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WEN MEREDITH



Lillian Whiting

1-21-1884.

Boston

C. A. Whiting

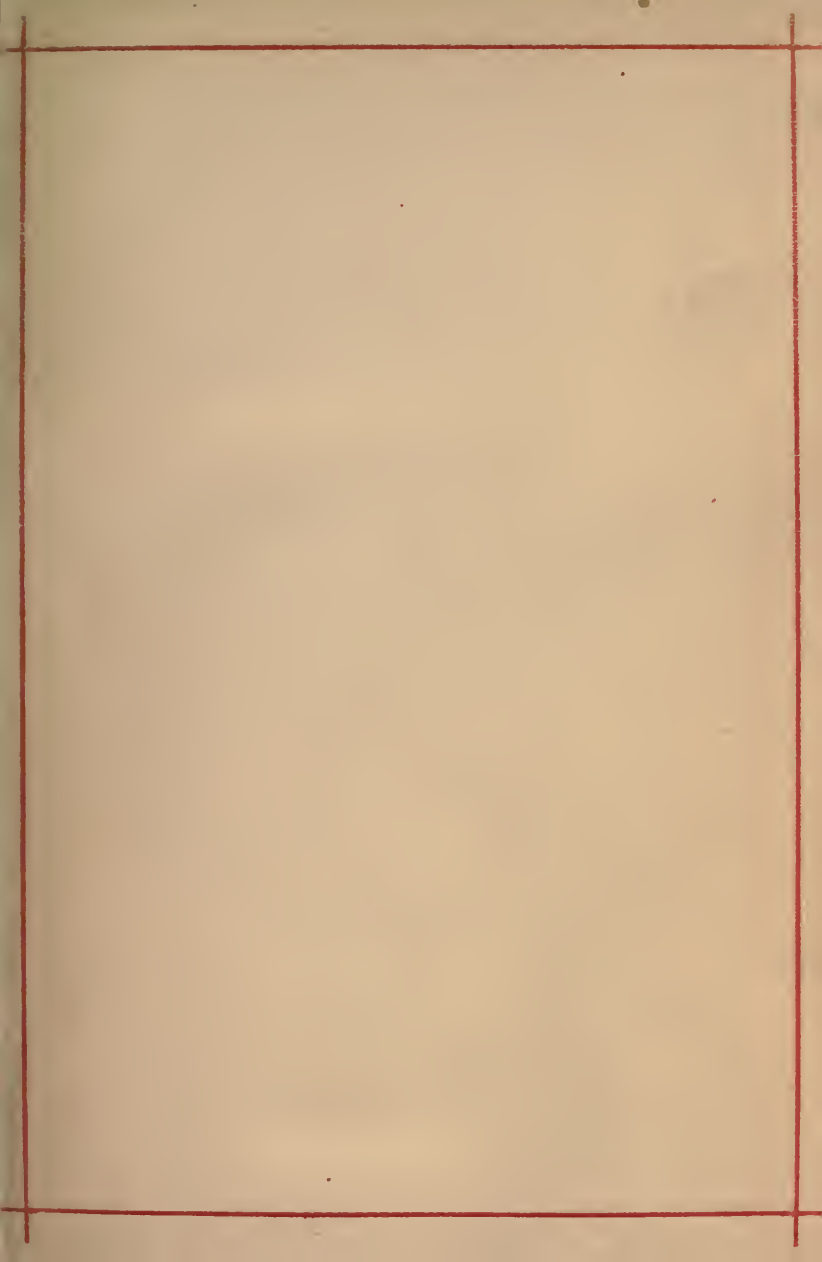
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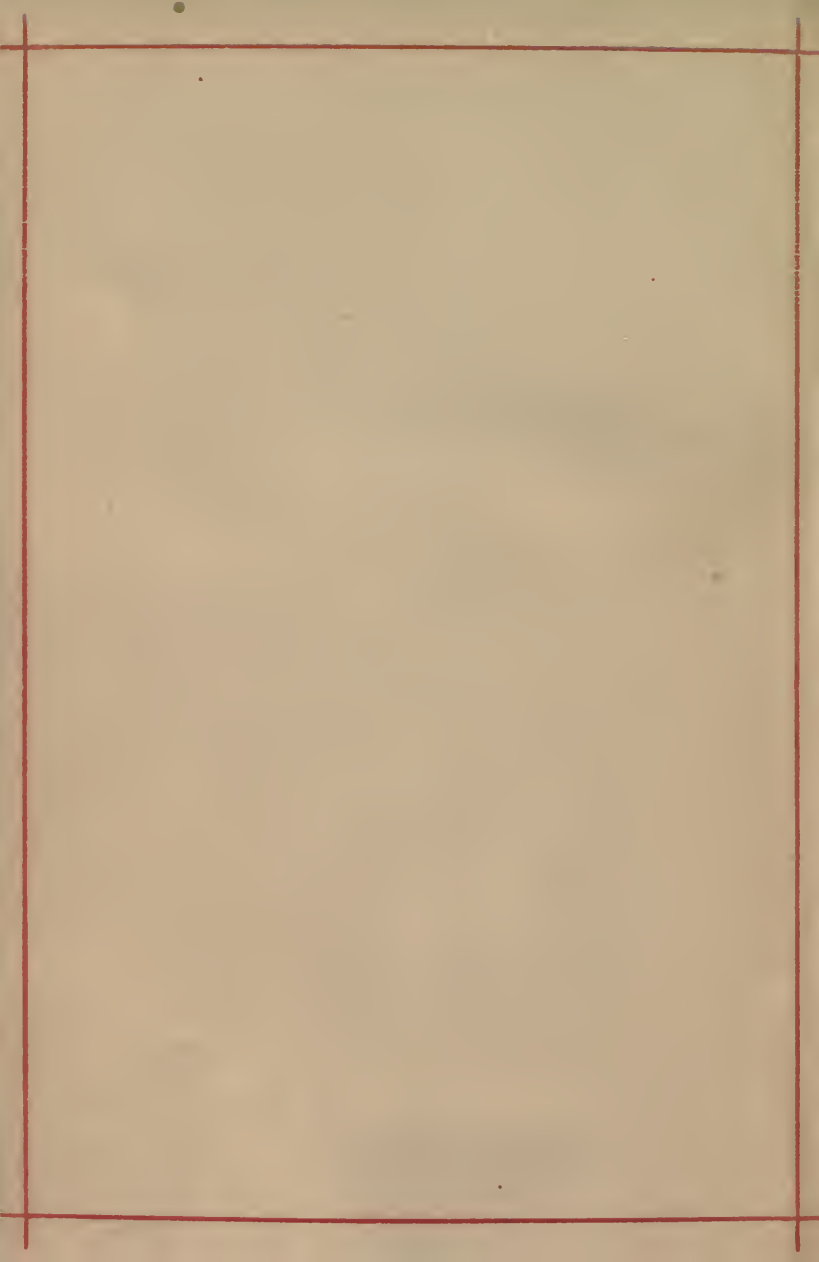
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1888



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PORTRAIT OF LORD LYTTON

THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF

OWEN MEREDITH

(ROBERT, LORD LYTTON).

"LUCILE," "THE APPLE OF LIFE," "THE WANDERER," "CLYTEMNESTRA,"
ETC., ETC.

HOUSEHOLD EDITION.



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LUCILE.

Dedication.

TO MY FATHER.

I DEDICATE to you a work, which is submitted to the public with a diffidence and hesitation proportioned to the novelty of the effort it represents. For in this poem I have abandoned those forms of verse with which I had most familiarized my thoughts, and have endeavored to follow a path on which I could discover no footprints before me, either to guide or to warn.

There is a moment of profound discouragement which succeeds to prolonged effort; when, the labor which has become a habit having ceased, we miss the sustaining sense of its championship, and stand, with a feeling of strangeness and embarrassment, before the abrupt and naked result. As regards myself, in the present instance, the force of all such sensations is increased by the circumstances to which I have referred. And in this moment of discouragement and doubt my heart instinctively turns to you, from whom it has so often sought, from whom it has never failed to receive, support.

I do not inscribe to you this book because it contains anything that is worthy of the beloved and honored name with which I thus seek to associate it: nor yet, because I would avail myself of a vulgar pretext to display in public an affection that is best honored by the silence which it renders sacred.

Feelings only such as those with which, in days when there existed for me no critic less gentle than yourself, I brought to you my childish manuscripts,—feelings only such as those which have, in later years, associated with your heart all that has moved or occupied my own,—lead me once more to seek assurance from the grasp of that hand which has hitherto been my guide and comfort through the life I owe to you.

And as in childhood, when existence had no toil beyond the day's simple lesson, no ambition beyond the neighboring approval of the night, I brought to you the morning's task for the evening's sanction, so now I bring to you this self-appointed task-work of maturer years; less confident indeed of your approval, but not less confident of your love; and anxious only to realize your presence between myself and the public, and to mingle with those severer voices to whose final sentence I submit my work the beloved and gracious accents of your own.

OWEN MEREDITH.

PART I.

CANTO I.

I.

Letter from the COMTESSE DE NEVERS *to* LORD ALFRED VARGRAVE.

"I HEAR from Bigorre you are there.

I am told

You are going to marry Miss Darcy.

Of old,

[it now,

So long since you may have forgotten

(When we parted as friends, soon

mere strangers to grow,)

Your last words recorded a pledge—
what you will—

A promise—the time is now come 'o
fulfil.

The letters I ask you, my lord, to re-
turn,

I desire to receive from your hand.
You discern

My reasons, which, therefore, I need
not explain.

The distance to Luchon is short. I
remain

A month in these mountains. Miss
Darcy, perchance,
Will forego one brief page from the
summer romance
Of her courtship, and spare you one
day from your place
At her feet, in the light of her fair
English face.
I desire nothing more, and I trust
you will feel
I desire nothing much.

“Your friend always,
“LUCILE.”

II.

Now in May Fair, of course,—in the
fair month of May,—
When life is abundant, and busy,
and gay :
When the markets of London are
noisy about
Young ladies, and strawberries, —
“only just out :”
Fresh strawberries sold under all the
house-eaves,
And young ladies on sale for the
strawberry leaves :
When cards, invitations, and three-
cornered notes
Fly about like white butterflies,—
gay little notes
In the sunbeam of Fashion ; and
even Blue Books
Take a heavy-winged flight, and grow
busy as rooks ;
And the postman (that Genius, in-
different and stern,
Who shakes out even-handed to all,
from his urn,
Those lots which so often decide if
our day
Shall be fretful and anxious, or joy-
ous and gay),
Brings, each morning, more letters
of one sort or other
Than Cadmus himself put together,
to bother
The heads of Hellenes ;—I say, in
the season
Of Fair May, in May Fair, there can
be no reason

Why, when quietly munching your
dry-toast and butter,
Your nerves should be suddenly
thrown in a flutter
At the sight of a neat little letter,
addressed
In a woman’s handwriting, contain-
ing, half guessed,
An odor of violets faint as the
Spring,
And coquettishly sealed with a small
signet-ring.
But in Autumn, the season of some-
bre reflection,

When a damp day, at breakfast, be-
gins with dejection ;
Far from London and Paris, and ill
at one’s ease,
Away in the heart of the blue Pyre-
nees,
Where a call from the doctor, a stroll
to the bath,
A ride through the hills on a hack
like a lath,
A cigar, a French novel, a tedious
flirtation,
Are all a man finds for his day’s oc-
cupation,
The whole case, believe me, is total-
ly changed,
And a letter may alter the plans we
arranged
Over-night, for the slaughter of
Time.—a wild beast,
Which, though classified yet by no
naturalist,
Abounds in these mountains, more
hard to ensnare,
And more mischievous, too, than the
lynx or the bear.

III.

I marvel less, therefore, that, having
already
Torn open this note, with a hand
most unsteady,
Lord Alfred was startled.
The month is September ;
Time, morning ; the scene at Bi-
gorre ; (pray remember
These facts, gentle reader, because I
intend

To fling all the unities by at the end.)
 He walked to the window. The
 morning was chill :
 The brown woods were crisped in the
 cold on the hill :
 The sole thing abroad in the streets
 was the wind ;
 And the straws on the gust, like the
 thoughts in his mind,
 Rose, and eddied around and around,
 as though teasing
 Each other. The prospect, in truth,
 was unpleasing :
 And Lord Alfred, whilst moodily
 gazing around it.
 To himself more than once (vexed in
 soul) sighed
 . . . " Confound it ! "

IV.

What the thoughts were which led
 to this bad interjection,
 Sir, or Madam, I leave to your future
 detection ;
 For whatever they were, they were
 burst in upon.
 As the door was burst through, by
 my lord's Cousin John.

COUSIN JOHN.

A fool, Alfred, a fool, a most motley
 fool !

LORD ALFRED.

Who ?

JOHN.

The man who has anything better to
 do ;
 And yet so far forgets himself, so far
 degrades
 His position as Man, to this worst of
 all trades,
 Which even a well-brought-up ape
 were above,
 To travel about with a woman in
 love,—
 Unless she's in love with himself.

ALFRED.

Indeed ! why
 Are you there then, dear Jack ?

JOHN.

Can't you guess it ?

ALFRED.

Not I.

JOHN.

Because *I have* nothing that's better
 to do.
 I had rather be bored, my dear Al-
 fred, by you,
 On the whole (I must own), than be
 bored by myself.
 That perverse, imperturbable, golden-
 haired elf—
 Your Will-o'-the-wisp—that has led
 you and me
 Such a dance through these hills—

ALFRED.

Who, Matilda ?

JOHN.

Yes ! she,

Of course ! who but she could con-
 trive so to keep
 One's eyes, and one's feet too, from
 falling asleep
 For even one half-hour of the long
 twenty-four ?

ALFRED.

What's the matter ?

JOHN.

Why, she is—a matter, the more
 I consider about it, the more it de-
 mands
 An attention it does not deserve ;
 and expands
 Beyond the dimensions which even
 crinoline,
 When possessed by a fair face and
 saucy Eighteen.
 Is entitled to take in this very small
 star,
 Already too crowded, as *I* think, by
 far.
 You read Malthus and Sadler ?

ALFRED.

Of course.

JOHN.

To what use,
When you countenance, calmly, such
monstrous abuse
Of one mere human creature's legit-
imate space
In this world? Mars, Apollo, Viro-
rum! the case
Wholly passes my patience.

ALFRED.

My own is worse tried.

JOHN.

Yours, Alfred?

ALFRED.

Read this, if you doubt, and decide.

JOHN (*reading the letter*).

"I hear from Bigorre you are there.
I am told
You are going to marry Miss Darcy.
Of old—"
What is this?

ALFRED.

Read it on to the end, and you'll know.

JOHN (*continues reading*).

"When we parted, your last words
recorded a vow—
What you will" . . .

Hang it! this smells all over, I
swear,
Of adventures and violets. Was it
your hair
You promised a lock of?

ALFRED.

Read on. You'll discern.

JOHN (*continues*).

"Those letters I ask you, my lord,
to return." . . .
tumph! . . . Letters! . . . the
matter is worse than I guessed;
I have my misgivings—

ALFRED.

Well, read out the rest,
And advise.

JOHN.

Eh? . . . Where was I? . . .
(*Continues.*)

"Miss Darcy, perchance,
Will forego one brief page from the
summer romance
Of her courtship." . . .

Egad! a romance, for my part,
I'd forego every page of, and not
break my heart!

ALFRED.

Continue!

JOHN (*reading*).

"And spare you one day from your
place
At her feet." . . .

Pray forgive me the passing grim-
ace.

I wish you had my place!

(Reads.)

"I trust you will feel
I desire nothing much. Your
friend" . . .

Bless me! "Lucille"?

The Comtesse de Nevers?

ALFRED.

Yes.

JOHN.

What will you do?

ALFRED.

You ask me just what I would rather
ask you.

JOHN.

You can't go.

ALFRED.

I must.

JOHN.

And Matilda?

ALFRED.

O, that
You must manage!

JOHN.

Must I? I decline it, though, flat.
In an hour the horses will be at the
door.

And Matilda is now in her habit.
Before

I have finished my breakfast, of
course I receive

A message for "*dear Cousin John!*"
. . . I must leave

At the jeweller's the bracelet which
you broke last night;

I must call for the music. "Dear
Alfred is right:

The black shawl looks best: *will* I
change it? Of course

I can just stop, in passing, to order
the horse.

Then Beau has the mumps, or St.
Hubert knows what;

Will I see the dog-doctor?" Hang
Beau! I will *not*.

ALFRED.

Tush, tush! this is serious.

JOHN.

It is.

ALFRED.

Very well,

You must think—

JOHN.

What excuse will you make, though?

ALFRED.

O, tell

Mrs. Darcy that . . . lend me your
wits, Jack! . . . the deuce!

Can you not stretch your genius to fit
a friend's use?

Excuses are clothes which, when
asked unawares.

Good Breeding to naked Necessity
spares.

You must have a whole wardrobe.
no doubt.

JOHN.

My dear fellow!

Matilda is jealous, you know, as
Othello.

ALFRED.

You joke.

JOHN.

I am serious. Why go to Luchon?

ALFRED.

Don't ask me. I have not a choice,
my dear John.

Besides, shall I own a strange sort of
desire,

Before I extinguish forever the fire
Of youth and romance, in whose

shadowy light

Hope whispered her first fairy tales,
to excite

The last spark, till it rise, and fade
far in that dawn

Of my days where the twilights of
life were first drawn

By the rosy, reluctant auroras of
Love

In short, from the dead Past the
gravestone to move:

Of the years long departed forever to
take

One last look, one final farewell, to
awake

The Heroic of youth from the Hades
of joy,

And once more be, though but for
an hour, Jack—a boy!

JOHN.

You had better go hang yourself.

ALFRED.

No! were it but

To make sure that the Past from the
Future is shut,

It were worth the step back. Do
you think we should live

With the living so lightly, and learn
to survive

That wild moment in which to the
grave and its gloom

We consigned our heart's best, if the
doors of the tomb

Were not locked with a key which
Fate keeps for our sake?

If the dead could return, or the
corpses awake?

JOHN.

Nonsense!

ALFRED.

Not wholly. The man who gets up
A filled guest from the banquet, and
drains off his cup,
Sees the last lamp extinguished with
cheerfulness, goes
Well contented to bed, and enjoys
its repose.

(But he who hath supped at the
tables of kings,
And yet starved in the sight of lux-
urious things ;
Who hath watched the wine flow,
by himself but half tasted,
Heard the music, and yet missed the
tune : who hath wasted
One part of life's grand possibili-
ties ;—friend,
That man will bear with him, be
sure, to the end,
A blighted experience, a rancor
within .
You may call it a virtue, I call it a
sin.

JOHN.

I see you remember the cynical story
Of that wicked old piece of Experi-
ence—a hoary
Lothario, whom dying, the priest by
his bed
(Knowing well the unprincipled life
he had led,
And observing, with no small amount
of surprise,
Resignation and calm in the old sin-
ner's eyes)
Asked if he had nothing that weighed
on his mind .
" Well, . . . no," says Lothario, " I
think not. I find
On reviewing my life, which in most
things was pleasant,
I never neglected, when once it was
present,
An occasion of pleasing myself. On
the whole,
I have naught to regret " ; . . . and
so, smiling, his soul
Took its flight from this world.

ALFRED.

Well, Regret or Remorse,
Which is best ?

JOHN.

Why, Regret.

ALFRED.

No ; Remorse, Jack, of course ;
For the one is related, to be sure, to
the other.
Regret is a spiteful old maid ; but
her brother,
Remorse, though a widower cer-
tainly, yet
Has been wed to young Pleasure.
Dear Jack, hang Regret !

JOHN.

Bref ! you mean, then, to go ?

ALFRED.

Bref ! I do.

JOHN.

One word . . . stay !
Are you really in love with Matilda ?

ALFRED.

Love, eh ?

What a question ! Of course.

JOHN.

Were you really in love
With Madame de Nevers ?

ALFRED.

What ; Lucile ? No, by Jov,
Never really.

JOHN.

She's pretty ?

ALFRED.

Decidedly so.
At least, so she was, some ten sum-
mers ago.
As soft and as fallow as Autumn,—
with hair
Neither black, nor yet brown, but
that tinge which the air

Takes at eve in September, when
 night lingers lone
 Through a vineyard, from beams
 of a slow-setting sun.
 Eyes—the wistful gazelle's ; the fine
 foot of a fairy ;
 And a hand fit a fay's wand to wave,
 —white and airy ;
 A voice soft and sweet as a tune that
 one knows.
 Something in her there was, set you
 thinking of those
 Strange backgrounds of Raphael . . .
 that hectic and deep
 Brief twilight in which southern
 suns fall asleep.

JOHN.

Coquette ?

ALFRED.

Not at all. 'Twas her own fault.
 Not she !
 I had loved her the better, had she
 less loved me.
 The heart of a man's like that delicate
 weed
 Which requires to be trampled on,
 boldly indeed,
 Ere it gives forth the fragrance you
 wish to extract.
 'Tis a simile, trust me, if not new,
 exact.

JOHN.

Women change so.

ALFRED.

Of course.

JOHN.

And, unless rumor errs,
 I believe that, last year, the Comtesse
 de Nevers *

* O Shakespeare ! how couldst thou ask
 " What's in a name ?"
 'Tis the devil's in it when a bard has to
 frame
 English rhymes for alliance with names
 that are French ;
 And in these rhymes of mine, well I know
 that I trench
 All too far on that license which critics re-
 fuse,

Was at Baden the rage,—held an
 absolute court
 Of devoted adorers, and really made
 sport
 Of her subjects.

ALFRED.

Indeed !

JOHN.

When she broke off with you
 Her engagement, her heart did not
 break with it ?

ALFRED.

Pooh !

Pray would you have had her dress
 always in black,
 And shut herself up in a convent,
 dear Jack ?
 Besides, 'twas my fault the engage-
 ment was broken.

JOHN.

Most likely. How was it ?

ALFRED.

The tale is soon spoken.
 She bored me. I showed it. She
 saw it. What next ?
 She reproached. I retorted. Of
 course she was vexed.
 I was vexed that she was so. She
 sulked. So did I.
 If I asked her to sing, she looked
 ready to cry.
 I was contrite, submissive. She
 softened. I hardened.
 At noon I was banished. At eve I
 was pardoned.

With just right, to accord to a well-brought-
 up Muse.
 Yet, though faulty the union, in many a
 line,
 'Twixt my British-born verse and my
 French heroine,
 Since, however auspiciously wedded they
 be,
 There is many a pair that yet cannot
 agree.
 Your forgiveness for this pair the author
 invites,
 Whom necessity, not inclination, unites.

She said I had no heart. I said she had no reason.
I swore she talked nonsense. She sobbed I talked treason.
In short, my dear fellow, 'twas time, as you see,
Things should come to a crisis, and finish. 'Twas she
'y whom to that crisis the matter was brought.
Sae released me. I lingered. I lingered, she thought,
With too sullen an aspect. This gave me, of course,
The occasion to fly in a rage, mount my horse,
And declare myself uncomprehended. And so
We parted. The rest of the story you know.

JOHN.

No, indeed.

ALFRED.

Well, we parted. Of course we could not
Continue to meet, as before, in one spot.
You conceive it was awkward? Even Don Ferdinando
Can do, you remember, no more than he can do.
I think that I acted exceedingly well,
Considering the time when this rupture befell,
For Paris was charming just then. it deranged
All my plans for the winter. I asked to be changed,—
Wrote for Naples, then vacant,—obtained it,—and so
Joined my new post at once; but scarce reached it, when lo!
My first news from Paris informs me Lucile
Is ill, and in danger. Conceive what I feel.
I fly back. I find her recovered, but yet

Looking pale. I am seized with a contrite regret;
I ask to renew the engagement.

JOHN.

And she?

ALFRED.

Reflects, but declines. We part, swearing to be
Friends ever, friends only. All that sort of thing!
We each keep our letters . . . a portrait . . . a ring . . .
With a pledge to return them whenever the one
Or the other shall call for them back.

JOHN.

Pray go on.

ALFRED.

My story is finished. Of course I enjoin
On Lucile all those thousand good maxims we coin
To supply the grim deficit found in our days,
When Love leaves them bankrupt. I preach. She obeys.
She goes out in the world; takes to dancing once more.—
A pleasure she rarely indulged in before.
I go back to my post, and collect (I must own
'Tis a taste I had never before, my dear John)
Antiques and small Elzevirs. Heigh-ho! now, Jack,
You know all.

JOHN (after a pause).

You are really resolved to go back?

ALFRED.

Eh, where?

JOHN.

To that worst of all places,—the past.
You remember Lot's wife?

ALFRED.

'Twas a promise when last
We parted. My honor is pledged to it.

JOHN.

Well,
What is it you wish me to do ?

ALFRED.

You must tell
Matilda, I meant to have called—to
leave word—
To explain—but the time was so
pressing—

JOHN.

My lord,
Your lordship's obedient ! I really
can't do. . .

ALFRED.

You wish then to break off my mar-
riage ?

JOHN.

No, no !
But indeed I can't see why yourself
you need take
These letters.

ALFRED.

Not see ? would you have me, then,
break
A promise my honor is pledged to ?

JOHN (*humming*).

*" Off, off,
And away ! said the stranger "*. . .

ALFRED.

O, good ! O, you scoff !

JOHN.

At what, my dear Alfred ?

ALFRED.

At all things !

JOHN.

Indeed ?

ALFRED.

Yes ; I see that your heart is as dry
as a reed :

That the dew of your youth is rubbed
off you : I see

You have no feeling left in you, even
for me !

At honor you jest ; you are cold as
a stone

To the warm voice of friendship.
Belief you have none :

You have lost faith in all things.
You carry a blight

About with you everywhere. Yes,
at the sight

Of such callous indifference, who
could be calm ?

I must leave you at once, Jack, or
else the last balm

That is left me in Gilead you'll turn
into gall.

Heartless, cold, unconcerned. .

JOHN.

Have you done ? Is that all ?
Well, then, listen to me ! I pre-
sume when you made

Up your mind to propose to Miss
Darcy, you weighed

All the drawbacks against the
equivalent gains,

Ere you finally settled the point.
What remains

But to stick to your choice ? You
want money : 'tis here.

A settled position : 'tis yours. A ca-
reer :

You secure it. A wife, young, and
pretty as rich,

Whom all men will envy you. Why
must you itch

To be running away, on the eve of
all this,

To a woman whom never for once
did you miss

All these years since you left her ?
Who knows what may hap ?

This letter—to me—is a palpable
trap.

The woman has changed since you
knew her. Perchance

She yet seeks to renew her youth's
broken romance.

When women begin to feel youth
and their beauty

Slip from them, they count it a sort
 of a duty
 To let nothing else slip away unse-
 cured
 Which these, while they lasted,
 might once have procured.
 Lucile's coquette to the end of her
 fingers,
 I will stake my last farthing. Per-
 haps the wish lingers
 To recall the once reckless, indiffer-
 ent lover
 To the feet he has left ; let intrigue
 now recover
 What truth could not keep. 'Twere
 a vengeance, no doubt—
 A triumph ;—but why must *you*
 bring it about ?
 You are risking the substance of all
 that you schemed
 To obtain ; and for what ? Some
 mad dream you have dreamed !

ALFRED.

But there's nothing to risk. You
 exaggerate, Jack.
 You mistake. In three days, at the
 most, I am back.

JOHN.

Ay, but how ? . . . discontented, un-
 settled, upset,
 Bearing with you a comfortless
 twinge of regret ;
 Preoccupied, sulky, and likely
 enough
 To make your betrothed break off
 all in a huff.
 Three days, do you say ? But in
 three days who knows
 What may happen ? I don't, nor
 do you, I suppose.

V.

Of all the good things in this good
 world around us,
 The one most abundantly furnished
 and found us,
 And which, for that reason, we
 least care about,
 And can best spare our friends, is
 good counsel, no doubt.

But advice, when 'tis sought from a
 friend (though civility
 May forbid to avow it), means mere
 liability
 In the bill we already have drawn
 on Remorse,
 Which we deem that a true friend is
 bound to indorse.
 A mere lecture on debt from that
 friend is a bore.
 Thus, the better his cousin's advice
 was, the more
 Alfred Vargrave with angry resent-
 ment opposed it.
 And, having the worst of the con-
 test, he closed it
 With so firm a resolve his bad ground
 to maintain,
 That, sadly perceiving resistance was
 vain,
 And argument fruitless, the amiable
 Jack
 Came to terms, and assisted his
 cousin to pack
 A slender valise (the one small con-
 descension
 Which his final remonstrance ob-
 tained), whose dimension
 Excluded large outfits ; and, cursing
 his stars, he
 Shook hands with his friend and re-
 turned to Miss Darcy.

VI.

Lord Alfred, when last to the win-
 dow he turned,
 Ere he locked up and quitted his
 chamber, discerned
 Matilda ride by, with her cheek
 beaming bright
 In what Virgil has called " Youth's
 purple light "
 (I like the expression, and can't find
 a better).
 He sighed as he looked at her. Did
 he regret her ?
 In her habit and hat, with her glad
 golden hair, [air,
 As airy and blithe as a blithe bird in
 And her arch rosy lips, and her
 eager blue eyes,

With their little impertinent look of
surprise,
And her round youthful figure, and
fair neck, below
The dark drooping feather, as
radiant as snow,—
I can only declare, that if *I* had the
chance
Of passing three days in the ex-
quisite glance
Of those eyes, or caressing the hand
that now petted
That fine English mare, I should
much have regretted
Whatever might lose me one little
half-hour
Of a pastime so pleasant, when once
in my power.
For, if one drop of milk from the
bright Milky-Way
Could turn into a woman, 'twould
look, I dare say,
Not more fresh than Matilda was
looking that day.

VII.

But, whatever the feeling that
prompted the sigh
With which Alfred Vargrave now
watched her ride by,
I can only affirm that, in watching
her ride,
As he turned from the window, he
certainly sighed.

CANTO II.

I.

*Letter from LORD ALFRED VAR-
GRAVE to the COMTESSE DE
NEVERS.*

“BIGORRE, Tuesday.

“Your note, Madam, reached me
to-day, at Bigorre,
And commands (need I add?) my
obedience. Before
The night I shall be at Serchon,—
where a line,
If sent to Duval's, the hotel where I
dine,

Will find me, awaiting your orders.

Receive

My respects,

“Yours sincerely,

“A. VARGRAVE.

“I leave

In an hour.”

II.

In an hour from the time he wrote
this,

Alfred Vargrave, in tracking a
mountain abyss,

Gave the rein to his steed and his
thoughts, and pursued,

In pursuing his course through the
blue solitude,

The reflections that journey gave
rise to.

And here

(Because, without some such pre-
caution, I fear

You might fail to distinguish them
each from the rest

Of the world they belong to; whose
captives are drest,

As our convicts, precisely the same
one and all,

While the coat cut for Peter is passed
on to Paul)

I resolve, one by one, when I pick
from the mass

The persons I want, as before you
they pass,

To label them broadly in plain black
and white

On the backs of them. Therefore
whilst yet he's in sight,

I first label my hero.

III.

The age is gone o'er

When a man may in all things be all,
We have more

Painters, poets, musicians, and art-
ists, no doubt,

Than the great Cinquecento gave
birth to; but out

Of a million of mere dilettanti, when,
when

Will a new LEONARDO arise on our
ken?

