in the universe, and yet  
Neither God nor His servant. The red sign  
Burnt on my forehead, which you taunt me with,  
Is God's sign that it bows not unto God;  
The potter's mark upon his work, to show  
It rings well to the striker. I and the earth  
Can bear more curse.

*Gabriel.*

O miserable earth,

O ruined angel!

*Lucifer.*

Well! and if it be,

I CHOSE this ruin: I elected it

Of my will, not of service. What I do,  
 I do volitent, not obedient,  
 And overtop thy crown with my despair.  
 My sorrow crowns me. Get thee back to Heaven;  
 And leave me to the earth which is mine own  
 In virtue of her misery, as I hers,  
 In virtue of my ruin! turn from both,  
 That bright, impassive, passive angelhood;  
 And spare to read us backward any more  
 Of your spent hallelujahs.

*Gabriel.* Spirit of scorn!

I might say, of unreason! I might say,  
 That who despairs, acts; that who acts, connives  
 With God's relations set in time and space;  
 That who elects, assumes a something good  
 Which God made possible; that who lives, obeys  
 The law of a Life-maker . . .

*Lucifer.* Let it pass!

No more, thou Gabriel! What if I stand up  
 And strike my brow against the crystalline  
 Roofing the creatures,—shall I say for that,  
 My stature is too high for me to stand,—  
 Henceforward I must sit? Sit *thou*.

*Gabriel.* I kneel.

*Lucifer.* A heavenly answer. Get thee to thy heaven.  
 And leave my earth to me.

*Gabriel.* Through heaven and earth

God's will moves freely; and I follow it,  
 As colour follows light. He overflows  
 The firmamental walls with deity,  
 Therefore with love: His lightnings go abroad,  
 His pity may do so; His angels must,  
 Whene'er He gives them charges.

*Lucifer.* Verily,

I and my demons—who are spirits of scorn—  
 Might hold this charge of standing with a sword  
 'Twixt man and his inheritance, as well  
 As the benigntest angel of you all.

*Gabriel.* Thou speakest in the shadow of thy change.

If thou hadst gazed upon the face of God  
 This morning for a moment, thou hadst known  
 That only pity fitly can chastise,  
 While hate avengeth.

*Lucifer.* As it is, I know

Something of pity. When I reeled in Heaven,  
 And my sword grew too heavy for my wrist,  
 Stabbing through matter, which it could not pierce

So much as the first shell of,—toward the throne ;  
 When I fell back, down,—staring up as I fell,—  
 The lightnings holding open my scathed lids,  
 And that thought of the infinite of God,  
 Drawn from the finite, speeding my descent ;  
 When countless angel-faces, still and stern,  
 Pressed out upon me from the level heavens,  
 Adown the abysmal spaces ; and I fell,  
 Trampled down by your stillness, and struck blind  
 By the sight in your eyes ;—'twas then I knew  
 How ye could pity, my kind angelhood !

*Gabriel.* Yet, thou discrowned one, by the truth in me  
 Which God keeps in me, I would give away  
 All,—save that truth, and His love over it,—  
 To lead thee home again into the light,  
 And hear thy voice chant with the morning stars ;  
 When their rays tremble round them with much song,  
 Sung in more gladness !

*Lucifer.* Sing, my morning star !  
 Last beautiful—last heavenly—that I loved !  
 If I could drench thy golden locks with tears,  
 What were it to this angel ?

*Gabriel.* What love is !  
 And now I have named God.

*Lucifer.* Yet, Gabriel,  
 By the lie in me which I keep myself,  
 Thou'rt a false swearer. Were it otherwise,  
 What dost thou here, vouchsafing tender thoughts  
 To that earth-angel or earth-demon—which,  
 Thou and I have not solved his problem yet  
 Enough to argue,—that fallen Adam there,—  
 That red-clay and a breath ! who must, forsooth,  
 Live in a new apocalypse of sense,  
 With beauty and music waving in his trees  
 And running in his rivers, to make glad  
 His soul made perfect ; if it were not for  
 The hope within thee, deeper than thy truth,  
 Of finally conducting him and his  
 To fill the vacant thrones of me and mine,  
 Which affront heaven with their vacuity ?

*Gabriel.* Angel, there are no vacant thrones in heaven  
 To suit thy bitter words. Glory and life  
 Fulfil their own depletions : and if God  
 Sighed you far from Him, His next breath drew in  
 A compensative splendour up the skies,  
 Flushing the starry arteries !

*Lucifer.* With a change .

So, let the vacant thrones, and gardens too,  
 Fill as may please you!—and be pitiful,  
 As ye translate that word, to the dethroned  
 And exiled, man or angel. The fact stands,  
 That I, the rebel, the cast out and down,  
 Am here, and will not go; while there, along  
 The light to which ye flash the desert out,  
 Flies your adopted Adam! your red clay  
 In two kinds, both being flawed. Why, what is this?  
 Whose work is this? Whose hand was in the work?  
 Against whose hand? In this last strife, methinks,  
 I am not a fallen angel!

*Gabriel.* Dost thou know  
 Aught of those exiles?

*Lucifer.* Ay: I know they have fled  
 Wordless all day along the wilderness;  
 I know they wear, for burden on their backs,  
 The thought of a shut gate of Paradise,  
 And faces of the marshalled cherubim  
 Shining against, not for them! and I know  
 They dare not look in one another's face,  
 As if each were a cherub!

*Gabriel.* Dost thou know  
 Aught of their future?

*Lucifer.* Only as much as this:  
 That evil will increase and multiply  
 Without a benediction.

*Gabriel.* Nothing more?

*Lucifer.* Why so the angels taunt! What should be more?

*Gabriel.* God is more.

*Lucifer.* Proving what?

*Gabriel.* That He is God,

And capable of saving. Lucifer,  
 I charge thee by the solitude He kept  
 Ere He created,—leave the earth to God!

*Lucifer.* My foot is on the earth, firm as my sin!

*Gabriel.* I charge thee by the memory of heaven  
 Ere any sin was done,—leave earth to God!

*Lucifer.* My sin is on the earth, to reign thereon.

*Gabriel.* I charge thee by the choral song we sang,  
 When up against the white shore of our feet,  
 The depths of the creation swelled and brake,—  
 And the new worlds, the beaded foam and flower  
 Of all that coil, roared outward into space  
 On thunder-edges,—leave the earth to God.

*Lucifer.* My woe is on the earth, to curse thereby.

*Gabriel.* I charge thee by that mournful Morning Star

Which trembleth . . .

*Lucifer.* Hush! I will not hear thee speak  
Of such things. Enough spoken. As the pine  
In norland forest, drops its weight of snows  
By a night's growth, so, growing toward my ends  
I drop thy counsels. Farewell, Gabriel!  
Watch out thy service; I assert my will.  
And peradventure in the after years,  
When thoughtful men bend slow their spacious brows  
Upon the storm and strife seen everywhere  
To ruffle their smooth manhood, and break up  
With lurid lights of intermittent hope  
Their human fear and wrong,—they may discern  
The heart of a lost angel in the earth.

CHORUS OF EDEN SPIRITS

*(Chanting from Paradise while ADAM and EVE fly across  
the Sword-glare).*

Hearken, oh hearken! let your souls, behind you,  
Lean, gently moved!  
Our voices feel along the Dread to find you,  
O lost, beloved!  
Through the thick-shielded and strong-marshalled angels,  
They press and pierce:  
Our requiems follow fast on our evangels,—  
Voice throbs in verse!  
We are but orphaned spirits left in Eden,  
A time ago—  
God gave us golden cups; and we were bidden  
To feed you so!  
But now our right hand hath no cup remaining,  
No work to do;  
The mystic hydromel is spilt, and staining  
The whole earth through;  
And all those stains lie clearly round for shewing  
(Not interfused!)  
That brighter colours were the world's foregoing,  
Than shall be used.  
Hearken, oh hearken! ye shall hearken surely,  
For years and years,  
The noise beside you, dripping coldly, purely,  
Of spirits' tears!  
The yearning to a beautiful, denied you,  
Shall strain your powers:—  
Ideal sweetnesses shall over-glide you,  
Resumed from ours!

In all your music, our pathetic minor  
 Your ears shall cross ;  
 And all fair sights shall mind you of diviner,  
 With sense of loss !  
 We shall be near, in all your poet-languors  
 And wild extremes ;  
 What time ye vex the desert with vain angers,  
 Or light with dreams !  
 And when upon you, weary after roaming,  
 Death's seal is put,  
 By the foregone ye shall discern the coming,  
 Through eyelids shut.

*Spirits of the trees.*

Hark ! the Eden trees are stirring,  
 Slow and solemn to your hearing !  
 Plane and cedar, palm and fir,  
 Tamarisk and juniper,  
 Each is throbbing in vibration  
 Since that crowning of creation,  
 When the God-breath spake abroad,  
 Peeling down the depths of Godhead.  
*Let us make man like to God.*  
 And the pine stood quivering  
 In the Eden-gorges wooded,  
 As the awful word went by ;  
 Like a vibrant chorded string  
 Stretched from mountain-peak to sky !  
 And the cypress did expand,  
 Slow and gradual, branch and head ;  
 And the cedar's strong black shade  
 Fluttered brokenly and grand !—  
 Grove and forest bowed aslant  
 In emotion jubilant.

*Voice of the same, but softer.*

Which divine impulsion cleaves  
 In dim movements to the leaves  
 Dropt and lifted, dropt and lifted  
 In the sunlight greenly sifted,—  
 In the sunlight and the moonlight  
 Greenly sifted through the trees.  
 Ever wave the Eden trees  
 In the nightlight, and the noonlight,  
 With a ruffling of green branches  
 Shaded off to resonances ;  
 Never stirred by rain or breeze !  
 Fare ye well, farewell !

The sylvan sounds, no longer audible,  
 Expire at Eden's door!  
 Each footstep of your treading  
 Treads out some murmur which ye heard before.  
 Farewell! the trees of Eden  
 Ye shall hear nevermore.

*River-spirits.*

Hark! the flow of the four rivers—  
 Hark the flow!  
 How the silence round you shivers,  
 While our voices through it go  
 Cold and clear.

*A softer voice.*

Think a little, while ye hear,—  
 Of the banks  
 Where the green palms and red deer  
 Crowd in intermingled ranks,  
 As if all would drink at once,  
 Where the living water runs!  
 Of the fishes' golden edges  
 Flashing in and out the sedges:  
 Of the swans on silver thrones,  
 Floating down the winding streams,  
 With impassive eyes turned shoreward,  
 And a chant of undertones,—  
 And the lotos leaning forward  
 To help them into dreams.

Fare ye well, farewell!  
 The river-sounds, no longer audible,  
 Expire at Eden's door!  
 Each footstep of your treading  
 Treads out some murmur which ye heard before:  
 Farewell! the streams of Eden,  
 Ye shall hear nevermore.

*Bird-spirit.*

I am the nearest nightingale  
 That singeth in Eden after you;  
 And I am singing loud and true,  
 And sweet,—I do not fail!  
 I sit upon a cypress bough,  
 Close to the gate; and I fling my song  
 Over the gate and through the mail  
 Of the warden angels marshalled strong,—  
 Over the gate and after you!  
 And the warden angels let it pass,  
 Because the poor brown bird, alas!  
 Sings in the garden, sweet and true,

And I build my song of high pure notes,  
 Note over note, height over height,  
 Till I strike the arch of the Infinite;  
 And I bridge abysmal agonies  
 With strong, clear calms of harmonies,—  
 And something abides, and something floats,  
 In the song which I sing after you :  
 Fare ye well, farewell !  
 The creature-sounds, no longer audible,  
 Expire at Eden's door !  
 Each footstep of your treading  
 Treads out some cadence which ye heard before.  
 Farewell ! the birds of Eden,  
 Ye shall hear nevermore.

*Flower-spirits.*

We linger, we linger,  
 The last of the throng !  
 Like the tones of a singer  
 Who loves his own song.  
 We are spirit-aromas  
 Of blossom and bloom ;  
 We call your thoughts home, as  
 Ye breathe our perfume.  
 To the amaranth's splendour  
 Afire on the slopes ;  
 To the lily-bells tender,  
 And grey heliotropes ;  
 To the poppy-plains, keeping  
 Such dream-breath and blee,  
 That the angels there stepping  
 Grew whiter to see !  
 To the nook, set with moly,  
 Ye jested one day in,  
 Till your smile waxed too holy,  
 And left your lips praying !  
 To the rose in the bower-place,  
 That dripped o'er you sleeping ;  
 To the asphodel flower place,  
 Ye walked ankle-deep in !  
 We pluck at your raiment,  
 We stroke down your hair,—  
 We faint in our lament,  
 And pine into air.  
 Fare ye well, farewell !  
 The Eden scents no longer sensible,  
 Expire at Eden's door !  
 Each footstep of your treading

Treads out some fragrance which ye knew before.  
Farewell! the flowers of Eden,  
Ye shall smell nevermore.

[*There is silence. ADAM and EVE fly on, and never look back. Only a colossal shadow, as of the dark ANGEL passing quickly, is cast upon the Sword-glare.*]

SCENE.—*The extremity of the Sword-glare.*

*Adam.* Pausing a moment on this outer edge,  
Where the supernal sword-glare cuts in light  
The dark exterior desert,—hast thou strength,  
Beloved, to look behind us to the gate?

*Eve.* I have strength to look upward to thy face!

*Adam.* We need be strong: yon spectacle of cloud  
Which seals the gate up to the final doom,  
Is God's seal in a cloud. There seem to lie  
A hundred thunders in it, dark and dead;  
The unmolten lightnings vein it motionless;  
And, outward from its depth, the self-moved sword  
Swings slow its awful gnomon of red fire  
From side to side,—in pendulous horror slow,—  
Across the stagnant, ghastly glare thrown flat  
On the intermediate ground from that to this,  
In still reflection of still splendour. They,  
The angelic hosts, the archangelic pomps,  
Thrones, dominations, pryncedoms, rank on rank,  
Rising sublimely to the feet of God,  
On either side, and overhead the gate,—  
Show like a glittering and sustained smoke  
Set in an apex. That their faces shine  
Betwixt the solemn claspings of their wings,  
Clasped high to a silver point above their heads,—  
We only guess from hence, and not discern.

*Eve.* Though we were near enough to see them shine,  
The shadow on thy face were awfuller,  
To me, at least,—than could appear their light.

*Adam.* What is this, Eve? thou droppest heavily  
In a heap earthward; and thy body heaves  
Under the golden floodings of thine hair!

*Eve.* O Adam, Adam! by that name of Eve—  
Thine Eve, thy life—which suits me little now,  
Seeing that I confess myself thy death  
And thine undoer, as the snake was mine,—  
I do adjure thee, put me straight away,  
Together with my name! Sweet, punish me!

O Love, be just ! and, ere we pass beyond  
 The light cast outward by the fiery sword,  
 Into the dark which earth must be to us,  
 Bruise my head with thy foot,—as the curse said  
 My seed shall the first tempter's ! strike with curse,  
 As God struck in the garden ! and as HE,  
 Being satisfied with justice and with wrath,  
 Did roll His thunder gentler at the close,—  
 Thou, peradventure, may'st at last recoil  
 To some soft need of mercy. Strike, my lord !  
 I, also, after tempting, writhe on ground ;  
 And I would feed on ashes from thine hand,  
 As suits me, O my tempted !

*Adam.* My beloved,  
 Mine Eve and life—I have no other name  
 For thee or for the sun than what ye are,  
 My blessed life and light ! If we have fallen,  
 It is that we have sinned,—we : God is just ;  
 And, since His curse doth comprehend us both,  
 It must be that His balance holds the weights  
 Of first and last sin on a level. What !  
 Shall I who had not virtue to stand straight  
 Among the hills of Eden, here assume  
 To mend the justice of the perfect God,  
 By piling up a curse upon His curse,  
 Against thee—thee ?

*Eve.* For so, perchance, thy God  
 Might take thee into grace for scorning me ;  
 Thy wrath against the sinner giving proof  
 Of inward abrogation of the sin !  
 And so, the blessed angels might come down  
 And walk with thee as erst,—I think they would,—  
 Because I was not near to make them sad,  
 Or soil the rustling of their innocence.

*Adam.* They know me. I am deepest in the guilt,  
 If last in the transgression.

*Eve.* Thou !

*Adam.* If God,  
 Who gave the right and joyance of the world  
 Both unto thee and me,—gave thee to me,  
 The best gift last ; the last sin was the worst,  
 Which sinned against more complement of gifts  
 And grace of giving. God ! I render back  
 Strong benediction and perpetual praise  
 From mortal feeble lips (as incense-smoke,  
 Out of a little censer, may fill heaven),  
 That Thou, in striking my benumbed hands,

And forcing them to drop all other boons,  
Of beauty, and dominion, and delight,—  
Hast left this well-beloved Eve—this life  
Within life—this best gift between their palms,  
In gracious compensation

*Eve.* Is it thy voice?  
Or some saluting angel's—calling home  
My feet into the garden?

*Adam.* O my God!  
I, standing here between the glory and dark,—  
The glory of Thy wrath projected forth  
From Eden's wall; the dark of our distress,  
Which settles a step off in that drear world—  
Lift up to Thee the hands from whence hath fallen  
Only creation's sceptre,—thanking Thee  
That rather Thou hast cast me out with *her*,  
Than left me lorn of her in Paradise;—  
With angel looks and angel songs around,  
To show the absence of her eyes and voice,  
And make society full desertness,  
Without the uses of her comforting.

*Eve.* Or is it but a dream of thee, that speaks  
Mine own love's tongue?

*Adam.* Because with *her*, I stand  
Upright, as far as can be in this fall,  
And look away from heaven, which doth accuse me,  
And look up from the earth which doth convict me,  
Into her face; and crown my discrowned brow  
Out of her love; and put the thought of her  
Around me, for an Eden full of birds;  
And lift her body up—thus—to my heart;  
And with my lips upon her lips,—thus, thus,—  
Do quicken and sublimate my mortal breath,  
Which cannot climb against the grave's steep sides,  
But overtops this grief!

*Eve.* I am renewed.  
My eyes grow with the light which is in thine;  
The silence of my heart is full of sound.  
Hold me up—so! Because I comprehend  
This human love, I shall not be afraid  
Of any human death; and yet because  
I know this strength of love, I seem to know  
Death's strength, by that same sign. Kiss on my lips,  
To shut the door close on my rising soul,—  
Lest it pass outwards in astonishment,  
And leave thee lonely!

*Adam.* Yet thou liest, Eve,

Bent heavily on thyself across mine arm,  
Thy face flat to the sky.

*Eve.* Ay! and the tears  
Running, as it might seem, my life from me,  
They run so fast and warm. Let me lie so,  
And weep so,—as if in a dream or prayer,—  
Unfastening, clasp by clasp, the hard, tight thought  
Which clipped my heart, and showed me evermore  
Loathed of thy justice as I loathe the snake,  
And as the pure ones loathe our sin. To-day,  
All day, beloved, as we fled across  
This desolating radiance, cast by swords  
Not suns,—my lips prayed soundless to myself,  
Rocking against each other—‘O Lord God!’  
('Twas so I prayed), I ask Thee by my sin,  
And by Thy curse, and by Thy blameless heavens,  
Make dreadful haste to hide me from Thy face,  
And from the face of my beloved here,  
For whom I am no helpmeet, quick away  
Into the new dark mystery of death!  
I will lie still there; I will make no plaint;  
I will not sigh, nor sob, nor speak a word;  
Nor struggle to come back beneath the sun,  
Where peradventure I might sin anew  
Against Thy mercy and his pleasure. Death,  
O death, whate'er it be, is good enough  
For such as I.—For Adam—there's no voice,  
Shall ever say again, in heaven or earth,  
*It is not good for him to be alone.*

*Adam.* And was it good for such a prayer to pass,  
My unkind Eve, betwixt our mutual lives?  
If I am exiled, must I be bereaved?

*Eve.* 'Twas an ill prayer: it shall be prayed no more!  
And God did use it for a foolishness,  
Giving no answer. Now my heart has grown  
Too high and strong for such a foolish prayer;  
Love makes it strong: and since I was the first  
In the transgression, with a steady foot  
I will be first to tread from this sword-glare  
Into the outer darkness of the waste,—  
And thus I do it.

*Adam.* Thus I follow thee,  
As erewhile in the sin.—What sounds! what sounds!  
I feel a music which comes slant from Heaven,  
As tender as a watering dew.

*Eve.* I think  
That angels—not those guarding Paradise,—

But the love-angels who came erst to us,  
 And when we said "GOD," fainted unawares  
 Back from our mortal presence unto God,  
 (As if He drew them inward in a breath)  
 His name being heard of them,—I think that they  
 With sliding voices lean from heavenly towers,  
 Invisible, but gracious. Hark—how soft!

CHORUS OF INVISIBLE ANGELS.

*Faint and tender.*

Mortal man and woman,  
 Go upon your travel!  
 Heaven assist the Human  
 Smoothly to unravel  
 All that web of pain  
 Wherein ye are holden.  
 Do ye know our voices  
 Chanting down the Golden?  
 Do ye guess our choice is,  
 Being un beholden,  
 To be harkened by you yet again?

This pure door of opal  
 God hath shut between us;  
 Us, His shining people,—  
 You, who once have seen us,  
 And are blinded new!  
 Yet, across the doorway,  
 Past the silence reaching,  
 Farewells evermore may,  
 Blessing in the teaching,  
 Glide from us to you.

*First semichorus.*

Think how erst your Eden,  
 Day on day succeeding,  
 With our presence glowed.  
 We came as if the Heavens were bowed  
 To a milder music rare!  
 Ye saw us in our solemn treading,  
 Treading down the steps of cloud;  
 While our wings, outspreading  
 Double calms of whiteness,  
 Dropped superfluous brightness  
 Down from stair to stair,

*Second semichorus.*

Or, abrupt though tender,  
 While ye gazed on space,  
 We flashed our angel-splendour  
 In either human face !  
 With mystic lilies in our hands,  
 From the atmospheric bands,  
 Breaking, with a sudden grace,  
 We took you unaware !  
 While our feet struck glories  
 Outward, smooth and fair,  
 Which we stood on floorwise,  
 Platformed in mid air.

*First semichorus.*

Oft, when Heaven-descended,  
 Shut up in a secret light  
 Stood we speechless in your sight,  
 In a mute apocalypse !  
 With dumb vibrations on our lips,  
 From hosannas ended ;  
 And grand half-vanishings  
 Of the foregone things,  
 Within our eyes, belated !  
 Till the heavenly Infinite  
 Falling off from our Created,  
 Left our inward contemplation  
 Opening into ministration.

*Chorus.*

Then in odes of burning,  
 Brake we suddenly,  
 And sang out the morning  
 Nobly up the sky,—  
 Or we drew  
 Our music through  
 The noontide's hush and heat and shine,  
 And taught them our intense Divine !  
 With our vital fiery notes  
 All departed hither, thither,  
 Trembling out into the æther,—  
 Visible like beamy motes !—  
 Or, as twilight drifted  
 Through the cedar masses,  
 The massive sun we lifted,  
 Trailing purple, trailing gold  
 Out between the passes  
 Of the mountains manifold,  
 To anthems slowly sung !

While he, aweary and in swoon,  
 For joy to hear our climbing tune  
 Pierce the faint stars' concentric rings,—  
 The burden of his glory flung  
 In broken lights upon our wings.

[*Chant dies away confusedly, and enter LUCIFER.*]

*Lucifer.* Now may all fruits be pleasant to thy lips,  
 Beautiful Eve! The times have somewhat changed  
 Since thou and I had talk beneath a tree;  
 Albeit ye are not gods yet.

*Eve.* Adam! hold  
 My right hand strongly. It is Lucifer—  
 And we have love to lose.

*Adam.* I' the name of God,  
 Go apart from us, O thou Lucifer!  
 And leave us to the desert thou hast made  
 Out of thy treason. Bring no serpent-slime  
 Athwart this path kept holy to our tears;  
 Or we may curse thee with their bitterness.

*Lucifer.* Curse freely! curses thicken. Why, this Eve  
 Who thought me once part worthy of her ear,  
 And somewhat wiser than the other beasts,—  
 Drawing together her large globes of eyes,  
 The light of which is throbbing in and out  
 Around their continuity of gaze,—  
 Knots her fair eyebrows in so hard a knot,  
 And, down from her white heights of womanhood,  
 Looks on me so amazed,—I scarce should fear  
 To wager such an apple as she plucked,  
 Against one riper from the tree of life,  
 That she could curse too—as a woman may—  
 Smooth in the vowels.

*Eve.* So—speak wickedly!  
 I like it best so. Let thy words be wounds,—  
 For, so, I shall not fear thy power to hurt.  
 Trench on the forms of good by open ill—  
 For, so, I shall wax strong and grand with scorn;  
 Scorning myself for ever trusting thee  
 As far as thinking, ere a snake ate dust,  
 He could speak wisdom.

*Lucifer.* Our new gods, methinks,  
 Deal more in thunders than in courtesies.  
 And, sooth, mine own Olympus, which anon  
 I shall build up to loud-voiced imagery,  
 From all the wandering visions of the world,—  
 May show worse railing than our lady Eve

Pours o'er the rounding of her argent arm.  
But why should this be? Adam pardoned Eve.

*Adam.* Adam loved Eve. Jehovah pardon both!

*Eve.* Adam forgave Eve—because loving Eve.

*Lucifer.* So, well. Yet Adam was undone of Eve,  
As both were by the snake. Therefore forgive,  
In like wise, fellow-temptress, the poor snake—  
Who stung there, not so poorly! [*Aside.*]

*Eve.* Hold thy wrath,

Beloved Adam! let me answer him;

For this time he speaks truth, which we should hear,

And asks for mercy, which I most should grant,

In like wise, as he tells us—in like wise!

And therefore I thee pardon, Lucifer,

As freely as the streams of Eden flowed,

When we were happy by them. So, depart;

Leave us to walk the remnant of our time

Out mildly in the desert. Do not seek

To harm us any more or scoff at us,

Or ere the dust be laid upon our face

To find it the communion of the dust

And issue of the curse.—Go!

*Adam.* At once, go!

*Lucifer.* Forgive! and go! Ye images of clay,  
Shrunk somewhat in the mould,—what jest is this?  
What words are these to use? By what a thought  
Conceive ye of me? Yesterday—a snake!  
To-day—what?

*Adam.* A strong spirit.

*Eve.* A sad spirit.

*Adam.* Perhaps a fallen angel,—Who shall say!

*Lucifer.* Who told thee, Adam?

*Adam.* *Thou!* The prodigy

Of thy vast brows and melancholy eyes,

Which comprehend the heights of some great fall.

I think that thou hast one day worn a crown

Under the eyes of God.

*Lucifer.* And why of God?

*Adam.* It were no crown else! Verily, I think  
Thou'rt fallen far. I had not yesterday  
Said it so surely; but I know to-day  
Grief by grief, sin by sin!

*Lucifer.* A crown, by a crown.

*Adam.* Ay, mock me! now I know more than I knew.  
Now I know thou art fallen below hope  
Of final re-ascent.

*Lucifer.* Because?

*Adam.* Because  
A spirit who expected to see God,  
Though at the last point of a million years,  
Could dare no mockery of a ruined man  
Such as this Adam.

*Lucifer.* Who is high and bold—  
Be it said passing!—of a good red clay  
Discovered on some top of Lebanon,  
Or haply of Aornus, beyond sweep  
Of the black eagle's wing! A furlong lower  
Had made a meeker king for Eden. Soh!  
It is not possible, by sin and grief  
(To give the things your names) that spirits should rise  
Instead of falling?

*Adam.* Most impossible.  
The Highest being the Holy and the Glad,  
Whoever riseth must approach delight  
And sanctity in the act.

*Lucifer.* Ha, my clay-king!  
Thou wilt not rule by wisdom very long  
The after generations. Earth, methinks,  
Will disinherit thy philosophy  
For a new doctrine suited to thine heirs!  
Classing these present dogmas with the rest  
Of the old-world traditions—Eden fruits  
And saurian fossils.

*Eve.* Speak no more with him,  
Beloved! it is not good to speak with him.  
Go from us, Lucifer, and speak no more!  
We have no pardon which thou dost not scorn,  
Nor any bliss, thou seest, for coveting,  
Nor innocence for staining. Being bereft,  
We would be alone,—Go!

*Lucifer.* Ah! ye talk the same,  
All of you—spirits and clay—go, and depart!  
In Heaven they said so, and at Eden's gate,—  
And here, reiterant, in the wilderness!  
None saith, Stay with me, for thy face is fair!  
None saith, Stay with me, for thy voice is sweet!  
And yet I was not fashioned out of clay.  
Look on me, woman! Am I beautiful?

*Eve.* Thou hast a glorious darkness.

*Lucifer.* Nothing more?

*Eve.* I think no more.

*Lucifer.* False Heart—thou thinkest more!  
Thou canst not choose but think, as I praise God,  
Unwillingly but fully, that I stand

Most absolute in beauty. As yourselves  
 Were fashioned very good at best, so *we*  
 Sprang very beauteous from the creant Word  
 Which thrilled around us—God Himself being moved  
 When that august work of a perfect shape,  
 His dignities of sovran angel-hood,  
 Swept out into the universe,—divine  
 With thunderous movements, earnest looks of gods,  
 And silver-solemn clash of cymbal wings.  
 Whereof I was, in motion and in form,  
 A part not poorest. And yet,—yet, perhaps,  
 This beauty which I speak of, is not here,  
 As God's voice is not here ; nor even my crown—  
 I do not know. What is this thought, or thing  
 Which I call beauty ? is it thought, or thing ?  
 Is it a thought accepted for a thing ?  
 Or both ? or neither ?—a pretext—a word ?  
 Its meaning flutters in me like a flame  
 Under my own breath : my perceptions reel  
 For evermore around it, and fall off,  
 As if it too were holy.

*Eve.* Which it is.

*Adam.* The essence of all beauty I call love.  
 The attribute, the evidence, and end,  
 The consummation to the inward sense,  
 Of beauty apprehended from without,  
 I still call love. As form, when colourless,  
 Is nothing to the eye ; that pine-tree there,  
 Without its black and green, being all a blank ;  
 So, without love, is beauty undiscerned  
 In man or angel. Angel ! rather ask  
 What love is in thee, what love moves to thee,  
 And what collateral love moves on with thee ;  
 Then shalt thou know if thou art beautiful.

*Lucifer.* Love ! what is love ? I lose it. Beauty and love !  
 I darken to the image. Beauty—Love !

[*He fades away, while a low music sounds.*]

*Adam.* Thou art pale, *Eve.*

*Eve.* The precipice of ill  
 Down this colossal nature, dizzies me—  
 And, hark ! the starry harmony remote  
 Seems measuring the heights from whence he fell.

*Adam.* Think that we have not fallen so. By the hope  
 And aspiration, by the love and faith,  
 We do exceed the stature of this angel.

*Eve.* Happier we are than he is, by the death !

*Adam.* Or rather, by the life of the Lord God !

How dim the angel grows, as if that blast  
Of music swept him back into the dark.

[*The music is stronger, gathering itself  
into uncertain articulation.*]

*Eve.* It throbs in on us like a plaintive heart,  
Pressing, with slow pulsations, vibrative,  
Its gradual sweetness through the yielding air,  
To such expression as the stars may use,  
Most starry-sweet, and strange! With every note  
That grows more loud, the angel grows more dim,  
Receding in proportion to approach,  
Until he stand afar,—a shade.

*Adam.*

Now, words.

SONG OF THE MORNING STAR TO LUCIFER.

*He fades utterly away and vanishes, as it proceeds.*

Mine orb'd image sinks  
Back from thee, back from thee,  
As thou art fallen, methinks,  
Back from me, back from me.

O my light-bearer,  
Could another fairer

Lack to thee, lack to thee?

Ai, ai, Heosphoros!

I loved thee, with the fiery love of stars,  
Who love by burning, and by loving move,  
Too near the throned Jehovah, not to love.

Ai, ai, Heosphoros!

Their brows flash fast on me from gliding cars,  
Pale-passioned for my loss.

Ai, ai, Heosphoros!

Mine orb'd heats drop cold  
Down from thee, down from thee,  
As fell thy grace of old  
Down from me, down from me.

O my light-bearer,  
Is another fairer

Won to thee, won to thee?

Ai, ai, Heosphoros,  
Great love preceded loss,  
Known to thee, known to thee.

Ai, ai!

Thou, breathing thy communicable grace  
Of life into my light,  
Mine astral faces, from thine angel face,  
Hast inly fed,

And flooded me with radiance overmuch  
From thy pure height.

Ai, ai!

Thou, with calm, floating pinions both ways spread,  
Erect, irradiated,  
Didst sting my wheel of glory

On, on before thee,

Along the Godlight, by a quickening touch!

Ha, ha!

Around, around the firmamental ocean,  
I swam expanding with delirious fire!  
Around, around, around, in blind desire  
To be drawn upward to the Infinite—

Ha, ha!

Until, the motion flinging out the motion  
To a keen whirl of passion and avidity,—  
To a blind whirl of rapture and delight,—  
I wound in girant orbits, smooth and white

With that intense rapidity!

Around, around,

I wound and interwound,

While all the cyclic heavens about me spun!  
Stars, planets, suns, and moons, dilated broad,  
Then flashed together into a single sun,  
And wound, and wound in one;

And as they wound I wound,—around, around,  
In a great fire, I almost took for God!

Ha, ha, Heosphoros!

Thine angel glory sinks

Down from me, down from me—

My beauty falls, methinks,

Down from thee, down from thee!

O my light-bearer,

O my path-preparer,

Gone from me, gone from me!

Ai, ai, Heosphoros!

I cannot kindle underneath the brow  
Of this new angel here, who is not Thou:  
All things are altered since that time ago,—  
And if I shine at eve, I shall not know—

I am strange—I am slow!

Ai, ai, Heosphoros!

Henceforward, human eyes of lovers be  
The only sweetest sight that I shall see,  
With tears between the looks raised up to me.

Ai, ai!

When, having wept all night, at break of day,  
Above the folded hills they shall survey  
My light, a little trembling, in the grey.

Ai, ai!

And gazing on me, such shall comprehend  
Through all my piteous pomp at morn or even,  
And melancholy leaning out of Heaven,  
That love, their own divine, may change or end,  
That love may close in loss!

Ai, ai, Heosphoros!

SCENE.—*Farther on. A wild open country seen  
vaguely in the approaching night.*

*Adam.* How doth the wide and melancholy earth  
Gather her hills around us, grey and ghaſt,  
And ſtare with blank ſignificance of loſs  
Right in our faces! Is the wind up?

*Eve.*

Nay.

*Adam.* And yet the cedars and the junipers  
Rock ſlowly through the miſt, without a noiſe;  
And ſhapes, which have no certainty of ſhape,  
Drift duſkly in and out between the pines,  
And loom along the edges of the hills,  
And lie flat, curdling in the open ground—  
Shadows without a body, which contract  
And lengthen as we gaze on them.

*Eve.*

O Life

Which is not man's nor angel's! What is this?

*Adam.* No cauſe for fear. The circle of God's life  
Contains all life beſide.

*Eve.*

I think the earth

Is crazed with curſe, and wanders from the ſenſe  
Of thoſe firſt laws affixed to form and ſpace  
Or ever ſhe knew ſin!

*Adam.*

We will not fear:

We were brave ſinning.

*Eve.*

Yea, I plucked the fruit

With eyes upturned to Heaven, and ſeeing there  
Our god-thrones, as the tempter ſaid,—not GOD..  
My heart, which beat then, ſinks. The ſun hath ſunk  
Out of ſight with our Eden.

*Adam.*

Night is near.

*Eve.* And God's curſe, neareſt. Let us travel back,  
And ſtand within the ſword-glare till we die;  
Believing it is better to meet death  
Than ſuffer deſolation.

*Adam.*

Nay, beloved!

We muſt not pluck death from the Maker's hand,

As erst we plucked the apple : we must wait  
 Until He gives death, as He gave us life ;  
 Nor murmur faintly o'er the primal gift,  
 Because we spoilt its sweetness with our sin.

*Eve.* Ah, ah ! Dost thou discern what I behold ?

*Adam.* I see all. How the spirits in thine eyes,  
 From their dilated orbits, bound before  
 To meet the spectral Dread !

*Eve.* I am afraid—

Ah, ah ! The twilight bristles wild with shapes  
 Of intermittent motion, aspect vague  
 And mystic bearings, which o'ercreep the earth,  
 Keeping slow time with horrors in the blood.  
 How near they reach . . . and far ! How grey they move—  
 Treading upon the darkness without feet,—  
 And fluttering on the darkness without wings !  
 Some run like dogs, with noses to the ground ;  
 Some keep one path, like sheep ; some rock like trees ;  
 Some glide like a fallen leaf ; and some flow on,  
 Copious as rivers.

*Adam.* Some spring up like fire—  
 And some coil . . .

*Eve.* Ah, ah ! Dost thou pause to say  
 Like what ?—coil like the serpent, when he fell  
 From all the emerald splendour of his height,  
 And writhed,—and could not climb against the curse,  
 Not a ring's length. I am afraid—afraid—  
 I think it is God's will to make me afraid ;  
 Permitting THESE to haunt us in the place  
 Of His beloved angels—gone from us,  
 Because we are not pure. Dear Pity of God,  
 That didst permit the angels to go home,  
 And live no more with us who are not pure ;  
 Save *us* too from a loathly company—  
 Almost as loathly in our eyes, perhaps,  
 As *we* are in the purest ! Pity us—  
 Us too ! nor shut us in the dark, away  
 From verity and from stability,  
 Or what we name such, through the precedence  
 Of earth's adjusted uses,—evermore  
 To doubt, betwixt our senses and our souls,  
 Which are the most distraught, and full of pain,  
 And weak of apprehension.

*Adam.* Courage, Sweet !  
 The mystic shapes ebb back from us, and drop  
 With slow concentric movement, each on each,—  
 Expressing wider spaces,—and collapsed

In lines more definite for imagery  
 And clearer for relation ; till the throng  
 Of shapeless spectra merge into a few  
 Distinguishable phantasms, vague and grand,  
 Which sweep out and around us vastly,  
 And hold us in a circle and a calm.

*Eve.* Strange phantasms of pale shadow ! there are twelve.  
 Thou, who didst name all lives, hast names for these ?

*Adam.* Methinks this is the zodiac of the earth,  
 Which rounds us with its visionary dread,—  
 Responding with twelve shadowy signs of earth,  
 In fantasmic apposition and approach,  
 To those celestial, constellated twelve  
 Which palpitate adown the silent nights  
 Under the pressure of the hand of God,  
 Stretched wide in benediction. At this hour,  
 Not a star pricketh the flat gloom of heaven !  
 But, girdling close our nether wilderness,  
 The zodiac-figures of the earth loom slow,—  
 Drawn out, as suiteth with the place and time,  
 In twelve colossal shades, instead of stars,  
 Through which the ecliptic line of mystery  
 Strikes bleakly with an unrelenting scope,  
 Foreshowing life and death.

*Eve.* By dream or sense,  
 Do we see this ?

*Adam.* Our spirits have climbed high  
 By reason of the passion of our grief,—  
 And, from the top of sense, looked over sense,  
 To the significance and heart of things  
 Rather than things themselves.

*Eve.* And the dim twelve . . .

*Adam.* Are dim exponents of the creature-life  
 As earth contains it. Gaze on them, beloved !  
 By stricter apprehension of the sight,  
 Suggestions of the creatures shall assuage  
 Thy terror of the shadows ;—what is known  
 Subduing the unknown, and taming it  
 From all prodigious dread. That phantasm, there,  
 Presents a lion,—albeit, twenty times  
 As large as any lion—with a roar  
 Set soundless in his vibratory jaws,  
 And a strange horror stirring in his mane !  
 And, there, a pendulous shadow seems to weigh—  
 Good against ill, perchance ; and there, a crab  
 Puts coldly out its gradual shadow-claws,  
 Like a slow blot that spreads,—till all the ground,

Crawled over by it, seems to crawl itself ;  
 A bull stands horned here with gibbous glooms ;  
 And a ram likewise ; and a scorpion writhes  
 Its tail in ghastly slime, and stings the dark !  
 This way a goat leaps, with wild blank of beard ;  
 And here, fantastic fishes dusky float,  
 Using the calm for waters, while their fins  
 Throb out slow rhythms along the shallow air !  
 While images more human —

*Eve.* How he stands,  
 That phantasm of a man—who is not *thou* !  
 Two phantasms of two men !

*Adam.* One that sustains,  
 And one that strives !—resuming, so, the ends  
 Of manhood's curse of labour.\* Dost thou see  
 That phantasm of a woman ?—

*Eve.* I have seen—  
 But look off to those small humanities, †  
 Which draw me tenderly across my fear,—  
 Lesser and fainter than my womanhood,  
 Or yet thy manhood—with strange innocence  
 Set in the misty lines of head and hand  
 They lean together ! I would gaze on them  
 Longer and longer, till my watching eyes,—  
 As the stars do in watching anything,—  
 Should light them forward from their outline vague,  
 To clear configuration—

*Two Spirits, of organic and inorganic nature, arise from the ground.*

But what Shapes  
 Rise up between us in the open space,—  
 And thrust me into horror, back from hope !

*Adam.* Colossal Shapes—twin sovran images,—  
 With a disconsolate, blank majesty  
 Set in their wondrous faces !—with no look,  
 And yet an aspect—a significance  
 Of individual life and passionate ends,  
 Which overcomes us gazing.

O bleak sound !  
 O shadow of sound, O phantasm of thin sound !  
 How it comes, wheeling as the pale moth wheels,  
 Wheeling and wheeling in continuous wail,

\* Adam recognises in *Aquarius*, the water-bearer, and *Sagittarius*, the archer, distinct types of the man bearing and the man combatting,—the passive and active forms of human labour. I hope that the preceding zodiacal signs—transferred to the earthly shadow and representative purpose—of Aries, Taurus, Cancer, Leo, Libra, Scorpio, Capricornus, and Pisces, are sufficiently obvious to the reader.

† Her maternal instinct is excited by *Gemini*.

Around the cyclic zodiac ; and gains force,  
 And gathers, settling coldly like a moth,  
 On the wan faces of these images  
 We see before us ; whereby modified,  
 It draws a straight line of articulate song  
 From out that spiral faintness of lament—  
 And, by one voice, expresses many griefs.

*First Spirit.*

I am the spirit of the harmless earth ;  
 God spake me softly out among the stars,  
 As softly as a blessing of much worth,—  
 And then, His smile did follow unawares,  
 That all things, fashioned, so, for use and duty,  
 Might shine anointed with His chrim of beauty—

Yet I wail !

I drave on with the worlds exultingly,  
 Obliquely down the Godlight's gradual fall—  
 Individual aspect and complexity  
 Of giratory orb and interval,  
 Lost in the fluent motion of delight  
 Towards the high ends of Being, beyond sight—

Yet I wail !

*Second Spirit.*

I am the Spirit of the harmless beasts,  
 Of flying things, and creeping things, and swimming ;  
 Of all the lives, erst set at silent feasts,  
 That found the love-kiss on the goblet brimming,  
 And tasted, in each drop within the measure,  
 The sweetest pleasure of their Lord's good pleasure—

Yet I wail !

What a full hum of life, around His lips,  
 Bore witness to the fulness of creation !  
 How all the grand words were full-laden ships ;  
 Each sailing onward, from enunciation,  
 To separate existence,—and each bearing  
 The creature's power of joying, hoping, fearing !—

Yet I wail !

*Eve.* They wail, beloved ! they speak of glory and God,  
 And they wail—wail. That burden of the song  
 Drops from it like its fruit, and heavily falls  
 Into the lap of silence !

*Adam.*

Hark, again !

*First Spirit.*

I was so beautiful, so beautiful,  
 My joy stood up within me bold and glad,  
 To answer God ; and, when His work was full,  
 To "very good," responded "very glad !"

Filtered through roses, did the light inclose me ;  
 And bunches of the grape swam blue across me—  
 Yet I wail !

*Second Spirit.*

I bounded with my panthers ! I rejoiced  
 In my young tumbling lions, rolled together !  
 My stag—the river at his fetlocks—poised,  
 Then dipped his antlers, through the golden weather,  
 In the same ripple which the alligator  
 Left in his joyous troubling of the water—  
 Yet I wail !

*First Spirit.*

O my deep waters, cataract and flood—  
 What wordless triumph did your voices render !  
 O mountain-summits, where the angels stood,  
 And shook from head and wing thick dews of splendour ;  
 How, with a holy quiet, did your Earthy  
 Accept the Heavenly—knowing ye were worthy !  
 Yet I wail !

*Second Spirit.*

O my wild wood-dogs, with your listening eyes !  
 My horses—my ground eagles, for swift fleeing !  
 My birds, with viewless wings of harmonies,—  
 My calm cold fishes of a silver being,—  
 How happy were ye, living and possessing,  
 O fair half-souls, capacious of full blessing.  
 Yet I wail !

*First Spirit.*

I wail, I wail ! Now hear my charge to-day,  
 Thou man, thou woman, marked as the misdoers,  
 By God's sword at your backs ! I lent my clay  
 To make your bodies, which had grown more flowers :  
 And now, in change for what I lent, ye give me  
 The thorn to vex, the tempest-fire to cleave me—  
 And I wail !

*Second Spirit.*

I wail, I wail ! Behold ye that I fasten  
 My sorrow's fang upon your souls dishonoured ?  
 Accursed transgressors ! down the steep ye hasten,—  
 Your crown's weight on the world, to drag it downward  
 Unto your ruin. Lo ! my lions, scenting  
 The blood of wars, roar hoarse and unrelenting—  
 And I wail !

*First Spirit.*

I wail, I wail ! Do ye hear that I wail ?  
 I had no part in your transgression—none !  
 My roses on the bough did bud not pale—

My rivers did not loiter in the sun.  
 I was obedient. Wherefore, in my centre,  
 Do I thrill at this curse of death and winter?—  
 And I wail!

*Second Spirit.*

I wail, I wail! I shriek in the assault  
 Of undeserved perdition, sorely wounded!  
 My nightingales sang sweet without a fault,  
 My gentle leopards innocently bounded;  
 We were obedient—what is this convulses  
 Our blameless life with pangs and fever-pulses?  
 And I wail!

*Eve.* I choose God's thunder and His angels' swords  
 To die by, Adam, rather than such words.  
 Let us pass out and flee.

*Adam.* We cannot flee.  
 This zodiac of the creatures' cruelty  
 Curles round us, like a river cold and drear,  
 And shuts us in, constraining us to hear.

*First Spirit.*

I feel your steps, O wandering sinners, strike  
 A sense of death to me, and undug graves!  
 The heart of earth, once calm, is trembling, like  
 The ragged foam along the ocean-waves:  
 The restless earthquakes rock against each other;—  
 The elements moan 'round me—"Mother, mother"—  
 And I wail!

*Second Spirit.*

Your melancholy looks do pierce me through;  
 Corruption swathes the paleness of your beauty.  
 Why have ye done this thing? What did we do  
 That we should fall from bliss, as ye from duty?  
 Wild shriek the hawks, in waiting for their jesses,  
 Fierce howl the wolves along the wildernesses—  
 And I wail!

*Adam.* To thee, the Spirit, of the harmless earth—  
 To thee, the Spirit of earth's harmless lives—  
 Inferior creatures, but still innocent—  
 Be salutation from a guilty mouth,  
 Yet worthy of some audience and respect  
 From you who are not guilty. If we have sinned,  
 God hath rebuked us, who is over us,  
 To give rebuke or death; and if ye wail  
 Because of any suffering from our sin,  
 Ye, who are under and not over us,  
 Be satisfied with God, if not with us,  
 And pass out from our presence in such peace

As we have left you, to enjoy revenge,  
Such as the Heavens have made you. Verily,  
There must be strife between us, large as sin.

*Eve.* No strife, mine Adam! Let us not stand high  
Upon the wrong we did, to reach disdain,  
Who rather should be humbler evermore,  
Since self-made sadder. Adam! shall I speak—  
I who spake once to such a bitter end—

Shall I speak humbly now, who once was proud?

I, schooled by sin to more humility

Than thou hast, O mine Adam, O my king—

*My king, if not the world's?*

*Adam.*

Speak as thou wilt.

*Eve.* Thus, then—my hand in thine—

. . . Sweet, dreadful Spirits!

I pray you humbly in the name of God;  
Not to say of these tears, which are impure—  
Grant me such pardoning grace as can go forth  
From clean volitions toward a spotted will,  
From the wronged to the wronger; this and no more;  
I do not ask more. I am 'ware, indeed,  
That absolute pardon is impossible  
From you to me, by reason of my sin,—  
And that I cannot evermore, as once,  
With worthy acceptance of pure joy,  
Behold the trances of the holy hills  
Beneath the leaning stars; or watch the vales,  
Dew-pallid with their morning ecstasy;  
Or hear the winds make pastoral peace between  
Two grassy uplands,—and the river-wells  
Work out their bubbling lengths beneath the ground,—  
And all the birds sing, till, for joy of song,  
They lift their trembling wings, as if to heave  
The too-much weight of music from their heart,  
And float it up the æther! I am 'ware  
That these things I can no more apprehend,  
With a pure organ, into a full delight;  
The sense of beauty and of melody  
Being no more aided in me by the sense  
Of personal adjustment to those heights  
Of what I see well-formed or hear well-tuned,—  
But rather coupled darkly, and made ashamed,  
By my percipiency of sin and fall,  
And melancholy of humilient thoughts.  
But, oh! fair, dreadful Spirits—albeit this  
Your accusation must confront my soul,  
And your pathetic utterance and full gaze

Must evermore subdue me : be content—  
 Conquer me gently—as if pitying me,  
 Not to say loving ! let my tears fall thick  
 As watering dews of Eden, unreproached ;  
 And when your tongues reprove me, make me smooth,  
 Not ruffled—smooth and still with your reproof,  
 And peradventure better, while more sad.  
 For look to it, sweet Spirits—look well to it—  
 It will not be amiss in you who kept  
 The law of your own righteousness, and keep  
 The right of your own griefs to mourn themselves,—  
 To pity me twice fallen,—from that, and this,—  
 From joy of place, and also right of wail,—  
 “ I wail ” being not for me—only “ I sin.”  
 Look to it, O sweet Spirits !—

For was I not,

At that last sunset seen in Paradise,  
 When all the westering clouds flashed out in throngs  
 Of sudden angel-faces, face by face,  
 All hushed and solemn, as a thought of God  
 Held them suspended,—was I not, that hour,  
 The lady of the world, princess of life,  
 Mistress of feast and favour ? Could I touch  
 A rose with my white hand, but it became  
 Redder at once ? Could I walk leisurely  
 Along our swarded garden, but the grass  
 Tracked me with greenness ? Could I stand aside  
 A moment underneath a cornel-tree,  
 But all the leaves did tremble as alive,  
 With songs of fifty birds who were made glad  
 Because I stood there ? Could I turn to look  
 With these twain eyes of mine, now weeping fast,  
 Now good for only weeping,—upon man,  
 Angel, or beast, or bird, but each rejoiced  
 Because I looked on him ? Alas, alas !  
 And is not this much woe, to cry “ alas ! ”  
 Speaking of joy ? And is not this more shame,  
 To have made the woe myself, from all that joy ?  
 To have stretched mine hand, and plucked it from the tree,  
 And chosen it for fruit ? Nay, is not this  
 Still most despair,—to have halved that bitter fruit,  
 And ruined, so, the sweetest friend I have,  
 Turning the GREATEST to mine enemy ?

*Adam.* I will not hear thee speak so. Harken, Spirits !  
 Our God, who is the enemy of none,  
 But only of their sin,—hath set your hope  
 And my hope, in a promise, on this Head.

Show reverence, then,—and never bruise her more  
 With unpermitted and extreme reproach ;  
 Lest, passionate in anguish, she fling down  
 Beneath your trampling feet, God's gift to us,  
 Of sovranly by reason and freewill ;  
 Sinning against the province of the Soul  
 To rule the soulless. Reverence her estate,  
 And pass out from her presence with no words.

*Eve.* O dearest Heart, have patience with my heart,—  
 O Spirits, have patience, 'stead of reverence,—  
 And let me speak ; for, not being innocent,  
 It little doth become me to be proud ;  
 And I am prescient by the very hope  
 And promise set upon me, that henceforth,  
 Only my gentleness shall make me great,  
 My humbleness exalt me. Awful Spirits,  
 Be witness that I stand in your reproof  
 But one sun's length off from my happiness—  
 Happy, as I have said, to look around—  
 Clear to look up !—And now ! I need not speak—  
 Ye see me what I am ; ye scorn me so,—  
 Because ye see me what I have made myself  
 From God's best making ! Alas,—peace foregone,—  
 Love wronged,—and virtue forfeit, and tears wept  
 Upon all, vainly ! Alas, me ! alas,  
 Who have undone myself from all that best,  
 Fairest and sweetest, to this wretchedest,  
 Saddest and most defiled—cast out, cast down—  
 What word metes absolute loss ? let absolute loss  
 Suffice you for revenge. For *I*, who lived  
 Beneath the wings of angels yesterday,  
 Wander to-day beneath the roofless world !  
*I*, reigning the earth's empress, yesterday,  
 Put off from me, to-day, your hate with prayers !  
*I*, yesterday, who answered the Lord God,  
 Composed and glad, as singing-birds the sun,  
 Might shriek now from our dismal desert, " God,"  
 And hear Him make reply, " What is thy need,  
 Thou whom I cursed to-day ? "

*Adam.*

*Eve !*

*Eve.*

*I*, at last,

Who yesterday was helpmate and delight  
 Unto mine Adam, am to-day the grief  
 And curse-mete for him ! And, so, pity us,  
 Ye gentle Spirits, and pardon him and me,  
 And let some tender peace, made of our pain,  
 Grow up betwixt us, as a tree might grow

With boughs on both sides. In the shade of which,  
 When presently ye shall behold us dead,  
 For the poor sake of our humility,  
 Breathe out your pardon on our breathless lips,  
 And drop your twilight dews against our brows ;  
 And stroking with mild airs, our harmless hands  
 Left empty of all fruit, perceive your love  
 Distilling through your pity over us,  
 And suffer it, self-reconciled to pass.