He is gone with the age which begat
 him. Our own
 Is too vast, and too complex, for one
 man alone
 To embody its purpose, and hold it
 shut close
 In the palm of his hand. There were
 giants in those
 Irreclaimable days ; but in these days
 of ours,
 In dividing the work, we distribute
 the powers.
 Yet a dwarf on a dead giant's shoul-
 ders sees more
 Than the 'live giant's eyesight avail-
 ed to explore ;
 And in life's lengthened alphabet
 what used to be
 To our sires X Y Z is to us A B C.
 A Vanini is roasted alive for his
 pains,
 But a Bacon comes after and picks
 up his brains.
 A Bruno is angrily seized by the
 throttle
 And hunted about by thy ghost,
 Aristotle,
 Till a More or Lavater step into his
 place :
 Then the world turns and makes an
 admiring grimace.
 Once the men were so great and so
 few, they appear,
 Through a distant Olympian atmos-
 phere,
 Like vast Caryatids upholding the
 age.
 Now the men are so many and small,
 disengage
 One man from the million to mark
 him. next moment
 The crowd sweeps him hurriedly out
 of your comment ;
 And since we seek vainly (to praise
 in our songs)
 'Mid our fellows the size which to
 heroes belongs,
 We take the whole age for a hero, in
 want
 Of a better : and still, in its favor,
 descant

On the strength and the beauty
 which, failing to find
 In any one man, we ascribe to man-
 kind.

IV.

Alfred Vargrave was one of those
 men who achieve
 So little, because of the much they
 conceive.
 With irresolute finger he knocked at
 each one
 Of the doorways of life, and abided
 in none.
 His course, by each star that would
 cross it, was set. [regret.
 And whatever he did he was sure to
 That target, discussed by the travel-
 lers of old,
 Which to one appeared argent, to
 one appeared gold,
 To him, ever lingering on Doubt's
 dizzy margent,
 Appeared in one moment both golden
 and argent.
 The man who seeks one thing in life,
 and but one, [done :
 May hope to achieve it before life be
 But he who seeks all things, wher-
 ever he goes,
 Only reaps from the hopes which
 around him he sows
 A harvest of barren regrets. And
 the worm
 That crawls on in the dust to the
 definite term
 Of its creeping existence, and sees
 nothing more
 Than the path it pursues till its creep-
 ing be o'er.
 In its limited vision, is happier far
 Than the Half-Sage, whose course,
 fixed by no friendly star,
 Is by each star distracted in turn, and
 who knows
 Each will still be as distant wherever
 he goes.

V.

Both brilliant and brittle, both boid
 and unstable,
 Indecisive yet keen, Alfred Var-
 grave seemed able

To dazzle, but not to illumine man-
kind.

A vigorous, various, versatile mind ;
A character wavering, fitful, uncertain.

As the shadow that shakes o'er a
luminous curtain,

Vague, flitting, bat on it forever im-
pressing

The shape of some substance at
which you stand guessing :

When you said, " All is worthless
and weak here," behold !

Into sight on a sudden there seemed
to unfold [the man :

Great outlines of strenuous truth in
When you said, " This is genius,"
the outlines grew wan.

And his life, though in all things so
gifted and skilled,

Was, at best, but a promise which
nothing fulfilled.

VI.

In the budding of youth, ere wild
winds can deflower

The shut leaves of man's life, round
the germ of his power

Yet folded, his life had been earnest.
Alas !

In that life one occasion, one mo-
ment, there was

When this earnestness might, with
the life-sap of youth,

Lusty fruitage have borne in his
manhood's full growth ;

But it found him too soon, when his
nature was still

The delicate toy of too pliant a will,
The boisterous wind of the world to
resist, [wisdom.

Or the frost of the world's wintry
He missed

That occasion, too rathe in its ad-
vent.

Since then.

He had made it a law, in his com-
merce with men,

That intensity in him, which only
left sore [ignore.

The heart it disturbed, to repel and

And thus, as some Prince by his
subjects deposed,

Whose strength he, by seeking to
crush it, disclosed.

In resigning the power he lacked
power to support,

Turns his back upon courts, with a
sneer at the court,

In his converse this man for self-
comfort appealed

To a cynic denial of all he concealed
In the instincts and feelings belied
by his words.

Words, however, are things ; and
the man who accords

To his language the license to ont-
rage his soul

Is controlled by the words he dis-
dains to control.

And, therefore, he seemed in the
deeds of each day.

The light code proclaimed on his
lips to obey ;

And, the slave of each whim, fol-
lowed wilfully aught

That peréance fooled the fancy, or
flattered the thought.

Yet, indeed, deep within him, the
spirits of truth,

Vast, vague aspirations, the powers
of his youth,

Lived and breathed, and made moan
—stirred themselves—strove
to start

Into deeds—though deposed, in that
Hades, his heart.

Like those antique Theogonies ru-
ined and hurled

Under clefts of the hills, which,
convulsing the world.

Heaved, in earthquake, their heads
the rent caverns above,

To trouble at times in the light court
of Jove [fined awe

All its frivolous gods, with an unde-
Of wronged rebel powers that owned
not their law.

For his sake, I am fain to believe
that, if born

To some lowlier rank (from the
world's languid scorn

Secured by the world's stern resist-
 ance), where strife,
 Strife and toil, and not pleasure,
 gave purpose to life,
 He possibly might have contrived to
 attain
 Not eminence only, but worth. So,
 again,
 Had he been of his own house the
 first-born, each gift
 Of a mind many-gifted had gone to
 uplift
 A great name by a name's greatest
 uses.

But there
 He stood isolated, opposed, as it
 were,
 To life's great realities ; part of no
 plan :
 And if ever a nobler and happier
 man
 He might hope to become, that alone
 could be when
 With all that is real in life and in
 men
 What was real in him should have
 been reconciled :
 When each influence now from ex-
 perience exiled
 Should have seized on his being,
 combined with his nature,
 And formed, as by fusion, a new hu-
 man creature :
 As when those airy elements view-
 less to sight
 (The amalgam of which, if our sci-
 ence be right,
 The germ of this populous planet
 doth fold)
 Unite in the glass of the chemist, be-
 hold !
 Where a void seemed before there a
 substance appears,
 From the fusion of forces whence
 issued the spheres !

VII.

But the permanent cause why his
 life failed and missed
 The full value of life was,—where
 man should resist

The world, which man's genius is
 called to command,
 He gave way, less from lack of the
 power to withstand,
 Than from lack of the resolute will
 to retain
 Those strongholds of life which the
 world strives to gain.
 Let this character go in the old-
 fashioned way,
 With the moral thereof tightly tacked
 to it. Say—
 " Let any man once show the world
 that he feels
 Afraid of its bark, and 'twill fly at
 his heels :
 Let him fearlessly face it, 'twill leave
 him alone :
 But 'twill fawn at his feet if he
 flings it a bone."

VIII.

The moon of September, now half
 at the full,
 Was unfolding from darkness and
 dreamland the hull
 Of the quiet blue air, where the
 many-faced hills
 Watched, well-pleased, their fair
 slaves, the light, foam-footed
 rills,
 Dance and sing down the steep mar-
 ble stairs of their courts,
 And gracefully fashion a thousand
 sweet sports.
 Lord Alfred (by this on his journey-
 ing far)
 Was pensively puffing his Lopez
 cigar.
 And brokenly humming an old oper-
 a strain,
 And thinking, perchance, of those
 castles in Spain
 Which that long rocky barrier hid
 from his sight ;
 When suddenly, out of the neighbor-
 ing night,
 A horseman emerged from a fold of
 the hill.
 And so startled his steed, that was
 winding at will

Up the thin dizzy strip of a pathway
 which led
 O'er the mountain—the reins on its
 neck, and its head
 Hanging lazily forward—that, but for
 a hand
 Light and ready, yet firm, in familiar
 command,
 Both rider and horse might have
 been in a trice
 Hurl'd horribly over the grim precipice.

IX.

As soon as the moment's alarm had
 subsided,
 And the oath, with which nothing
 can find unprovided
 A thoroughbred Englishman, safely
 exploded,
 Lord Alfred imbecil (as Apollo his
 bow did
 Now and then) his erectness; and
 looking, not ruder
 Than such inroad would warrant,
 surveyed the intruder,
 Whose arrival so nearly cut short in
 his glory
 My hero, and finished abruptly this
 story.

X.

The stranger, a man of his own age
 or less,
 Well mounted, and simple though
 rich in his dress,
 Wore his beard and mustache in the
 fashion of France.
 His face, which was pale, gathered
 force from the glance
 Of a pair of dark, vivid, and eloquent
 eyes.
 With a gest of apology, touched with
 surprise,
 He lifted his hat, bowed and courteously
 made
 Some excuse in such well-cadenced
 French as betrayed,
 At the first word he spoke, the Parisian.

XI.

I swear
 I have wandered about in the world
 everywhere;
 From many strange mouths have
 heard many strange tongues;
 Strained with many strange idioms
 my lips and my lungs;
 Walked in many a far land, regretting
 my own;
 In many a language groaned many
 a groan;
 And have often had reason to curse
 those wild fellows
 Who built the high house at which
 Heaven turned jealous,
 Making human audacity stumble and
 stammer
 When seized by the throat in the
 hard gripe of Grammar.
 But the language of languages dearest
 to me
 Is that in which once, *O ma toute
 chérie*,
 When, together, we bent o'er your
 nosegay for hours,
 You explain'd what was silently
 said by the flowers.
 And, selecting the sweetest of all,
 sent a flame
 Through my heart, as, in laughing,
 you murmured, *Je t'aime*.

XII.

The Italians have voices like peacocks;
 the Spanish
 Smell, I fancy, of garlic; the Swedish
 and Danish
 Have something too Runic, too
 rough and unshod, in
 Their accent for mouths not descended
 from Odhu;
 German gives me a cold in the head,
 sets me wheezing
 And coughing; and Russian is nothing
 but sneezing;
 But by Belus and Babel! I never
 have heard,
 And I never shall hear (I well know
 it), one word

Of that delicate idiom of Paris with-
out
Feeling morally sure, beyond ques-
tion or doubt,
By the wild way in which my heart
inwardly fluttered
That my heart's native tongue to my
heart had been uttered.
And when'er I hear French spoken
as I approve,
I feel myself quietly falling in love.

XIII.

Lord Alfred, on hearing the stran-
ger, appeased
By a something, an accent, a ca-
dence, which pleased
His ear with that pledge of good
breeding which tells
At once of the world in whose fel-
lowship dwells
The speaker that owns it, was glad
to remark
In the horseman a man one might
meet after dark
Without fear.

And thus, not disagreeably im-
pressed,
As it seemed, with each other, the
two men abreast
Rode on slowly a moment.

XIV.

STRANGER.

I see, Sir, you are
A smoker. Allow me!

ALFRED.

Pray take a cigar.

STRANGER.

Many thanks! . . . Such cigars are a
luxury here.
Do you go to Luchon?

ALFRED.

Yes; and you?

STRANGER.

Yes. I fear,
Since our road is the same, that our
journey must be

Somewhat closer than is our ac-
quaintance. You see
How narrow the path is. I'm tempt-
ed to ask
Your permission to finish (no dif-
ficult task!)
The cigar you have given me (really
a prize!)
In your company.

ALFRED.

Charmed, Sir, to find your road lies
In the way of my own inclinations!

Indeed

The dream of your nation I find in
this weed.

In the distant savannas a talisman
grows

That makes all men brothers that
use it . . . who knows?

That blaze which erewhile from the
Boulevard outbroke.

It has ended where wisdom begins,
Sir,—in smoke.

Messieurs Lopez (whatever your
publicists write)

Have done more in their way human
kind to unite,

Perchance, than ten Proudhons.

STRANGER.

Yes. Ah, what a scene!

ALFRED.

Humph! Nature is here too preten-
tious. Her mien

Is too haughty. One likes to be
coaxed, not compelled,

To the notice such beauty resents if
withheld.

She seems to be saying too plainly,
"Admire me!"

And I answer, "Yes, madam, I do;
but you tire me."

STRANGER.

That sunset, just now though . . .

ALFRED.

A very old trick!
One would think that the sun by this
time must be sick

Of blushing at what, by this time,
he must know
Too well to be shocked by—this
world

STRANGER.

Ah, 'tis so
With us all. 'Tis the sinner that
best knew the world
At twenty, whose lip is, at sixty,
most curled
With disdain of its follies. You stay
at Luchon?

ALFRED.

A day or two only.

STRANGER.

The season is done.

ALFRED.

Already?

STRANGER.

'Twas shorter this year than the
last.
Folly soon wears her shoes out. She
dances so fast,
We are all of us tired.

ALFRED.

You know the place well?

STRANGER.

I have been there two seasons.

ALFRED.

Pray who is the Belle
Of the Baths at this moment?

STRANGER.

The same who has been
The belle of all places in which she
is seen.
The belle of all Paris last winter;
last spring
The belle of all Baden.

ALFRED.

An uncommon thing!

STRANGER.

Sir, an uncommon beauty! . . . I
rather should say.
An uncommon character. Truly,
each day

One meets women whose beauty is
equal to hers,
But none with the charm of Lucile
de Nevers.

ALFRED.

Madame de Nevers?

STRANGER.

Do you know her?

ALFRED.

I know,
Or, rather, I knew her—a long time
ago.

I almost forget . . .

STRANGER.

* What a wit! what a grace
In her language! her movements!
what play in her face!
And yet what a sadness she seems to
conceal!

ALFRED.

You speak like a lover.

STRANGER.

I speak as I feel,
But not like a lover. What interests
me so
In Lucile, at the same time forbids
me, I know,
To give to that interest, whate'er the
sensation,
The name we men give to an hour's
admiration,
A night's passing passion, an ac-
tress's eyes,
A dancing girl's ankles, a fine lady's
sighs.

ALFRED.

Yes, I quite comprehend. But this
sadness—this shade
Which you speak of? . . . it almost
would make me afraid
Your gay countrymen, Sir, less
adroit must have grown,
Since when, as a stripling, at Paris,
I own

I found in them terrible rivals,—if yet
 They have all lacked the skill to console this regret
 (If regret be the word I should use), or fulfil
 This desire (if desire be the word), which seems still
 To endure unappeased. For I take it for granted,
 From all that you say, that the will was not wanted.

XV.

The stranger replied, not without irritation :
 “ I have heard that an Englishman—
 —one of your nation,
 I presume—and if so, I must beg you, indeed,
 To excuse the contempt which I . . . ”

ALFRED.

Pray, Sir, proceed
 With your tale. My compatriot, what was his crime ?

STRANGER.

O, nothing ! His folly was not so sublime
 As to merit that term. If I blamed him just now,
 It was not for the sin, but the silliness.

ALFRED.

How ?

STRANGER.

I own I hate Botany. Still, . . . I admit.
 Although I myself have no passion for it,
 And do not understand, yet I cannot despise
 The cold man of science, who walks with his eyes
 All alert through a garden of flowers, and strips
 The lilies' gold tongues, and the roses' red lips,
 With a ruthless dissection; since he,
 I suppose,

Has some purpose beyond the mere mischief he does.
 But the stupid and mischievous boy, that uproots
 The exotics, and tramples the tender young shoots,
 For a boy's brutal pastime, and only because
 He knows no distinction 'twixt heartsease and haws.—
 One would wish, for the sake of each nursling so nipped,
 To catch the young rascal and have him well whipped !

ALFRED.

Some compatriot of mine, do I then understand.
 With a cold Northern heart, and a rude English hand,
 Has injured your Rosebud of France ?

STRANGER.

Sir, I know
 But little, or nothing. Yet some faces show
 The last act of tragedy in their regard:
 Though the first scenes be wanting, it yet is not hard
 To divine, more or less, what the plot may have been.
 And what sort of actors have passed o'er the scene,
 And whenever I gaze on the face of Lucile,
 With its pensive and passionless languor, I feel
 That some feeling hath burnt there . . . burnt out, and burnt up
 Health and hope. So you feel when you gaze down the cup
 Of extinguished volcanoes: you judge of the fire
 Once there, by the ravage you see;—the desire,
 By the apathy left in its wake, and that sense
 Of a moral, immovable, mute impotence.

ALFRED.

Humph! . . . I see you have finished,
at last, your cigar.
Can I offer another?

STRANGER.

No, thank you. We are
Not two miles from Luchon.

ALFRED.

You know the road well?

STRANGER.

I have often been over it.

XVI.

Here a pause fell
On their converse. Still musingly
on side by side,
In the moonlight, the two men con-
tinued to ride
Down the dim mountain pathway.
But each, for the rest
Of their journey, although they still
rode on abreast,
Continued to follow in silence the
train [ed his brain;
Of the different feelings that haunt-
And each, as though roused from a
deep reverie,
Almost shouted, descending the
mountain, to see
Burst at once on the moonlight the
silvery Baths,
The long lime-tree alley, the dark
gleaming paths,
With the lamps twinkling through
them—the quaint wooden
roofs—
The little white houses.
The clatter of hoofs,
And the music of wandering bands,
up the walls
Of the steep hanging hill, at remote
intervals
Reached them, crossed by the sound
of the clacking of whips.
And here and there, faintly, through
serpentine slips
Of verdant rose-gardens, deep-shel-
tered with screens

Of airy acacias and dark evergreens,
They could mark the white dresses,
and catch the light songs,
Of the lovely Parisians that wan-
dered in throngs,
Led by Laughter and Love through
the cold eventide
Down the dream-haunted valley, or
up the hillside.

XVII.

At length, at the door of the inn
PHERISON,
(Pray go there, if ever you go to Ser-
chon!)

The two horsemen, well pleased to
have reached it, alighted
And exchanged their last greetings
The Frenchman invited
Lord Alfred to dinner. Lord Alfred
declined.
He had letters to write, and felt
tired. So he dined
In his own rooms that night.
With an unquiet eye
He watched his companion depart;
nor knew why,
Beyond all accountable reason or
measure,
He felt in his breast such a sovran
displeasure.
“The fellow’s good-looking,” he
murmured at last,
“And yet not a coxcomb.” Some
ghost of the past
Vexed him still.
“If he love her,” he thought,
“let him win her.”
Then he turned to the future—and
ordered his dinner.

XVIII.

O hour of all hours, the most blessed
upon earth,
Blesséd hour of our dinners!
The land of his birth;
The face of his first love; the bills
that he owes;
The twaddle of friends and the
venom of foes;
The sermon he heard when to church
he last went;

The money he borrowed, the money
 he spent,—
 All of these things a man, I believe,
 may forget,
 And not be the worse for forgetting,
 but yet
 Never, never, O never! earth's
 luckiest sinner
 Hath unpunished forgotten the hour
 of his dinner!
 Indigestion, that conscience of every
 bad stomach,
 Shall relentlessly gnaw and pursue
 him with some ache
 Or some pain; and trouble, remorse-
 less, his best ease,
 As the Furies once troubled the sleep
 of Orestes.

XIX.

We may live without poetry, music,
 and art ;
 We may live without conscience, and
 live without heart ;
 We may live without friends ; we
 may live without books ;
 But civilized man cannot live with-
 out cooks.
 He may live without books,—what
 is knowledge but grieving ?
 He may live without hope,—what is
 hope but deceiving ?
 He may live without love,—what is
 passion but pining ?
 But where is the man that can live
 without dining ?

XX.

Lord Alfred found, waiting his com-
 ing, a note
 From Lucie.
 " Your last letter has reached me,"
 she wrote. [the ball,
 " This evening, alas ! I must go to
 And shall not be at home till too
 late for your call ;
 But to-morrow, at any rate, *sans*
faute, at One
 You will find me at home, and will
 find me alone.
 Meanwhile, let me thank you sincere-
 ly, milord,

For the honor with which you ad-
 here to your word.
 Yes, I thank you, Lord Alfred ! To-
 morrow, then.

" L."

XXI.

I find myself terribly puzzled to tell
 The feeling with which Alfred Van-
 grave flung down
 This note, as he poured out his wine.
 I must own
 That I think he himself could have
 hardly explained
 Those feelings exactly.
 " Yes, yes," as he drained
 The glass down, he muttered,
 " Jack's right, after all.
 The coquette !"

" Does milord mean to go to the
 ball ?"
 Asked the waiter, who lingered.

" Perhaps. I don't know.
 You may keep me a ticket, in case I
 should go."

XXII.

O, better, no doubt, is a dinner of
 herbs,
 When seasoned by love, which no
 rancor disturbs,
 And sweetened by all that is sweet-
 est in life,
 Than turbot, bisque, ortolans, eaten
 in strife !
 But if, out of humor, and hungry,
 alone,
 A man should sit down to a dinner,
 each one
 Of the dishes of which the cook
 chooses to spoil
 With a horrible mixture of garlic and
 oil.
 The chances are ten against one, I
 must own,
 He gets up as ill-tempered as when
 he sat down.
 And if any reader this fact to dis-
 pute is
 Disposed, I say . . . "*Allium edat*
civitis
Nocentius !"

Over the fruit and the wine
 Undisturbed the wasp settled. The
 evening was fine.
 Lord Alfred his chair by the window
 had set, cigarette.
 And languidly lighted his small
 The window was open. The warm
 air without
 Waved the flame of the candles.
 The moths were about.
 In the gloom he sat gloomy.

XXIII.

Gay sounds from below
 Floated up like faint echoes of joys
 long ago,
 And night deepened apace; through
 the dark avenues
 The lamps twinkled bright; and by
 threes, and by twos,
 The idlers of Luchon were strolling
 at will,
 As Lord Alfred could see from the
 cool window-sill,
 Where his gaze, as he languidly
 turned it, fell o'er
 His late travelling companion, now
 passing before
 The inn, at the window of which he
 still sat,
 In full toilet,—boots varnished, and
 snowy cravat,
 Gayly smoothing and buttoning a
 yellow kid glove,
 As he turned down the avenue.

Watching above,
 From his window, the stranger, who
 stopped as he walked
 To mix with those groups, and now
 nodded, now talked,
 To the young Paris dandies, Lord
 Alfred discerned,
 By the way hats were lifted, and
 glances were turned,
 That this unknown acquaintance,
 now bound for the ball,
 Was a person of rank or of fashion ;
 for all
 Whom he bowed to in passing, or
 stopped with and chattered,
 Walked on with a look which im-
 plied . . . "I feel flattered !"

XXIV.

His form was soon lost in the dis-
 tance and gloom.

XXV.

Lord Alfred still sat by himself in
 his room.
 He had finished, one after the oth' ,
 a dozen
 Or more cigarettes. He had thought
 of his cousin :
 He had thought of Matilda, and
 thought of Lucile :
 He had thought about many things :
 thought a great deal
 Of himself : of his past life, his fu-
 ture, his present :
 He had thought' of the moon, neither
 full moon nor crescent :
 Of the gay world, so sad ! life, so
 sweet and so sour !
 He had thought, too, of glory, and
 fortune, and power :
 Thought of love, and the country,
 and sympathy, and
 A poet's asylum in some distant
 land :
 Thought of man in the abstract, and
 woman, no doubt,
 In particular ; also he had thought
 much about
 His digestion, his debts, and his
 dinner ; and last,
 He thought that the night would be
 stupidly passed,
 If he thought any more of such mat-
 ters at all :
 So he rose, and resolved to set out
 for the ball.

XXVI.

I believe, ere he finished his tardy
 toilet,
 That Lord Alfred had spoiled, and
 flung by in a pet,
 Half a dozen white neckcloths, and
 looked for the nonce
 Twenty times in the glass, if he
 looked in it once.

I believe that he split up, in drawing
 them on,
 Three pair of pale lavender gloves,
 one by one.
 And this is the reason, no doubt,
 that at last,
 When he reached the Casino, al-
 though he walked fast,
 He heard, as he hurriedly entered
 the door,
 'The church-clock strike Twelve.

XXVII.

The last waltz was just o'er.
 The chaperons and dancers were all
 in a flutter.
 A crowd blocked the door: and a
 buzz and a mutter
 Went about in the room as a young
 man, whose face
 Lord Alfred had seen ere he entered
 that place,
 But a few hours ago, through the
 perfumed and warm
 Flowery porch, with a lady that
 leaned on his arm
 Like a queen in a fable of old fairy
 days,
 Left the ballroom.

XXVIII.

The hubbub of comment and praise
 Reached Lord Alfred as just then he
 entered.

"*Ma foi!*"

Said a Frenchman beside him,
 "That lucky Luvois
 Has obtained all the gifts of the
 gods . . . rank and wealth,
 And good looks, and then such inex-
 haustible health!
 He that hath shall have more; and
 this truth, I surmise,
 Is the cause why, to-night, by the
 beautiful eyes
 Of *la charmante Lucile* more distin-
 guished than all,
 He so gayly goes off with the belle of
 the ball."

"Is it true," asked a lady, aggres-
 sively fat,
 Who, fierce as a female Leviathan,
 sat
 By another that looked like a needle,
 all steel
 And tenuity.—"Luvois will marry
 Lucile?"
 The needle seemed jerked by a viru-
 lent twitch,
 As though it were bent upon driving
 a stitch
 Through somebody's character.

"Madam," replied,
 Interposing, a young man who sat by
 their side,
 And was languidly fanning his face
 with his hat,
 "I am ready to bet my new Tilbury
 that,
 If Luvois has proposed, the Comtesse
 has refused."

The fat and thin ladies were highly
 amused.
 "Refused! . . . what! a young
 Duke, not thirty, my dear,
 With at least half a million (what is
 it?) a year!"

"That may be," said the third; "yet
 I know some time since
 Castelmar was refused, though as
 rich, and a Prince.

But Luvois, who was never before in
 his life
 In love with a woman who was not
 a wife,
 Is now certainly serious."

XXIX.

The music once more
 Recommenced.

XXX.

Said Lord Alfred, "This ball is a
 bore!"
 And returned to the inn, somewhat
 worse than before.

XXXI.

There, whilst musing he leaned the
 dark valley above,
 Through the warm land were wan-
 dering the spirits of love.



"THE LAST WALTZ WAS JUST O'ER."

A soft breeze in the white window
 drapery stirred ;
 In the blossomed acacia the lone
 cricket chirred ;
 The scent of the roses fell faint o'er
 the night,
 And the moon on the mountain was
 dreaming in light.
 Repose, and yet rapture! that pensive
 wild nature
 Impregnate with passion in each
 breathing feature!
 A stone's-throw from thence, through
 the large lime-trees peeped.
 In a garden of roses, a white chalet,
 steeped
 In the moonbeams. The windows
 oped down to the lawn ;
 The casements were open; the cur-
 tains were drawn ;
 Lights streamed from the inside; and
 with them the sound
 Of music and song. In the garden,
 around [there set,
 A table with fruits, wine, tea, ices,
 Half a dozen young men and young
 women were met.
 Light, laughter, and voices, and
 music, all streamed
 Through the quiet-leaved limes. At
 the window there seemed
 For one moment the outline, familiar
 and fair,
 Of a white dress, a white neck, and
 soft dusky hair,
 Which Lord Alfred remembered . . .
 a moment or so
 It hovered, then passed into shadow;
 and slow
 The soft notes, from a tender piano
 upflung,
 Floated forth, and a voice unforget-
 ten thus sung:

“ Hear a song that was born in the
 land of my birth!
 The anchors are lifted, the fair
 ship is free,
 And the shout of the mariners
 floats in its mirth
 'Twixt the light in the sky and
 the light on the sea.

“ And this ship is a world. She is
 freighted with souls,
 She is freighted with merchan-
 dise: proudly she sails
 With the Labor that stores, and
 the Will that controls
 The gold in the ingots, the silk
 in the bales.

“ From the gardens of Pleasure,
 where reddens the rose,
 And the scent of the cedar is
 faint on the air,
 Past the harbors of Traffic, sub-
 limely she goes.
 Man's hopes o'er the world of
 the waters to bear!

“ Where the cheer from the harbors
 of Traffic is heard,
 Where the gardens of Pleasure
 fade fast on the sight,
 O'er the rose, o'er the cedar, there
 passes a bird;
 'Tis the Paradise Bird, never
 known to alight.

“ And that bird, bright and bold as a
 Poet's desire,
 Roams her own native heavens,
 the realms of her birth.
 There she soars like a seraph, she
 shines like a fire,
 And her plumage hath never
 been sullied by earth.

“ And the mariners greet her; there's
 song on each lip,
 For that bird of good omen, and
 joy in each eye.
 And the ship and the bird, and the
 bird and the ship,
 Together go forth over ocean and
 sky.

“ Fast, fast fades the land! far the
 rose-gardens flee,
 And far fleet the harbors. In
 regions unknown
 The ship is alone on a desert of
 sea,
 And the bird in a desert of sky
 is alone.

“ In those regions unknown, o’er
 that desert of air,
 Down that desert of waters—tre-
 mendous in wrath—
 The storm-wind Euroclydon leaps
 from his lair,
 And cleaves, through the waves
 of the ocean, his path.

And the bird in the cloud, and the
 ship on the wave,
 Overtaken, are beaten about by
 wild gales:
 And the mariners all rush their
 cargo to save,
 Of the gold in the ingots, the
 silk in the bales.

“ Lo! a wonder, which never before
 hath been heard,
 For it never before hath been
 given to sight;
 On the ship hath descended the
 Paradise Bird,
 The Paradise-Bird, never known
 to alight!

“ The bird which the mariners bless-
 ed, when each lip
 Had a song for the omen that
 gladdened each eye:
 The bright bird for shelter hath
 flown to the ship
 From the wrath on the sea and
 the wrath in the sky.

“ But the mariners heed not the bird
 any more.
 They are felling the masts,—they
 are cutting the sails;
 Some are working, some weeping,
 and some wrangling o’er
 Their gold in the ingots, their
 silk in the bales.

“ Souls of men are on board; wealth
 of man in the hold;
 And the storm-wind Euroclydon
 sweeps to his prey;
 And who heeds the bird? ‘Save
 the silk and the gold!’
 And the bird from her shelter
 the gust sweeps away!

“ Poor Paradise Bird! on her lone
 flight once more
 Back again in the wake of the
 wind she is driven.—
 To be ’whelmed in the storm, or
 above it to soar,
 And, if rescued from ocean, to
 vanish in heaven!

“ And the ship rides the waters, and
 weathers the gales:
 From the haven she hears the
 rejoicing is heard.
 All hands are at work on the ingots,
 the bales,
 Save a child, sitting lonely, who
 misses—the Bird !”

CANTO III.

I.

WITH stout iron shoes be my Pega-
 sus shod!
 For my road is a rough one: flint,
 stubble, and clod,
 Blue clay, and black quagmire,
 brambles no few,
 And I gallop up-hill, now.
 There’s terror that’s true
 In that tale of a youth who, one night
 at a revel,
 Amidst music and mirth lured and
 wiled by some devil.
 Followed ever one mask through the
 mad masquerade,
 Till, pursued to some chamber de-
 serted (’tis said),
 He unmasked, with a kiss, the
 strange lady, and stood
 Face to face with a Thing not of
 flesh nor of blood.
 In this Masque of the Passions,
 called Life, there’s no human
 Emotion, though masked, or in man
 or in woman,
 But, when faced and unmasked, it
 will leave us at last
 Struck by some supernatural aspect
 aghast.

For truth is appalling and eldritch,
 as seen
 By this world's artificial lamplights,
 and we screen
 From our sight the strange vision
 that troubles our life.
 'Tis! why is Genius forever at
 strife
 With the world, which, despite the
 world's self, it ennobles?
 Why is it that Genius perplexes and
 troubles
 And offends the effete life it comes
 to renew?
 'Tis the terror of truth! 'tis that
 Genius is true!

II.

Lucile de Nevers (if her riddle I
 read)
 Was a woman of genius: whose gen-
 ius, indeed,
 With her life was at war. Once,
 but once, in that life
 The chance had been hers to escape
 from this strife
 In herself; finding peace in the life
 of another
 From the passionate wants she, in
 hers, failed to smother.
 But the chance fell too soon, when
 the crude restless power
 Which had been to her nature so
 fatal a dower,
 Only wearied the man it yet haunted
 and thrall'd;
 And that moment, once lost, had
 been never recalled.
 Yet it left her heart sore: and, to
 shelter her heart
 From approach, she then sought, in
 that delicate art
 of concealment, those thousand
 adroit strategies
 Of feminine wit, which repel while
 they please,
 A weapon, at once, and a shield, to
 conceal
 And defend all that women can ear-
 nestly feel.
 Thus, striving her instincts to hide
 and repress,

She felt frightened, at times, by her
 very success:
 She pined for the hill-tops, the
 clouds, and the stars:
 Golden wires may annoy us as much
 as steel bars
 If they keep us behind prison-win-
 dows: impassioned
 Her heart rose and burst the light
 cage she had fashioned
 Out of glittering trifles around it.
 Unknown
 To herself, all her instincts, without
 hesitation, [tion.
 Embraced the idea of self-immola-
 The strong spirit in her, had her life
 been but blended
 With some man's whose heart had
 her own comprehended,
 All its wealth at his feet would have
 lavishly thrown.
 For him she had struggled and
 striven alone;
 For him had aspired; in him had
 transfused
 All the gladness and grace of her
 nature: and used
 For him only the spells of its delicate
 power:
 Like the ministering fairy that
 brings from her bower
 To some mage all the treasures,
 whose use the fond elf,
 More enriched by her love, disre-
 gards for herself.
 But, standing apart, as she ever had
 done,
 And her genius, which needed a
 vent, finding none
 In the broad fields of action thrown
 wide to man's power,
 She unconsciously made it her bul-
 wark and tower,
 And built in it her refuge, whence
 lightly she hurled
 Her contempt at the fashions and
 forms of the world.
 And the permanent cause why she
 now missed and failed
 That firm hold upon life she so
 keenly assailed,

Was, in all those diurnal occasions
that place

Say—the world and the woman op-
posed face to face,

Where the woman must yield, she,
refusing to stir,

Offended the world, which in turn
wounded her.

As before, in the old-fashioned man-
ner, I fit

To this character, also, its moral : to
wit,

Say—the world is a nettle; disturb
it, it stings :

Grasp it firmly, it stings not. On one
of two things,

If you would not be stung, it be-
hooves you to settle :

Avoid it, or crush it. She crushed
not the nettle ;

For she could not ; nor would she
avoid it : she tried

With the weak hand of woman to
thrust it aside,

And it stung her. A woman is too
slight a thing

To trample the world without feel-
ing its sting.

III.

One lodges but simply at Luchon ;
yet, thanks

To the season that changes forever
the banks

Of the blossoming mountains, and
shifts the light cloud

O'er the valley, and hushes or rouses
the loud

Wind that walls in the pines, or
creeps murmuring down

The dark evergreen slopes to the
slumbering town.

And the torrent that falls, faintly
heard from afar.

And the bluebells that purple the
dapple-gray scaur.

One sees with each month of the
many-faced year

A thousand sweet changes of beauty
appear.

The chalet where dwelt the Com-
tesse de Nevers

Rested half up the base of a moun-
tain of firs,

In a garden of roses, revealed to the
road,

Yet withdrawn from its noise : 'twas
a peaceful abode.

And the walls, and the roofs, with
their gables like hoods

Which the monks wear, were buil
of sweet resinous woods.

The sunlight of noon, as Lord Alfred
ascended

The steep garden paths, every odor
had blended

Of the ardent carnations, and faint
heliotropes,

With the balms floated down from
the dark wooded slopes :

A light breeze at the windows was
playing about,

And the white curtains floated, now
in and now out.

The house was all hushed when he
rang at the door,

Which was opened to him in a mo-
ment, or more,

By an old nodding negress, whose
sable head shined

In the sun like a cocoa-nut polished
in Ind,

'Neath the snowy *foulard* which
about it was wound.

IV.

Lord Alfred sprang forward at once,
with a bound.

He remembered the nurse of Lucile.
The old dame,

Whose teeth and whose eyes used to
beam when he came,

With a boy's eager step, in the blith
days of yore,

To pass, unannounced, her young
mistress's door.

The old woman had fondled Lucile
on her knee

When she left, as an infant, far over
the sea,

In India, the tomb of a mother, un-
known.

To pine, a pale floweret, in great
Paris town.

She had soothed the child's sobs on
 her breast, when she read
 The letter that told her her father
 was dead.
 An astute, shrewd adventurer, who,
 like Ulysses,
 Had studied men, cities, laws, wars,
 the abysses
 Of statecraft, with varying fortunes,
 was he.
 He had wandered the world through,
 by land and by sea,
 And knew it in most of its phases.
 Strong will,
 Subtle tact, and soft manners, had
 given him skill
 To conciliate Fortune, and courage
 to brave
 Her displeasure. Thrice shipwreck-
 ed, and cast by the wave
 On his own quick resources, they
 rarely had failed
 His command: often baffled, he
 ever prevailed.
 In his combat with fate: to-day
 flattered and fed
 By monarchs, to-morrow in search
 of mere bread.
 The offspring of times trouble-
 haunted, he came
 Of a family ruined, yet noble in
 name.
 He lost sight of his fortune at twen-
 ty in France;
 And half statesman, half soldier,
 and wholly Free-lance,
 Had wandered in search of it, over
 the world,
 Into India.
 But scarce had the nomad un-
 furled
 His wandering tent at Mysore, in
 the smile
 Of a Rajah (whose court he con-
 trolled for awhile,
 And whose council he prompted and
 governed by stealth);
 Scarce, indeed, had he wedded an
 Indian of wealth,
 Who died giving birth to this daugh-
 ter, before

He was borne to the tomb of his wife
 at Mysore.
 His fortune, which fell to his or-
 phan, perchance,
 Had secured her a home with his
 sister in France,
 A lone woman, the last of the race
 left. Lucile
 Neither felt, nor affected, the wish
 to conceal
 The half-Eastern blood, which ap-
 peared to bequeath
 (Revealed now and then, though but
 rarely, beneath
 That outward repose that concealed
 it in her)
 A something half wild to her strange
 character.
 The nurse with the orphan, awhile
 broken-hearted,
 At the door of a convent in Paris
 had parted.
 But later, once more, with her mis-
 tress she tarried,
 When the girl, by that grim maiden
 aunt, had been married
 To a dreary old Count, who had sul-
 lenly died,
 With no claim on her tears,—she
 had wept as a bride.
 Said Lord Alfred, "Your mistress
 expects me."

The crone
 Opened the drawing-room door, and
 there left him alone.

v.

O'er the soft atmosphere of this
 temple of grace
 Rested silence and perfume. No
 sound reached the place.
 In the white curtains wavered the
 delicate shade
 Of the heaving acacias, through
 which the breeze played.
 O'er the smooth wooden floor, pol-
 ished dark as a glass,
 Fragrant white India matting allow-
 ed you to pass.

In light olive baskets, by window
and door,
Some hung from the ceiling, some
crowding the floor,
Rich wild-flowers plucked by Lucile
from the hill,
Seemed the room with their passion-
ate presence to fill :
Blue aconite, hid in white roses, re-
posed ;
The deep belladonna its vermeil dis-
closed ;
And the frail saponaire, and the
tender bluebell,
And the purple valerian,—each child
of the fell
And the solitude flourished, fed fair
from the source
Of waters the huntsman scarce heeds
in his course,
Where the amois and izard, with
delicate hoof,
Pause or flit through the pinnacled
silence aloof.

VI.

Here you felt by the sense of its
beauty reposed,
That you stood in a shrine of sweet
thoughts. Half unclosed
In the light slept the flowers : all
was pure and at rest ;
All peaceful ; all modest ; all seemed
self-possessed,
And aware of the silence. No ves-
tige or trace
Of a young woman's coquetry trou-
bled the place.
He stood by the window. A cloud
passed the sun.
A light breeze uplifted the leaves,
one by one.
Just then Lucile entered the room,
Undiscovered
By Lord Alfred, whose face to the
window was turned,
In a strange revery.

The time was, when Lucile,
In beholding that man, could not
help but reveal

The rapture, the fear which wrenched
out every nerve
In the heart of the girl from the wo-
man's reserve.
And now—she gazed at him, calm,
smiling,—perchance
Indifferent.

VII.

Indifferently turning his glance,
Alfred Vargrave encountered that
gaze unaware.
O'er a bodice snow-white streamed
her soft dusky hair ;
A rose-bud half blown in her hand ;
in her eyes
A half-pensive smile.

A sharp cry of surprise
Escaped from his lips : some un-
known agitation,
An invincible trouble, a strange pal-
pitation,
Confused his ingenious and frivolous
wit ;
Overtook, and entangled, and paraly-
zed it.
That wit so complacent and docile,
that ever
Lightly came at the call of the light-
est endeavor,
Ready coined, and avaiably current
as gold,
Which, sense of its value, so flu-
ently rolled
In free circulation from hand on to
hand
For the usage of all, at a moment's
command ;
For once it rebelled, it was mute
and unstirred,
And he looked at Lucile without
speaking a word.

VIII.

Perhaps what so troubled him was,
that the face
On whose features he gazed had no
more than a trace
Of the face his remembrance had
imaged for years.
Yes ! the face he remembered was
faded with tears :

Grief had famished the figure, and
 dimmed the dark eyes,
 And starved the pale lips, too ac-
 quainted with sighs.
 And that tender, and gracious, and
 fond *coquetterie*
 Of a woman who knows her least
 ribbon to be
 Something dear to the lips that so
 warmly caress
 Every sacred detail of her exquisite
 dress,
 In the careless toilet of Lucile,—
 then too sad
 To care aught to her changeable
 beauty to add,—
 Lord Alfred had never admired be-
 fore !
 Alas ! poor Lucile, in those weak
 days of yore,
 Had neglected herself, never heed-
 ing, nor thinking
 (While the blossom and bloom of her
 beauty were shrinking)
 That sorrow can beautify only the
 heart—
 Not the face—of a woman ; and can
 but impart
 Its endearment to one that has suf-
 fered. In truth
 Grief hath beauty for grief ; but gay
 youth loves gay youth.

IX.

The woman that now met, unshrink-
 ing, his gaze,
 Seemed to bask in the silent but
 sumptuous haze
 Of that soft second summer, more
 ripe than the first,
 Which returns when the bud to the
 blossom hath burst
 In despite of the stormiest April.
 Lucile
 Had acquired that matchless uncon-
 scious appeal
 To the homage which none but a
 churl would withhold—
 That caressing and exquisite grace—
 never bold,

Ever present—which just a few wo-
 men possess.
 From a healthful repose, undisturbed
 by the stress
 Of unquiet emotions, her soft cheek
 had drawn
 A freshness as pure as the twilight
 of dawn.
 Her figure, though slight, had re-
 vived everywhere
 The luxurious proportions of youth ;
 and her hair—
 Once shorn as an offering to pas-
 sionate love—
 Now floated or rested redundant
 above
 Her airy pure forehead and throat ;
 gathered loose
 Under which, by one violet knot, the
 profuse
 Milk-white folds of a cool modest
 garment reposed,
 Rippled faint by the breast they half
 hid, half disclosed,
 And her simple attire thus in all
 things revealed
 The fine art which so artfully all
 things concealed.

X.

Lord Alfred, who never conceived
 that Lucile
 Could have looked so enchanting,
 felt tempted to kneel
 At her feet, and her pardon with
 passion implore ;
 But the calm smile that met him
 sufficed to restore
 The pride and the bitterness needed
 to meet
 The occasion with dignity due and
 discreet.

XI.

“Madam,”—thus he began with a
 voice reassured,—
 “You see that your latest command
 has secured
 My immediate obedience,—presum-
 ing I may
 Consider my freedom restored from
 this day.”—

"I had thought," said Lucile, with
 a smile gay yet sad.
 "That your freedom from me not a
 fetter has had.
 Indeed! . . . in my chains have you
 rested till now?
 I had not so flattered myself, I
 avow!"
 "For Heaven's sake, Madam," Lord
 Alfred replied,
 "Do not jest! has the moment no
 sadness?" he sighed.
 "'Tis an ancient tradition," she answered,
 "a tale
 Often told.—a position too sure to
 prevail
 In the end of all legends of love. If
 we wrote,
 When we first love, foreseeing that
 hour yet remote,
 Wherein of necessity each would re-
 call
 From the other the poor foolish
 records of all
 Those emotions, whose pain, when
 recorded, seemed bliss,
 Should we write as we wrote? But
 one thinks not of this!
 At Twenty (who does not at Twenty?)
 we write
 Believing eternal the frail vows we
 plight;
 And we smile with a confident pity,
 above
 The vulgar results of all poor human
 love:
 For we deem, with that vanity com-
 mon to youth,
 Because what we feel in our bosoms,
 in truth,
 Is novel to us—that 'tis novel to
 earth,
 And will prove the exception, in
 durance and worth.
 To the great law to which all on
 earth must incline.
 The error was noble, the vanity fine!
 Shall we blame it because we sur-
 vive it? ah, no;
 'Twas the youth of our youth, my
 lord, is it not so?"

XII.

Lord Alfred was mute. He remem-
 bered her yet
 A child,—the weak sport of each
 moment's regret,
 Blindly yielding herself to the errors
 of life,
 The deceptions of youth, and borne
 down by the strife
 And the tumult of passion; the trem-
 ulous toy
 Of each transient emotion of grief or
 of joy.
 But to watch her pronounce the
 death-warrant of all
 The illusions of life,—lift, unflinch-
 ing, the pall
 From the bier of the dead Past,—
 that woman so fair,
 And so young, yet her own self-sur-
 vivor: who there
 Traced her life's epitaph with a finger
 so cold!
 'Twas a picture that pained his self-
 love to be old.
 He himself knew—none better—the
 things to be said
 Upon subjects like this. Yet he
 bowed down his head:
 And as thus, with a trouble he could
 not command,
 He paused, crumpling the letters he
 held in his hand.
 "You know me enough," she con-
 tinued, "or what
 I would say is, you yet recollect (do
 you not, |to know
 Lord Alfred?) enough of my nature,
 That these pledges of what was per-
 haps long ago
 A foolish affection, I do not recall
 From those motives of prudence
 which actuate all
 Or most women when their love
 ceases. Indeed,
 If you have such a doubt, to dispel it
 I need
 But remind you that ten years these
 letters have rested
 Unreclaimed in your hands." A re-
 proach seemed suggested

By these words. To meet it, Lord
Alfred looked up.
(His gaze had been fixed on a blue
Sèvres cup
With a look of profound connoisseur-
ship,—a smile
Of singular interest and care, all this
while.)

He looked up, and looked long in the
face of Lucile,
To mark if that face by a sign would
reveal

At the thought of Miss Darcy the
least jealous pain.

He looked keenly and long, yet he
looked there in vain.

“You are generous, Madam,” he
murmured at last,

And into his voice a light irony
passed.

He had looked for reproaches, and
fully arranged

His forces. But straightway the
enemy changed

The position.

XIII.

“Come!” gayly Lucile interposed,
With a smile whose divinely deep
sweetness disclosed

Some depth in her nature he never
had known,

While she tenderly laid her light
hand on his own,

“Do not think I abuse the occasion.
We gain

Justice, judgment, with years, or
else years are in vain.

From me not a single reproach can
you hear.

I have sinned to myself,—to the
world,—nay, I fear

To you chiefly. The woman who
loves should, indeed,

Be the friend of the man that she
loves. She should heed

Not her selfish and often mistaken
desires,

But his interest whose fate her own
interest inspires;

And, rather than seek to allure, for
her sake,

His life down the turbulent, fanciful
wake
Of impossible destinies, use all her
That his place in the world find its
place in her heart.

I, alas!—I perceived not this truth,
till too late:

I tormented your youth, I have dark-
ened your fate.

Forgive me the ill I have done for
the sake

Of its long expiation!”

XIV.

Lord Alfred, awake,
Seemed to wander from dream on to
dream. In that seat

Where he sat as a criminal, ready to
meet

His accuser, he found himself turned
by some change,

As surprising and all unexpected as
strange,

To the judge from whose mercy in-
dulgence was sought.

All the world's foolish pride in that
moment was naught;

He felt all his plausible theories
posed;

And, thrilled by the beauty of nature
disclosed

In the pathos of all he had witnessed,
his head

He bowed, and faint words self-re-
proachfully said,

As he lifted her hand to his lips.
'Twas a hand

White, delicate, dimpled, warm, lan-
guid, and bland.

The hand of a woman is often, in
youth,

Somewhat rough, somewhat red,
somewhat graceless, in truth;

Does its beauty refine, as its pulses
grow calm,

Or as Sorrow has crossed the life-
line in the palm?

XV.

The more that he looked, that he
listened, the more

He discovered perfections unnoticed
before.

Less salient than once, less poetic,
 perchance,
 This woman who thus had survived
 the romance
 That had made him its hero, and
 breathed him its sighs,
 Seemed more charming a thousand
 times o'er to his eyes.
 Together they talked of the years
 since when last
 They parted, contrasting the present,
 the past.
 Yet no memory marred their light
 converse. Lucile
 Questioned much, with the interest
 a sister might feel,
 Of Lord Alfred's new life,—of Miss
 Darcy,—her face,
 Her temper, accomplishments, —
 pausing to trace
 The advantage derived from a hymen
 so fit.
 Of herself, she recounted with humor
 and wit
 Her journeys, her daily employ-
 ments, the lands
 She had seen, and the books she had
 read, and the hands
 She had shaken.

In all that she said there appeared
 An amiable irony. Laughing, she
 reared
 The temple of reason, with ever a
 touch
 Of light scorn at her work, revealed
 only so much
 As there gleams, in the thyrsus that
 Bacchanals bear,
 Through the blooms of a garland the
 point of a spear.
 But above, and beneath, and beyond
 all of this,
 To that soul, whose experience had
 paralyzed bliss,
 A benignant indulgence, to all things
 resigned, [mind,
 A justice, a sweetness, a meekness of
 Gave a luminous beauty, as tender
 and faint
 And serene as the halo encircling a
 saint.

XVI.

Unobserved by Lord Alfred the time
 fled by.
 To each novel sensation spontane-
 ously
 He abandoned himself with that
 ardor so strange
 Which belongs to a mind grown ac-
 customed to change.
 He sought, with well-practised and
 delicate art,
 To surprise from Lucile the true state
 of her heart;
 But his efforts were vain, and the
 woman, as ever,
 More adroit than the man, baffled
 every endeavor.
 When he deemed he had touched on
 some chord in her being,
 At the touch it dissolved, and was
 gone. Ever fleeing
 As ever he near it advanced, when he
 thought
 To have seized, and proceeded to
 analyze aught
 Of the moral existence, the absolute
 soul,
 Light as vapor the phantom escaped
 his control.

XVII.

From the hall, on a sudden, a sharp
 ring was heard.
 In the passage without a quick foot-
 step there stirred.
 At the door knocked the negress,
 and thrust in her head,
 "The Duke de Luvois had just en-
 tered," she said,
 "And insisted"—
 "The Duke!" cried Lucile (as
 she spoke
 The Duke's step, approaching, a
 light echo woke).
 "Say I do not receive till the even-
 ing. Explain,"
 As she glanced at Lord Alfred, she
 added again,
 "I have business of private impor-
 tance."

There came
O'er Lord Alfred at once, at the
sound of that name,
An invincible sense of vexation. He
turned
To Lucile, and he fancied he faintly
discerned
Or her face an indefinite look of
confusion.

On his mind instantaneously flashed
the conclusion,
That his presence had caused it.

He said, with a sneer
Which he could not repress, "Let
not *me* interfere
With the claims on your time, lady !
when you are free
From more pleasant engagements,
allow me to see
And to wait on you later."

The words were not said
Ere he wished to recall them. He
bitterly read
The mistake he had made in Lucile's
flashing eye.

Inclining her head, as in haughty
reply,
More reproachful perchance than all
uttered rebuke,
She said merely, resuming her seat,
"Tell the Duke
He may enter."

And vexed with his own words
and hers,
Alfred Vargrave bowed low to Lucile
de Nevers,
Passed the casement and entered the
garden. Before
His shadow was fled the Duke stood
at the door.

XVIII.

When left to his thoughts in the
garden alone,
Alfred Vargrave stood, strange to
himself. With dull tone
Of importance, through cities of rose
and carnation,
Went the bee on his business from
station to station.
The minute mirth of summer was
shrill all around ;

Its incessant small voices like stings
seemed to sound
On his sore angry sense. He stood
grieving the hot
Solid sun with his shadow, nor stir-
red from the spot.

The last look of Lucile still bewilder-
ed, perplexed,
And reproached him. The Duke's
visit goaded and vexed.

He had not yet given the letters.
Again

He must visit Lucile. He resolved
to remain

Where he was till the Duke went.
In short, he would stay,
Were it only to know when the Duke
went away.

But just as he formed this resolve,
he perceived

Approaching towards him, between
the thick-leaved
And luxuriant laurels, Lucile and
the Duke.

Thus surprised, his first thought was
to seek for some nook
Whence he might, unobserved, from
the garden retreat.

They had not yet seen him. The
sound of their feet
And their voices had warned him in
time. They were walking

Towards him. The Duke (a true
Frenchman) was talking
With the action of Talma. He saw
at a glance

That they barred the sole path to the
gateway. No chance
Of escape save in instant conceal-
ment ! Deep-dipped

In thick foliage, an arbor stood near.
In he slipped,
Saved from sight, as in front of the
ambush they passed,

Still conversing. Beneath a labur-
num at last
They paused, and sat down on a
bench in the shade,

So close that he could not but hear
what they said.

XIX.

LUCILE.

Duke, I scarcely conceive . . .

LUVOIS.

Ah, forgive ! . . . I desired
So deeply to see you to-day. You
retired

So early last night from the ball . . .
this whole week

I have seen you pale, silent, preoccupied . . . speak,

Speak, Lucile, and forgive me ! . . .
I know that I am

A rash fool—but I love you ! I love
you, Madame,

More than language can say ! Do
not deem, O Lucile,

That the love I no longer have
strength to conceal

Is a passing caprice ! It is strange
to my nature,

It has made me, unknown to myself,
a new creature.

I implore you to sanction and save
the new life

Which I lay at your feet with this
prayer—Be my wife ;

Stoop, and raise me !

Lord Alfred could scarcely restrain
The sudden, acute pang of anger and
pain

With which he had heard this. As
though to some wind

The leaves of the hushed windless
laurels behind

The two thus in converse were sud-
denly stirred.

The sound half betrayed him. They
started. He heard

The low voice of Lucile ; but so
faint was its tone

That her answer escaped him.

Luvois hurried on.

As though in remonstrance with
what had been spoken.

“Nay, I know it, Lucile ! but your
heart was not broken

By the trial in which all its fibres
were proved.

Love, perchance, you mistrust, yet
you need to be loved.

You mistake your own feelings. I
fear you mistake

What so ill I interpret, those feelings
which make

Words like these vague and feeble.
Whatever your heart

May have suffered of yore, this can
only impart

A pity profound to the love which I
feel.

Hush ! hush ! I know all. ‘Tell me
nothing, Lucile.’”

“You know all, Duke ?” she said ;
“well then, know that, in truth,

I have learned from the rude lesson
taught to my youth

From my own heart to shelter my
life ; to mistrust

The heart of another. We are what
we must,

And not what we would be. I know
that one hour

Assures not another. The will and
the power

Are diverse.”

“O madam !” he answered, “you
fence

With a feeling you know to be true
and intense.

’Tis not *my* life, Lucile, that I plead
for alone :

If your nature I know, ’tis no less
for your own.

That nature will prey on itself ; it
was made

To influence others. Consider,” he
said,

“That genius craves power,—what
scope for it here ?

Gifts less noble to *me* give command
of that sphere

In which genius is power. Such
gifts you despise ?

But you do not disdain what such
gifts realize !

I offer you, Lady, a name not un-
known—

A fortune which worthless, without
you, is grown—

All my life at your feet I lay down—
at your feet

A heart which for you, and you
only, can beat."

LUCILE.

That heart, Duke, that life—I re-
spect both. The name

And position you offer, and all that
you claim

In behalf of their nobler employ-
ment, I feel

To deserve what, in turn, I now ask
you—

LUVOIS.

Lucile!

LUCILE.

I ask you to leave me—

LUVOIS.

—You do not reject?

LUCILE.

I ask you to leave me the time to re-
flect.

LUVOIS.

You ask me?—

LUCILE.

—The time to reflect.

LUVOIS.

Say— One word!

May I hope?

The reply of Lucile was not heard
By Lord Alfred; for just then she
rose, and moved on.

The Duke bowed his lips o'er her
hand, and was gone.

XX.

Not a sound save the birds in the
bushes. And when

Alfred Vargrave reeled forth to the
sunlight again,

He just saw the white robe of the
woman recede

As she entered the house.

Scarcely conscious indeed
Of his steps, he too followed, and en-
tered.

XXI.

He entered

Unnoticed; Lucile never stirred: so
concentred

And wholly absorbed in her thoughts
she appeared.

Her back to the window was turned.
As he neared

The sofa, her face from the glass was
reflected.

Her dark eyes were fixed on the
ground. Pale, dejected,

And lost in profound meditation she
seemed.

Softly, silently, over her drooped
shoulders streamed

The afternoon sunlight. The cry of
alarm

And surprise which escaped her, as
now on her arm

Alfred Vargrave let fall a hand icily
cold [told

And clanny as death, all too cruelly
How far he had been from her

thoughts.

XXII.

All his cheek

Was disturbed with the effort it cost
him to speak.

"It was not my fault. I have heard
all," he said.

"Now the letters—and farewell,
Lucile! When you wed

May—"

The sentence broke short, like a
weapon that snaps

When the weight of a man is upon
it.

"Perhaps,"

Said Lucile (her sole answer revealed
in the flush

Of quick color which up to her brows
seemed to rush

In reply to those few broken words),
"this farewell

Is our last, Alfred Vargrave, in life.
Who can tell?

Let us part without bitterness. Here
are your letters.

Be assured I retain you no more in
my fetters!"—

She laughed, as she said this, a little
 sad laugh,
 And stretched out her hand with the
 letters. And half
 Wroth to feel his wrath rise, and
 unable to trust
 His own powers of restraint, in his
 bosom he thrust
 The packet she gave, with a short
 angry sigh,
 Bowed his head, and departed with-
 out a reply.

XXIII.

And Lucile was alone. And the men
 of the world
 Were gone back to the world. And
 the world's self was furled
 Far away from the heart of the
 woman. Her hand
 Drooped, and from it, unloosed from
 their frail silken band,
 Fell those early love-letters, strewn,
 scattered, and shed
 At her feet—life's lost blossoms!
 Dejected, her head
 On her bosom was bowed. Her gaze
 vaguely strayed o'er
 Those strewn records of passionate
 moments no more.
 From each page to her sight leapt
 some word that belied
 The composure with which she that
 day had denied
 Every claim on her heart to those
 poor perished years.
 They avenged themselves now, and
 she burst into tears.

CANTO IV.

I.

*Letter from COUSIN JOHN to COUSIN
 ALFRED.*

“BIGORRE, Thursday.

“TIME up, you rascal! Come back,
 or be hanged.
 Matilda grows peevish. Her mother
 harangued

For a whole hour this morning about
 you. The deuce!
 What on earth can I say to you?—
 Nothing's of use.
 And the blame of the whole of your
 shocking behavior
 Falls on *me*, sir! Come back,—do
 you hear?—or I leave your
 Affairs, and abjure you forever.
 Come back
 To your anxious betrothed; and per-
 plexed
 “COUSIN JACK.”

II.

Alfred needed, in truth, no entreaties
 from John
 To increase his impatience to fly
 from Serchon.
 All the place was now fraught with
 sensations of pain
 Which, whilst in it, he strove to es-
 cape from in vain.
 A wild instinct warned him to fly
 from a place
 Where he felt that some fatal event,
 swift of pace,
 Was approaching his life. In despite
 his endeavor
 To think of Matilda, her image for-
 ever
 Was effaced from his fancy by that of
 Lucile.
 From the ground which he stood on
 he felt himself reel.
 Scared, alarmed by those feelings to
 which, on the day
 Just before, all his heart had so soon
 given way,
 When he caught, with a strange sense
 of fear, for assistance,
 At what was, till then, the great fact
 in existence,
 'Twas a phantom he grasped.

III.

Having sent for his guide,
 He ordered his horse, and determined
 to ride
 Back forthwith to Bigorre.

Then, the guide, who well knew
 Every haunt of those hills, said the
 wild lake of Oo
 Lay a league from Luchon; and sug-
 gested a track
 By the lake to Bigorre, which, trans-
 versing the back
 Of the mountain, avoided a circuit
 between
 Two long valleys; and thinking,
 "Perchance change of scene
 May create change of thought," Al-
 fred Vargrave agreed,
 Mounted horse, and set forth to Bi-
 gorre at full speed.

IV.

His guide rode beside him.
 The king of the guides!
 The gallant Bernard! ever boldly he
 rides,
 Ever gayly he sings! For to him,
 from of old,
 The hills have confided their secrets,
 and told
 Where the white partridge lies, and
 the cock o' the woods;
 Where the izard flits fine through the
 cold solitudes;
 Where the bear lurks perdu; and the
 lynx on his prey
 At nightfall descends, when the
 mountains are gray;
 Where the sassafras blooms, and the
 bluebell is born,
 And the wild rhododendron first
 reddens at morn;
 Where the source of the waters is
 fine as a thread;
 How the storm on the wild Mala-
 detta is spread;
 Where the thunder is hoarded, the
 snows lie asleep,
 Whence the torrents are fed, and the
 cataracts leap;
 And, familiarly known in the ham-
 lets, the vales
 Have whispered to him all their
 thousand love-tales;
 He has laughed with the girls, he
 has leaped with the boys;

Ever blithe, ever bold, ever boon, he
 enjoys
 An existence untroubled by envy or
 strife,
 While he feeds on the dews and the
 juices of life.
 And so lightly he sings, and so gay-
 ly he rides,
 For BERNARD LE SAUTEUR is the
 king of all guides!

V.

But Bernard found, that day, neither
 song nor love-tale,
 Nor adventure, nor laughter, nor
 legend avail
 To arouse from his deep and pro-
 found reverie
 Him that silent beside him rode fast
 as could be.

VI.

Ascending the mountain they slack-
 ened their pace,
 And the marvellous prospect each
 moment changed face.
 The breezy and pure inspirations of
 morn
 Breathed about them. The scarp'd
 ravaged mountains, all worn
 By the torrents, whose course they
 watched faintly meander,
 Were alive with the diamonded shy
 salamander.
 They paused o'er the bosom of pur-
 ple abysses,
 And wound through a region of
 green wildernesses;
 The waters went wrbling above and
 around,
 The forests hung heaped in their
 shadows profound.
 Here the Larboust, and there Aven-
 tin, Castellon,
 Which the Demon of Tempest, de-
 scending upon,
 Had wasted with fire, and the peace-
 ful Cazeaux
 They marked; and far down in the
 sunshine below,
 Half dipped in a valley of airiest
 blue,

The white happy homes of the vil-
lage of Oo,
Where the age is yet golden.

And high overhead
The wrecks of the combat of Titans
were spread.

Red granite and quartz, in the alche-
mic sun,
Fused their splendors of crimson and
crystal in one ;

And deep in the moss gleaned the
delicate shells,
And the dew lingered fresh in the
heavy harebells ;

The large violet burned ; the cam-
panula blue ;

And Autumn's own flower, the saf-
fron, peered through

The red-berried brambles and thick
sassafras ;

And fragrant with thyme was the
delicate grass ;

And high up, and higher, and high-
est of all,

The secular phantom of snow !
O'er the wall

Of a gray sunless glen gaping drowsy
below,

That aerial spectre, revealed in the
glow

Of the great golden dawn, hovers
faint on the eye,

And appears to grow in, and grow
out of, the sky,

And plays with the fancy, and baf-
fles the sight.