LUCIFER rises in the circle.

*Lucifer.* Who talks here of a complement of grief?  
 Of expiation wrought by loss and fall?  
 Of hate subduable to pity? Eve?  
 Take counsel from thy counsellor the snake,  
 And boast no more in grief, nor hope from pain,  
 My docile Eve! I teach you to despond,  
 Who taught you disobedience. Look around ;—  
 Earth-spirits and phantasms hear you talk, unmoved,  
 As if ye were red clay again, and talked!  
 What are your words to them? your griefs to them?  
 Your deaths, indeed, to them? Did the hand pause  
 For *their* sake, in the plucking of the fruit,  
 That they should pause for *you*, in hating you?  
 Or will your grief or death, as did your sin,  
 Bring change upon their final doom? Behold,  
 Your grief is but your sin in the rebound,  
 And cannot expiate for it.

*Adam.*

It is true.

*Lucifer.* Ay, it is true. The clay-king testifies  
 To the snake's counsel,—hear him!—very true.

*Earth Spirits.* I wail, I wail!

*Lucifer.*

And certes, *that* is true.

Ye wail, ye all wail. Peradventure I  
 Could wail among you. O thou universe,  
 That holdest sin and woe,—more room for wail!

*Distant starry voice.* Ai, ai, Heosphoros!

*Earth Spirits.*

I wail, I wail.

*Adam.* Mark Lucifer. He changes awfully.

*Eve.* It seems as if he looked from grief to God,  
 And could not see Him ;—wretched Lucifer!

*Adam.* How he stands—yet an angel!

*Earth Spirits.*

I wail—wail!

*Lucifer (after a pause).* Dost thou remember, Adam, when  
 the curse  
 Took us in Eden? On a mountain-peak  
 Half-sheathed in primal woods, and glittering

In spasms of awful sunshine, at that hour  
 A lion couched,—part raised upon his paws,  
 With his calm, massive face turned full on thine,  
 And his mane listening. When the ended curse  
 Left silence in the world,—right suddenly  
 He sprang up rampant, and stood straight and stiff,  
 As if the new reality of death  
 Were dashed against his eyes,—and roared so fierce,  
 (Such thick carnivorous passion in his throat  
 Tearing a passage through the wrath and fear)—  
 And roared so wild, and smote from all the hills  
 Such fast, keen echoes crumbling down the vales  
 To distant silence,—that the forest beasts,  
 One after one, did mutter a response  
 In savage and in sorrowful complaint  
 Which trailed along the gorges. Then, at once,  
 He fell back, and rolled crashing from the height,  
 Hid by the dark-orbed pines.

*Adam.* It might have been.

I heard the curse alone.

*Earth Spirits.* I wail, I wail!

*Lucifer.* That lion is the type of what I am!  
 And as he fixed thee with his full-faced hate,  
 And roared, O Adam—comprehending doom;  
 So, gazing on the face of the Unseen,  
 I cry out here, between the Heavens and earth,  
 My conscience of this sin, this woe, this wrath,  
 Which damn me to this depth!

*Earth Spirits.* I wail, I wail!

*Eve.* I wail—O God!

*Lucifer.* I scorn you that ye wail,

Who use your petty griefs for pedestals  
 To stand on, beckoning pity from without,  
 And deal in pathos of antithesis  
 Of what ye *were* forsooth, and what ye are;—  
 I scorn you like an angel! Yet, one cry,  
 I, too, would drive up, like a column erect,  
 Marble to marble, from my heart to Heaven,  
 A monument of anguish, to transpierce  
 And overtop your vapory complaints  
 Expressed from feeble woes!

*Earth Spirits.* I wail, I wail!

*Lucifer.* For, O ye Heavens, ye are my witnesses,  
 That I, struck out from nature in a blot,  
 The outcast, and the mildew of things good,  
 The leper of angels, the excepted dust  
 Under the common rain of daily gifts,—

I the snake, I the tempter, I the cursed,—  
 To whom the highest and the lowest alike  
 Say, Go from us—we have no need of thee,—  
 Was made by God like others. Good and fair,  
 He did create me!—ask Him, if not fair ;  
 Ask, if I caught not fair and silvery  
 His blessing for chief angels, on my head,  
 Until it grew there, a crown crystallised !  
 Ask, if He never called me by my name,  
*Lucifer*—kindly said as “ Gabriel ”—  
*Lucifer*—soft as “ Michael ! ” while serene  
 I, standing in the glory of the lamps,  
 Answered “ my Father,” innocent of shame  
 And of the sense of thunder. Ha ! ye think,  
 White angels in your niches,—I repent,—  
 And would tread down my own offences, back  
 To service at the footstool ? *That's* read wrong :  
 I cry as the beast did, that I may cry—  
 Expansive, not appealing ! Fallen so deep  
 Against the sides of this prodigious pit,  
 I cry—cry—dashing out the hands of wail  
 On each side, to meet anguish everywhere,  
 And to attest it in the ecstasy  
 And exultation of a woe sustained  
 Because provoked and chosen.

Pass along

Your wilderness, vain mortals ! Puny griefs,  
 In transitory shapes, be henceforth dwarfed  
 To your own conscience, by the dread extremes  
 Of what I am and have been. If ye have fallen,  
 It is a step's fall,—the whole ground beneath  
 Strewn woolly soft with promise ; if ye have sinned,  
 Your prayers tread high as angels ! if ye have grieved,  
 Ye are too mortal to be pitiable,  
 And power to die disproveth right to grieve.  
 Go to ! ye call this ruin ? I half-scorn  
 The ill I did you ! Were ye wronged by me,  
 Hated and tempted, and undone of me,—  
 Still, what's your hurt to mine, of doing hurt,  
 Of hating, tempting, and so ruining ?  
 This sword's *hilt* is the sharpest, and cuts through  
 The hand that wields it.

Go—I curse you all.

Hate one another—feebly—as ye can ;  
 I would not certes cut you short in hate—  
 Far be it from me ! hate on as ye can !  
 I breathe into your faces, spirits of earth.

As wintry blasts may breathe on wintry leaves,  
 And, lifting up their brownness, show beneath  
 The branches very bare.—Beseech you, give  
 To Eve, who beggarly entreats your love  
 For her and Adam when they shall be dead,  
 An answer rather fitting to the sin  
 Than to the sorrow—as the Heavens, I trow,  
 For justice' sake, gave their's.

I curse you both,  
 Adam and Eve! Say grace as after meat,  
 After my curses. May your-tears fall hot  
 On all the hissing scorns o' the creatures here,—  
 And yet rejoice. Increase and multiply,  
 Ye and your generations, in all plagues,  
 Corruptions, melancholies, poverties,  
 And hideous forms of life and fears of death;  
 The thought of death being always eminent  
 Immovable and dreadful in your life,  
 And deady and dumbly insignificant  
 Of any hope beyond,—as death itself,—  
 Whichever of you lieth dead the first,—  
 Shall seem to the survivor—yet rejoice!  
 My curse catch at you strongly, body and soul,  
 And HE find no redemption—nor the wing  
 Of seraph move your way—and yet rejoice!  
 Rejoice,—because ye have not set in you  
 This hate which shall pursue you—this fire-hate  
 Which glares without, because it burns within—  
 Which kills from ashes—this potential hate,  
 Wherein I, angel, in antagonism  
 To God and His reflex beatitudes,  
 Moan ever in the central universe,  
 With the great woe of striving against Love—  
 And gasp for space amid the Infinite—  
 And toss for rest amid the Desertness—  
 Self-orphaned by my will, and self-elect  
 To kingship of resistant agony  
 Toward the Good round me—hating good and love,  
 And willing to hate good and to hate love,  
 And willing to will on so evermore,  
 Scorning the Past, and damning the To come—  
 Go and rejoice! I curse you! [LUCIFER *vanishes*.  
*Earth Spirit.*

And we scorn you! there's no pardon  
 Which can lean to you aright!  
 When your bodies take the guerdon  
 Of the death-curse in our sight,

Then the bee that hummeth lowest shall transcend you.  
 Then ye shall not move an eyelid  
 Though the stars look down your eyes ;  
 And the earth, which ye defiled,  
 She shall show you to the skies,—  
 “Lo! these kings of ours—who sought to comprehend  
 you.”

*First Spirit.*

And the element shall boldly  
 All your dust to dust constrain ;  
 Unresistedly and coldly,  
 I will smite you with my rain !  
 From the slowest of my frosts is no receding.

*Second Spirit.*

And my little worm, appointed  
 To assume a royal part,  
 He shall reign, crowned and ancinted,  
 O'er the noble human heart !  
 Give him counsel against losing of that Eden !

*Adam.* Do ye scorn us? Back your scorn  
 Toward your faces grey and lorn,  
 As the wind drives back the rain,  
 Thus I drive with passion-strife ;  
 I who stand beneath God's sun,  
 Made like God, and, though undone,  
 Not unmade for love and life.  
 Lo! ye utter words in vain !  
 By my free will that chose sin,  
 By mine agony within  
 Round the passage of the fire ;  
 By the pinings which disclose  
 That my native soul is higher  
 Than what it chose,—

We are yet too high, O spirits, for your disdain.  
*Eve.* Nay, beloved ! If these be low,  
 We confront them with no height ;  
 We stooped down to their level  
 In working them that evil :  
 And their scorn that meets our blow,  
 Scathes aright.  
 Amen. Let it be so.

*Earth Spirits.*

We shall triumph—triumph greatly,  
 When ye lie beneath the sword?  
 There, my lily shall grow stately,  
 Though ye answer not a word—  
 And her fragrance shall be scornful of your silence !

While your throne, ascending calmly,  
 We, in heirdom of your soul,  
 Flash the river, lift the palm tree,  
 The dilated ocean, roll  
 With the thoughts that throbb'd within you—round the  
 islands.

Alp and torrent shall inherit  
 Your significance of will :  
 With the grandeur of your spirit,  
 Shall our broad savannahs fill—  
 In our winds, your exultations shall be springing.  
 Even your parlance which inveigles,  
 By our rudeness, shall be won :  
 Hearts poetic in our eagles,  
 Shall beat up against the sun,  
 And pour downward, in articulate clear singing.  
 Your bold speeches, our Behemoth,  
 With his thunderous jaw, shall wield !  
 Your high fancies shall our Mammoth  
 Breathe sublimely up the shield  
 Of St. Michael, at God's throne, who waits to speed him  
 Till the heavens' smooth-grooved thunder  
 Spinning back, shall leave them clear ;  
 And the angels, smiling wonder,  
 With dropt looks from sphere to sphere,  
 Shall cry, "Ho, ye heirs of Adam ! ye exceed him !"

*Adam.* Root out thine eyes, sweet, from the dreary ground.  
 Beloved, we may be overcome by God,  
 But not by *these*.

*Eve.* By God, perhaps, in *these*.

*Adam.* I think, not so. Had God foredoomed despair,  
 He had not spoken hope. He may destroy,  
 Certes, but not deceive.

*Eve.* Behold this rose !  
 I plucked it in our bower of Paradise  
 This morning as I went forth ; and my heart  
 Hath beat against its petals all the day.  
 I thought it would be always red and full,  
 As when I plucked it—*Is* it ?—ye may see !  
 I cast it down to you that ye may see,  
 All of you !—count the petals lost of it—  
 And note the colours faded ! ye may see :  
 And I am as it is, who yesterday  
 Grew in the same place. O ye spirits of earth !  
 I almost, from my miserable heart,  
 Could here upbraid you for your cruel heart,  
 Which will not let me, down the slope of death,

Draw any of your pity after me,  
Or lie still in the quiet of your looks,  
As my flower, there, in mine.

*[A bleak wind, quickened with indistinct human voices, spins around the earth-zodiac; and filling the circle with its presence, and then waiving off into the east, carries the flower away with it. EVE falls upon her face. ADAM stands erect.]*

*Adam.* So, verily,  
The last departs.

*Eve.* So Memory follows Hope,  
And Life both. Love said to me, "Do not die,"  
And I replied. "O Love, I will not die.  
I exiled and I will not orphan Love."  
But now it is no choice of mine to die—  
My heart throbs from me.

*Adam.* Call it straightway back.  
Death's consummation crowns completed life,  
Or comes too early. Hope being set on thee  
For others; if for others, then for thee,—  
For thee and me.

*[The wind revolves from the east, and round again to the east, perfumed by the Eden-flower, and full of voices which sweep out into articulation as they pass.]*

Let thy soul shake its leaves,  
To feel the mystic wind—Hark!

*Eve.* I hear life.

*Infant voices passing in the wind.*

O we live, O we live—  
And this life that we receive,  
Is a warm thing and a new,  
Which we softly bud into,  
From the heart and from the brain,—  
Something strange, that overmuch is  
Of the sound and of the sight,  
Flowing round in trickling touches,  
In a sorrow and delight,—  
Yet is it all in vain?

Rock us softly,  
Lest it be all in vain.

*Youthful voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
And this life that we achieve,  
Is a loud thing and a bold,  
Which, with pulses manifold,  
Strikes the heart out full and fair—

Active doer, noble liver,  
 Strong to struggle, sure to conquer,—  
 Though the vessel's prow will quiver  
 At the lifting of the anchor :  
 Yet do we strive in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,  
 Lest it be all in vain.

*Poet voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
 And this life that we conceive  
 Is a clear thing and a fair,  
 Which we set in crystal air,  
 That its beauty may be plain :  
 With a breathing and a flooding  
 Of the heaven-life on the whole,  
 While we hear the forests budding  
 To the music of the soul—  
 Yet is it tuned in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,  
 Lest it be all in vain.

*Philosophic voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
 And this life that we perceive,  
 Is a strong thing and a grave,  
 Which for others' use we have,  
 Duty laden to remain.  
 We are helpers, fellow-creatures,  
 Of the right against the wrong,—  
 We are earnest-hearted teachers  
 Of the truth which maketh strong—  
 Yet do we teach in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly;  
 Lest it be all in vain.

*Revel voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
 And this life that we reprieve,  
 Is a low thing and a light,  
 Which is jested out of sight,  
 And made worthy of disdain !  
 Strike with bold electric laughter  
 The high tops of things divine—  
 Turn thy head, my brother, after,  
 Lest thy tears fall in my wine ;—  
 For is all laughed in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,  
Lest it be all in vain.

*Eve.* I hear a sound of life—of life like ours—  
Of laughter and of wailing,—of grave speech,  
Of little plaintive voices innocent,—  
Of life in separate courses flowing out  
Like our four rivers to some outward main.  
I hear life—life!

*Adam.* And, so, thy cheeks have snatched  
Scarlet to paleness: and thine eyes drink fast  
Of Glory from full cups; and thy moist lips  
Seem trembling, both of them, with earnest doubts  
Whether to utter words, or only smile.

*Eve.* Shall I be mother of the coming life?  
Hear the steep generations, how they fall  
Adown the visionary stairs of Time,  
Like supernatural thunders—far, yet near;  
Sowing their fiery echoes through the hills.  
Am I a cloud to these—mother to these?

*Earth Spirits.* And bringer of the curse upon all these.  
[*EVE sinks down again.*]

*Poet voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
And this life that we believe,  
Is a noble thing and high,  
Which we climb up loftily,  
To view God without a stain:  
Till, recoiling where the shade is,  
We retread our steps again,  
And descend the gloomy Hades,  
To taste man's mortal pain.  
Shall it be climbed in vain?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly,  
Lest it be all in vain.

*Love voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—  
And this life we would retrieve,  
Is a faithful thing apart,  
Which we love in, heart to heart  
Until one heart fitteth twain.  
“Wilt thou be one with me?”  
“I will be one with thee!”  
“Ha, ha!—we love and live!”  
Alas! ye love and die!  
Shriek—who shall reply?

For is it not loved in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly.

Though it be all in vain.

*Old voices passing.*

O we live, O we live—

And this life that we receive,

Is a gloomy thing and brief,

Which, consummated in grief,

Leaveth ashes for all gain.

Is it not *all* in vain ?

*Infant voices passing.*

Rock us softly.

Though it be *all* in vain.

[Voices *die away*.

*Earth Spirits.* And bringer of the curse upon all these.

*Eve.* The voices of foreshown Humanity

Die off ;—so let me die.

*Adam.*

So let us die,

When God's will soundeth the right hour of death.

*Earth Spirits.* And bringer of the curse upon all these.

*Eve.* O spirits ! by the gentleness ye use

In winds at night, and floating clouds at noon,—

In gliding waters under lily-leaves,—

In chirp of crickets, and the settling hush

A bird makes in her nest, with feet and wings,—

Fulfil your natures ! Do not any more

Taunt us or mock us—let us die alone.

*Earth Spirits.*

Agreed ; allowed !

We gather out our natures like a cloud,

And thus fulfil their lightnings ! Thus, and thus !

Hearken, O hearken to us !

*First Spirit.*

As the east-wind blows bleakly in the norland,—

As the snow-wind beats blindly from the moorland,—

As the simoom drives wild across the desert,—

As the thunder roars deep in the Unmeasured,—

As the torrent tears an ocean-world to atoms,—

As the whirlpool grinds fathoms below fathoms,—

Thus,—and thus !

*Second Spirit.*

As the yellow toad, that spits its poison chilly,—

As the tiger, in the jungle, crouching stilly,—

As the wild boar, with ragged tusks of anger,—

As the wolf-dog, with teeth of glittering clangour,—

As the vultures that scream against the thunder,—

As the owlets that sit and moan asunder,—  
Thus,—and thus!

*Eve.* Adam! God!

*Adam.* Ye cruel, cruel, unrelenting Spirits!  
By the power in me of the sovran soul,  
Whose thoughts keep pace yet with the angels' march,  
I charge you into silence—trample you  
Down to obedience.—I am king of you!

*Earth Spirits.*

Ha, ha! thou art king!  
With a sin for a crown,  
And a soul undone!  
Thou, who antagonised,  
Tortured and agonised,  
Art held in the ring  
Of the zodiac!  
Now, king, beware!  
We are many and strong,  
Whom thou standest among,  
And we press on the air,  
And we stifle thee back,  
And we multiply where  
Thou wouldst trample us down  
From rights of our own,  
To an utter wrong—  
And, from under the feet of thy scorn,  
O forlorn!

We shall spring up like corn,  
And our stubble be strong.

*Adam.* God, there is power in Thee! I make appeal  
Unto Thy kingship.

*Eve.* There is pity in THEE,  
O sinned against, great God!—My seed, my seed,  
There is hope set on THEE—I cry to Thee,  
Thou mystic Seed that shalt be!—leave us not  
In agony beyond what we can bear,  
And in debasement below thunder-mark  
For Thine arch-image,—taunted and perplex:  
By all these creatures we ruled yesterday,  
Whom thou, Lord, rulest alway. O my Seed,  
Through the tempestuous years that rain so thick  
Betwixt my ghostly vision and Thy face,  
Let me have token! for my soul is bruised  
Before the serpent's head.

*[A vision of CHRIST appears in the midst of the zodiac,  
which pales before the heavenly light. The Earth  
Spirits grow greyer and fainter.]*

CHRIST. LO, I AM HERE!

*Adam.* This is God!—Curse us not, God, any more.

*Eve.* But gazing so—so—with omnific eyes,  
Lift my soul upward till it touch Thy feet!  
Or lift it only,—not to seem too proud,—  
To the low height of some good angel's feet,—  
For such to tread on, when he walketh straight,  
And Thy lips praise Him.

CHRIST. Spirits of the earth,  
I meet you with rebuke for the reproach  
And cruel and unmitigated blame  
Ye cast upon your masters. True, they have sinned;  
And true, their sin is reckoned into loss  
For you the sinless. Yet, your innocence,  
Which of you praises? since God made your acts  
Inherent in your lives, and bound your hands  
With instincts and imperious sanctities,  
From self-defacement? Which of you disdains  
These sinners, who, in falling, proved their height  
Above you, by their liberty to fall?  
And which of you complains of loss by them,  
For whose delight and use ye have your life  
And honour in creation? Ponder it!  
This regent and sublime Humanity,  
Though fallen, exceeds you! this shall film your sun,—  
Shall hunt your lightning to its lair of cloud,—  
Turn back your rivers, footpath all your seas,  
Lay flat your forests, master with a look  
Your lion at his fasting, and fetch down  
Your eagle flying. Nay, without this rule  
Of mandom, ye would perish,—beast by beast  
Devouring; tree by tree, with strangling roots  
And trunks set tuskwise. Ye would gaze on God  
With imperceptive blankness up the stars,  
And mutter, "Why, God, hast Thou made us thus?  
And, pining to a sallow idiocy,  
Stagger up blindly against the ends of life;  
Then stagnate into rottenness, and drop  
Heavily—poor, dead matter—piecemeal down  
The abysmal spaces—like a little stone  
Let fall to chaos. Therefore, over you,  
Accept this sceptre; therefore be content  
To minister with voluntary grace  
And melancholy pardon, every rite  
And service in you, to this sceptred hand.  
Be ye to man as angels be to God,  
Servants in pleasure, singers of delight,

Suggesters to his soul of higher things  
 Than any of your highest. So, at last,  
 He shall look round on you, with lids too straight  
 To hold the grateful tears, and thank you well ;  
 And bless you when he prays his secret prayers,  
 And praise you when he sings his open songs,  
 For the clear song-note he has learnt in you,  
 Of purifying sweetness ; and extend  
 Across your head his golden fantasies,  
 Which glorify you into soul from sense !  
 Go, serve him for such price. That not in vain ;  
 Nor yet ignobly ye shall serve, I place  
 My word here for an oath, Mine oath for act  
 To be hereafter. In the name of which  
 Perfect redemption and perpetual grace,  
 I bless you through the hope and through the peace,  
 Which are Mine,—to the Love, which is Myself.  
*Eve.* Speak on still, Christ. Albeit Thou bless me not  
 In set words, I am blessed in hearkening Thee—  
 Speak, Christ.

*CHRIST.* Speak, Adam. Bless the woman, man—  
 It is thine office.

*Adam.* Mother of the world,  
 Take heart before this Presence. Rise, aspire  
 Unto the calms and magnanimities,  
 The lofty uses, and the noble ends,  
 The sanctified devotion and full work,  
 To which thou art elect for evermore,  
 First woman, wife, and mother.

*Eve.* And first in sin.

*Adam.* And also the sole bearer of the Seed  
 Whereby sin dieth ! Raise the majesties  
 Of thy disconsolate brows, O well-beloved,  
 And front with level eyelids the To come,  
 And all the dark o' the world. Behold ! my voice,  
 Which, naming erst the creatures, did express,—  
 God breathing through my breath,—the attributes  
 And instincts of each creature in its name ;  
 Floats to the same afflatus,—floats and heaves  
 Like a water-weed that opens to a wave,—  
 A full-leaved prophecy affecting thee,  
 Out fairly and wide. Henceforward, woman, rise  
 To thy peculiar and best altitudes  
 Of doing good and of enduring ill,—  
 Of comforting for ill, and teaching good,  
 And reconciling all that ill and good  
 Unto the patience of a constant hope,—

Rise with thy daughters ! If sin came by thee,  
 And by sin, death, the ransom-righteousness,  
 The heavenly life and compensative rest  
 Shall come by means of thee. If woe by thee  
 Had issue to the world, thou shalt go forth  
 An angel of the woe thou didst achieve ;  
 Found acceptable to the world instead  
 Of others of that name, of whose bright steps  
 Thy deed stripped bare the hills. Be satisfied ;  
 Something thou hast to bear through womanhood—  
 Peculiar suffering answering to the sin ;  
 Some pang paid down for each new human life ;  
 Some weariness in guarding such a life—  
 Some coldness from the guarded ; some mistrust  
 From those thou hast too well served ; from those beloved  
 Too loyally, some treason ; feebleness  
 Within thy heart, and cruelty without ;  
 And pressures of an alien tyranny,  
 With its dynastic reasons of larger bones  
 And stronger sinews. But, go to ! thy love  
 Shall chant itself its own beatitudes,  
 After its own life-working. A child's kiss,  
 Set on thy sighing lips, shall make thee glad :  
 A poor man, served by thee, shall make thee rich ;  
 An old man, helped by thee, shall make thee strong ;  
 Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense  
 Of service which thou renderest. Such a crown  
 I set upon thy head,—Christ witnessing  
 With looks of prompting love—to keep thee clear  
 Of all reproach against the sin foregone,  
 From all the generations which succeed.  
 Thy hand which plucked the apple, I clasp close ;  
 Thy lips which spake wrong counsel, I kiss close,—  
 I bless thee in the name of Paradise,  
 And by the memory of Edenic joys  
 Forfeit and lost ;—by that last cypress-tree  
 Green at the gate, which thrilled as we came out ;  
 And by the blessed nightingale, which threw  
 Its melancholy music after us ;—  
 And by the flowers, whose spirits full of smells  
 Did follow softly, plucking us behind  
 Back to the gradual banks and vernal bowers  
 And fourfold river-courses :—by all these,  
 I bless thee to the contraries of these ;  
 I bless thee to the desert and the thorns,  
 To the elemental change and the turbulence,  
 And to the roar of the estranged beasts,

And to the solemn dignities of grief,—  
To each one of these ends,—and to this END  
Of Death and the hereafter!

*Eve.* I accept  
For me and for my daughters this high part,  
Which lowly shall be counted. Noble work  
Shall hold me in the place of garden-rest ;  
And in the place of Eden's lost delight,  
Worthy endurance of permitted pain ;  
While on my longest patience there shall wait  
Death's speechless angel, smiling in the east  
Whence cometh the cold wind. I bow myself  
Humbly henceforward on the ill I did,  
That humbleness may keep it in the shade.  
Shall it be so ? Shall *I* smile, saying so ?  
O seed ! O King ! O God, who *shalt* be seed,—  
What shall I say ? As Eden's fountains swelled  
Brightly betwixt their banks, so swells my soul  
Betwixt Thy love and power !

And, sweetest thoughts  
Of foregone Eden ! now, for the first time  
Since God said " Adam," walking through the trees,  
I dare to pluck you, as I plucked erewhile  
The lily or pink, the rose or heliotrope,  
So pluck I you—so largely—with both hands,—  
And throw you forward on the outer earth  
Wherein we are cast out, to sweeten it.

*Adam.* As Thou, Christ, to illumine it, holdest Heaven  
Broadly above our heads.

[*The CHRIST is gradually transfigured during the following phrases of dialogue, into humanity and suffering.*]

*Eve.* O Saviour Christ,  
Thou standest mute in glory, like the sun.

*Adam.* We worship in Thy silence, Saviour Christ.

*Eve.* Thy brows grow grander with a forecast woe,—  
Diviner, with the possible of Death !  
We worship in Thy sorrow, Saviour Christ.

*Adam.* How do Thy clear, still eyes transpierce our souls,  
As gazing *through* them toward the Father-throne,  
In a pathological, full Deity,  
Serenely as the stars gaze through the air  
Straight on each other.

*Eve.* O pathetic Christ,  
Thou standest mute in glory, like the moon.

CHRIST. Eternity stands alway fronting God ;  
A stern colossal image, with blind eyes,  
And grand dim lips, that murmur evermore

God, God, God! while the rush of life and death,  
 The roar of act and thought, of evil and good,—  
 The avalanches of the ruining worlds  
 Tolling down space,—the new worlds' genesis  
 Budding in fire,—the gradual humming growth  
 Of the ancient atoms, and first forms of earth,  
 The slow procession of the swathing seas  
 And firmamental waters,—and the noise  
 Of the broad, fluent strata of pure airs,—  
 All these flow onward in the intervals  
 Of that reiterant, solemn sound of—**GOD!**  
 Which **WORD**, innumerable angels straightway lift  
 High on celestial altitudes of song  
 And choral adoration, and then drop  
 The burden softly! shutting the last notes  
 Hushed up in silv' wings! I' the noon of time,  
 Nathless, that mystic-lipped Eternity  
 Shall wax as silent-dumb as Death himself,  
 While a new voice beneath the spheres shall cry,  
 "God! why hast Thou forsaken Me, My God?"  
 And not a voice in heaven shall answer it.

[*The transfiguration is complete in sadness.*]

*Adam.* Thy speech is of the Heavenlies; yet, O, Christ,  
 Awfully human are Thy voice and face!

*Eve.* My nature overcomes me from Thine eyes.

**CHRIST.** Then in the noon of time, shall one from  
 Heaven,

An angel fresh from looking upon God,  
 Descend before a woman, blessing her  
 With perfect benediction of pure love,  
 For all the world in all its elements;  
 For all the creatures of earth, air, and sea;  
 For all men in the body and in the soul,  
 Unto all ends of glory and sanctity.

*Eve.* O pale, pathetic Christ—I worship Thee!  
 I thank Thee for that woman!

**CHRIST.**

For, at last,

I, wrapping round Me your humanity,  
 Which, being sustained, shall neither break nor burn  
 Beneath the fire of Godhead, will tread earth,  
 And ransom you and it, and set strong peace  
 Betwixt you and its creatures. With My pangs  
 I will confront your sins: and since your sins  
 Have sunken to all Nature's heart from yours,  
 The tears of My clean soul shall follow them,  
 And set a holy passion to work clear  
 Absolute consecration. In My brow

Of kingly whiteness, shall be crowned anew  
 Your discrowned human nature. Look on Me  
 As I shall be uplifted on a cross  
 In darkness of eclipse and anguish dread,  
 So shall I lift up in My pierced hands,  
 Not into dark, but light—not unto death,  
 But life,—beyond the reach of guilt and grief,  
 The whole creation. Henceforth in My name  
 Take courage, O thou woman,—man, take hope !  
 Your graves shall be as smooth as Eden's sward,  
 Beneath the steps of your prospective thoughts ;  
 And, one step past them, a new Eden-gate  
 Shall open on a hinge of harmony,  
 And let you through to mercy. Ye shall fall  
 No more, within that Eden, nor pass out  
 Any more from it. In which hope, move on,  
 First sinners and first mourners. Live and love,—  
 Doing both nobly, because lowly ;  
 Live and work, strongly,—because patiently !  
 And, for the deed of death, trust it to God,  
 That it be well done, unrepented of,  
 And not to loss. And thence, with constant prayers  
 Fasten your souls so high, that constantly  
 The smile of your heroic cheer may float  
 Above all floods of earthly agonies,  
 Purification being the joy of pain !

[*The vision of CHRIST vanishes. ADAM and EVE stand in an ecstasy. The earth-zodiac pales away shade by shade, as the stars, star by star, shine out in the sky ; and the following chant from the two Earth Spirits (as they sweep back into the zodiac and disappear with it) accompanies the process of change.*

*Earth Spirits.*

By the mighty word thus spoken  
 Both for living and for dying,  
 We, our homage-oath once broken,  
 Fasten back again in sighing ;  
 And the creatures and the elements renew their covenanting.  
 Here, forgive us all our scorning ;  
 Here, we promise milder duty ;  
 And the evening and the morning  
 Shall re-organise in beauty,  
 A sabbath day in sabbath joy, for universal chanting.

And if, still, this melancholy  
 May be strong to overcome us ;

If this mortal and unholy,  
     We still fail to cast out from us,—  
 And we turn upon you, unaware, your own dark influences ;  
     If ye tremble, when surrounded  
     By our forest pine and palm trees !  
     If we cannot cure the wounded  
     With our marjoram and balm trees ;  
 And if your souls, allmournfully, sit down among your senses,—  
     Yet, O mortals, do not fear us,—  
     We are gentle in our languor ;  
     And more good ye shall have near us,  
     Than any pain or anger ;  
 And our God's refracted blessing, in our blessing, shall be given !  
     By the desert's endless vigil,  
     We will solemnise your passions ;  
     By the wheel of the black eagle  
     We will teach you exaltations,  
 When he sails against the wind, to the white spot up in Heaven.

    Ye shall find us tender nurses  
     To your weariness of nature ;  
     And our hands shall stroke the curse's  
     Dreary furrows from the creature,  
 Till your bodies shall lie smooth in death, and straight and  
     slumberful :  
     Then, a couch we will provide you,  
     Where no summer heats shall dazzle ;  
     Strewing on you and beside you  
     The thyme and the sweet basil—  
 And the cypress shall grow overhead, to keep all safe and cool

    Till the Holy blood awaited  
     Shall be chrisms around us running,  
     Whereby, newly-consecrated,  
     We shall leap up in God's sunning,  
 To join the spheric company, where the pure worlds  
     assemble ;  
     While, renewed by new evangels,  
     Soul-consummated, made glorious,  
     Ye shall brighten past the angels—  
     Ye shall kneel to Christ victorious ;  
 And the rays around His feet, beneath your sobbing lips, shall  
     tremble.

*[The phantastic vision has all passed; the earth-zodiac  
 has broken like a belt and dissolved from the desert.  
 The Earth Spirits vanish; and the stars shine out  
 above, bright and mild.]*

## CHORUS OF INVISIBLE ANGELS,

*While ADAM and EVE advance into the desert, hand in hand*

Hear our heavenly promise,  
 Through your mortal passion !  
 Love, ye shall have from us,  
 In a pure relation !  
 As a fish or bird  
 Swims or flies, if moving,  
 We, unseen, are heard  
 To live on by loving.  
 Far above the glances  
 Of your eager eyes,  
 Listen ! we are loving !  
 Listen, through man's ignorances—  
 Listen, through God's mysteries—  
 Listen down the heart of things,  
 Ye shall hear our mystic wings  
 Rustle with our loving !  
 Through the opal door,  
 Listen evermore  
 How we live by loving !

*First semichorus.*

When your bodies therefore,  
 Lie in grave or goal,  
 Softly will we care for  
 Each enfranchised soul !  
 Softly and unlothly,  
 Through the door of opal,  
 We will draw you soothly  
 Toward the Heavenly people.  
 Floated on a minor fine  
 Into the full chant divine,  
 We will draw you smoothly,—  
 While the human in the minor  
 Makes the harmony diviner :  
 Listen to our loving !

*Second semichorus.*

Then a sough of glory  
 Shall your entrance greet ;  
 Ruffling, round the doorway,  
 The smooth radiance it shall meet.  
 From the Heavenly throned centre  
 Heavenly voices shall repeat—  
 "Souls redeemed and pardoned, enter ;  
 For the chrim on you is sweet."

And every angel in the place  
 Lowly shall bow his face,  
 Folded fair on softened sounds,  
 Because upon your hands and feet  
 He thinks he sees his Master's wounds :  
 Listen to our loving !

*First semichorus.*

So, in the universe's  
 Consummated undoing,  
 Our angels of white mercies  
 Shall hover round the ruin !  
 Their wings shall stream upon the flame  
 As if incorporate of the same,  
 In elemental fusion ;  
 And calm their faces shall burn out,  
 With a pale and mastering thought,  
 And a steadfast looking of desire,  
 From out between the clefts of fire,  
 While they cry, in the Holy's name,  
 To the final Restitution !  
 Listen to our loving !

*Second semichorus.*

So, when the day of God is  
 To the thick graves accompted ;  
 Awaking the dead bodies,  
 The angel of the trumpet  
 Shall split the charnel earth  
 To the roots of the grave,  
 Which never before were slackened ;  
 And quicken the charnel birth,  
 With his blast so clear and brave ;  
 Till the Dead all stand erect,—  
 And every face of the burial-place  
 Shall the awful, single look, reflect,  
 Wherewith he them awakened.  
 Listen to our loving !

*First semichorus.*

But wild is the horse of Death !  
 He will leap up wild at the clamour  
 Above and beneath ;  
 And where is his Tamer  
 On that last day,  
 When he crieth, Ha, ha !  
 To the trumpet's evangel,  
 And paweth the earth's Aceldama ?  
 When he tosseth his head,  
 The drear-white steed,

And champeth athwart the last moon-ray,—  
 Oh, where is the angel  
 Can lead him away,  
 That the living may rule for the Dead ?

*Second semichorus.*

Yet a TAMER shall be found !  
 One more bright than seraph crowned,  
 And more strong than cherub bold :  
 Elder, too, than angel old,  
 By his grey eternities,—  
 He shall master and surprise  
     The steed of Death,  
 For He is strong, and He is fain ;  
 He shall quell him with a breath,  
 And shall lead him where He will,  
 With a whisper in the ear,  
 Which it alone can hear—  
     Full of fear—  
 And a hand upon the mane,  
     Grand and still.

*First semichorus.*

Through the flats of Hades, where the souls assemble,  
 HE will guide the Death-steed, calm between their ranks ;  
 While, like beaten dogs, they, a little moan and tremble  
 To see the darkness curdle from the horse's glittering flanks.  
 Through the flats of Hades, where the dreary shade is,—  
 Up the steep of Heaven, will the Tamer guide the steed—  
 Up the spheric circles—circle above circle,  
 We, who count the ages, shall count the tolling tread—  
 Every hoof-fall striking a blinder, blanker sparkle  
 From the stony orbs, which shall show as they were dead.

*Second semichorus.*

All the way the Death-steed, with muffled hoofs, shall travel,  
 Ashen grey the planets shall be motionless as stones ;  
 Loosely shall the systems eject their parts coæval,—  
 Stagnant in the spaces shall float the pallid moons ;  
 And suns that touch their apogees, reeling from their level,  
 Shall run back on their axles, in wild, low, broken tunes.

*Chorus.*

Up against the arches of the crystal ceiling,  
 Shall the horse's nostrils steam the blurting breath ;  
 Up between the angels pale with silent feeling,  
 Will the Tamer, calmly, lead the horse of Death.

*Semichorus.*

Cleaving all that silence, cleaving all that glory,  
 Will the Tamer lead Him straightway to the Throne :  
 " Look out O Jehovah, to this I bring before Thee,

With a hand nail-pierced,—I, who am Thy Son.”  
 Then the Eye Divinest, from the Deepest, flaming,  
 On the horse-eyes feeding, shall burn out their fire :  
 Blind the beast shall stagger, where It overcame him,—  
 Meek as lamb at pasture—bloodless in desire—  
 Down the beast shall shiver,—slain amid the taming,—  
 And, by Life essential, the phantasm Death expire.

*A Voice.* Gabriel, thou Gabriel !

*Another Voice.* What wouldst *thou* with me ?

*First Voice.* I heard thy voice sound in the angels song ;  
 And I would give thee question.

*Second Voice.* Question me.

*First Voice.* Why have I called thrice to my morning star  
 And had no answer ? All the stars are out,  
 And round the earth, upon their silver lives,  
 Wheel out the music of the inner life,  
 And answer in their places. Only in vain  
 I cast my voice against the outer rays  
 Of *my* star, shut in light behind the sun !  
 No more reply than from a breaking string,  
 Breaking when touched. Or is she *not* my star ?  
 Where *is* my star—my star ? Have ye cast down  
 Her glory like my glory ? Has she waxed  
 Mortal, like Adam ? Has she learnt to hate  
 Like any angel ?

*Second Voice.* She is sad for thee :  
 All things grow sadder to thee, one by one.

*Chorus.* Live, work on, O Earthy !

By the Actual's tension,  
 Speed the arrow worthy  
 Of a pure ascension !  
 From the low earth around you,  
 Reach the heights above you ;  
 From the stripes that wound you,  
 Seek the loves that love you !  
 God's divinest burneth plain  
 Through the crystal diaphane  
 Of our loves that love you.

*First Voice.* Gabriel, O Gabriel !

*Second Voice.* What wouldst *thou* with me ?

*First Voice.* Is it true, O thou Gabriel, that the crown  
 Of sorrow which I claimed, another claims ?  
 That HE claims THAT too ?

*Second Voice.* Lost one, it is true.

*First Voice.* That HE will be an exile from His Heaven,  
 To lead those exiles homeward ?

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* That HE will be an exile by His will,  
As I by mine election!

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* That I shall stand sole exile finally,—  
Made desolate for fruition?

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* Gabriel!

*Second Voice.* I hearken.

*First Voice.* Is it true besides—  
Aright true—that mine orient star will give  
Her name of "Bright and Morning-Star" to HIM,—  
And take the fairness of His virtue back,  
To cover loss and sadness?

*Second Voice.* It is true.

*First Voice.* Untrue, Untrue! O morning-star! O MINE!  
Who sittest secret in a veil of light,  
Far up the starry spaces, say—*Untrue!*  
Speak but so loud as doth a wasted moon  
To Tyrrhene waters! I am Lucifer—

[*A pause. Silence in the stars.*]

All things grow sadder to me, one by one.

*Chorus.* Exiled Human creatures,  
Let your hope grow larger!  
Larger grows the vision  
Of the new delight.  
From this chain of Nature's,  
God is the Discharger;  
And the Actual's prison  
Opens to your sight.

*Semichorus.* Calm the stars and golden,  
In a light exceeding:  
What their rays have measured

Let your hearts fulfil!  
These are stars beholden  
By your eyes in Eden;  
Yet, across the desert,  
See them shining still.

*Chorus.* Future joy and far light  
Working such relations,—  
Hear us singing gently—  
*Exiled is not lost!*  
God, above the starlight,  
God, above the patience,  
Shall at last present ye  
Guerdons worth the cost,  
Patiently enduring,  
Painfully surrounded,

Listen how we love you—  
Hope the uttermost—  
Waiting for that curing  
Which exalts the wounded  
Hear us sing above you—  
EXILED, BUT NOT LOST!

*[The stars shine on brightly, while ADAM and EVE  
pursue their way into the far wilderness. There is  
sound through the silence, as of the falling tears  
of an angel.]*

## SONNETS.

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### THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION.

WITH stammering lips and insufficient sound,  
 I strive and struggle to deliver right  
 That music of my nature, day and night  
 With dream and thought and feeling, interwound :  
 And inly answering all the senses round  
 With octaves of a mystic depth and height,  
 Which step out grandly to the infinite  
 From the dark edges of the sensual ground !  
 This song of soul I struggle to outbear  
 Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,  
 And utter all myself into the air :  
 But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll  
 Breaks its own cloud,—my flesh would perish there,  
 Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

---

### THE SERAPH AND POET.

THE seraph sings before the manifest  
 God-One, and in the burning of the Seven,  
 And with the full life of consummate Heaven  
 Heaving beneath him like a mother's breast  
 Warm with her first-born's slumber in that nest !  
 The poet sings upon the earth grave-riven ;  
 Before the naughty world soon self-forgiven  
 For wronging him ; and in the darkness prest  
 From his own soul by worldly weights. Even so,  
 Sing, seraph with the glory ! Heaven is high—  
 Sing, poet with the sorrow ! Earth is low !  
 The universe's inward voices cry  
 " Amen " to either song of joy and woe—  
 Sing seraph,—poet,—sing on equally.

ON A PORTRAIT OF WORDSWORTH BY  
R. B. HAYDON.

WORDSWORTH upon Helvellyn! Let the cloud  
Ebb audibly along the mountain-wind,  
Then break against the rock, and show behind  
The lowland valleys floating up to crowd  
The sense with beauty. *He*, with forehead bowed  
And humble-lidded eyes, as one inclined  
Before the sovran thought of his own mind,  
And very meek with inspirations proud,—  
Takes here his rightful place as poet-priest  
By the high altar, singing prayer and prayer  
To the higher Heavens! A noble vision free,  
Our Haydon's hand hath flung out from the mist!  
No portrait this, with Academic air—  
This is the poet and his poetry.

---

PAST AND FUTURE.

My future will not copy fair my past  
On any leaf but Heaven's. Be fully done,  
Supernal Will! I would not fain be one  
Who, satisfying thirst and breaking fast  
Upon the fulness of the heart, at last  
Saith no grace after meat. My wine hath run  
Indeed out of my cup, and there is none  
To gather up the bread of my repast  
Scattered and trampled! Yet I find some good  
In earth's green herbs, and streams that bubble up  
Clear from the darkling ground,—content until  
I sit with angels before better food.  
Dear Christ! when Thy new vintage fills my cup,  
This hand shall shake no more, nor that wine spill.

---

IRREPARABLENESS.

I HAVE been in the meadows all the day  
And gathered there the nosegay that you see;  
Singing within myself as bird or bee,  
When such do field-work on a morn of May:  
But now I look upon my flowers,—decay

Hath met them in my hands, more fatally,  
 Because more warmly clasped ; and sobs are free  
 To come instead of songs. What do you say,  
 Sweet counsellors, dear friends ? that I should go  
 Back straightway to the fields, and gather more ?  
 Another, sooth, may do it,—but not I !  
 My heart is very tired—my strength is low—  
 My hands are full of blossoms plucked before,  
 Held dead within them till myself shall die.

---

 TEARS.

THANK God, bless God, all ye who suffer not  
 More grief than ye can weep for. That is well—  
 That is light grieving ! lighter, none befell,  
 Since Adam forfeited the primal lot.  
 Tears ! what are tears ? The babe weeps in its cot,  
 The mother singing : at her marriage-bell,  
 The bride weeps : and before the oracle  
 Of high-faned hills, the poet hath forgot  
 That moisture on his cheeks. Commend the grace,  
 Mourners, who weep ? Albeit, as some have done,  
 Ye grope tear-blinded, in a desert place,  
 And touch but tombs,—look up ! Those tears will run  
 Soon, in long rivers, down the lifted face,  
 And leave the vision clear for stars and sun.

---

 GRIEF.

I TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless—  
 That only men incredulous of despair,  
 Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air  
 Beat upward to God's throne in loud access  
 Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness  
 In souls, as countries, lieth silent-bare  
 Under the blenching, vertical eye-glare  
 Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express  
 Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death ;  
 Most like a monumental statue set  
 In everlasting watch and moveless woe,  
 Till itself crumble to the dust beneath !  
 Touch it ! the marble eyelids are not wet—  
 If it could weep, it could arise and go.

## SUBSTITUTION.

WHEN some beloved voice that was to you  
 Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,  
 And silence against which you dare not cry,  
 Aches round you like a strong disease and new—  
 What hope? what help? what music will undo  
 That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh—  
 Not reason's subtle count! Not melody  
 Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew—  
 Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales,  
 Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress trees  
 To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws  
 Self-chanted,—nor the angels' sweet All hails,  
 Met in the smile of God. Nay, none of these.  
 Speak THOU, availing Christ!—and fill this pause.

## COMFORT.

SPEAK low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet  
 From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,  
 Lest I should fear and fall, and miss Thee so  
 Who art not missed by any that entreat.  
 Speak to me as to Mary at Thy feet—  
 And if no precious gums my hands bestow,  
 Let my tears drop like amber, while I go  
 In reach of Thy divinest voice complete  
 In humanest affection—thus in sooth  
 To lose the sense of losing! As a child,  
 Whose song-bird seeks the wood for evermore,  
 Is sung to in its stead by mother's mouth;  
 Till, sinking on her breast, love-reconciled,  
 He sleeps the faster that he wept before.

## PERPLEXED MUSIC.

EXPERIENCE, like a pale musician, holds  
 A dulcimer of patience in his hand;  
 Whence harmonies we cannot understand,  
 Of God's will in His worlds, the strain unfolds  
 In sad perplexed minors. Deathly colds  
 Fall on us while we hear and countermand

Our sanguine heart back from the fancy-land,  
 With nightingales in visionary wolds.  
 We murmur,—“Where is any certain tune  
 Or measured music, in such notes as these?”—  
 But angels, leaning from the golden seat,  
 Are not so minded! their fine ear hath won  
 The issue of completed cadences;  
 And, smiling down the stars, they whisper—SWEET.

---

 WORK.

WHAT are we set on earth for? Say, to toil—  
 Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines,  
 For all the heat o’ the day, till it declines,  
 And Death’s mild curfew shall from work assoil.  
 God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,  
 To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns  
 All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,  
 For younger fellow-workers of the soil  
 To wear for amulets. So others shall  
 Take patience, labour, to their heart and hands,  
 From thy hands, and thy heart, and thy brave cheer,  
 And God’s grace fructify through thee to all.  
 The least flower, with a brimming cup, may stand,  
 And share its dew-drop with another near.

---

 FUTURITY.

AND, O beloved voices, upon which  
 Ours passionately call, because erelong  
 Ye brake off in the middle of that song  
 We sang together softly, to enrich  
 The poor world with the sense of love, and witch  
 The heart out of things evil,—I am strong,—  
 Knowing ye are not lost for aye among  
 The hills, with last year’s thrush. God keeps a niche  
 In Heaven to hold our idols! and albeit  
 He brake them to our faces, and denied  
 That our close kisses should impair their white,—  
 I know we shall behold them raised complete,—  
 The dust shook from their beauty,—glorified  
 New Memnons singing in the great God-light.

## THE TWO SAYINGS.

Two sayings of the Holy Scriptures beat  
 Like pulses, in the Church's brow and breast ;  
 And, by them, we find rest in our unrest,  
 And, heart-deep in salt tears, do yet entreat  
 God's fellowship, as if on Heavenly seat.  
 One is, AND JESUS WEPT,—whereon is prest  
 Full many a sobbing face that drops its best  
 And sweetest waters on the record sweet :—  
 And one is, where the Christ denied and scorned  
 LOOKED UPON PETER ! Oh, to render plain,  
 By help of having loved a little, and mourned,—  
 That look of sovran love and sovran pain,  
 Which HE who could not sin, yet suffered, turned  
 On him who could reject, but not sustain !

## THE LOOK.

THE Saviour looked on Peter. Ay, no word—  
 No gesture of reproach ! The Heavens serene,  
 Though heavy with armed justice, did not lean  
 Their thunders that way ! The forsaken Lord  
*Looked* only, on the traitor. None record  
 What that look was ; none guess : for those who have  
 seen  
 Wronged lovers loving through a death-pang keen,  
 Or pale-cheeked martyrs smiling to a sword,  
 Have missed Jehovah at the judgment call !  
 And Peter, from the height of blasphemy—  
 “ I never knew this man ”—did quail and fall,  
 As knowing straight THAT GOD,—and turned free  
 And went out speechless from the face of all,  
 And filled the silence, weeping bitterly.

## THE MEANING OF THE LOOK.

I THINK that look of Christ might seem to say—  
 “ Thou Peter ! art thou then a common stone  
 Which I at last must break My heart upon,  
 For all God's charge, to His high angels, may  
 Guard My foot better ? Did I yesterday  
 Wash *thy* feet, My beloved, that they should run  
 Quick to deny Me 'neath the morning sun,—

And do thy kisses, like the rest, betray?—  
 The cock crows coldly.—Go and manifest  
 A late contrition, but no bootless fear?  
 For when thy deathly need is bitterest,  
 Thou shalt not be denied, as I am here—  
 My voice, to God and Angels, shall attest,—  
*Because I KNOW this man, let him be clear.*"

---

#### A THOUGHT FOR A LONELY DEATH-BED.\*

IF God compel thee to this destiny,  
 To die alone, with none beside thy bed  
 To ruffle round with sobs thy last word said,  
 And mark with tears the pulses ebb from thee,—  
 Then pray alone—"O Christ, come tenderly!  
 By Thy forsaken Sonship,—and the red  
 Drear wine-press,—and the wilderness outspread,—  
 And the lone garden where Thine agony  
 Fell bloody from Thy brow,—by all of those  
 Permitted desolations, comfort mine!  
 No earthly friend being near me, interpose  
 No deathly angel 'twixt my face and Thine;  
 But stoop Thyself to gather my life's rose,  
 And smile away my mortal to Divine."

---

#### WORK AND CONTEMPLATION.

THE woman singeth at her spinning-wheel  
 A pleasant chant, ballad, or barcarolle;  
 She thinketh of her song, upon the whole,  
 Far more than of her flax; and yet the reel  
 Is full, and artfully her fingers feel  
 With quick adjustment, provident controul,  
 The lines, too subtly twisted to unroll,  
 Out to a perfect thread. I hence appeal  
 To the dear Christian Church—that we may do  
 Our Father's business in these temples mirk,  
 Thus, swift and steadfast; thus, intent and strong;  
 While, thus, apart from toil, our souls pursue  
 Some high, calm, spheric tune, and prove our work  
 The better for the sweetness of our song.

\* Written at the request of my friend Miss Cockell, to whom it is inscribed.

## PAIN IN PLEASURE.

A THOUGHT lay like a flower upon mine heart,  
 And drew around it other thoughts like bees  
 For multitude, and thirst of sweetnesses :  
 Whereat rejoicing, I desired the art  
 Of the Greek whistler, who to wharf and mart  
 Could lure those insect swarms from orange-trees,  
 That I might hive with me such thoughts, and please  
 My soul so, always. Foolish counterpart  
 Of a weak man's vain wishes ! While I spoke,  
 The thought I called a flower, grew nettle-rough—  
 The thoughts called bees, stung me to festering.  
 Oh, entertain (cried Reason, as she woke),  
 Your best and gladdest thoughts but long enough,  
 And they will all prove sad enough to sting !

---

## AN APPREHENSION.

If all the gentlest-hearted friends I know  
 Concentred in one heart their gentleness,  
 That still grew gentler, till its pulse was less  
 For life than pity,—I should yet be slow  
 To bring my own heart nakedly below  
 The palm of such a friend, that he should press  
 Motive, condition, means, appliances,  
 My false ideal joy and fickle woe,  
 Out full to light and knowledge. I should fear  
 Some plait between the brows—some rougher chime  
 In the free voice. . . . O angels, let your flood  
 Of bitter scorn dash on me ! Do ye hear  
 What *I* say, who bear calmly all the time  
 This everlasting face-to-face with God ?

---

## DISCONTENT.

LIGHT human nature is too lightly tost  
 And ruffled without cause ; complaining on—  
 Restless with rest—until, being overthrown,  
 It learneth to lie quiet. Let a frost  
 Or a small wasp have crept to the innermost  
 Of our ripe peach ; or let the wilful sun

Shine westward of our window,—straight we run  
 A furlong's sigh, as if the world were lost.  
 But what time through the heart and through the brain  
 God hath transfixed us,—we, so moved before,  
 Attain to a calm ! Ay, shouldering weights of pain,  
 We anchor in deep waters, safe from shore ;  
 And hear, submissive, o'er the stormy main,  
 God's chartered judgments walk for evermore.

---

#### PATIENCE TAUGHT BY NATURE.

"O DREARY life !" we cry, "O dreary life !"  
 And still the generations of the birds  
 Sing through our sighing, and the flocks and herds  
 Serenely live while we are keeping strife  
 With Heaven's true purpose in us, as a knife  
 Against which we may struggle. Ocean girds  
 Unslackened the dry land : savannah-swards  
 Unweary sweep : hills watch, unworn ; and rife  
 Meek leaves drop yearly from the forest trees,  
 To show, above, the unwasted stars that pass  
 In their old glory. O thou God of old !  
 Grant me some smaller grace than comes to *these* ;—  
 But so much patience, as a blade of grass  
 Grows by contented through the heat and cold.

---

#### CHEERFULNESS TAUGHT BY REASON.

I THINK we are too ready with complaint  
 In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope  
 Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope  
 Of yon grey blank of sky, we might be faint  
 To muse upon eternity's constraint  
 Round our aspirant souls. But since the scope  
 Must widen early, is it well to droop,  
 For a few days consumed in loss and taint ?  
 O pusillanimous Heart, be comforted,—  
 And, like a cheerful traveller, take the road—  
 Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread  
 Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod  
 To meet the flints ?—At least it may be said,  
 "Because the way is *short*, I thank Thee, God !"

## EXAGGERATION.

WE overstate the ills of life, and take  
 Inagination, given us to bring down  
 The choirs of singing angels overshone  
 By God's clear glory,—down our earth to rake  
 The dismal snows instead ; flake following flake,  
 To cover all the corn. We walk upon  
 The shadow of hills across a level thrown,  
 And pant like climbers. Near the alderbrake  
 We sigh so loud, the nightingale within  
 Refuses to sing loud, as else she would.  
 O brothers ! let us leave the shame and sin  
 Of taking vainly, in a plaintive mood,  
 The holy name of GRIEF !—holy herein,  
 That, by the grief of ONE, came all our good.

## ADEQUACY.

NOW by thy verdure on thy thousand hills,  
 Belov'd England,—doth the earth appear  
 Quite noble enough for men to overbear  
 The will of God in, with rebellious wills !  
 We cannot say the morning-sun fulfils  
 Ingloriously its course ; nor that the clear  
 Strong stars, without significance, insphere  
 Our habitation. We, meantime, our ills  
 Heap up against this good ; and lift a cry  
 Against this work-day world, this ill-spread feast,  
 As if ourselves were better certainly  
 Than what we come to. Maker and High Priest,  
 I ask Thee not my joys to multiply,—  
 Only to make me worthier of the least.

## TO GEORGE SAND.

## A DESIRE.

THOU large-brained woman and large-hearted man,  
 Self-called George Sand ! whose soul, amid the lions  
 Of thy tumultuous senses, moans, defiance,  
 And answers roar for roar, as spirits can :  
 I would some mild miraculous thunder ran  
 Above the applauded circus, in appliance

Of thine own nobler nature's strength and science,—  
 Drawing two pinions, white as wings of swan,  
 From thy strong shoulders, to amaze the place  
 With holier light! That thou to woman's claim,  
 And man's, might join beside the angel's grace  
 Of a pure genius sanctified from blame;  
 Till child and maiden pressed to thine embrace,  
 To kiss upon thy lips a stainless fame.

---

TO GEORGE SAND.

A RECOGNITION.

TRUE genius, but true woman! dost deny  
 Thy woman's nature with a manly scorn,  
 And break away the gauds and armlets worn  
 By weaker women in captivity?  
 Ah, vain denial! that revolted cry  
 Is sobbed in by a woman's voice forlorn:—  
 Thy woman's hair, my sister, all unshorn,  
 Floats back dishevelled strength in agony,  
 Disproving thy man's name. And while before  
 The world thou burnest in a poet-fire,  
 We see thy woman's-heart beat evermore  
 Through the large flame. Beat purer, heart, and  
     higher,  
 Till God unsex thee on the spirit-shore;  
 To which alone unsexing, purely aspire!

---

THE PRISONER.

I COUNT the dismal time by months and years,  
 Since last I felt the green sward under foot,  
 And the great breath of all things summer-mute  
 Met mine upon my lips. Now earth appears  
 As strange to me as dreams of distant spheres,  
 Or thoughts of Heaven we weep at! Nature's lute  
 Sounds on behind this door so closely shut,  
 A strange, wild music to the prisoner's ears,  
 Dilated by the distance, till the brain  
 Grows dim with fancies which it feels too fine;  
 While ever, with a visionary pain,  
 Past the precluded senses, sweep and shine  
 Streams, forests, glades,—and many a golden train  
 Of sunlit hills, transfigured to Divine.

## INSUFFICIENCY.

WHEN I attain to utter forth in verse  
 Some inward thought, my soul throbs audibly  
 Along my pulses, yearning to be free  
 And something farther, fuller, higher, rehearse,  
 To the individual, true, and the universe,  
 In consummation of right harmony !  
 But, like a dreary wind against a tree,  
 We are blown against for ever by the curse  
 Which breathes through nature. Oh, the world is  
 weak—  
 The effluence of each is false to all ;  
 And what we best conceive, we fail to speak.  
 Wait, soul, until thine ashen garments fall !  
 And then resume thy broken strains, and seek  
 Fit peroration, without let or thrall.



## THE ROMAUNT OF THE PAGE.

“The trustiest, loving’st, and the gentlest boy,  
 That ever master had.”

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

A KNIGHT of gallant deeds,  
 And a young page at his side,  
 From the holy war in Palestine,  
 Did slow and thoughtful ride,—  
 As each were a palmer, and told for beads,  
 The dews of the eventide.

“O young page,” said the knight,  
 “A noble page art thou !  
 Thou fearest not to steep in blood  
 The curls upon thy brow ;  
 And once in the tent, and twice in the fight,  
 Didst ward me a mortal blow.”—

“O brave knight,” said the page,  
 “Or ere we hither came,  
 We talked in tent, we talked in field,  
 Of the bloody battle-game :  
 But here, below this greenwood bough,  
 I cannot speak the same.

“ Our troop is far behind,  
 The woodland calm is new ;  
 Our steeds, with slow grass-muffled hoofs,  
 Tread deep the shadows through :  
 And in my mind, some blessing kind  
 Is dropping with the dew.

“ The woodland calm is pure—  
 I cannot choose but have  
 A thought, from these, o' the beechen-trees  
 Which, in our England, wave ;  
 And of the little finches fine,  
 Which sang there, while in Palestine  
 The warrior-hilt we drave.

“ Methinks, a moment gone,  
 I heard my mother pray !  
 I heard, Sir Knight, the prayer for *me*  
 Wherein she passed away ;  
 And I know the Heavens are leaning down  
 To hear what I shall say.”

The page spake calm and high,  
 As of no mean degree ;  
 Perhaps he felt in nature's broad  
 Full heart, his own was free !  
 And the knight looked up to his lifted eye,  
 Then answered smilingly :—

“ Sir Page, I pray your grace !  
 Certes, I meant not so  
 To cross your pastoral mood, Sir Page,  
 With the crook of the battle-bow ;  
 But a knight may speak of a lady's face,  
 I trow, in any mood or place,  
 If the grasses die or grow.

“ And this, I meant to say,—  
 My lady's face shall shine  
 As ladies' faces use, to greet  
 My page from Palestine :  
 Or, speak she fair, or prank she gay,  
 She is no lady of mine.

“ And this, I meant to fear,—  
 Her bower may suit thee ill !  
 For, sooth, in that same field and tent,  
 Thy *talk* was somewhat still ;  
 And fitter thine hand for my knightly spear,  
 Than thy tongue for my lady's will.”

Slowly and thankfully

The young page bowed his head :  
His large eyes seemed to muse a smile,  
Until he blushed instead ;  
And no lady in her bower, pardiè,  
Could blush more sudden red—  
“ Sir Knight,—thy lady’s bower to me,  
Is suited well,” he said.

*Beati, beati, mortui !*

From the convent on the sea,—  
One mile off, or scarce as nigh,  
Swells the dirge as clear and high  
As if that, over brake and lea,  
Bodily the wind did carry  
The great altar of St. Mary.  
And the fifty tapers burning o’er it,  
And the Lady Abbess dead before it,  
And the chanting nuns whom yesterweeke  
Her voice did charge and bless—  
Chanting steady, chanting meek,  
Chanting with a solemn breath,  
Because that they are thinking less  
Upon the dead than upon death !

*Beati, beati, mortui !*

Now the vision in the sound  
Wheelet on the wind around—  
Now it sweeps aback, away—  
The uplands will not let it stay  
To dark the western sun.

*Mortui !*—away at last,—

Or ere the page’s blush is past !  
And the knight heard all, and the page heard none.

“ A boon, thou noble knight,  
If ever I servèd thee !  
Though thou art a knight, and I am a page,  
Now grant a boon to me—  
And tell me sooth, if dark or bright,  
If little loved, or loved aright,  
Be the face of thy ladye.”

Gloomily looked the knight ;—

“ As a son thou hast servèd me :  
And would to none, I had granted boon,  
Except to only thee !  
For haply then I should love aright,—  
For then I should know if dark or bright  
Were the face of my ladye.

“ Yet ill it suits my knightly tongue,  
 To grudge that granted boon !  
 That heavy price, from heart and life,  
 I paid in silence down :  
 The hand that claimed it, cleared in fine  
 My father's fame ! I swear by mine,  
 That price was nobly won.

“ Earl Walter was a brave old earl,—  
 He was my father's friend ;  
 And while I rode the lists at court,  
 And little guessed the end,—  
 My noble father in his shroud,  
 Against a slanderer lying loud,  
 He rose up to defend.

“ Oh, calm, below the marble grey,  
 My father's dust was strown !  
 Oh, meek, above the marble grey,  
 His image prayed alone !  
 The slanderer lied—the wretch was brave,—  
 For, looking up the minster-nave,  
 He saw my father's knightly glaive  
 Was changed from steel to stone.

“ But Earl Walter's glaive was steel,  
 With a brave old hand to wear it !  
 And dashed the lie back in the mouth  
 Which lied against the godly truth  
 And against the knightly merit !  
 The slanderer, 'neath the avenger's heel,  
 Struck up the dagger in appeal  
 From stealthy lie to brutal force—  
 And out upon that traitor's corse,  
 Was yielded the true spirit !

“ I would mine hand had fought that fight,  
 And justified my father !  
 I would mine heart had caught that wound,  
 And slept beside him rather !  
 I think it were a better thing  
 Than murdered friend, and marriage-ring,  
 Forced on my life together.

“ Wail shook Earl Walter's house—  
 His true wife shed no tear—  
 She lay upon her bed as mute  
 As the earl did on his bier :

Till—'Ride, ride fast,' she said at last,  
 'And bring the avengèd's son anear!  
 Ride fast—ride free, as a dart can flee;  
 For white of ble, with waiting for me,  
 Is the corse in the next chambère.'

"I came—I knelt beside her bed—  
 Her calm was worse than strife—  
 'My husband, for thy father dear,  
 Gave freely, when thou wert not here,  
 His own and eke my life.  
 A boon! Of that sweet child we make  
 An orphan for thy father's sake,  
 Make thou, for ours, a wife.'

"I said, 'My steed neighs in the court;  
 My bark rocks on the brine;  
 And the warrior's vow, I am under now,  
 To free the pilgrim's shrine:  
 But fetch the ring, and fetch the priest,  
 And call that daughter of thine;  
 And rule she wide, from my castle on Nyde,  
 While I am in Palestine.'

"In the dark chambère, if the bride was fair,  
 Ye wis, I could not see;  
 But the steed thrice neighed, and the priest  
 fast prayed,  
 And wedded fast were we.  
 Her mother smiled upon her bed,  
 As at its side we knelt to wed;  
 And the bride rose from her knce,—  
 And kissed the smile of her mother dead,  
 Or ever she kissed me.

"My page, my page, what grieves thee so,  
 That the tears run down thy face?"—  
 "Alas, alas! mine own sistèr  
 Was in thy lady's case!  
 But *she* laid down the silks she wore  
 And followed him she wed before,  
 Disguised as his true servitor,  
 To the very battle-place."

And wept the page, and laughed the knight,—  
 A careless laugh, laughed he:  
 "Well done it were for thy sistèr,  
 But not for my ladyè!

My love, so please you, shall requite  
 No woman, whether dark or bright,  
 Unwomaned if she be."

The page stopped weeping, and smiled cold—  
 "Your wisdom may declare  
 That womanhood is proved the best  
 By golden brooch and glossy vest  
 The mincing ladies wear :  
 Yet is it proved, and was of old,  
 Anear as well—I dare to hold—  
 By truth, or by despair."

He smiled no more—he wept no more,—  
 But passionate he spake,—  
 "Oh, womanly, she prayed in tent,  
 When none beside did wake !  
 Oh, womanly she paled in fright,  
 For one belovèd's sake !—  
 And her little hand defiled with blood,  
 Her tender tears of womanhood,  
 Most woman-pure, did make !"

"Well done it were for thy sistèr—  
 Thou tellest well her tale !  
 But for my lady, she shall pray  
 I' the kirk of Nydesdale—  
 Not dread for me, but love for me,  
 Shall make my lady pale !  
 No casque shall hide her woman's tear—  
 It shall have room to trickle clear  
 Behind her woman's veil."

"But what if she mistook thy mind,  
 And followed thee to strife ;  
 Then kneeling, did entreat thy love,  
 As Paynims ask for life ?"  
 "I would forgive, and evermore  
 Would love her as my servitor,  
 But little as my wife.

"Look up—there is a small bright cloud  
 Alone amid the skies !  
 So high, so pure, and so apart,  
 A woman's glory lies."  
 The page looked up—the cloud was sheen—  
 A sadder cloud did rush, I ween,  
 Betwixt it and his eyes :

Then dimly dropped his eyes away  
 From welkin unto hill—  
 Ha! who rides there?—the page is 'ware,  
 Though the cry at his heart is still!  
 And the page seeth all, and the knight seeth  
 none,  
 Though banner and spear do fleck the sun,  
 And the Saracens ride at will.

He speaketh calm, he speaketh low,—  
 "Ride fast, my master, ride,  
 Or ere within the broadening dark  
 The narrow shadows hide!"  
 "Yea, fast, my page; I will do so;  
 And keep thou at my side."

"Now nay, now nay, ride on thy way,  
 Thy faithful page precede!  
 For I must loose on saddle-bow  
 My battle-casque, that galls, I trow,  
 The shoulder of my steed;  
 And I must pray, as I did vow,  
 For one in bitter need.

"Ere night I shall be near to thee,—  
 Now ride, my master, ride!  
 Ere night, as parted spirits cleave  
 To mortals too beloved to leave,  
 I shall be at thy side."  
 The knight smiled free at the fantasy,  
 And adown the dell did ride.

Had the knight looked up to the page's face,  
 No smile the word had won!  
 Had the knight looked up to the page's face,  
 I ween he had never gone!  
 Had the knight looked back to the page's geste,  
 I ween he had turned anon!  
 For dread was the woe in the face so young;  
 And wild was the silent geste that flung  
 Casque, sword to earth—as the boy down-sprung,  
 And stood—alone, alone.

He clenched his hands, as if to hold  
 His soul's great agony—  
 "Have I renounced my womanhood,  
 For wifehood unto *thee*?  
 And is this the last, last look of thine,  
 That ever I shall see?"

" Yet God thee save, and may'st thou have  
 A lady to thy mind ;  
 More woman-proud, and half as true  
 As one thou leav'st behind !  
 And God me take with HIM to dwell—  
 For HIM I cannot love too well,  
 As I have loved my kind."

SHE looketh up, in earth's despair,  
 The hopeful Heavens to seek !  
 That little cloud still floateth there,  
 Whereof her Loved did speak.  
 How bright the little cloud appears !  
 Her eyelids fall upon the tears,—  
 And the tears, down either cheek.

\* \* \* \* \*

The tramp of hoof, the flash of steel—  
 The Paynims round her coming !  
 The sound and sight have made her calm,—  
 False page, but truthful woman !  
 She stands amid them all unmoved :  
 The heart, once broken by the loved,  
 Is strong to meet the foeman.

" Ho, Christian page ! art keeping sheep,  
 From pouring wine-cups, resting ?"—  
 " I keep my master's noble name,  
 For warring, not for feasting :  
 And if that here Sir Hubert were,  
 My master brave, my master dear,  
 Ye would not stay to question."

" Where is thy master, scornful page,  
 That we may slay or bind him ?"—  
 " Now search the lea, and search the wood,  
 And see if ye can find him !  
 Nathless, as hath been often tried,  
 Your Paynim heroes faster ride  
 Before him than behind him."

" Give smoother answers, lying page,  
 Or perish in the lying."—  
 " I trow that if the warrior brand  
 Beside my foot, were in my hand,  
 'Twere better at replying."  
 They cursed her deep, they smote her low,  
 They cleft her golden ringlets through :  
 The Loving is the Dying.

She felt the scimitar gleam down,  
 And met it from beneath,  
 With smile more bright in victory  
 Than any sword from sheath,—  
 Which flashed across her lip serene,  
 Most like the spirit-light between  
 The darks of life and death.

*Ingemisco, ingemisco !*

From the convent on the sea,  
 Now it sweepeth solemnly !  
 As over wood and over lea,  
 Bodily the wind did carry  
 The great altar of St. Mary,  
 And the fifty tapers paling o'er it,  
 And the Lady Abbess stark before it,  
 And the weary nuns, with hearts that faintly  
 Beat along their voices saintly—

*Ingemisco, ingemisco !*

Dirge for abbess laid in shroud,  
 Sweepeth o'er the shroudless dead,  
 Page or lady, as we said,  
 With the dewys upon her head,  
 All as sad if not as loud !

*Ingemisco, ingemisco !*

Is ever a lament begun  
 By any mourner under sun,  
 Which, ere it endeth, suits but *one* ?



## THE LAY OF THE BROWN ROSARY.

“Go thy ways. I did not think to have shed one tear for thee, but thou hast made me water my plants spite of my heart.”

WITCH OF EDMONTON.

### FIRST PART.

“ONORA, Onora”—her mother is calling—  
 She sits at the lattice and hears the dew falling  
 Drop after drop from the sycamores laden  
 With dew as with blossom—and calls home the maiden—  
 “Night cometh, Onora.”

She looks down the garden-walk caverned with trees,  
 To the limes at the end, where the green arbour is—

"Some sweet thought or other may keep where it found her,  
While, forgot or unseen in the dreamlight around her,  
Night cometh—Onora!"

She looks up the forest whose alleys shoot on  
Like the mute minster-aisles, when the anthem is done,  
And the choristers, sitting with faces aslant,  
Feel the silence to consecrate more than the chant—  
"Onora, Onora!"

And forward she looketh across the brown heath—  
"Onora, art coming?"—what is it she seeth?  
Nought, nought, but the grey border-stone that is wist  
To dilate and assume a wild shape in the mist—  
"My daughter!"—Then over

The casement she leaneth, and as she doth so,  
She is 'ware of her little son playing below:  
"Now where is Onora?"—He hung down his head  
And spake not, then answering blushed scarlet-red,—  
"At the tryst with her lover."

But his mother was wroth. In a sternness quoth she,  
"As thou play'st at the ball, art thou playing with me?  
When we know that her lover to battle is gone,  
And the saints know above that she loveth but one,  
And will ne'er wed another?"

Then the boy wept aloud. 'Twas a fair sight, yet sad,  
To see the tears run down the sweet blooms he had:  
He stamped with his foot, said—"The saints know I lied,  
Because truth that is wicked, is fittest to hide!  
Must I utter it, mother?"

In his vehement childhood he hurried within,  
And knelt at her feet as in prayer against sin;  
But a child at a prayer never sobbeth as he—  
"Oh! she sits with the nun of the brown rosarie,  
At nights in the ruin!

"The old convent ruin, the ivy rots off,  
Where the owl hoots by day, and the toad is sun-proof;  
Where no singing-birds build; and the trees gaunt and grey,  
As in stormy sea-coasts, appear blasted one way—  
But is *this* the wind's doing?"

"A nun in the east wall was buried alive,  
Who mocked at the priest when he called her to shrive,—

And shrieked such a curse as the stone took her breath,  
The old abbess fell back and swooned unto death  
With an Ave half-spoken.

"I tried once to pass it, myself and my hound,  
Till, as fearing the lash, down he shivered to ground!  
A brave hound, my mother! a brave hound, ye wot!  
And the wolf thought the same, with his fangs at her throat,  
In the pass of the Brocken.

"At dawn and at eve, mother, who sitteth there,  
With the brown rosarie never used for a prayer?  
Stoop low, mother, low! If we went there to see,  
What an ugly great hole in that east wall must be  
At dawn and at even!

"Who meet there, my mother, at dawn and at even?  
Who meet by that wall, never looking to heaven?  
O sweetest my sister, what doeth with *thee*,  
The ghost of a nun with a brown rosarie,  
And a face turned from Heaven?

"St. Agnes o'erwatcheth my dreams: and erewhile  
I have felt through mine eyelids, the warmth of her smile—  
But last night, as a sadness like pity came o'er her,  
She whispered—'Say *two* prayers at dawn for Onora!  
The Tempted is sinning.'"

Onora, Onora! they heard her not coming—  
Not a step on the grass, not a voice through the gloaming!  
But her mother looked up, and she stood on the floor,  
Fair and still as the moonlight that came there before,  
And a smile just beginning!

It touches her lips—but it dares not arise  
To the height of the mystical sphere of her eyes:  
And the large musing eyes, neither joyous nor sorry,  
Sing on like the angels in separate glory,  
Between clouds of amber.

For the hair droops in clouds amber-coloured, till stirred  
Into gold by the gesture that comes with a word;  
While—O soft!—her speaking is so interwound  
Of the dim and the sweet, 'tis a twilight of sound,  
And floats through the chamber.

"Since thou shrivest my brother, fair mother," said she,  
"I count on thy priesthood for marrying of me!

And I know by the hills, that the battle is done—  
That my lover rides on—will be here with the sun,  
    'Neath the eyes that behold thee!"

Her mother sate silent—too tender, I wis,  
Of the smile her dead father smiled dying to kiss;  
But the boy started up, pale with tears, passion-wrought,—  
"O wicked fair sister, the hills utter nought!  
    If he cometh, who told thee?"

"I know by the hills," she resumed calm and clear,  
"By the beauty upon them, that HE is anear!  
Did they ever look *so* since he bade me adieu?  
Oh, love in the waking, sweet brother, is true  
    As St. Agnes in sleeping."

Half-ashamed and half-softened, the boy did not speak,  
And the blush met the lashes which fell on his cheek:  
She bowed down to kiss him—Dear saints, did he see  
Or feel on her bosom the BROWN ROSARIE—  
    That he shrank away weeping?

## PART SECOND.

*A bed. ONÓRA sleeping. Angels, but not near.*

*First Angel.*

Must we stand so far, and she  
So very fair?

*Second Angel.*

As bodies be.

*First Angel.*

And she so mild?

*Second Angel.*

As spirits, when

They meeken, not to God but men.

*First Angel.*

And she so young,—that I who bring  
Good dreams for saintly children, might  
Mistake that small soft face to-night,  
And fetch her such a blessed thing,  
That, at her waking, she would weep  
For childhood lost anew in sleep!

How hath she sinned?

*Second Angel.*

In bartering love—

God's love—for man's!

*First Angel.*

We may reprove

The world for this! not only her!—

Let me approach, to breathe away  
This dust o' the heart with holy air.

*Second Angel.*

Stand off! She sleeps, and did not pray.

*First Angel.*

Did none pray for her?

*Second Angel.*

Ay, a child,—

Who never, praying, wept before:

While, in a mother undefiled,

Prayer goeth on in sleep, as true

And pauseless as the pulses do.

*First Angel.*

Then I approach.

*Second Angel.*

It is not WILLED.

*First Angel.*

One word: Is she redeemed?

*Second Angel.*

No more!

THE PLACE IS FILLED.

[Angels vanish.]

*Evil Spirit in a Nun's garb by the bed.*

Forbear that dream—forebear that dream! too near to Heaven  
it leaned.

*Onora in sleep.*

Nay, leave me this—but only this! 'tis but a dream, sweet  
fiend!

*Evil Spirit.*

It is a thought.

*Onora in sleep.*

A sleeping thought—most innocent of good—  
It doth the Devil no harm, sweet fiend! it cannot, if it would.

I say in it no holy hymn—I do no holy work;

I scarcely hear the Sabbath-bell that chimeth from the kirk.

*Evil Spirit.*

Forebear that dream—forebear that dream!

*Onora in sleep.*

Nay, let me *dream* at least!

That far-off bell, it may be took for viol at a feast—

I only walk among the fields, beneath the autumn sun,

With my dead father, hand in hand, as I have often done.

*Evil Spirit.*

Forebear that dream—forebear that dream!

*Onora in sleep.*

Nay, sweet fiend, let me go—

I never more can walk with *him*, oh, never more but so!

For they have tied my father's feet beneath the kirk-yard  
stone,—

Oh, deep and straight ; oh, very straight ! they move at nights  
alone :

And then he calleth through my dreams, he calleth tenderly,—  
“ Come forth, my daughter, my beloved, and walk the fields  
with me ! ”

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear that dream, or else disprove its pureness by a sign.

*Onora in sleep.*

Speak on, thou shalt be satisfied ! my word shall answer thine.  
I hear a bird which used to sing when I a child was praying ;  
I see the poppies in the corn, I used to sport away in !—

What shall I do—tread down the dew, and pull the blossoms  
blowing ?

Or clap my wicked hands to fright the finches from the rowen ?

*Evil Spirit.*

Thou shalt do something harder still ! Stand up where thou  
dost stand,

Among the fields of Dreamland, with thy father, hand in hand,  
And clear and slow, repeat the vow—declare its cause and  
kind,

Which, not to break in sleep or wake, thou bearest on thy  
mind.

*Onora in sleep.*

I bear a vow of wicked kind, a vow for mournful cause !

I vowed it deep, I vowed it strong—the spirits laughed  
applause !

The spirits trailed, along the pines, low laughter like a  
breeze,

While, high atween their swinging tops, the stars appeared  
to freeze.

*Evil Spirit.*

More calm and free,—speak out to me, why such a vow was  
made.

*Onora in sleep.*

Because that God decreed my death, and I shrank back afraid !  
Have patience, O dead father mine ! I did not fear to die ;—

I wish I were a young dead child, and had thy company !

I wish I lay beside thy feet, a buried three-year child,

And wearing only a kiss of thine, upon my lips that smiled !

The linden-tree that covers thee, might, so, have shadowed  
twain—

For death itself I did not fear—'tis love that makes the pain.  
Love feareth death ! I was no child—I was betrothed that

day ;

I wore a troth-kiss on my lips, I could not give away !

How could I bear to lie content and still beneath a stone,  
And feel my own Betrothed go by—alas! no more mine  
own,—

Go leading by, in wedding pomp, some lovely lady brave,  
With cheeks that blushed as red as rose, while mine were  
cold in grave?

How could I bear to sit in Heaven, on e'er so high a throne,  
And hear him say to her—to *her!* that else he loveth none?  
Though e'er so high I sate above, though e'er so low he spake,  
As clear as thunder I should hear the new oath he might  
take—

That *her's*, forsooth, are heavenly eyes—ah, me! while very dim  
Some heavenly eyes (indeed of Heaven!) would darken  
down to *him*.

*Evil Spirit.*

Who told thee thou wert called to death?

*Onora in sleep.*

I sate all night beside thee—  
The grey owl on the ruined wall shut both his eyes to hide  
thee;

And ever he flapped his heavy wing, all brokenly and weak,  
And the long grass waved against the sky, around his gasping  
beak!

I sate beside thee all the night, while the moonlight lay  
forlorn,

Strewn round us like a dead world's shroud, in ghastly  
fragments torn!

And through the night, and through the hush, and over the  
flapping wing,

We heard beside the Heavenly Gate, the angels murmuring:—  
We heard them say, "Put day to day, and count the days to  
seven,

And God will draw Onora up the golden stairs of Heaven:

And yet He grants the evil ones that purpose to defer,

For if she has no need of HIM, He has no need of *her*."

*Evil Spirit.*

Speak out to me—speak bold and free.

*Onora in sleep.*

And then I heard thee say,—  
"I count upon my rosarie brown, the hours thou hast to stay!  
Yet God permits us evil ones to put by that decree,  
Since if thou hast no need of HIM, He has no need of *thee*—  
And if thou wilt forego the sight of angels, verily  
Thy true love, gazing on thy face, shall guess what angels be—  
Nor bride shall pass, save thee" . . . Alas!—my father's  
hand's a-cold—

The meadows seem . . .

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear the dream, or let the vow be told!

*Onora in sleep.*

I vowed upon thy rosarie brown, this string of antique beads,  
By charnal lichens overgrown, and dank among the weeds—  
This rosarie brown which is thine own,—lost soul of buried  
nun,—

Who, lost by vow, wouldst render now all soul alike un-  
done;—

I vowed upon thy rosarie brown,—and, till such vow should  
break,

A pledge always of living days, 'twas hung around my neck—  
I vowed to thee on rosarie (Dead father, look not so!),  
*I would not thank God in my weal, nor seek God in my woe.*

*Evil Spirit.*

And canst thou prove . . .

*Onora in sleep.*

O love—my love! I felt him near again!

I saw his steed on mountain-head, I heard it on the plain!

Was this no weal for me to feel?—is greater weal than this?

Yet when he came, I wept his name—and the angels heard  
but *his*.

*Evil Spirit.*

Well done, well done!

*Onora in sleep.*

Ay me! the sun . . . the dreamlight 'gins to pine,—  
Ay me! how dread can look the Dead!—Aroint thee, father  
mine!

She started from slumber, she sitteth upright,

And her breath comes in sobs while she stares through the  
night!

There is nought! The great willow, her lattice before,

Large-drawn in the moon, lieth calm on the floor;

But her hands tremble fast as their pulses, and free

From the death-clasp, close over—the BROWN ROSARIE.

### THIRD PART.

'Tis a morn for a bridal; the merry bride-bell

Rings clear through the green-wood that skirts the chapelle;

And the priest at the altar awaiteth the bride,

And the sacristans slyly are jesting aside

At the work shall be doing.

While down through the wood rides that fair companie,

The youths with the courtship, the maids with the glee,—

Till the chapel-cross opens to sight, and at once  
 All the maids sigh demurely, and think for the nonce,  
 "And so endeth a wooing!"

And the bride and the bridegroom are leading the way,  
 With his hand on her rein, and a word yet to say:  
 Her dropt eyelids suggest the soft answers beneath,—  
 And the little quick smiles come and go with her breath,  
 When she sigheth or speaketh.

And the tender bride-mother breaks off unaware  
 From an Ave, to think that her daughter is fair,—  
 Till in nearing the chapel, and glancing before,  
 She seeth her little son stand at the door,—  
 Is it play that he seeketh?

Is it play? when his eyes wander innocent-wild,  
 And sublimed with the sadness unfitting a child!  
 He trembles not, weeps not—the passion is done,  
 And calmly he kneels in their midst, with the sun  
 On his head like a glory.

"O fair-featured maids, ye are many!" he cried,—  
 "But, in fairness and vileness, who matcheth the bride?  
 O brave-hearted youths, ye are many! but whom,  
 For the courage and woe, can ye match with the groom,  
 As ye see them before ye?"

Out spake the bride's mother—"The vileness is thine,  
 If thou shame thine own sister a bride at the shrine!"  
 Out spake the bride's lover—"The vileness be mine,  
 If he shame mine own wife at the hearth or the shrine,  
 And the charge be unprovèd.

"Bring the charge, prove the charge, brother! speak it aloud—  
 Let thy father and her's, hear it deep in his shroud!"  
 —"O father, thou seest—for dead eyes can see—  
 How she wears on her bosom a *brown rosarie*,  
 O my father beloved!"

Then outlaughed the bridegroom, and outlaughed withal  
 Both maidens and youths, by the old chapel wall—  
 "So she weareth no love-gift, kind brother," quoth he,  
 "She may wear, an she listeth, a brown rosarie,  
 Like a pure-hearted lady!"

Then swept through the chapel, the long bridal train!  
 Though he spake to the bride she replied not again:  
 On, as one in a dream, pale and stately she went,  
 Where the altar-lights burn o'er the great sacrament,  
 Faint with daylight, but steady.

But her brother had passed between them and her,  
 And calmly knelt down on the high altar stair—  
 Of an infantine aspect so stern to the view,  
 That the priest could not smile on the child's eyes of blue,  
 As he would for another.

He knelt like a child marble-sculptured and white,  
 That seems kneeling to pray on the tomb of a knight,  
 With a look taken up to each iris of stone  
 From the greatness and death where he kneeleth, but none  
 From the face of a mother.

“In your chapel, O priest, ye have wedded and shriven  
 Fair wives for the hearth, and fair sinners for Heaven!  
 But this fairest my sister, ye think now to wed,  
 Bid her kneel where she standeth, and shrive her instead—  
 O shrive her and wed not!”

In tears, the bride's mother,—“Sir priest, unto thee  
 Would he lie, as he lied to this fair companie!”  
 In wrath, the bride's lover,—“The lie shall be clear!  
 Speak it out, boy! the saints in their niches shall hear—  
 Be the charge proved or said not?”

Then serene in his childhood he lifted his face,  
 And his voice sounded holy and fit for the place—  
 “Look down from your niches, ye still saints, and see  
 How she wears on her bosom *a brown rosarie!*  
 Is it used for the praying?”

The youths looked aside—to laugh there were a sin—  
 And the maidens' lips trembled with smiles shut within:  
 Quoth the priest—“Thou art wild, pretty boy! Blessed she  
 Who prefers at her bridal a brown rosarie  
 To a worldly arraying!”

The bridegroom spake low and led onward the bride,  
 And before the high altar they stood side by side:  
 The rite-book is opened, the rite is begun—  
 They have knelt down together to rise up as one—  
 Who laughed by the altar?

The maidens looked forward, the youths looked around,—  
 The bridegroom's eye flashed from his prayer at the sound;  
 And each saw the bride, as if no bride she were,  
 Gazing cold at the priest, without gesture of prayer,  
 As he read from the psalter.

The priest never knew that she did so, but still  
 He felt a power on him, too strong for his will ;  
 And whenever the Great Name was there to be read,  
 His voice sank to silence—THAT could not be said,  
 Or the air could not hold it.

“I have sinnēd,” quoth he, “I have sinnēd, I wot”—  
 And the tears ran adown his old cheeks at the thought ;  
 They dropped fast on the book ; but he read on the same,—  
 And aye was the silence where should be the NAME,—  
 As the choristers told it.

The rite-book is closed, and the rite being done,  
 They who knelt down together, arise up as one :  
 Fair riseth the bride—Oh, a fair bride is she,—  
 But, for all (think the maidens) that brown rosarie,  
 No saint at her praying !

What aileth the bridegroom ? He glares blank and wide—  
 Then suddenly turning, he kisseth the bride—  
 His lips stung her with cold : she glanced upwardly mute :  
 “Mine own wife,” he said, and fell stark at her foot  
 In the word he was saying.

They have lifted him up,—but his head sinks away,—  
 And his face showeth bleak in the sunshine, and grey.  
 Leave him now where he lieth—for oh, never more  
 Will he kneel at an altar or stand on a floor ;  
 Let his bride gaze upon him !

Long and still was her gaze, while they chafēd him there,  
 And breathed in the mouth whose last life had kissed her !  
 But when they stood up—only *they* ! with a start  
 The shriek from her soul struck her pale lips apart—  
 She has lived, and foregone him !

And low on his body she droppeth adown—  
 “Didst call me thine own wife, belovēd—thine own ?  
 Then take thine own with thee ! thy coldness is warm  
 To the world’s cold without thee ! Come, keep me from harm  
 In a calm of thy teaching !”

She looked in his face earnest long, as in sooth  
 There were hope of an answer,—and then kissed his mouth ;  
 And with head on his bosom, wept, wept bitterly,—  
 “Now, O God, take pity—take pity on me !—  
 God, hear my beseeching !”

She was 'ware of a shadow that crossed where she lay ;  
 She was 'ware of a presence that withered the day—  
 Wild she sprang to her feet,—“ I surrender to *thee*  
 The broken vow's pledge,—the accursed rosarie,—  
 I am ready for dying !”

She dashed it in scorn to the marvel-paved ground,  
 Where it fell mute as snow ; and a weird music-sound  
 Crept up, like a chill, up the aisles long and dim,—  
 As the fiends tried to mock at the choristers' hymn,  
 And moaned in the trying.

#### FOURTH PART.

ONORA looketh listlessly adown the garden walk :  
 “ I am weary, O my mother, of thy tender talk !  
 “ I am weary of the trees a-waving to and fro—  
 Of the steadfast skies above, the running brooks below ;—  
 All things are the same but I ;—only I am dreary ;  
 And, mother, of my dreariness, behold me very weary.

“ Mother, brother, pull the flowers I planted in the spring  
 And smiled to think I should smile more upon their gathering.  
 The bees will find out other flowers—oh, pull them dearest  
 mine,  
 And carry them and carry me before St. Agnes' shrine.”  
 —Whereat they pulled the summer flowers she planted in the  
 spring,  
 And her and them, all mournfully, to Agnes' shrine did bring.

She looked up to the pictured saint, and gently shook her  
 head—

“ The picture is too calm for *me*—too calm for *me*,” she said :  
 “ The little flowers we brought with us, before it we may lay,  
 For those are used to look at Heaven,—but *I* must turn away,—  
 Because no sinner under sun, can dare or bear to gaze  
 On God's or angel's holiness, except in Jesu's face.”

She spoke with passion after pause—“ And were it wisely  
 done?—

If we who cannot gaze above, should walk the earth alone ?  
 If we whose virtue is so weak, should have a will so strong,—  
 And stand blind on the rocks, to choose the right path from  
 the wrong ?

To choose perhaps a love-lit hearth, instead of love and  
 Heaven,—

A single rose, for a rose tree, which beareth seven times seven ?

A rose that droppeth from the hand, that fadeth in the breast,  
 Until, in grieving for the worst, we learn what is the best ! ”  
 Then breaking into tears,—“ Dear, God,” she cried, “ and must  
 we see  
 All blissful things depart from *us*, or ere we go to THEE ?  
 We cannot guess Thee in the wood, or hear Thee in the wind ?  
 Our cedars must fall round us, ere we see the light behind ?  
 Ay sooth, we feel too strong in weal, to need Thee on that road ;  
 But woe being come the soul is dumb, that crieth not on  
 ‘ God.’ ”

Her mother could not speak for tears ; she ever musèd  
 thus—  
 “ *The bees will find out other flowers*,—but what is left for *us* ?  
 But her young brother stayed his sobs, and knelt beside her  
 knee,  
 —“ Thou sweetest sister in the world, hast never a word for  
 me ? ”  
 She passed her hand across his face, she pressed it on his  
 cheek,  
 So tenderly, so tenderly—she needed not to speak.

The wreath that lay on shrine that day, at vespers bloomed  
 no more—  
 The woman fair who placed it there, had died an hour before !  
 Both perished mute, for lack of root, earth’s nourishment to  
 reach ;—  
 O reader, breathe (the ballad saith), some sweetness out of  
 each !

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## THE MOURNFUL MOTHER

(OF THE DEAD BLIND).

DOST thou weep, mournful mother,  
 For thy blind boy in grave ?  
 That no more with each other,  
 Sweet counsel ye can have ?—  
 That *he* left dark by nature,  
 Can never more be led  
 By thee, maternal creature,  
 Along smooth paths instead ?  
 That thou canst no more show him  
 The sunshine, by the heat ;  
 The river’s silver flowing,  
 By murmurs at his feet ?

## THE MOURNFUL MOTHER.

The foliage, by its coolness ;  
 The roses, by their smell ;  
 And all creation's fulness,  
 By Love's invisible ?  
 Weepest thou to behold not  
 His meek blind eyes again,—  
 Closed doorways which are folded,  
 And prayed against in vain—  
 And under which, sate smiling  
 The child-mouth evermore,  
 As one who watcheth, wiling  
 The time by, at a door ?  
 And weepest thou to feel not  
 His clinging hand on thine—  
 Which now, at dream-time, will not  
 Its cold touch disentwine ?  
 And weepest thou still ofter,  
 Oh, never more to mark  
 His low soft words, made softer  
 By speaking in the dark ?  
 Weep on, thou mournful mother !

But since to him when living,  
 Thou wert both sun and moon,  
 Look o'er his grave, surviving,  
 From a high sphere alone :  
 Sustain that exaltation—  
 Expand that tender light ;  
 And hold in mother-passion,  
 Thy Blessèd, in thy sight.  
 See how he went out straightway  
 From the dark world he knew,—  
 No twilight in the gateway  
 To mediate 'twixt the two,—  
 Into the sudden glory,  
 Out of the dark he trod,  
 Departing from before thee  
 At once to light and GOD !—  
 For the first face, beholding  
 The Christ's in its divine,—  
 For the first place, the golden  
 And tideless hyaline ;  
 With trees, at lasting summer,  
 That rock to songful sound,  
 While angels, the new-comer,  
 Wrap a still smile around !

Oh, in the blessed psalm now,  
 His happy voice he tries,—  
 Spreading a thicker palm-bough,  
 Than others, o'er his eyes,—  
 Yet still, in all the singing,  
 Thinks haply of thy song  
 Which, in his life's first springing,  
 Sang to him all night long,—  
 And wishes it beside him,  
 With kissing lips that cool  
 And soft did overglide him,—  
 To make the sweetness full.  
 Look up, O mournful mother ;  
 Thy blind boy walks in light !  
 Ye wait for one another  
 Before God's infinite !  
 But *thou* art now the darkest,  
 Thou mother left below—  
*Thou*, the sole blind,—thou markest,  
 Content that it be so ;—  
 Until ye two *g* 'e meeting  
 Where the great Heaven-gate is,  
 And *he* shall lead thy feet in,  
 As once thou leddest *his* !  
 Wait on, thou mournful mother !



## A VALEDICTION.

God be with thee, my belov'd,—God be with thee !  
 Else alone thou goest forth,  
 Thy face unto the north,—  
 Moor and pleasance, all around thee and beneath thee,  
 Looking equal in one snow !  
 While I who try to reach thee,  
 Vainly follow, vainly follow,  
 With the farewell and the hollo,  
 And cannot reach thee so.  
 Alas ! I can but teach thee.—  
 God be with thee, my belov'd,—God be with thee !

Can I teach thee, my belov'd,—can I teach thee ?

Ye. If I said, "Go left or right,"

And you take my counsel would be

blackly nor of all that poets pass their moment to stain.

As presence

notes

'Tis the eyes that

them on.

My right would show like left ;  
 My raising would depress thee,—  
 My choice of light would blind thee,—  
 Of way, would leave behind thee,—  
 Of end, would leave bereft !  
 Alas ! I can but bless thee.—

May GOD teach thee, my belov'ed,—may GOD teach thee !

Can I bless thee, my belov'ed,—can I bless thee ?

What blessed word can I,  
 From mine own tears, keep dry ?

What flowers grow in my field wherewith to dress thee ?

My good reverts to ill ;  
 My calmnesses would move thee,—  
 My softnesses would prick thee,—  
 My bindings up would break thee,—  
 My crownings, curse and kill.  
 Alas ! I can but love thee.—

May GOD bless thee, my belov'ed,—may GOD bless thee !

Can I love thee, my belov'ed,—can I love thee ?

And is *this* like love, to stand  
 With no help in my hand,

When strong as death I fain would watch above thee ?

My love-kiss can deny  
 No tear that falls beneath it :  
 Mine oath of love can swear thee  
 From no ill that comes near thee,—  
 And thou diest while I breathe it,  
 And I—I can but die !

May GOD love thee, my belov'ed,—may GOD love thee !

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## LADY GERALDINE'S COURTSHIP.

A ROMANCE OF THE AGE.

*A Poet writes to his Friend. Place—A room in Wycombe Hall. Time—Late in the evening.*

DEAR my friend and fellow-student, I would lean my spirit  
 o'er you !

Down the purple of this chamber, tears should scarcely run  
 at will !

I am humbled who was humble ! Friend,—I bow my head  
 before you !

You should lead me to <sup>the</sup> lock <sup>of</sup> measants !—but their face  
 too still. <sup>angels, I</sup>

wrap a still s.

There's a lady—an earl's daughter; she is proud and she is noble;  
 And she treads the crimson carpet, and she breathes the perfumed air;  
 And a kingly blood sends glances up her princely eye to trouble;  
 And the shadow of a monarch's crown, is softened in her hair.

She has halls and she has castles, and the resonant steam-eagles

Follow far on the directing of her floating dove-like hand—  
 With a thundrous vapour trailing, underneath the starry vigils,  
 So to mark upon the blasted heaven, the measure of her land.

There be none of England's daughters, who can show a prouder presence;

Upon princely suitors suing, she has looked in her disdain:  
 She was sprung of English nobles, I was born of English knights;

What was *I* that I should love her—save for feeling of the pain?

I was only a poor poet, made for singing at her casement,  
 As the finches or the thrushes, while she thought of other things.

Oh, she walked so high above me, she appeared to my abasement,  
 In her lovely silken murmur, like an angel clad in wings!

Many vassals bow before her, as her chariot sweeps their doorways;

She hath blest their little children,—as a priest or queen were she!

Oh, too tender or too cruel far, her smile upon the poor was,  
 For I thought it was the same smile, which she used, to smile on *me*.

She has members in the commons, she has lovers in the palace—

And of all the fair court-ladies, few have jewels half as fine:  
 Even the prince has named her beauty, 'twixt the red wine and the chalice:

Oh, and what was *I* to love her? my beloved, my Geraldine!

Yet I could not choose but love her—I was born to poet uses—  
 To love all things set above me, all of good and all of fair!

And ye hills of old Parnassus mountain, we are wont to call the

blackly noted climbing, poets pass from mount to star.  
 At present

notes

'Tis the eyes to them on.

And because I was a poet, and because the people praised me,  
 With their critical deductions for the modern writer's fault ;  
 I could sit at rich men's tables,—though the courtesies that  
 raised me,  
 Still suggested clear between us, the pale spectrum of the salt.

And they praised me in her presence ;—“ Will your book  
 appear this summer ? ”  
 Then returning to each other—“ Yes, our plans are for the  
 moors ; ”  
 Then with whisper dropped behind me—“ There he is ! the  
 latest comer !  
 Oh, she only likes his verses ! what is over, she endures.

“ Quite low born ! self-educated ! somewhat gifted though by  
 nature,—  
 And we make a point of asking him,—of being very kind ;  
 You may speak, he does not hear you ; and besides, he writes  
 no satire,—  
 These new charmers keep their serpents with the antique  
 sting resigned.”

I grew colder, I grew colder, as I stood up there among them,—  
 Till as frost intense will burn you, the cold scorning scorned  
 my brow ;  
 When a sudden silver speaking, gravely cadenced, overrung  
 them,  
 And a sudden silken stirring touched my inner nature through.

I looked upward and beheld her ! With a calm and regnant  
 spirit,  
 Slowly round she swept her eyelids, and said clear before  
 them all—  
 “ Have you such superfluous honour, sir, that, able to confer  
 it,  
 You will come down, Mr. Bertram, as my guest to Wycombe  
 Hall ? ”

Here she paused,—she had been paler at the first word of her  
 speaking ;  
 But because a silence followed it, blushed scarlet, as for shame ;  
 Then, as scorning her own feeling, resumed calmly—“ I am  
 seeking  
 More distinction than these gentlemen think we  
 claim.

"Ne'ertheless, you see, I seek it—not because I am a woman,"—

(Here her smile sprang like a fountain, and, so, overflowed her mouth)

"But because my woods in Sussex have some purple shades at gloaming,

Which are worthy of a king in state, or poet in his youth.

"I invite you, Mr. Bertram, to no hive for worldly speeches—Sir, I scarce should dare—but only where God asked the thrushes first—

And if *you* will sing beside them, in the covert of my beeches,

I will thank you for the woodlands, . . . for the human world at worst."

Then, she smiled around right childly, then, she gazed around right queenly ;

And I bowed—I could not answer! Alternated light and gloom—

While as one who quells the lions, with a steady eye serenely, She, with level fronting eyelids, passed out stately from the room.

Oh, the bless'd woods of Sussex, I can hear them still around me,

With their leafy tide of greenery still rippling up the wind !

Oh, the curs'd woods of Sussex! Oh, the cruel love that bound me

Up against the boles of cedars, to be sham'd where I pined !

Oh, the cursed woods of Sussex! where the hunter's dart has found me,

When a fair face and a tender voice had made me mad and blind !

In that ancient hall of Wycombe, thronged the numerous guests invited,

And the lovely London ladies trod the floors with gliding feet ;

And their voices low with fashion, not with feeling, softly freighted

All the air about the windows, with elastic laughters sweet.

For at eve, the open windows flung their light out on the terrace,

Which the floating orbs of curtains, did with gradual shadow

Ye sweep ;

And you the swans upon the river, fed at morning by the heiress, blackly downward through their snowy wings, at music in

An presence c.

notes

'Tis the eyes that  
them on.

And there evermore was music, both of instrument and singing,  
 Till the finches of the shrubberies, grew restless in the dark ;  
 But the cedars stood up motionless, each in a moonlight  
 ringing,  
 And the deer, half in the glimmer, strewed the hollows of the  
 park.

And though sometimes she would bind me with her silver-  
 corded speeches,  
 To commix my words and laughter with the converse and the  
 jest,—  
 Oft I sate apart and, gazing on the river, through the beeches,  
 Heard, as pure the swans swam down it, her pure voice  
 o'erfloat the rest.

In the morning, horn of huntsman, hoof of steed, and laugh  
 of rider,  
 Spread out cheery from the courtyard, till we lost them in the  
 hills ;  
 While herself and other ladies, and her suitors left beside her,  
 Went a-wandering up the gardens, through the laurels and  
 abeles.

Thus, her foot upon the new-mown grass—bareheaded—with  
 the flowings  
 Of the virginal white vesture, gathered closely to her throat ;  
 With the golden ringlets in her neck, just quickened by her  
 going,  
 And appearing to breathe sun for air, and doubting if to float,—

With a branch of dewy maple, which her right hand held above  
 her,  
 And which trembled a green shadow in betwixt her and the  
 skies,—  
 As she turned her face in going, thus, she drew me on to love  
 her,  
 And to study the deep meaning of the smile hid in her eyes.

For her eyes alone smiled constantly : her lips had serious  
 sweetness,  
 And her front was calm—the dimple rarely rippled on her  
 cheek :  
 But her deep blue eyes smiled constantly,—as if they had  
 fitness  
 Won the secret of a happy dream, she did not.

Thus she drew me the first morning, out across into the garden:

And I walked among her noble friends, and could not keep behind;

Spake she unto all and unto me—"Behold, I am the warden, Of the birds within these lindens, which are cages to their mind.

"But here, in this swarded circle, into which the lime-walk brings us—

Whence the beeches rounded greenly, stand away in reverent fear,—

I will let no music enter, saving what the fountain sings us Which the lilies round the basin, may seem pure enough to hear.

"And the air that waves the lilies, waves this slender jet of water,

Like a holy thought sent feebly up from soul of fasting saint! Whereby lies a marble Silence, sleeping! (Lough the sculptor wrought her)

So asleep, she is forgetting to say *Hush!*—a fancy quaint.

"Mark how heavy white her eyelids! not a dream between them lingers!

And the left hand's index droppeth from the lips upon the cheek:

And the right hand,—with the symbol-rose held slack within the fingers,—

Has fallen backward in the basin—yet this Silence will not speak!

"That the essential meaning growing, may exceed the special symbol,

Is the thought, as I conceive it: it applies more high and low—Your true noblemen will often, through right nobleness, grow humble,

And assert an inward honour, by denying outward show."

"Yes, your Silence," said I, "truly holds her symbol-rose but slackly,

Yet *she holds it*—or would scarcely be a Silence to our ken!

And your nobles wear their ermine on the outside, or walk blackly

At a presence of the social law, as most ignoble men.

notes

'Tis the eyes that  
them on.

"Let the poets dream such dreaming! Madam, in these  
British islands,  
'Tis the substance that wanes ever, 'tis the symbol that  
exceeds:  
Soon we shall have nought but symbol! and for statues like  
this Silence  
Shall accept the rose's marble—in another case, the weed's."

"I let *you* dream," she retorted, "and I grant where'er you go,  
you  
Find for things, names—shows for actions, and pure gold for  
honour clear;  
But when all is run to symbol in the Social, I will throw you  
The world's book, which now reads drily, and sit down with  
Silence here."