Only reached by the vast rosy ripple
of light,

And the cool star of eve, the Im-
perial Thing,

Half unreal, like some mythological
king

That dominates all in a fable of old,
Takes command of a valley as fair
to behold

As aught in old fables ; and, seen or
unseen,

Dwells aloof over all, in the vast and
serene

Sacred sky, where the footsteps of
spirits are furled

'Mid the clouds beyond which
spreads the infinite world
Of man's last aspirations, unfathom-
ed, untrod.

Save by Even and Morn, and the
angels of God.

VII.

Meanwhile, as they journeyed, that
serpentine road.

Now abruptly reversed, unexpect-
edly showed

A gay cavalcade some few feet in
advance.

Alfred Vargrave's heart beat ; for
he saw at a glance

The slight form of Lucile in the
midst. His next look

Showed him, joyously ambling be-
side her, the Duke.

The rest of the troop which had thus
caught his ken

He knew not, nor noticed them,
(women and men).

They were laughing and talking to-
gether. Soon after

His sudden appearance suspended
their laughter.

VIII.

"You here ! . . . I imagined you far
on your way

To Bigorre !" . . . said Lucile.
"What has caused you to stay ?"

"I am on my way to Bigorre," he
replied,

"But, since *my* way would seem to
be *yours*, let me ride

For one moment beside you." And
then, with a stoop,

At her ear, . . . "and forgive me !"

IX.

By this time the troop
Had regathered its numbers.

Lucile was as pale
As the cloud 'neath their feet, on its
way to the vale.

The Duke had observed it, nor quit-
ted her side,

For even one moment, the whole of
the ride.

Alfred smiled, as he thought, "he
is jealous of her!"
And the thought of this jealousy ad-
ded a spur
To his firm resolution and effort to
please.
He talked much; was witty, and
quite at his ease.

X.

After noontide, the clouds, which
had traversed the east
Half the day, gathered closer, and
rose and increased.
The air changed and chilled. As
though out of the ground,
There ran up the trees a confused
hissing sound,
And the wind rose. The guides
sniffed, like chamois, the air,
And looked at each other, and halt-
ed, and there
Unbuckled the cloaks from the sad-
dles. The white
Aspens rustled, and turned up their
frail leaves in fright.
All announced the approach of the
tempest.

Ere long,

Thick darkness descended the moun-
tains among;
And a vivid, vindictive, and serpen-
tine flash
Gored the darkness, and shore it
across with a gash.
The rain fell in large heavy drops.
And anon
Broke the thunder.
The horses took fright, every one.
The Duke's in a moment was far out
of sight.
The guides whooped. The band was
obliged to alight;
And, dispersed up the perilous path-
way, walked blind
To the darkness before from the
darkness behind.

XI.

And the Storm is abroad in the
mountains!

He fills

The crouched hollows and all the
oracular hills
With dread voices of power. A
roused million or more
Of wild echoes reluctantly rise from
their hoar
Immemorial ambush, and roll in the
wake
Of the cloud, whose reflection leaves
vivid the lake.
And the wind, that wild robber, for
plunder descends
From invisible lands, o'er those black
mountain ends;
He howls as he hounds down his
prey; and his lash
Tears the hair of the timorous wan
mountain-ash,
That clings to the rocks, with her
garments all torn.
Like a woman in fear; then he blows
his hoarse horn,
And is off, the fierce guide of destruc-
tion and terror,
Up the desolate heights, 'mid
tricate error
Of mountain and mist.

XII.

There is war in the skies!
Lo! the black-winged legions of tem-
pest arise
O'er these sharp splintered rocks
that are gleaming below
In the soft light, so fair and so fatal,
as though
Some seraph burned through them
the thunder-bolt searching
Which the black cloud unbosomed
just now. Lo! the lurching
And shivering pine-trees, like phan-
toms, that seem
To waver above, in the dark; and
yon stream,
How it hurries and roars, on its way
to the white
And paralyzed lake there, appalled
at the sight
Of the things seen in heaven!

XII.

Through the darkness and awe
That had gathered around him, Lord
Alfred now saw,
Revealed in the fierce and evanishing
glare
Of the lightning that momentarily
pulsed through the air,
A woman alone on a shelf of the
hill,
With her cheek coldly propped on
her hand,—and as still
As the rock that she sat on, which
beetled above
The black lake beneath her.

All terror, all love,
Added speed to the instinct with
which he rushed on.
For one moment the blue lightning
swathed the whole stone
In its lurid embrace: like the sleek
dazzling snake
That encircles a sorceress, charmed
for her sake
And lulled by her loveliness; fawn-
ing, it played
And caressingly twined round the
feet and the head
Of the woman who sat there, un-
daunted and calm
As the soul of that solitude, listing
the psalm
Of the plangent and laboring tempest
roll slow
From the caldron of midnight and
vapor below.
Next moment from bastion to bas-
tion, all round,
Of the siege-circled mountains, there
tumbled the sound
Of the battering thunder's indefinite
peal,
And Lord Alfred had sprung to the
feet of Lucile.

XIV.

She started. Once more, with its
flickering wand,
The lightning approached her. In
terror, her hand

Alfred Vargrave had seized within
his; and he felt
The light fingers that coldly and lin-
geringly dwelt
In the grasp of his own, tremble
faintly.

“See! see!
Where the whirlwind hath stricken
and strangled yon tree!”
She exclaimed, . . . “like the pas-
sion that brings on its breath,
To the being it embraces, destruction
and death!
Alfred Vargrave, the lightning is
round you!”

“Lucile!
I hear—I see—naught but yourself.
I can feel
Nothing here but your presence. My
pride fights in vain
With the truth that leaps from me.
We two meet again
'Neath yon terrible heaven that is
watching above
To avenge if I lie when I swear that
I love,—
And beneath yonder terrible heaven,
at your feet,
I humble my head and my heart. I
entreat
Your pardon, Lucile, for the past,—
I implore
For the future your mercy,—implore
it with more
Of passion than prayer ever breathed.
By the power
Which invisibly touches us both in
this hour,
By the rights I have o'er you, Lucile
I demand”—

“The rights!” . . . said Lucile, and
drew from him her hand.

“Yes, the rights! for what greater
to man may belong
Than the right to repair in the future
the wrong
To the past? and the wrong I have
done you, of yore,
Hath bequeathed to me all the sad
right to restore,

To retrieve, to amend! I, who injured your life,
 Urge the right to repair it, Lucile!
 Be my wife,
 My guide, my good angel, my all upon earth,
 And accept, for the sake of what yet may give worth
 o my life, its contrition!"

XV.

He paused, for there came
 O'er the cheek of Lucile a swift flush
 like the flame
 That illumined at moments the darkness o'erhead.
 With a voice faint and marred by emotion, she said,
 "And your pledge to another?"

XVI.

"Hush, hush!" he exclaimed,
 "My honor will live where my love lives, unshamed.
 'Twere poor honor, indeed, to another to give
 That life of which *you* keep the heart. Could I live
 In the light of those young eyes, suppressing a lie?
 Alas, no! *your* hand holds my whole destiny.
 I can never recall what my lips have avowed;
 In your love lies whatever can render me proud.
 For the great crime of all my existence hath been
 To have known you in vain. And the duty best seen,
 And most hallowed,—the duty most sacred and sweet,
 is that which hath led me, Lucile, to your feet.
 O speak! and restore me the blessing I lost
 When I lost you,—my pearl of all pearls beyond cost!
 And restore to your own life its youth, and restore
 The vision, the rapture, the passion of yore!

Ere our brows had been dimmed in the dust of the world,
 When our souls their white wings yet exulting, unfurled!
 For your eyes rest no more on the unquiet man,
 The wild star of whose course its pale orbit outran,
 Whom the formless indefinite faint of youth,
 With its lying allurements, distracted. In truth
 I have wearily wandered the world, and I feel
 That the least of your lovely regards, O Lucile,
 Is worth all the world can afford, and the dream
 Which, though followed forever, forever doth seem
 As fleeting, and distant, and dim, as of yore
 When it brooded in twilight, at dawn, on the shore
 Of life's untraversed ocean! I know the sole path
 To repose, which my desolate destiny hath,
 Is the path by whose course to your feet I return.
 And who else, O Lucile, will so truly discern,
 And so deeply revere, all the passionate strength,
 The sublimity in you, as he whom at length
 These have saved from himself, for the truth they reveal
 To his worship?"

XVII.

She spoke not; but Alfred could feel
 The light hand and arm, that upon him reposed,
 Thrill and tremble. Those dark eyes of hers were half closed;
 But, under their languid mysterious fringe,
 A passionate softness was beaming
 Que tinge

Of faint inward fire flushed transparently through
 The delicate, pallid, and pure olive hue
 Of the cheek, half averted and drooped. The rich bosom
 Heaved, as when in the heart of a ruffled rose-blossom
 A bee is imprisoned and struggles.

XVIII.

Meanwhile

The sun, in his setting, sent up the last smile
 Of his power, to baffle the storm.
 And, behold!
 O'er the mountains embattled, his armies, all gold.
 Rose and rested: while far up the dim airy crags,
 Its artillery silenced, its banners in rags,
 The rear of the tempest its sullen retreat
 Drew off slowly, reeking in silence, gathering afar,
 Had already sent forward one bright, signal star.
 The curls of her soft and luxuriant hair,
 From the dark riding-hat, which Lucile used to wear.
 Had escaped; and Lord Alfred now covered with kisses
 The redolent warmth of those long falling tresses.
 Neither he, nor Lucile, felt the rain, which not yet
 Had ceased falling around them; when, splashed, drenched, and wet,
 The Due de Luvois down the rough mountain course
 Approached them as fast as the road, and his horse,
 Wh'ch was limping, would suffer. The beast had just now
 Lost his footing, and over the perilous brow

Of the storm-haunted mountain his master had thrown;
 But the Duke, who was agile, had leaped to a stone,
 And the horse, being bred to the instinct which fills
 The breast of the wild mountaineer in these hills,
 Had scrambled again to his feet; and now master
 And horse bore about them the signs of disaster,
 As they heavily footed their way through the mist,
 The horse with his shoulder, the Duke with his wrist,
 Bruised and bleeding.

XIX.

If ever your feet, like my own, O reader, have traversed these mountains alone,
 Have you felt your identity shrink and contract
 In the presence of nature's immensities? Say,
 Have you hung o'er the torrent, bedewed with its spray.
 And, leaving the rock-way, contorted and rolled,
 Like a huge couchant Typhon, fold heaped over fold,
 Tracked the summits, from which every step that you tread
 Rolls the loose stones, with thunder below, to the bed
 Of invisible waters, whose mystical sound
 Fills with awful suggestions the dizzy profound?
 And, laboring onwards, at last through a break
 In the walls of the world, burst at once on the lake?
 If you have, this description I might have withheld.
 You remember how strangely your bosom has swelled

At the vision revealed. On the over-
worked soil
Of this planet, enjoyment is sharp-
ened by toil ;
And one seems, by the pain of as-
cending the height,
To have conquered a claim to that
wonderful sight.

XX.

Hail, virginal daughter of cold Es-
pingo !
Hail, Naiad, whose realm is the
cloud and the snow ;
For o'er thee the angels have whi-
tened their wings,
And the thirst of the seraphs is
quenched at thy springs.
What hand hath, in heaven, upheld
thine expanse ?
When the breath of creation first
fashioned fair France,
Did the Spirit of Ill, in his down-
throw appalling,
Bruise the world, and thus hollow
thy basin while falling ?
Ere the mammoth was born hath
some monster unnamed
The base of thy mountainous pedes-
tal framed ?
And later, when Power to Beauty
was wed,
Did some delicate fairy embroider
thy bed
With the fragile valerian and wild
columbine ?

XXI.

But thy secret thou keepest, and I
will keep mine ;
For once gazing on thee, it flashed
on my soul,
Al. that secret ! I saw in a vision
the whole
Vast design of the ages ; what was
and shall be !
Hands unseen raised the veil of a
great mystery
For one moment. I saw, and I
heard ; and my heart
Bore witness within me to infinite

27.

In infinite power proving infinite
love ;
Caught the great choral chant,
marked the dread pageant
move—
The divine Whence and Whither of
life ! But, O daughter
Of Oo, not more safe in the deep
silent water
Is thy secret, than mine in my heart—
Even so.
What I then saw and heard, the
world never shall know.

XXII.

The dimness of eve o'er the valleys
had closed,
The rain had ceased falling, the
mountains reposed.
The stars had enkindled in luminous
courses
Their slow-sliding lamps, when, re-
mounting their horses,
The riders retraversed that mighty
serration
Of rock-work. Thus left to its own
desolation,
The lake, from whose glimmering
limits the last
Transient pomp of the pageants of
sunset had passed,
Drew into its bosom the darkness,
and only [lonely
Admitted within it one image,—a
And tremulous phantom of flicker-
ing light
That followed the mystical moon
through the night.

XXIII.

It was late when o'er Luchon at last
they descended.
To her chalet, in silence, Lord Al-
fred attended
Lucile. As they parted she whisper-
ed him low,
“ You have made to me, Alfred, an
offer I know
All the worth of, believe me. I can-
not reply
Without time for reflection. Good
night !—not good by.”

"Alas ! 'tis the very same answer
 you made
 To the Duc de Lauvois but a day
 since," he said.
 "No, Alfred ! the very same, no,"
 she replied.
 Her voice shook. "If you love me,
 obey me.
 Abide my answer, to-morrow."

XXIV.

Alas, Cousin Jack !
 You Cassandra in breeches and
 boots ! turn your back
 To the ruins of Troy. Prophet,
 seek not for glory
 Amongst thine own people.
 I follow my story.

CANTO V.

I.

UP !—forth again, Pegasus !—
 "Many's the slip,"
 Hath the proverb well said, "'twixt
 the cap and the lip !"
 How blest should we be, have I often
 conceived,
 Had we really achieved what we
 nearly achieved !
 We but catch at the skirts of the
 thing we would be,
 And fall back on the lap of a false
 destiny.
 So it will be, so has been, since this
 world began !
 And the happiest, noblest, and best
 part of man
 Is the part which he never hath
 fully played out :
 For the first and last word in life's
 volume is—Doubt.
 The face the most fair to our vision
 allowed
 Is the face we encounter and lose in
 the crowd.
 The thought that most thrills our
 existence is one
 Which, before we can frame it 'in
 language, is gone.

O Horace ! the rustic still rests by
 the river,
 But the river flows on, and flows
 past him forever !
 Who can sit down, and say,
 "What I will be, I will" ?
 Who stand up, and affirm
 "What I was, I am still" ?
 Who is it that must not, if ques-
 tioned, say, . . . "What
 I would have remained, or become,
 I am not" ?
 We are ever behind, or beyond, or
 beside [hide
 Our intrinsic existence. Forever at
 And seek with our souls. Not in
 Hades alone
 Doth Sisyphus roll, ever frustrate,
 the stone,
 Do the Danaïds ply, ever vainly, the
 sieve.
 Tasks as futile does earth to its den-
 izens give.
 Yet there's none so unhappy, but
 what he hath been
 Just about to be happy, at some time,
 I ween ;
 And none so beguiled and defrauded
 by chance,
 But what once, in his life, some
 minute circumstance
 Would have fully sufficed to secure
 him the bliss
 Which, missing it then, he forever
 must miss ;
 And to most of us, ere we go down
 to the grave,
 Life, relenting, accords the good
 gift we would have ;
 But, as though by some strange im-
 perfection in fate,
 The good gift, when it comes, comes
 a moment too late.
 The Future's great veil our breath
 fitfully flaps,
 And behind it broods ever the migh-
 ty Perhaps.
 Yet ! there's many a slip 'twixt the
 cap and the lip ;
 But while o'er the brim of life's
 beaker I dip,

Though the cup may next-moment
 be shattered, the wine
 Spilt, one deep health I'll pledge,
 and that health shall be thine.
 O being of beauty and bliss ! seen
 and known
 In the deeps of my soul, and possessed
 there alone !
 My days know thee not ; and my
 lips name thee never.
 Thy place in my poor life is vacant
 forever.
 We have met : we have parted. No
 more is recorded
 In my annals on earth. This alone
 was afforded
 To the man whom men knew me, or
 deem me, to be.
 But, far down, in the depth of my
 life's mystery
 (Like the siren that under the deep
 ocean dwells,
 Whom the wind as it wails, and the
 wave as it swells,
 Cannot stir in the calm of her coral-
 line halls,
 'Mid the world's adamantine and
 dim pedestals ;
 At whose feet sit the sylphs and sea
 fairies ; for whom
 The almondine glimmers, the soft
 samphires bloom)—
 Thou abidest and reignest forever,
 O Queen
 Of that better world which thou
 swayest unseen !
 My one perfect mistress ! my all
 things in all !
 Thee by no vulgar name known to
 men do I call :
 For the seraphs have named thee to
 me in my sleep,
 And that name is a secret I sacredly
 keep.
 But, wherever this nature of mine
 is most fair,
 And its thoughts are the purest—be-
 loved, thou art there !
 And whatever is noblest in aught
 that I do, [too.
 Is done to exalt and to worship thee

The world gave thee not to me, no
 and the world
 Cannot take thee away from me
 now. I have furled
 The wings of my spirit about thy
 bright head ;
 At thy feet are my soul's immortal-
 ities spread.
 Thou mightest have been to me
 much. Thou art more.
 And in silence I worship, in dark-
 ness adore.
 If life be not that which without us
 we find—
 Chance, accident, merely—but rather
 the mind,
 And the soul which, within us, sur-
 viveth these things,
 If our real existence have truly its
 springs
 Less in that which we do than in
 that which we feel,
 Not in vain do I worship, not hope-
 less I kneel !
 For then, though I name thee not
 mistress or wife,
 Thou art mine—and mine only,—O
 life of my life !
 And though many's the slip 'twixt
 the cup and the lip,
 Yet while o'er the brim of life's
 beaker I dip,
 While there's life on the lip, while
 there's warmth in the wine,
 One deep health I'll pledge, and that
 health shall be thine !

II.

This world, on whose peaceable
 breast we repose
 Unconvulsed by alarm, once con-
 fused in the throes
 Of a tumult divine, sea and land,
 moist and dry,
 And in fiery fusion commixed earth
 and sky.
 Time cooled it, and calmed it, and
 taught it to go
 The round of its orbit in peace, long
 ago.

The wind changeth and whirleth continually :
 All the rivers run down and run into the sea :
 The wind whirleth about, and is presently stilled :
 All the rivers run down, yet the sea is not filled :
 The sun goeth forth from his chambers : the sun Ariseth, and lo ! he descendeth anon.
 All returns to its place. Use and Habit are powers
 Far stronger than Passion, in this world of ours.
 The great laws of life readjust their infraction,
 And to every emotion appoint a reaction.

III.

Alfred Vargrave had time, after leaving Lucile,
 To review the rash step he had taken, and feel
 What the world would have called "*s erroneous position.*"
 Thought obtruded its claim, and enforced recognition :
 Like a creditor who, when the gloss is worn out
 On the coat which we once wore with pleasure, no doubt,
 Sends us in his account for the garment we bought.
 Every spendthrift to passion is debtor to thought.

IV.

He felt ill at ease with himself. He could feel
 Little doubt what the answer would be from Lucile.
 Her eyes, when they parted,—her voice, when they met,
 Still enraptured his heart, which they haunted. And yet,
 Though, exulting, he deemed himself loved, where he loved,
 Through his mind a vague self-accusation there moved.

O'er his fancy, when fancy was fairest, would rise
 The infantine face of Matilda, with eyes
 So sad, so reproachful, so cruelly kind,
 That his heart failed within him. In vain did he find
 A thousand just reasons for what he had done :
 The vision that troubled him would not be gone.
 In vain did he say to himself, and with truth,
 "Matilda has beauty and fortune, and youth ;
 And her heart is too young to have deeply involved
 All its hopes in the tie which must now be dissolved.
 'Twere a false sense of honor in me to suppress
 The sad truth which I owe it to her to confess.
 And what reason have I to presume this poor life
 Of my own, with its languid and frivolous strife,
 And without what alone might endear it to her,
 Were a boon all so precious, indeed, to confer,
 Its withdrawal can wrong her ?

"It is not as though I were bound to some poor village maiden, I know,
 Unto whose simple heart mine were all upon earth,
 Or to whose simple fortunes my own could give worth.
 Matilda, in all the world's gifts, will not miss
 Aught that I could procure her.
 'Tis best as it is !"

V.

In vain did he say to himself,
 "When I came
 To this fatal spot, I had nothing to blame

Or reproach myself for, in the thoughts of my heart.
 I could not foresee that its pulses would start
 Into such strange emotion on seeing once more
 A woman I left with indifference before.
 I believed, and with honest conviction believed,
 In my love for Matilda. I never conceived
 That another could shake it. I deemed I had done
 With the wild heart of youth, and looked hopefully on
 To the soberer manhood, the worthier life,
 Which I sought in the love that I vowed to my wife.
 Poor child! she shall learn the whole truth. She shall know
 What I knew not myself but a few days ago.
 The world will console her,—her pride will support,—
 Her youth will renew its emotions. In short,
 There is nothing in me that Matilda will miss
 When once we have parted. 'Tis best as it is!"

VI.

But in vain did he reason and argue. Alas!
 He yet felt unconvinced that 'twas best as it was.
 Out of reach of all reason, forever would rise
 That infantine face of Matilda, with eyes
 So sad, so reproachful, so cruelly kind,
 That they harrowed his heart and distracted his mind.

VII.

And then, when he turned from these thoughts to Lucile,
 Though his heart rose enraptured, he could not but feel

A vague sense of awe of her nature.
 Behind
 All the beauty of heart, and the graces of mind,
 Which he saw and revered in her, something unknown
 And unseen in that nature still troubled his own.
 He felt that Lucile penetrated and prized
 Whatever was noblest and best, though disguised,
 In himself; but he did not feel sure that he knew,
 Or completely possessed, what, half hidden from view,
 Remained lofty and lonely in *her*.

Then, her life,
 So untamed, and so free! would she yield as a wife,
 Independence, long claimed as a woman? Her name,
 So linked by the world with that spurious fame
 Which the beauty and wit of a woman assert,
 In some measure, alas! to her own loss and hurt
 In the serious thoughts of a man!
 This reflection
 O'er the love which he felt cast a shade of dejection,
 From which he forever escaped to the thought
 Doubt could reach not. . . . "I love her, and all else is naught!"

VIII.

His hand trembled strangely in breaking the seal
 Of the letter which reached him at last from Lucile.
 At the sight of the very first word that he read,
 That letter dropped down from his hand like the dead
 Leaf in autumn, that, falling, leaves naked and bare
 A desolate tree in a wide wintry air.
 He passed his hand hurriedly over his eyes,
 Bewildered, incredulous. Angry sur- [prio

And dismay, in one sharp moan,
broke from him. Anon
He picked up the page, and read rap-
idly on.

ix.

*The COMTESSE DE NEVERS to LORD
ALFRED VARGRAVE.*

"No, Alfred!

"If over the present, when last
We two met, rose the glamour and
mist of the past,
It hath now rolled away, and our
two paths are plain,
And those two paths divide us.

"That hand which again
Mine one moment has clasped as the
hand of a brother,
That hand and your honor are
pledged to another!

Forgive, Alfred Vargrave, forgive
me, if yet

For that moment (now past!) I have
made you forget

What was due to yourself and that
other one. Yes,

Mine the fault, and be mine the re-
pentance! Not less

In now owning this fault, Alfred,
let me own, too,

I foresaw not the sorrow involved
in it,

"True,

That meeting, which hath been so
fatal, I sought,

I alone! But O, deem not it was
with the thought

Or your heart to regain, or the past
to awaken.

No! believe me, it was with the
firm and unshaken

Conviction, at least, that our meet-
ing would be

Without peril to *you*, although haply
to me

The salvation of all my existence.

"I own,

When the rumor first reached me,
which lightly made known

To the world your engagement, my
heart and my mind

Suffered torture intense. It was
cruel to find

That so much of the life of my life,
half unknown

To myself, had been silently settled
on one

Upon whom but to think it would
soon be a crime.

Then I said to myself, 'From th
thralldom which time

Hath not weakened there rests but
one hope of escape.

That image which Fancy seems ever
to shape

From the solitude left round the
ruins of yore

Is a phantom. The Being I loved
is no more.

What I hear in the silence, and see
in the lone

Void of life, is the young hero born
of my own

Perished youth: and his image, se-
rene and sublime,

In my heart rests unconscious of
change and of time.

Could I see it but once more, as time
and as change

Have made it, a thing unfamiliar and
strange,

See, indeed, that the Being I loved in
my youth

Is no more, and what rests now is
only, in truth,

The hard pupil of life and the world:
then, O, then,

I should wake from a dream, and my
life be again

Reconciled to the world; ana. re-
leased from regret,

Take the lot fate accords to my
choice.'

"So we met

But the danger I did not foresee has
occurred:

The danger, alas, to yourself! I have
erred.

But happy for both that this error
hath been:

Discovered as soon as the danger was
seen!

We meet, Alfred Vargrave, no more.
I, indeed,
Shall be far from Luchon when this
letter you read.
My course is decided ; my path I dis-
cern :
Doubt is over ; my future is fixed
now.

“ Return,
O return to the young living love!
Whence, alas !
If, one moment, you wandered, think
only it was
More deeply to bury the past love.

“ And, oh!
Believe, Alfred Vargrave, that I,
where I go
On my far distant pathway through
life, shall rejoice
To treasure in memory all that your
voice

Has avowed to me, all in which
others have clothed
To my fancy with beauty and worth
your betrothed !

In the fair morning light, in the
orient dew
Of that young life, now yours, can
you fail to renew

All the noble and pure aspirations,
the truth,
The freshness the faith, of your own
earnest youth ?

Yes! *you* will be happy. I, too, in
the bliss

I foresee for you, I shall be happy.
And this

Proves me worthy your friendship.
And so—let it prove

That I cannot—I do not—respond to
your love.

Yes, indeed ! be convinced that I
could not (no, no,
Never, never !) have rendered you
happy. And so.

Rest assured that, if false to the vows
you have plighted,

You would have endured, when the
first brief, excited

Emotion was o'er, not alone the re-
morse

Of honor, but also (to render it worse)
Disappointed affection.

“ Yes, Alfred ; you start ?
But think ! if the world was too
much in your heart,
And too little in mine, when we
parted ten years
Ere this last fatal meeting, that time
(ay, and tears !)

Have but deepened the old demarca-
tions which then
Placed our natures asunder ; and we
two again,

As we then were, would still have
been strangely at strife.

In that self-independence which is to
my life

Its necessity now, as it once was its
pride,

Had our course through the world
been henceforth side by side,

I should have revolted forever, and
shocked,

Your respect for the world's plausi-
bilities, mocked,

Without meaning to do so, and out-
raged, all those

Social creeds which you live by.

“ Oh ! do not suppose
That I blame you. Perhaps it is you
that are right.

Best, then, all as it is !

“ Deem these words life's Good-
night

To the hope of a moment : no more !
If there fell

Any tear on this page, 'twas a
friend's.

“ So farewell
To the past—and to you, Alfred Var-
grave.

“ LUCILE.”

x.

So ended that letter.

The room seemed to reel
Round and round in the mist that
was scorching his eyes
With a fiery dew. Grief, resentment,
surprise.

Half choked him ; each word he had
 read, as it smote
 Down some hope, rose and grasped
 like a hand at his throat,
 To stifle and strangle him.

Gasping already

For relief from himself, with a foot-
 step unsteady,
 He passed from his chamber. He
 felt both oppressed
 And excited. The letter he thrust
 in his breast,
 And, in search of fresh air and of
 solitude, passed
 The long lime-trees of Luchon. His
 footsteps at last
 Reached a bare narrow leath by the
 skirts of a wood :
 It was sombre and silent, and suited
 his mood.
 By a mineral spring, long unused,
 now unknown,
 Stood a small ruined abbey. He
 reached it, sat down
 On a fragment of stone, 'mid the
 wild weed and thistle.
 And read over again that perplexing
 epistle.

XI.

In re-reading that letter, there rolled
 from his mind
 The raw mist of resentment which
 first made him blind
 To the pathos breathed through it.
 Tears rose in his eyes,
 And a hope sweet and strange in his
 heart seemed to rise.
 The truth which he saw not the first
 time he read
 That letter, he now saw,—that each
 word betrayed
 The love which the writer had sought
 to conceal.
 His love was received not, he could
 not but feel,
 For one reason alone,—that his love
 was not free.
 True! free yet he was not : but could
 he not be

Free ere long, free as air to revoke
 that farewell,
 And to sanction his own hopes ? he
 had but to tell
 The truth to Matilda, and she were
 the first
 To release him : he had but to wait
 at the worst.
 Matilda's relations would probably
 snatch
 Any pretext, with pleasure, to break
 off a match
 In which they had yielded, alone at
 the whim
 Of their spoiled child, a languid ap-
 proval to him.
 She herself, careless child ! was her
 love for him aught
 Save the first joyous fancy succeed-
 ing the thought
 She last gave to her doll ? was she
 able to feel
 Such a love as the love he divined in
 Lucile ?
 He would seek her, obtain his re-
 lease, and, oh ! then,
 He had but to fly to Lucile, and again
 Claim the love which his heart would
 be free to command.
 But to press on Lucile any claim to
 her hand,
 Or even to seek, or to see her, before
 He could say, " I am free ! free, Lu-
 cile, to implore
 That great blessing on life you alone
 can confer,"
 'Twere dishonor in him, 'twould be
 insult to her.
 Thus still with the letter outspread
 on his knee
 He followed so fondly his own rever-
 ery,
 That he felt not the angry regard of
 a man
 Fixed upon him ; he saw not a face
 stern and wan
 Turned towards him ; he heard not
 a footstep that passed
 And repassed the lone spot where he
 stood, till at last
 A hoarse voice aroused him.

He looked up and saw,
On the bare heath before him, the
Duc de Luvois.

XII.

With aggressive ironical tones, and
a look
Of concentrated insolent challenge,
the Duke
addressed to Lord Alfred some
sneering allusion
To "the doubtless sublime reveries
his intrusion
Had, he feared, interrupted. Mi-
lord would do better,
He fancied, however, to fold up a
letter
The writing of which was too well
known, in fact,
His remark as he passed to have
failed to attract."

XIII.

It was obvious to Alfred the French-
man was bent
Upon picking a quarrel! and doubt-
less 'twas meant
From *him* to provoke it by sneers
such as these.
A moment sufficed his quick instinct
to seize
The position. He felt that he could
not expose
His own name, or Lucile's, or Ma-
tilda's, to those
Idle tongues that would bring down
upon him the ban
Of the world, if he now were to fight
with this man.
And indeed, when he looked in the
Duke's haggard face,
He was pained by the change there
he could not but trace.
And he almost felt pity.

He therefore put by
Each remark from the Duke with
some careless reply,
And coldly, but courteously, waving
away
The ill-humor the Duke seemed re-
solved to display,
Rose, and turned, with a stern salu-
tation, aside.

XIV.

Then the Duke put himself in the
path, made one stride
In advance, raised a hand, fixed
upon him his eyes,
And said . . .