Half in playfulness she spoke, I thought, and half in indignation;  
Her friends turned her words to laughter, while her lovers  
deemed her fair,—  
A fair woman—flushed with feeling, in her noble lighted  
station,  
Near the statues white reposing—and both bathed in sunny  
air!—

With the trees round, not so distant, but you heard their  
vernal murmur,  
And beheld in light and shadow the leaves in and outward  
move;  
And the little fountain leaping toward the sun-heart to be  
warmer,  
And recoiling backward, trembling with the too much light  
above—

'Tis a picture for remembrance! and thus, morning after  
morning,  
Did I follow as she drew me, by the spirit, to her feet—  
Why, her greyhound followed also! dogs—we both were dogs  
for scorning—  
To be sent back when she pleased it, and her path lay  
through the wheat.

And thus, morning after morning, spite of oath, and spite of  
sorrow,  
Did I follow at her drawing, while the week-days passed  
along;  
Just to feed the swans this noontide, or to see the fawns to-  
morrow,—  
Or to teach the hill-side echo, some sweet Tuscan in a son

Ay, and sometimes on the hill-side, while we sate down in  
the gowans,  
With the forest green behind us, and its shadow cast before ;  
And the river running under ; and across it, from the rowans,  
A brown partridge whirring near us, till we felt the air it  
bore,—

There, obedient to her praying, did I read aloud the poems  
Made by Tuscan flutes, or instruments more various, of our  
own ;  
Read the pastoral parts of Spenser—or the subtle inter-  
flowings  
Found in Petrarch's sonnets—here's the book—the leaf is  
folded down !—

Or at times a modern volume,—Wordsworth's solemn-  
thoughted idyl,  
Howitt's ballad-dew, or Tennyson's enchanted reverie,—  
Or from Browning some "Pomegranate," which, if cut deep  
down the middle,  
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity !—

Or I read there sometimes, hoarsely, some new poem of my  
making—  
Oh, your poets never read their own best verses to their  
worth,—  
For the echo, in you, breaks upon the words which you are  
speaking,  
And the chariot-wheels jar in the gate, through which you  
drive them forth.

After, when we were grown tired of books, the silence round  
us flinging  
A slow arm of sweet compression, felt with beatings at the  
breast,—  
She would break out, on a sudden, in a gush of woodland  
singing,  
Like a child's emotion in a god—a naiad tired of rest.

Oh, to see or hear her singing ! scarce I know which is  
divinest—  
For her looks sings too—she modulates her gestures on the  
tune ;  
And her mouth stirs with the song, like song ; and when the  
notes are finest,  
'Tis the eyes that shoot out vocal light, and seem to swell  
them on.

Then we talked—oh, how we talked ! her voice, so cadenced  
 in the talking,  
 Made another singing—of the soul ! a music without bars—  
 While the leafy sounds of woodlands, humming round where  
 we were walking,  
 Brought interposition worthy-sweet,—as skies about the stars.

And she spake such good thoughts natural, as if she always  
 thought them—  
 And had sympathies so ready, open, free as bird on branch,  
 Just as ready to fly east as west, whichever way besought  
 them,  
 In the birchen wood a chirrup, or a cockcrow in the grange.

In her utmost lightness there is truth—and often she speaks  
 lightly ;  
 And she has a grace in being gay, which mourners even  
 approve ;  
 For the root of some grave earnest thought is understruck so  
 rightly,  
 As to justify the foliage and the waving flowers above.

And she talked on—*we* talked truly ! upon all things—  
 substance—shadow—  
 Of the sheep that browsed the grasses—of the reapers in the  
 corn—  
 Of the little children from the schools, seen winding through  
 the meadow—  
 Of the poor rich world beyond them, still kept poorer by its  
 scorn !

So of men, and so, of letters—books are men of higher  
 stature,  
 And the only men that speak aloud for future times to hear !  
 So, of mankind in the abstract, which grows slowly into  
 nature,  
 Yet will lift the cry of "progress," as it trod from sphere to  
 sphere.

And her custom was to praise me, when I said,—“The Age  
 culls simples,  
 With a broad clown's back turned broadly, to the glory of the  
 stars—  
 We are gods by our own reck'ning,—and may well shut up  
 the temples,  
 And wield on, amid the incense-steam, the thunder of our  
 cars.

"For we throw our acclamations of self-thanking, self-admiring,  
 With, at every mile run faster,—‘O the wondrous wondrous age!’  
 Little thinking if we work our SOULS as nobly as our iron,—  
 Or if angels will commend us, at the goal of pilgrimage.

"Why, what *is* this patient entrance into nature's deep resources,  
 But the child's most gradual learning to walk straightly without bane?—  
 When we drive out, from the cloud of steam, majestic white horses,  
 Are we greater than the first men, who led black ones by the mane?

"If we sided with the eagles, if we struck the stars in rising,  
 If we wrapped the globe intensely, with one hot electric breath,  
 'Twere but power within our *tether*—no new spirit-power conferring—  
 And in life we were not greater men, nor bolder men in death."

She was patient with my talking; and I loved her—loved her certes,  
 As I loved all heavenly objects, with uplifted eyes and hands!  
 As I loved pure inspirations—loved the graces, loved the virtues,—  
 In a Love content with writing his own name, on desert sands.

Or at least I thought so purely!—thought, no idiot Hope was raising  
 Any crown to crown Love's silence—silent Love that sate alone—  
 Out, alas! the stag is like me—he, that tries to go on grazing  
 With the great deep gun-wound in his neck, then reels with sudden moan.

It was thus I reeled! I told you that her hand had many suitors—  
 But she rose above them, smiling down, as Venus down the waves—  
 And with such a gracious coldness, that they could not press their futures  
 On that present of her courtesy, which yieldingly enslaves.

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## LADY GERALDINE'S COURTSHIP.

And this morning, as I sat alone within the inner chamber  
 With the great saloon beyond it, lost in pleasant thought  
 serene—

For I had been reading Camoëns—that poem you remember,  
 Which his lady's eyes are praised in, as the sweetest ever seen.

And the book lay open, and my thought flew from it, taking  
 from it

A vibration and impulsion to an end beyond its own,—  
 As the branch of a green osier, when a child would over-  
 come it,

Springs up freely from his clasping, and goes swinging in the  
 sun.

As I mused I heard a murmur,—it grew deep as it grew  
 longer—

Speakers using earnest language—"Lady Geraldine, you  
*would!*"

And I heard a voice that pleaded ever on, in accents stronger,  
 As a sense of reason gave it power to make its rhetoric good.

Well I knew that voice—it was an earl's, of soul that  
 matched his station—

Of a soul complete in lordship—might and right read on his  
 brow :

Very finely courteous—far too proud to doubt his domination  
 Of the common people,—he atones for grandeur by a bow.

High straight forehead, nose of eagle, cold blue eyes, of less  
 expression

Than resistance,—coldly casting off the looks of other men,  
 As steel, arrows,—inelastic lips, which seem to taste pos-  
 session,

And be cautious lest the common air should injure or distract.

For the rest, accomplished, upright,—ay, and standing by his  
 order

With a bearing not ungraceful ; fond of arts, and letters too ;  
 Just a good man, made a proud man,—as the sandy rocks  
 that border

A wild coast, by circumstances, in a regnant ebb and flow.

Thus, I knew that voice—I heard it—and I could not help  
 the hearkening :

In the room I stood up blindly, and my burning heart within  
 Seemed to seethe and fuse my senses, till they ran on all  
 sides, darkening,

And scorched, weighed, like melted metal, round my feet  
 that stood therein.

And that voice, I heard it pleading, for love's sake—for  
wealth, position, . . .

For the sake of liberal uses, and great actions to be done—  
And she answered, answered gently—"Nay, my lord, the  
old tradition

Of your Normans, by some worthier hand than mine is,  
should be won."

"Ah, that white hand!" he said quickly,—and in his he  
either drew it,

Or attempted—for with gravity and instance she replied—

"Nay, indeed, my lord, this talk is vain, and we had best  
eschew it,

And pass on, like friends, to other points, less easy to  
decide."

What he said again, I know not. It is likely that his trouble  
Worked his pride up to the surface, for she answered in slow  
scorn—

'And your lordship judges rightly. Whom I marry, shall be  
noble,

Ay, and wealthy. I shall never blush to think how he was  
born."

There, I maddened! her words stung me! Life swept through  
me into fever,

And my soul sprang up astonished; sprang, full-statured in  
an hour!

Know you what it is when anguish, with apocalyptic NEVER,  
To a Pythian height dilates you,—and despair sublimes to  
power?

From my brain, the soul-wings budded!—waved a flame  
about my body,

Whence conventions coiled to ashes! I felt self-drawn out,  
as man,

From amalgamate false natures; and I saw the skies grow  
ruddy,

With the deepening feet of angels, and I knew what spirits  
can!

I was mad—inspired—say either! anguish worketh inspira-  
tion!

Was a man, or beast—perhaps so; for the tiger roars, when  
speared;

And I walked on, step by step, along the level of my passion—  
Oh my soul! and passed the doorway to her face, and never  
feared.

*He* had left her,—peradventure, when my footstep proved my coming—

But for *her*—she half arose, then sate—grew scarlet and grew pale :

Oh, she trembled!—'tis so always with a worldly man or woman,

In the presence of true spirits—what else *can* they do but quail ?

Oh, she fluttered like a tame bird, in ' among its forest-brothers,

Far too strong for it! then drooping, bowed her face upon her hands—

And I spake out wildly, fiercely, brutal truths of her and others !  
*L*, she planted in the desert, swathed her, windlike, with my sands.

I plucked up her social fictions, bloody-rooted, though leaf-verdant,—

Trod them down with words of shaming,—all the purples and the gold,

And the "landed stakes" and lordships—all that spirits pure and ardent

Are cast out of love and reverence, because chancing not to hold.

"For myself I do not argue," said I, "though I love you, Madam,—

But for better souls, that nearer to the height of yours have trod—

And this age shows to my thinking, still more infidels to Adam, Than directly, by profession, simple infidels to God.

"Yet, O God" (I said), "O grave" (I said), "O mother's heart and bosom,

With whom first and last are equal, saint and corpse and little child!

We are fools to your deductions, in these figments of heart-closing!

We are traitors to your causes, in these sympathies defiled!

"Learn more reverence, Madam, not for rank or wealth—*that* needs no learning;

*That* comes quickly—quick as sin does! ay, and often works to sin;

But for Adam's seed, MAN! Trust me, 'tis a clay above your scorning,

With God's image stamped upon it, and God's kindling breath within.

“What right have you, Madam, gazing in your shining mirror  
 daily,  
 Getting so, by heart, your beauty, which all others must  
 adore—  
 While you draw the golden ringlets down your fingers, to vow  
 gaily, . . .  
 You will wed no man that's only good to God,—and nothing  
 more.

“Why, what right have you, made fair by that same God—  
 the sweetest woman  
 Of all women He has fashioned—with your lovely spirit-face,  
 Which would seem too near to vanish, if its smile were not  
 so human,—  
 And your voice of holy sweetness, turning common words to  
 grace :

“What right *can* you have, God's other works, to scorn,  
 despise, . . . revile them  
 In the gross, as mere men, broadly—not as *noble* men,  
 forsooth,—  
 But as Parias of the outer world, forbidden to assoil them,  
 In the hope of living—dying,—near that sweetness of your  
 mouth?

“Have you any answer, Madam? If my spirit were less  
 earthy—  
 If its instruments were gifted with more vibrant silver  
 strings—  
 I would kneel down where I stand, and say—‘Behold me! I  
 am worthy  
 Of thy loving, for I love thee! I am worthy as a king.’

“As it is—your ermined pride, I swear, shall feel this stain  
 upon her—  
 That *I*, poor, weak, tost with passion, scorned by me and you  
 again,  
 Love you, Madam—dare to love you—to my grief and your  
 dishonour—  
 To my endless desolation, and your impotent disdain!”

More mad words like these—mere madness! friend, I need  
 not write them fuller;  
 And I hear my hot soul dropping on the lines in showers of  
 tears—

Oh, a woman! friend, a woman! Why, a beast had scarce  
 been duller,  
 Than roar bestial loud complaints against the shining of the  
 spheres.

But at last there came a pause. I stood all vibrating with  
 thunder,  
 Which my soul had used. The silence drew her face up like  
 a call.  
 Could you guess what word she uttered? She looked up as  
 if in wonder,  
 With tears beaded on her lashes, and said "Bertram!" it was  
 all.

If she had cursed me—and she might have—or if even, with  
 queenly bearing,  
 Which at need is used by women, she had risen up and said,  
 "Sir, you are my guest, and therefore, I have given you a full  
 hearing—  
 Now, beseech you, choose a name exacting somewhat less,  
 instead"—

I had borne it!—but that "Bertram"—why, it lies there on  
 the paper  
 A mere word, without her accents,—and you cannot judge the  
 weight  
 Of the calm which crushed my passion! I seemed swimming  
 in a vapour,—  
 And her gentleness did shame me, whom her scorn made  
 desolate.

So, struck backward, and exhausted with that inward flow of  
 passion  
 Which had passed, in deadly rushing, into forms of abstract  
 truth,—  
 With a logic agonising through unfit denunciation,—  
 And with youth's own anguish turning grimly grey the hairs  
 of youth,—

With the sense accursed and instant, that if even I spake  
 wisely,  
 I spake basely—using truth,—if what I spake, indeed was  
 true—  
 To avenge wrong on a woman—*her*, who sate there weighing  
 nicely  
 A poor manhood's worth, found guilty of such deeds as I  
 could do!—

With such wrong and woe exhausted—what I suffered and  
 occasioned,—  
 As a wild horse, through a city, runs with lightning in his  
 eyes,  
 And then dashing at a church's cold and passive wall,  
 impassioned,  
 Strikes the death into his burning brain, and blindly drops and  
 dies—

So I fell, struck down before her! Do you blame me, friend,  
 for weakness?  
 'Twas my strength of passion slew me!—fell before her like  
 a stone;  
 Fast the dreadful world rolled from me, on its roaring wheels  
 of blackness!  
 When the light came I was lying in this chamber—and alone.

Oh, of course, she charged her lacqueys to bear out the sickly  
 burden,  
 And to cast it from her scornful sight—but not *beyond* the  
 gate—  
 She is too kind to be cruel, and too haughty not to pardon  
 Such a man as I—'twere something to be level to her hate.

But for *me*—you now are conscious why, my friend, I write  
 this letter—  
 How my life is read all backward, and the charm of life  
 undone!  
 I shall leave this house at dawn—I would to-night, if I were  
 better—  
 And I charge my soul to hold my body strengthened for the  
 sun.

When the sun has dyed the orient, I depart with no last  
 gazes,  
 No weak moanings—one word only, left in writing for her  
 hands,—  
 Out of reach of her derisions, and some unavailing praises,  
 To make front against this anguish in the far and foreign  
 lands.

Blame me not, I would not squander life in grief—I am  
 abstemious;  
 I but nurse my spirit's falcon, that its wing may soar again!  
 There's no room for tears of weakness, in the blind eyes of a  
 Pheonius:  
 Into work the poet kneads them,—and he does not die *till*  
*then.*

## CONCLUSION.

BERTRAM finished the last pages, while along the silence  
 ever  
 Still in hot and heavy splashes, fell his tears on every leaf:  
 Having ended, he leans backward in his chair, with lips that  
 quiver  
 From the deep unspoken, ay, and deep unwritten thoughts of  
 grief.

Soh! how still the lady standeth! 'tis a dream—a dream of  
 mercies!  
 'Twixt the purple lattice-curtains, how she standeth still and  
 pale!  
 'Tis a vision, sure, of mercies, sent to soften his self-curses—  
 Sent to sweep a patient quiet, o'er the tossing of his wail.

“Eyes,” he said, “now throbbing through me! are ye eyes  
 that did undo me?  
 Shining eyes, like antique jewels set in Parian statue-stone!  
 Underneath that calm white forehead, are ye ever burning  
 torrid,  
 O'er the desolate sand-desert of my heart and life undone?”

With a murmurous stir, uncertain, in the air, the purple curtain  
 Swelleth in and swelleth out around her motionless pale  
 brows;  
 While the gliding of the river sends a rippling noise for ever,  
 Through the open casement whitened by the moonlight's  
 slant repose.

Said he—“Vision of a lady! stand there silent, stand there  
 steady!  
 Now I see it plainly, plainly; now I cannot hope or doubt—  
 There, the cheeks of calm expression—there, the lips of silent  
 passion,  
 Curv'd like an archer's bow, to send the bitter arrows out.”

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling,—  
 And approached him slowly, slowly, in a gliding measured  
 pace;  
 With her own white hands extended, as if praying one  
 offended,  
 And a look of supplication, gazing earnest in his face.

Said he—“Wake me by no gesture,—sound of breath, or stir  
 of vesture;  
 Let the blessed apparition melt not yet to its divine!

No approaching—hush! no breathing! or, my heart must swoon to death in

The too utter life thou bringest—O thou dream of Geraldine!”

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling—  
But the tears ran over lightly from her eyes, and tenderly;

“Dost thou, Bertram, truly love me? Is no woman far above me,

Found more worthy of thy poet-heart, than such a one as I?”

Said he—“I would dream so ever, like the flowing of that river,

Flowing ever in a shadow, greenly onward to the sea;  
So, thou vision of all sweetness—princely to a full completeness,—

Would my heart of life flow onward—deathward—through this dream of THEE!”

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling,—  
While the shining tears ran faster down the blushing of her cheeks;

Then with her hands enfolding both of his, she softly told him,  
“Bertram, if I say I love thee, . . . 'tis the vision only speaks.”

Softened, quickened to adore her, on his knee he fell before her—

And she whispered low in triumph—“It shall be as I have sworn!

Very rich he is in virtues,—very noble—noble, certes;  
And I shall not blush in knowing, that men call him lowly born!”

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## A VISION OF POETS.

“O Sacred Essence, lighting me this hour,  
How may I lightly stifle thy great power?”

*Echo.* Power. Power! but of whence? under the greenwood spray?  
Or liv'st in Heaven? saye.

*Echo.* In Heavens aye. In Heavens aye. In Heavens aye! tell, may I it obtayne  
By alms, by fasting, prayer,—by paine?

*Echo.* By paine. Show me the paine, it shall be undergone;  
I to mine end will still go on.

*Echo.* Go on.”  
BRITANNIA'S PASTORALS.

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A POET could not sleep aright,  
For his soul kept up too much light  
Under his eyelids for the night:

And thus he rose disquieted,  
 With sweet rhymes ringing through his head,  
 And in the forest wander'd ;

Where, sloping up the darkest glades,  
 The moon had drawn long colonnades,  
 Upon whose floor the verdure fades

To a faint silver : pavement fair,  
 The antique Dryads scarce would dare  
 To footprint o'er, if such were there,

But rather sit by breathlessly,  
 With tears in their large eyes to see  
 The consecrated sight. But HE—

The poet—who with spirit-kiss  
 Familiar, had long claimed for his  
 Whatever earthly beauty is,

Who also in his spirit bore  
 A Beauty passing the earth's store,  
 Walked calmly onward evermore.

His aimless thoughts in metre went,  
 Like a babe's hand, without intent,  
 Drawn down a seven-stringed instrument.

Nor jarred it with his mood when as,  
 With a faint stirring down the grass,  
 An apparition fair did pass.

He might have feared another time,  
 But all things fair and strange did chime  
 With his thoughts then—as rhyme to rhyme.

An angel had not startled him,  
 Dropping from Heaven's encyclic rim  
 To breathe from glory in the Dim—

Much less a lady, riding slow  
 Upon a palfrey white as snow,  
 And smooth as a snow-cloud could go.

Full upon his she turned her face,—  
 "What, ho, sir poet ! dost thou pace  
 Our woods at night, in ghostly chace

"Of some fair Dryad of old tales,  
 Who chaunts between the nightingales,  
 And over sleep by song prevails ?"

She smiled : but he could see arise  
Her soul from far adown her eyes,  
Prepared as if for sacrifice.

She looked a queen who seemeth gay  
From royal grace alone : " Now, nay,"  
He answered,— " slumber passed away,

" Compelled by instincts in my head,  
That I should see to-night instead  
Of a fair nymph, some fairer Dread."

She looked up quickly to the sky  
And spake :—" The moon's regality  
Will hear no praise ! she is as I.

" She is in heaven, and I on earth ;  
This is my kingdom—I come forth  
To crown all poets to their worth."

He brake in with a voice that mourned—  
" To their worth, lady ! They are scorned  
By men they sing for, till inurned.

" To their worth ! Beauty in the mind  
Leaves the hearth cold ; and love-refined  
Ambitions make the world unkind.

" The boor who ploughs the daisy down,  
The chief, whose mortgage of renown  
Fixed upon graves, has bought a crown—

" Both these are happier, more approved  
Than poets !—why should I be moved  
In saying both are more beloved ?"

" The south can judge not of the north ;"  
She resumed calmly—" I come forth  
To crown all poets to their worth.

" Yea, sooth ! and to anoint them all  
With blessed oils, which surely shall  
Smell sweeter as the ages fall."

" As sweet," the poet said, and rung  
A low sad laugh, " as flowers do sprung  
Out of their graves when they die young !

" As sweet as window eglantine—  
Some bough of which, as they decline,  
The hired nurse plucketh at their sign !

"As sweet, in short, as perfumed shroud,  
Which the fair Roman maidens sewed  
For English Keats, singing aloud."

The lady answered, "Yea, as sweet!  
The things thou namest being complete  
In fragrance, as I measure it.

"Since sweet the death-clothes and the knell  
Of him who, having lived, dies well,—  
And holy sweet the asphodel,

"Stirred softly by that foot of his,  
When he treads brave on all that is,  
Into the world of souls from this!

"Since sweet the tears, dropped at the door  
Of tearless death,—and even before:  
Sweet, consecrated evermore!

"What! dost thou judge it a strange thing,  
That poets, crowned for conquering,  
Should bear some dust from out the ring?

"Come on with me, come on with me;  
And learn in coming! Let me free  
Thy spirit into verity."

She ceased; her palfrey's paces sent  
No separate noises as she went,—  
'Twas a bee's hum—a little spent.

And while the poet seemed to tread  
Along the drowsy noise so made,  
The forest heaved up overhead

Its billowy foliage through the air,  
And the calm stars did, far and fair,  
O'er-swim the masses everywhere:

Save where the overtopping pines  
Did bar their tremulous light with lines  
All fixed and black. Now the moon shines

A broader glory! You may see  
The trees grow rarer presently,—  
The air blows up more fresh and free:

Until they come from dark to light,  
And from the forest to the sight  
Of the large Heaven-heart, bare with night,—

A fiery throb in every star,  
 With burning arteries that are  
 The conduits of God's life afar,—

A wild brown moorland underneath,  
 Low glimmering here and thither, with  
 White pools in breaks, as blank as death.

Beside the first pool, near the wood,  
 A dead tree in set horror stood,  
 Peeled and disjointed, stark as rood ;

Since thunder stricken, years ago,  
 Fixed in the spectral strain and throe  
 Wherewith it struggled from the blow :

A monumental tree . . . alone,  
 That will not bend, if tempest-blown,  
 But break off sudden like a stone,—

Its lifeless shadow lies oblique  
 Upon the pool,—where, javelin-like,  
 The star rays quiver while they strike.

“Drink,” said the lady, very still—  
 “Be holy and cold.” He did her will,  
 And drank the starry water chill.

The next pool they came near unto,  
 Was bare of trees : there, only grew  
 Straight flags and lilies fair to view,

Which sullen on the water sate,  
 And leant their faces on the flat,  
 As weary of the starlight-state.

“Drink,” said the lady, grave and slow,  
 “*World's use* behoveth thee to know.”  
 He drank the bitter wave below.

The third pool, girt with thorny bushes,  
 And flaunting weeds, and reeds and rushes  
 That winds sang through in mournful gushes,

Was whitely smeared in many a round  
 By a slow slime ; the starlight swound  
 Over the ghastly light it found.

“Drink,” said the lady, sad and slow—  
 “*World's love* behoveth thee to know.”  
 He looked to her, commanding so.

Her brow was troubled, but her eye  
Struck clear to his soul. For all reply  
He drank the water suddenly,—

Then, with a deathly sickness, passed  
Beside the fourth pool and the last,  
Where weights of shadow were down-cast

From yew and cypress, and from trails  
Of hemlock clasping the trunk-scales,  
And flung across the intervals

From yew to yew. Who dareth stoop  
Where those moist branches overdroop,  
Into his heart the chill strikes up :

He hears a silent, gliding coil—  
The snakes breathe hard against the soil—  
His foot slips in their slimy oil :

And toads seem crawling on his hand,  
And clinging bats, but dimly scanned,  
Right in his face their wings expand.

A paleness took the poet's cheek :  
" Must I drink *here* ? " he questioned meek  
The lady's will, with utterance weak.

" Ay, ay, " she said, " it so must be "—  
(And this time she spake cheerfully)  
" Behoves thee know *World's cruelty*."

He bowed his forehead till his mouth  
Curved in the wave, and drank unloth,  
As if from rivers of the south.

His lips sobbed through the water rank,  
His heart paused in him while he drank,  
His brain beat heart-like—rose and sank,—

And he swooned backward to a dream  
Wherein he lay 'twixt gloom and gleam,  
With Death and Life at each extreme.

And spiritual thunders, born of soul  
Not cloud, did leap from mystic pole,  
And o'er him roll and counter-roll,

Crushing their echoes reboant  
With their own wheels. Did Heaven so grant  
His spirit a sign of covenant ?

At last came silence. A slow kiss  
Did crown his forehead after this :  
His eyelids flew back for the bliss.

The lady stood beside his head,  
Smiling a thought, with hair dispread !  
The moonshine seemed dishevellèd

In her sleek tresses manifold ;  
Like Danae's in the rain of old,  
That dripped with melancholy gold !

But SHE was holy, pale, and high—  
As one who saw an ecstasy  
Beyond a foretold agony.

“Rise up!” said she, with voice where song  
Eddied through speech—“rise up, be strong !  
And learn how right avengeth wrong.”

The poet rose up on his feet :  
He stood before an altar set  
For sacrament, with vessels meet,

And mystic altar-lights which shine  
As if their flames were crystalline  
Carved flames that would not shrink or pine.

The altar filled the central place  
Of a great church and toward its face  
Long aisles did shoot and interlace.

And from it a continuous mist  
Of incense (round the edges kissed  
By a pure light of amethyst)

Wound upward slowly and throbbingly,  
Cloud within cloud right silverly,  
Cloud above cloud, victoriously,

Broke full against the archèd roof,  
And, thence refracting, eddied off  
And floated through the marble woof

Of many a fine-wrought architrave,—  
Then, poising the white masses brave,  
Swept solemnly down aisle and nave.

And now in dark, and now in light,  
The countless columns, glimmering white,  
Scemed leading out to Infinite.

Plunged half-way up the shaft they showed,  
 In the pale shifting incense-cloud  
 Which flowed them by, and overflowed,

Till mist and marble seemed to blend,  
 And the whole temple, at the end,  
 With its own incense to distend ;

The arches, like a giant's bow,  
 To bend and slacken,—and below,  
 The niched saints to come and go.

Alone, amid the shifting scene,  
 That central altar stood serene  
 In its clear steadfast taper-sheen.

Then first, the poet was aware  
 Of a chief angel standing there  
 Before that altar, in the glare.

His eyes were dreadful, for you saw  
 That *they* saw God—his lips and jaw  
 Grand-made and strong, as Sinai's Law

They could enunciate, and refrain  
 From vibratory after-pain ;  
 And his brow's height was sovereign—

On the vast background of his wings  
 Arose his image ! and he flings  
 From each plumed arc, pale glitterings

And fiery flakes (as beateth more  
 Or less, the angel-heart !) before,  
 And round him, upon roof and floor,

Edging with fire the shifting fumes :  
 While at his side, 'twixt lights and glooms,  
 The phantasm of an organ booms.

Extending from which instrument  
 And angel, right and left-way bent  
 The poet's sight grew sentient

Of a strange company around  
 And toward the altar,—pale and crowned,  
 With sovran eyes of depth profound.

Deathful their faces were ; and yet  
 The power of life was in them set—  
 Never forgot, nor to forget.

Sublime significance of mouth,  
Dilated nostril full of youth,  
And forehead royal with the truth.

These faces were not multiplied  
Beyond your count, but side by side  
Did front the altar, glorified ;

Still as a vision, yet exprest  
Full as an action—look and geste  
Of buried saint, in risen rest !

The poet knew them. Faint and dim  
His spirit seemed to sink in him,  
Then like a dolphin change and swim

The current—These were poets true  
Who died for Beauty, as martyrs do  
For Truth—the ends being scarcely two.

God's prophets of the Beautiful  
These poets were—of iron rule,  
The rugged cilix, serge of wool.

Here, Homer, with the broad suspense  
Of thunderous brows, and lips intense  
Of garrulous god-innocence.

There, Shakspeare ! on whose forehead climb  
The crowns o' the world ! Oh, eyes sublime—  
With tears and laughters for all time !

Here, Æschylus,—the women swooned  
To see so awful when he frowned  
As the gods did,—he standeth crowned.

Euripides, with close and mild  
Scholastic lips,—that could be wild,  
And laugh or sob out like a child

Right in the classes. Sophocles,  
With that king's look which down the trees,  
Followed the dark effigies

Of the lost Theban ! Hesiod old,  
Who, somewhat blind, and deaf, and cold,  
Cared most for gods and bulls ! and bold

Electric Pindar, quick as fear,  
With race-dust on his cheeks, and clear,  
Slant startled eyes that seem to hear

The chariot rounding the last goal,  
To hurtle past it in his soul !  
And Sappho crowned with aureole

Of ebon curls on calmed brows—  
O poet-woman ! none forgoes  
The leap, attaining the repose !

Theocritus, with glittering locks  
Dropt sideway, as betwixt the rocks  
He watched the visionary flocks !

And Aristophanes, who took  
The world with mirth, and laughter-struck  
The hollow caves of Thought and woke

The infinite echoes hid in each.  
And Virgil ! shade of Mantuan beech  
Did help the shade of bay to reach

And knit around his forehead high !—  
For his gods wore less majesty  
Than his brown bees hummed deathlessly.

Lucretius—nobler than his mood !  
Who dropped his plummet down the broad  
Deep universe, and said " No God,"

Finding no bottom ! he denied  
Divinely the divine, and died  
Chief poet on the Tiber-side,

By grace of God ! his face is stern,  
As one compelled, in spite of scorn,  
To teach a truth he could not learn.

And Ossian, dimly seen or guessed ;  
Once counted greater than the rest,  
When mountain winds blew out his vest.

And Spenser drooped his dreaming head  
(With languid sleep-smile you had said  
From his own verse engendered)

On Aristo's, till they ran  
Their locks in one !—The Italian  
Shot nimbler heat of bolder man

From his fine lids. And Dante stern  
And sweet, whose spirit was an urn  
For wine and milk poured out in turn,

Hard-souled Alfieri; and fancy-willed  
Boiardo,—who with laughter filled  
The pauses of the jostled shield.

And Berni, with a hand stretched out  
To sleek that storm! And not without  
The wreath he died in, and the doubt

He died by, Tasso! bard and lover,  
Whose visions were too thin to cover  
The face of a false woman over.

And soft Racine,—and grave Corneille—  
The orator of rhymes, whose wail  
Scarce shook his purple! And Petrarch pale,

Who from his brainlit heart hath thrown  
A thousand thoughts beneath the sun,  
Each perfumed with the name of One.

And Camoëns, with that look he had,  
Compelling India's Genius sad  
From the wave through the Lusiad,

With murmurs of a purple ocean  
Indrawn in vibrative emotion  
Along the verse! And while devotion

In his wild eyes fantastic shone  
Between the bright curls blown upon  
By airs celestial,—Calderon!

And bold De Vega,—who breathed quick  
Song after song, till death's old trick  
Put pause to life and rhetorick.

And Goethe—with that reaching eye  
His soul reached out from, far and high,  
And fell from inner entity.

And Schiller, with heroic front  
Worthy of Plutarch's kiss upon't,—  
Too large for wreath of modern wont.

And Chaucer, with his infantine  
Familiar clasp of things divine—  
That mark upon his lip is wine.

Here Milton's eyes strike piercing-dim!  
The shapes of suns and stars did swim  
Like clouds from them, and granted him

God for sole vision ! Cowley, there,  
Whose active fancy debonair  
Drew straws like amber—foul to fair.

Drayton and Browne,—with smiles they drew  
From outward Nature, to renew  
From their own inward nature true.

And Marlowe, Webster, Fletcher, Ben—  
Whose fire-hearts sowed our furrows when  
The world was worthy of such men.

And Burns, with pungent passionings  
Set in his eyes. Deep lyric springs  
Are of the fire-mount's issuings.

And Shelley, in his white ideal,  
All statue-blind ; and Keats the real  
Adonis, with the hymeneal

Fresh vernal buds half sunk between  
His youthful curls, kissed straight and sheen  
In his Rome-grave, by Venus queen.

And poor, proud Byron,—sad as grave  
And salt as life ! forlornly brave,  
And quivering with the dark he drave.

And visionary Coleridge, who  
Did sweep his thoughts as angels do  
Their wings, with cadence up the Blue.

These poets faced (and other more)  
The lighted altar booming o'er  
The clouds of incense dim and hoar :

And all their faces, in the lull  
Of natural things, looked wonderful  
With life and death and deathless rule !

All, still as stone, and yet intense ;  
As if by spirit's vehemence  
That stone was carved, and not by sense.

All still and calm as statue-stone !  
The life lay coiled unforegone  
Up in the awful eyes alone,

And flung its length out through the air  
Into whatever eyes should dare  
To front them—Awful shapes and fair !

But where the heart of each should beat,  
There seemed a wound instead of it,  
From whence the blood dropped to their feet,

Drop after drop—dropped heavily,  
As century follows century  
Into the deep eternity.

Then said the lady—and her word  
Came distant,—as wide waves were stirred  
Between her and the ear that heard ;—

“ *World's use* is cold—*World's love* is vain,—  
*World's cruelty* is bitter bane ;  
But pain is not the fruit of pain.

“ Harken, O poet, whom I led  
From the dark wood ! Dismissing dread,  
Now hear this angel in my stead.

“ His organ's pedals strike along  
These poets' hearts, which metal-strong,  
They gave him without count of wrong,—

“ From which foundation he can guide  
Up to God's feet, from these who died,  
An anthem fully glorified !

“ Whereat God's blessing . . . IBARAK  
Breathes back this music—folds it back  
About the earth in vapoury rack :

“ And men walk in it, crying ‘ Lo !  
The world is wider, and we know  
The very heavens look brighter so !

“ ‘ The stars walk statelier round the edge  
O' the silver spheres, and give in pledge  
Their light for nobler privilege.

“ ‘ No little flower but joys or grieves—  
Full life is rustling in the sheaves ;  
Full spirit sweeps the forest-leaves !’

“ So works this music on the earth !  
God so admits it, sends it forth,  
To add another worth to worth—

“ A new creation-bloom that rounds  
The old creation, and expounds  
His Beautiful in tuncful sounds.

"Now hearken!" Then the Poet gazed  
Upon the angel glorious-faced,  
Whose hand, majestically raised,

Floated across the organ-keys,  
Like a pale moon o'er murmuring seas,  
With no touch but with influences.

Then rose and fell (with swell and swound  
Of shapeless noises wandering round  
A concord which at last they found)

Those mystic keys—the tones were mixed,  
Dim, faint, and thrilled and throbbed betwixt  
The incomplete and the unfixed :

And therein mighty minds were heard  
In mighty musings, inly stirred,  
And struggling outward for a word.

Until these surges, having run  
This way and that, gave out as one  
An Aphroditè of sweet tune,—

A harmony that finding vent,  
Upward in grand ascension went,  
Winged to a heavenly argument—

Up, upward! like a saint who strips  
The shroud back from his eyes and lips,  
And rises in apocalypse!

A Harmony sublime and plain  
Which cleft (as flying swan, the rain,—  
Throwing the drops off with a strain

Of her white wing) those undertones  
Of perplexed chords, and soared at once,  
And struck out from the starry thrones

Their several silver octaves, as  
It passed to God! The music was  
Of divine stature—strong to pass!

And those who heard it, understood  
Something of life in spirit and blood—  
Something of nature's fair and good.

And while it sounded, those great souls  
Did thrill as racers at the goals,  
And burn in all their aureoles.

But she, the lady, as vapour-bound,  
 Stood calmly in the joy of sound,—  
 Like Nature with the showers around.

And when it ceased, the blood which fell,  
 Again, alone grew audible,  
 Tolling the silence as a bell.

The sovran angel lifted high  
 His hand, and spake out sovranly—  
 "Tried poets, hearken and reply!

"Give me true answers. If we grant  
 That not to suffer is to want  
 The conscience of the Jubilant,—

"If ignorance of anguish is  
*But* ignorance; and mortals miss  
 Far prospects, by a level bliss,—

"If as two colours must be viewed  
 In a seen image, mortals should  
 Need good and evil, to see good,—

"If to speak nobly, comprehends  
 To feel profoundly—if the ends  
 Of power and suffering, Nature blends,—

"If poets on the tripod must  
 Writhe like the Pythian, to make just  
 Their oracles, and merit trust,—

"If every vatic word that sweeps  
 To change the world, must pale their lips,  
 And leave their own souls in eclipse—

"If to search deep the universe  
 Must pierce the searcher with the curse,—  
 Because that bolt (in man's reverse),

'Was shot to the heart o' the wood, and lies  
 Wedged deepest in the best!—if eyes  
 That look for visions and surprise

"From marshalled angels, must shut down  
 Their lids, first upon sun and moon,  
 The head asleep upon a stone,—

"If ONE who did redeem you back,  
 By his own lack, from final lack,  
 Did consecrate by touch and track

" Those temporal sorrows, till the taste  
Of brackish waters of the waste  
Is salt with tears He dropt too fast,—

" If all the crowns of earth must wound—  
With prickings of the thorns He found—  
If saddest sighs swell sweetest sound,—

" What say ye unto this?—refuse  
This baptism in salt water?—choose  
Calm breasts, mute lips, and labour loose?

" Or, oh ye gifted givers ! ye  
Who give your liberal hearts to me,  
To make the world this harmony,—

" Are ye resigned that they be spent  
To such world's help ?"—

The Spirits bent

Their awful brows and said—" Content !"

Content ! it sounded like *Amen*,  
Said by a choir of mourning men—  
An affirmation full of pain

And patience !—ay, of glorying,  
And adoration,—as a king  
Might seal an oath for governing.

Then said the angel—and his face  
Lightened abroad, until the place  
Grew larger for a moment's space,—

The long aisles flashing out in light,  
And nave and transept, columns white,  
And arches crossed, being clear to sight,

As if the roof were off, and all  
Stood in the noon-sun,—“ Lo ! I call  
To other hearts as liberal.

" This pedal strikes out in the air !  
My instrument hath room to bear  
Still fuller strains and perfecter.

" Herein is room, and shall be room  
While Time lasts, for new hearts to come  
Consummating while they consume.

“What living man will bring a gift  
Of his own heart, and help to lift  
The tune?—The race is to the swift!”

So asked the angels. Straight the while  
A company came up the aisle  
With measured step and sorted smile;

Cleaving the incense-clouds that rise,  
With winking unaccustomed eyes,  
And love-locks smelling sweet of spice.

One bore his head above the rest,  
As if the world were dispossessed—  
And One did pillow chin on breast.

Right languid—an as he should faint!  
One shook his curls across his paint,  
And moralised on worldly taint.

One, slanting up his face, did wink  
The salt rheum to the eyelid's brink,  
To think—O gods! or—not to think!

Some trod out stealthily and slow,  
As if the sun would fall in snow,  
If *they* walked to, instead of fro.

And some with conscious ambling free,  
Did shake their bells right daintily  
On hand and foot, for harmony.

And some composing sudden sighs,  
In attitudes of point-device,  
Rehearsed impromptu agonies.

And when this company drew near  
The spirits crowned, it might appear  
Submitted to a ghastly fear.

As a sane eye in master-passion  
Constrains a maniac to the fashion  
Of hideous maniac imitation

In the least geste—the dropping low  
O' the lid—the wrinkling of the brow,—  
Exaggerate with mock and mow,—

So, mastered was that company  
By the crowned vision utterly,  
Swayed to a maniac mockery.

One dulled his eyeballs, as they ached  
 With Homer's forehead—though he lacked  
 An inch of any! And one racked

His lower lip with restless tooth,—  
 As Pindar's rushing words forsooth  
 Were pent behind it. One, his smooth

Pink cheeks, did rumple passionate,  
 Like Æschylus—and tried to prate  
 On trolling tongue, of fate and fate!

One set her eyes like Sappho's—or  
 Any light woman's! one forbore  
 Like Dante, or any man as poor

In mirth, to let a smile undo  
 His hard shut lips, And one, that drew  
 Sour humours from his mother, blew

His sunken cheeks out to the size  
 Of most unnatural jollities,  
 Because Anacreon looked jest-wise.

So with the rest.—It was a sight  
 For great world-laughter, as it might  
 For great world-wrath, with equal right!

Out came a speaker from that crowd,  
 To speak for all—in sleek and proud  
 Exordial periods, while he bowed

His knee before the angel.—“Thus,  
 O angel, who hast called for us,  
 We bring thee service emulous,—

“Fit service from sufficient soul—  
 Hand-service, to receive world's dole—  
 Lip-service, in world's ear to roll

“Adjusted concords—soft enow  
 To hear the wine-cups passing, through,  
 And not too grave to spoil the show.

“Thou, certes, when thou askest more,  
 O sapient angel, leanest o'er  
 The window-sill of metaphor.

“To give our hearts up! fie!—That rage  
 Barbaric, antedates the age!  
 It is not done on any stage.

" Because your scald or gleeman went  
With seven or nine-stringed instrument  
Upon his back—must ours be bent ?

" We are not pilgrims, by your leave,  
No, nor yet martyrs ! if we grieve,  
It is to rhyme to—summer eve.

" And if we labour, it shall be  
As suiteth best with our degree,  
In after-dinner reverie."

More yet that speaker would have said,—  
Poising between his smiles fair-fed,  
Each separate phrase till finish'd ;

But all the foreheads of those born  
And dead true poets flashed with scorn  
Betwixt the bay leaves round them worn—

Ay, jetted such brave fire, that they,  
The new-come, shrank and paled away,  
Like leaden ashes when the day

Strikes on the hearth ! A spirit-blast,  
A presence known by power at last  
Took them up mutely—they had passed !

And *he*, our pilgrim-poet, saw  
Only their places, in deep awe,—  
What time the angel's smile did draw

His gazing upward. Smiling on,  
The angel in the angel shone,  
Revealing glory in benison.

Till, ripened in the light which shut  
The poet in, his spirit mute  
Dropped sudden, as a perfect fruit.

He fell before the Angel's feet,  
Saying—" If what is true is sweet,  
In something I may compass it.

" For, where my worthiness is poor,  
My will stands richly at the door,  
To pay shortcomings evermore.

" Accept me therefore—Not for price,  
And not for pride, my sacrifice  
Is tendered ! for my soul is nice,

" And will beat down those dusty seeds  
Of bearded corn if he succeeds  
In soaring while the covey feeds.

" I soar—I am drawn up like the lark  
To its white cloud! So high my mark,  
Albeit my wing is small and dark!

" I ask no wages—seek no fame!  
Sew me, for shroud round face and name,  
God's banner of the oriflamme.

" I only would have leave to lose  
(In tears and blood, if so He choose)  
Mine inward music out to use.

" I only would be spent—in pain  
And loss, perchance—but not in vain,  
Upon the sweetness of that strain,—

" Only project, beyond the bound  
Of mine own life, so lost and found,  
My voice, and live on in its sound,—

" Only embrace and be embraced  
By fiery ends,—whereby to waste,  
And light God's future with my past!"

The angel's smile grew more divine—  
The mortal speaking—ay, its shine  
Swelled fuller, like a choir note fine,

Till the broad gloriole, round his brow,  
Did vibrate with the light below;  
But what he said I do not know.

Nor know I if the man who prayed,  
Rose up accepted, unforbade,  
From the church-floor where he was laid,—

Nor if a listening life did run  
Through the king-poets, glossing down  
Their eyes capacious of renown.

My soul, which saw these things, was blind  
By what it looked on! I can find  
No certain count of things behind.

I saw alone, dim white and grand  
As in a dream, the angel's hand  
Stretched forth in gesture of command,

Straight through the haze—And so, as erst,  
A strain, more noble than the first,  
Mused in the organ, and outburst.

With giant march from floor to roof,  
Rose the full notes ; now parted off  
In pauses massively aloof,

Like measured thunders ; now rejoined  
In concords of mysterious kind,  
Which won together sense and mind !

Now flashing sharp on sharp along,  
Exultant, in a mounting throng,—  
Now dying off into a song

Fed upon minors,—starry sounds  
Moved on free-paced, in silver rounds,  
Enlarging liberty with bounds.

And every rhythm that seemed to close,  
Survived in confluent underflows,  
Symphonious with the next that rose :

Thus the whole strain being multiplied  
And greatened,—with its glorified  
Wings shot abroad from side to side,—

Waved backwards (as a wind might wave  
A Brocken mist and with as brave  
Wild roaring) arch and architrave,

Aisle, transept, column, marble wall,—  
Then swelling outward, prodigal  
Of aspiration beyond thrall,

Soared,—and drew up with it the whole  
Of this said vision—as a soul  
Is raised by a thought ! and as a roll

Of bright devices is unrolled  
Still upward, with a gradual gold,—  
So rose the vision manifold,

Angel and organ, and the round  
Of spirits, solemnised and crowned—  
While the freed clouds of incense wound

Ascending, following in their track,  
And glimmering faintly, like the rack  
O' the moon, in her own light cast back.

And as that solemn Dream withdrew,  
The lady's kiss did fall anew  
Cold on the poet's brow as dew.

And that same kiss which bound him first  
Beyond the senses, now reversed  
Its own law, and most subtly pierced

His spirit with the sense of things  
Sensual and present. Vanishings  
Of glory, with Æolian wings

Struck him and passed: the lady's face  
Did melt back in the chrysopras  
Of the orient morning sky that was

Yet clear of lark,—and there and so  
She melted, as a star might do,  
Still smiling as she melted—slow!

Smiling so slow, he seemed to see  
Her smile the last thing, gloriously,  
Beyond her—far as memory!

Then he looked round: he was alone—  
He lay before the breaking sun,  
As Jacob at the Bethel stone.

And thought's entangled skein being wound,  
He knew the moorland of his swound,  
And the pale pools that seared the ground,—

The far wood-pines, like offing ships—  
The fourth pool's yew anear him drips—  
*World's cruelty* attaints his lips;

And still he tastes it—bitter still—  
Through all that glorious possible  
He had the sight of present ill!

Yet rising calmly up and slowly,  
With such a cheer as scorneth folly,  
And mild delightsome melancholy,

He journeyed homeward through the wood,  
And prayed along the solitude,  
Betwixt the pines,—“O God, my God!”

The golden morning's open flowings  
Did sway the trees to murmurous bowings,—  
In metric chant of blessed poems.

And passing homeward through the wood,  
 He prayed along the solitude,—  
 "THOU, Poet-God, art great and good!

"And though we must have, and have had  
 Right reason to be earthly sad,—  
 THOU, Poet-God, art great and glad."

## CONCLUSION.

Life treads on life, and heart on heart—  
 We press too close in church and mart,  
 To keep a dream or grave apart.

And I was 'ware of walking down  
 That same green forest where had gone  
 The poet-pilgrim. One by one

I traced his footsteps! From the east  
 A red and tender radiance pressed  
 Through the near trees, until I guessed

The sun behind shone full and round;  
 While up the leafiness profound  
 A wind scarce old enough for sound

Stood ready to blow on me when  
 I turned that way; and now and then  
 The birds sang and brake off again

To shake their pretty feathers dry  
 Of dew which slideth droppingly  
 From the leaf-edges, and apply

Back to their song. 'Twixt dew and bird  
 So sweet a silence ministered,  
 God seemed to use it for a word.

Yet morning souls did leap and run  
 In all things, as the least had won  
 A joyous insight of the sun.

And no one looking round the wood  
 Could help confessing, as he stood,  
*This Poet-God is glad and good!*

But hark! a distant sound that grows!  
 A heaving, sinking of the boughs—  
 A rustling murmur, not of those!

A breezy noise, which is not breeze!—  
And white-clad children by degrees  
Steal out in troops among the trees ;

Fair little children, morning-bright,  
With faces grave, yet soft to sight,—  
Expressive of restrained delight.

Some plucked the palm-boughs within reach,  
And others leapt up high to catch  
The upper boughs, and shake from each

A rain of dew, till, wetted so,  
The child who held the branch let go,  
And it swang backward with a flow

Of faster drippings. Then I knew  
The children laughed—but the laugh flew  
From its own chirrup, as might do

A frightened song-bird ; and a child  
Who seemed the chief, said very mild,  
“ Hush ! keep this morning undefiled.”

His eyes rebuked them from calm spheres ;  
His soul upon his brow appears  
In waiting for more holy years.

I called the child to me, and said,  
“ What are your palms for ? ”—“ To be spread,”  
He answered, “ on a poet dead.

“ The poet died last month ; and now  
The world, which had been somewhat slow  
In honouring his living brow,

“ Commands the palms—They must be strown  
On his new marble very soon,  
In a procession of the town.”

I sighed and said, “ Did he foresee  
Any such honour ? ” “ Verily  
I cannot tell you,” answered he.

“ But this I know,—I fain would lay  
Mine own head down, another day,  
As *he* did,—with the fame away.

“ A lily, a friend's hand had plucked,  
Lay by his death-bed, which he looked  
As deep down as a bee had sucked ;

“Then turning to the lattice, gazed  
O'er hill and river, and upraised  
His eyes illumined and amazed

“With the world's beauty, up to God,  
Re-offering on his iris broad,  
The images of things bestowed

“By the chief Poet. ‘God!’ he cried,  
‘Be praised for anguish, which has tried;  
For beauty, which has satisfied:—

“‘For this world's presence, half within  
And half without me—sound and scene—  
This sense of Being and Having been.

“‘I thank Thee that my soul hath room  
For Thy grand world! Both guests may come—  
Beauty, to soul,—Body, to tomb!

“‘I am content to be so weak,—  
Put strength into the words I speak,  
And I am strong in what I seek.

“‘I am content to be so bare  
Before the archers! everywhere  
My wounds being stroked by heavenly air.

“‘I laid my soul before Thy feet,  
That Images of fair and sweet  
Should walk to other men on it.

“‘I am content to feel the step  
Of each pure Image!—let those keep  
To mandragore, who care to sleep.

“‘I am content to touch the brink  
Of the other goblet, and I think  
My bitter drink a wholesome drink.

“‘Because my portion was assigned  
Wholesome and bitter—Thou art kind,  
And I am blessed to my mind.

“‘Gifted for giving, I receive  
The maythorn, and its scent outgive!  
I grieve not that I once did grieve.

“‘In my large joy of sight and touch  
Beyond what others count for such,  
I am content to suffer much.

"*I know*—is all the mourner saith,—  
 Knowledge by suffering entereth ;  
 And Life is perfected by Death !”

The child spake nobly. Strange to hear,  
 His infantine soft accents clear,  
 Charged with high meanings, did appear,—

And fair to see, his form and face,—  
 Winged out with whiteness and pure grace  
 From the green darkness of the place.

Behind his head a palm-tree grew :  
 An orient beam, which pierced it through,  
 Transversely on his forehead drew

The figure of a palm-branch brown,  
 Traced on its brightness, up and down  
 In fine fair lines,—a shadow-crown

Guido might paint his angels so—  
 A little angel, taught to go,  
 With holy words to saints below.

Such innocence of action yet  
 Significance of object met  
 In his whole bearing strong and sweet.

And all the children, the whole band,  
 Did round in rosy reverence stand,  
 Each with a palm-bough in his hand.

“ And so he died,” I whispered ;—“ Nay,  
 Not so,” the childish voice did say—  
 “ That poet turned him, first, to pray

“ In silence ; and God heard the rest,  
 ‘ Twixt the sun’s footsteps down the west.  
 Then he called one who loved him best,

“ Yea, he called softly through the room  
 (His voice was weak yet tender)—‘ Come,’  
 He said, ‘ Come nearer ! Let the bloom

“ ‘ Of Life grow over, undenied,  
 This bridge of Death, which is not wide—  
 I shall be soon at the other side.

“ ‘ Come, kiss me !’ So the one in truth  
 Who loved him best—in love, not ruth,  
 Bowed down and kissed him mouth to mouth.

"And in that kiss of love, was won  
Life's manumission! All was done—  
The mouth that kissed last, kissed *alone!*"

"But in the former, confluent kiss,  
The same was sealed, I think by His,  
To words of truth and uprightness."

The child's voice trembled—his lips shook,  
Like a rose leaning o'er a brook,  
Which vibrates, though it is not struck.

"And who," I asked, a little moved,  
Yet curious-eyed, "was this that loved  
And kissed him last, as it behoved?"

"*I*," softly said the child; and then,  
"*I*," said he louder, once again:  
"*His son*,—my rank is among men.

"And now that men exalt his name,  
I come to gather palms with them,  
That holy Love may hallow Fame.

"He did not die alone; nor should  
His memory live so, 'mid these rude  
World-praisers—a worse solitude.