"Hold, Lord Alfred! Away with
disguise!
I will own that I sought you a mo-
ment ago,
To fix on you a quarrel. I still can
do so
Upon any excuse. I prefer to be
frank.
I admit not a rival in fortune or
rank
To the hand of a woman, whatever
be hers
Or her suitor's. I love the Comtesse
de Nevers.

I believed, ere you crossed me, and
still have the right
To believe, that she would have been
mine. To her sight
You return, and the woman is sud-
denly changed.
You step in between us: her heart
is estranged.
You! who now are betrothed to
another, I know:
You! whose name with Lucile's
nearly ten years ago
Was coupled by ties which you broke:
you! the man
I reproached on the day our acquaint-
ance began:
You! that left her so lightly,—I can-
not believe
That you love, as I love, her; nor
can I conceive
You, indeed, have the right so to
love her.

"Milord
I will not thus tamely concede, at
your word,
What, a few days ago, I believed to
be mine!
I shall yet persevere: I shall yet be,
in fine,
A rival you dare not despise. It is
plain

That to settle this contest there can
but remain
One way—need I say what it is ?”

XV.

Not unmoved
With regretful respect for the earnestness proved
By the speech he had heard, Alfred
Vargrave replied
In words which he trusted might
yet turn aside
The quarrel from which he felt
bound to abstain,
And, with stately urbanity, strove to
explain
To the Duke that he too (a fair
rival at worst !)
Had not been accepted.

XVI.

“Accepted! say first
Are you free to have offered ?”
Lord Alfred was mute.

XVII.

“Ah, you dare not reply!” cried the
Duke. “Why dispute,
Why palter with me? You are
silent! and why?
Because, in your conscience, you
cannot deny
'Twas from vanity wanton and
cruel withal,
And the wish an ascendancy lost to
recall,
That you stepped in between me and
her. If, milord,
You be really sincere, I ask only one
word.
Say at once you renounce her. At
once, on my part,
I will ask your forgiveness with all
truth of heart,
And there *can* be no quarrel between
us. Say on!”
Lord Alfred grew galled and im-
patient. This tone
roused a strong irritation he could
not repress.
“You have not the right, sir,” he
said, “and still less

The power, to make terms and con-
ditions with me.
I refuse to reply.”

XVIII.

As diviners may see
Fates they cannot avert in some
figure occult,
He foresaw in a moment each evil
result
Of the quarrel now imminent.
There, face to face,
'Mid the ruins and tombs of a long-
perished race,
With, for witness, the stern Autumn
Sky overhead,
And beneath them, unnoticed, the
graves, and the dead,
Those two men had met, as it were
on the ridge
Of that perilous, narrow, invisible
bridge
Dividing the Past from the Future,
so small
That, if one should pass over, the
other must fall.

XIX.

On the ear, at that moment, the
sound of a hoof,
Urged with speed, sharply smote;
and from under the roof
Of the forest in view, where the
skirts of it verged
On the heath where they stood, at
full gallop emerged
A horseman.
A guide he appeared, by the sash
Of red silk round the waist, and the
long leathern lash
With the short wooden handle, slung
crosswise behind
The short jacket; the loose canvas
trouser, confined
By the long boots; the woollen ca-
pote; and the rein,
A mere hempen cord on a curb.
Up the plain
He wheeled his horse, white with the
foam on his flank,
Leaped the rivulet lightly, turned
sharp from the bank.

And, approaching the Duke, raised
his woollen capote,
Bowed low in the selle, and deliv-
ered a note.

XX.

The two stood astonished. The
Duke, with a gest
Of apology, turned, stretched his
hand, and possessed
Himself of the letter, changed color,
and tore
The page open, and read.

Ere a moment was o'er
His whole aspect changed. A light
rose to his eyes,
And a smile to his lips. While with
startled surprise
Lord Alfred yet watched him, he
turned on his heel.

And said gayly, "A pressing re-
quest from Lucile!
You are quite right, Lord Alfred; fair
rivals at worst,
Our relative place may perchance be
reversed.

You are not accepted—nor free to
propose!

I, perchance, am accepted already;
who knows?

I had warned you, milord, I should
still persevere.

This letter—but stay! you can read it
—look here!"

XXI.

It was now Alfred's turn to feel
roused and enraged.

But Lucile to himself was not pledged
or engaged

By aught that could sanction resent-
ment. He said

Not a word, but turned round, took
the letter, and read . . .

*The COMTESSE DE NEVERS to the
DUC DE LUVOIS.*

"SAINT SAVIOUR.

"Your letter, which followed me
here, makes me stay
Till I see you again. With no mo-
ment's delay.

I entreat, I conjure you, by all that
you feel

Or profess, to come to me directly.

"LUCILE."

XXII.

"Your letter" He then had been
writing to her!

Coldly shrugging his shoulders, Lord
Alfred said, "Sir,

Do not let me detain you!"

The Duke smiled and bowed,
Placed the note in his bosom; ad-
dressed, half aloud,

A few words to the messenger: . . .
"Say your despatch

Will be answered ere nightfall;" then
glanced at his watch,

And turned back to the Baths.

XXIII.

Alfred Vargrave stood still,
Torn, distracted in heart, and divided
in will.

He turned to Lucile's farewell letter
to him,

And read over her words; rising tears
made them dim;

"*Doubt is over: my future is fixed
now,*" they said,

"*My course is decided.*" Her
course? what! to wed

With this insolent rival! With that
thought there shot

Through his heart an acute jealous
anguish. But not

Even thus could his clear worldly
sense quite excuse

Those strange words to the Duke.
She was free to refuse

Himself, free the Duke to accept, it
was true:

Even then, though, this eager and
strange rendezvous

How imprudent! To some unfre-
quented lone inn,

And so late (for the night was about
to begin)—

She, companionless there!—had she
bidden that man?

A fear, vague, and formless, and hor-
rible, ran

Through his heart.

XXIV.

At that moment he looked up, and
 saw,
 Riding fast through the forest, the
 Duc de Luvois,
 Who waved his hand to him, and
 sped out of sight.
 The day was descending. He felt
 'twould be night
 Ere that man reached Saint Saviour.

XXV.

He walked on, but not
 Back toward Luchon: he walked on,
 but knew not in what
 Direction, nor yet with what object,
 indeed,
 He was walking; but still he walked
 on without heed.

XXVI.

The day had been sullen; but,
 towards his decline,
 The sun sent a stream of wild light
 up the pine.
 Darkly denting the red light revealed
 at its back,
 The old ruined abbey rose roofless
 and black.
 The spring that yet oozed through
 the moss-paven floor
 Had suggested, no doubt, to the
 monks there, of yore,
 The site of that refuge where, back
 to its God
 How many a heart, now at rest
 'neath the sod,
 Had borne from the world all the
 same wild unrest
 That now preyed on his own!

XXVII.

By the thoughts in his breast
 With varying impulse divided and
 torn,
 He traversed the scant heath, and
 reached the forlorn
 Autumn woodland, in which but a
 short while ago
 He had seen the Duke rapidly enter;
 and so

He too entered. The light waned
 around him, and passed
 Into darkness. The wrathful, red
 Occident cast
 One glare of vindictive inquiry be-
 hind,
 As the last light of day from the high
 wood declined,
 And the great forest sighed its fare-
 well to the beam,
 And far off on the stillness the voice
 of the stream
 Fell faintly.

XXVIII.

O Nature, how fair is thy face,
 And how light is thy heart, and how
 friendless thy grace!
 Thou false mistress of man! thou
 dost sport with him lightly
 In his hours of ease and enjoyment;
 and brightly
 Dost thou smile to his smile; to his
 joys thou inclinest,
 But his sorrows, thou knowest them
 not, nor divinest.
 While he woos, thou art wanton;
 thou lettest him love thee;
 But thou art not his friend, for his
 grief cannot move thee;
 And at last, when he sickens and
 dies, what dost thou?
 All as gay are thy garments, as care-
 less thy brow,
 And thou laughest and toyest with
 any new comer,
 Not a tear more for winter, a smile
 less for summer!
 Hast thou never an anguish to heave
 the heart under
 That fair breast of thine, O thou
 feminine wonder!
 For all these—the young, and the
 fair, and the strong,
 Who have loved thee, and lived with
 thee gayly and long,
 And who now on thy bosom lie dead?
 and their deeds
 And their days are forgotten! O,
 hast thou no weeds
 And not one year of mourning,—one
 out of the many

That deck thy new bridals forever,—
 nor any
 Regrets for thy lost loves, concealed
 from the new,
 O thou widow of earth's genera-
 tions? Go to!
 If the sea and the night wind know
 aught of these things,
 They do not reveal it. We are not
 thy kings.

CANTO VI.

I.

"THE huntsman has ridden too far
 on the chase,
 And eldrich, and eerie, and strange
 is the place!
 The castle betokens a date long gone
 by.
 He crosses the court-yard with curi-
 ous eye:
 He wanders from chamber to cham-
 ber, and yet
 From strangeness to strangeness his
 footsteps are set;
 And the whole place grows wilder
 and wilder, and less
 Like aught seen before. Each in
 obsolete dress,
 Strange portraits regard him with
 looks of surprise,
 Strange forms from the arras start
 forth to his eyes;
 Strange epigraphs, blazoned, burn
 out of the wall:
 The spell of a wizard is over it all.
 In her chamber, enchanted, the
 Princess is sleeping
 The sleep which for centuries she
 has been keeping.
 If she smile in her sleep, it must be
 to some lover
 Whose lost golden locks the long
 grasses now cover:
 If she moan in her dream, it must
 be to deplore
 Some grief which the world cares to
 hear of no more.
 But how fair is her forehead, how
 calm seems her cheek!

And how sweet must that voice be,
 if once she would speak
 He looks and he loves her; but
 knows he (not he!)
 The clew to unravel this old mys-
 tery?
 And he stoops to those shut lips.
 The shapes on the wall,
 The mute men in armor around him
 and all
 The weird figures frown, as though
 striving to say,
 'Halt! invade not the Past, reck-
 less child of To-day!
 And give not, O madman! the heart
 in thy breast
 To a phantom, the soul of whose
 sense is possessed
 By an Age not thine own!'
 "But unconscious is he,
 And he heeds not the warning, he
 cares not to see
 Aught but *one* form before him!
 "Rash, wild words are o'er
 And the vision is vanished from
 sight evermore!
 And the gray morning sees, as it
 drearily moves
 O'er a land long deserted, a madman
 that roves
 Through a ruin, and seeks to re-
 capture a dream.
 Lost to life and its uses, withdrawn
 from the scheme
 Of man's waking existence, he wan-
 ders apart."
 And this is an old fairy-tale of the
 heart.
 It is told in all lands, in a different
 tongue;
 Told with tears by the old, heard
 with smiles by the young.
 And the tale to each heart unto
 which it is known
 Has a different sense. It has puz-
 zled my own.

II.

Eugène de Luvois was a man who,
 in part
 From strong physical health, and
 that vigor of heart

Which physical health gives, and
 partly, perchance,
 From a generous vanity native to
 France,
 With the heart of a hunter, what-
 ever the quarry,
 Pursued it, too hotly impatient to
 tarry
 Or turn, till he took it. His trophies
 were trifles :
 But trifter he was not. When rose-
 leaves it rifles,
 No less than when oak-trees it ruins,
 the wind
 Its pleasure pursues with impetuous
 mind.
 Both Engène de Luvois and Lord
 Alfred had been
 Men of pleasure: but men's pleasant
 vices, which, seen
 Floating faint, in the sunshine of
 Alfred's soft mood,
 Seemed amiable foibles, by Luvois
 pursued
 With impetuous passion, seemed
 semi-Satanic.
 Half pleased you see brooks play
 with pebbles; in panic
 You watch them whirled down by
 the torrent.
 In truth,
 To the sacred political creed of his
 youth
 The century which he was born to
 denied
 All realization. Its generous pride
 To degenerate protest on all things
 was sunk ;
 Its principles each to a prejudice
 shrunk.
 Down the path of a life that led no-
 where he trod,
 Where his whims were his guides,
 and his will was his god,
 And his pastime his purpose.
 From boyhood possessed
 Or inherited wealth, he had learned
 to invest
 Both his wealth and those passions
 wealth frees from the cage
 Which penury locks, in each vice of
 an age,

All the virtues of which, by the
 creed he revered.
 Were to him illegitimate.
 Thus, he appeared
 To the world what the world chose
 to have him appear,—
 The frivolous tyrant of Fashion, a
 mere
 Reformer in coats, cards, and ear-
 riages ! Still
 'Twas this vigor of nature, and ten-
 sion of will,
 That found for the first time—per-
 chance for the last—
 In Lucile what they lacked yet to
 free from the Past,
 Force, and faith, in the Future.
 And so, in his mind,
 To the anguish of losing the woman
 was joined
 The terror of missing his life's des-
 tination,
 Which in her had its mystical repre-
 sentation.

III.

And truly, the thought of it, scaring
 him, passed
 O'er his heart, while he now through
 the twilight rode fast.
 As a shade from the wing of some
 great bird obscene
 In a wild silent land may be sud-
 denly seen,
 Darkening over the sands, where it
 startles and scares
 Some traveller strayed in the waste
 unawares,
 So that thought more than once
 darkened over his heart
 For a moment, and rapidly seemed
 to depart.
 Fast and furious he rode through the
 thickets which rose
 Up the shaggy hillside ; and the
 quarrelling crows
 Clanged above him, and clustering
 down the dim air
 Dropped into the dark woods. By
 fits here and there
 Shepherd fires faintly gleamed from
 the valleys. O how

He envied the wings of each wild
bird, as now

He urged the steed over the dizzy
ascent

Of the mountains ! Behind him a
murmur was sent

From the torrent, — Before him a
sound from the tracts

Of the woodlands that waved o'er
the wild cataracts,

And the loose earth and loose stones
rolled momentarily down

From the hoofs of his steed to abysses
unknown.

The red day had fallen beneath the
black woods,

And the Powers of the night through
the vast solitudes

Walked abroad and conversed with
each other. The trees

Were in sound and in motion, and
muttered like seas

In Elfland. The road through the
forest was hollowed.

On he sped through the darkness, as
though he were followed

Fast, fast by the Erl king !

The wild wizard-work
Of the forest at last opened sharp,
o'er the fork

Of a savage ravine, and behind the
black stems

Of the last trees, whose leaves in the
light gleamed like gems,

Broke the broad moon above the
voluminous

Rock-chaos, — the Hecate of that
Tartarus !

With his horse reeking white, he at
last reached the door

Of a small mountain inn, on the
brow of a hoar

Craggy promontory, o'er a fissure as
grim,

Through which, ever roaring, there
leaped o'er the limb

Of the rent rock a torrent of water,
from sight,

Into pools that were feeding the
roots of the night.

A balcony hung o'er the water.
Above

In a glimmering casement a shade
seemed to move.

At the door the old negress was nod-
ding her head

As he reached it. "My mistress
awaits you," she said.

And up the rude stairway of creak-
ing pine rafter

He followed her silent. A few mo-
ments after,

His heart almost stunned him, his
head seemed to reel,

For a door closed—Luvois was alone
with Lucile.

IV.

In a gray travelling dress, her dark
hair unconfined

Streaming o'er it, and tossed now
and then by the wind

From the lattice, that waved the
dull flame in a spire

From a brass lamp before her,—a
faint hectic fire

On her cheek, to her eyes lent the
lustre of fever.

They seemed to have wept them-
selves wider than ever,

Those dark eyes,—so dark and so
deep !

"You relent ?
And your plans have been changed

by the letter I sent ?"

There his voice sank, borne down
by a strong inward strife.

LUCILE.

Your letter ! yes, Duke. For it
threatens man's life,—

Woman's honor.

LUVOIS.

The last, madam, *not !*

LUCILE.

Both. I glance
At your own words ; blush, son of

the knighthood of France,
As I read them ! You say in this

letter . . .

"I know

Why now you refuse me ; 'tis (is it not so ?)

For the man who has trifled before, wantonly,

And now trifles again with the heart you deny

To myself. But he shall not ! By man's lust wild law,

I will seize on the right (the right, Duc de Luvois !)

To avenge for you, woman, the past, and to give

To the future its freedom. That man shall not live

To make you as wretched as you have made me ! "

LUVOIS.

Well, madam, in those words what word do you see

That threatens the honor of woman ?

LUCILE.

See ! . . . what, what word, do you ask ? Every word ! would you not,

Had I taken your hand thus, have felt that your name

Was soiled and dishonored by more than mere shame

If the woman that bore it had first been the cause

Of the crime which in these words is menaced ? You pause !

Woman's honor, you ask ? Is there, sir, no dishonor

In the smile of a woman, when men, gazing on her,

Can shudder, and say, "In that smile is a grave ?"

No ! you can have no cause, Duke, for no right you have

In the contest you menace. That contest but draws

Every right into ruin. By all human laws

Of man's heart I forbid it, by all sanctities

Of man's social honor !

The Duke drooped his eyes. "I obey you," he said, "but let woman beware

How she plays fast and loose thus with human despair,

And the storm in man's heart. Madam, yours was the right,

When you saw that I hoped, to extinguish hope quite,

But you should from the first have done this, for I feel

That you knew from the first that loved you."

Lucile

This sudden reproach seemed to startle.

She raised

A slow, wistful regard to his features, and gazed

On them silent awhile. His own looks were downcast

Through her heart, whence its first wild alarm was now passed,

Pity crept, and perchance o'er her conscience a tear,

Falling softly, awoke it.

However severe,

Were they unjust, these sudden upbraidings, to her ?

Had she lightly misconstrued this man's character,

Which had seemed, even when most impassioned it seemed,

Too self-conscious to lose all in love ? Had she deemed

That this airy, gay, insolent man of the world,

So proud of the place the world gave him, held furled

In his bosom no passion which once shaken wide

Might tug, till it snapped, that erect lofty pride ?

Were those elements in him, which once roused to strife

Overtthrow a whole nature, an change a whole life ?

There are two kinds of strength. One, the strength of the river

Which through continents pushes its pathway forever

To fling its fond heart in the sea ; if it lose

This, the aim of its life, it is lost to its use.

It goes mad, is diffused into deluge,
and dies.

The other, the strength of the sea ;
which supplies

Its deep life from mysterious sources,
and draws

The river's life into its own life, by
laws

Which it heeds not. The difference
in each case is this :

The river is lost, if the ocean it
miss ;

If the sea miss the river, what mat-
ter ? The sea

Is the sea still, forever. Its deep
heart will be

Self-sufficing, unconscions of loss as
of yore ;

Its sources are infinite ; still to the
shore,

With no diminution of pride, it will
say,

" I am here ; I, the sea ! stand aside,
and make way ! "

Was his love, then, the love of the
river ? and she,

Had she taken that love for the love
of the sea ?

V.

At that thought, from her aspect
whatever had been

Stern or haughty departed ; and,
humbled in mien,

She approached him, and brokenly
murmured, as though

To herself more than him, " Was I
wrong ? is it so ?

Hear me, Duke ! you must feel that,
whatever you deem

Your right to reproach me in this,
your esteem

! may claim on *one* ground,—I at
least am sincere.

You say that to me from the first it
was clear

That you loved me. But what if
this knowledge were known

At a moment in life when I felt most
alone,

And least able to be so ? A moment,
in fact,

When I strove from one haunting
regret to retract

And emancipate life, and once more
to fulfil

Woman's destinies, duties, and
hopes ? would you still

So bitterly blame me, Eugène de
Luvois,

If I hoped to see all this, or deemed
that I saw

For a moment the promise of this,
in the plighted

Affection of one who, in nature,
united

So much that from others affection
might claim

If only affection were free ? Do you
blame

The hope of that moment ? I
deemed my heart free

From all, saving sorrow. I deemed
that in me

There was yet strength to mould it
once more to my will,

To uplift it once more to my hope.
Do you still

Blame me, Duke, that I did not then
bid you refrain

From hope ? alas ! I too then
hoped ! "

LUVUOIS.

O, again,

Yet again, say that thrice-blesséd
word ! say, Lucile,

That you then deigned to hope—

LUCILE.

Yes ! to hope I could feel,
And could give to you, that without

which, all else given
Were but to deceive, and to injure

you even :—
A heart free from thoughts of another.

Say, then,
Do you blame that one hope ?

LUVUOIS.

O Lucile !

" Say again, "

She resumed, gazing down, and with
faltering tone,

"Do you blame me that, when I at last had to cwin
To my heart that the hope it had
cherished was o'er,
And forever, I said to you then,
'Hope no more?'
I myself hoped no more!"

With but ill-suppressed wrath
The Duke answered . . . "What,
then! he recrosses your path
This man, and you have but to see
him, despite
Of his troth to another, to take back
that light
Worthless heart to your own, which
he wronged? years ago!"

Lucile faintly, brokenly murmured,
. . . "No! no!"

'Tis not that—but alas!—but I cannot
conceal

That I have not forgotten the past—
but I feel

That I cannot accept all these gifts
on your part,—

In return for what . . . ah, Duke,
what is it? . . . a heart

Which is only a ruin!"

With words warm and wild,
"Though a ruin it be, trust me yet
to rebuild

And restore it," Luvois cried ;
"though ruined it be,

Since so dear is that ruin, ah, yield
it to me!"

He approached her. She shrank
back. The grief in her eyes

Answered, "No!"

An emotion more fierce seemed to
rise

And to break into flame, as though
fired by the light

Of that look, in his heart. He ex-
claimed, "Am I right ?

You reject me! accept him ?"

"I have not done so,"
She said firmly. He hoarsely re-
sumed, "Not yet.—no!

But can you with accents as firm
promise me

That you will not accept him ?"

"Accept? Is he free ?
Free to offer?" she said.

"You evade me, Lucile,"
He replied; "ah, you will not avow
what you feel!

He might make himself free? O,
you blush,—turn away!

Dare you openly look in my face,
lady, say!

While you deign to reply to one
question from me?

I may hope not, you tell me: but tell
me, may he?

What! silent? I alter my question.
If quite

Freed in faith from this troth, might
he hope then?"

"He might,"
She said softly.

VI.

Those two whispered words, in his
breast,

As he heard them, in one maddening
moment releast

All that's evil and fierce in man's
nature, to crush

And extinguish in man all that's
good. In the rush

Of wild jealousy, all the fierce pas-
sions that waste

And darken and devastate intellect,
chased

From its realm human reason. The
wild animal

In the bosom of man was set free.
And of all

Human passions the fiercest, fierce
jealousy, fierce

As the fire, and more wild than the
whirlwind, to pierce

And to rend, rushed upon him; fierce
jealousy, swelled

By all passions bred from it, and
ever impelled

To involve all things else in the an-
guish within it,

And on others inflict its own pangs!
At that minute

What passed through his mind, who
shall say? who may tell

The dark thoughts of man's heart,
which the red glare of hell

Can illumine alone?

He stared wildly around
That lone place, so lonely! That silence!
Reached that room, through the dark evening air,
save the drear drip and roar of the cataract ceaseless and near!

It was midnight all round on the weird silent weather;
Deep midnight in him! They two,— lone and together,
Himself, and that woman defenceless before him!

The triumph and bliss of his rival flashed o'er him.

The abyss of his own black despair seemed to ope

At his feet, with that awful exclusion of hope

Which Dante read over the city of doom.

All the Tarquin passed into his soul in the gloom.

And, uttering words he dared never recall,

Words of insult and menace, he thundered down all

The brewed storm-cloud within him: its flashes scorched blind

His own senses. His spirit was driven on the wind

Of a reckless emotion beyond his control;

A torrent seemed loosened within him. His soul

Surged up from that caldron of passion that hissed

And seethed in his heart.

VII.

He had thrown, and had missed His last stake.

VIII.

For, transfigured, she rose from the place

Where he rested o'erawed: a saint's scorn on her face;

Such a dread *vade retro* was written in light

On her forehead, the fiend would himself, at that sight,

Have sunk back abashed to perdition. I know

If Lucretia at Tarquin but once had looked so,

She had needed no dagger next morning.

She rose
And swept to the door, like that phantom the snows

Feel at nightfall sweep o'er them, when daylight is gone,

And Caucasus is with the moon all alone.

There she paused; and, as though from immeasurable,

Insurpassable distance, she murmured—

“Farewell!

We, alas! have mistaken each other.

Once more

Illusion, to-night, in my lifetime is o'er.

Duc de Luvois, adieu!”

From the heart-breaking gloom Of that vacant, reproachful, and desolate room,

He felt she was gone,—gone forever!

IX.

No word,
The sharpest that ever was edged by a sword,

Could have pierced to his heart with such keen accusation

As the silence, the sudden profound isolation,

In which he remained.

“O, return; I repent!”
He exclaimed; but no sound through the stillness was sent,

Save the roar of the water, in answer to him,

And the beetle that, sleeping, yet hummed her night-hymn:

An indistinct anthem, that troubled the air

With a searching, and wistful, and questioning prayer.

“Return,” sung the wandering insect. The roar

Of the waters replied, “Nevermore! nevermore!”

He walked to the window. The
 spray on his brow
 Was flung cold from the whirlpools
 of water below;
 The frail wooden balcony shook in
 the sound
 Of the torrent. The mountains
 gloomed sullenly round
 A candle one ray from a closed case-
 ment flung.
 O'er the dim balustrade all bewil-
 dered he hung.
 Vaguely watching the broken and
 shimmering blink
 Of the stars on the veering and vitre-
 ous brink
 Of that snake-like prone column of
 water; and listing
 Aloof o'er the languors of air the per-
 sisting
 Sharp horn of the gray gnat. Before
 he relinquished
 His unconscious employment, that
 light was extinguished.
 Wheels, at last, from the inn door
 aroused him. He ran
 Down the stairs; reached the door—
 just to see her depart.
 Down the mountain the carriage was
 speeding.

x.

His heart

Pealed the knell of its last hope. He
 rushed on; but whither
 He knew not—on, into the dark
 cloudy weather—
 The midnight—the mountains—on,
 over the shelf
 O! the precipice—on, still—away
 from himself!
 Till, exhausted, he sank 'mid the
 dead leaves and moss
 At the mouth of the forest. A glim-
 mering cross
 Of gray stone stood for prayer by the
 woodside. He sank
 Prayerless, powerless, down at its
 base, 'mid the dank
 Weeds and grasses; his face hid
 amongst them. He knew

That the night had divided his whole
 life in two.
 Behind him a Past that was over for-
 ever, [deavor
 Before him a Future devoid of en-
 And purpose. He felt a remorse for
 the one,
 Of the other a fear. What remained
 to be done?
 Whither now should he turn? Turn
 again, as before,
 To his old easy, careless existence of
 yore
 He could not. He felt that for bet-
 ter or worse
 A change had passed o'er him; an
 angry remorse
 Of his own frantic failure and error
 had marred
 Such a refuge forever. The future
 seemed barred
 By the corpse of a dead hope o'er
 which he must tread
 To attain it. Life's wilderness round
 him was spread.
 What clew there to cling by?
 He clung by a name
 To a dynasty fallen forever. He came
 Of an old princely house, true
 through change to the race
 And the sword of Saint Louis,—a
 faith 'twere disgrace
 To relinquish, and folly to live for
 Nor less
 Was his ancient religion (once potent
 to bless
 Or to ban; and the crozier his ances-
 tors kneeled
 To adore, when they fought for the
 Cross, in hard field,
 With the Crescent) become ere it
 reached him, tradition;
 A mere faded badge of a social posi-
 tion;
 A thing to retain and say nothing
 about,
 Lest, if used, it should draw degrada-
 tion from doubt.
 Thus, the first time he sought them,
 the creeds of his youth
 Wholly failed the strong needs of his
 manhood, in truth!

And beyond them, what region of
 refuge? what field
 For employment, this civilized age,
 did it yield,
 In that civilized land? or to thought?
 or to action?
 Blind deliriums, bewildered and end-
 less distraction!
 Not even a desert, not even the cell
 Of a hermit to flee to, wherein he
 might quell
 The wild devil-instincts which now,
 unreprest,
 Run riot through that ruined world
 in his breast.

XI.

So he lay there, like Lucifer, fresh
 from the sight
 Of a heaven scaled and lost; in the
 wide arms of night
 O'er the howling abysses of nothing-
 ness! There
 As he lay, Nature's deep voice was
 teaching him prayer;
 But what had he to pray to?

The winds in the woods
 The voices abroad o'er those vast
 solitudes,
 Were in commune all round with the
 invisible Power
 That walked the dim world by Him-
 self at that hour.
 But their language he had not yet
 learned—in despite
 Of the much he *had* learned—or for-
 gotten it quite,
 With its once native accents. Alas!
 what had he
 To add to that deep-toned sublime
 symphony
 Of thanksgiving? . . . A fiery-finger
 was still
 Scorching into his heart some dread
 sentence. His will,
 Like a wind that is put to no purpose,
 was wild
 At its work of destruction within
 him. The child
 Of an infidel age, he had been his
 own god,
 His own devil.

He sat on the damp mountain sod,
 And stared sullenly up at the dark
 sky.

The clouds
 Had heaped themselves over the
 bare west in crowds
 Of misshapen, incongruous portents.
 A green
 Streak of dreary, cold, luminous
 ether, between
 The base of their black barricades,
 and the ridge
 Of the grim world, gleamed ghastly,
 as under some bridge,
 Cyclop-sized, in a city of ruins o'er-
 thrown
 By sieges forgotten, some river, un-
 known
 And unnamed, widens on into deso-
 late lands
 While he gazed, that cloud-city in-
 visible hands
 Dismantled and rent; and revealed,
 through a loop
 In the braided dark, the blemished
 and half-broken hoop
 Of the moon, which soon silently
 sank; and anon
 The whole supernatural pageant was
 gone.
 The wide night, discomfited, con-
 scious of loss,
 Darkened round him. One object
 alone—that gray cross—
 Glimmered faint on the dark. Gaz-
 ing up, he descried
 Through the void air, its desolate
 arms outstretched wide,
 As though to embrace him.
 He turned from the sight,
 Set his face to the darkness, and fled.

XII.

When the light
 Of the dawn grayly flickered and
 glared on the spent
 Worn ends of the night, like a
 hope that is sent
 To the need of some grief when its
 need is the sorest,
 He was sullenly riding across the
 dark forest

Towards Luchon.

Thus riding, with eyes of defiance
Set against the young day, as dis-
claiming alliance

With aught that the day brings to
man, he perceived

Faintly, suddenly, fleetingly, through
the damp-leaved

Autumn branches that put forth
gaunt arms on his way,

The face of a man pale and wistful,
and gray

With the gray glare of morning.
Eugène de Luvois,

With the sense of a strange second
sight, when he saw

'That phantom-like face, could at
once recognize,

By the sole instinct now left to guide
him, the eyes

Of his rival, though fleeting the
vision and dim,

With a stern and inquiry fixed keen-
ly on him.

And, to meet it, a lie leaped at once
to his own;

A lie born of that lying darkness now
grown

Over all in his nature! He answered
that gaze

With a look which, if ever a man's
look conveys

More intensely than words what a
man means, conveyed

Beyond doubt in its smile an an-
nouncement which said,

*" have triumphed. The question
your eyes would imply*

comes too late, Alfred Vargrave !"

And so he rode by,
and rode out of sight,

leaving that look behind him to
rattle and bite.

XIII.

And it bit, and it rankled.

XIV.

Lord Alfred, scarce knowing,
Or choosing, or heeding the way he
was going,

By one wild hope impelled, by one
wild fear pursued,

And led by one instinct, which seem-
ed to exclude

From his mind every human sensa-
tion, save one—

The torture of doubt—had strayed
moodily on,

Down the highway deserted, that
evening in which

With the Duke he had parted
strayed on, through the rich

Haze of sunset, or into the gradual
night,

Which darkened, unnoticed, the
land from his sight,

Toward Saint Saviour; nor did the
changed aspect of all

The wild scenery round him avail to
recall (tions, until,

To his senses their normal percep-
As he stood on the black shaggy
brow of the hill

At the mouth of the forest, the
moon, which had hung

Two dark hours in a cloud, slipped
on fire from among

The rent vapors, and sunk o'er the
ridge of the world.