"Me, a voice calleth to that tomb  
Where these are strewing branch and bloom,  
Saying, *come nearer!*—and I come.

"Glory to God!" resumed he,—  
And his eyes smiled for victory  
O'er their own tears, which I could see

Fallen on the palm, down cheek and chin—  
"That poet now hath entered in  
The place of rest which is not sin.

"And while he rests, his songs, in troops,  
Walk up and down our earthly slopes,  
Companied by diviner hopes."

"But *thou*," I murmured,—to engage  
The child's speech farther—"hast an age  
Too tender for this orphanage."

"Glory to God—to God!" he saith—  
"KNOWLEDGE BY SUFFERING ENTERETH;  
AND LIFE IS PERFECTED BY DEATH!"

## RHYME OF THE DUCHESS MAY.

In the belfry, one by one, went the ringers from the sun,—  
*Toll slowly!*

And the oldest ringer said, "Ours is music for the Dead,  
 When the rebecks are all done."

Six abeles i' the kirkyard grow, on the north side in a row,—  
*Toll slowly!*

And the shadows of their tops, rock across the little slopes  
 Of the grassy graves below.

On the south side and the west, a small river runs in haste,—  
*Toll slowly!*

And between the river flowing, and the fair green leaves  
 a-growing,  
 Do the dead lie at their rest.

On the east I sate that day, up against a willow grey :—  
*Toll slowly!*

Through the rain of willow branches, I could see the low  
 hill-ranges,  
 And the river on its way.

There I sate beneath the tree, and the bell tolled solemnly,—  
*Toll slowly!*

While the trees' and river's voices flowed between the 'solemn  
 noises,—  
 Yet death seemed more loud to me.

There, I read this ancient rhyme, while the bell did all the  
 time

*Toll slowly!*

And the solemn knell fell in with the tale of life and sin,  
 Like a rhythmic fate sublime.

## THE RHYME.

Broad the forest stood (I read) on the hills of Linteged—  
*Toll slowly!*

And three hundred years had stood, mute adown each hoary  
 wood,  
 Like a full heart, having prayed.

And the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—  
*Toll slowly!*

And but little thought was theirs, of the silent antique years,  
 In the building of their nest.

Down the sun dropt, large and red, on the towers of Linteged,—  
*Toll slowly!*  
 Lance and spearhead on the height, bristling strange in fiery  
 light,  
 While the castle stood in shade.

There, the castle stood up black, with the red sun at its back,—  
*Toll slowly!*  
 Like a sullen smouldering pyre, with a top that flickers fire,  
 When the wind is on its track.

And five hundred archers tall did besiege the castle wall,—  
*Toll slowly!*  
 And the castle, seethed in blood, fourteen days and nights  
 had stood,  
 And to-night, anears its fall.

Yet thereunto, blind to doom, three months since, a bride did  
 come,—  
*Toll slowly!*  
 One who proudly trod the floors, and softly whispered in the  
 doors,  
 “May good angels bless our home.”

Oh, a bride of queenly eyes, with a front of constancies,—  
*Toll slowly!*  
 Oh, a bride of cordial mouth,—where the untired smile of  
 youth  
 Did light outward its own sighs.

’Twas a duke’s fair orphan-girl, and her uncle’s ward, the Earl,  
*Toll slowly!*  
 Who betrothed her twelve years old, for the sake of dowry  
 gold,  
 To his son Lord Leigh, the churl.

But what time she had made good all her years of woman-  
 hood,—  
*Toll slowly!*  
 Unto both those lords of Leigh, spake she out right sovrانly,  
 “My will runneth as my blood.”

“And while this same blood makes red this same right  
 hand’s veins,” she said,—  
*Toll slowly!*

“’Tis my will, as lady free, not to wed a Lord of Leigh,  
 But Sir Guy of Linteged.”

The old Earl he smiled smooth, then he sighed for wilful youth,—

*Toll slowly!*

“Good my niece, that hand withal, looketh somewhat soft and small,  
For so large a will, in sooth.”

She, too, smiled by that same sign,—but her smile was cold and fine,—

*Toll slowly!*

“Little hand clasps muckle gold: or it were not worth the hold  
Of thy son, good uncle mine!”

Then the young lord jerked his breath, and sware thickly in his teeth,—

*Toll slowly!*

“He would wed his own betrothed, an she loved him an she loathed,  
Let the life come or the death.”

Up she rose with scornful eyes, as her father's child might rise,—

*Toll slowly!*

“Thy hound's blood, my lord of Leigh, stains thy knightly heel,” quoth she,  
“Though he moans not where he lies.”

“But a woman's will dies hard, in the hall or on the sward!”

*Toll slowly!*

“By that grave, my lords, which made me, orphaned girl and dowered lady,  
I deny you wife and ward.”

Unto each she bowed her head, and swept past with lofty tread,—

*Toll slowly!*

Ere the midnight-bell had ceased, in the chapel had the priest  
Blessed her, bride of Linteged.

Fast and fain the bridle train, along the night-storm rode amain:—

*Toll slowly!*

Wild the steeds of lord and serf, struck their hoofs out on the turf,  
In the pauses of the rain.

Fast and fain the kinsmen's train, along the storm pursued  
amain—

*Toll slowly!*

Steed on steed-track, dashing off—thickening, doubling, hoof  
on hoof,  
In the pauses of the rain.

And the bridegroom led the flight, on his red-roan steed of  
might,—

*Toll slowly!*

And the bride lay on his arm, still, as if she feared no harm,  
Smiling out into the night.

“Dost thou fear?” he said at last;—“Nay!” she answered  
him in haste,—

*Toll slowly!*

“Not such death as we could find—only life with one behind.  
Ride on fast as fear—ride fast!”

Up the mountain wheeled the steed—girth to ground, and  
fetlocks spread,—

*Toll slowly!*

Headlong bounds, and rocking flanks,—down he staggered—  
down the banks,  
To the towers of Linteged.

High and low the serfs looked out, red the flambeaus tossed  
about,—

*Toll slowly!*

In the courtyard rose the cry—“Live the Duchess and Sir  
Guy!”

But she never heard them shout.

On the steed she dropt her cheek, kissed his mane and  
kissed his neck,—

*Toll slowly!*

“I had happier died by thee, than lived on a Lady Leigh,”  
Were the words which she did speak.

But a three months' joyaunce lay 'twixt that moment and to-  
day,—

*Toll slowly!*

When five hundred archers tall, stand beside the castle wall,  
To recapture Duchess May.

And the castle standeth black, with the red sun at its back,—

*Toll slowly!*

And a fortnight's siege is done,—and except the Duchess, none  
Can misdoubt the coming wrack.

Then the captain, young Lord Leigh, with his eye so grey of  
blee,—

*Toll slowly!*

And thin lips, that scarcely sheathe the cold white gnashing  
of his teeth,

Gnashed in smiling, absently,—

Cried aloud—"So goes the day, bridegroom fair of Duchess  
May!"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Look thy last upon that sun. If thou seest to-morrow's one,  
'Twill be through a foot of clay.

"Ha, fair bride! Dost hear no sound, save that moaning of  
the hound?"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Thou and I have parted troth,—yet I keep my vengeance-  
oath,

And the other may come round.

"Ha! thy will is brave to dare, and thy new love past com-  
pare,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Yet thine old love's faulchion brave, is as strong a thing to  
have,

As the will of lady fair.

"Peck on blindly, netted dove!—If a wife's name thee  
behave,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Thou shalt wear the same to-morrow, ere the grave has hid  
the sorrow

Of thy last ill-mated love.

"O'er his fixed and silent mouth, thou and I will call back  
troth,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"He shall altar be and priest,—and he will not cry at least  
'I forbid you—I am loth!'

"I will wring thy fingers pale, in the gauntlet of my mail,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"'Little hand and muckle gold' close shall lie within my hold,  
As the sword did to prevail."

O the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

*Toll slowly!*

O and laughed the Duchess May, and her soul did put away  
All his boasting, for a jest.

In her chamber did she sit, laughing low to think of it,—

*Toll slowly!*

“Tower is strong and will is free—thou canst boast, my lord  
of Leigh,—

But thou boastest little wit.”

In her tire-glass gazed she, and she blushed right womanly,—

*Toll slowly!*

She blushed half from her disdain—half, her beauty was so  
plain,

“Oath for oath, my Lord of Leigh!”

Straight she called her maidens in—“Since ye gave me blame  
herein,”—

*Toll slowly!*

“That a bridal such as mine, should lack gauds to make it fine,  
Come and shrive me from that sin.

“It is three months gone to-day, since I gave mine hand  
away.”—

*Toll slowly!*

“Bring the gold and bring the gem, we will keep bride-state  
in them,

While we keep the foe at bay.

“On your arms I loose mine hair; comb it smooth and crown  
it fair,”—

*Toll slowly!*

“I would look in purple-pall, from this lattice down the wall,  
And throw scorn to one that’s there!”

O the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

*Toll slowly!*

On the tower the castle’s lord leant in silence on his sword,  
With an anguish in his breast.

With a spirit-laden weight, did he lean down passionate,—

*Toll slowly!*

They have almost sapped the wall,—they will enter there-  
withal,

With no knocking at the gate.

Then the sword he leant upon, shivered—snapped upon the  
stone,—

*Toll slowly!*

“Sword,” he thought, with inward laugh, “ill thou servest for  
a staff.

When thy nobler use is done!

"Sword, thy nobler use is done!—tower is lost, and shame begun:"—

*Toll slowly!*

If we met them in the breach, hilt to hilt or speech to speech,  
We should die there, each for one.

If we met them at the wall, we should singly, vainly fall,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"But if *I* die here alone,—then I die, who am but one,  
And die nobly for them all.

"Five true friends lie for my sake—in the moat and in the  
brake,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Thirteen warriors lie at rest, with a black wound in the  
breast,

And none of these will wake.

"And no more of this shall be!—heart-blood weighs too  
heavily,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"And I could not sleep in grave, with the faithful and the brave  
Heaped around and over me.

"Since young Clare a mother hath, and young Ralph a  
plighted faith,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Since my pale young sister's cheeks blush like rose when  
Ronald speaks,

Though never a word she saith—

"These shall never die for me—life-blood falls too heavily:"—

*Toll slowly!*

"And if *I* die here apart,—o'er my dead and silent heart  
They shall pass out safe and free.

"When the foe hath heard it said—'Death holds Guy of  
Linteged,'"—

*Toll slowly!*

"That new corse new peace shall bring: and a blessed,  
blessed thing,

Shall the stone be at its head.

"Then my friends shall pass out free, and shall bear my  
memory,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Then my foes shall sleek my pride, soothing fair my  
widowed bride,

Whose sole sin was love of me.

"With their words all smooth and sweet, they will front her  
and entreat:"—

*Toll slowly!*

"And their purple pall will spread underneath her fainting  
head,

While her tears drop over it.

"She will weep her woman's tears, she will pray her woman's  
prayers,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"But her heart is young in pain, and her hopes will spring  
again

By the suntime of her years.

'Ah, sweet May—ah, sweetest grief!—once I vowed thee my  
belief,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"That thy name expressed thy sweetness,—May of poets, in  
completeness!

Now my May-day seemeth brief."

All these silent thoughts did swim o'er his eyes grown strange  
and dim,—

*Toll slowly!*

Till his true men in the place, wished they stood there face  
to face

With the foe instead of him.

"One last oath, my friends, that wear faithful hearts to do  
and dare!"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Tower must fall, and bride be lost!—swear me service  
worth the cost."

—Bold they stood around to swear.

"Each man clasp my hand, and swear, by the deed we  
failed in there,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Not for vengeance, not for right, will ye strike one blow to-  
night!"—

Pale they stood around—to swear.

"One last boon, young Ralph and Clare! faithful hearts to  
do and dare!"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Bring that steed up from his stall, which she kissed before  
you all,—

Guide him up the turret-stair.

"Ye shall harness him aright, and lead upward to this height!"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Once in love and twice in war, hath he borne me strong and far,—  
He shall bear me far to-night."

Then his men looked to and fro, when they heard him speaking so,—

*Toll slowly!*

—"Las! the noble heart," they thought,—"he in sooth is grief-distraught.—  
Would we st.ood here with the foe!"

But a fire flashed from the eye, 'twixt their thought and their reply,—

*Toll slowly!*

"Have ye so much time to waste? We who ride here, must ride fast,  
As we wish our foes to fly."

They have fetched the steed with care, in the harness he did wear,—

*Toll slowly!*

Past the court and through the doors, across the rushes of the floors;  
But they goad him up the stair.

Then from out her bower-chambère, did the Duchess May repair,—

*Toll slowly!*

"Tell me now what is your need," said the lady, "of this steed,  
That ye goad him up the stair?"

Calm she stood! unbodkined through, fell her dark hair to her shoe,—

*Toll slowly!*

And the smile upon her face, ere she left the tiring-glass,  
Had not time enough to go.

"Get thee back, sweet Duchess May! hope is gone like yesterday,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"One half-hour completes the breach; and thy lord grows wild of speech.—  
Get thee in, sweet lady, and pray.

"In the east tower, high'st of all,—loud he cries for steed  
from stall,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"'He would ride as far,' quoth he, 'as for love and victory,  
Though he rides the castle-wall.'

"And we fetch the steed from stall, up where never a hoof  
did fall."

*Toll slowly!*

"Wifely prayer meets deathly need! may the sweet Heavens  
hear thee plead,  
If he ride the castle-wall."

Low she dropt her head, and lower, till her hair coiled on  
the floor,—

*Toll slowly!*

And tear after tear you heard, fall distinct as any word  
Which you might be listening for.

"Get thee in, thou soft ladiè! here is never a place for thee!"

*Toll slowly!*

"Braid thine hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty in its  
moan  
May find grace with Leigh of Leigh."

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady face,—

*Toll slowly!*

Like a statue thunderstruck, which, though quivering, seems  
to look  
Right against the thunder-place.

And her foot trod in with pride, her own tears i' the stone  
beside,—

*Toll slowly!*

"Go to, faithful friends, go to!—Judge no more what ladies  
do,—  
No, nor how their lords may ride!"

Then the good steed's rein she took, and his neck did kiss  
and stroke:—

*Toll slowly!*

Soft he neighed to answer her; and then followed up the stair,  
For the love of her sweet look.

Oh, and steeply, steeply wound up the narrow stair around,—

*Toll slowly!*

Oh, and closely, closely speeding, step by step beside her  
treading,  
Did he follow, meek as hound.

On the east tower high'st of all,—there, where never a hoof  
did fall,—

*Toll slowly!*

Out they swept, a vision steady,—noble steed and lovely lady,  
Calm as if in bower or stall!

Down she knelt at her lord's knee, and she looked up  
silently,—

*Toll slowly!*

And he kissed her twice and thrice, for that look within her  
eyes,

Which he could not bear to see.

Quoth he, "Get thee from this strife,—and the sweet saints  
bless thy life!"—

*Toll slowly!*

"In this hour, I stand in need of my noble red-roan steed—  
But not of my noble wife."

Quoth she, "Meekly have I done all thy biddings under  
sun:"—

*Toll slowly!*

"But by all my womanhood,—which is proved so, true and  
good,  
I will never do this one.

"Now by womanhood's degree, and by wifehood's verity,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"In this hour if thou hast need of thy noble red-roan steed,  
Thou hast also need of *me*."

"By this golden ring ye see on this lifted hand pardiè."—

*Toll slowly!*

"If this hour, on castle-wall, can be room for steed from  
stall,

Shall be also room for *me*.

"So the sweet saints with me be," (did she utter solemnly)—

*Toll slowly!*

"If a man, this eventide, on this castle-wall will ride,  
He shall ride the same with *me*."

Oh, he sprang up in the selle, and he laughed out bitter-  
well,—

*Toll slowly!*

"Wouldst thou ride among the leaves, as we used on other  
eves,

To hear chime a vesper-bell?"

She clung closer to his knee—"Ay, beneath the cypress tree!"—

*Toll slowly!*

"Mock me not; for otherwhere, than along the greenwood fair,

Have I ridden fast with thee!

"Fast I rode, with new-made vows, from my angry kinsman's house!"—

*Toll slowly!*

"What! and would you men should reckon, that I dared more for love's sake,

As a bride than as a spouse?

"What, and would you it should fall, as a proverb, before all,"—

*Toll slowly!*

"That a bride may keep your side, while through castle-gate you ride,

Yet eschew the castle-wall?"

Ho! the breach yawns into ruin, and roars up against her suing,—

*Toll slowly!*

With the inarticulate din, and the dreadful falling in—  
Shrieks of doing and undoing!

Twice he wrung her hands in twain; but the small hands closed again,—

*Toll slowly!*

Back he reined the steed—back, back! but she trailed along his track,

With a frantic clasp and strain!

Evermore the foemen pour through the crash of window and door,—

*Toll slowly!*

And the shouts of Leigh and Leigh, and the shrieks of "kill!" and "flee!"

Strike up clear the general roar.

Thrice he wrung her hands in twain,—but they closed and clung again,—

*Toll slowly!*

Wild she clung, as one, withstood, clasps a Christ upon the rood,

In a spasm of deathly pain.

She clung wild and she clung mute,—with her shuddering  
lips half-shut,—

*Toll slowly!*

Her head fallen as in swoond,—hair and knee swept on the  
ground,—

She clung wild to stirrup and foot.

Back he reined his steed, back-thrown on the slippery coping-  
stone,—

*Toll slowly!*

Back the iron hoofs did grind, on the battlement behind,  
Whence a hundred feet went down.

And his heel did press and goad on the quivering flank  
bestrode,

*Toll slowly!*

“Friends, and brothers! save my wife!—Pardon, sweet, in  
change for life,—

But I ride alone to God!”

Straight as if the Holy name did upbreathe her as a flame,—

*Toll slowly!*

She upsprang, she rose upright!—in his selle she sate in  
sight;

By her love she overcame.

And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as one at  
rest,—

*Toll slowly!*

“Ring,” she cried, “O vesper-bell, in the beechwood’s old  
chappelle!

But the passing-bell rings best.”

They have caught out at the rein, which Sir Guy threw loose  
—in vain,—

*Toll slowly!*

For the horse in stark despair, with his front hoofs poised in  
air,

On the last verge, rears amain.

And he hangs, he rocks between—and his nostrils curdle in,—

*Toll slowly!*

And he shivers head and hoof—and the flakes of foam fall off;  
And his face grows fierce and thin!

And a look of human woe, from his staring eyes did go,—

*Toll slowly!*

And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agony  
Of the headlong death below.—

And "Ring, ring, thou passing-bell," still she cried, "i' the old chapelle!"—

*Toll slowly!*

Then back-toppling, crashing back—a dead weight flung out to wrack,

Horse and riders overfell!

. . . . .

O, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

*Toll slowly!*

And I read this ancient Rhyme, in the kirkyard, while the chime

Slowly tolled for one at rest.

The abeles moved in the sun, and the river smooth did run,—

*Toll slowly!*

And the ancient Rhyme rang strange, with its passion and its change,

Here, where all done lay undone.

And beneath a willow tree, I a little grave did see,—

*Toll slowly!*

Where was graved,—"HERE UNDEFILED, LIETH MAUD, A THREE-YEAR CHILD,

"EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-THREE,"

Then, O spirits—did I say—ye who rode so fast that day,—

*Toll slowly!*

Did star-wheels and angels-wings, with their holy winnowings,

Keep beside you all the way?

Though 'in passions ye would dash, with a blind and heavy crash,

*Toll slowly!*

Up against the thick-bossed shield of God's judgment in the field,—

Though your heart and brain were rash,—

Now, your will is all unwilling—now, your pulses are all stilled,—

*Toll slowly!*

Now, ye lie as meek and mild (whereso laid) as Maud the child,—

Whose small grave to-day was filled.

## THE LADY'S YES.

Beating heart and burning brow, ye are very patient now,—

*Toll slowly!*

And the children might be bold to pluck the kingscups from  
your mould,

Ere a month had let them grow.

And you let the goldfinch sing, in the alder near, in spring,—

*Toll slowly!*

Let her build her nest and sit all the three weeks out on it,  
Murmuring not at anything.

In your patience ye are strong; cold and heat ye take not  
wrong:—

*Toll slowly!*

When the trumpet of the angel blows eternity's evangel,  
Time will seem to you not long.

O, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

*Toll slowly!*

And I said in underbreath,—all our life is mixed with  
death,—

And who knoweth which is best?

O, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—

*Toll slowly!*

And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our  
incompleteness,—

Round our restlessness, His rest.

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## THE LADY'S YES.

“YES!” I answered you last night;

“No!” this morning, Sir, I say!

Colours seen by candle-light,

Will not look the same by day.

When the tabors played their best,

Lamps above, and laughs below—

*Love me* sounded like a jest,

Fit for *Yes* or fit for *No!*

Call me false, or call me free—

Vow, whatever light may shine,

No man on thy face shall see

Any grief for change on mine.

Yet the sin is on us both—  
 Time to dance is not to woo—  
 Wooer light makes fickle troth—  
 Scorn of *me* recoils on *you*!

Learn to win a lady's faith  
 Nobly, as the thing is high;  
 Bravely, as for life and death—  
 With a loyal gravity.

Lead her from the festive boards,  
 Point her to the starry skies,  
 Guard her, by your truthful words,  
 Pure from courtship's flatteries.

By your truth she shall be true,  
 Ever true, as wives of yore—  
 And her *Yes*, once said to you,  
 SHALL be *Yes* for evermore.



## THE POET AND THE BIRD.

## A FABLE.

SAID a people to a poet—"Go out from among us straightway!

While we are thinking earthly things, thou singest of divine.  
 There's a little fair brown nightingale, who, sitting in the gateway,  
 Makes fitter music to our ear, than any song of thine!"

The poet went out weeping—the nightingale ceased chanting;  
 "Now wherefore, O thou nightingale, is all thy sweetness done?"

"I cannot sing my earthly things, the heavenly poet wanting,  
 Whose highest harmony includes the lowest under sun."

The poet went out weeping,—and died abroad, bereft there—  
 The bird flew to his grave and died amid a thousand wails!—

Yet when I last came by the place, I swear the music left there  
 Was only of the poet's song, and not the nightingale's!

## THE LOST BOWER.

In the pleasant orchard closes,  
 "God bless all our gains," say we ;  
 But "May God bless all our losses,"  
 Better suits with our degree.—

Listen gentle—ay, and simple ! Listen children on the knee !

Green the land is where my daily  
 Steps in jocund childhood played—  
 Dimpled close with hill and valley,  
 Dappled very close with shade ;  
 Summer-snow of apple blossoms, running up from glade to  
 glade.

There is one hill I see nearer,  
 In my vision of the rest ;  
 And a little wood seems clearer,  
 As it climbeth from the west,  
 Sideway from the tree-locked valley, to the airy upland crest.

Small the wood is, green with hazels,  
 And, completing the ascent,  
 Where the wind blows and sun dazzles,  
 Thrills in leafy tremblement :  
 Like a heart that, after climbing, beateth quickly through  
 content.

Not a step the wood advances  
 O'er the open hill-top's bound :  
 There, in green arrest, the branches  
 See their image on the ground :  
 You may walk beneath them smiling, glad with sight and glad  
 with sound.

For you hearken on your right hand,  
 How the birds do leap and call  
 In the greenwood, out of sight and  
 Out of reach and fear of all ;  
 And the squirrels crack the filberts, through their cheerful  
 madrigal.

On your left, the sheep are cropping  
 The slant grass and daisies pale ;  
 And five apple-trees stand, dropping  
 Separate shadows toward the vale,  
 Over which, in choral silence, the hills look you their "All  
 hail !"

Far out, kindled by each other,  
 Shining hills on hills, arise ;  
 Close as brother leans to brother,  
 When they press beneath the eyes  
 Of some father praying blessings from the gifts of paradise.

While beyond, above them mounted,  
 And above their woods also,  
 Malvern hills, for mountains counted  
 Not unduly, loom a-row—  
 Keepers of Piers Plowman's visions, through the sunshine and  
 the snow.\*

Yet in childhood little prized I  
 That fair walk and far survey :  
 'Twas a straight walk, unadvised by  
 The least mischief worth a nay—  
 Up and down—as dull as grammar on an eve of holiday !

But the wood, all close and clenching  
 Bough in bough and root in root,—  
 No more sky (for over-branching)  
 At your head than at your foot,—  
 Oh, the wood drew me within it, by a glamour past dispute !

Few and broken paths showed through it,  
 Where the sheep had tried to run,—  
 Forced, with snowy wool to strew it  
 Round the thickets, when anon  
 They with silly thorn-pricked noses, bleated back into the sun.

But my childish heart beat stronger  
 Than those thickets dared to grow :  
 I could pierce them ! I could longer  
 Travel on methought, than so !  
 Sheep for sheep-paths ! braver children climb and creep  
 where they would go.

And the poets wander, said I,  
 Over places all as rude !  
 Bold Rinaldo's lovely lady  
 Sate to meet him in a wood—  
 Rosalinda, like a fountain, laughed out pure with solitude.

And if Chaucer had not travelled  
 Through a forest by a well,

\* The Malvern Hills of Worcestershire are the scene of Langlande's visions ; and thus present the earliest classic ground of English poetry.

He had never dreamt nor marvelled  
 At those ladies fair and fell  
 Who lived smiling without loving, in their island-citadel.

Thus I thought of the old singers,  
 And took courage from their song,  
 Till my little struggling fingers  
 Tore asunder gyve and thong  
 Of the lichens which entrapped me, and the barrier branches  
 strong.

On a day, such pastime keeping,  
 With a fawn's heart debonair,  
 Under-crawling, overleaping  
 Thorns that prick and boughs that bear,  
 I stood suddenly astonished—I was gladdened unaware!

From the place I stood in, floated  
 Back the covert dim and close;  
 And the open ground was suited  
 Carpet-smooth with grass and moss,  
 And the blue-bell's purple presence signed it worthily across.

Here a linden-tree stood, brightening  
 All adown its silver rind;  
 For as some trees draw the lightning,  
 So this tree, unto my mind,  
 Drew to earth the blessed sunshine, from the sky where it was  
 shrined.

Tall the linden-tree, and near it  
 An old hawthorn also grew;  
 And wood-ivy like a spirit  
 Hovered dimly round the two,  
 Shaping thence that bower of beauty, which I sing of thus  
 to you.

'Twas a bower for garden fitter,  
 Than for any woodland wide!  
 Though a fresh and dewy glitter  
 Struck it through, from side to side,  
 Shaped and shaven was the freshness, as by garden-cunning  
 plied.

Oh, a lady might have come there,  
 Hooded fairly like her hawk,  
 With a book or lute in summer,  
 And a hope of sweeter talk,—  
 Listening less to her own music, than for footsteps on the walk.

But that bower appeared a marvel  
 In the wildness of the place!  
 With such seeming art and travail,  
 Finely fixed and fitted was  
 Leaf to leaf, the dark-green ivy, to the summit from the base.

And the ivy, veined and glossy,  
 Was inwrought with eglantine;  
 And the wild hop fibred closely,  
 And the large-leaved columbine,  
 Arch of door and window-mullion, did right sylvanly entwine.

Rose-trees, either side the door, were  
 Growing lithe and growing tall;  
 Each one set a summer warder  
 For the keeping of the hall,—  
 With a red rose, and a white rose, leaning, nodding at the  
 wall.

As I entered—mosses hushing  
 Stole all noises from my foot;  
 And a round elastic cushion,  
 Clasped within the linden's root,  
 Took me in a chair of silence, very rare and absolute.

All the floor was paved with glory,—  
 Greenly, silently inlaid,  
 Through quick motions made before me,  
 With fair counterparts in shade,  
 Of the fair serrated ivy-leaves which slanted overhead.

“Is such pavement in a palace?”  
 So I questioned in my thought:  
 The sun, shining through the chalice  
 Of the red rose hung without,  
 Threw within a red libation, like an answer to my doubt.

At the same time, on the linen  
 Of my childish lap there fell  
 Two white may-leaves, downward winning  
 Through the ceiling's miracle,  
 From a blossom, like an angel, out of sight yet blessing well.

Down to floor and up to ceiling,  
 Quick I turned my childish face;  
 With an innocent appealing  
 For the secret of the place,  
 To the trees which surely knew it, in partaking of the grace.

Where's no foot of human creature,  
 How could reach a human hand ?  
 And if this be work of nature,  
 Why is nature sudden bland,  
 reaking off from other wild work ? It was hard to understand.

Was she weary of rough-doing,  
 Of the bramble and the thorn ?  
 Did she pause, in tender rueing,  
 Here, of all her sylvan scorn ?  
 Or, in mock of art's deceiving, was the sudden mildness worn ?

Or could this same bower (I fancied)  
 Be the work of Dryad strong ;  
 Who, surviving all that chanced  
 In the world's old pagan wrong,  
 Lay hid, feeding in the woodland, on the last true poet's song ?

Or was this the house of fairies,  
 Left, because of the rough ways,  
 Unassoiled by Ave Marys  
 Which the passing pilgrim prays,—  
 And beyond St. Catherine's chiming, on the blessed Sabbath  
 days ?

So, young muser, I sate listening  
 To my fancy's wildest word—  
 On a sudden, through the glistening  
 Leaves around, a little stirred,  
 Came a sound, a sense of music, which was rather felt than  
 heard.

Softly finely, it inwound me—  
 From the world it shut me in,—  
 Like a tountain falling round me,  
 Which with silver waters thin  
 Clips a little marble Naiad sitting smilingly within.

Whence the music came, who knoweth ?  
 I know nothing. But indeed  
 Pan or Faunus never bloweth  
 So much sweetness from a reed,  
 Which has sucked the milk of waters, at the oldest river-head.

Never lark the sun can waken  
 With such sweetness ! when the lark,  
 The high planets overtaking  
 In the half-*evanished* Dark,  
 Casts his singing to their singing, like an arrow to the mark.

Never nightingale so singeth—  
 Oh ! she leans on thorny tree,  
 And her poet-soul she flingeth  
 Over pain to victory !

Yet she never sings such music,—or she sings it not to me !

Never blackbirds, never thrushes,  
 Nor small finches sing as sweet,  
 When the sun strikes through the bushes.  
 To their crimson clinging feet,

And their pretty eyes look sideways to the summer heavens  
 complete.

If it *were* a bird, it seem'd  
 Most like Chaucer's, which, in sooth,  
 He of green and azure dream'd,  
 While it sate in spirit-ruth

On that bier of a crowned lady, singing nigh her silent mouth.

If it *were* a bird !—ah, sceptic,  
 Give me " Yea " or give me " Nay "—  
 Though my soul were nympholeptic,  
 As I heard that virëlay,

You may stoop your pride to pardon, for my sin is far away.

I rose up in exultation  
 And an inward trembling heat,  
 And (it seemed) in geste of passion,  
 Dropped the music to my feet,

Like a garment rustling downwards!—such a silence followed it.

Heart and head beat through the quiet,  
 Full and heavily, though slower ;  
 In the song, I think, and by it,  
 Mystic Presences of power

Had up-snatched me to the Timeless, then returned me to  
 the Hour.

In a child-abstraction lifted,  
 Straightway from the bower I past ;  
 Foot and soul being dimly drifted  
 Through the greenwood, till, at last,

In the hill-top's open sunshine, I all consciously was cast.

Face to face with the true mountains,  
 I stood silently and still ;  
 Drawing strength for fancy's dauntings,  
 From the air about the hill,

And from Nature's open mercies, and most debonair goodwill.

Oh! the golden-hearted daisies  
 Witnessed there, before my youth,  
 To the truth of things, with praises  
 To the beauty of the truth ;  
 And I woke to Nature's real, laughing joyfully for both.

And I said within me, laughing,  
 I have found a bower to-day,  
 A green lusus—fashioned half in  
 Chance, and half in Nature's play—  
 And a little bird sings nigh it, I will nevermore missay.

Henceforth, I will be the fairy  
 Of this bower, not built by one ;  
 I will go there, sad or merry,  
 With each morning's benison ;  
 And the bird shall be my harper in the dream-hall I have won.

So I said. But the next morning,  
 (—Child, look up into my face—  
 'Ware, O sceptic, of your scorning !  
 This is truth in its pure grace !)  
 The next morning, all had vanished, or my wandering missed  
 the place.

Bring an oath most sylvan holy,  
 And upon it swear me true—  
 By the wind-bells swinging slowly  
 Their mute curfews in the dew—  
 By the advent of the snowdrop—by the rosemary and rue,—

I affirm by all or any,  
 Let the cause be charm or chance,  
 That my wandering searches many  
 Missed the bower of my romance—  
 That I nevermore upon it, turned my mortal countenance.

I affirm that, since I lost it,  
 Never bower has seemed so fair—  
 Never garden creeper crossed it,  
 With so deft and brave an air—  
 Never bird sung in the summer, as I saw and heard them there.

Day by day, with new desire,  
 Toward my wood I ran in faith—  
 Under leaf and over brier—  
 Through the thickets, out of breath—  
 Like the prince who rescued Beauty from the sleep as long as  
 death.

But his sword of mettle clash'd,  
 And his arm smote strong, I ween ;  
 And her dreaming spirit flash'd  
 Through her body's fair white screen,—  
 And the light thereof might guide him up the cedar alleys  
 green.

But for me, I saw no splendour—  
 All my sword was my child-heart ;  
 And the wood refused surrender  
 Of that bower it held apart,  
 Safe as *Ædipus's* grave-place 'mid *Colone's* olives swart.

As *Aladdin* sought the basements  
 His fair palace rose upon,  
 And the four-and-twenty casements  
 Which gave answers to the sun ;  
 So, in wilderment of gazing, I looked up, and I looked down.

Years have vanished since, as wholly  
 As the little bower did then :  
 And you call it tender folly  
 That such thoughts should come again ?  
 Ah ! I cannot change this sighing for your smiling, brother-  
 men !

For this loss it did prefigure  
 Other loss of better good,  
 When my soul, in spirit-vigour,  
 And in ripened womanhood,  
 Fell from visions of more beauty than an arbour in a wood.

I have lost—oh, many a pleasure—  
 Many a hope, and many a power—  
 Studious health and merry leisure—  
 The first dew on the first flower !  
 But the first of all my losses was the losing of the bower.

I have lost the dream of Doing,  
 And the other dream of Done—  
 The first spring in the pursuing,  
 The first pride in the Begun,—  
 First recoil from incompletion, in the face of what is won—

Exultations in the far light,  
 Where some cottage only is—  
 Mild dejections in the starlight,  
 Which the sadder-hearted miss ;  
 And the child-cheek blushing scarlet, for the very shame of bliss.

I have lost the sound child-sleeping  
 Which the thunder could not break ;  
 Something too of the strong leaping  
 Of the staglike heart awake,  
 Which the pale is low for keeping in the road it ought to take.

Some respect to social fictions  
 Hath been also lost by me ;  
 And some generous genuflexions,  
 Which my spirit offered free  
 To the pleasant old conventions of our false humanity.

And my losses did I tell you,  
 Ye, perchance, would look away ;—  
 Ye would answer me, " Farewell ! you  
 Make sad company to-day ;  
 And your tears are falling faster than the bitter words you say."

For God placed me like a dial  
 In the open ground, with power ;  
 And my heart had for its trial,  
 All the sun and all the shower !  
 And I suffered many losses ; and my first was of the bower.

Laugh ye ? If that loss of mine be  
 Of no heavy-seeming weight—  
 When the cone falls from the pine-tree  
 The young children laugh thereat ;  
 Yet the wind that struck it, riseth, and the tempest shall be great :

One who knew me in my childhood,  
 In the glamour and the game,  
 Looking on me long and mild, would  
 Never know me for the same !  
 Come, unchanging recollections, where those changes over-  
 came !

On this couch I weakly lie on,  
 While I count my memories,—  
 Through the fingers which, still sighing,  
 I press closely on mine eyes,—  
 Clear as once beneath the sunshine, I behold the bower arise.

Springs the linden-tree as greenly,  
 Stroked with light adown its rind—  
 And the ivy-leaves serenely  
 Each in either intertwined,  
 And the rose-trees at the doorway, they have neither grown  
 nor pined !

From those overblown faint roses,  
 Not a leaf appeareth shed,  
 And that little bud discloses  
 Not a thorn's-breadth more of red,  
 For the winters and the summers which have passed me over-  
 head.

And that music overfloweth,  
 Sudden sweet, the sylvan eaves;  
 Thrush or nightingale—who knoweth?  
 Fay or Faunus—who believes?  
 But my heart still trembles in me, to the trembling of the  
 leaves.

Is the bower lost, then? Who sayeth  
 That the bower indeed is lost?  
 Hark! my spirit in it prayeth  
 Through the solstice and the frost,—  
 And the prayer preserves it greenly, to the last and utter-  
 most—

Till another open for me  
 In God's Eden-land unknown,  
 With an angel at the doorway,  
 White with gazing at His Throne;  
 And a saint's voice in the palm-trees, singing—"ALL IS LOST  
 . . . and *won!*"



## A CHILD ASLEEP.

How he sleepeth! having drunken  
 Weary childhood's mandragore!  
 From his pretty eyes have sunken  
 Pleasures, to make room for more—  
 Sleeping near the withered nosegay, which he pulled the day  
 before.

Nosegays! leave them for the waking!  
 Throw them earthward where they grew;  
 Dim are such, beside the breaking  
 Amaranths he looks unto—  
 Folded eyes see brighter colours than the open ever do.

Heaven-flowers, rayed by shadows golden  
 From the palms they sprang beneath,

Now perhaps divinely holden,  
 Swing against him in a wreath—  
 We may think so from the quickening of his bloom and of  
 his breath.

Vision unto vision calleth,  
 While the young child dreameth on.  
 Fair, O dreamer, thee befalleth  
 With the glory thou hast won!  
 Darker wert thou in the garden, yestermorn, by summer sun.

We should see the spirits ringing  
 Round thee,—were the clouds away!  
 'Tis the child-heart draws them, singing  
 In the silent-seeming clay—  
 Singing!—Stars that seem the mutest, go in music all the way.

As the moths around a taper,  
 As the bees around a rose,  
 As in sunset, many a vapour,—  
 So the spirits group and close  
 Round about a holy childhood, as if drinking its repose.

Shapes of brightness overlean thee,  
 With their diadems of youth  
 Striking on thy ringlets sheenly,—  
 While thou smilest, . . . not in sooth  
*Thy* smile . . . but the overfair one, dropt from some ætherial  
 mouth.

Haply it is angels' duty,  
 During slumber, shade by shade  
 To fine down this childish beauty  
 To the thing it must be made,  
 Ere the world shall bring it praises, or the tomb shall see it  
 fade.

Softly, softly I make no noises I  
 Now he lieth dead and dumb—  
 Now he hears the angels' voices  
 Folding silence in the room—  
 Now he muses deep the meaning of the Heaven-words as  
 they come.

Speak not! he is consecrated—  
 Breathe no breath across his eyes;  
 Lifted up and separated  
 On the hand of God he lies,  
 In a sweetness beyond touching,—held in cloistral sanctities.

Could ye bless him—father—mother ?  
 Bless the dimple in his cheek ?  
 Dare ye look at one another,  
 And the benediction speak ?  
 Would ye not break out in weeping, and confess yourselves  
 too weak ?

He is harmless—ye are sinful,—  
 Ye are troubled—he, at ease !  
 From his slumber, virtue windful  
 Floweth outward with increase—  
 Dare not bless him ! but be blessed by his peace—and go in  
 peace.



## THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

“φῆῦ, φῆῦ, τι προσδερκεσθε μ’ ομμασῶς τεκνα.”

MEDEA.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
 Ere the sorrow comes with years ?  
 They are leaning their young heads against their  
 mothers,—  
 And *that* cannot stop their tears.  
 The young lambs are bleating in the meadows ;  
 The young birds are chirping in the nest ;  
 The young fawns are playing with the shadows ;  
 The young flowers are blowing toward the west—  
 But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
 They are weeping bitterly !—  
 They are weeping in the playtime of the others,  
 In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow  
 Why their tears are falling so ?—  
 The old man may weep for his to-morrow  
 Which is lost in Long Ago—  
 The old tree is leafless in the forest—  
 The old year is ending in the frost—  
 The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest—  
 The old hope is hardest to be lost :  
 But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
 Do you ask them why they stand  
 Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers  
 In our happy Fatherland ?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,  
 And their looks are sad to see,  
 For the man's grief abhorrent, draws and presses  
 Down the cheeks of infancy—  
 "Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;"  
 "Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!  
 Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—  
 Our grave-rest is very far to seek!  
 Ask the old why they weep, and not the children,  
 For the outside earth is cold,—  
 And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,  
 And the graves are for the old!"

"True," say the young children, "it may happen  
 That we die before our time!  
 Little Alice died last year—the grave is shapen  
 Like a snowball, in the rime.  
 We looked into the pit prepared to take her—  
 Was no room for any work in the close clay;  
 From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,  
 Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'  
 If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,  
 With your ear down, little Alice never cries!—  
 Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,  
 For the smile has time for growing in her eyes,—  
 And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in  
 The shroud, by the kirk-chime!  
 It is good when it happens," say the children,  
 "That we die before our time!"

Alas, the wretched children! they are seeking  
 Death in life, as best to have!  
 They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,  
 With a cerement from the grave.  
 Go out, children, from the mine and from the city—  
 Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do—  
 Pluck you handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty—  
 Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!  
 But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows  
 Like our weeds anear the mine?  
 Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,  
 From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,  
 And we cannot run or leap—  
 If we cared for any meadows, it were merely  
 To drop down in them and sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—  
 We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;  
 And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,  
 The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.  
 For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,  
     Through the coal-dark, underground—  
 Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron  
     In the factories, round and round.

“ For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—  
     Their wind comes in our faces,—  
 Till our hearts turn,—our heads, with pulses burning  
     And the walls turn in their places—  
 Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—  
     Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall—  
 Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—  
     All are turning, all the day, and we with all !—  
 And all day, the iron wheels are droning ;  
     And sometimes we could pray,  
 ‘ O ye wheels’ (breaking out in a mad moaning),  
     ‘ Stop ! be silent for to-day ! ’ ”

Ay ! be silent ! Let them hear each other breathing  
     For a moment, mouth to mouth—  
 Let them touch each other’s hands, in a fresh wreathing  
     Of their tender human youth !  
 Let them feel that this cold metallic motion  
     Is not all the life God fashions or reveals—  
 Let them prove their inward souls against the notion  
     That thy live in you, or under you, O wheels !—  
 Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,  
     As if Fate in each were stark ;  
 And the children’s souls, which God is calling sunward,  
     Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,  
     That they look to Him and pray—  
 So the blessed One, who blesseth all the others,  
     Will bless them another day.  
 They answer, “ Who is God that He should hear us,  
     While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred ?  
 When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us  
     Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word !  
 And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)  
     Strangers speaking at the door ;  
 Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,  
     Hears our weeping any more ?

" Two words, indeed, of praying we remember ;  
     And at midnight's hour of harm,—  
 ' Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,  
     We say softly for a charm,\*  
 We know no other words, except ' Our Father,'  
     And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,  
 God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,  
     And hold both within His right hand which is strong.  
 ' Our Father !' If He heard us, He would surely  
     (For they call Him good and mild)  
 Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,  
     ' Come and rest with me, my child.' "

" But, no ! " say the children, weeping faster,  
     " He is speechless as a stone ?  
 And they tell us, of His image is the master  
     Who commands us to work on.  
 Go to ! " say the children,— " Up in Heaven,  
     Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find !  
 Do not mock us ; grief has made us unbelieving—  
     We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."

Do ye hear the children weeping and disproving,  
     O my brothers, what ye preach ?  
 For God's possible is taught by His world's loving—  
     And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you ;  
     They are weary ere they run ;  
 They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory  
     Which is brighter than the sun :  
 They know the grief of men, but not the wisdom ;  
     They sink in the despair, without the calm—  
 Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,—  
     Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—  
 Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievably  
     No dear remembrance keep,—  
 Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly :  
     Let them weep ! let them weep !

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,  
     And their look is dread to see,

\* A fact rendered pathetically historical by Mr. Horne's report of his mission. The name of the poet of " Orion " and " Cosmo de' Medici " has, however, a change of associations ; and comes in time to remind me (with other noble instances) that we have some brave poetic heat of literature still,—though open to the reproach, on certain points, of being somewhat gelid in our humanity.

For you think you see their angels in their places,  
 With eyes meant for Deity ;—  
 “ How long,” they say, “ how long, O cruel nation,  
 Will you stand, to move the world, on a child’s heart,  
 Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,  
 And tread onward to your throne amid the smart ?  
 Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants,  
 And your purple shows your path ;  
 But the child’s sob curseth deeper in the silence  
 Than the strong man in his wrath !”

---

CROWNED AND WEDDED.

WHEN last before her people’s face her own fair face she bent  
 Within the meek projection of that shade she was content  
 To erase the child-smile from her lips, which seemed as if it  
 might

Be still kept holy from the world to childhood still in sight—  
 To erase it with a solemn vow,—a princely vow—to rule—  
 A priestly vow—to rule by grace of God the pitiful,—  
 A very godlike vow—to rule in right and righteousness,  
 And with the law and for the land!—so God the vower  
 bless!

The minster was alight that day, but not with fire, I ween,  
 And long-drawn glitterings swept adown that mighty aisled  
 scene.

The priests stood stoléd in their pomp, the sworded chiefs in  
 theirs,

And so, the collared knights, and so, the civil ministers,—  
 And so, the waiting lords and dames—and little pages best  
 At holding trains—and legates so, from countries east and  
 west—

So, alien princes, native peers, and high-born ladies bright,  
 Along whose brows the Queen’s, new crowned, flashed coro-  
 nets to light!—

And so, the people at the gates, with priestly hands on high,  
 Which bring the first anointing to all legal majesty !

And so the DEAD—who lie in rows beneath the minster floor,  
 There, verily an awful state maintaining evermore—

The statesman, whose clean palm will kiss no bribe whate’er  
 it be—

The courtier, who, for no fair queen, will rise up to his  
 knee—

The court-dame, who, for no court-tire, will leave her shroud  
 behind—  
 The laureate, who no courtlier rhyme than "dust to dust" can  
 find—  
 The kings and queens who, having made that vow and worn  
 that crown,  
 Descended unto lower thrones and darker, deep adown!  
*Dieu et mon droit*—what is't to them?—what meaning can it  
 have?—  
 The King of kings, the rights of death—God's judgment and  
 the grave!  
 And when betwixt the quick and dead the young fair Queen  
 had vowed,  
 The living shouted "May she live! Victoria, live!" aloud—  
 And as the loyal shouts went up, true spirits prayed between,  
 "The blessings happy monarchs have, be thine, O crown'd  
 Queen!"

But now before her people's face she bendeth her's anew,  
 And calls them, while she vows, to be her witness thereunto.  
 She vowed to rule, and in that oath, her childhood put away—  
 She doth maintain her womanhood, in vowing love to-day.  
 O lovely lady! let her vow! such lips become such vows,—  
 And fairer goeth bridal wreath than crown with vernal brows!  
 O lovely lady!—let her vow!—yea, let her vow to love!—  
 And though she be no less a queen—with purples hung above,  
 The pageant of a court behind, the royal kin around,  
 The woven gold to catch her looks turned maidenly to  
 ground,—  
 Yet may the bride-veil hide from her a little of that state,  
 While loving hopes, for retinues, about her sweetness wait!—  
 SHE vows to love, who vowed to rule—the chosen at her  
 side—  
 Let none say, God preserve the Queen!—but rather, Bless  
 the bride!—  
 None blow the trump, none bend the knee, none violate the  
 dream  
 Wherein no monarch, but a wife, she to herself may seem!  
 Or if ye say, Preserve the Queen!—oh, breathe it inward low—  
 She is a *woman*, and *beloved*!—and 'tis enough but so!  
 Count it enough, thou noble prince, who tak'st her by the  
 hand,  
 And claimest for thy lady-love, our lady of the land!—  
 And since, Prince Albert, men have called thy spirit high and  
 rare,  
 And true to truth and brave for truth, as some at Augsburg  
 were,—

We charge thee by thy lofty thoughts, and by thy poet-mind  
Which not by glory and degree takes measure of mankind,  
Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than for ring,  
And hold her uncrowned womanhood to be the royal thing !

And now, upon our Queen's last vow, what blessings shall we  
pray ?

None straitened to a shallow crown, will suit our lips to-day.  
Behold, they must be free as love—they must be broad as  
free—

Even to the borders of heaven's light and earth's humanity !  
Long live she !—send up loyal shouts—and true hearts pray  
between,—

“The blessings happy PEASANTS have, be thine, O crown'd  
Queen !”

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### CROWNED AND BURIED.

NAPOLÉON !—years ago, and that great word,  
Compact of human breath in hate and dread  
And exultation, skied us overhead—  
An atmosphere whose lightning was the sword,  
Scathing the cedars of the world,—drawn down  
In burnings, by the metal of a crown.

Napoleon ! Nations, while they cursed that name,  
Shook at their own curse ; and while others bore  
Its sound, as of a trumpet, on before,  
Brass-fronted legions justified its fame—  
And dying men, on trampled battle-sods,  
Near their last silence, uttered it for God's.

Napoleon ! Sages, with high foreheads drooped,  
Did use it for a problem : children small  
Leapt up to greet it as at manhood's call :  
Priests blessed it from their altars overstoopt  
By meek-eyed Christs,—and widows with a moan  
Spake it, when questioned why they sate alone.

That name consumed the silence of the snows  
In Alpine keeping, holy and cloud-hid !  
The mimic eagles dared what Nature's did,  
And over-rushed her mountainous repose  
In search of eyries : and the Ægyptian river  
Mingled the same word with its grand “For ever.”

That name was shouted near the pyramidal  
 Egyptian tombs, whose mummied habitants,  
 Packed to humanity's significance,  
 Motioned it back with stillness! Shouts as idle  
 As hireling artists' work of myrrh and spice,  
 Which swathed last glories round the Ptolemies.

The world's face changed to hear it! Kingly men  
 Came down, in chidden babes' bewilderment,  
 From autocratic places—each content  
 With sprinkled ashes for anointing!—then  
 The people laughed or wondered for the nonce,  
 To see one throne a composite of thrones.

Napoleon! and the torrid vastitude  
 Of India felt, in throbbings of the air,  
 That name which scattered by disastrous blare  
 All Europe's bound-lines,—drawn afresh in blood!  
 Napoleon—from the Russias, west to Spain!  
 And Austria trembled—till ye heard her chain.

And Germany was 'ware—and Italy,  
 Oblivious of old fames—her laurel-locked,  
 High-ghosted Cæsars passing uninvoked,—  
 Did crumble her own ruins with her knee,  
 To serve a newer!—Ay! and Frenchmen cast  
 A future from them, nobler than her past:

For, verily, though France augustly rose  
 With that raised NAME, and did assume by such  
 The purple of the world,—none gave so much  
 As she, in purchase—to speak plain, in loss—  
 Whose hands, to freedom stretched, dropped paralysed  
 To wield a sword, or fit an undersized

King's crown to a great man's head! And though along  
 Her Paris' streets, did float on frequent streams  
 Of triumph, pictured or emmarbled dreams,  
 Dreamt right by genius in a world gone wrong,—  
 No dream, of all so won, was fair to see  
 As the lost vision of her liberty.

Napoleon! 'twas a high name lifted high!  
 It met at last God's thunder sent to clear  
 Our compassing and covering atmosphere,  
 And open a clear sight, beyond the sky  
 Of supreme empire! this of earth's was done—  
 And kings crept out again to feel the sun.

The kings crept out—the peoples sate at home,—  
 And finding the long-invoked peace  
 A pall embroidered with worn images  
 Of rights divine, too scant to cover doom  
 Such as they suffered,—cursed the corn that grew  
 Rankly, to bitter bread, on Waterloo !

A deep gloom centred in the deep repose—  
 The nations stood up mute to count their dead—  
 And *he* who owned the NAME which vibrated  
 Through silence,—trusting to his noblest foes,  
 When earth was all too grey for chivalry—  
 Died of their mercies, 'mid the desert sea.

O wild St. Helen ! very still she kept him,  
 With a green willow for all pyramid,—  
 Which stirred a little if the low wind did,  
 A little more, if pilgrims overwept him  
 And parted the lithe boughs to see the clay  
 Which seemed to cover his for judgment-day.

Nay ! not so long !—France kept her own affection,  
 As deeply as the sepulchre the corse,  
 Until dilated by such love's remorse  
 To a new angel of the resurrection,  
 She cried, "Behold, thou England ! I would have  
 The dead whereof thou wottest, from that grave."

And England answered in the courtesy  
 Which, ancient foes turned lovers, may befit,—  
 "Take back thy dead ! and when thou buriest it,  
 Throw in all former strifes 'twixt thee and me."  
 Amen, mine England ! 'tis a courteous claim—  
 But ask a little room too . . . for thy shame !

Because it was not well, it was not well,  
 Nor tuneful with thy lofty-chanted part  
 Among the Oceanides,—that Heart  
 To bind and bare, and vex with vulture fell.  
 I would, my noble England ! men might seek  
 All crimson stains upon thy breast—not cheek !

I would that hostile fleets had scarred thy bay,  
 Instead of the lone ship which waited moored  
 Until thy princely purpose was assured,  
 Then left a *shadow*—not to pass away—  
 Not for to-night's moon, nor to-morrow's sun  
 Green watching hills, ye witnessed what was done !

And since it *was* done,—in sepulchral dust,  
 We fain would pay back something of our debt  
 To France, if not to honour, and forget  
 How through much fear we falsified the trust  
 Of a fallen foe and exile!—We return  
 Orestes to Electra . . . in his urn!