Then he lifted his eyes, and saw
round him unfurled,

In one moment of splendor, the
leagues of dark trees,

And the long rocky line of the wild
Pyrenees.

And he knew by the milestone scored
rough on the face

Of the bare rock, he was but two
hours from the place

Where Lucile and Luvois must have
met. This same track

The Duke must have traversed, per-
force, to get back

To Luchon; not yet then the Duke
had returned!

He listened, he looked up the dark,
but discerned

Not a trace, not a sound of a horse
by the way.

He knew that the night was ap-
proaching to day.

He resolved to proceed to Saint Saviour. The morn
Which, at last, through the forest
broke chill and forlorn.
Revealed to him, riding toward Luchon, the Duke.

'Twas then that the two men exchanged look for look.

XV.

And the Duke's rankled in him.

XVI.

He rushed on. He tore
His path through the thicket. He
reached the inn door,
Roused the yet drowsing porter, reluctant to rise,
And inquired for the Countess. The man rubbed his eyes.
The Countess was gone. And the Duke?

The man stared
A sleepy inquiry.

With accents that scared
The man's dull sense awake, "He, the stranger," he cried,
"Who had been there that night!"
The man grinned and replied,
With a vacant intelligence, "He, O ay, ay!"

He went after the lady."
No further reply
Could he give. Alfred Vargrave demanded no more,

Flung a coin to the man, and so turned from the door.
"What! the Duke then the night in that lone inn had passed?"

In that lone inn—with her!" Was that look he had cast
When they met in the forest, that look which remained
On his mind with its terrible smile, thus explained?

XVII.

The day was half turned to the evening, before
He re-entered Luchon, with a heart sick and sore.
In the midst of a light crowd of babblers, his look,

By their voices attracted, distinguished the Duke,
Gay, insolent, noisy, with eyes sparkling bright,
With laughter, shrill, airy, continuing
Through the throng Alfred Vargrave, with swift sombre

stride,
Glided on. The Duke noticed him turned, stepped aside,
And, cordially grasping his hand, whispered low,

"O, how right have you been! There can never be—no, Never—any more contest between us! Milord,

Let us henceforth be friends!"
Having uttered that word,
He turned lightly round on his heel, and again

His gay laughter was heard, echoed loud by that train
Of his young imitators.

Lord Alfred stood still,
Rooted, stunned to the spot. He felt weary and ill,
Out of heart with his own heart, and sick to the soul,

With a dull, stifling anguish he could not control.

Does he hear in a dream, through the buzz of the crowd,
The Duke's blithe associates, babbling aloud

Some comment upon his gay humor that day?

He never was gayer: what makes him so gay?

'Tis, no doubt, say the flatterers, flattering in tune,

Some vestal whose virtue no tongue dare impugn

Has at last found a Mars,—who, of course, shall be nameless.

The vestal that yields to Mars *only* is blameless!

Hark! hears he a name which thus syllabled, stirs

All his heart into tumult? . . . Lucile de Nevers

With the Duke's coupled gayly, in
 some laughing, light,
 Free allusion? Not so as might
 give him the right
 To turn fiercely round on the
 speaker, but yet
 To a trite and irreverent compliment
 set!

XVIII.

Slowly, slowly, usurping that place
 in his soul
 Where the thought of Lucile was
 enshrined, did there roll
 Back again, back again, on its
 smooth downward course
 O'er his nature, with gathered mo-
 mentum and force,
 THE WORLD.

XIX.

"No!" he muttered, "she cannot
 have sinned!
 True! women there are (self-named
 women of mind!)
 Who love rather liberty — liberty,
 yes!
 To choose and to leave—than the
 legalized stress
 Of the lovingest marriage. But she
 —is she so?
 I will not believe it. Lucile? O no,
 no!
 Not Lucile!
 "But the world? and, ah, what
 would it say?
 O the look of that man, and his
 laughter, to-day!
 The gossip's light question! the
 slanderous jest!
 She is right! no, we could not be
 happy. 'Tis best
 As it is. I will write to her,—write,
 O my heart!
 And accept her farewell. *Our fare-
 well!* must we part,—
 Part thus, then,—forever, Lucile?
 Is it so?
 Yes! I feel it. We could not be
 happy, I know.
 'Twas a dream! we must waken!"

XX.

With head bowed, as though
 By the weight of the heart's resigna-
 tion, and slow
 Moody footsteps, he turned to his
 inn.

Drawn apart
 From the gate, in the court-yard,
 and ready to start,
 Postboys mounted, portinanteaus
 packed up and made fast,
 A travelling-carriage, unnoticed, he
 passed.
 He ordered his horse to be ready
 anon:
 Sent, and paid, for the reckoning,
 and slowly passed on,
 And ascended the staircase, and en-
 tered his room.
 It was twilight. The chamber was
 dark in the gloom
 Of the evening. He listlessly kindled
 a light
 On the mantel-piece; there a large
 card caught his sight,—
 A large card, a stout card, well print-
 ed and plain,
 Nothing flourishing, flimsy, affected,
 or vain.
 It gave a respectable look to the slab
 That it lay on. The name was—

SIR RIDLEY MACNAB.

Full familiar to him was the name
 that he saw,
 For 'twas that of his own future
 uncle-in-law,
 Mrs. Darcy's rich brother, the bank
 er, well-known
 As wearing the longest-phylacteried
 gown
 Of all the rich Pharisees England
 can boast of;
 A shrewd Puritan Scot, whose sharp
 wits made the most of

This world and the next ; having largely invested
 Not only where treasure is never molested
 By thieves, moth, or rust ; but on this earthly ball
 Where interest was high, and security small,
 Of mankind there was never a theory yet
 Not by some individual instance upset :
 And so to that sorrowful verse of the Psalm
 Which declares that the wicked expand like the palm
 In a world where the righteous are stunted and pent,
 A cheering exception did Ridley present.
 Like the worthy of Uz, Heaven prospered his piety.
 The leader of every religious society, Christian knowledge he labored through life to promote
 With personal profit, and knew how to quote
 Both the Stocks and the Scripture, with equal advantage
 To himself and admiring friends, in this Cant-Age.

XXI.

Whilst over this card Alfred vacantly brooded,
 A waiter his head through the doorway protruded ;
 "Sir Ridley MacNab with Milord wished to speak."
 Alfred Vargrave could feel there were tears on his cheek :
 He brushed them away with a gesture of pride.
 He glanced at the glass ; when his own face he eyed.
 He was scared by its pallor. Inclining his head,
 He with tones calm, unshaken, and silvery, said,
 Sir Ridley may enter."

In three minutes more

That benign apparition appeared at the door.
 Sir Ridley, released for a while from the cares
 Of business, and minded to breathe the pure airs
 Of the blue Pyrenees, and enjoy his release,
 In company there with his sister and niece,
 Found himself now at Luchon,—distributing tracts,
 Sowing seed by the way, and collecting new facts
 For Exeter Hall ; he was starting that night
 For Bigorre : he had heard, to his cordial delight,
 That Lord Alfred was there, and, himself, setting out
 For the same destination : impatient, no doubt !
 Here some commonplace compliments as to "the marriage"
 Through his speech trickled softly, like honey : his carriage
 Was ready. A storm seemed to threaten the weather :
 If his young friend agreed, why not travel together ?

With a footstep uncertain and restless, a frown
 Of perplexity, during this speech, up and down
 Alfred Vargrave was striding ; but, after a pause
 And a slight hesitation, the which seemed to cause
 Some surprise to Sir Ridley, he answered,—“My dear
 Sir Ridley, allow me a few moments here—
 Half an hour at the most—to conclude an affair
 Of a nature so urgent as hardly to spare
 My presence (which brought me, indeed, to this spot),
 Before I accept your kind offer.”
 “Why not ?”

Said Sir Ridley, and smiled. Alfred
Vargrave, before

Sir Lidley observed it, had passed
through the door.

A few moments later, with footsteps
revealing

Intense agitation of uncontrolled
feeling,

He was rapidly pacing the garden be-
What passed through his mind then
is more than I know,

But before one half-hour into dark-
ness had fled,

In the court-yard he stood with Sir
Ridley. His tread

Was firm and composed. Not a sign
on his face

Betrayed there the least agitation.
"The place

You so kindly have offered," he said,
"I accept."

And he stretched out his hand. The
two travellers stepped

Smiling into the carriage.

And thus, out of sight,
They drove down the dark road, and
into the night.

XXII.

Sir Ridley was one of those wise men
who, so far

As their power of saying it goes, say
with Zophar,

"We, no doubt, are the people, and
wisdom shall die with us!"

Though of wisdom like theirs there
is no small supply with us.

Side by side in the carriage en-
sconced, the two men

Began to converse, somewhat crows-
sily, when

Alfred suddenly thought,—"Here's
a man of ripe age,

At my side, by his fellows reputed
as sage,

Who looks happy, and therefore who
must have been wise:

Suppose I with caution reveal to his
eyes

Some few of the reasons which make
me believe

That I neither am happy nor wise ?
'twould relieve

And enlighten, perchance, my own
darkness and doubt."

For which purpose a feeler he softly
put out.

It was snapped up at once.

"What is truth?" jesting Pi-
ate

Asked, and passed from the question
at once with a smile at

Its utter futility. Had he addressed
it

To Ridley MacNab, he at least had
confessed it

Admitted discussion! and certainly
no man

Could more promptly have answered
the skeptical Roman

Than Ridley. Hear some street as-
tronomer talk!

Grant him two or three hearers, a
morsel of chalk,

And forthwith on the pavement he'll
sketch you the scheme

Of the heavens. Then hear him en-
large on his theme!

Not afraid of La Place, nor of Arago,
he!

He'll prove you the whole plan in
plain A B C.

Here's your sun,—call him A; B's
the moon; it is clear

How the rest of the alphabet brings
up the rear

Of the planets. Now ask Arago, ask
La Place,

(Your sages, who speak with the
heavens face to face!)

Their science in plain A B C to ac-
cord

To your point-blank inquiry, my
friends! not a word

Will you get for your pains from
their sad lips. Alas!

Not a drop from the bottle that's
quite full will pass.

'Tis the half-empty vessel that freest
emits

The water that's in it. 'Tis thus
with men's wits;

Or at least with their knowledge. A
 man's capability
 Of imparting to others a truth with
 facility (exactness
 Is proportioned forever with painful
 To the portable nature, the vulgar
 compactness,
 The minuteness in size, or the light-
 ness in weight
 Of the truth he imparts. So small
 coins circulate
 More freely than large ones. A beg-
 gar asks alms,
 And we fling him a sixpence, nor
 feel any qualms ;
 But if every street charity shook an
 investment,
 Or each beggar to clothe we must
 strip off a vestment,
 The length of the process would
 limit the act ;
 And therefore the truth that's sum-
 med up in a tract
 Is most lightly dispensed.

As for Alfred, indeed,
 On what spoonfuls of truth he was
 suffered to feed
 By Sir Ridley, I know not. This
 only I know,
 That the two men thus talking con-
 tinued to go
 Onward somehow, together,—on
 into the night,—
 The midnight,—in which they es-
 cape from our sight.

XXIII.

And meanwhile a world had been
 changed in its place,
 And those glittering chains that o'er
 blue balmy space
 Hang the blessing of darkness, had
 drawn out of sight,
 To solace unseen hemispheres, the
 soft night ;
 And the dew of the dayspring be-
 nignly descended,
 And the fair morn to all things new
 sanction extended,
 In the smile of the East. And the
 lark soaring on,

Lost in light, shook the dawn with
 a song from the sun.

And the world laughed.

It wanted but two rosy hours
 From the noon, when they passed
 through the thick passion-
 flowers

Of the little wild garden that dim-
 pled before

The small house where their car-
 riage now stopped, at Bigorre.

And more fair than the flowers,
 more fresh than the dew,

With her white morning robe flitting
 joyously through

The dark shrubs with which the soft
 hillside was clothed,

Alfred Vargrave perceived, where he
 paused, his betrothed.

Matilda sprang to him, at once, with
 a face

Of such sunny sweetness, such glad-
 ness, such grace,

And radiant confidence, childlike
 delight,

That his whole heart upbraided it-
 self at that sight.

And he murmured, or sighed, "O,
 how could I have strayed

From this sweet child, or suffered in
 aught to invade

Her young claim on my life, though
 it were for an hour,

The thought of another ?"

"Look up, my sweet flower !"
 He whispered her softly, "my heart
 unto thee

Is returned, as returns to the rose
 the wild bee !"

"And will wander no more ?"
 laughed Matilda.

"No more"

He repeated. And, low to himself,
 "Yes, 'tis o'er !"

My course, too, is decided, Lucile !
 Was I blind

To have dreamed that these clever
 Frenchwomen of mind

Could satisfy simply a plain English
 heart,

Or sympathize with it ?"

XXIV.

And here the first part
Of this drama is over. The curtain
falls furled
On the actors within it,—the Heart
and the World.
Wood and wooer have played with
the riddle of life,
Have they solved it?
Appear! answer, Husband and
Wife!

XXV.

Yet, ere bidding farewell to Lucile
de Nevers,
Bear her own heart's farewell in this
letter of hers.

*The COMTESSE DE NEVERS to a
FRIEND IN INDIA.*

"Once more, O my friend, to your
arms and your heart,
And the places of old . . . never,
never to part!
Once more to the palm and the foun-
tain! Once more
To the land of my birth, and the
deep skies of yore!
From the cities of Europe, pursued
by the fret
Of their turmoil wherever my foot-
steps are set;
From the children that cry for the
birth, and behold,
There is no strength to bear them,
—old Time is so old!
From the world's weary masters,
that come upon earth
Sapped and mined by the fever they
bear from their birth:
From the men of small stature, mere
parts of a crowd,
Born too late, when the strength of
the world hath been bowed;
Back,—back to the Orient, from
whose sunbright womb
Sprang the giants which now are no
more, in the bloom
And the beauty of times that are
faded forever!
To the palms! to the tombs! to the
still Sacred River!

Where I too, the child of a day that
is done,
First leapt into life, and looked up
at the sun.
Back again, back again, to the hill-
tops of home
I come. O my friend, my consoler, I
come!
Are the three intense stars, that we
watched night by night
Burning broad on the band of Orion,
as bright?
Are the large Indian moons as re-
rene as of old,
When, as children, we gathered the
moonbeans for gold?
Do you yet recollect me, my friend?
Do you still
Remember the free games we played
on the hill,
'Mid those huge stones upheaped,
where we recklessly trod
O'er the old ruined fane of the old
ruined god?
How he frowned, while around him
we carelessly played!
That frown on my life ever after
hath stayed,
Like the shade of a soleris experi-
ence uncast
From some vague supernatural grief
in the past.
For the poor god, in pain, more than
anger, he frowned,
To perceive that our youth, though
so fleeting, had found,
In its transient and ignorant glad-
ness, the bliss
Which his science divine seemed di-
vinely to miss.
Alas! you may haply remember me
yet
The free child, whose bliss in childhood
myself I forget.
I come—a sad woman, defrauded of
rest:
I bear to you only a laboring breast:
My heart is a storm-beaten ark,
wildly hurled
O'er the whirlpools of time, with the
wrecks of a world:

The dove from my bosom hath flown
far away ;

It is flown, and returns not, though
many a day

I have watched from the windows
of life for its coming.

Friend, I sigh for repose, I am
weary of roaming.

I know not what Ararat rises for me
Far away, o'er the waves of the
wandering sea :

I know not what rainbow may yet,
from far hills, [tion of ills:

Lift the promise of hope, the cessa-
But a voice, like the voice of my

youth, in my breast
Wakes and whispers me on—to the

East ! to the East !
Shall I find the child's heart that I

left there ? or find
The lost youth I recall with its pure

peace of mind ?
Alas ! who shall number the drops

of the rain ?
Or give to the dead leaves their

greenness again ?
Who shall seal up the caverns the

earthquake hath rent ?
Who shall bring forth the winds that

within them are pent ?
To a voice who shall render an im-
age ? or who

From the heats of the noontide shall
gather the dew ?

I have burned out within me the
fuel of life

Wherefore lingers the flame ? Rest
is sweet after strife.

I would sleep for a while. I am
weary.

“ My friend,
I had meant in these lines to re-
gather, and send

To our old home, my life's scattered
links. But 'tis vain !

Each attempt seems to shatter the
chaplet again ;

Only fit now for fingers like mine to
run o'er,

Who return, a recluse, to those
cloisters of yore

Whence too far I have wandered.

“ How many long years
Does it seem to me now since the
quick, scorching tears,

While I wrote to you, splashed out a
girl's premature

Moans of pain at what women in si-
lence endure !

To your eyes, friend of mine, and to
your eyes alone,

That now long-faded page of my life
hath been shown

Which recorded my heart's birth,
and death, as you know,

Many years since,—how many !
“ A few months ago

I seemed reading it backward, that
page ! Why explain

Whence or how ? The old dream of
my life rose again.

The old superstition ! the idol of old !
It is over. The leaf trodden down

in the mould
Is not to the forest more lost than to
me

That emotion. I bury it here by the
sea

Which will bear me anon far away
from the shore

Of a land which my footsteps shall
visit no more.

And a heart's *requiescat* I write on
that grave.

Hark ! the sigh of the wind, and the
sound of the wave,

Seem like voices of spirits that whis-
per me home !

I come, O you whispering voices, I
come !

My friend, ask me nothing.
“ Receive me alone

As a Santon receives to his dwelling
of stone

In silence some pilgrim the midnight
may bring :

It may be an angel that, weary of
wing,

Hath paused in his flight from some
city of doom,

Or only a wayfarer strayed in the
gloom.

This only I know : that in Europe at
 least
 Lives the craft or the power that
 must master our East.
 Wherefore strive where the gods
 must themselves yield at last ?
 Both they and their altars pass by
 with the Past.
 The gods of the household Time
 thrusts from the shelf ;
 And I seem as unreal and weird to
 myself
 As those idols of old.

“ Other times, other men,
 Other men, other passions !

“ So be it ! yet again
 I turn to my birthplace, the birth-
 place of morn,
 And the light of those lands where
 the great sun is born !
 Spread your arms, O, my friend ! on
 your breast let me feel
 The repose which hath fled from my
 own.

“ YOUR LUCILE.”

PART II.

CANTO I.

I.

HAIL, Muse ! But each Muse by this
 time has, I know,
 Been used up, and Apollo has bent
 his own bow
 All too long ; so I leave unassaulted
 the portal
 Of Olympus, and only invoke here a
 mortal.

Hail, Murray !—not Lindley,—but
 Murray and Son.

Hail, omniscient, beneficent, great
 Two-in-One !

In Albemarle Street may thy temple
 long stand !

Long enlightened and led by thine
 erudite hand,

May each novice in science nomadic
 unravel

Statistical mazes of modernized
 travel !

May each inn-keeping knave long
 thy judgments revere,

And the postboys of Europe regard
 thee with fear ;

While they feel, in the silence of
 baffled extortion,

That knowledge is power ! Long,
 long, like that portion

Of the national soil which the Greek
 exile took

In his baggage wherever he went,
 may thy book

Cheer each poor British pilgrim, who
 trusts to thy wit

Not to pay through his nose just for
 following it !

Mayst thou long, O instructor ! pre-
 side o'er his way,

And teach him alike what to praise
 and to pay !

Thee, pursuing this pathway of song,
 once again

I invoke, lest, unskilled, I should
 wander in vain.

To my call be propitious, nor, churl-
 ish, refuse

Thy great accents to lend to the lip
 of my Muse ;

For I sing of the Naiads who dwell
 'mid the stems

Of the green linden-trees by the
 waters of Ems.

Yes! thy spirit descends upon mine,
 O, John Murray !

And I start—with thy book—for the
 Baths in a hurry.

II.

“ At Coblenz a bridge of boats
 crosses the Rhine ;

And from thence the road, winding
 by Ehrenbreitstein,

Passes over the frontier of Nassau.

 ("N. B. No custom-house here since the Zollverein." See Murray, paragraph 30.)

 "The route, at each turn, Here the lover of nature allows to discern,

 n varying prospect, a rich wooded dale :

The vine and acacia-tree mostly prevail

In the foliage observable here ; and, moreover,

The soil is carbonic. The road, under cover

Of the grape-clad and mountainous upland that hems

Round this beautiful spot, brings the traveller to—"EMS.

A schnellpost from Frankfort arrives every day.

At the Kurhaus (the old Ducal mansion) you pay

Eight florins for lodgings. A Restaurateur

Is attached to the place ; but most travellers prefer

(Including, indeed, many persons of note) [d'hôte.

To dine at the usual-priced table Through the town runs the Lahn, the steep green banks of which

Two rows of white picturesque houses enrich ;

And between the high road and the river is laid

Out a sort of a garden, called 'THE Promenade.'

Female visitors here, who may make up their mind

To ascend to the top of these mountains, will find

On the banks of the stream, saddled all the day long,

Troops of donkeys — sure-footed— proverbially strong ;"

And the traveller at Ems may remark, as he passes,

Here, as e'sewhere, the women run after the asses.

III.

'Mid the world's weary denizens bound for these springs

In the month when the merle on the maple-bough sings,

Pursued to the place from dissimilar paths [the baths

By a similar sickness, there came to Four sufferers, — each stricken deep

through the heart,

Or the head, by the self-same invisible dart

Of the arrow that flieth unheard in the noon,

From the sickness that walketh unseen in the moon,

Through this great lazaretto of life, wherein each

Infects with his own sores the next within reach.

First of these were a young English husband and wife,

Grown weary ere half through the journey of life.

O Nature, say where, thou gray mother of earth,

Is the strength of thy youth ? that thy womb brings to birth

Only old men to-day ! On the winds, as of old. [bold ;

Thy voice in its accent is joyous and Thy forests are green as of yore ; and thine oceans

Yet move in the night of their ancient emotions :

But man—thy last birth and thy best—is no more

Life's free lord, that looked up to the starlight of yore,

With the faith on the brow, and the fire in the eyes,

The firm foot on the earth, the high heart in the skies ;

But a gray-headed infant, defrauded of youth,

Born too late or too early.

 The lady, in truth, Was young, fair, and gentle ; and never was given

To more heavenly eyes, the pure azure of heaven.

Never yet did the sun touch to rip-
ples of gold
Tresses brighter than those which
her soft hand unrolled
From her noble and innocent brow,
when she rose,
An Aurora, at dawn, from her balmy
repose,
And into the mirror the bloom and
the blush
Of her beauty broke, glowing ; like
light in a gush
From the sunrise in summer.

Love, roaming, shall meet
But rarely a nature more sound or
more sweet—

Eyes brighter— brows whiter — a
figure more fair—

Or lovelier lengths of more radiant
hair—

Than thine, Lady Alfred ! And
here I aver

(May those that have seen thee de-
clare if I err)

That not all the oysters in Britain
contain

A pearl pure as thou art.

Let some one explain,—

Who may know more than I of the
intimate life

Of the pearl with the oyster,—why
yet in his wife,

In despite of her beauty—and most
when he felt

His soul to the sense of her loveli-
ness melt—

Lord Alfred missed something he
sought for : indeed,

The more that he missed it the
greater the need ;

Till it seemed to himself he could
willingly spare

All the charms that he found for the
one charm not there.

IV.

For the blessings Life lends us, it
strictly demands

The worth of their full usufruct at
our hands.

And the value of all things exists,
not indeed

In themselves, but man's use of
them, feeding man's need.

Alfred Vargrave, in wedding with
beauty and youth,

Had embraced both Ambition and
Wealth. Yet in truth

Unfulfilled the ambition, and sterile
the wealth

(In a life paralyzed by a moral il-
health),

Had remained, while the beauty and
youth, unredeemed

From a vague disappointment at all
things, but seemed

Day by day to reproach him in silence
for all

That lost youth in himself they had
failed to recall.

No career had he followed, no object
obtained

In the world by those worldly ad-
vantages gained

From nuptials beyond which once
seemed to appear,

Lit by love, the broad path of a bril-
liant career.

All that glittered and gleamed
through the moonlight of youth

With a glory so fair, now that man-
hood in truth

Grasped and gathered it, seemed like
that false fairy gold

Which leaves in the hand only moss,
leaves, and mould !

V.

Fairy gold ! moss and leaves ! and the
young Fairy Bride ?

Lived there yet fairy-lands in the face
at his side ?

Say, O friend, if at evening thou ever
hast watched

Some pale and impalpable vapor, de-
tached

From the dim and disconsolate earth,
rise and fall

O'er the light of a sweet serene star,
until all

The chilled splendor reluctantly
waned in the deep

Of its own native heaven ? Even so
seemed to creep

O'er that fair and ethereal face, day
 by day,
 While the radiant vermeil, subsiding
 away,
 Hid its light in the heart, the faint
 gradual veil
 Of a sadness unconscious.

The lady grew pale
 As silent her lord grew: and both, as
 they eyed
 Each the other askance, turned, and
 secretly sighed.

Ah, wise friend, what avails all ex-
 perience can give?

True, we know what life is—but,
 alas! do we live?

The grammar of life we have gotten
 by heart,

But life's self we have made a dead
 language,—an art,

Not a voice. Could we speak it, but
 once, as 'twas spoken

When the silence of passion the first
 time was broken!

Cuvier knew the world better than
 Adam, no doubt:

But the last man, at best, was but
 learned about

What the first, without learning, en-
 joyed. What art thou

To the man of to-day, O Leviathan,
 now?

A science. What wert thou to him
 that from oozar.

First beheld thee appear? A sur-
 prise,—an emotion!

When life leaps in the veins, when it
 beats in the heart,

When it thrills as it fills every ani-
 mate part,

Where lurks it? how works it? . . .
 we scarcely detect it.

But life goes: the heart dies: haste,
 O leech, and dissect it!

Th'is accursed æsthetic, ethical age
 Hath so fingered life's hornbook, so
 blurred every page,

That the old glad romance, the gay
 chivalrous story,

With its fables of faery, its legends
 of glory,

Is turned to a tedious instruction, not
 new

To the children that read it insipidly
 through.

We know too much of Love ere we
 love. We can trace

Nothing new, unexpected, or strang
 in his face

When we see it at last. 'Tis th
 same little Cupid,

With the same dimpled cheek, and
 the smile almost stupid,

We have seen in our pictures, and
 stuck on our shelves,

And copied a hundred times over,
 ourselves.

And wherever we turn, and what-
 ever we do,

Still, that horrible sense of the *déjà
 connu!*

VI.

Perchance 'twas the fault of the life
 that they led;

Perchance 'twas the fault of the
 novels they read;

Perchance 'twas a fault in them-
 selves; I am bound not

To say: this I know—that these two
 creatures found not

In each other some sign they expect-
 ed to find

Of a something unnamed in the
 heart or the mind;

And, missing it, each felt a right to
 complain

Of a sadness which each found no
 word to explain.

Whatever it was, the world noticed
 not it

In the light-hearted beauty, the light-
 hearted wit.

Still, as once with the actors in
 Greece, 'tis the case,

Each must speak to the crown with a
 mask on his face.

Praise followed Matilda wherever
 she went.

She was flattered. Can flattery pur-
 chase content?

Yes. While to its voice, for a moment, she listened,
 The young cheek still bloomed, and the soft eyes still glistened;
 And her lord, when, like one of those light vivid things
 That glide down the gauzes of summer with wings
 If rapturous radiance, unconscious she moved
 Through that buzz of inferior creatures, which proved
 Her beauty, their envy, one moment forgot
 'Mid the many charms there, the one charm that was not:
 And when o'er her beauty enraptured he bowed,
 (As they turned to each other, each flushed from the crowd,)
 And murmured those praises which yet seemed more dear
 Than the praises of others had grown to her ear,
 She, too, ceased awhile her own fate to regret:
 "Yes! . . . he loves me," she sighed;
 "this is love, then,—and *yet!*"

VII.

Ah, that *yet!* fatal word! 'tis the moral of all
 Thought and felt, seen or done, in this world since the Fall!
 It stands at the end of each sentence we learn;
 It flits in the vista of all we discern;
 It leads us, forever and ever, away
 To find in to-morrow what flies with to-day.
 'Twas this same little fatal and mystical word [and lord
 That now, like a mirage, led my lady
 To the waters of Ems from the waters of Marah;
 Drooping pilgrims in Fashion's blank, arid Sahara!

VIII.

At the same time, pursued by a spell much the same,
 To these waters two other worn pilgrims there came:

One a man, one a woman: just now, at the latter,
 As the Reader I mean by and by to look at her
 And judge for himself, I will not even glance.

IX.

Of the self-crowned young kings of the Fashion in France
 Whose resplendent regalia so dazzled the sight,
 Whose horse was so perfect, whose boots were so bright,
 Who so hailed in the salon, so marked in the Bois,
 Who so welcomed by all, as Eugène de Luvois?
 Of all the smooth-browed premature debauchees
 In that town of all towns, where Debauchery sees
 On the forehead of youth her mark everywhere graven,—
 In Paris I mean,—where the streets are all paved
 By those two fiends whom Milton saw bridging the way
 From Hell to this planet,—who, haughty and gay,
 The free rebel of life, bound or led by no law,
 Walked that causeway as bold as Eugène de Luvois?
 Yes! he marched through the great masquerade, loud of tongue,
 Bold of brow: but the motley he masked in, it hung
 So loose, trailed so wide, and appeared to impede
 So strangely at times the vexed effort at speed,
 That a keen eye might guess it was made—not for him,
 But some brawler more stalwart of stature and limb.
 That it irked him, in truth, you at times could divine,
 For when low was the music, and spilt was the wine.

He would clutch at the garment, as
though it oppressed
And stifled some impulse that choked
in his breast.

X.

What ! he, . . . the light sport of his
frivolous ease !

Was he, too, a prey to a mortal dis-
ease ?

My friend, hear a parable : ponder
it well :

For a moral there is in the tale that
I tell.

One evening I sat in the Palais
Royal,

And there, while I laughed at Gras-
sot and Arnal,

My eye fell on the face of a man at
my side ;

Every time that he laughed I ob-
served that he sighed,

As though vexed to be pleased. I
remarked that he sat

Ill at ease on his seat, and kept
twirling his hat

In his hand, with a look of unquiet
abstraction.

I inquired the cause of his dissatis-
faction.

“Sir,” he said, “if what vexes me
here you would know,

Learn that, passing this way some
few half-hours ago,

I walked into the Français, to look
at Rachel.

(Sir that woman in Phèdre is a
miracle !)—Well,

I asked for a box : they were oc-
cupied all :

For a seat in the balcony : all taken !
a stall :

Taken too : the whole house was as
full as could be.—

Not a hole for a rat ! I had just time
to see

The lady I love tête-à-tête with a
In a box out of reach at the opposite
end :

Then the crowd pushed me out.
What was left me to do ?

I tried for the tragedy . . . *que
voulez-vous ?*

Every place for the tragedy booked !
. . . *mon ami,*

The farce was close by : . . . at the
farce me voici !

The piece is a new one : and Gras-
sot plays well :

There is drollery, too, in that fellow
Ravel :

And Hyacinth’s nose is superb ! . . .
Yet I meant

My evening elsewhere, and not thus,
to have spent.

Fate orders these things by her will,
not by ours !

Sir, mankind is the sport of invisible
powers.”

I once met the Duc de Luvois for a
moment ;

And I marked, when his features I
fixed in my comment,

O’er those features the same vague
disquietude stray

I had seen on the face of my friend
at the play ;

And I thought that he too, very
probably, spent

His evenings not wholly as first he
had meant.

XI.

O source of the holiest joys we in-
herit,

O Sorrow, thou solemn, invisible
spirit !

Ill fares it with man when, through
life’s desert sand,

Grown impatient too soon for the
long-promised land

He turns from the worship of thee,
as thou art,

An expressless and imageless truth
in the heart,

And takes of the jewels of Egypt,
the pelf

And the gold of the godless, to make
to himself

A gaudy, idolatrous image of thee
And then bows to the sound of the

cymbal the knee.

The sorrows we make to ourselves
 are false gods :
 Like the prophets of Baal, our
 bosoms with rods
 We may smite, we may gash at our
 hearts till they bleed,
 But these idols are blind, deaf, and
 dumb to our need.
 The land is athirst, and cries out !
 . . . 'tis in vain ;
 The great blessing of Heaven de-
 scends not in rain.

XII.

It was night ; and the lamps were
 beginning to gleam
 Through the long linden-trees, fold-
 ed each in his dream,
 From that building which looks like
 a temple . . . and is
 The Temple of—Health ? Nay, but
 enter ! I wish
 That never the rosy-hued deity
 knew
 One votary out of that sallow-
 cheeked crew
 Of Courlanders, Wallacs, Greeks, af-
 fable Russians,
 Explosive Parisians, potato-faced
 Prussians ;
 Jews—Hamburglers chiefly ;—pure
 patriots,—Suabians ;—
 “Cappadocians and Elamites, Cretes
 and Arabians,
 And the dwellers in Pontus” . . .
 My muse will not weary
 More lines with the list of them . . .
cur fremuere ?
 What is it they murmur, and mutter,
 and hum ?
 Into what Pandemonium is Pente-
 cost come ?
 O, what is the name of the god at
 whose fane
 Every nation is mixed in so motley
 a train ?
 What weird Kabala lies on those
 tables outspread ?
 To what oracle turns with attention
 each head ?

What holds these pale worshippers
 each so devout,
 And what are those hierophants
 busied about ?

XIII.

He repasses, repasses, and flits to
 and fro,
 And rolls without ceasing the great
 Yes and No :
 Round this altar alternate the weird
 Passions dance,
 And the God worshipped here is the
 old God of Chance.
 Through the wide-open doors of the
 distant saloon
 Flute, hautboy, and fiddle are
 squeaking in tune ;
 And an indistinct music forever is
 rolled,
 That mixes and chimes with the
 clink of the gold,
 From a vision, that flits in a lumin-
 ous haze,
 Of figures forever eluding the gaze ;
 It fleets through the doorway, it
 gleams on the glass,
 And the weird words pursue it—
Rouge, Impair, et Passe !
 Like a sound borne in sleep through
 such dreams as encumber
 With haggard emotions the wild
 wicked slumber
 Of some witch when she seeks,
 through a night-mare, to grab
 at
 The hot hoof of the fiend, on her
 way to the Sabbat.

XIV.

The Duc de Luvois and Lord Alfr. d
 had met
 Some few evenings ago (for the sea-
 son as yet
 Was but young) in this self-same
 Pavilion of Chance.
 The idler from England, the idler
 from France
 Shook hands, each, of course, with
 much cordial pleasure :
 An acquaintance at Ems is to most
 men a treasure,

And they both were too well-bred in
 ought to betray
 One discourteous remembrance of
 things passed away.
 'Twas a sight that was pleasant, in-
 deed, to be seen.
 These friends exchange greetings ;—
 the men who had been
 Foes so nearly in days that were
 past.

This, no doubt,
 Is why, on the night I am speaking
 about,
 My Lord Alfred sat down by him-
 self at roulette,
 Without one suspicion his bosom to
 fret,
 Although he had left, with his pleas-
 ant French friend,
 Matilda, half vexed, at the room's
 farthest end.

XV.

Lord Alfred his combat with For-
 tune began
 With a few modest thalers—away
 they all ran—
 The reserve followed fast in the rear.
 As his purse
 Grew lighter his spirits grew sensi-
 bly worse.
 One needs not a Bacon to find a
 cause for it :
 'Tis an old law in physics—*Natura*
abhorret
Vacuum—and my lord, as he watch-
 ed his last crown
 Tumble into the bank, turned away
 with a frown
 Which the brows of Napoleon him-
 self might have decked
 On that day of all days when an em-
 pire was wrecked
 On thy plain, Waterloo, and he wit-
 nessed the last
 Of his favorite Guard cut to pieces,
 aghast !
 Just then Alfred felt, he could
 scarcely tell why,
 Within him the sudden strange
 sense that some eye

Had long been intently regarding
 him there,—
 That some gaze was upon him too,
 searching to bear.
 He rose and looked up. Was it fact ?
 Was it fable ?
 Was it dream ? Was it waking ?
 Across the green table,
 That face, with its features so fa-
 tally known, —
 Those eyes, whose deep gaze an-
 swered strangely his own,—
 What was it ? Some ghost from its
 grave come again ?
 Some cheat of a feverish, fanciful
 brain ?
 Or was it herself—with those deep
 eyes of hers,
 And that face unforgotten ?—Lucile
 de Nevers !

XV.

Ah, well that pale woman a phan-
 tom might seem.
 Who appeared to herself but the
 dream of a dream !
 'Neath those features so calm, that
 fair forehead so hushed,
 That pale cheek forever by passion
 unflushed,
 There yawned an insatiate void, and
 there heaved
 A tumult of restless regrets unre-
 lieved.
 The brief noon of beauty was pass-
 ing away,
 And the chill of the twilight fell, si-
 lent and gray,
 O'er that deep, self-perceived isola-
 tion of soul.
 And now, as all round her the dim
 evening stole,
 With its weird desolations, she in-
 wardly grieved
 For the want of that tender assur-
 ance received
 From the warmth of a whisper, the
 glance of an eye,
 Which should say, or should look,
 "Fear thou naught.—I am
 by !"

And thus, through that lonely and self-fixed existence,
 Crept a vague sense of silence, and horror, and distance :
 A strange sort of faint-footed fear,
 —like a mouse
 That comes out, when 'tis dark, in some old ducal house
 Long deserted, where no one the creature can scare,
 And the forms on the arras are all that move there.

In Rome,—in the Forum,—there opened one night
 A gulf. All the augurs turned pale at the sight.
 In this omen the anger of Heaven they read.
 Men consulted the gods : then the oracle said :— [till at last
 “Ever open this gulf shall endure,
 That which Rome hath most precious within it be cast.”
 The Romans threw in it their corn and their stuff,
 But the gulf yawned as wide. Rome seemed likely enough
 To be ruined ere this rent in her heart she could choke.
 Then Curtius, revering the oracle, spoke : [tion is come :
 ‘O Quirites ! to this Heaven’s ques-
 What to Rome is most precious ?
 The manhood of Rome.’
 He plunged, and the gulf closed.
 The tale is not new :
 But the moral applies many ways, and is true.
 How, for hearts rent in twain, shall the curse be destroyed ?
 'Tis a warm human life that must fill up the void.
 Thorough many a heart runs the rent in the fable ; [able ?
 But who to discover a Curtius is

XVII.

Back she came from her long hiding-place, at the source
 Of the sunrise ; where, fair in their fabulous course,

Run the rivers of Eden : an exile again,
 To the cities of Europe,—the scenes, and the men,
 And the life, and the ways, she had left : still oppressed
 With the same hungry heart, and unpeaceable breast.
 The same, to the same things ! The world, she had quitted
 With a sigh, with a sigh she re-entered. Soon flitted
 Through the salons and clubs, to the great satisfaction [tion.
 Of Paris, the news of a novel attraction.
 The enchanting Lucile, the gay Countess, once more
 To her old friend, the World, had reopened her door ;
 The World came, and shook hands, and was pleased and amused
 With what the World then went away and abused.
 From the woman’s fair fame it in naught could detract :
 'Twas the woman’s free genius it vexed and attacked
 With a sneer at her freedom of action and speech.
 But its light careless evils, in truth, could not reach
 The lone heart they aimed at. Her tears fell beyond
 The world’s limit, to feel that the world could respond
 To that heart’s deepest, innermost yearning, in naught.
 'Twas no longer this earth’s idle inmates she sought :
 The wit of the woman sufficed to engage
 In the woman’s gay court the first men of the age.
 Some had genius ; and all, wealth of mind to confer
 On the world : but that wealth was not lavished for her.
 For the genius of man, though so human indeed,
 When called out to man’s help by some great human need,

The right to a man's chance acquaintance refuses
 To use what it hoards for mankind's nobler uses.
 Genius touches the world at but one point alone
 Of that spacious circumference, never quite known
 To the world : all the infinite number of lines
 That radiate thither a mere point combines,
 But one only,—some central affection apart
 From the reach of the world, in which Genius'is Heart,
 And love, life's fine centre, includes heart and mind.
 And therefore it was that Lucile sighed to find [her ken,
 Men of genius appear, one and all in
 When they stooped themselves to it, as mere clever men ;
 Artists, statesmen, and they in whose works are unfurled
 Worlds new-fashioned for man, as mere men of the world.
 And so, as alone now she stood, in the sight
 Of the sunset of youth, with her face from the light,
 And watched her own shadow grow long at her feet,
 As though stretched out, the shade of some *other* to meet,
 The woman felt homeless and childless : a scorn
 She seemed mocked by the voices of children unborn ;
 And when from these sombre reflections away
 She turned, with a sigh, to that gay world, more gay
 For her presence within it, she knew herself friendless ;
 That her path led from peace, and that path appeared endless !
 That even her beauty had been but a snare,
 And her wit sharpened only the edge of despair.

XVIII.

With a face all transfigured and flushed by surprise,
 Alfred turned to Lucile. With those deep searching eyes
 She looked into his own. Not a word that she said,
 Not a look, not a blush, one emotion betrayed.
 She seemed to smile through him, at something beyond :
 When she answered his questions she seemed to respond
 To some voice in herself. With no trouble desiered,
 To each troubled inquiry she calmly replied.
 Not so he. At the sight of that face back again
 To his mind came the ghost of a long-stifled pain,
 A remembered resentment, half checked by a wild
 And relentful regret like a motherless child
 Softly seeking admittance, with plaintive appeal,
 To the heart which resisted its entrance.
 Lucile
 And himself thus, however, with freedom allowed
 To old friends, talking still side by side, left the crowd
 By the crowd unobserved. Not unnoticed, however,
 By the Duke and Matilda. Matilda had never
 Seen her husband's new friend.
 She had followed by chance
 Or by instinct, the sudden, half menacing glance
 Which the Duke, when he witnessed their meeting, had turned
 On Lucile and Lord Alfred ; and, scared, she discerned
 On his features the shade of a gloom so profound
 That she shuddered instinctively.
 Deaf to the sound

Of her voice, to some startled inquiry
of hers

He replied not, but murmured, "Lucile de Nevers

Once again then? so be it!" In the
mind of that man,

At that moment, there shaped itself
vaguely the plan

Of a purpose malignant and dark,
such alone

(To his own secret heart but imper-
fectly shown)

As could spring from the cloudy,
fierce chaos of thought

By which all his nature to tumult
was wrought.

XIX.

"So!" he thought, "they meet thus:
and reweave the old charm!

And she hangs on his voice, and she
leans on his arm,

And she heeds me not, seeks me not,
recks not of me!

O, what if I showed her that I, too,
can be

Loved by one—her own rival—more
fair and more young?"

The serpent rose in him: a serpent
which, stung,

Sought to sting.

Each unconscious, indeed, of the
eye

Fixed upon them, Lucile and my
lord sauntered by,

In converse which seemed to be
earnest. A smile

Now and then seemed to show where
their thoughts touched. Mean-
while

The muse of this story, convinced
that they need her,

To the Duke and Matilda returns,
gentle Reader.

XX.

The Duke, with that sort of aggres-
sive false praise

Which is meant a resentful remon-
strance to raise

From a listener (as sometimes a
judge, just before

He pulls down the black cap, very
gently goes o'er

The case for the prisoner, and deals
tenderly

With the man he is minded to hang
by and by),

Had referred to Lucile, and then
stopped to detect

In the face of Matilda the growing
effect

Of the words he had dropped.
There's no weapon that slays

Its victim so surely (if well aimed)
as praise.

Thus, a pause on their converse had
fallen: and now

Each was silent, preoccupied,
thoughtful.

There are moments when silence,
prolonged and unbroken,

More expressive may be than all
words ever spoken.

It is when the heart has an instinct
of what

In the heart of another is passing.
And that

In the heart of Matilda, what was it?
Whence came

To her cheek on a sudden that trem-
ulous flame?

What weighed down her head?
All your eye could discover

Was the fact that Matilda was
troubled. Moreover

That trouble the Duke's presence
seemed to renew.

She, however, broke silence, the
first of the two.

The Duke was too prudent to shat-
ter the spell

Of a silence which suited his pur-
pose so well.

She was plucking the leaves from a
pale blush rose blossom

Which had fallen from the nosegay
she held in her bosom.

"This poor flower," she said, "seems
it not out of place

In this hot, lamplit air, with its
fresh, fragrant grace?"

She bent her head low as she spoke.
 With a smile
 The Duke watched her caressing the
 leaves all the while,
 And continued on his side the si-
 lence. He knew
 This would force his companion
 their talk to renew
 At the point that he wished ; and
 Matilda divined
 The significant pause with new
 trouble of mind.
 She lifted one moment her head ;
 but her look
 Encountered the ardent regard of
 the Duke,
 And dropped back on her floweret
 abashed. Then, still seeking
 The assurance she fancied she
 showed him by speaking,
 She conceived herself safe in adopt-
 ing again
 The theme she should most have
 avoided just then.

XXI.

“Duke,” she said, . . . and she felt,
 as she spoke, her cheek burned,
 “You know, then, this . . . lady ?”
 “Too well !” he returned.

MATILDA.

True ; you drew with emotion her
 portrait just now.

LUVOIS.

With emotion ?

MATILDA.

Yes, yes ! you described her, I know,
 As possessed of a charm all unriv-
 alled.

LUVOIS.

Alas !
 You mistook me completely ! You,
 madam, surpass
 This lady as moonlight does lamp-
 light ; as youth
 Surpasses its best imitations ; as
 truth
 The fairest of falsehoods surpasses ;
 as nature

Surpasses art's masterpiece ; ay, as
 the creature
 Fresh and pure in its native adorn-
 ment surpasses
 All the charms got by heart at the
 world's looking-glasses !

“Yet you said,”—she continued
 with some trepidation,
 “That you quite comprehended” . . .
 a slight hesitation
 Shook the sentence, . . . “a passion
 so strong as”

LUVOIS.

True, true !

But not in a man that had once
 looked at you.
 Nor can I conceive, or excuse, or . . .
 “Hush, hush !”
 She broke in, all more fair for one
 innocent blush.
 “Between man and woman these
 things differ so !
 It may be that the world pardons . .
 (how should I know ?)
 In you what it visits on us ; or 'tis
 true,
 It may be, that we women are better
 than you.”

LUVOIS.

Who denies it ? Yet, madam, once
 more you mistake.
 The world, in its judgment, some
 difference may make
 'Twixt the man and the woman, so
 far as respects
 Its social enactments ; but not as
 affects
 The one sentiment which it were
 easy to prove,
 Is the sole law we look to the mo-
 ment we love.

MATILDA.

That may be. Yet I think I should
 be less severe.
 Although so inexperienced in such
 things, I fear

I have learned that the heart cannot
always repress
Or account for the feelings which
sway it.

“Yes! yes!
That is too true, indeed!” . . . the
Duke sighed.

And again
For one moment in silence continued
the twain.

XXII.

At length the Duke slowly, as though
he had needed
All this time to repress his emotions,
proceeded:

“And yet! . . . what avails, then, to
woman the gift
Of a beauty like yours, if it cannot
uplift

Her heart from the reach of one
doubt, one despair.

One pang of wronged love, to which
women less fair
Are exposed, when they love?”

With a quick change of tone,
As though by resentment impelled,
he went on:—

“The name that you bear, it is whis-
pered, you took

From love, not convention. Well,
lady, . . . that look

So excited, so keen, on the face you
must know

Throughout all its expressions,—that
rapturous glow—

Those eloquent features—significant
eyes—

Which that pale woman sees, yet be-
trays no surprise,”

(He pointed his hand as he spoke to
the door,

Fixing with it Lucile and Lord Al-
fred,) . . . “before,

Have you ever once seen what just
now you may view

In that face so familiar? . . . no,
lady, 'tis new.

Young, lovely, and loving, no doubt,
as you are,

Are you loved?” . . .

XXIII.

He looked at her—paused—felt if
thus far

The ground held yet. The ardor with
which he had spoken,

This close, rapid question, thus sud-
denly broken,

Inspired in Matilda a vague sense of
fear,

As though some indefinite danger
were near.

With composure, however, at once
she replied:—

“’Tis three years since the day when
I first was a bride,

And my husband I never had cause
to suspect;

Nor ever have stooped, sir, such cause
to detect. [see—

Yet if in his looks or his acts I should
See, or fancy—some moment’s ob-
livion of me,

I trust that I too should forget it,—
for you

Must have seen that my heart is my
husband’s.”

The hue
On her cheek, with the effort where-
with to the Duke

She had uttered this vague and half-
frightened rebuke,

Was white as the rose in her hand.
The last word

Seemed to die on her lip, and could
scarcely be heard.

There was silence again.

A great step had been made
By the Duke in the words he that
evening had said.

There, half drowned by the music,
Matilda, that night,

Had listened,—long listened,—no
doubt, in despite

Of herself, to a voice she should
never have heard,

And her heart by that voice had
been troubled and stirred.

And so, having suffered in silence his
eye

To fathom her own, he resumed, with
a sigh:

XXIV.

“Will you suffer me, lady, your thoughts to invade
By disclosing my own? The position,” he said,

“In which we so strangely seem placed may excuse
The frankness and force of the words which I use.

You say that your heart is your husband’s. You say

That you love him. You think so, of course, lady . . . nay,

Such a love, I admit, were a merit, no doubt.

But, trust me, no true love there can be without

Its dread penalty—jealousy.

“Well, do not start !
Until now,—either thanks to a singular art

Of supreme self-control, you have held them all down

Unrevealed in your heart,—or you never have known

Even one of those fierce irresistible pangs

Which deep passion engenders ; that anguish which hangs

On the heart like a nightmare, by jealousy bred.

But if, lady, the love you describe, in the bed [posed

Of a blissful security thus hath re-Undisturbed with mild eyelids on happiness closed,

Were it not to expose to a peril unjust,

And most cruel, that happy repose you so trust

To meet, to receive, and, indeed, it may be, [to see

For how long I know not, continue A woman whose place rivals yours in the life

And the heart which not only your title of wife,

But also (forgive me !) your beauty alone,

Should have made wholly yours?—

You, who gave all your own !

Reflect !—’tis the peace of existence you stake

On the turn of a die. And for whose—for his sake ?

While you witness this woman, the false point of view

From which she must now be regarded by you

Will exaggerate to you, whatever they be,

The charms I admit she possesses. To me

They are trivial indeed ; yet to your eyes, I fear

And foresee, they will true and intrinsic appear.

Self-unconscious, and sweetly unable to guess

How more lovely by far is the grace you possess,

You will wrong your own beauty. The graces of art,

You will take for the natural charm of the heart ;

Studied manners, the brilliant and bold repartee,

Will too soon in that fatal comparison be

To your fancy more fair than the sweet timid sense

Which, in shrinking, betrays its own best eloquence.

O then, lady, then, you will feel in your heart

The poisonous pain of a fierce jealous dart !

While you see her, yourself you no longer will see,—

You will hear her, and hear not yourself,—you will be

Unhappy ; unhappy, because you will deem

Your own power less great than her power will seem.

And I shall not be by your side, day by day [to say

In despite of your noble displeasure, ‘You are fairer than she, as the star

is more fair

Than the diamond, the brightest that beauty can wear !’ ”

XXV.

This appeal, both by looks and by
language, increased
The trouble Matilda felt grown in
her breast.

Still she spoke with what calmness
she could :—

“Sir, the while
I thank you,” she said, with a faint
scornful smile.

“For your fervor in painting my
fancied distress :

Allow me the right some surprise to
express

At the zeal you betray in disclosing
to me

The possible depth of my own
misery.”

“That zeal would not startle you,
madam,” he said,

“Could you read in my heart, as
myself I have read.

The peculiar interest which causes
that zeal—”

Matilda her terror no more could
conceal.

“Duke,” she answered in accents
short, cold, and severe,

As she rose from her seat, “I con-
tinue to hear ;

But permit me to say, I no more
understand.”

“Forgive !” with a nervous appeal
of the hand,

And a well-feigned confusion of
voice and of look,

“Forgive, O, forgive me !” at once
cried the Duke,

“I forgot that you know me so
slightly. Your leave

entreat (from your anger those
words to retrieve)

For one moment to speak of myself,
—for I think

That you wrong me—”

His voice as in pain seemed to
sink ;

And tears in his eyes, as he lifted
them, glistened.

XXVI.

Matilda, despite of herself, sat and
listened.

XXVII.

“Beneath an exterior which seems,
and may be,

Worldly, frivolous, careless, my
heart hides in me.”

He continued, “a sorrow which
draws me to side

With all things that suffer. Nay,
laugh not,” he cried,

“At so strange an avowal.
“I seek at a ball,

For instance,—the beauty admired
by all ?

No ! some plain, insignificant creat-
ure, who sits

Scorned of course by the beauties,
and shunned by the wits.

All the world is accustomed to
wound, or neglect,

Or oppress, claims my heart and
commands my respect.

No Quixote, I do not affect to be-
long,

I admit, to those chartered redres-
sers of wrong ;

But I seek to console, where I can.
’Tis a part

Not brilliant, I own, yet its joys
bring no smart.”

These trite words, from the tone
which he gave them, received

An appearance of truth, which
might well be believed

By a heart shrewder yet than Ma-
tilda’s.

And so

He continued . . . “O lady ! alas,
could you know

What injustice and wrong in this
world I have seen !

How many a woman, believed to
have been [aside

Without a regret, I have known turn
To burst into heart-broken tears un-
descried !

On how many a lip have I witnessed
the smile

Which but hid what was breaking
the poor heart the while !”
Said Matilda, “ Your life, it would
seem, then, must be
One long act of devotion.”

“ Perhaps so,” said he ;
“ But at least that devotion small
merit can boast,
For one day may yet come,—if one
day at the most,—

When, perceiving at last all the dif-
ference—how great !—

’Twixt the heart that neglects and
the heart that can wait.

’Twixt the natures that pity, the
natures that pain,

Some woman, that else might have
passed in disdain

Or indifference by me,—in passing
that day

Might pause with a word or a smile
to repay

This devotion,—and then” . . .

XXVIII.

To Matilda’s relief
At that moment her husband ap-
proached.

With some grief
I must own that her welcome, per-
chance, was expressed

The more eagerly just for one ’winge
in her breast

Of a conscience disturbed, and her
smile not less warm,

Though she saw the Countesse de
Nevers on his arm.

The Duke turned and adjusted his
collar.

Thought he,
“ God ! the gods fight my battle to-
night. I foresee

That the family doctor’s the part I
must play.

Very well ! but the patients my
visits shall pay.”

Lord Alfred presented Lucile to his
wife ;

And Matilda, repressing with effort
the strife

Of emotions which made her voice
shake, murmured low

Some faint, troubled greeting. The
Duke, with a bow

Which betokened a distant defiance,
replied

To Lucile’s startled cry, as surprised
she descried

Her former gay wooer. Anon, wit’
the grace

Of that kindness which seeks to wir
kindness, her place

She assumed by Matilda, uncon-
scious, perchance,

Or resolved not to notice, the half-
frightened glance

That followed that movement.

The Duke to his feet
Arose ; and, in silence, relinquished
his seat.

One must own that the moment was
awkward for all ;

But nevertheless, before long, the
strange thral!

Of Lucile’s gracious tact was by
every one felt,

And from each the reserve seemed,
reluctant, to melt ;

Thus, conversing together, the whole
of the four

Through the crowd sauntered, smil-
ing.

XXIX.

Approaching the door
Eugène de Luvois who had fallen
behind,

By Lucile, after some hesitation,
was joined

With a gesture of gentle and kindly
appeal

Which appeared to imply, withou
words, “ Let us feel

That the friendship between us in
years that are fled,

Has survived one mad moment for-
gotten,” she said,

“ You remain, Duke, at Ems ?”

He turned on her a look
Of frigid, resentful, and sullen re-
buke ;

And then, with a more than significant glance
At Matilda, maliciously answered,
"Perchance
I have here an attraction. And
you?" he returned.
Lucile's eyes had followed his own,
and discerned
The boast they implied.

He repeated, "And you?"
And, still watching Matilda, she answered,
"I too."
And he thought, as with that word
she left him, she sighed.
The next moment her place she resumed
by the side
Of Matilda; and soon they shook
hands at the gate
Of the self-same hotel.

XXX.

One depressed, one elate,
The Duke and Lord Alfred again,
through the glooms
Of the thick linden alley, returned
to the Rooms.
His cigar each had lighted, a moment
before,
At the inn, as they turned, arm-in-
arm, from the door.
Ems cigars do not cheer a man's
spirits, *experto*
(*Me miserum quoties!*) *crede Roberto*.
In silence, awhile, they walked on-
ward.

At last
The Duke's thoughts to language
half consciously passed.

LUIVOIS.

Once more! yet once more!

ALFRED.

What?

LUIVOIS.

We meet her, once more,
The woman for whom we two mad
men of yore
(Laugh, *mon cher Alfred*, laugh!)
were about to destroy
Each the other!

ALFRED.

It is not with laughter that I
Raise the ghost of that once troubled
time. Say! can you
Recall it with coolness and quietude
now?

LUIVOIS.

Now? yes! I, *mon cher*, am a true
Parisien:
Now, the red revolution, the tocsin
and then
The dance and the play. I am now
at the play.

ALFRED.

At the play, are you now? Then
perchance I now may
Presume, Duke, to ask you what,
ever until
Such a moment, I waited . . .

LUIVOIS.

Oh! ask what you will.
Franc jeu! on the table my cards I
spread out.
Ask!

ALFRED.

Duke, you were called to a meeting
(no doubt
You remember it yet) with Lucile.
It was night
When you went; and before you re-
turned it was light.
We met; you accosted me then with
a brow
Bright with triumph: your words
(you remember them now?)
Were "Let us be friends!"

LUIVOIS.

Well?

ALFRED.

How then, after that,
Can you and she meet as acquaint-
ances?

LUIVOIS.

What!
Did she not then, herself, the Com-
tesse de Nevers,
Solve your riddle to-night with those
soft lips of hers?

ALFRED.

In our converse to-night we avoided
the past.
But the question I ask should be answered at last :
By you, if you will ; if you will not,
by her.

LUVOIS.

Indeed ? but that question, milord,
can it stir
Such an interest in you, if your passion
be o'er ?

ALFRED.

Yes. Esteem may remain, although
love be no more.
Lucile asked me, this night, to my
wife (understand
To *my wife* !) to present her. I did
so. Her hand
Has clasped that of Matilda. We
gentlemen owe
Respect to the name that is ours :
and, if so, [respect.
To the woman that bears it a twofold
Answer, Duc de Luvois ! Did Lucile
then reject
The proffer you made of your hand
and your name ?
Or did you on her love then relin-
quish a claim
Urged before ? I ask bluntly this
question, because
My title to do so is clear by the laws
That all gentlemen honor. Make
only one sign
That you know of Lucile de Nevers
ought, in fine,
For which, if your own virgin sister
were by,
From Lucile you would shield her
acquaintance, and I
And Matilda leave Ems on the mor-
row.

XXXI.

Hesitated and paused. He could
tell, by the look
Of the man at his side, that he
meant what he said,

And there flashed in a moment these
thoughts through his head :
“ Leave Ems ! would that suit me ?
no ! that were again
To mar all. And besides, if I do not
explain,
She herself will . . . *et puis, il a
raison ; on est
Gentilhomme avant tout !*” He re-
plied therefore,

“ Nay !
Madame de Nevers had rejected me.
I,

In those days, I was mad ; and in
some mad reply
I threatened the life of the rival to
whom
That rejection was due, I was led to
presume.
She feared for his life ; and the letter
which then
She wrote me, I showed you ; we
met : and again
My hand was refused, and my love
was denied,
And the glance you mistook was the
vizard which Pride
Lends to Humiliation.

“ And so,” half in jest,
He went on, “ in this best world, 'tis
all for the best ;
You are wedded, (blessed English-
man !) wedded to one
Whose past can be called into ques-
tion by none :
And I (fickle Frenchman !) can still
laugh to feel
I am lord of myself, and the Mode :
and Lucile
Still shines from her pedestal, frigid
and fair
As yon German moon o'er the linden-
tops there ! [trough
A Dian in marble that scorns any
With the little love-gods, whom I
thank for us both,
While she smiles from her lonely
Olympus apart,
That her arrows are marble as well
as her heart.
Stay at Ems, Alfred Vargrave !”

XXXII.

The Duke, with a smile,
Turned and entered the Rooms
which, thus talking, mean-
while,
They had reached.

XXXIII.

Alfred Vargrave strode on (over-
thrown
Heart and mind!) in the darkness
bewildered, alone :
“And so,” to himself did he mutter,
“and so
’Twas to rescue my life, gentle
spirit! and, oh,
For this did I doubt her? . . . a light
word—a look—
The mistake of a moment! . . . for
this I forsook—
For this? Pardon, pardon, Lucile!
O Lucile!”
Thought and memory rang, like a
funeral peal,
Weary changes on one dirge-like note
through his brain,
As he strayed down the darkness.

XXXIV.

Re-entering again
The Casino, the Duke smiled. He
turned to roulette,
And sat down, and played fast, and
lost largely, and yet
He still smiled: night deepened: he
played his last number:
Went home: and soon slept: and
still smiled in his slumber.

XXXV.

In his desolate Maxims, La Roche-
foucauld wrote,
“In the grief or mischance of a
friend you may note,
There is something which always
gives pleasure.”
Alas!
That reflection fell short of the truth
as it was.

La Rochefoucauld might have as
truly set down,—
“No misfortune, but what some one
turns to his own
Advantage its mischief: no sorrow,
but of it [profit:
There ever is somebody ready to
No affliction without its stock-jol-
bers, who all
Gamble, speculate, play on the rise
and the fall
Of another man’s heart, and make
traffic in it.”
Burn thy book, O La Rochefoucauld!
Fool! one man’s wit
All men’s selfishness how should it
fathom?

O sage,
Dost thou satirize Nature?
She laughs at thy page.

CANTO II.

I.

COUSIN JOHN to COUSIN ALFRED.
“LONDON, 18—.