A little urn—a little dust inside,  
 Which once outbalanced the large earth, albeit  
 To-day, a four-years child might carry it,  
 Sleek-browed and smiling “Let the burden ’bide!  
 Orestes to Electra!—O fair town  
 Of Paris, how the wild tears will run down,

And run back in the chariot marks of Time,  
 When all the people shall come forth to meet  
 The passive victor death-still in the street  
 He rode through ’mid the shouting and bell-chime  
 And martial music,—under eagles which  
 Dyed their ensanguined beaks at Austerlitz!

Napoleon! he hath come again—borne home  
 Upon the popular ebbing heart,—a sea  
 Which gathers its own wrecks perpetually,  
 Majestically moaning. Give him room!—  
 Room for the dead in Paris! welcome solemn  
 And grave deep, ’neath the cannon-moulded column! \*

There, weapon spent and warrior spent may rest  
 From roar of fields! provided Jupiter  
 Dare trust Saturnus to lie down so near  
 His bolts!—And this he *may*! For, dispossessed  
 Of any godship, lies the godlike arm—  
 The goat, Jove sucked, as likely to do harm!

And yet . . . Napoleon!—the recovered name  
 Shakes the old casements of the world! and we  
 Look out upon the passing pageantry,  
 Attesting that the Dead makes good his claim  
 To a Gaul grave,—another kingdom won—  
 The last—of few spans—by Napoleon!

Blood fell like dew beneath his sunrise—sooth!  
 But glittered dew-like in the covenanted  
 And high-rayed light. He was a tyrant—granted!  
 But the *avros* of his autocratic mouth  
 Said yea i’ the people’s French! he magnified  
 The image of the freedom he denied.

\* It was the first intention to bury him under the column.

And if they asked for rights, he made reply,  
 "Ye have my glory!"—and so, drawing round them  
 His ample purple, glorified and bound them  
 In an embrace that seemed identity.  
 He ruled them like a tyrant—true! but none  
 Were ruled like slaves! Each felt Napoleon!

I do not praise this man: the man was flawed,  
 For Adam—much more, Christ!—his knee, unbent—  
 His hand, unclean—his aspiration, pent  
 Within a sword-sweep—pshaw!—but since he had  
*The genius to be loved*, why, let him have  
 The justice to be honoured in his grave.

I think this nation's tears, poured thus together,  
 Nobler than shouts! I think this funeral  
 Grandeur than crownings, though a Pope bless all!  
 I think this grave stronger than thrones! But whether  
 The crowned Napoleon or the buried clay  
 Be better, I discern not—Angels may.

---

TO FLUSH, MY DOG.

LOVING friend, the gift of one,  
 Who, her own true faith, hath run,  
 Through thy lower nature; \*  
 Be my benediction said  
 With my hand upon thy head,  
 Gentle fellow-creature!

Like a lady's ringlets brown,  
 Flow thy silken ears adown  
 Either side demurely,  
 Of thy silver-suited breast  
 Shining out from all the rest  
 Of thy body purely.

Darkly brown thy body is,  
 Till the sunshine, striking this,  
 Alchemise its dulness,—

\* This dog was the gift of my dear and admired friend, Miss Mitford, and belongs to the beautiful race she has rendered celebrated among English and American readers. The Flushes have their laurels as well as the Cæsars,—the chief difference (at least the very head and front of it) consisting, according to my perception, in the bald head.

When the sleek curls manifold  
Flash all over into gold,  
With a burnished fulness.

Underneath my stroking hand,  
Startled eyes of hazel bland  
Kindling, growing larger,—  
Up thou leapest with a spring,  
Full of prank and curvetting,  
Leaping like a charger.

Leap ! thy broad tail waves a light ;  
Leap ! thy slender feet are bright,  
Canopied in fringes.  
Leap—those tasselled ears of thine  
Flicker strangely, fair and fine,  
Down their golden inches.

Yet, my pretty sportive friend,  
Little is't to such an end  
That I praise thy rareness !  
Other dogs may be thy peers  
Haply in these drooping ears,  
And this glossy fairness.

But of *thee* it shall be said,  
This dog watched beside a bed  
Day and night unwearied,—  
Watched within a curtained room,  
Where no sunbeam brake the gloom  
Round the sick and dreary.

Roses, gathered for a vase,  
In that chamber died apace,  
Beam and breeze resigning—  
This dog only, waited on,  
Knowing that when light is gone,  
Love remains for shining.

Other dogs in thymy dew  
Tracked the hares and followed through  
Sunny moor or meadow—  
This dog only, crept and crept  
Next a languid cheek that slept,  
Sharing in the shadow.

Other dogs of loyal cheer  
Bounded at the whistle clear,  
Up the woodside hieing—

This dog only, watched in reach  
Of a faintly uttered speech,  
Or a louder sighing.

And if one or two quick tears  
Dropped upon his glossy ears,  
Or a sigh came double,—  
Up he sprang in eager haste,  
Fawning, fondling, breathing fast,  
In a tender trouble.

And this dog was satisfied,  
If a pale thin hand would glide  
Down his dewlaps sloping,—  
Which he pushed his nose within,  
After,—platforming his chin  
On the palm left open.

This dog, if a friendly voice  
Call him now to blyther choice  
Than such chamber-keeping,  
“Come out!” praying from the door,—  
Presseth backward as before,  
Up against me leaping.

Therefore to this dog will I,  
Tenderly not scornfully,  
Render praise and favour!  
With my hand upon his head,  
Is my benediction said  
Therefore, and for ever.

And because he loves me so,  
Better than his kind will do  
Often, man or woman,—  
Give I back more love again  
Than dogs often take of men,—  
Leaning from my Human.

Blessings on thee, dog of mine,  
Pretty collars make thee fine,  
Sugared milk make fat thee!  
Pleasures wag on in thy tail—  
Hands of gentle motions fail  
Nevermore, to pat thee!

Downy pillow take thy head,  
Silken coverlid bestead,  
Sunshine help thy sleeping!

## THE FOURFOLD ASPECT.

No fly's buzzing wake thee up—  
 No man break thy purple cup,  
 Set for drinking deep in.

Whiskered cats aointed flee—  
 Sturdy stoppers keep from thee  
 Cologne distillations!  
 Nuts lie in thy path for stones,  
 And thy feast-day macaroons  
 Turn to daily rations!

Mock I thee, in wishing weal?—  
 Tears are in my eyes to feel  
 Thou art made so straightly,  
 Blessing needs must straighten too,—  
 Little canst thou joy or do,  
 Thou who lovest *greatly*.

Yet be bless'd to the height  
 Of all good and all delight  
 Pervious to thy nature,—  
 Only *loved* beyond that line,  
 With a love that answers thine,  
 Loving fellow-creature!



## THE FOURFOLD ASPECT.

WHEN ye stood up in the house  
 With your little childish feet,  
 And, in touching Life's first shows,  
 First, the touch of Love, did meet,—  
 Love and Nearness seeming one,  
 By the hearthlight cast before,—  
 And, of all Belovèds, none  
 Standing farther than the door—  
 Not a name being dear to thought,  
 With its owner beyond call,—  
 Nor a face, unless it brought  
 Its own shadow to the wall,—  
 When the worst recorded change  
 Was of cherry dropped from bough,—  
 When love's sorrow seemed more strange  
 Than love's treason can seem now,—

Then, the Loving took you up  
 Soft, upon their elder knees,—  
 Telling why the statues droop  
 Underneath the churchyard trees,  
 And how *ye* must lie beneath them,  
 Through the winters long and deep,  
 Till the last trump overbreathe them,  
 And ye smile out of your sleep . . .  
 Oh ye lifted up your head, and it seemed as if they said  
 A tale of fairy ships  
 With a swan-wing for a sail!—  
 O, ye kissed their loving lips  
 For the merry, merry tale!—  
 So carelessly ye thought upon the Dead.

Soon ye read in solemn stories  
 Of the men of long ago—  
 Of the pale bewildering glories  
 Shining farther than we know,—  
 Of the heroes with the laurel,  
 Of the poets with the bay,  
 Of the two worlds' earnest quarrel  
 For that beauteous Helena,—  
 How Achilles at the portal  
 Of the tent, heard footsteps nigh,  
 And his strong heart, half immortal,  
 Met the *keitai* with a cry,—  
 How Ulysses left the sunlight  
 For the pale eidola race  
 Blank and passive through the dun light,  
 Staring blindly on his face!  
 How that true wife said to Pœtus,  
 With calm smile and wounded heart,—  
 "Sweet, it hurts not!"—how Admetus  
 Saw his bless'd one depart!—  
 How King Arthur proved his mission—  
 And Sir Roland wound his horn,—  
 And at Sangreal's moony vision  
 Swords did bristle round like corn,—  
 Oh! ye lifted up your head, and it seemed the while ye read,  
 That this death, then, must be found  
 A Valhalla for the crowned—  
 The heroic who prevail!  
 None, be sure, can enter in  
 Far below a paladin  
 Of a noble, noble tale!—  
 So, awfully, ye thought upon the Dead.

Aye! but soon ye woke up shrieking,—  
 As a child that wakes at night  
 From a dream of sisters speaking  
 In a garden's summer light,—  
 That wakes, starting up and bounding,  
 In a lonely, lonely bed,  
 With a wall of darkness round him,  
 Stifling black about his head!—  
 And the full sense of your mortal  
 Rushed upon you deep and loud,  
 And ye heard the thunder hurtle  
 From the silence of the cloud—  
 Funeral-torches at your gateway  
 Threw a dreadful light within;  
 All things changed! you rose up straightway,  
 And saluted Death and Sin!  
*Since*,—your outward man has rallied,  
 And your eye and voice grown bold—  
 Yet the Sphinx of Life stands pallid,  
 With her saddest secret told!  
 Happy places have grown holy:  
 If ye went where once ye went,  
 Only tears would fall down slowly,  
 As at solemn sacrament;  
 Merry books, once read for pastime,  
 If ye dared to read again,  
 Only memories of the last time  
 Would swim darkly up the brain!  
 Household *names*, which used to flutter  
 Through your laughter unawares,—  
 God's Divine one, would ye utter  
 With less trembling in your prayers!  
 Ye have dropt adown your head, and it seems as if ye tread  
 On your own hearts in the path  
 Ye are called to in His wrath,—  
 And your prayers go up in wail!  
 —“Dost Thou see, then all our loss,  
 O Thou agonized on cross?  
 Art thou reading all its tale?”  
 So, mournfully, ye think upon the Dead!  
  
 Pray, pray, *thou* who also weepst,  
 And the drops will slacken so;—  
 Weep, weep!—and the watch thou keepst,  
 With a quicker count will go.  
 Think!—the shadow on the dial  
 For the nature most undone,

Marks the passing of the trial,  
 Proves the presence of the sun!  
 Look, look up, in starry passion,  
 To the throne above the spheres,—  
 Learn! the spirit's gravitation  
 Still must differ from the tear's.  
 Hope! with all the strength thou uscest  
 In embracing thy despair!  
 Love! the earthly love thou lovest  
 Shall return to thee more fair.  
 Work! make clear the forest-tangles  
 Of the wildest stranger-land;  
 Trust! the blessed deathly angels  
 Whisper, "Sabbath hours at hand!"  
 By the heart's wound when most gory,  
 By the longest agony,  
 Smile!—Behold, in sudden glory  
 The TRANSFIGURED smiles on *thee!*  
 And ye lifted up your head, and it seemed as if He said,  
 "My Belovèd, is it so?  
 Have ye tasted of my woe?—  
 Of my Heaven ye shall not fail!"  
 He stands brightly where the shade is,  
 With the keys of Death and Hades,  
 And there, ends the mournful tale!—  
 So, hopefully, ye think upon the Dead!

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 A FLOWER IN A LETTER.

WRITTEN 1839.

MY lonely chamber next the sea,  
 Is full of many flowers set free  
 By summer's earliest duty;  
 Dear friends upon the garden-walk  
 Might stop amid their fondest talk,  
 To pull the least in beauty.

A thousand flowers—each seeming one  
 That learnt, by gazing on the sun,  
 To counterfeit his shining—  
 Within whose leaves the holy dew  
 That falls from heaven, hath won anew  
 A glory . . . in declining.

Red roses, used to praises long,  
 Contented with the poet's song,  
 The nightingale's being over :  
 And lilies white, prepared to touch  
 The whitest thought, nor soil it much,  
 Of dreamer turned to lover.

Deep violets you liken to  
 The kindest eyes that look on you,  
 Without a thought disloyal :  
 And cactuses, a queen might don,  
 If weary of her golden crown,  
 And still appear as royal !

Pansies for ladies all ! I wis  
 That none who wear such brooches, miss  
 A jewel in the mirror :  
 And tulips, children love to stretch  
 Their fingers down, to feel in each  
 Its beauty's secret nearer.

Love's language may be talked with these  
 To work out choicest sentences,  
 No blossoms can be meeter,—  
 And, such being used in Eastern bowers,  
 Young maids may wonder if the flowers  
 Or meanings be the sweeter.

And such being strewn before a bride,  
 Her little foot may turn aside,  
 Their longer bloom decreeing !  
 Unless some voice's whispered sound  
 Should make her gaze upon the ground  
 Too earnestly—for seeing.

And such being scattered on a grave,  
 Whoever mourneth there may have  
 A type that seemeth worthy  
 Of a fair body hid below,  
 Which bloomed on earth a time ago,  
 Then perished as the earthy.

And such being wreathed for worldly feast,  
 Across the brimming cup some guest  
 Their rainbow colours viewing,  
 May feel them,—with a silent start,—  
 The covenant, his childish heart  
 With nature, made,—renewing.

No flowers our gardened England hath,  
 To match with these in bloom and breath,  
 Which from the world are hiding  
 In sunny Devon moist with rills,—  
 A nunnery of cloistered hills,—  
 The elements presiding.

By Loddon's stream the flowers are fair  
 That meet one gifted lady's care  
 With prodigal rewarding ;  
 But Beauty is too used to run  
 To Mitford's bower—to want the sun  
 To light her through the garden !

And *here*, all summers are comprised—  
 The nightly frosts shrink exorcised  
 Before the priestly moonshine !  
 And every wind with stolid feet,  
 In wandering down the alleys sweet,  
 Steps lightly on the sunshine ;

And (having promised Harpocrate  
 Among the nodding roses, that  
 No harm shall touch his daughters)  
 Gives quite away the noisy sound,  
 He dares not use upon such ground,  
 To ever-trickling waters.

Yet, sun and wind ! what can ye do,  
 But make the leaves more brightly shew  
 In posies newly gathered ?—  
 I look away from all your best !  
 To one poor flower unlike the rest,—  
 A little flower half-withered.

I do not think it ever was  
 A pretty flower,—to make the grass  
 Look greener where it reddened :  
 And now it seems ashamed to be  
 Alone, in all this company,  
 Of aspect shrunk and saddened !

A chamber-window was the spot  
 It grew in, from a garden-pot,  
 Among the city shadows :  
 If any, tending it, might seem  
 To smile, 'twas only in a dream  
 Of nature in the meadows.

## THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.

How coldly, on its head, did fall  
 The sunshine, from the city wall,  
 In pale refraction driven !  
 How sadly plashed upon its leaves  
 The raindrops, losing in the eaves  
 The first sweet news of Heaven !

And those who planted, gathered it  
 In gamesome or in loving fit,  
 And sent it as a token  
 Of what their city pleasures be,—  
 For one, in Devon by the sea  
 And garden-blooms, to look on.

But SHE, for whom the jest was meant,  
 With a grave passion innocent  
 Receiving what was given,—  
 Oh ! if her face she *turnèd then*, . . .  
 Let none say 'twas to gaze again  
 Upon the flowers of Devon !

Because, whatever virtue dwells  
 In genial skies—warm oracles  
 For gardens brightly springing,—  
 The flower which grew beneath your eyes,  
 Ah sweetest friends, to mine supplies  
 A beauty worthier singing !



## THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.

"THERE is no God," the foolish saith,—  
 But none, "There is no sorrow ;"  
 And nature oft, the cry of faith,  
 In bitter need will borrow :  
 Eyes, which the preacher could not school,  
 By wayside graves are raised ;  
 And lips say, "God be pitiful,"  
 Who ne'er said, "God be praised."  
Be pitiful, O God

The tempest stretches from the steep  
 The shadow of its coming—  
 The beasts grow tame, and near us creep,  
 As help were in the human—

Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind,  
 We spirits tremble under!—  
 The hills have echoes; but we find  
 No answer for the thunder.

Be pitiful, O God!

The battle hurtles on the plains—  
 Earth feels new scythes upon her :  
 We reap our brothers for the wains,  
 And call the harvest . . . honour,—  
 Draw face to face, from line to line,  
 One image all inherit,—  
 Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,  
 Clay, clay,—and spirit, spirit.

Be pitiful, O God!

The plague runs festering through the town,—  
 And never a bell is tolling ;  
 And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,  
 Nod to the dead-cart's rolling !  
 The young child calleth for the cup—  
 The strong man brings it weeping ;  
 The mother from her babe looks up,  
 And shrieks away its sleeping.

Be pitiful, O God!

The plague of gold strikes far and near,—  
 And deep and strong it enters :  
 This purple chimar which we wear,  
 Makes madder than the centaur's.  
 Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange ;  
 We cheer the pale gold-diggers—  
 Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,  
 And marked, like sheep, with figures.

Be pitiful, O God!

The curse of gold upon the land,  
 The lack of bread enforces—  
 The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,  
 Like more of Death's White horses !  
 The rich preach "rights" and future days,  
 And hear no angel scoffing !  
 The poor die mute—with starving gaze  
 On corn-ships in the offing.

Be pitiful, O God!

We meet together at the feast—  
 To private mirth betake us—

We stare down in the wine-cup, lest  
 Some vacant chair should shake us !  
 We name delight, and pledge it round—  
 “It shall be ours to-morrow !”  
 God’s seraphs ! do your voices sound  
 As sad in naming sorrow ?

Be pitiful, O God !

We sit together, with the skies,  
 The steadfast skies, above us :  
 We look into each other’s eyes,—  
 “And how long will you love us ?”—  
 The eyes grow dim with prophecy,  
 The voices, low and breathless—  
 “Till death us part !”—O words, to be  
 Our *best* for love the deathless !

Be pitiful, O God !

We tremble by the harmless bed  
 Of one loved and departed—  
 Our tears drop on the lips that said  
 Last night, “Be stronger-hearted !”  
 O God,—to clasp those fingers close,  
 And yet to feel so lonely !—  
 To see a light on dearest brows,  
 Which is the daylight only !

Be pitiful, O God !

The happy children come to us,  
 And look up in our faces :  
 They ask us—Was it thus, and thus,  
 When we were in their places !—  
 We cannot speak :—we see anew  
 The hills we used to live in ;  
 And feel our mother’s smile press through  
 The kisses she is giving.

Be pitiful, O God !

We pray together at the kirk,  
 For mercy, mercy, solely—  
 Hands weary with the evil work,  
 We lift them to the Holy !  
 The corpse is calm below our knee—  
 Its spirit, bright before Thee—  
 Between them, worse than either, we—  
 Without the rest or glory !

Be pitiful, O God !

We leave the communing of men,  
 The murmur of the passions ;  
 And live alone, to live again  
 With endless generations.  
 Are we so brave ?—The sea and sky  
 In silence lift their mirrors ;  
 And, glassed therein, our spirits high  
 Recoil from their own terrors.  
 Be pitiful, O God !

We sit on hills our childhood wist,  
 Woods, hamlets, streams, beholding !  
 The sun strikes, through the farthest mist,  
 The city's spire to golden.  
 The city's golden spire it was,  
 When hope and health were strongest,  
 But now it is the churchyard grass,  
 We look upon the longest.  
 Be pitiful, O God !

And soon all vision waxeth dull—  
 Men whisper, " He is dying :"  
 We cry no more, " Be pitiful !"—  
 We have no strength for crying !—  
 No strength, no need ! Then, Soul of mine,  
 Look up and triumph rather—  
 Lo ! in the depths of God's Divine,  
 The Son adjures the Father—  
 BE PITIFUL, O GOD !

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## A LAY OF THE EARLY ROSE.

—"discordance that can accord,"  
 ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

A ROSE once grew within  
 A garden April-green,  
 In her lonesness, in her lonesness,  
 And the fairer for that oneness.

A white rose delicate,  
 On a tall bough and straight !  
 Early comer, early comer,  
 Never waiting for the summer.

Her pretty gesses did win  
 South winds to let her in,  
 In her loneliness, in her loneliness,  
 All the fairer for that oneness.

"For if I wait," said she,  
 "Till times for roses be,—  
 For the musk-rose and the moss-rose,  
 Royal-red and maiden-blush rose,—

"What glory then for me  
 In such a company?—  
 Roses plenty, roses plenty,  
 And one nightingale for twenty?"

"Nay, let me in," said she,  
 "Before the rest are free,—  
 In my loneliness, in my loneliness,  
 All the fairer for that oneness.

"For I would lonely stand,  
 Uplifting my white hand,—  
 On a mission, on a mission,  
 To declare the coming vision.

"Upon which lifted sign,  
 What worship will be mine?  
 What addressing, what caressing!  
 And what thank, and praise, and blessing!"

"A windlike joy will rush  
 Through every tree and bush,  
 Bending softly in affection  
 And spontaneous benediction.

"Insects, that only may  
 Live in a sunbright ray,  
 To my whiteness, to my whiteness,  
 Shall be drawn, as to a brightness,—

"And every moth and bee,  
 Approach me reverently;  
 Wheeling o'er me, wheeling o'er me,  
 Coronals of motioned glory.

"Three larks shall leave a cloud;  
 To my whiter beauty vowed—  
 Singing gladly all the moontide,—  
 Never waiting for the suntide.

“Ten nightingales shall flee  
Their woods for love of me.—  
Singing sadly all the suntide,  
Never waiting for the moontide.

“I ween the very skies  
Will look down with surprise,  
When low on earth they see me,  
With my starry aspect dreamy !

“And earth will call her flowers  
To hasten out of doors,—  
By their curtsies and sweet-smelling,  
To give grace to my foretelling.”

So praying, did she win  
South winds to let her in,  
In her lonesness, in her lonesness,  
And the fairer for that oneness.

But ah !—alas for her !  
No thing did minister  
To her praises, to her praises,  
More than might unto a daisy's.

No tree nor bush was seen  
To boast a perfect green ;  
Scarcely having, scarcely having,  
One leaf broad enough for waving.

The little flies did crawl  
Along the southern wall,—  
Faintly shifting, faintly shifting  
Wings scarce strong enough for lifting.

The lark, too high or low,  
I ween, did miss her so ;  
With his nest down in the gorses,  
And his song in the star-courses !

The nightingale did please  
To loiter beyond seas.  
Guess him in the Happy islands,  
Learning music from the silence !

Only the bee, forsooth,  
Came in the place of both ;  
Doing honour, doing honour,  
To the honey-dews upon her.

The skies looked coldly down,  
 As on a royal crown ;  
 Then with drop for drop, at leisure,  
 They began to rain for pleasure.

Whereat the earth did seem  
 To waken from a dream,  
 Winter-frozen, winter-frozen,  
 Her unquiet eyes unclosing—

Said to the Rose—" Ha, Snow !  
 And art thou fallen so ?  
 Thou, who wert enthroned stately  
 All along my mountains, lately ?

" Holla, thou world-wide snow !  
 And art thou wasted so ?  
 With a little bough to catch thee,  
 And a little bee to watch thee ? "

—Poor Rose to be 'misknown !  
 Would she had ne'er been blown,  
 In her lonesness, in her lonesness,—  
 All the sadder for that oneness !

Some word she tried to say—  
 Some *no* . . . ah, wellaway !  
 But the passion did o'ercome her,  
 And the fair frail leaves dropped from her—

Dropped from her, fair and mute,  
 Close to a poet's foot,  
 Who beheld them, smiling slowly,  
 As at something sad yet holy :

Said, " Verily and thus  
 It chanceth eke with *us*  
 Poets singing sweetest snatches,  
 While that deaf men keep the watches—

" Vaunting to come before  
 Our own age evermore,  
 In a lonesness, in a lonesness,  
 And the nobler for that oneness !

" Holy in voice and heart,—  
 To high ends, set apart !  
 All unmated, all unmated,  
 Because so consecrated !

“ But if alone we be,  
Where is our empery ?  
And if none can reach our stature,  
Who can praise our lofty nature ?

“ What bell will yield a tone,  
Swung in the air alone ?  
If no brazen clapper bringing,  
Who can hear the chiméd ringing ?

“ What angel, but would seem  
To sensual eyes, ghost-dim ?  
And without assimilation,  
Vain is inter-penetration !

“ And thus, what can we do,  
Poor rose and poet too,  
Who both antedate our mission  
In an unprepared season ?

“ Drop leaf—be silent song—  
Cold things we come among !  
We must warm them, we must warm them,  
Ere we ever hope to charm them.

“ Howbeit ” (here his face  
Lightened around the place,—  
So to mark the outward turning  
Of his spirit's inward burning)—

“ Something, it is, to hold  
In God's worlds manifold,  
First revealed to creature-duty,  
Some new form of His mild Beauty !

“ Whether that form respect  
The sense or intellect,  
Holy be in soul or pleasance,  
The Chief Beauty's sign of presence !

“ Holy, in me and thee,  
Rose fallen from the tree,—  
Though the world stand dumb around us,  
All unable to expound us !

“ Though none us deign to bless,  
Blessed are we, natless !  
Blessed still, and consecrated,  
In that, rose, we were created.

## A LAY OF THE EARLY ROSE.

" Oh, shame to poet's lays  
Sung for the dole of praise,—  
Hoarsely sung upon the highway  
With that *obolum da mihi*.

" Shame, shame to poet's soul,  
Pining for such a dole,  
When heaven-chosen to inherit  
The high throne of a chief spirit !

" Sit still upon your thrones,  
O ye poetic ones !  
And if, sooth, the world decry you,  
Let it pass, unchallenged by you !

" Ye to yourselves suffice,  
Without its flatteries.  
Self-contentedly approve you  
Unto HIM who sits above you,—

" In prayers—that upward mount  
Like to a fair-sunned fount  
Which, in gushing back upon you,  
Hath an upper music won you,—

" In faith—that still perceives  
No rose can shed her leaves,  
Far less, poet fall from mission—  
With an unfulfilled fruition !

" In hope—that apprehends  
An end beyond these ends ;  
And great uses rendered duly  
By the meanest song sung truly !

" In thanks—for all the good,  
By poets understood—  
For the sound of seraphs moving  
Down the hidden depths of loving,—

" For sights of things away,  
Through fissures of the clay,  
Promised things which *shall* be given  
And sung over, up in Heaven,—

" For life, so lovely-vain,—  
For death, which breaks the chain,—  
For this sense of present sweetness,—  
And this yearning to completeness !

## BERTHA IN THE LANE.

PUT the broidery-frame away,  
 For my sewing is all done!  
 The last thread is used to-day,  
 And I need not join it on.  
 Though the clock stands at the noon,  
 I am weary! I have sewn  
 Sweet, for thee, a wedding-gown.

Sister, help me to the bed,  
 And stand near me, Dearest-sweet,  
 Do not shrink nor be afraid.  
 Blushing with a sudden heat!  
 \* No one standeth in the street?—  
 By God's love I go to meet,  
 Love I thee with love complete. \*

Lean thy face down! drop it in  
 These two hands, that I may hold  
 'Twixt their palms thy cheek and chin,  
 Stroking back the curls of gold.  
 'Tis a fair, fair face, in sooth—  
 Larger eyes and redder mouth  
 Than mine were in my first youth!

Thou art younger by seven years—  
 Ah!—so bashful at my gaze,  
 That the lashes, hung with tears,  
 Grow too heavy to upraise?  
 I would wound thee by no touch  
 Which thy shyness feels as such—  
 Dost thou mind me, Dear, so much?

Have I not been nigh a mother  
 To thy sweetness—tell me, Dear?  
 Have we not loved one another  
 Tenderly, from year to year;  
 Since our dying mother mild  
 Said with accents undefiled,  
 "Child, be mother to this child"?

Mother, mother, up in heaven,  
 Stand up on the jasper sea,  
 And be witness I have given  
 All the gifts required of me;—

## BERTHA IN THE LANE.

Hope that blessed me, bliss that crowned,  
 Love, that left me with a wound,  
 Life itself, that turneth round !

Mother, mother, thou art kind,  
 Thou art standing in the room,—  
 In a molten glory shrined,  
 That rays off into the gloom !  
 But thy smile is bright and bleak. ✕  
 Like cold wayes—I cannot speak ;  
 I sob in it, and grow weak.

Ghostly mother, keep aloof  
 One hour longer from my soul—  
 For I still am thinking of  
 Earth's warm-beating joy and dole !  
 On my finger is a ring  
 Which I still see glittering,  
 ✕ When the night hides everything.

Little sister, thou art pale !  
 Ah, I have a wandering brain—  
 But I lose that fever-bale,  
 And my thoughts grow calm again.  
 Lean down closer—closer still !  
 I have words thine ear to fill,—  
 And would kiss thee at my will.

Dear, I heard thee in the spring,  
 Thee and Robert—through the trees,—  
 When we all went gathering  
 Boughs of May-bloom for the bees.  
 Do not start so ! think instead  
 How the sunshine overhead  
 Seemed to trickle through the shade.

What a day it was, that day !  
 Hills and vales did openly  
 Seem to heave and throb away,  
 At the sight of the great sky :  
 And the Silence, as it stood  
 In the Glory's golden flood,  
 Audibly did bud—and bud !

Through the winding hedgerows green,  
 How we wandered, I and you,—  
 With the bowery tops shut in,  
 And the gates that showed the view—

How we talked there! thrushes soft  
Sang our pauses out,—or oft  
Bleatings took them, from the croft.

Till the pleasure, grown too strong,  
Left me muter evermore;  
And, the winding road being long,  
I walked out of sight, before;  
And so wrapt in musings fond,  
Issued (past the wayside pond)  
On the meadow-lands beyond.

I sate down beneath the beech  
Which leans over to the lane,  
And the far sound of your speech  
Did not promise any pain:  
And I blessed you full and free,  
With a smile stooped tenderly  
O'er the May-flowers on my knee.

But the sound grew into word  
As the speakers drew more near—  
Sweet, forgive me that I heard  
What you wished me not to hear.  
Do not weep so—do not shake—  
Oh,—I heard thee, Bertha, make  
Good true answers for my sake.

Yes, and HE too! let him stand  
In thy thoughts, untouched by blame.  
Could he help it, if my hand  
He had claimed with hasty claim?  
That was wrong perhaps—but then  
Such things be—and will, again!  
Women cannot judge for men.

Had he seen thee, when he swore  
He would love but me alone?  
Thou wert absent,—sent before  
To our kin in Sidmouth town.  
When he saw thee who art best,  
Past compare, and loveliest,  
He but judged thee as the rest.

Could we blame him with grave words,  
Thou and I, Dear, if we might?  
Thy brown eyes have looks like birds,  
Flying straightway to the light:

## BERTHA IN THE LANE.

Mine are older.—Hush!—Look out—  
Up the street! Is none without?  
How the poplar swings about!

And that hour—beneath the beech,  
When I listened in a dream,  
And he said, in his deep speech,  
That he owed me all *esteem*,—  
Each word swam in on my brain  
With a dim, dilating pain,  
Till it burst with that last strain.

I fell flooded with a Dark,  
In the silence of a swoon—  
When I rose, still cold and stark,  
There was night,—I saw the moon  
And the stars, each in its place,  
And the May-blooms on the grass,  
Seemed to wonder what I was.

And I walked as if apart  
From myself, when I could stand—  
And I pitied my own heart,  
As if I held it in my hand,—  
Somewhat coldly,—with a sense  
Of fulfilled benevolence,  
And a “Poor thing” negligence.

And I answered coldly too,  
When you met me at the door;  
And I only *heard* the dew  
Dripping from me to the floor:  
And the flowers I bade you see,  
Were too withered for the bee,—  
As my life, henceforth, for me.

Do not weep so—Dear—heart-warm!  
It was best as it befell!  
If I say he did me harm,  
I speak wild,—I am not well.  
All his words were kind and good—  
*He esteemed me!* Only blood  
Runs so faint in womanhood!

Then I always was too grave,—  
Liked the saddest ballad sung,—  
With that look, besides, we have  
In our faces, who die young.

I had died, Dear, all the same—  
 Life's long, joyous, jostling game  
 Is too loud for my meek shame.

We are so unlike each other,  
 Thou and I; that none could guess  
 We were children of one mother,  
 But for mutual tenderness.  
 Thou art rose-lined from the cold,  
 And meant, verily, to hold  
 Life's pure pleasures manifold.

I am pale as crocus grows  
 Close beside a rose-tree's root!  
 Whoso'er would reach the rose,  
 Treads the crocus under foot—  
 I, like May-bloom on thorn-tree—  
 Thou, like merry summer-bee.  
 Fit that I be plucked for thee!

Yet who plucks me?—no one mourns—  
 I have lived my season out,—  
 And now die of my own thorns  
 Which I could not live without.  
 Sweet, be merry! How the light  
 Comes and goes! If it be night,  
 Keep the candles in my sight.

Are there footsteps at the door?  
 Look out quickly. Yea, or nay?  
 Some one might be waiting for  
 Some last word that I might say.  
 Nay? So best!—So angels would  
 Stand off clear from deathly road,—  
 Not to cross the sight of God.

Colder grow my hands and feet—  
 When I wear the shroud I made,  
 Let the folds lie straight and neat,  
 And the rosemary be spread,—  
 That if any friend should come,  
 (To see thee, sweet!) all the room  
 May be lifted out of gloom.

And dear Bertha, let me keep  
 On my hand this little ring,  
 Which at nights, when others sleep,  
 I can still see glittering.

THAT DAY.

Let me wear it out of sight,  
In the grave,—where it will light  
All the Dark up, day and night.

On that grave, drop not a tear !  
Else, though fathom-deep the place,  
Through the woollen shroud I wear,  
I shall feel it on my face.  
Rather smile there, blessed one,  
Thinking of me in the sun—  
Or forget me—smiling on !

Art thou near me ? nearer ? so !  
Kiss me close upon the eyes,—  
That the earthly light may go  
Sweetly as it used to rise,—  
When I watched the morning-grey  
Strike, betwixt the hills, the way  
He was sure to come that day.

So,—no more vain words be said !  
The hosannas nearer roll—  
Mother, smile now on thy Dead,—  
I am death-strong in my soul !  
Mystic Dove alit on cross,  
Guide the poor bird of the snows  
Through the snow-wind above loss !

Jesus, Victim, comprehending  
Love's divine self-abnegation,—  
Cleanse my love in its self-spending,  
And absorb the poor libation !  
Wind my thread of life up higher,  
Up through angels' hands of fire !—  
I aspire while I expire !—

—◆—

THAT DAY.

FOR MUSIC.

I STAND by the river where both of us stood,  
And there is but one shadow to darken the flood :  
And the path leading to it, where both used to pass,  
Has the step but of one, to take dew from the grass,—  
One forlorn since that day.

The flowers of the margin are many to see,  
 For none stoops at my bidding to pluck them for me;  
 The bird in the alder sings loudly and long,  
 For my low sound of weeping disturbs not his song,  
 As thy vow did that day!

I stand by the river—I think of the vow—  
 Oh, calm as the place is, vow-breaker, be *thou*!  
 I leave the flower growing—the bird, unreprieved,—  
 Would I trouble *thee* rather than *them*, my beloved,  
 And my loving that day?

Go! be sure of my love—by that treason forgiven,—  
 Of my prayers—by the blessings they win thee from  
 Heaven,—  
 Of my grief (guess the length of the sword by the sheath's)—  
 By the silence of life, more pathetic than death's,—  
 Go,—be clear of that day!



## LOVED ONCE.

I CLASSED, appraising once,  
 Earth's lamentable sounds; the welladay,  
 The jarring yea and nay,  
 The fall of kisses on unanswering clay,  
 The sobbed farewell, the welcome mournfuller;—  
 But all did leaven the air  
 With a less bitter leaven of sure despair,  
 Than these words—"I loved ONCE."

And who saith, "I loved ONCE?"  
 Not angels, whose clear eyes, love, love foresee,  
 Love through eternity!  
 Who, by To Love, do apprehend To Be.  
 Not God, called LOVE, His noble crown-name,—casting  
 A light too broad for blasting!  
 The great God changing not from everlasting,  
 Saith never, "I loved ONCE."

Nor ever the "Loved ONCE,"  
 Dost THOU say, Victim-Christ, misprized friend!  
 The cross and curse may rend;  
 But, having loved, Thou lovest to the end!

It is man's saying—man's! Too weak to move  
 One sphered star above,  
 Man desecrates the eternal God-word Love  
 With his No More, and Once.

How say ye, "We loved once,"  
 Blasphemers? Is your earth not cold enow,  
 Mourners, without that snow?  
 Ah, friends! and would ye wrong each other so?  
 And could ye say of some, whose love is known,  
 Whose prayers have met your own,  
 Whose tears have fallen for you, whose smiles have shone,  
 Such words, "We loved them ONCE?"

Could ye, "We loved her once,"  
 Say calm of me, sweet friends, when out of sight?  
 When hearts of better right  
 Stand in between me and your happy light?  
 And when, as flowers kept too long in the shade,  
 Ye find my colours fade,  
 And all that is not love in me, decayed?  
 Such words—Ye loved me ONCE!

Could ye "We loved her once,"  
 Say cold of me, when further put away  
 In earth's sepulchral clay?  
 When mute the lips which deprecate to-day?—  
 Not so! not then—*least* then! when life is shriven,  
 And Death's full joy is given,—  
 Of those who sit and love you up in Heaven,  
 Say not, "We loved them once."

Say never, ye loved ONCE!  
 God is too near above, the grave below,  
 And all our moments go  
 Too quickly past our souls, for saying so!  
 The mysteries of Life and Death avenge  
 Affections light of range—  
 There comes no change to justify that change,  
 Whatever comes—Loved ONCE.

And yet that word of ONCE  
 Is humanly acceptive! Kings have said,  
 Shaking a disrowned head,  
 "We ruled once,"—idiot tongues, "We once bested,"—  
 Cripples once danced i' the vines—and bards approved,  
 Were once by scornings, moved!  
 But love strikes one hour—LOVE. Those *never* loved,  
 Who dream that they loved ONCE.

## A RHAPSODY OF LIFE'S PROGRESS.

"Fill all the stops of life with tuneful breath."

POEMS ON MAN, by *Cornelius Mathews*.\*

We are borne into life—it is sweet, it is strange !  
 We lie still on the knee of a mild Mystery,  
     Which smiles with a change !  
 But we doubt not of changes, we know not of spaces ;  
 The Heavens seem as near as our own mother's face is,  
 And we think we could touch all the stars that we see ;  
 And the milk of our mother is white on our mouth !  
 And, with small childish hands, we are turning around  
 The apple of Life which another has found :—  
 It is warm with our touch, not with sun of the south,  
 And we count, as we turn it, the red side for four—  
     O Life, O Beyond,  
 Thou art sweet, thou art strange evermore !

Then all things look strange in the pure golden æther :  
 We walk through the gardens with hands linked together,  
     And the lilies look large as the trees ;  
 And as loud as the birds, sing the bloom-loving bees,—  
 And the birds sing like angels, so mystical fine ;  
 And the cedars are brushing the archangel's feet ;  
 And time is eternity,—love is divine,  
     And the world is complete !  
 Now, God bless the child,—father, mother, respond.  
     O Life, O Beyond,  
 Thou art strange, thou art sweet.

Then we leap on the earth with the armour of youth,  
     And the earth rings again !  
 And we breathe out, "O beauty!"—we cry out, "O truth!"  
 And the bloom of our lips drops with wine ;  
 And our blood runs amazed 'neath the calm hyaline,—  
 The earth cleaves to the foot, the sun burns to the brain,—  
 What is this exultation, and what this despair ?  
 The strong pleasure is smiting the nerves into pain,  
 And we drop from the Fair, as we climb to the Fair,  
     And we lie in a trance at its feet ;  
 And the breath of an angel cold-piercing the air  
     Breathes fresh on our faces in swoon ;

\* A small volume, by an American poet—as remarkable, in thought and manner, for a vital sinewy vigour, as the right arm of Pathfinder.

And we think him so near, he is this side the sun !  
 And we wake to a whisper self murmured and fond,  
     O Life, O Beyond,  
 Thou art strange, thou art sweet !

And the winds and the waters in pastoral measures  
 Go winding around us, with roll upon roll,  
 Till the soul lies within in a circle of pleasures,  
     Which hideth the soul !

And we run with the stag, and we leap with the horse,  
 And we swim with the fish through the broad water-course,  
 And we strike with the falcon, and hunt with the hound,  
 And the joy which is in us, flies out with a wound ;  
 And we shout so aloud, " We exult, we rejoice,"  
 That we lose the low moan of our brothers around,—  
 And we shout so adeep down creation's profound,  
     We are deaf to God's voice—

And we bind the rose-garland on forehead and ears,  
     Yet we are not ashamed :

And the dew of the roses that runneth unblamed  
     Down our cheeks, is not taken for tears.

Help us God ! trust us man, love us woman ! " I hold  
 Thy small head in my hands,—with its grapelets of gold  
 Growing bright through my fingers,—like altar for oath,  
 'Neath the vast golden spaces like witnessing faces  
 That watch the eternity strong in the troth—

I love thee, I leave thee,—  
 Live for thee, die for thee !  
 I prove thee, deceive thee,—  
 Undo evermore thee !

Help me, God ! slay me man !—one is mourning for both !"  
 And we stand up, though young, near the funeral sheet  
 Which covers the Cæsar and old Pharamond ;  
 And death is so nigh us, Life cools from its heat—  
     O Life, O Beyond,  
 Art thou fair,—art thou sweet ?

Then we act to a purpose—we spring up erect—  
 We will tame the wild mouths of the wilderness steeds ;  
 We will plough up the deep in the ships double-decked ;  
 We will build the great cities, and do the great deeds,—  
 Strike the steel upon steel, strike the soul upon soul,  
 Strike the dole on the weal, overcoming the dole,—  
 Let the cloud meet the cloud in a grand thunder roll !  
 While the eagle of Thought rides the tempest in scorn,  
 Who cares if the lightning is burning the corn ?

"Let us sit on the thrones  
 In a purple sublimity,  
 And grind down men's bones  
 To a pale unanimity !  
 Speed me, God !—serve me, man !—I am god over men !  
 When I speak in my cloud, none shall answer again—  
 'Neath the stripe and the bond,  
 Lie and mourn at my feet !"  
 O thou Life, O Beyond,  
 Thou art strange, thou art sweet !

Then we grow into thought,—and with inward ascensions,  
 Touch the bounds of our Being !  
 We lie in the dark here, swathed doubly around  
 With our sensual relations and social conventions,—  
 Yet are 'ware of a sight, yet are 'ware of a sound  
 Beyond Hearing and Seeing,—  
 Are aware that a Hades rolls deep on all sides,  
 With its infinite tides,  
 About and above us,—until the strong arch  
 Of our life creaks and bends as if ready for falling,  
 And through all the dim rolling, we hear the sweet calling  
 Of spirits that speak, in a soft under-tongue,  
 The interpretive sense of the mystical march :  
 And we cry to them softly, "Come nearer, come nearer,—  
 And lift up the lap of this Dark, and speak clearer,  
 And teach us the song that ye sung."  
 And we smile in our thought, if they answer or no,—  
 For to dream of a sweetness is sweet as to know !  
 Wonders breathe in our face,  
 And we ask not their name ;  
 And Love takes all the blame  
 Of the world's prison place.  
 And we sing back the songs as we guess them, aloud ;  
 And we send up the lark of our music that cuts  
 Untired through the cloud,  
 To beat with its wings at the lattice Heaven shuts :  
 Yet the angels look down, and the mortals look up,  
 As the little wings beat,  
 And the poet is blessed with their pity or hope.  
 'Twixt the Heavens and the earth, *can* a poet despond ?  
 O Life, O Beyond,  
 Thou art strange, thou art sweet !

Then we wring from our souls their applicative strength,  
 And bend to the cord the strong bow of our ken ;  
 And bringing our lives to the level of others,

Hold the cup we have filled, to their uses at length.  
 " Help me, God ! love me, man ! I am man among men,—  
     And my life is a pledge  
     Of the ease of another's ! "

From the fire and the water we drive out the steam,  
 With a rush and a roar, and the speed of a dream !  
 And the car without horses, the car without wings,  
     Roars onward and flies  
     On its pale iron edge,  
 'Neath the heat of a Thought sitting still in our eyes—  
 And the hand knots in air, with the bridge that it flings,  
 Two peaks far disrupted by ocean and skies—  
 And, lifting a fold of the smooth-flowing Thames,  
 Draws under the world, with its turmoils and pothers ;  
 While the swans float on softly, untouched in their calms  
 By Humanity's hum at the root of the springs !  
 And with reachings of Thought we reach down to the deeps  
     Of the souls of our brothers,

And teach them full words with our slow-moving lips,  
 " God," " Liberty," " Truth,"—which they hearken and think,  
 And work into harmony, link upon link,  
 Till the silver meets round the earth gelid and dense,  
 Shedding sparks of electric response intense  
     On the dark of eclipse.

Then we hear through the silence and glory afar,  
     As from shores of a star

In aphelion,—the new generations that cry  
 In attune to our voice and harmonious reply,  
     " God," " Liberty," " Truth ! "

    We are glorious forsooth,—  
     And our name has a seat,  
 Though the shroud should be donned !  
     O Life, O Beyond,  
 Thou art strange, thou art sweet !

Help me, God ! help me, man ! I am low, I am weak—  
 Death loosens my sinews and creeps in my veins ;  
 My body is cleft by these wedges of pains,  
     From my spirit's serene ;

And I feel the externe and insensate creep in  
     On my organised clay.  
 I sob not, nor shriek,  
 Yet I faint fast away !

I am strong in the spirit,—deep-thoughted, clear-eyed,—  
 I could walk, step for step, with an angel beside,  
     On the Heaven-heights of Truth !  
 Oh, the soul keeps its youth—

But the body faints sore, it is tired in the race,—  
 It sinks from the chariot ere reaching the goal ;  
     It is weak, it is cold,  
     The rein drops from its hold—  
 It sinks back, with the death in its face !  
     On, chariot—on, soul,—  
     Ye are all the more fleet  
     Be alone at the goal  
     Of the strange and the sweet !

Love us, God ! love us, man ! we believe, we achieve—  
     Let us love, let us live,  
     For the acts correspond—  
     We are glorious—and DIE !  
 And again on the knee of a mild Mystery  
     That smiles with a change,  
     Here we lie !  
     O DEATH, O BEYOND,  
 Thou art sweet, thou art strange !

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### L. E. L.'S LAST QUESTION.

“Do you think of me as I think of you?”

*(From her Poem written during the Voyage to the Cape.)*

“Do you think of me as I think of you,  
 My friends, my friends?”—She said it from the sea,  
 The English minstrel in her minstrelsy ;  
 While, under brighter skies than erst she knew,  
 Her heart grew dark,—and groped there, as the blind,  
 To reach across the waves friends left behind—  
 “Do you think of me as I think of you ?”

It seemed not much to ask—as *I of you ?*—  
 We all do ask the same. No eyelids cover  
 Within the meekest eyes, that question over,—  
 And little, in the world, the Loving do,  
 But sit (among the rocks ?) and listen for  
 The echo of their own love evermore—  
 “Do you think of me as I think of you ?”

Love-learn'd, she had sung of love and love,—  
 And, like a child, that, sleeping with dropt head

Upon the fairy-book he lately read,  
 Whatever household noises round him move,  
 Hears in his dream some elfin turbulence,—  
 Even so, suggestive to her inward sense,  
 All sounds of life assumed one tune of love.

And when the glory of her dream withdrew,—  
 When nightly gesses and courtly pageantries  
 Were broken in her visionary eyes,  
 By tears the solemn seas attested true,—  
 Forgetting that sweet lute beside her hand,  
 She asked not,—Do you praise me, O my land?—  
 But,—“Think ye of me, friends, as I of you?”

Hers was the hand that played for many a year,  
 Loves' silver phrase for England,—smooth and well!  
 Would God, her heart's more inward oracle  
 In that lone moment, might confirm her dear!  
 For when her questioned friends in agony  
 Made passionate response,—“We think of *thee*,”—  
 Her place was in the dust, too deep to hear.

Could she not wait to catch their answering breath?  
 Was she content—content—with ocean's sound,  
 Which dashed its mocking infinite around  
 One thirsty for a little love?—beneath  
 Those stars, content,—where last her song had gone,—  
*They*, mute and cold in radiant life,—as soon  
 Their singer was to be, in darksome death?\*

Bring your vain answers—cry, “We think of *thee*!”  
 How think ye of her? warm in long ago  
 Delights?—or crowned with budding bays? Not so.  
 None smile and none are crowned where lieth she,—  
 With all her vision unfulfilled, save one—  
 Her childhood's—of the palm-trees in the sun—  
 And lo! their shadow on her sepulchre!

“Do ye think of me as I think of you?”—  
 O friends,—O kindred,—O dear brotherhood  
 Of all the world! what are we, that we should  
 For covenants of long affection sue?  
 Why press so near each other, when the touch  
 Is barred by graves? Not much, and yet too much,  
 Is this “Think of me as I think of you.”

\* Her lyric on the Polar star, came home with her latest papers.

But while on mortal lips I shape anew  
 A sigh to mortal issues,—verily  
 Above the unshaken stars that see us die,  
 A vocal pathos rolls! and HE who drew  
 All life from dust, and for all, tasted death,  
 By death and life and love, appealing, saith,  
*Do you think of me as I think of you?*

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THE HOUSE OF CLOUDS.

I WOULD build a cloudy House  
 For my thoughts to live in ;  
 When for earth too fancy-loose,  
 And too low for Heaven.  
 Hush ! I talk my dream aloud—  
 I build it bright to see,—  
 Build it on the moonlit cloud,  
 To which I looked with *thee*.

Cloud-walls of the morning's grey,  
 Faced with amber column,—  
 Crowned with crimson cupola  
 From a sunset solemn !  
 May-mists, for the casements, fetch,  
 Pale and glimmering ;  
 With a sunbeam hid in each,  
 And a smell of spring.

Build the entrance high and proud,  
 Darkening and eke brightening,—  
 Of a riven thunder-cloud,  
 Vein'd by the lightning !  
 Use one with the iris-stain,  
 For the door within ;  
 Turning to a sound like rain,  
 As we enter in !

Enter a broad hall thereby,  
 Walled with cloudy whiteness :  
 'Tis a blue place of the sky,  
 Wind-worked into brightness ;  
 Whence such corridors sublime  
 Stretch, with winding stairs—  
 Praying children wish to climb  
 After their own prayers.

In the mutest of the house,  
 I will have my chamber :  
 Round its door I keep for use  
 Northern lights of amber.  
 Silence gave that rose and bee  
 For the lock, in meteness ;  
 And the tuning of the key  
 Goes in humming sweetness.

Be my chamber tapestried  
 With the showers of summer,  
 Close but soundless,—glorified  
 When the sunbeams come here—  
 Wandering harpers, harping on  
 Chorded drops, as such,—  
 Drawing colours, for a tune,  
 With a vibrant touch.

Bring a shadow green and still  
 From the chestnut forest,—  
 Bring a purple from the hill,  
 When the heat is sorest,—  
 Spread them out from wall to wall,  
 Carpet-wove around,—  
 Whereupon the foot shall fall  
 In light instead of sound.

Bring the fantastic cloudlets home,  
 From the noontide zenith ;  
 Ranged, for sculptures, round the room,—  
 Named as Fancy weeneth :  
 Some be Junos, without eyes—  
 Naiads, without sources—  
 Some be birds of paradise,—  
 Some, Olympian horses.

Bring the dews the birds shake off,  
 Waking in the hedges,—  
 Those too, perfumed for a proof,  
 From the lilies' edges :  
 From our England's field and moor,  
 Bring them calm and white in,—  
 Whence to form a mirror pure,  
 For Love's self-delighting !

Bring a grey cloud from the east,  
 Where the lark is singing,—  
 Something of the song at least,  
 Unlost in the bringing :

*That* shall be a morning chair,  
 Poet-dream may sit in,  
 When it leans out on the air,  
 Unrhymed and unwritten.

Bring the red cloud from the sun !  
 While he sinketh, catch it—  
*That* shall be a couch,—with one  
 Sidelong star to watch it,—  
 Fit for poet's finest thought,  
 At the curfew-sounding,—  
 Things unseen being nearer brought  
 Than the seen, around him.

Poet's thought,—not poet's sigh !  
 'Las, they come together !  
 Cloudy walls divide and fly,  
 As in April weather !  
 Corridor and column proud,  
 Chamber bright to see—  
 Gone !—except that moonlit cloud,  
 To which I looked with *thee* !

*Let* them ! Wipe such visionings  
 From the Fancy's cartel—  
 Love secures some fairer things  
 Dowered with his immortal !  
 Sun may darken,—heaven be bowed—  
 Still, unchanged shall be,—  
 Soul-deep,—*here*—that moonlit cloud,  
 To which I looked with *THEE* !



## CATARINA TO CAMOËNS ;

DYING IN HIS ABSENCE ABROAD, AND REFERRING TO THE POEM  
 IN WHICH HE RECORDED THE SWEETNESS OF HER EYES.

ON the door you will not enter,  
 I have gazed too long—adieu !  
 Hope withdraws her peradventure—  
 Death is near me,—and not *you* !  
 Come, O lover,  
 Close and cover  
 These poor eyes, you called, I ween  
 “Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.”

## CATARINA TO CAMOËNS.

When I heard you sing that burden  
 In my vernal days and bowers,  
 Other praises disregarding,  
 I but hearkened that of yours,—  
     Only saying  
     In heart-playing,  
 “Blessed eyes mine eyes have been,  
 If the sweetest, HIS have seen !”

But all changeth ! At this vesper,  
 Cold the sun shines down the door !  
 If you stood there, would you whisper  
 “Love, I love you,” as before,—  
     Death pervading  
     Now, and shading  
 Eyes you sang of, that yestreen,  
 As the sweetest, ever seen ?

Yes ! I think, were you beside them,  
 Near the bed I die upon,—  
 Though their beauty you denied them,  
 As you stood there, looking down,  
     You would truly  
     Call them duly,  
 For the love’s sake found therein,—  
 “Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.”

And if *you* looked down upon them,  
 And if *they* looked up to *you*,  
 All the light which has foregone them  
 Would be gathered back anew !  
     They would truly  
     Be as duly  
 Love-transformed to Beauty’s sheen,  
 “Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.”

But, ah me ! you only see me  
 In your thoughts of loving man,  
 Smiling soft perhaps and dreamy  
 Through the wavings of my fan,—  
     And unweeting  
     Go repeating,  
 In your reverie serene,  
 “Sweetest eyes, were ever seen.”

While my spirit leans and reaches  
 From my body still and pale,  
 Fain to hear what tender speech is  
 In your love, to help my bale—

O my poet,  
 Come and show it !  
 Come, of latest love, to glean  
 "Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

O my poet, O my prophet,  
 When you praised their sweetness so,  
 Did you think, in singing of it,  
 That it might be near to go ?  
 Had you fancies  
 From their glances,  
 That the grave would quickly screen  
 "Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

No reply ! The fountain's warble  
 In the courtyard sounds alone !  
 As the water to the marble  
 So my heart falls with a moan,  
 From love-sighing  
 To this dying !

Death forerunneth Love, to win  
 "Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

*Will* you come ? when I'm departed  
 Where all sweetnesses are hid—  
 When thy voice, my tender-hearted,  
 Will not lift up either lid.  
 Cry, O lover,  
 Love is over !

Cry beneath the cypress green—  
 "Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

When the angelus is ringing,  
 Near the convent will you walk,  
 And recall the choral singing  
 Which brought angels down our talk ?  
 Spirit shriven  
 I viewed Heaven,  
 Till you smiled—"Is earth unclean,  
 Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

When beneath the palace-lattice,  
 You ride slow as you have done,  
 And you see a face there—*that* is  
 Not the old familiar one,—  
 Will you oftly  
 Murmur softly,  
 "Here, ye watched me morn and e'en,  
 Sweetest eyes, were ever seen !"

## CATARINA TO CAMOËNS.

When the palace ladies sitting  
 Round your gittern, shall have said,  
 "Poet, sing those verses written  
 For the lady who is dead,"—  
 Will you tremble,  
 Yet dissemble,—  
 Or sing hoarse, with tears between,  
 "Sweetest eyes, were ever seen?"

Sweetest eyes! How sweet in flowings,  
 The repeated cadence is!  
 Though you sang a hundred poems,  
 Still the best one would be this,  
 I can hear it  
 'Twixt my spirit  
 And the earth-noise, intervene—  
 "Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!"

But the priest waits for the praying,  
 And the choir are on their knees,—  
 And the soul must pass away in  
 Strains more solemn high than these!

*Miserere*

For the weary—  
 Oh, no longer for Catrine,  
 "Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!"

Keep my riband! take and keep it—  
 I have loosed it from my hair; \*  
 Feeling, while you overweep it,  
 Not alone in your despair,—  
 Since with saintly  
 Watch unfaintly,  
 Out of Heaven shall o'er you lean  
 "Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

But—but *now*—yet unremov'd  
 Up to Heaven, they glisten fast—  
 You may cast away, Belov'd,  
 In your future, all my past;  
 Such old phrases  
 May be praises  
 For some fairer bosom-queen—  
 "Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!"

Eyes of mine, what are ye doing?  
 Faithless, faithless,—praised amiss,

\* She left him the riband from her hair.

If a tear be of your showing,  
 Dropt for any hope of HIS !  
     Death hath boldness  
     Besides coldness,  
 If unworthy tears demean  
 " Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

I will look out to his future—  
 I will bless it till it shine !  
 Should he ever be a suitor  
     Unto sweeter eyes than mine,  
     Sunshine gild them,  
     Angels shield them,  
 Whatsoever eyes terrene  
 Be the sweetest HIS have seen !



## A PORTRAIT.

" One name is Elizabeth."—BEN JONSON.

I WILL paint her as I see her !  
 Ten times have the lilies blown,  
 Since she looked upon the sun.

And her face is lily-clear—  
 Lily-shaped, and drooped in duty  
 To the law of its own beauty.

Oval cheeks, encoloured faintly,  
 Which a trail of golden hair  
 Keeps from fading off to air !

And a forehead fair and saintly,  
 Which two blue eyes undershine,  
 Like meek prayers before a shrine.

Face and figure of a child,—  
 Though too calm, you think, and tender,  
 For the childhood you would lend her.

Yet child-simple, undefiled,  
 Frank, obedient,—waiting still  
 On the turnings of your will.

Moving light, as all young things,—  
 As young birds, or early wheat  
 When the wind blows over it.

Only free from flutterings  
 Of loud mirth that scorneth measure—  
 Taking love for her chief pleasure !

Choosing pleasures (for the rest)  
 Which come softly—just as *she*,  
 When she nestles at your knee !

Quiet talk she liketh best,  
 In a bower of gentle looks,—  
 Watering flowers, or reading books.

And her voice, it murmurs lowly,  
 As a silver stream may run,  
 Which yet feels, you feel, the sun.

And her smile, it seems half holy,  
 As if drawn from thoughts more far  
 Than our common jestings are.

And if any poet knew her,  
 He would sing of her with falls  
 Used in lovely madrigals.

And if any painter drew her,  
 He would paint her unaware  
 With a halo round her hair.

And if reader read the poem,  
 He would whisper—"You have done a  
 Consecrated little Una !"

And a dreamer (did you show him  
 The same picture) would exclaim,  
 "'Tis my angel, with a name !"

And a stranger,—when he sees her  
 In the street even—smileth stilly,  
 Just as *you* would at a lily.

And all voices that address her,  
 Soften, sleecken every word,—  
 As if speaking to a bird.

And all fancies yearn to cover  
 The hard earth whereon she passes,  
 And the thymy scented grasses.

And all hearts do pray, "God love her !"—  
 Ay, and certes, in good sooth,  
 We may all be sure He *DOETH*.

## SLEEPING AND WATCHING.

SLEEP on, baby, on the floor,  
 Tired of all the playing,—  
 Sleep with smile the sweeter for  
 That, you dropped away in !  
 On your curls' full roundness, stand  
 Golden lights serenely—

One cheek, pushed out by the hand,  
 Folds the dimple inly :  
 Little head and little foot  
 Heavy laid for pleasure,  
 Underneath the lids half-shut,  
 Slants the shining azure ;—  
 Open-souled in noonday sun,  
 So, you lie and slumber !  
 Nothing evil, having done,  
 Nothing can encumber.

*I*, who cannot sleep as well,  
 Shall I sigh to view you ?  
 Or sigh further to foretell  
 All that may undo you ?  
 Nay, keep smiling, little child,  
 Ere the sorrow neareth,—  
*I* will smile too ! Patience mild  
 Pleasure's token weareth.  
 Nay, keep sleeping, before loss ;  
*I* shall sleep though losing !  
 As by cradle, so by cross,  
 Sure is the reposing.

And God knows, who sees us twain,  
 Child at childish leisure,  
 I am near as tired of pain  
 As you seem of pleasure ;—  
 Very soon too, by His grace  
 Gently wrapt around me,  
 Shall I show as calm a face,  
 Shall I sleep as soundly !  
 Differing in this, that *you*  
 Clasp your playthings sleeping,  
 While my hand shall drop the few  
 Given to my keeping ;

## WINE OF CYPRUS.

Differing in this, that *I*  
 Sleeping, shall be colder,  
 And in waking presently,  
 Brighter to beholder !  
 Differing in this beside  
 (Sleeper, have you heard me ?  
 Do you move, and open wide  
 Eyes of wonder toward me ?)—  
 That while I, you, draw withal  
 From your slumber, solely,—  
 Me, from mine, an angel shall,  
 With reveillie holy !



## WINE OF CYPRUS.

GIVEN TO ME BY H. S. BOYD, ESQ., AUTHOR OF "SELECT  
 PASSAGES FROM THE GREEK FATHERS," ETC., TO WHOM  
 THESE STANZAS ARE ADDRESSED.

IF old Bacchus were the speaker,  
 He would tell you with a sigh,  
 Of the Cyprus in this beaker,  
 I am sipping like a fly,—  
 Like a fly or gnat on Ida  
 At the hour of goblet-pledge,  
 By queen Juno brushed aside, a  
 Full white arm-sweep, from the edge !

Sooth, the drinking should be ampler,  
 When the drink is so divine ;  
 And some deep-mouthed Greek exemplar  
 Would become your Cyprian wine !  
 Cyclop's mouth might plunge aright in,  
 While his one eye over-leered—  
 Nor too large were mouth of Titan,  
 Drinking rivers down his beard.

Pan might dip his head so deep in,  
 That his ears alone pricked out ;  
 Fauns around him, pressing, leaping,  
 Each one pointing to his throat !  
 While the Naiads like Bacchantes,  
 Wild, with urns thrown out to waste,  
 Cry—" O earth, that thou wouldst grant us  
 Springs to keep, of such a taste !"

But for me, I am not worthy  
 After gods and Greeks to drink ;  
 And my lips are pale and earthy,  
 To go bathing from this brink !  
 Since you heard them speak the last time,  
 They have faded from their blooms ;  
 And the laughter of my pastime  
 Has learned silence at the tombs.

Ah, my friend ! the antique drinkers  
 Crowned the cup and crowned the brow !  
 Can I answer the old thinkers  
 In the forms they thought of, now ?  
 Who will fetch from garden-closes  
 Some new garlands while I speak,  
 That the forehead, crowned with roses,  
 May strike scarlet down the cheek ?

Do not mock me ! with my mortal,  
 Suits no wreath again, indeed !  
 I am sad-voiced as the turtle,  
 Which Anacreon used to feed :  
 Yet as that same bird demurely  
 Wet her beak in cup of his,—  
 So, without a garland, surely  
 I may touch the brim of this.

Go !—let others praise the Chian !—  
 This is soft as Muses' string—  
 This is tawny as Rhea's lion,  
 This is rapid as its spring,—  
 Bright as Paphia's eyes e'er met us,  
 Light as ever trod her feet !  
 And the brown bees of Hymettus  
 Make their honey, not so sweet.

Very copious are my praises,  
 Though I sip it like a fly !—  
 Ah—but, sipping,—times and places  
 Change before me suddenly—  
 As Ulysses' old libation  
 Drew the ghosts from every part,  
 So your Cyprian wine, dear Græcian,  
 Stirs the Hades of my heart.

And I think of those long mornings  
 Which my Thought goes far to seek,  
 When, betwixt the folio's turnings,  
 Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek.

## WINE OF CYPRUS.

Past the pane, the mountain spreading,  
 Swept the sheep-bell's tinkling noise,  
 While a girlish voice was reading,—  
 Somewhat low for *ai's* and *oi's*!

Then what golden hours were for us!—  
 While we sate together there,  
 How the white vests of the chorus  
 Seemed to wave up a live air!  
 How the cothurns trod majestic  
 Down the deep iambic lines?  
 And the rolling anapæstic  
 Curled, like vapour over shrines!

Oh, our Æschylus, the thunderous!  
 How he drove the bolted breath  
 Through the cloud, to wedge it ponderous  
 In the gnarled oak beneath.  
 Oh, our Sophocles, the royal!  
 Who was born to monarch's place—  
 And who made the whole world loyal,  
 Less by kingly power than grace.

Our Euripides, the human—  
 With his droppings of warm tears;  
 And his touches of things common,  
 Till they rose to touch the spheres!  
 Our Theocritus, our Bion,  
 And our Pindar's shining goals!—  
 These were cup-bearers undying,  
 Of the wine that's meant for souls.

And my Plato, the divine one,—  
 If men know that gods aright  
 By their motions as they shine on  
 With a glorious trail of light—  
 And your noble Christian bishops,  
 Who mouthed grandly the last Greek:  
 Though the sponges on their hyssops  
 Were distent with wine—too weak!

Yet, your Chrysostom, you praised him  
 With his glorious mouth of gold—  
 And your Basil, you upraised him  
 To the height of speakers old:  
 And we both praised Heliodorus  
 For his secret of pure lies!—  
 Who forged first his link'd stories  
 In the heat of lady's eyes.

And we both praised your Synesius,  
 For the fire shot up his odes,  
 Though the church was scarce propitious,  
 As he whistled dogs and gods.—  
 And we both praised Nazianzen,  
 For the fervid heart and speech !  
 Only I eschewed his glancing  
 At the lyre hung out of reach.

Do you mind that deed of Até,  
 Which you bound me to, so fast,—  
 Reading “ De Virginitate,”  
 From the first line to the last ?  
 How I said at ending, solemn,  
 As I turned and looked at you,  
 That St. Simeon on the column  
 Had had somewhat less to do ?

For we sometimes gently wrangled ;  
 Very gently, be it said,—  
 For our thoughts were disentangled  
 By no breaking of the thread !  
 And, I charged you with extortions  
 On the nobler fames of old—  
 Ay, and sometimes thought your Porsons  
 Stained the purple they would fold.

For the rest !—a mystic moaning,  
 Kept Cassandra at the gate !  
 With wild eyes the vision shone in—  
 And wide nostrils scenting fate !  
 And Prometheus, bound in passion  
 By brute Force to the blind stone,  
 Showed us looks of invocation  
 Turned to ocean and the sun.

And Medea we saw, burning  
 At her nature's planted stake !  
 And proud Œdipus, fate-scorning,  
 While the cloud came on to brake—  
 While the cloud came on slow—slower,  
 Till he stood discrowned, resigned !—  
 But the reader's voice dropped lower,  
 When the poet called him BLIND !

Ah, my gossip ! you were older,  
 And more learned, and a man !—  
 Yet that shadow,—the enfolder  
 Of your quiet eyelids,—ran

Both our spirits to one level;  
 And I turned from hill and lea  
 And the summer-sun's green revel,—  
 To your eyes that *could not see*.

Now Christ bless you with the one light  
 Which goes shining night and day!  
 May the flowers which grow in sunlight  
 Shed their fragrance in your way!  
 Is it not right to remember  
 All your kindness, friend of mine,—  
 When we two sate in the chamber,  
 And the poets poured us wine?

So, to come back to the drinking  
 Of this Cyprus!—it is well—  
 But those memories, to my thinking,  
 Make a better œnomet!  
 And whoever be the speaker  
 None can murmur with a sigh,—  
 That, in drinking from *that* beaker,  
 I am sipping like a fly!



## THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST.

"So the dreams depart,  
 So the fading phantoms flee,  
 And the sharp reality  
 Now must act its part."

WESTWOOD'S "BEADS FROM A ROSARY."

LITTLE Ellie sits alone  
 Mid the beeches of a meadow,  
 By a stream-side, on the grass:  
 And the trees are showering down  
 Doubles of their leaves in shadow,  
 On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by;  
 And her feet she has been dipping  
 In the shallow water's flow—  
 Now she holds them nakedly  
 In her hands, all sleek and dripping,  
 While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,—  
 And the smile she softly useth  
 Fills the silence like a speech ;  
 While she thinks what shall be done,—  
 And the sweetest pleasure, chooseth,  
 For her future within reach !

Little Ellie in her smile  
 Chooseth . . . " I will have a lover,  
 Riding on a steed of steeds !  
 He shall love me without guile ;  
 And to *him* I will discover  
 The swan's nest among the reeds.

" And the steed shall be red-roan,  
 And the lover shall be noble,  
 With an eye that takes the breath,—  
 And the lute he plays upon,  
 Shall strike ladies into trouble,  
 As his sword strikes men to death.

" And the steed it shall be shod  
 All in silver, housed in azure,  
 And the mane shall swim the wind  
 And the hoofs, along the sod,  
 Shall flash onward in a pleasure,  
 Till the shepherds look behind.

" But my lover will not prize  
 All the glory that he rides in,  
 When he gazes in my face !  
 He will say, ' O Love, thine eyes  
 Build the shrine my soul abides in ;  
 And I kneel here for thy grace.'

" Then, ay, then—he shall kneel low,—  
 With the red-roan steed anear him  
 Which shall seem to understand—  
 Till I answer, ' Rise, and go !  
 For the world must love and fear him  
 Whom I gift with heart and hand.'

" Then he will arise so pale,  
 I shall feel my own lips tremble  
 With a *yes* I must not say—  
 Nathless, maiden-brave, ' Farewell,'  
 I will utter and dissemble—  
 ' Light to-morrow with to-day.'

" Then he will ride through the hills,  
 To the wide world past the river,  
 There to put away all wrong!  
 To make straight distorted wills,—  
 And to empty the broad quiver  
 Which the wicked bear along.

" Three times shall a young foot-page  
 Swim the stream, and climb the mountain,  
 And kneel down beside my feet—  
 ' Lo! my master sends this gage,  
 Lady, for thy pity's counting!  
 What wilt thou exchange for it?'

" And the first time, I will send  
 A white rosebud for a guerdon,—  
 And the second time, a glove!  
 But the third time—I may bend  
 From my pride, and answer—' Pardon—  
 If he comes to take my love.'

" Then the young foot-page will run—  
 Then my lover will ride faster,  
 Till he kneeleth at my knee!  
 ' I am a duke's eldest son!  
 Thousand serfs do call me master,—  
 But, O Love, I love but *thee!*'

" He will kiss me on the mouth  
 Then, and lead me as a lover,  
 Through the crowds that praise his deeds!  
 And, when soul-tied by one troth,  
 Unto *him* I will discover  
 That swan's nest among the reeds."

Little Ellie, with her smile  
 Not yet ended, rose up gaily,—  
 Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe—  
 And went homeward, round a mile,  
 Just to see, as she did daily,  
 What more eggs were with the *two*.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse,  
 Winding by the stream, light-hearted,  
 Where the osier pathway leads—  
 Past the boughs she stoops—and stops.  
 Lo! the wild swan had deserted—  
 And a rat had gnawed the reeds!

Ellie went home sad and slow !  
 If she found the lover ever,  
 With his red-roan steed of steeds,  
 Sooth I know not ! but I know  
 She could show him never—never,  
 That swan's nest among the reeds !

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LESSONS FROM THE GORSE.

“ To win the secret of a weed's plain heart.”

LOWELL.

MOUNTAIN gorses, ever-golden !  
 Cankered not the whole year long !  
 Do ye teach us to be strong,  
 Howsoever pricked and holden  
 Like your thorny blooms, and so  
 Trodden on by rain and snow,  
 Up the hillside of this life, as bleak as where ye grow ?

Mountain blossoms, shining blossoms !  
 Do ye teach us to be glad  
 When no summer can be had,  
 Blooming in our inward bosoms ?  
 Ye, whom God preserveth still,  
 Set as lights upon a hill,  
 Tokens to the wintry earth, that Beauty liveth still !

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us  
 From that academic chair  
 Canopied with azure air,  
 That the first fruit Wisdom reaches  
 Hath the hue of childly cheek ?  
 Ye, who live on mountain peak,  
 Yet live low along the ground, beside the grasses meek !

Mountain gorses ! since Linnæus  
 Knelt beside you on the sod,  
 For your beauty thanking God,—  
 For your teaching, ye should see us  
 Bowing in prostration new,—  
 Whence arisen,—if one or two  
 Drops be on our cheeks—O world ! they are not tears, but  
 dew.

## THE DEAD PAN.

Excited by Schiller's "Götter Griechenlands," and partly founded on a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch ("De Oraculorum Defectu"), according to which, at the hour of the Saviour's agony, a cry of "Great Pan is dead!" swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners,—and the oracles ceased.

It is in all veneration to the memory of the deathless Schiller, that I oppose a doctrine still more dishonouring to poetry than to Christianity.

As Mr. Kenyon's graceful and harmonious paraphrase of the German poem was the first occasion of the turning of my thoughts in this direction, I take advantage of the pretence to indulge my feelings (which overflow on other grounds) by inscribing my lyric to that dear friend and relative, with the earnestness of appreciating esteem as well as of affectionate gratitude.—  
E. B. B.

GODS of Hellas, gods of Hellas,  
Can ye listen in your silence?  
Can your mystic voices tell us  
Where ye hide? In floating islands,  
With a wind that evermore  
Keeps you out of sight of shore?  
Pan, Pan is dead.

In what revels are ye sunken  
In old Æthiopia?  
Have the Pygmies made you drunken,  
Bathing in mandragora  
Your divine pale lips that shiver  
Like the lotus in the river?  
Pan, Pan is dead.

Do ye sit there still in slumber,  
In gigantic Alpine rows?  
The black poppies out of number  
Nodding, dripping from your brows  
To the red lees of your wine,—  
And so kept alive and fine?  
Pan, Pan is dead.

Or lie crushed your stagnant corpses  
Where the silver spheres roll on,  
Stung to life by centric forces  
Thrown like rays out from the sun?—  
While the smoke of your old altars  
Is the shroud that round you welters?  
Great Pan is dead.

"Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,"  
Said the old Hellenic tongue;  
Said the hero-oaths, as well as  
Poets' songs the sweetest sung!



## THE DEAD PAN.

Will thy queendom all lie hid  
Meekly under either lid ?

Pan, Pan is dead.

Ha, Apollo ! Floats his golden  
Hair all mist-like where he stands ;  
While the Muses hang enfolding  
Knee and foot with faint wild hands ?  
'Neath the clanging of thy bow,  
Niobe looked lost as thou !

Pan, Pan is dead.

Shall the casque with its brown iron,  
Pallas' broad blue eyes, eclipse,—  
And no hero take inspiring  
From the god-Greek of her lips ?  
'Neath her olive dost thou sit,  
Mars the mighty, cursing it ?

Pan, Pan is dead.

Bacchus, Bacchus ! on the panther  
He swoons,—bound with his own vines !  
And his Mænads slowly saunter,  
Head aside, among the pines,  
While they murmur dreamingly,—  
" Evohe—ah—evohe !—"

Ah, Pan is dead.

Neptune lies beside the trident,  
Dull and senseless as a stone :  
And old Pluto, deaf and silent  
Is cast out into the sun.  
Ceres smileth stern thereat,—  
" We *all* now are desolate—

Now Pan is dead."

Aphrodite ! dead and driven  
As thy native foam, thou art ;  
With the cestus long done heaving  
On the white calm of thine heart !  
*Ai Adonis !* at that shriek,  
Not a tear runs down her cheek—

Pan, Pan is dead.

And the Loves, we used to know from  
One another,—huddled lie,  
Frore as taken in a snow-storm,  
Close beside her tenderly,—





And Dodona's oak swang lonely  
Henceforth, to the tempest only,  
Pan, Pan was dead.

Pythia staggered,—feeling o'er her,  
Her lost god's forsaking look,  
Straight her eyeballs filmed with horror,  
And her crispy fillets shook—  
And her lips gasped through their foam,  
For a word that did not come.  
Pan, Pan was dead.

O ye vain false gods of Hellas,  
Ye are silent evermore!  
And I dash down this old chalice  
Whence libations ran of yore.  
See! the wine crawls in the dust  
Wormlike—as your glories must!—  
Since Pan is dead.

Get to dust, as common mortals,  
By a common doom and track!  
Let no Schiller from the portals  
Of that Hades, call you back,—  
Or instruct us to weep all—  
At your antique funeral.  
Pan, Pan is dead.

By your beauty, which confesses  
Some chief Beauty conquering you,—  
By our grand heroic guesses,  
Through your falsehood, at the True,—  
We will weep *not!* earth shall roll  
Heir to each god's aureole—  
And Pan is dead.

Earth outgrows the mythic fancies  
Sung beside her in her youth:  
And those debonair romances  
Sound but dull beside the truth.  
Phœbus' chariot-course is run!  
Look up, poets, to the sun!  
Pan, Pan is dead.

Christ hath sent us down the angels;  
And the whole earth and the skies  
Are illumed by altar-candles  
Lit for bless'd mysteries.

## THE DEAD PAN.

And a Priest's Hand, through creation,  
Waveth calm and consecration—  
And Pan is dead.

Truth is fair : should we forego it?  
Can we sigh right for a wrong?  
God Himself is the best Poet,  
And the Real is His song.  
Sing His truth out fair and full,  
And secure His beautiful.

Let Pan be dead.

Truth is large. Our aspiration  
Scarce embraces half we be.  
Shame ! to stand in His creation  
And doubt Truth's sufficiency!—  
To think God's song unexcelling  
The poor tales of our own telling—  
When Pan is dead.

What is true and just and honest,  
What is lovely, what is pure—  
All of praise that hath admonisht,—  
All of virtue, shall endure,—  
These are themes for poets' uses,  
Stirring nobler than the Muses—  
Ere Pan was dead.

O brave poets, keep back nothing ;  
Nor mix falsehood with the whole !  
Look up Godward ! speak the truth in  
Worthy song from earnest soul  
Hold, in high poetic duty,  
Truest Truth the fairest Beauty !  
Pan, Pan is dead.

EARLY POEMS.

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1826—1833



## TO MY FATHER ON HIS BIRTHDAY.

“Causa fuit Pater his.”—HOR.

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AMIDST the days of pleasant mirth,  
That throw their halo round our earth ;  
Amidst the tender thoughts that rise  
To call bright tears to happy eyes ;  
Amidst the silken words that move  
To syllable the names we love ;  
There glides no day of gentle bliss,  
More soothing to the heart than *this* !  
No thoughts of fondness e'er appear  
*More* fond, than those I write of here !  
No name can e'er on tablet shine,  
My father ! more belov'd than *thine* !  
    'Tis sweet, adown the shady past,  
A lingering look of love to cast—  
Back th' enchanted world to call,  
That beamed around us first of all ;  
And walk with Memory fondly o'er  
The paths, where Hope had been before—  
Sweet to receive the sylphic sound  
That breathes in tenderness around,  
Repeating to the listening ear  
The names that made our childhood dear—  
For parted Joy, like Echo, kind,  
Will leave her dulcet voice behind,  
To tell, amidst the magic air,  
How oft she smiled and lingered there.  
Oh ! let the deep Aonian shell  
Breathe tuneful numbers, clear and well,  
While the glad Hours, in fair array,  
Lead on this buxom Holiday ;  
And Time, as on his way he springs,  
Hates the last bard who gave him wings ;

For 'neath thy gentleness of praise,  
 My Father ! rose my early lays !  
 And when the lyre was scarce awake,  
 I lov'd its strings for *thy* lov'd sake ;  
 Woo'd the kind Muses—but the while  
 Thought only how to win thy smile—  
 My proudest fame—my dearest pride—  
*More* dear than all the world beside !  
 And now, perchance, I seek the tone  
 For magic that is more its own ;  
 But still my Father's looks remain  
 The best Mæcenas of my strain ;  
 My gentlest joy, upon his brow  
 To read the smile, that meets me now—  
 To hear him, in his kindness, say  
 The words,—perchance he'll speak to-day !



## SPENSERIAN STANZAS

ON A BOY OF THREE YEARS OLD.

CHILD of the sunny lockes and beautifull brow !  
 In thoughtfull tendernesse I gaze on thee—  
 Upon thy daintie cheek Expression's glow  
 Daunceth in tyme to thine heart's melodie ;  
 Ne mortall wight mote lovelier urchin see !  
 Nathlesse it teens this pensive brest of mine  
 To think—belive the innocent revelrie  
 Shall be eclipsed in those soft blue eyne—  
 Whenso the howre of youth no more for thee shall shine.

Ah me ! eftsoons thy childhood's pleasaunt dais  
 Shall fly away, and be a whilome thing !  
 And sweetest mearimake, and birthday lais  
 Be reck'd not of, except when memories bring  
 Feres to their embers with awaking wing,  
 To make past love rejoyce thy tender sprit,  
 Albeit the toyles of daunger thee enring !  
 Child of the wayy lockes, and brow of light—  
*Then* be thy conscience pure, as *now* thy face is bright.

## VERSES TO MY BROTHER.

“For we were nurs’d upon the self-same hill.”—LYCIDAS.

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I WILL write down thy name, and when 'tis writ,  
 Will turn me from the hum that mortals keep  
 In the wide world without, and gaze on it!  
 It telleth of the past—calling from sleep  
 Such dear, yet mournful thoughts, as make us smile, and  
 weep.

Belov’d and best! what thousand feelings start,  
 As o’er the paper’s course my fingers move—  
 My Brother! dearest, kindest as thou art!  
 How can these lips my heart’s affection prove?  
 I could not speak the words, if words could speak my love.

Together have we past our infant hours,  
 Together sported Childhood’s spring away,  
 Together cull’d young Hope’s fast budding flowers,  
 To wreath the forehead of each coming day!  
 Yes! for the present’s sun makes e’en the future gay.

And when the laughing mood was nearly o’er,  
 Together, many a minute did we wile  
 On Horace’ page, or Maro’s sweeter lore;  
 While one young critic, on the classic style,  
 Would sagely try to frown, and make the other smile.

But now alone thou con’st the ancient tome—  
 And sometimes thy dear studies, it may be,  
 Are cross’d by dearer dreams of me and home!  
 Alone I muse on Homer—thoughts are free—  
 And if mine often stray, they go in search of thee!

I may not praise thee *here*—I will not bless!  
 Yet all thy goodness doth my memory bear,  
 Cherish’d by more than Friendship’s tenderness—  
 And, in the silence of my evening prayer,  
 Thou shalt not be forgot—thy dear name shall be there!

## STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF LORD BYRON.

“——— λέγε πᾶσιν ἀπέλωτο.”—BYRON.

“——— I am not now  
That which I have been.”—CHILDE HAROLD.

HE *was*, and *is* not ! Græcia's trembling shore,  
Sighing through all her palmy groves, shall tell  
That Harold's pilgrimage at last is o'er—  
Mute the impassioned tongue, and tuneful shell,  
That erst was wont in noblest strains to swell—  
Hush'd the proud shouts that rode Ægæa's wave !  
For lo ! the great Deliv'rer breathes farewell !  
Gives to the world his mem'ry and a grave—  
Expiring in the land he only lived to save !

Mourn, Hellas, mourn ! and o'er thy widow'd brow,  
For aye, the cypress wreath of sorrow twine ;  
And in thy new form'd beauty, desolate, throw  
The fresh-cull'd flowers on *his* sepulchral shrine.  
Yes ! let that heart whose fervour was all thine,  
In consecrated urn lamented be !  
That generous heart where genius thrill'd divine,  
Hath spent its last most glorious throb for thee—  
Then sank amid the storm that made thy children free !

Britannia's Poet ! Græcia's hero, sleeps !  
And Freedom, bending o'er the breathless clay—  
Lifts up her voice, and in her anguish weeps !  
For *us*, a night hath clouded o'er our day,  
And hush'd the lips that breathed our fairest lay.  
Alas ! and must the British lyre resound  
A requiem, while the spirit wings away  
Of him who on its strings such music found,  
And taught its startling chords to give so sweet a sound !

The theme grows sadder—but my soul shall find  
A language in these tears ! No more—no more !  
Soon, 'midst the shriekings of the tossing wind,  
The “dark blue depths” he sang of, shall have bore  
Our *all* of Byron to his native shore !  
His grave is thick with voices—to the ear  
Murm'ring an awful tale of greatness o'er ;  
But Memory strives with Death, and lingering near,  
Shall consecrate the dust of Harold's lonely bier !

## MEMORY.

MY Fancy's steps have often strayed  
 To some fair vale the hills have made ;  
 Where sparkling waters travel o'er,  
 And hold a mirror to the shore ;  
 Winding with murmurings in and out,  
 To find the flowers which grow about.  
 And there, perchance, in childhood bold,  
 Some little elf, four summers old,  
 Adown the vales may chance to run,  
 To hunt his shadow in the sun !  
 But when the waters meet his eyes,  
 He starts and stops with glad surprise,  
 And shouts, with merry voice, to view  
 The banks of green, the skies of blue,  
 Th' inverted flocks that bleating go,  
 Lilies, and trees of apple blow,  
 Seeming so beautiful below !  
 He peeps above—he glances round,  
 And then looks down, and thinks he's found  
 Reposing in the stream, to woo one,  
 A world ev'n lovelier than the true one.

Thus, with visions gay and light,  
 Hath Fancy lov'd my page to dight ;  
 Yet Thought hath, through a vista, seen  
 Something less frivolous I ween :  
 Then, while my chatting pen runs on,  
 I'll tell you what she dreamt upon.

Memory's the streamlet of the scene,  
 Which sweeps the hills of Life between ;  
 And, when our walking hour is past,  
 Upon its shore we rest at last ;  
 And love to view the waters fair,  
 And see lost joys depicted there.

My —, when thy feet are led  
 To press those banks we all must tread—  
 May Virtue's smile, and Learning's praise,  
 Adorn the waters to thy gaze ;  
 And, o'er their lucid course, be lent  
 The sunshine of a life well spent !  
 Then, if a thought should glad thy breast  
 Of those who loved thee first and best,  
 My name, perchance, may haunt the spot,  
 Not quite unprized—nor all forgot,

TO ———

TO ———

MINE is a wayward lay ;  
 And, if its echoing rhymes I try to string,  
 Proveth a truant thing,  
 Whenso some names I love, send it away !

For then, eyes swimming o'er,  
 And clasp'd hands, and smiles in fondness meant,  
 Are much more eloquent—  
 So it had fain begone, and speak no more !

Yet shall it come again,  
 Ah, friend belov'd ! if so thy wishes be,  
 And, with mild melody,  
 I will, upon thine ear, cadence my strain—

Cadence my simple line,  
 Unfashion'd by the cunning hand of Art,  
 But coming from my heart,  
 To tell the message of its love to thine !

As ocean shells, when taken  
 From Ocean's bed, will faithfully repeat  
 Her ancient music sweet—  
 Ev'n so these words, true to my heart, shall waken !

Oh! while our bark is seen,  
 Our little bark of kindly, social love,  
 Down life's clear stream to move  
 Toward the summer shores, where all is green—

So long thy name shall bring,  
 Echoes of joy unto the grateful gales,  
 And thousand tender tales,  
 To freshen the fond hearts that round thee cling !

Hast thou not look'd upon  
 The flowerets of the field in lowly dress ?  
 Blame not my simpleness—  
 Think only of my love!—my song is gone,

## STANZAS.

OCCASIONED BY A PASSAGE IN MR. EMERSON'S JOURNAL, WHICH STATES, THAT ON THE MENTION OF LORD BYRON'S NAME, CAPTAIN DEMETRIUS, AN OLD ROUMELIOT, BURST INTO TEARS.

NAME not his name, or look afar—  
 For when my spirit hears  
 That name, its strength is turned to woe—  
 My voice is turned to tears.

Name me the host and battle-storm,  
 Mine own good sword shall stem;  
 Name me the foeman and the block,  
 I have a smile for *them*!

But name *him* not, or cease to mark  
 This brow where passions sweep—  
 Behold, a warrior is a man,  
 And as a man may weep!

I could not scorn my Country's foes,  
 Did not these tears descend—  
 I could not love my Country's fame,  
 And not my Country's Friend.

Deem not his memory e'er can be  
 Upon our spirits dim—  
 Name us the generous and the free,  
 And we must think of *him*!

For his voice resounded through our land  
 Like the voice of liberty,  
 As when the war-trump of the wind,  
 Upstirs our dark blue sea.

His arm was in the foremost rank,  
 Where embattled thousands roll—  
 His name was in the love of Greece,  
 And his spell was on her soul!

But the arm that wielded her good sword,  
 The brow that wore the wreath,  
 The lips that breathed the deathless thoughts—  
 They went asleep in death.

Ye left his HEART, when ye took away  
 The dust in funeral state ;  
 And we dumbly placed in a little urn,  
 That home of all things great.

The banner streamed—the war-shout rose—  
 Our heroes played their part !  
 But not a pulse would throb or burn—  
 Oh ! could it be *his* heart !

I will not think—'tis worse than vain  
 Upon such thoughts to keep ;  
 Then, Briton, name me not his name—  
 I cannot choose but weep !



### THE PAST.

THERE is a silence upon the Ocean,  
 Albeit it swells with a feverish motion ;  
 Like to the battle-camp's fearful calm,  
 While the banners are spread, and the warriors arm.

The winds beat not their drum to the waves,  
 But sullenly moan in the distant caves ;  
 Talking over, before they rise,  
 Some of their dark conspiracies.

And so it is in this life of ours,  
 A calm may be on the present hours,  
 But the calmest hour of festive glee  
 May turn the mother of woe to thee.

I will betake me to the Past,  
 And she shall make my love at last ;  
 I will find my home in her tarrying-place—  
 I will gaze all day on her deathly face !

Her form, though awful, is fair to view ;  
 The clasp of her hand, though cold, is true ;  
 Her shadowy brow hath no changefulness,  
 And her numbered smiles can grow no less !

Her voice is like a pleasant song,  
 Which we have not heard for very long,  
 And which a joy on *our* souls will cast,  
 Though we know not where we heard it last.

She shall walk with me, away, away,  
Where'er the mighty have left their clay;  
She shall speak to me in places lone,  
With a low and holy tone.

Ay! when I have lit my lamp at night,  
She will be present with my sprite;  
And I will say, what'er it be,  
Every word she telleth me!



### THE PRAYER.

METHOUGHT that I did stand upon a tomb—  
And all was silent as the dust beneath,  
While feverish thoughts upon my soul would come,  
Losing my words in tears: I thought of death;  
And prayed that when my lips gave out the breath,  
The friends I loved like life might stay behind:  
So, for a little while, my name might eath  
Be something dear,—spoken with voices kind,  
Heard with remembering looks, from eyes which tears  
would blind!

I prayed that I might sink into my rest,  
(O foolish, selfish prayer!) before them all;  
So I might look my last on those loved best—  
So never would my voice repining call,  
And never would my tears impassioned fall  
On one familiar face turning to clay!  
So would my tune of life be musical,  
Albeit abrupt—like airs the Spaniards play,  
Which in the sweetest part, break off, and die away.

Methought I looked around! the scene was rife  
With little vales, green banks, and waters heaving;  
And every living thing did joy in life,  
And every thing of beauty did seem living—  
Oh, then, life's pulse was at my heart reviving;  
And then I knew that it was good to bear  
Dispens'd woe, that by the spirit's grieving,  
It might be wean'd from a world so fair!—  
Thus with submissive words mine heart did close its  
prayer.

## ON A PICTURE OF RIEGO'S WIDOW,

PLACED IN THE EXHIBITION.

DAUGHTER of Spain ! a passer by  
 May mark the cheek serenely pale—  
 The dark eyes which dream silently,  
 And the calm lip which gives no wail !

Calm ! it bears not a deeper trace  
 Of feelings it disdained to show ;  
 We look upon the Widow's face,  
 And only read the Patriot's woe !

No word, no look, no sigh of thine,  
 Would make *his* glory seem more dim ;  
 Thou would'st not give to vulgar eyne  
 The sacred tear which fell for HIM.

Thou would'st not hold to the world's view  
 Thy ruined joys, thy broken heart—  
 The jeering world—it only knew  
 Of all thine anguish—that thou WERT !

While o'er *his* grave thy steps would go  
 With a firm tread,—stilling thy love,—  
 As if the dust would blush below  
 To feel one faltering foot above.

For Spain, *he* dared the noble strife—  
 For Spain, he gave his latest breath ;  
 And he who lived the Patriot's life,  
 Was dragged to die the traitor's death !

And the shout of thousands swept around,  
 As he stood the traitor's block beside ;  
 But his dying lips gave a free sound—  
 Let the foe weep !—*THY* brow had *pride* ;

Yet haply in the midnight air,  
 When none might part thy God and thee,  
 The lengthened sob, the passionate prayer,  
 Have spoken thy soul's agony !

But silence else, thou past away—  
 The plaint unbreath'd, the anguish hid—  
 More voiceless than the echoing clay  
 Which idly knocked thy coffin's lid.

Peace be to thee ! while Britons seek  
 This place, if British souls they bear,  
 'Twill start the crimson in the cheek  
 To see Riego's widow THERE !

---

SONG.

WEEP, as if you thought of laughter !  
 Smile, as tears were coming after !  
 Marry your pleasures to your woes ;  
 And think life's green well worth its rose !

No sorrow will your heart betide,  
 Without a comfort by its side ;  
 The sun may sleep in his sea-bed,  
 But you have starlight overhead.

Trust not to Joy ! the rose of June,  
 When opened wide, will wither soon ;  
 Italian days without twilight,  
 Will turn them suddenly to night.

Joy, most changeful of all things,  
 Flits away on rainbow wings ;  
 And when they look the gayest, know,  
 It is that they are spread to go !

---

THE DREAM.

A FRAGMENT.

I HAD a dream !—my spirit was unbound  
 From the dark iron of its dungeon, clay,  
 And rode the steeds of Time ;—my thoughts had sound,  
 And spoke without a word,—I went away  
 Among the buried ages, and did lay  
 The pulses of my heart beneath the touch  
 Of the rude minstrel Time, that he should play  
 Thereon, a melody which might seem such  
 As musing spirits love—mournful, but not too much !

I had a dream—and there mine eyes did see  
 The shadows of past deeds like present things—  
 The sepulchres of Greece and Hespery,  
 Ægyptus, and old lands, gave up their kings,  
 Their prophets, saints, and minstrels, whose lute-strings  
 Keep a long echo—yea, the dead, white bones,  
 Did stand up by the house whereto Death clings,  
 And dressed themselves in life, speaking of thrones,  
 And fame, and power, and beauty, in familiar tones !

I went back further still, for I beheld  
 What time the earth was one fair Paradise—  
 And over such bright meads the waters welled,  
 I wot the rainbow was content to rise  
 Upon the earth, when absent from the skies !  
 And there were tall trees that I never knew,  
 Whereon sate nameless birds in merry guise,  
 Folding their radiant wings, as the flowers do,  
 When summer nights send sleep down with the dew.

\* \* \* \* \*

Anon there came a change—a terrible motion,  
 That made all living things grow pale and shake !  
 The dark Heavens bowed themselves unto the ocean,  
 Like a strong man in strife—Ocean did take  
 His flight across the mountains ; and the lake  
 Was lashed into a sea where the winds ride—  
 Earth was no more, for in her merrymake  
 She had forgot her God—Sin claimed his bride,  
 And with his vampire breath sucked out her life's fair  
 tide !

Life went back to her nostrils, and she raised  
 Her spirit from the waters once again—  
 The lovely sights, on which I erst had gazed,  
 Were *not*—though she was beautiful as when  
 The Grecian called her " Beauty "—sinful men  
 Walked i' the track of the waters, and felt bold—  
 Yea, they looked up to Heaven in calm disdain,  
 As if no eye had seen its vault unfold  
 Darkness, and fear, and death !—as if a tale were told !

And ages fled away within my dream ;  
 And still Sin made the heart his dwelling-place,  
 Eclipsing Heaven from men ; but it would seem  
 That two or three dared commune face to face,  
 And speak of the soul's life, of hope, and grace—  
 Anon there rose such sounds as angels breathe—

For a God came to die, bringing down peace—  
 "Pan *was not*;" and the darkness that did wreath  
 The earth, past from the soul—Life came by death!

\* \* \* \* \*



### RIGA'S LAST SONG.

I HAVE looked my last on my native land,  
 And over these strings I throw my hand,  
 To say in the death-hour's minstrelsy,  
 Hellas, my country! farewell to thee!

I have looked my last on my native shore;  
 I shall tread my country's plains no more;  
 But my last thought is of her fame;  
 But my last breath speaketh her name!

And though these lips shall soon be still,  
 They may now obey the spirit's will;  
 Though the dust be fettered, the spirit is free—  
 Hellas, my country! farewell to thee!

I go to death—but I leave behind  
 The stirrings of Freedom's mighty mind;  
 Her voice shall arise from plain to sky,  
 Her steps shall tread where my ashes lie!

I looked on the mountains of proud Souli,  
 And the mountains they seemed to look on me;  
 I spoke my thought on Marathon's plain,  
 And Marathon seemed to speak again!

And as I journeyed on my way,  
 I saw an infant group at play;  
 One shouted aloud in his childish glee,  
 And showed me the heights of Thermopylæ!

I gazed on peasants hurrying by,—  
 The dark Greek pride crouched in their eye;  
 So I swear in my death-hour's minstrelsy,  
 Hellas, my country! thou *shalt* be free!

No more!—I dash my lyre on the ground—  
 I tear its strings from their home of sound—  
 For the music of slaves shall never keep  
 Where the hand of a freeman was wont to sweep!

And I bend my brows above the block,  
 Silently waiting the swift death shock ;  
 For these lips shall speak what becomes the free—  
 Or—Hellas, my country ! farewell to thee !

---

He bowed his head with a Patriot's pride,  
 And his dead trunk fell the mute lyre beside !  
 The soul of each had past away—  
 Soundless the strings—breathless the clay !

---

### THE VISION OF FAME.

Did ye ever sit on summer noon,  
 Half musing and half asleep,  
 When ye smile in such a dreamy way,  
 Ye know not if ye weep—

When the little flowers are thick beneath,  
 And the welkin blue above ;  
 When there is not a sound but the cattle's low,  
 And the voice of the woodland dove ?

A while ago and I dream'd thus—  
 I mused on ancient story,—  
 For the heart like a minstrel of old doth seem,  
 It delighteth to sing of glory.

What time I saw before me stand,  
 A bright and lofty One ;  
 A golden lute was in her hand,  
 And her brow drooped thereon.

But the brow that drooped was rais'd soon,  
 Showing its royal sheen—  
 It was, I guessed, no human brow,  
 Though pleasant to human een.

And this brow of peerless majesty,  
 With its whiteness did enshroud  
 Two eyes, that, darkly mystical,  
 'Gan look up at a cloud.

Like to the hair of Berenice,  
 Fetch'd from its house of light,  
 Was the hair which wreathed her shadowless form—  
 And Fame the ladye hight !

But as she wended on to me,  
 My heart's deep fear was chidden ;  
 For she called up the sprite of Melody,  
 Which in her lute lay hidden.

When ye speak to well-beloved ones,  
 Your voice is tender and low :  
 The wires methought did love her touch—  
 For they did answer so.

And her lips in such a quiet way  
 Gave the chant soft and long,—  
 You might have thought she only breathed,  
 And that her breath was song :—

“ When Death shrouds thy memory,  
 Love is no shrine—  
 The dear eyes that weep for thee,  
 Soon sleep like thine !  
 The wail murmured over thee,  
 Fainteth away ;  
 And the heart which kept love for thee,  
 Turns into clay !

“ But would'st thou remembered be,  
 Make me thy vow ;  
 This verse that flows gushingly,  
 Telleth thee how—  
 Linking thy hand in mine,  
 Listen to me,  
 So not a thought of thine  
 Dieth with thee—

“ Rifle thy pulsing heart  
 Of the gift, love made ;  
 Bid thine eye's light depart ;  
 Let thy cheek fade !  
 Give me the slumber deep,  
 Which night-long seems ;  
 Give me the joys that creep  
 Into thy dreams !

“ Give me thy youthful years,  
 Merriest that fly—  
 So the word, spoke in *tears*,  
 Liveth for aye !  
 So thy sepulchral stone,  
 Nations may raise—  
 What time thy soul hath known  
 The *worth of praise !*”

## THE TEMPEST.

She did not sing this chant to me,  
 Though I was sitting by;  
 But I listened to it with chain'd breath,  
 That had no power to sigh.

And ever as the chant went on,  
 Its measure changed to wail;  
 And ever as the lips sang on,  
 Her face did grow more pale.

Paler and paler—till anon  
 A fear came o'er my soul;  
 For the flesh curled up from her bones,  
 Like to a blasted scroll!

Ay! silently it dropped away,  
 Before my wondering sight—  
 There was only a bleach'd skeleton,  
 Where erst was ladye bright!

But still the vacant sockets gleamed  
 With supernatural fires—  
 But still the bony hands did ring  
 Against the shuddering wires!

Alas, alas! I wended home,  
 With a sorrow and a shame—  
 Is Fame the rest of our poor hearts?  
 Woe's me! for THIS is FAME!

---

 THE TEMPEST.

## A FRAGMENT.

"Mors erat ante oculos."

LUCAN, lib. ix.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE forest made my home—the voiceful streams  
 My minstrel throng: the everlasting hills,—  
 Which marry with the firmament, and cry  
 Unto the brazen thunder, "Come away,  
 Come from thy secret place, and try our strength,"—  
 Enwrapp'd me with their solemn arms. Here, light  
 Grew pale as darkness, scar'd by the shade  
 O' the forest Titans. Here, in piny state,

Reign'd Night, the Æthiopian queen, and crown'd  
The charm'd brow of Solitude, her spouse.

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

A sign was on creation. You beheld  
All things encolour'd in a sulph'rous hue,  
As day were sick with fear. The haggard clouds  
O'erhung the utter lifelessness of air ;  
The top boughs of the forest all aghast,  
Stared in the face of Heav'n ; the deep-mouth'd wind,  
That hath a voice to bay the arm'd sea,  
Fled with a low cry like a beaten hound ;  
And only that askance the shadows, flew  
Some open-beak'd birds in wilderment,  
Naught stirred abroad. All dumb did Nature seem,  
In expectation of the coming storm.

It came in power. You soon might hear afar  
The footsteps of the martial thunder sound  
Over the mountain battlements ; the sky  
Being deep-stain'd with hues fantastical,  
Red like to blood, and yellow like to fire,  
And black like plumes at funerals ; overhead  
You might behold the lightning faintly gleam  
Amid the clouds which thrill and gape aside,  
And straight again shut up their solemn jaws,  
As if to interpose between Heaven's wrath  
And Earth's despair. Interposition brief !  
Darkness is gathering out her mighty pall  
Above us, and the pent-up rain is loosed,  
Down trampling in its fierce delirium.

Was not my spirit gladden'd as with wine,  
To hear the iron rain, and view the mark  
Of battle on the banner of the clouds ?  
Did I not hearken for the battle-cry,  
And rush along the bowing woods to meet  
The riding Tempest—skyey cataracts  
Hissing around him with rebellion vain ?  
Yea ! and I lifted up my glorying voice  
In an "All hail ;" when, wildly resonant,  
As brazen chariots rushing from the war,  
As passion'd waters gushing from the rock,  
As thousand crash'd woods, the thunder cried :  
And at his cry the forest tops were shook

As by the woodman's axe ; and far and near  
Stagger'd the mountains with a mutter'd dread.

All hail unto the lightning ! hurriedly  
His lurid arms are glaring through the air,  
Making the face of heav'n to show like hell !  
Let him go breathe his sulphur stench about,  
And, pale with death's own mission, lord the storm !  
Again the gleam—the glare : I turn'd to hail  
Death's mission : at my feet there lay the dead !  
The dead—the dead lay there ! I could not view  
(For Night espoused the storm, and made all dark)  
Its features, but the lightning in his course  
Shiver'd above a white and corpse-like heap,  
Stretch'd in the path, as if to show its prey,  
And have a triumph ere he pass'd. Then I  
Crouch'd down upon the ground, and groped about  
Until I touch'd that thing of flesh, rain-drench'd,  
And chill, and soft. Nathless, I did refrain  
My soul from natural horror ! I did lift  
The heavy head, half-bedded in the clay,  
Unto my knee ; and pass'd my fingers o'er  
The wet face, touching every lineament,  
Until I found the brow ; and chafed its chill,  
To know if life yet lingered in its pulse.  
And while I was so busied, there did leap  
From out the entrails of the firmament,  
The lightning, who his white unblenching breath  
Blew in the dead man's face, discov'ring it  
As by a staring day. I knew that face—  
His, who did hate me—his, whom I did hate !

I shrunk not—spake not—sprang not from the ground !  
But felt my lips shake without cry or breath,  
And mine heart wrestle in my breast to still  
The tossing of its pulses ; and a cold,  
Instead of living blood, o'ercreep my brow.  
Albeit such darkness brooded all around,  
I had dread knowledge that the open eyes  
Of that dead man were glaring up at mine,  
With their unwinking, unexpressive stare ;  
And mine I could not shut nor turn away.  
The man was my familiar. I had borne  
Those eyes to scowl on me their living hate,  
Better than I could bear their deadliness :  
I had endured the curses of those lips,  
Far better than their silence. Oh constrain'd

And awful silence!—awful peace of death!  
*There* is an answering to all questioning,  
 That one word—*death*. Our bitterness can throw  
 No look upon the face of death, and live.  
 The burning thoughts that erst my soul illumed,  
 Were quench'd at once; as tapers in a pit  
 Wherein the vapour-witches weirdly reign  
 In charge of darkness. Farewell all the past!  
 It was out-blotted from my memory's eyes,  
 When clay's cold silence pleaded for its sin.

Farewell the elemental war! farewell  
 The clashing of the shielded clouds—the cry  
 Of scath'd echoes! I no longer knew  
 Silence from sound, but wandered far away  
 Into the deep Eleusis of mine heart,  
 To learn its secret things. When arm'd foes  
 Meet on one deck with impulse violent,  
 The vessel quakes thro' all her oaken ribs,  
 And shivers in the sea; so with mine heart:  
 For there had battled in her solitudes,  
 Contrary spirits; sympathy with power,  
 And stooping unto power;—the energy  
 And passiveness,—the thunder and the death!

Within me was a nameless thought: it closed  
 The Janus of my soul on echoing hinge,  
 And said "Peace!" with a voice like War's. I bow'd,  
 And trembled at its voice: it gave a key,  
 Empower'd to open out all mysteries  
 Of soul and flesh; of man, who doth begin,  
 But endeth not; of life, and *after life*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Day came at last: her light show'd gray and sad,  
 As hatch'd by tempest, and could scarce prevail  
 Over the shaggy forest to imprint  
 Its outline on the sky—expressionless,  
 Almost sans shadow as sans radiance:  
 An idiocy of light. I waken'd from  
 My deep unslumb'ring dream, but utter'd naught.  
 My living I uncoupled from the dead,  
 And look'd out, 'mid the swart and sluggish air,  
 For place to make a grave. A mighty tree  
 Above me, his gigantic arms outstretch'd,  
 Poising the clouds. A thousand mutter'd spells  
 Of every ancient wind and thun'drous storm,  
 Had been off-shaken from his scathless bark.  
 He had heard distant years sweet concord yield,

## THE TEMPEST.

And go to silence ; having firmly kept  
 Majestical companionship with Time.  
 Anon his strength wax'd proud : his tusky roots  
 Forced for themselves a path on every side,  
 Riving the earth ; and, in their savage scorn,  
 Casting it from them like a thing unclean,  
 Which might impede his naked clambering  
 Unto the heavens. Now blasted, peel'd, he stood,  
 By the gone night, whose lightning had come in  
 And rent him, even as it rent the man  
 Beneath his shade : and there the strong and weak  
 Communion join'd in deathly agony.

There, underneath, I lent my feverish strength,  
 To scoop a lodgment for the traveller's corse.  
 I gave it to the silence and the pit,  
 And strew'd the heavy earth on all : and then—  
 I—I, whose hands had form'd that silent house,—  
 I could not look thereon, but turn'd and wept !

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Oh death—Oh crown'd Death—pale-steed'd Death !  
 Whose name doth make our respiration brief,  
 Muffling the spirit's drum ! Thou, whom men know  
 Alone by charnel-houses, and the dark  
 Sweeping of funeral feathers, and the scath  
 Of happy days,—love deem'd inviolate !  
 Thou of the shrouded face, which to have seen  
 Is to be very awful, like thyself !—  
 Thou, whom all flesh shall see !—thou, who dost call,  
 And there is none to answer !—thou, whose call  
 Changeth all beauty into what we fear,  
 Changeth all glory into what we tread,  
 Genius to silence, wrath to nothingness,  
 And love—not love !—thou hast no change for love !  
 Thou, who art Life's betroth'd, and bear'st her forth  
 To scare her with sad sights,—who hast thy joy  
 Where'er the peopled towns are dumb with plague,—  
 Where'er the battle and the vulture meet,—  
 Where'er the deep sea writhes like Laocoon  
 Beneath the serpent winds, the vessels split  
 On secret rocks, and men go gurgling down,  
 Down, down, to lose their shriekings in the depth.  
 Oh universal thou ! who comest aye  
 Among the minstrels, and their tongue is tied ;—

Among the sophists, and their brain is still ;  
 Among the mourners, and their wail is done ;  
 Among the dancers, and their tinkling feet  
 No more make echoes on the tombing earth !  
 Among the wassail rout, and all the lamps  
 Are quench'd ; and wither'd the wine-pouring hands !

My heart is arm'd not in panoply  
 Of the old Roman iron, nor assumes  
 The Stoic valour. 'Tis a human heart  
 And so confesses, with a human fear ;—  
 That only for the hope the cross inspires,  
 That only for the MAN who died and lives,  
 'Twould crouch beneath thy sceptre's royalty,  
 With faintness of the pulse, and backward cling  
 To life. But knowing what I soothly know,  
 High-seeming Death, I dare thee ! and have hope,  
 In God's good time, of showing to thy face  
 An unsuccumbing spirit, which sublime  
 May cast away the low anxieties  
 That wait upon the flesh—the reptile moods ;  
 And enter that eternity to come,  
 Where live the dead, and only Death shall die.

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### A SEA-SIDE MEDITATION.

“ Ut per aquas quæ nunc rerum simulacra videmus.”

LUCRETIUS.

Go, travel 'mid the hills ! The summer's hand  
 Hath shaken pleasant freshness o'er them all.  
 Go, travel 'mid the hills ! There, tuneful streams  
 Are touching myriad stops, invisible ;  
 And winds, and leaves, and birds, and your own thoughts,  
 (Not the least glad) in wordless chorus, crowd  
 Around the thymele\* of Nature.

Go,  
 And travel onward. Soon shall leaf and bird,  
 Wind, stream, no longer sound. Thou shalt behold  
 Only the pathless sky, and houseless sward ;  
 O'er which anon are spied innumerable sails  
 Of fisher vessels like the wings o' the hill,  
 And white as gulls above them, and as fast.—  
 But sink they—sink they out of sight. And now  
 The wind is springing upward in your face ;

\* The central point of the choral movements in the Greek theatre.

And, with its fresh-toned gushings, you may hear  
 Continuous sound which is not of the wind,  
 Nor of the thunder, nor o' the cataract's  
 Deep passion, nor o' the earthquake's wilder pulse ;  
 But which rolls on in stern tranquillity,  
 As memories of evil o'er the soul ;  
 Boweth the bare broad Heav'n.—What view you ? sea—  
 and sea !

The sea—the glorious sea ! from side to side,  
 Swinging the grandeur of his foamy strength,  
 And undersweeping the horizon,—on—  
 On—with his life and voice inscrutable.  
 Pause : sit you down in silence ! I have read  
 Of that Athenian, who, when ocean raged,  
 Unchain'd the prison'd music of his lips,  
 By shouting to the billows, sound for sound.  
 I marvel how his mind would let his tongue  
 Affront thereby the ocean's solemnness.  
 Are we not mute, or speak restrainedly,  
 When overhead the trampling tempests go,  
 Dashing their lightning from their hoofs ? and when  
 We stand beside the bier ? and when we see  
 The strong bow down to weep—and stray among  
 Places which dust or mind hath sanctified ?  
 Yea ! for such sights and acts do tear apart  
 The close and subtle clasping of a chain,  
 Form'd not of gold, but of corroded brass,  
 Whose links are furnish'd from the common mine  
 Of every day's event, and want, and wish ;  
 From work-times, diet-times, and sleeping-times ;  
 And thence constructed, mean and heavy links  
 Within the pandemonic walls of sense,  
 Enchain our deathless part, constrain our strength,  
 And waste the goodly stature of our soul.

Howbeit, we love this bondage ; we do cleave  
 Unto the sordid and unholy thing,  
 Fearing the sudden wrench required to break  
 Those clasp'd links. Behold ! all sights and sounds  
 In air, and sea, and earth, and under earth,  
 All flesh, all life, all ends, are mysteries ;  
 And all that is mysterious dreadful seems,  
 And all we cannot understand we fear.  
 Ourselves do scare ourselves : we hide our sight  
 In artificial nature from the true,  
 And throw sensation's veil associative  
 On God's creation, man's intelligence ;

Bowing our high imaginings to eat  
 Dust, like the serpent, once erect as they ;  
 Binding conspicuous on our reason's brow  
 Phylacteries of shame ; learning to feel  
 By rote, and act by rule, (man's rule, not God's !)  
 Until our words grow echoes, and our thoughts  
 A mechanism of spirit.

Can this last ?

No ! not for aye. We cannot subject aye  
 The heav'n-born spirit to the earth-born flesh.  
 Tame lions *will* scent blood, and appetite  
 Carnivorous glare from out their restless eyes.  
 Passions, emotions, sudden changes, throw  
 Our nature back upon us, till we burn.  
 What warm'd Cyrene's fount ? As poets sing,  
 The *change* from light to dark, from dark to light.

All that doth force this nature back on us,  
 All that doth force the mind to view the mind,  
 Engend'reth what is named by men, *sublime*.  
 Thus when, our wonted valley left, we gain  
 The mountain's horrent brow, and mark from thence  
 The sweep of lands extending with the sky ;  
 Or view the spanless plain ; or turn our sight  
 Upon yon deep immensity ;—we breathe  
 As if our breath were marble : to and fro  
 Do reel our pulses, and our words are mute.  
 We cannot mete by parts, but grapple all :  
 We cannot measure with our eye, but soul ;  
 And fear is on us. The extent unused,  
 Our spirit, sends, to spirit's element,  
 To seize upon abstractions : first on space,  
 The which *eternity in place*, I deem ;  
 And then upon eternity ; till thought  
 Hath form'd a mirror from their secret sense,  
 Wherein we view ourselves, and back recoil  
 At our own awful likeness ; ne'ertheless,  
 Cling to that likeness with a wonder wild,  
 And while we tremble, glory—proud in fear.

So ends the prose of life : and so shall be  
 Unlock'd her poetry's magnificent store.  
 And so, thou pathless and perpetual sea,  
 So, o'er thy deeps, I brooded and must brood,  
 Whether I view thee in thy dreadful peace,  
 Like a spent warrior hanging in the sun  
 His glittering arms, and meditating death ;

Or whether thy wild visage gath' reth shades,  
 What time thou marshall'st forth thy waves who hold  
 A covenant of storms, then roar and wind  
 Under the rocking rocks ; as martyrs lie  
 Wheel-bound ; and, dying, utter lofty words !  
 Whether the strength of day is young and high,  
 Or whether, weary of the watch, he sits  
 Pale on thy wave, and weeps himself to death ;—  
 In storm and calm, at morn and eventide,  
 Still have I stood beside thee, and out-thrown  
 My spirit onward on thine element,—  
 Beyond thine element,—to tremble low  
 Before those feet which trod thee as they trod  
 Earth,—to the holy, happy, peopled place,  
 Where there is no more sea. Yea, and my soul,  
 Having put on thy vast similitude,  
 Hath wildly moan'd at her proper depth,  
 Echoed her proper musings, veil'd in shade  
 Her secrets of decay, and exercised  
 An elemental strength, in casting up  
 Rare gems and things of death on fancy's shore,  
 Till Nature said, " Enough."

Who longest dreams,  
 Dreams not for ever ; seeing day and night  
 And corporal feebleness divide his dreams,  
 And, on his elevate creations weigh  
 With hunger, cold, heat, darkness, weariness :  
 Else should we be like gods ; else would the course  
 Of thought's free wheels, increased in speed and might,  
 By an eterne volution, oversweep  
 The heights of wisdom, and invade her depths :  
 So, knowing all things, should we have all power ;  
 For is not Knowledge power ? But mighty spells  
 Our operation sear ; the Babel must,  
 Or ere it touch the sky, fall down to earth :  
 The web, half form'd, must tumble from our hands,  
 And, ere they can resume it, lie decay'd.  
 Mind struggles vainly from the flesh. E'en so,  
 Hell's angel (saith a scroll apocryphal)  
 Shall, when the latter days of earth have shrunk  
 Before the blast of God, affect his heav'n ;  
 Lift his scarr'd brow, confirm his rebel heart,  
 Shoot his strong wings, and darken pole and pole,—  
 Till day be blotted into night ; and shake  
 The fever'd clouds, as if a thousand storms  
 Throbb'd into life ! Vain hope—vain strength—vain flight !  
 God's arm shall meet God's foe, and hurl him back !

## A VISION OF LIFE AND DEATH.

MINE ears were deaf to melody,  
 My lips were dumb to sound :  
 Where didst thou wander, oh my soul,  
 When ear and tongue were bound ?

“ I wander'd by the stream of time,  
 Made dark by human tears :  
 I threw my voice upon the waves,  
 And *they* did throw me theirs.”

And how did sound the waves, my soul ?  
 And how did sound the waves ?  
 “ Hoarse, hoarse, and wild !—they ever dash'd  
 'Gainst ruin'd thrones and graves.”

And what sight on the shore, my soul ?  
 And what sight on the shore ?  
 “ Twain beings sate there silently,  
 And sit there evermore.”

Now tell me fast and true, my soul ;  
 Now tell me of those twain.  
 “ One was yclothed in mourning vest,  
 And one, in trappings vain.

“ She, in the trappings vain, was fair,  
 And eke fantastical :  
 A thousand colours dyed her garb ;  
 A blackness bound them all.

“ In part her hair was gaily wreath'd,  
 In part was wildly spread :  
 Her face did change its hue too fast,  
 To say 'twas pale or red.

“ And when she look'd on earth, I thought  
 She smiled for very glee :  
 But when she look'd to heav'n, I knew  
 That tears stood in her ee.

“ She held a mirror, there to gaze :  
 It could no cheer bestow ;  
 For while her beauty cast the shade,  
 Her breath did make it go.

“ A harper's harp did lie by her,  
 Without the harper's hest ;

A monarch's crown did lie by her,  
Wherein an owl had nest :

" A warrior's sword did lie by her,  
Grown rusty since the fight ;  
A poet's lamp did lie by her :—  
Ah me !—where was its light ? "

And what didst *thou* say, O, my soul,  
Unto that mystic dame ?

" I ask'd her of her tears, and eke  
I ask'd her of her name.

" She said, she built a prince's throne :  
She said, he ruled the grave ;  
And that the levelling worm ask'd not  
If he were king or slave.

" She said, she form'd a godlike tongue,  
Which lofty thoughts unsheathed ;  
Which roll'd its thunder round, and purged  
The air the nations breathed.

" She said, that tongue, all eloquent,  
With silent dust did mate ;  
Whereon false friends betray'd long faith,  
And foes outspat their hate.

" She said, she warm'd a student's heart,  
But heart and brow 'gan fade :  
Alas, alas ! those Delphic trees  
Do cast an upas shade !

" She said, she lighted happy hearths,  
Whose mirth was all forgot :  
She said, she tun'd marriage bells,  
Which rang when love was *not*.

" She said, her name was Life ; and then  
Out laugh'd and wept aloud,—  
What time the other being strange  
Lifted the veiling shroud.

" Yea ! lifted she the veiling shroud,  
And breathed the icy breath ;  
Whereat, with inward shuddering,  
I knew *her* name was Death.

" Yea ! lifted she her calm, calm brow,  
Her clear cold smile on me :  
Whereat within my deepness, leap'd  
Mine immortality.

" She told me, it did move her smile,  
 To witness how I sigh'd,  
 Because that what was fragile brake,  
 And what was mortal died :

" As if that kings could grasp the earth,  
 Who from its dust began ;  
 As if that suns could shine at night,  
 Or glory dwell with man.

" She told me, she had freed *his* soul,  
 Who aye did freedom love ;  
 Who now reck'd not, were worms below,  
 Or ranker worms above !

" She said, the student's heart had beat  
 Against its prison dim ;  
 Until she crush'd the bars of flesh,  
 And pour'd truth's light on him.

" She said, that they who left the hearth,  
 For aye in sunshine dwell ;  
 She said, the funeral tolling brought  
 More joy than marriage bell !

" And as she spake, she spake less loud ;  
 The stream resounded more :  
 Anon I nothing heard but waves  
 That wail'd along the shore."

And what didst thou say, oh my soul,  
 Upon that mystic strife ?

" I said, that Life was only Death,  
 That only Death was Life."



## EARTH.

How beautiful is earth ! my starry thoughts  
 Look down on it from their unearthly sphere,  
 And sing symphonious—Beautiful is earth !  
 The lights and shadows of her myriad hills  
 The branching greenness of her myriad woods ;  
 Her sky-affecting rocks ; her zoning sea ;  
 Her rushing, gleaming cataracts ; her streams  
 That race below, the wing'd clouds on high ;  
 Her pleasantness of vale and meadow !—

Hush !

Meseemeth through the leafy trees to ring  
 A chime of bells to falling waters tuned ;  
 Whereat comes heathen Zephyrus, out of breath  
 With running up the hills, and shakes his hair  
 From off his gleesome forehead, bold and glad  
 With keeping blythe Dan Phœbus company ;—  
 And throws him on the grass, though half afraid ;  
 First glancing round, lest tempests should be nigh ;  
 And lays close to the ground his ruddy lips,  
 And shapes their beauty into sound, and calls  
 On all the petall'd flowers that sit beneath  
 In hiding-places from the rain and snow,  
 To loosen the hard soil, and leave their cold  
 Sad idlesse, and betake them up to him.  
 They straightway hear his voice—

A thought did come,

And press from out my soul the heathen dream.  
 Mine eyes were purg'd. Straightway did I bind  
 Round me the garment of my strength, and heard  
 Nature's death-shrieking—the hereafter cry,  
 When he o' the lion voice, the rainbow-crown'd,  
 Shall stand upon the mountains and the sea,  
 And swear by earth, by heaven's throne, and Him  
 Who sitteth on the throne, there shall be time  
 No more, no more ! Then, veil'd Eternity  
 Shall straight unveil her awful countenance  
 Unto the reeling worlds, and take the place  
 Of seasons, years, and ages. Aye and aye  
 Shall be the time of day. The wrinkled heav'n  
 Shall yield her silent sun, made blind and white  
 With an exterminating light : the wind,  
 Unchain'd from the poles, nor having charge  
 Of cloud or ocean, with a sobbing wail  
 Shall rush among the stars, and swoon to death.  
 Yea, the shrunk earth, appearing livid pale  
 Beneath the red-tongued flame, shall shudder by  
 From out her ancient place, and leave—a void.  
 Yet haply by that void the saints redeem'd  
 May sometimes stray ; when memory of sin  
 Ghost-like shall rise upon their holy souls ;  
 And on their lips shall lie the name of earth  
 In paleness and in silentness ; until  
 Each looking on his brother, face to face,  
 And bursting into sudden happy tears,  
 (The only tears undried) shall murmur—" Christ !"

THE PICTURE GALLERY AT PENSHURST.

THEY spoke unto me from the silent ground,  
 They look'd unto me from the pictured wall :  
 The echo of my footstep was a sound  
 Like to the echo of their own footfall,  
 What time their living feet were in the hall.  
 I breathed where they had breathed—and where they  
     brought  
 Their souls to moralise on glory's pall,  
 I walk'd with silence in a cloud of thought :  
 So, what they erst had learn'd, I mine own spirit taught.

Ay! with mine eyes of flesh, I did behold  
 The likeness of their flesh! They, the great dead,  
 Stood still upon the canvas, while I told  
 The glorious memories to their ashes wed.  
 There, I beheld the Sidneys :—he, who bled  
 Freely for freedom's sake, bore gallantly  
 His soul upon his brow;—he, whose lute said  
 Sweet music to the land, meseem'd to be  
 Dreaming with that pale face, of love and Arcadie.

Mine heart had shrin'd these. And therefore past  
 Where these, and such as these, in mine heart's pride,  
 Which deem'd death, glory's other name. At last  
 I stay'd my pilgrim feet, and paused beside  
 A picture,\* which the shadows half did hide.  
 The form was a fair woman's form; the brow  
 Brightly between the clustering curls espied :  
 The cheek a little pale, yet seeming so  
 As, if the lips could speak, the paleness soon would go.

And rested there the lips, so warm and loving,  
 That, they *could* speak, one might be fain to guess :  
 Only they had been much too bright, if moving,  
 To stay by their own will, all motionless.  
 One outstretch'd hand its marble seal 'gan press  
 On roses which look'd fading; while the eyes,  
 Uplifted in a calm, proud loveliness,  
 Seem'd busy with, their flow'ry destinies,  
 Drawing, for ladye's heart, some moral quaint and wise.

She perish'd like her roses. I did look  
 On her, as she did look on them—to sigh!

\* Vandyke's portrait of Waller's Sacharissa.

## TO A POET'S CHILD.

Alas, alas ! that the fair-written book  
 Of her sweet face, should be in death laid by,  
 As any blotted scroll ! Its cruelty  
 Poison'd a heart most gentle-pulsed of all,  
 And turn'd it unto song, therein to die :  
 For grief's stern tension maketh musical,  
 Unless the strain'd string break or ere the music fall

Worship of Waller's heart ! no dream of thine  
 Reveal'd unto thee, that the lowly one,  
 Who sate enshadow'd near thy beauty's shine,  
 Should, when the light was out, the life was done,  
 Record thy name with those by Memory won  
 From Time's eternal burial. I am woo'd  
 By wholesome thoughts this sad thought hath begun,  
 For mind is strengthen'd when awhile subdued,  
 As he who touch'd the earth, and rose with power  
 renew'd.



## TO A POET'S CHILD.

A FAR harp swept the sea above ;  
 A far voice said thy name in love :  
 Then silence on the harp was cast ;  
 The voice was chain'd—the love went last !

And as I heard the melodie,  
 Sweet-voic'd Fancy spake of thee :  
 And as the silence o'er it came,  
 Mine heart, in silence, sigh'd thy name.

I thought there was one only place,  
 Where thou couldst lift thine orphan'd face :  
 A little home for prayer and woe ;—  
 A stone above—a shroud below ;—

That evermore, that stone beside,  
 Thy wither'd joys would form thy pride ;  
 As palm trees, on their south sea bed,  
 Make islands with the flowers they shed.

Child of the Dead ! my dream of thee  
 Was sad to tell, and dark to see ;  
 And vain as many a brighter dream ;  
 Since thou canst sing by Babel's stream !

For here, amid the worldly crowd,  
 'Mid common brows, and laughter loud,  
 And hollow words, and feelings sere,  
 Child of the Dead! I meet thee here!

And is thy step so fast and light?  
 And is thy smile so gay and bright?  
 And *canst* thou smile, with cheek undim,  
 Upon a world that frown'd on *him*?

The minstrel's harp is on his bier;  
 What doth the minstrel's orphan here?  
 The loving moulders in the clay;  
 The loved,—she keepeth holiday!

'Tis well! I would not doom thy years  
 Of golden prime, to only tears.  
 Fair girl! 'twere better that thine eyes  
 Should find a joy in summer skies,

As if their sun were on thy fate.  
 Be happy; strive not to be great;  
 And go not, from thy kind apart,  
 With lofty soul and stricken heart.

Think not too deeply: shallow thought,  
 Like open rills, is ever sought  
 By light and flowers; while fountains deep  
 Amid the rocks and shadows sleep.

Feel not too warmly: lest thou be  
 Too like Cyrene's waters free,  
 Which burn at night, when all around  
 In darkness and in chill is found.

Touch not the harp to win the wreath:  
 Its tone is fame, its echo death!  
 The wreath may like the laurel grow,  
 Yet turns to cypress on the brow!

And, as a flame springs clear and bright,  
 Yet leaveth ashes 'stead of light;  
 So genius (fatal gift!) is doom'd  
 To leave the heart it fired, consumed.

For thee, for thee, thou orphan'd one,  
 I make an humble orison!  
 Love all the world; and ever dream  
 That all are true who truly seem.

Forget ! for, so, 'twill move thee not,  
 Or lightly move ; to be forgot !  
 Be streams thy music ; hills, thy mirth ;  
 Thy chiefest light, the household hearth.

So, when grief plays her natural part,  
 And visiteth thy quiet heart ;  
 Shall all the clouds of grief be seen  
 To show a sky of hope between.

So, when thy beauty senseless lies,  
 No sculptured urn shall o'er thee rise ;  
 But gentle eyes shall weep at will,  
 Such tears as hearts like thine distil.

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### MINSTRELSY.

“ One asked her once the reason why,  
 She hadde delyte in minstrelsie,  
 She answerd on this manere.”

ROBERT DE BRUNNE.

FOR ever, since my childish looks  
 Could rest on Nature's pictured books ;  
 For ever, since my childish tongue  
 Could name the themes our bards have sung ;  
 So long, the sweetness of their singing  
 Hath been to me a rapture bringing !  
 Yet ask me not the reason why  
 I have delight in minstrelsy.

I know that much whereof I sing,  
 Is shapen but for vanishing ;  
 I know that summer's flower and leaf  
 And shine and shade are very brief,  
 And that the heart they brighten, may,  
 Before them all, be sheathed in clay !—  
 I do not know the reason why  
 I have delight in minstrelsy.

A few there are, whose smile and praise  
 My minstrel hope, would kindly raise :  
 But, of those few—Death may impress  
 The lips of some with silentness ;  
 While some may friendship's faith resign,  
 And heed no more a song of mine.—  
 Ask not, ask not the reason why  
 I have delight in minstrelsy.

The sweetest song that minstrels sing,  
 Will charm not Joy to tarrying ;  
 The greenest bay that earth can grow,  
 Will shelter not in burning woe ;  
 A thousand voices will not cheer,  
 When *one* is mute that aye is dear !—  
 Is there, alas ! *no* reason why  
 I have delight in minstrelsy ?

I do not know ! The turf is green  
 Beneath the rain's fast-dropping sheen,  
 Yet asks not why that deeper hue  
 Doth all its tender leaves renew ;—  
 And I, like-minded, am content,  
 While music to my soul is sent,  
 To question not the reason why  
 I have delight in minstrelsy.

Years pass—my life with them shall pass :  
 And soon, the cricket in the grass  
 And summer bird, shall louder sing  
 Than she who owns a minstrel's string.  
 Oh then may some, the dear and few,  
 Recall her love, whose truth they knew ;  
 When all forget to question why  
 She had delight in minstrelsy !



TO THE MEMORY OF  
 SIR UVEDALE PRICE, BART.

FAREWELL !—a word that human lips bestow  
 On all that human hearts delight to know :  
 On summer skies, and scenes that change as fast ;  
 On ocean calms, and faith as fit to last ;  
 On Life, from Love's own arms, that breaks away ;  
 On hopes that blind, and glories that decay !

And ever thus, "farewell, farewell," is said,  
 As round the hills of lengthening time, we tread ;  
 As at each step, the winding ways unfold  
 Some untried prospect which obscures the old ;—  
 Perhaps a prospect brightly color'd o'er,  
 Yet not with brightness that we loved before ;  
 And dull and dark the brightest hue appears  
 To eyes like ours, surcharged and dim with tears.

Oft, oft we wish the winding road were past,  
 And yon supernal summit gain'd at last ;  
 Where all that gradual change removed, is found  
 At once, for ever, as you look around ;  
 Where every scene by tender eyes survey'd,  
 And lost and wept for, to their gaze is spread—  
 No tear to dim the sight, no shade to fall,  
 But Heaven's own sunshine lighting, charming all.

Farewell !—a common word—and yet how drear  
 And strange it soundeth as I write it here !  
 How strange that *thou* a place of death shouldst fill,  
 Thy brain unlighted, and thine heart grown chill !  
 And dark the eye, whose plausible glance to draw,  
 Incited Nature brake her tyrant's law !  
 And deaf the ear, to charm whose organ true,  
 Mœonian music tuned her harp anew !  
 And mute the lips where Plato's bee hath roved ;  
 And motionless the hand that genius moved !—  
 Ah friend ! thou speakest not !—but still to me  
 Do Genius, Music, Nature, speak of *thee* !—  
 Still golden fancy, still the sounding line,  
 And waving wood, recall some word of thine :  
 Some word, some look, whose living light is o'er—  
 And Memory sees what Hope can see no more.

Twice, twice, thy voice hath spoken. Twice there came  
 To us, a change, a joy—to thee, a fame !  
 Thou spakest once,\* and every pleasant sight,  
 Woods waving wild, and fountains gushing bright,  
 Cool copses, grassy banks, and all the dyes  
 Of shade and sunshine gleam'd before our eyes.  
 Thou spakest twice ; † and every pleasant sound  
 Its ancient silken harmony unwound,  
 From Doric pipe and Attic lyre that lay  
 Enclasp'd in hands whose cunning is decay.  
 And now no more thou speakest ! Death hath met  
 And won thee to him ! Oh remember'd yet !  
 We cannot *see*, and *hearken*, and forget !

My thoughts are far. I think upon the time,  
 When Foxley's purple hills and woods sublime  
 Were thrilling at thy step ; when thou didst throw  
 Thy burning spirit on the vale below,  
 To bathe its sense in beauty. Lovely ground !  
 There, never more shall step of thine resound !

\* Essay on the Picturesque.

† Essay on the Pronunciation of the Ancient Languages.

There, Spring again shall come, but find thee not,  
 And deck with humid eyes her favourite spot ;  
 Strew tender green on paths thy foot forsakes,  
 And make that fair, which Memory saddest makes.  
 For me, all sorrowful, unused to raise  
 A minstrel song and dream not of thy praise,  
 Upon thy grave, my tuneless harp I lay,  
 Nor try to sing what only tears can say.  
 So warm and fast the ready waters swell—  
 So weak the faltering voice thou knewest well !  
 Thy words of kindness calm'd that voice before ;  
*Now*, thoughts of *them* but make it tremble more ;  
 And leave its theme to others, and depart  
 To dwell within the silence where thou art.

—◆—

### THE AUTUMN.

Go, sit upon the lofty hill,  
 And turn your eyes around,  
 Where waving woods and waters wild  
 Do hymn an autumn sound.  
 The summer sun is faint on them—  
 The summer flowers depart—  
 Sit still—as all transform'd to stone,  
 Except your musing heart.

How there you sat in summer-time,  
 May yet be in your mind ;  
 And how you heard the green woods sing  
 Beneath the freshening wind.  
 Though the same wind now blows around,  
 You would its blast recall ;  
 For every breath that stirs the trees,  
 Doth cause a leaf to fall.

Oh ! like that wind, is all the mirth  
 That flesh and dust impart :  
 We cannot bear its visitings,  
 When change is on the heart.  
 Gay words and jests may make us smile,  
 When Sorrow is asleep ;  
 But other things must make us smile,  
 When Sorrow bids us *weep* !

The dearest hands that clasp our hands,—  
*Their* presence may be o'er :  
 The dearest voice that meets our ear,  
*That* tone may come no more !  
 Youth fades ; and then, the joys of youth,  
 Which once refresh'd our mind,  
 Shall come—as, on those sighing woods,  
 The chilling autumn wind.

Hear not the wind—view not the woods ;  
 Look out o'er vale and hill :  
 In spring, the sky encircled them—  
 The sky is round them still.  
 Come autumn's scathe—come winter's cold—  
 Come change—and human fate !  
 Whatever prospect HEAVEN doth bound,  
 Can ne'er be desolate.



### THE DEATH-BED OF TERESA DEL RIEGO.

“ —Si fia muta ogni altra cosa, al fine  
 Parlerà il mio morire,  
 E ti dirà la morte il mio martire.”

GUARINI.

THE room was darken'd ; but a wan lamp shed  
 Its light upon a half-uncurtain'd bed,  
 Whereon the widow'd sate. Blackly as death  
 Her veiling hair hung round her, and no breath  
 Came from her lips to motion it. Between  
 Its parted clouds, the calm fair face was seen  
 In a snow paleness, and snow silentness,  
 With eyes unquenchable, whereon did press  
 A little, their white lids, so taught to lie,  
 By weights of frequent tears wept secretly.  
 Her hands were clasp'd and raised—the lamp did fling  
 A glory on her brow's meek suffering.

Beautiful form of woman ! seeming made  
 Alone to shine in mirrors, there to braid  
 The hair and zone the waist—to garland flowers—  
 To walk like sunshine through the orange bowers—  
 To strike her land's guitar—and often see  
 In other eyes how lovely hers must be.  
 Grew she acquaint with anguish ? Did she sever

For ever from the one she loved for ever,  
 To dwell among the strangers? Ay! and she,  
 Who shone most brightly in that festive glee,  
 Sate down in this despair most patiently.

Some hearts are Niobes! In grief's down-sweeping,  
 They turn to very stone from over-weeping,  
 And after, feel no more. Hers did remain  
 In life, which is the power of feeling pain,  
 Till pain consumed the life so call'd below.  
 She heard that he was dead!—she ask'd not how—  
 For *he* was dead! She wail'd not o'er his urn,  
 For *he* was dead—and in *her* hands, should burn  
 His vestal flame of honor radiantly,  
 Sighing would dim its light—she did not sigh.

She only died. They laid her in the ground,  
 Whereon th' unloving tread, and accents sound  
 Which are not of her Spain. She left behind,  
 For those among the strangers who were kind  
 Unto the poor heart-broken, her dark hair.  
 It once was gauded out with jewels rare ;  
 It swept her dying pillow—it doth lie  
 Beside me, (thank the giver) droopingly,  
 And very long and bright! Its tale doth go  
 Half to the dumb grave, half to life-time woe,  
 Making the heart of man, if manly, ring  
 Like Dodonæan brass, with echoing.



## TO VICTOIRE, ON HER MARRIAGE.

VICTOIRE! I knew thee in thy land,  
 Where I was strange to all :  
 I heard thee ; and were strange to me  
 The words thy lips let fall.

I loved thee—for the Babel curse  
 Was meant not for the heart :  
 I parted from thee, in such way  
 As those who love may part.

And now a change hath come to us,  
 A sea doth rush between !  
 I do not know if we can be  
 Again as we have been.

## TO A BOY.

I sit down in mine English land,  
 Mine English hearth beside ;  
 And thou, to one I never knew,  
 Art plighted for a bride.

It will not wrong thy present joy,  
 With by-gone days to wend ;  
 Nor wrongeth it mine English hearth,  
 To love my Gallic friend.

Bind, bind the wreath ! the slender ring  
 Thy wedded fingers press !  
 May he who calls thy love his own,  
 Call so thine happiness !

Be he Terpander to thine heart,  
 And string fresh strings of gold,  
 Which may out-give new melodies,  
 But never mar the old !

And though I clasp no more thy hand  
 In my hand, and rejoice—  
 And though I see thy face no more,  
 And hear no more thy voice—

Farewell, farewell !—let thought of me  
 Visit thine heart ! There is  
 In mine the very selfish prayer  
 That prayeth for thy bliss !

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 TO A BOY.

WHEN my last song was said for thee,  
 Thy golden hair swept, long and free,  
 Around thee ; and a dove-like tone  
 Was on thy voice—or Nature's own :  
 And every phrase and word of thine  
 Went out in lisping infantine !  
 Thy small steps faltering round our hearth—  
 Thine een out-peering in their mirth—  
 Blue een ! that, like thine heart, seem'd given  
 To be, for ever, full of heaven !  
 Wert thou, in sooth, made up of glee,  
 When my last song was said for thee ?

And now more years are finish'd,—  
 For thee another song is said.  
 Thy voice hath lost its cooing tone;  
 The lisping of thy words is gone:  
 Thy step treads firm—thine hair not flings  
 Round thee its length of golden rings—  
 Departed, like all lovely things!  
 Yet art thou still made up of glee,  
 When my *now* song is said for thee.

Wisely and well responded they,  
 Who cut thy golden hair away,  
 What time I made the bootless prayer,  
 That they should pause awhile, and spare.  
 They said, "its sheen did less agree  
 With boyhood than with infancy."  
 And thus I know it aye must be.  
 Before the revel noise is done,  
 The revel lamps pale one by one.

Ay! Nature loveth not to bring  
 Crown'd victims to life's labouring.  
 The mirth-effulgent eye appears  
 Less sparkling—to make room for tears:  
 After the heart's quick throbs depart,  
 We lose the gladness of the heart:  
 And, after we have lost awhile  
 The rose o' the lip, we lose its smile;  
 As Beauty could not bear to press  
 Near the death-pyre of Happiness.

This seemeth but a sombre dream?  
 It hath more pleasant thoughts than seem.  
 The older a young tree doth grow,  
 The deeper shade it sheds below;  
 But makes the grass more green—the air  
 More fresh, than had the sun been there.  
 And thus our human life is found,  
 Albeit a darkness gather round:  
 For patient virtues, that their light  
 May shine to all men, want the night:  
 And holy Peace, unused to cope,  
 Sits meekly at the tomb of Hope,  
 Saying that "she is risen!"

Then I

Will sorrow not at destiny,—  
 Though from thine eyes, and from thine heart,

The glory of their light depart ;  
 Though on thy voice, and on thy brow,  
 Should come a fiercer change than now ;  
 Though thou no more be made of glee,  
 When my next song is said for thee.



## REMONSTRANCE.

OH say not it is vain to weep  
 That deafen'd bier above ;  
 Where genius has made room for death,  
 And life is past from love ;  
 That tears can never his bright looks  
 And tender words restore :  
 I know it is most vain to weep—  
 And therefore, weep the more !

Oh say not I shall cease to weep  
 When years have wither'd by ;  
 That ever I shall speak of joy,  
 As if he could reply ;  
 That ever mine unquivering lips  
 Shall name the name he bore :  
 I know that I may cease to weep,  
 And therefore weep the more !

Say, Time, who slew mine happiness,  
 Will leave to me my woe ;  
 And woe's own stony strength shall chain  
 These tears' impassion'd flow :  
 Or say, that these, my ceaseless tears,  
 May life to death restore ;  
 For then my soul were wept away,  
 And I should weep no more !

## REPLY.

To weep awhile beside the bier,  
 Whereon his ashes lie,  
 Is well!—I know that rains must fall  
 When clouds are in the sky :  
 I know, *to die—to part*, will cloud  
 The brightest spirit o'er ;  
 And yet, wouldst *thou* for ever weep,  
 When *he* can weep no more ?

Fix not thy sight, so long and fast,  
 Upon the shroud's despair;  
 Look upward unto Zion's hill,  
 For death was also *there!*  
 And think, "The death, the scourge, the scorn,  
 My sinless Saviour bore—  
 The curse—the pang, too deep for tears—  
 That *I* should weep no more!"

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EPITAPH.

BEAUTY, who softly walkest all thy days,  
 In silken garment to the tunes of praise;—  
 Lover, whose dreamings by the green-bank'd river,  
 Where once she wander'd, fain would last for ever;—  
 King, whom the nations scan, adoring scan,  
 And shout "a god," when sin hath mark'd thee man;—  
 Bard, on whose brow the Hyblan dew remains,  
 Albeit the fever burneth in the veins;—  
 Hero, whose sword in tyrant's blood is hot;—  
 Sceptic, who doubting, wouldst be doubted not;—  
 Man, whosoe'er thou art, whate'er thy trust;—  
 Respect thyself in me;—thou treadest *dust.*

---

THE IMAGE OF GOD.

"I am God, and there is none like me,"

ISAIAH xlvi. 9.

"Christ, who is the image of God."

2 COR. iv. 4.

THOU! art thou like to God?  
 (I ask'd this question of the glorious sun)  
 Thou high unwearied one,  
 Whose course in heat, and light, and life is run?  
 Eagles may view thy face—clouds can assuage  
 Thy fiery wrath—the sage  
 Can mete thy stature—thou shalt fade with age,  
*Thou* art not like to God.

Thou! art thou like to God?  
 (I ask'd this question of the bounteous earth)  
 Oh thou, who givest birth  
 To forms of beauty and to sounds of mirth?

In all thy glory works the worm decay—  
 Thy golden harvests stay  
 For seed and toil—thy power shall pass away.  
*Thou* art not like to God.

Thou ! art thou like to God ?  
 (I ask'd this question of my deathless soul)  
 Oh thou, whose musings roll  
 Above the thunder, o'er creation's whole ?

Thou art not. Sin, and shame, and agony  
 Within thy deepness lie :  
 They utter forth their voice in thee, and cry  
 '*Thou* art not like to God.'

Then art THOU like to God ;  
 Thou, who didst bear the sin, and shame, and woe—  
 O Thou, whose sweat did flow—  
 Whose tears did gush—whose brow was dead and low ?

No grief is like thy grief ; no heart can prove  
 Love like unto Thy love ;  
 And none, save only Thou,—below, above,—  
 O God, is like to God !



## THE APPEAL.

CHILDREN of our England ! stand  
 On the shores that girt our land ;  
 The ægis of whose cloud-white rock  
 Braveth Time's own battle shock.  
 Look above the wide, wide world ;  
 Where the northern blasts have furl'd  
 Their numb'd wings amid the snows,  
 Mutt'ring in a forced repose—  
 Or where the madden'd sun on high  
 Shakes his torch athwart the sky,  
 Till within their prison sere,  
 Chain'd earthquakes groan for fear ?  
 Look above the wide, wide world,  
 Where a gauntlet Sin hath hurl'd  
 To astonied Life ; and where  
 Death's gladiatorial smile doth glare,  
 On making the arena bare.

Shout aloud the words that show  
 Jesus in the sands and snow;—  
 Shout aloud the words that free,  
 Over the perpetual sea.

Speak ye. As a breath will sweep  
 Avalanche from Alpine steep,  
 So the spoken word shall roll  
 Fear and darkness from the soul.  
 Are ye men, and love not man?  
 Love ye, and permit his ban?  
 Can ye, dare ye, rend the chain  
 Wrought of common joy and pain,  
 Claspings with its links of gold,  
 Man to man in one strong hold?  
 Lo! if the golden links ye sever,  
 Ye shall make your heart's flesh quiver;  
 And wheresoe'er the links are reft,  
 There, shall be a blood-stain left.  
 To earth's remotest rock repair,  
 Ye shall find a vulture there:  
 Though for others sorrowing not,  
 Your own tears shall still be hot:  
 Though ye play a lonely part;  
 Though ye bear an iron heart;—  
 Woe, like Echetus, still must  
 Grind your iron into dust.

But children of our Britain, ye  
 Rend not man's chain of sympathy;  
 To those who sit in woe and night,  
 Denying tears and hiding light.  
 Ye have stretch'd your hands abroad  
 With the Spirit's sheathless sword:  
 Ye have spoken—and the tone  
 To earth's extremest verge hath gone:  
 East and west sublime it rolls,  
 Echoed by a million souls!  
 The wheels of rapid circling years,  
 Erst hot with crime, are quenched in tears.  
 Rocky hearts and waters pour,  
 That were chain'd in stone before:  
 Bloody hands, that only bare  
 Hilted sword, are clasp'd in prayer:  
 Savage tongues, that wont to fling  
 Shout of war in deathly ring,  
 Speak the name which angels sing.

Dying lips are lit the while  
 With a most undying smile,  
 Which reposing there, instead  
 Of language, when the lips are dead,  
 Saith,—“No sound of grief or pain,  
 Shall haunt us when we move again.”

Children of our country! brothers  
 To the children of all others!  
 Shout aloud the words that show  
 Jesus in the sands and snow;—  
 Shout aloud the words that free,  
 Over the perpetual sea!



## IDOLS.

How weak the gods of this world are—  
 And weaker yet their worship made me!  
 I have been an idolater  
 Of three—and three times they betray'd me!

Mine oldest worshipping was given  
 To natural Beauty, aye residing  
 In bowery earth and starry heav'n,  
 In ebbing sea, and river gliding.

But natural Beauty shuts her bosom  
 To what the natural feelings tell!  
 Albeit I sigh'd, the trees would blossom—  
 Albeit I smiled, the blossoms fell.

Then left I earthly sights, to wander  
 Amid a grove of name divine,  
 Where bay-reflecting streams meander,  
 And Moloch Fame hath rear'd a shrine.

Not green, but black, is that reflection;  
 On rocky beds those waters lie;  
 That grove hath chillness and dejection—  
 How could I sing? I had to sigh.

Last, human Love, thy Lares greeting,  
 To rest and warmth I vow'd my years.  
 To rest? how wild my pulse is beating!  
 To warmth? ah me! my burning tears.

Ay, *they* may burn—though thou be frozen  
 By death, and changes wint'ring on !  
 Fame !—Beauty !—idols madly chosen—  
 Were yet of gold ; but *thou* art STONE !

Crumble like stone ! my voice no longer  
 Shall wail their names, who silent be :  
 There is a voice that soundeth stronger—  
 “ My daughter, give thine heart to *Me*.”

Lord ! take mine heart ! Oh first and fairest,  
 Whom all creation's ends shall hear ;  
 Who deathless love in death declarest !  
 None else is beautiful—famous—dear !

---

 HYMN.

“ Lord, I cry unto Thee, make haste unto me.”  
 PSALM cxli.

“ The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon Him.”  
 PSALM cxlv.

SINCE without Thee we do no good,  
 And with Thee do no ill,  
 Abide with us in weal and woe,—  
 In action and in will.

In weal,—that while our lips confess  
 The Lord who “ gives,” we may  
 Remember, with an humble thought,  
 The Lord who “ takes away.”

In woe,—that, while to drowning tears  
 Our hearts their joys resign,  
 We may remember *who* can turn  
 Such water into wine.

By hours of day,—that when our feet  
 O'er hill and valley run,  
 We still may think the light of truth  
 More welcome than the sun.

By hours of night,—that when the air  
 Its dew and shadow yields,  
 We still may hear the voice of God  
 In silence of the fields.

Oh! then sleep comes on us like death,  
 All soundless, deaf and deep :  
 Lord! teach us so to watch and pray,  
 That death may come like sleep.

Abide with *us*, abide with *us*,  
 While flesh and soul agree ;  
 And when our flesh is only dust,  
 Abide our souls with *Thee*.



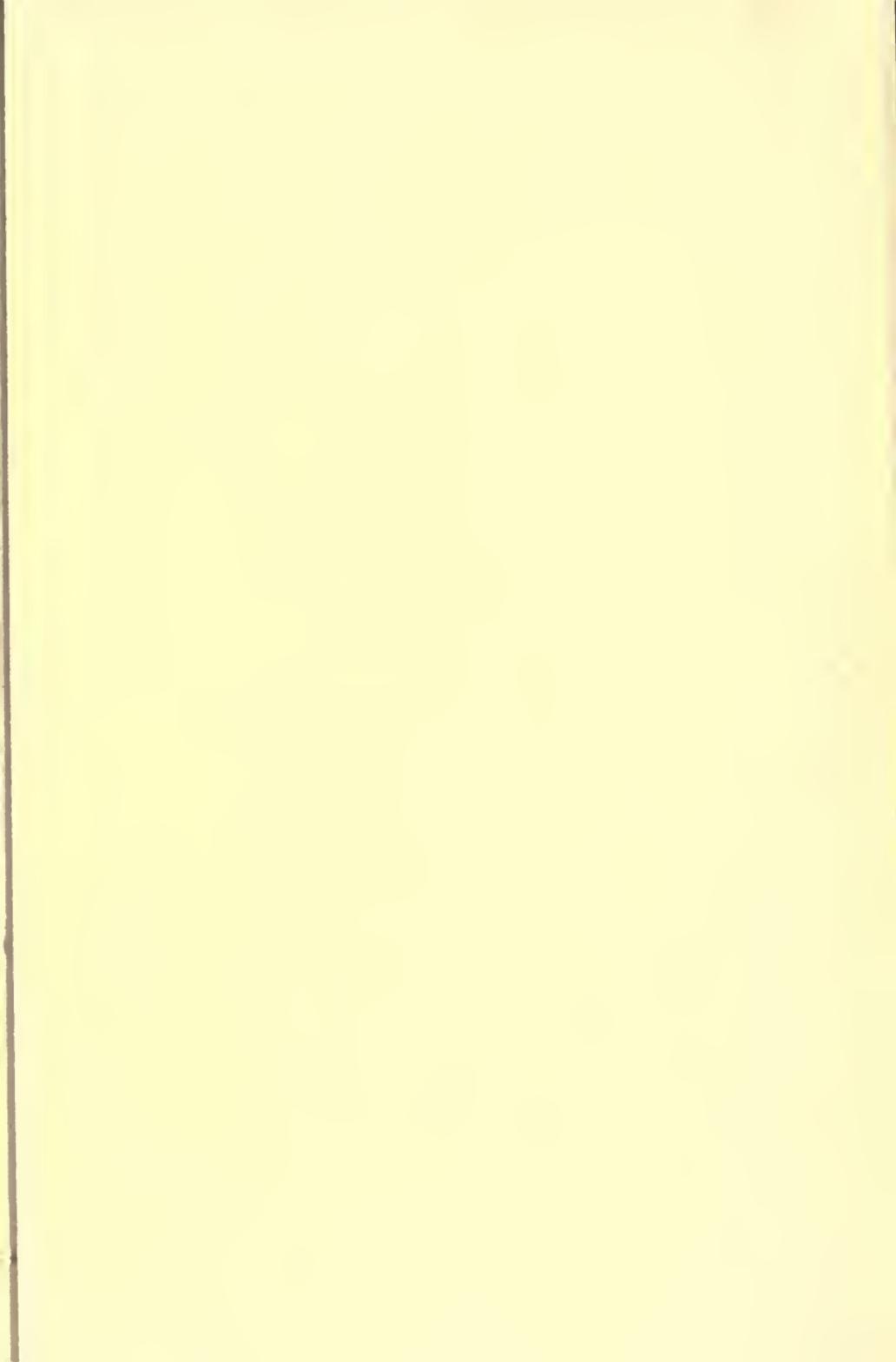
## WEARINESS.

MINE eyes are weary of surveying  
 The fairest things, too soon decaying ;  
 Mine ears are weary of receiving  
 The kindest words—ah, past believing !  
 Weary my hope, of ebb and flow ;  
 Weary my pulse, of tunes of woe :  
 My trusting heart is weariest !  
 I would—I would, I were at rest !

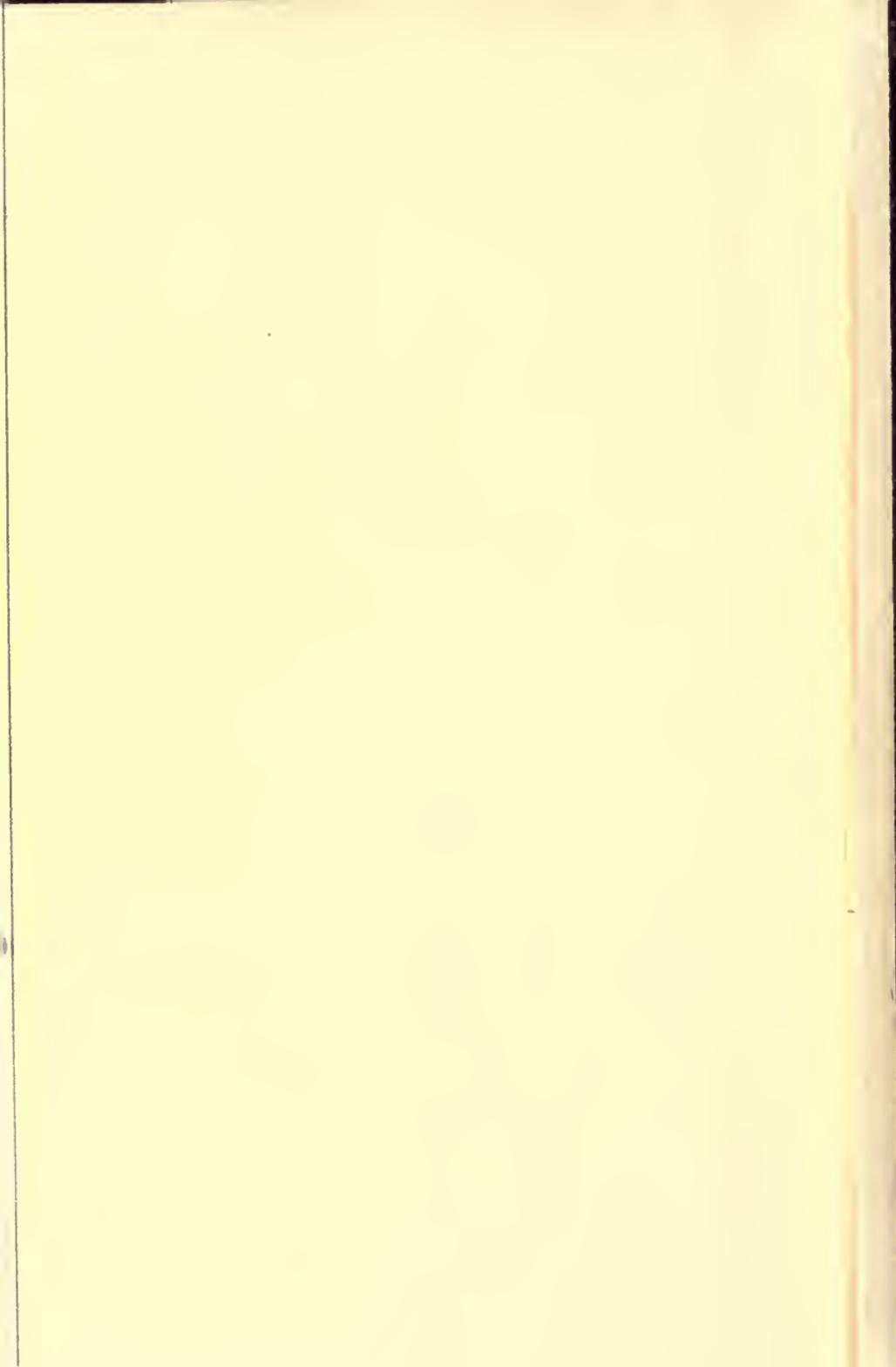
For *me*, can earth refuse to fade ?  
 For *me*, can words be faithful made ?  
 Will *my* embitter'd hope be sweet ?  
*My* pulse forego the human beat ?  
 No ! Darkness must consume mine eye—  
 Silence, mine ear—hope cease—pulse die—  
 And o'er mine heart a stone be press'd—  
 Or vain this,—“ Would I were at rest !”

There is a land of rest deferr'd :  
 Nor eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard,  
 Nor Hope hath trod the precinct o'er ;  
 For hope beheld is hope no more !  
 There, human pulse forgets its tone—  
 There, hearts may know as they are known !  
 Oh, for dove's wings, thou dwelling blest,  
 To fly to *thee*, and be at rest !

THE END.









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