“MY DEAR ALFRED:
Your last letters put me in pain.
This contempt of existence, this list-
less disdain
Of your own life,—its joys and its
duties,—the deuce
Take my wits if they find for it half
an excuse!
I wish that some Frenchman would
shoot off your leg.
And compel you to stump through
the world on a peg.
I wish that you had, like myself,
(more’s the pity!)
To sit seven hours on this cursed
committee.
I wish that you knew, sir, how salt
is the bread
Of another—(what is it that Dante
has said?)
And the trouble of other men’s stairs.
In a word,
I wish fate had some real affliction
conferred

On your whimsical self, that, at
 least, you had cause
 For neglecting life's duties, and
 damning its laws !
 This pressure against all the pur-
 pose of life,
 This self-ebullition, and ferment, and
 strife,
 Betokened, I grant that it may be in
 truth,
 The richness and strength of the
 new wine of youth.
 But if, when the wine should have
 mellowed with time,
 Being bottled and binned, to a flavor
 sublime
 It retains the same acrid, incongru-
 ous taste,
 Why, the sooner to throw it away
 that we haste
 The better, I take it. And this vice
 of snarling,
 Self-love's little lapdog, the overfed
 darling
 Of a hypochondriacal fancy appears,
 To my thinking, at least, in a man
 of your years,
 At the midnoon of manhood with
 plenty to do,
 And every incentive for doing it
 too,—
 With the duties of life just suffi-
 ciently pressing
 For prayer, and of joys more than
 most men for blessing ;
 With a pretty young wife, and a
 pretty full purse,—
 Like poltroonery, puerile truly, or
 worse !
 I wish I could get you at least to
 agree
 To take life as it is, and consider
 with me,
 If it be not all smiles, that it is not
 all sneers ;
 It admits honest laughter, and needs
 honest tears.
 Do you think none have known but
 yourself all the pain
 Of hopes that retreat, and regrets
 that remain ?

And all the wide distance fate fixes,
 no doubt,
 'Twixt the life that's within, and the
 life that's without ?
 What one of us finds the world just
 as he likes ?
 Or gets what he wants when he
 wants it ? Or strikes
 Without missing the thing that he
 strikes at the first ?
 Or walks without stumbling ? Or
 quenches his thirst
 At one draught ? Bah ! I tell you !
 I, bachelor John,
 Have had griefs of my own. But
 what then ? I push on
 All the faster perchance that I yet
 feel the pain
 Of my last fall, albeit I may stumble
 again.
 God means every man to be happy,
 be sure.
 He sends us no sorrows that have
 not some cure.
 Our duty down here is to do, not to
 know.
 Live as though life were earnest, and
 life will be so.
 Let each moment, like Time's last
 ambassador, come :
 It will wait to deliver its message ;
 and some
 Sort of answer it merits. It is not
 the deed
 A man does, but the way that he
 does it, should plead
 For the man's compensation in do-
 ing it.
 " Here
 My next neighbor's a man with
 twelve thousand a year,
 Who deems that life has not a pas-
 time more pleasant
 Than to follow a fox or to slaughter
 a pheasant.
 Yet this fellow goes through a con-
 tested election,
 Lives in London, and sits, like the
 soul of dejection,
 All the day through upon a commit-
 tee, and late

To the last, every night, through the dreary debate,
 As though he were getting each speaker by heart,
 Though amongst them he never presumes to take part.
 One asks himself why, without murmur or question,
 He foregoes all his tastes, and destroys his digestion,
 For a labor of which the result seems so small.
 'The man is ambitious,' you say. Not at all.
 He has just sense enough to be fully aware
 That he never can hope to be Premier, or share
 The renown of a Tully;—or even to hold
 A subordinate office. He is not so bold
 As to fancy the House for ten minutes would bear
 With patience his modest opinions to hear.
 'But he wants something !'
 "What ! with twelve thousand a year?
 What could Government give him would be half so dear
 To his heart as a walk with a dog and a gun
 Through his own pheasant woods, or a capital run ?
 'No ; but vanity fills out the emptiest brain ;
 The man would be more than his neighbors, 'tis plain ;
 And the drudgery drearily gone through in town
 Is more than repaid by provincial renown.
 Enough if some Marchioness, lively and loose,
 Shall have eyed him with passing complaisance ; the goose,
 If the Fashion to him open one of its doors,
 As proud as a sultan, returns to his boors'

Wrong again ! if you think so.
 "For, *primo* ; my friend
 Is the head of a family known from one end
 Of his shire to the other, as the old est ; and therefore
 He despises fine lords and fine ladies.
He care for
 A peerage ? no, truly ! *Secundo* ; he rarely
 Or never goes out : dines at Bellamy's sparely,
 And abhors what you call the gay world.
 "Then, I ask,
 What inspires, and consoles, such a self-imposed task
 As the life of this man,—but the sense of its duty ?
 And I swear that the eyes of the haughtiest beauty
 Have never inspired in my soul that intense,
 Reverential, and loving, and absolute sense
 Of heartfelt admiration I feel for this
 As I see him beside me ; — there, wearing the wan
 London daylight away, on his humdrum committee ;
 So unconscious of all that awakens my pity,
 And wonder—and worship, I might say.
 "To me
 There seems something nobler than genius to be
 In that dull patient labor no genius relieves,
 That absence of all joy which yet never grieves ;
 The humility of it ! the grandeur withal !
 The sublimity of it ! And yet, should you call
 The man's own very slow apprehension to this,
 He would ask, with a stare, what sublimity is !
 His work is the duty to which he was born ;

He accepts it, without ostentation or
 scorn :
 And this man is no uncommon type
 (I thank Heaven !)
 Of this land's common men. In all
 other lands, even
 The type's self is wanting. Per-
 chance, 'tis the reason
 That Government oscillates ever
 'twixt treason
 And tyranny elsewhere.
 " I wander away
 Too far, though, from what I was
 wishing to say.
 You, for instance, read Plato. You
 know that the soul
 Is immortal ; and put this in rhyme,
 on the whole,
 Very well, with sublime illustration.
 Man's heart
 Is a mystery, doubtless. You trace
 it in art :—
 The Greek Psyche,—that's beauty,—
 the perfect ideal.
 But then comes the imperfect, per-
 fectible real,
 With its pained aspiration and strife.
 In those pale
 Ill-drawn virgins of Giotto you see
 it prevail.
 You have studied all this. Then,
 the universe, too,
 Is not a mere house to be lived in,
 for you. [know
 Geology opens the mind. So you
 Something also of strata and fos-
 sils ; these show
 The bases of cosmical structure :
 some mention
 Of the nebulous theory demands
 your attention ;
 And so on.
 " In short, it is clear the interior
 Of your brain, my dear Alfred, is
 vastly superior
 In fibre, and fulness, and function,
 and fire,
 To that of my poor parliamentary
 squire ;
 But your life leaves upon me (for-
 give me this heat
 Due to friendship) the sense of a
 thing incomplete.
 You fly high. But what is it, in
 truth, you fly at ?
 My mind is not satisfied quite as to
 that.
 An old illustration's as good as a
 new,
 Provided the old illustration be
 true.
 We are children. Mere kites are the
 fancies we fly,
 Though we marvel to see them as-
 cending so high ;
 Things slight in themselves,—leg-
 tailed toys, and no more.
 What is it that makes the kite
 steadily soar
 Through the realms where the cloud
 and the whirlwind have birth
 But the tie that attaches the kite to
 the earth ?
 I remember the lessons of childhood,
 you see,
 And the hornbook I learned on my
 poor mother's knee.
 In truth, I suspect little else do we
 learn
 From this great book of life, which
 so shrewdly we turn,
 Saving how to apply, with a good or
 bad grace,
 What we learned in the hornbook
 of childhood.
 " Your case
 Is exactly in point.
 " Fly your kite, if you please,
 Out of sight : let it go where it will,
 on the breeze ;
 But cut not the one thread by which
 it is bound,
 Be it never so high, to this poor
 human ground.
 No man is the absolute lord of his
 life.
 You, my friend, have a home, and a
 sweet and dear wife.
 If I often have sighed by my own
 silent fire,
 With a sense of a sometimes recur-
 ring desire

For a voice sweet and low, or a face
fond and fair,
Some dull winter evening to solace
and share
With the love which the world its
good children allows
To shake hands with,—in short, a
legitimate spouse,
This thought has consoled me : “ At
least I have given
For my own good behavior no host-
age to heaven.”
You have, though. Forget it not !
faith, if you do,
I would rather break stones on a
road than be you.
If any man wilfully injured, or led
That little girl wrong, I would sit on
his head,
Even though you yourself were the
sinner !
“ And this
Leads me back (do not take it, dear
cousin, amiss !)
To the matter I meant to have men-
tioned at once,
But these thoughts put it out of my
head for the nonce.
Of all the preposterous humbugs and
shams, [lunbs,
Of all the old wolves ever taken for
The wolf best received by the flock
he devours
Is that uncle-in-law, my dear Alfred,
of yours.
At least, this has long been my set-
tled conviction,
And I almost would venture at once
the prediction
That before very long—but no mat-
ter ! I trust
For his sake and our own, that I
may be unjust.
But Heaven forgive me, if cautious
I am on
The score of such men as, with both
God and Mammon,
Seem so shrewdly familiar.
“ Neglect not this warning.
There were rumors afloat in the City
this morning

Which I scarce like the sound of.
Who knows ? would he fleece
At a pinch, the old hypocrite, even
his own niece ?
For the sake of Matilda I cannot im-
portune
Your attention too early. If all your
wife's fortune
Is yet in the hands of that specious
old sinner,
Who would dice with the devil, and
yet rise up winner,
I say, lose no time ! get it out of the
grab
Of her trustee and uncle, Sir Ridley
McNab.
I trust those deposits, at least, are
drawn out,
And safe at this moment from
danger or doubt.
A wink is as good as a nod to the
wise. [justifies
Verbum sap. I admit nothing yet
My mistrust ; but I have in my own
mind a notion
That old Ridley's white waistcoat,
and airs of devotion,
Have long been the only ostensible
capital
On which he does business. If so,
time must sap it all,
Sooner or later. Look sharp. Do
not wait,
Draw at once. In a fortnight it may
be too late.
I admit I know nothing. I can but
suspect ;
I give you my notions. Form yours
and reflect.
My love to Matilda. Her mother
looks well.
I saw her last week. I have noth-
ing to tell
Worth your hearing. We think that
the Government here
Will not last our next session. Fitz
Funk is a peer,
You will see by the Times. There
are symptoms which show
That the ministers now are prepar-
ing to go,

And finish their feast of the loaves
and the fishes.

It is evident that they are clearing
the dishes,

And cramming their pockets with
bon-bons. Your news

Will be always acceptable. Vere, of
the Blues,

Has bolted with Lady Selina. And
so,

You have met with that hot-headed
Frenchman? I know

That the man is a sad *mauvais sujet*.
Take care

Of Matilda. I wish I could join you
both there ;

But, before I am free, you are sure
to be gone.

Good-by, my dear fellow. Yours,
anxiously,

“JOHN.”

II.

This is just the advice I myself would
have given

To Lord Alfred, had I been his
cousin, which, Heaven

Be praised, I am not. But it reached
him indeed

In an unlucky hour, and received lit-
tle heed.

A half-languid glance was the most
that he lent at

That time to these homilies. *Pri-*
mum dementat

Quem Deus vult perdere. Alfred in
fact

Was behaving just then in a way to
distract

Job's self had Job known him. The
more you'd have thought

The Duke's court to Matilda his eye
would have caught,

The more did his aspect grow listless
to hers.

And the more did it beam to Lucile
de Nevers.

And Matilda, the less she found love
in the look

Of her husband, the less did she
shrink from the Duke.

With each day that passed o'er them,
they each, heart from heart,

Woke to feel themselves further and
further apart.

More and more of his time Alfred
passed at the table ;

Played high ; and lost more than to
lose he was able.

He grew feverish, querulous, absent,
perverse,—

And here I must mention, what
made matters worse,

That Lucile and the Duke at the self-
same hotel

With the Vargraves resided. It
needs not to tell

That they all saw too much of each
other. The weather

Was so fine that it brought them
each day all together

In the garden, to listen, of course, to
the band.

The house was a sort of phalanstery ;
and

Lucile and Matilda were pleased to
discover

A mutual passion for music. More-
over,

The Duke was an excellent tenor :
could sing

“*Ange si pure*” in a way to bring
down on the wing

All the angels St. Cicely played to.
My lord

Would also at times, when he was
not too bored,

Play Beethoven, and Wagner's new
music, not ill ;

With some little things of his own,
showing skill.

For which reason, as well as for some
others too,

Their rooms were a pleasant enough
rendezvous.

Did Lucile, then, encourage (the
heartless coquette !)

All the mischief she could not but
mark ?

Patience yet !

III.

In that garden, an arbor, withdrawn
 from the sun,
 By laburnum and lilac with blooms
 overrun,
 Formed a vault of cool verdure,
 which made, when the heat
 Of the noontide hung heavy, a gra-
 cious retreat.
 And here, with some friends of their
 own little world,
 In the warm afternoons, till the
 shadows uncurled
 From the feet of the lindens, and
 crept through the grass,
 Their blue hours would this gay little
 colony pass.
 The men loved to smoke, and the
 women to bring,
 Undeterred by tobacco, their work
 there, and sing
 Or converse, till the dew fell, and
 homeward the bee
 Floated, heavy with honey. Towards
 eve there was tea
 (A luxury due to Matilda), and ice,
 Fruit, and coffee. Ὁ "Εσπερε, πάντα
 φέρεις!
 Such an evening it was, while Ma-
 tilda presided
 O'er the rustic arrangements thus
 daily provided,
 With the Duke, and a small German
 Prince with a thick head,
 And an old Russian Countess both
 witty and wicked,
 And two Austrian Colonels,—that
 Alfred, who yet
 Was lounging alone with his last
 cigarette,
 Saw Lucile de Nevers by herself
 pacing slow
 'Neath the shade of the cool linden-
 trees to and fro,
 And joining her, cried, "Thank the
 good stars, we meet!
 I have so much to say to you!"
 "Yes? . . ." with her sweet
 Serene voice, she replied to him . . .
 "Yes? and I too

Was wishing, indeed, to say some-
 what to you."
 She was paler just then than her
 wont was. The sound
 Of her voice had within it a sadness
 profound.
 "You are ill?" he exclaimed.
 "No!" she hurriedly said,
 "No, no!"
 "You alarm me!"
 She drooped down her head.
 "If your thoughts have of late
 sought, or cared, to divine
 The purpose of what has been pass-
 ing in mine,
 My farewell can scarcely alarm you."

ALFRED.

Lucile!

Your farewell! you go!

LUCILE.

Yes, Lord Alfred.

ALFRED.

Reveal

The cause of this sudden unkind-
 ness.

LUCILE.

Unkind?

ALFRED.

Yes! what else is this parting?

LUCILE.

No, no! are you blind?

Look into your own heart and home.

Can you see

No reason for this, save unkindness
 in me?Look into the eyes of your wife,—
 those true eyesToo pure and too honest in aught :c
 disguiseThe sweet soul shining through
 them.

ALFRED.

Lucile! (first and last

Be the word, if you will!) let me
 speak of the past.

I know now, alas ! though I know it
 too late,
 What passed at that meeting which
 settled my fate.
 Nay, nay, interrupt me not yet ! let
 it be !
 I but say what is due to yourself,—
 due to me,
 And must say it.
 He rushed incoherently on,
 Describing how, lately, the truth he
 had known,
 To explain how, and whence, he had
 wronged her before,
 All the complicate coil wound about
 him of yore.
 All the hopes that had flown with
 the faith that was fled,
 “ And then, O Lucile, what was left
 me,” he said,
 “ When my life was defrauded of
 you, but to take
 That life, as ’twas left, and endeavor
 to make
 Unobserved by another, the void
 which remained
 Unconcealed to myself ? If I have
 not attained,
 I have striven. One word of un-
 kindness has never
 Passed my lips to Matilda. Her least
 wish has ever
 Received my submission. And if, of
 a truth,
 I have failed to renew what I felt in
 my youth,
 I at least have been loyal to what I
 do feel,
 Respect, duty, honor, affection. Lu-
 cile,
 ! speak not of love now, nor love’s
 long regret :
 I would not offend you, nor dare I
 forget
 The ties that are round me. But
 may there not be
 A friendship yet hallowed between
 you and me ?
 May we not be yet friends,—friends
 the dearest ?”

“ Alas !”

She replied, “ for one moment, per-
 chance, did it pass
 Through my own heart, that dream
 which forever hath brought
 To those who indulge it in innocent
 thought
 So fatal and evil a waking ! But
 no.
 For in lives such as ours are, the
 Dream-tree would grow
 On the borders of Hades : beyond it,
 what lies ?
 The wheel of Ixion, alas ! and the
 cries
 Of the lost and tormented. Depart-
 ed, for us,
 Are the days when with innocence
 we could discuss
 Dreams like these. Fled, indeed,
 are the dreams of *my* life !
 O trust me, the best friend you have
 is your wife.
 And I,—in that pure child’s pure
 virtue, I bow
 To the beauty of virtue. I felt on
 my brow
 Not one blush when I first took her
 hand. With no blush
 Shall I clasp it to-night, when I leave
 you.
 “ Hush ! hush !
 I would say what I wished to have
 said when you came.
 Do not think that years leave us and
 find us the same !
 The woman you knew long ago, long
 ago,
 Is no more. You yourself have
 within you, I know,
 The germ of a joy in the years yet
 to be,
 Whereby the past years will bear
 fruit. As for me,
 I go my own way,—onward, upward .
 “ O yet,
 Let me thank you for that which en-
 nobled regret,
 When it came, as it beautified hope
 ere it fled,—
 The love I once felt for you. True,
 it is dead.

But it is not corrupted. I too have
 at last
 Lived to learn that love is not—
 (such love as is past,
 Such love as youth dreams of at
 least)—the sole part
 Of life, which is able to fill up the
 heart;
 Even that of a woman.

“Between you and me
 Heaven fixes a gulf, over which you
 must see
 That our guardian angels can bear
 us no more.
 We each of us stand on an opposite
 shore.
 Trust a woman’s opinion for once.
 Women learn,
 By an instinct men never attain, to
 discern
 Each other’s true natures. Matilda
 is fair,
 Matilda is young—see her now, sit-
 ting there!—
 How tenderly fashioned—(O, is she
 not? say,)
 To love and be loved!”

IV.

He turned sharply away,—
 “Matilda is young, and Matilda is
 fair;
 Of all that you tell me pray deem me
 aware;
 But Matilda’s a statue, Matilda’s a
 child;
 Matilda loves not—”

Lucile quietly smiled
 As she answered him:—“Yesterday,
 all that you say
 Might be true; it is false, wholly
 false, though, to-day.”
 “How?—what mean you?”
 “I mean that to-day,” she re-
 plied,
 “The statue with life has become
 vivified:
 I mean that the child to a woman
 has grown:
 And that woman is jealous.”

“What! she?” with a tone

Of ironical wonder, he answered—
 “what, she!
 She jealous!—Matilda!—of whom,
 pray?—not me!”

“My lord, you deceive yourself; no
 one but you
 Is she jealous of. Trust me. And
 thank Heaven, too,
 That so lately this passion within
 her hath grown.
 For who shall declare, if for months
 she had known
 What for days she has known all too
 keenly, I fear,
 That knowledge perchance might
 have cost you more dear?”
 “Explain! explain, madam!” he
 cried in surprise;
 And terror and anger enkindled his
 eyes.

“How blind are you men!” she re-
 plied. “Can you doubt
 That a woman, young, fair, and neg-
 lected—”

“Speak out!”
 He gasped with emotion. “Lucile!
 you mean—what?
 Do you doubt her fidelity?”

“Certainly not.
 Listen to me, my friend. What I
 wish to explain
 Is so hard to shape forth. I could
 almost refrain
 From touching a subject so fragile.
 However, [endeavor
 Bear with me awhile, if I frankly
 To invade for one moment your in-
 nermost life.
 Your honor, Lord Alfred, and that
 of your wife,
 Are dear to me,—most dear! And
 I am convinced
 That you rashly are risking that
 honor.”

He winced,
 And turned pale, as she spoke.
 She had aimed at his heart,
 And she saw, by his sudden and ter-
 rified start,

That her aim had not missed.

“Stay, Lucile!” he exclaimed,
“What in truth do you mean by
these words, vaguely framed
To alarm me? Matilda?—My
wife?—do you know?”—

“I know that your wife is as spot-
less as snow.

But I know not how far your con-
tinued neglect

Her nature, as well as her heart,
might affect.

Till at last, by degrees, that serene
atmosphere

Of her unconscious purity, faint and
yet clear,

Like the indistinct golden and vapor-
ous fleece

Which surrounded and hid the cele-
stials in Greece

From the glances of men, would dis-
perse and depart

At the sighs of a sick and delirious
heart,—

For jealousy is to a woman, be sure,
A disease healed too oft by a crimi-
nal cure;

And the heart left too long to its
ravage, in time

May find weakness in virtue, reprisal
in crime.”

V.

“Such thoughts could have never,”
he faltered, “I know,

Reached the heart of Matilda.”

“Matilda? O no!
But reflect! when such thoughts do
not come of themselves

To the heart of a woman neglected,
like elves

That seek lonely places,—there rare-
ly is wanting

Some voice at her side, with an evil
enchanted

To conjure them to her.”

“O lady, beware!
At this moment, around me I search
everywhere

For a clew to your words”—

“You mistake them,” she said,

Half fearing, indeed, the effect they
had made.

“I was putting a mere hypothetical
case.”

With a long look of trouble he gazed
in her face.

“Woe to him, . . .” he exclaimed
. . . “woe to him that shall feel

Such a hope! for I swear, if he did
but reveal

One glimpse,—it should be the last
hope of his life!”

The clenched hand and bent eye-
brow betokened the strife

She had roused in his heart.

“You forget,” she began,
“That you menace yourself. You
yourself are the man

That is guilty. Alas! must it ever
be so?

Do we stand in our own light, wher-
ever we go,

And fight our own shadows forever?
O think!

The trial from which you, the
stronger ones, shrink,

You ask woman, the weaker one,
still to endure;

You bid her be true to the laws you
abjure;

To abide by the ties you yourselves
rend asunder,

With the force that has failed you;
and that, too, when under

The assumption of rights which to
her you refuse,

The immunity claimed for your
selves you abuse!

Where the contract exists, it in-
volves obligation

To both husband and wife, in an
equal relation.

You unloose, in asserting your own
liberty,

A knot, which, unloosed, leaves
another as free,

Then, O Alfred! be juster at heart!
and thank Heaven

That Heaven to your wife such a
nature has given

That you have not wherewith to reproach her, albeit
You have cause to reproach your own self, could you see it !”

VI.

In the silence that followed the last word she said,
In the heave of his chest, and the droop of his head,
Poor Lucile marked her words had sufficed to impart
A new germ of motion and life to that heart
Of which he himself had so recently spoken
As dead to emotion,—exhausted, or broken !
New fears would awaken new hopes in his life.
In the husband indifferent no more to the wife
She already, as she had foreseen, could discover
That Matilda had gained, at her hands, a new lover.
So after some moments of silence, whose spell
They both felt, she extended her hand to him. . . .

VII.

“ Well ? ”

VIII.

“ Lucile,” he replied, as that soft quiet hand
In his own he clasped warmly, “ I both understand
And obey you.”

“ Thank Heaven ! ” she murmured.

“ O yet,
One word, I beseech you ! I cannot forget.”
He exclaimed, “ we are parting for life. You have shown
My pathway to me : but say, what is your own ? ”
The calmness with which until then she had spoken

In a moment seemed strangely and suddenly broken.
She turned from him nervously, hurriedly.

“ Nay,
I know not,” she murmured, “ I follow the way
Heaven leads me ; I cannot foresee to what end.

I know only that far, far away it must tend
From all places in which we have met, or might meet.
Far away !—onward—upward ! ”

A smile strange and sweet
As the incense that rises from some sacred cup
And mixes with music, stole forth,
and breathed up
Her whole face, with those words.

“ Wheresoever it be,
May all gentlest angels attend you ! ”
sighed he,
“ And bear my heart’s blessing wheresoever you are ! ”
And her hand, with emotion, he kissed.

IX.

From afar
That kiss was, alas ! by Matilda beheld
With far other emotions : her young bosom swelled,
And her young cheek with anger was crimsoned.

The Duke
Adroitly attracted towards it her look
By a faint but significant smile.

X.

Much ill-contrued,
Renowned Bishop Berkeley has fully, for one, strewed
With arguments page upon page to teach folks [a hoax.
That the world they inhabit is only
But it surely is hard, since we can’t do without them,
That our senses should make us so oft wish to doubt them !

CANTO III.

I.

WHEN first the red savage called
 Man strode, a king,
 Through the wilds of creation,—the
 very first thing
 That his naked intelligence taught
 him to feel
 Was the shame of himself ; and the
 wish to conceal
 Was the first step in art. From the
 apron which Eve
 In Eden sat down out of fig-leaves
 to weave,
 To the furbelowed flounce and the
 broad crinoline
 Of my lady . . . you all know of
 course whom I mean . . .
 This art of concealment has greatly
 increased.
 A whole world lies cryptic in each
 human breast ;
 And that drama of passions as old
 as the hills,
 Which the moral of all men in each
 man fulfils,
 Is only revealed now and then to
 our eyes
 In the newspaper-files and the courts
 of assize.

II.

In the group seen so lately in sun-
 light assembled,
 'Mid those walks over which the la-
 burnum-bough trembled,
 And the deep-bosomed lilac empara-
 dising ;
 The hawks where the blackbird and
 thrush flit and sing,
 The keenest eye could but have seen,
 and seen only,
 A circle of friends, minded not to
 leave lonely
 The bird on the bough, or the bee on
 the blossom ;
 Conversing at ease in the garden's
 green bosom,
 Like those who, when Florence was
 yet in her glories,

Cheated death and killed time with
 Boccaccian stories.
 But at length the long twilight more
 deeply grew shaded.
 And the fair night the rosy horizon
 invaded.
 And the bee in the blossom, the bird
 on the bough,
 Through the shadowy garden were
 slumbering now,
 The trees only, o'er every unvisited
 walk, [talk.
 Began on a sudden to whisper and
 And, as each little sprightly and
 garrulous leaf
 Woke up with an evident sense of
 relief,
 They all seemed to be saying . . .
 "Once more we're alone.
 And, thank Heaven, those tiresome
 people are gone !"

III.

Through the deep blue concave of
 the luminous air,
 Large, loving, and languid, the stars
 here and there,
 Like the eyes of shy passionate wo-
 men, looked down
 O'er the dim world whose sole ten-
 der light was their own,
 When Matilda, alone, from her
 chamber descended,
 And entered the garden, unseen,
 unattended.
 Her forehead was aching and parch-
 ed, and her breast
 By a vague inexpressible sadness op-
 pressed ;
 A sadness which led her, she scarcely
 knew how,
 And she scarcely knew why . . . |
 (save, indeed, that just now
 The house, out of which with a gasp
 she had fled
 Half-stifled, seemed ready to sink on
 her head) . . .
 Out into the night air, the silence,
 the bright
 Boundless starlight, the cool isola-
 tion of night !

Her husband that day had looked
once in her face.

And pressed both her hands in a
silent embrace.

And reproachfully noticed her re-
cent dejection

With a smile of kind wonder and
tacit affection.

He, of late so indifferent and listless !
. . . at last

Was he startled and awed by the
change which had passed

O'er the once radiant face of his
young wife? Whence came

That long look of solicitous fond-
ness? . . . the same

Look and language of quiet affection,
—the look

And the language, alas ! which so
often she took

For pure love in the simple repose
of its purity.—

Her own heart thus lulled to a fatal
security !

Ha ! would he deceive her again by
this kindness ?

Had she been, then, O fool ! in her
innocent blindness

The sport of transparent illusion ?
ah, folly !

And that feeling, so tranquil, so hap-
py, so holy,

She had taken, till then, in the
heart, not alone

Of her husband, but also, indeed, in
her own,

For true love, nothing else, after all,
did it prove

But a friendship profanely familiar ?
“ And love ? . . .

What was love, then ? . . . not calm,
not secure,—scarcely kind !

But in one, all intensest emotions
combined :

Life and death : pain and rapture.”

Thus wandering astray,
Led by doubt, through the darkness
she wandered away.

All silently crossing, recrossing the
night, [light,

With faint, meteoric, miraculous

The swift-shooting stars through the
infinite burned,

And into the infinite ever returned.
And silently o'er the obscure and

unknown
In the heart of Matilda there darted

and shone
Thoughts, enkindling like meteors
the deeps, to expire,

Leaving traces behind them of
tremulous fire.

IV.

She entered that arbor of lilacs, in
which

The dark air with odors hung heavy
and rich,

Like a soul that grows faint with
desire.

’Twas the place

In which she so lately had sat, face
to face

With her husband,—and her, the
pale stranger detested,

Whose presence her heart like a
plague had infested.

The whole spot with evil remem-
brance was haunted.

Through the darkness there rose on
the heart which it daunted

Each dreary detail of that desolate
day,

So full, and yet so incomplete. Far
away

The acacias were muttering, like
mischievous elves,

The whole story over again to them-
selves,

Each word,—and each word was a
wound ! By degrees

Her memory mingled its voice with
the trees.

V.

Like the whisper Eve heard, when
she paused by the root

Of the sad tree of knowledge, and
gazed on its fruit.

To the heart of Matilda the trees
seemed to hiss

Wild instructions, revealing man’s
last right, which is

The right of reprisals.

An image uncertain,
And vague, dimly shaped itself forth
on the curtain
Of the darkness around her. It
came, and it went ;
Through her senses a faint sense of
peril it sent :
It passed and repassed her ; it went
and it came
Forever returning ; forever the same ;
And forever more clearly defined ;
till her eyes
In that outline obscure could at last
recognize
The man to whose image, the more
and the more
That her heart, now aroused from
its calm sleep of yore,
From her husband detached itself
slowly, with pain,
Her thoughts had returned, and re-
turned to, again, [law.—
As though by some secret indefinite
The vigilant Frenchman, — Eugène
de Lavois !

VI.

A light sound behind her. She
trembled. By some
Night-witchcraft her vision a fact
had become.
On a sudden she felt, without turn-
ing to view,
That a man was approaching behind
her. She knew
By the fluttering pulse which she
could not restrain,
And the quick-beating heart, that
this man was Eugène.
Her first instinct was flight ; but she
felt her slight foot
As heavy as though to the soil it had
root.
And the Duke's voice retained her,
like fear in a dream.

VII.

“ Ah, lady ! in life there are meet-
ings which seem
Like a fate. Dare I think like a
sympathy too ?

Yet what else can I bless for this
vision of you ?
Alone with my thoughts, on this
starlighted lawn,
By an instinct resistless, I felt my-
self drawn
To revisit the memories left in the
place
Where so lately this evening I look-
ed in your face.
And I find,—you, yourself,—my own
dream !

“ Can there be
In this world one thought common
to you and to me ?
If so, . . . I, who deemed but a mo-
ment ago
My heart unaccompanied, save only
by woe,
Should indeed be more blessed than
I dare to believe—
Ah, but *one* word, but *one* from your
lips to receive ” . . .

Interrupting him quickly, she mur-
mured, “ I sought,
Here, a moment of solitude, silence,
and thought,
Which I needed.” . . .
“ Lives solitude only for one ?
Must its charm by my presence so
soon be undone ?
Ah, cannot two share it ? What
needs it for this ?—
The same thought in both hearts,—
be it sorrow or bliss ;
If my heart be the reflex of yours,
lady,—you,
Are you not yet alone,—even though
we be two ? ”

“ For that,” . . . said Matilda, . . .
“ needs were, you should read
What I have in my heart.” . . .
“ Think you, lady, indeed,
You are yet of that age when a wo-
man conceals
In her heart so completely whatever
she feels
From the heart of the man whom it
interests to know

And find out what that feeling may
be? Ah, not so,
Lady Alfred! Forgive me that in it
I look,
But I read in your heart as I read in
a book."

"Well, Duke! and what read you
within it? unless
It be, of a truth, a profound weariness,
And some sadness?"

"No doubt. To all facts there are
laws.
The effect has its cause, and I mount
to the cause."

VIII.

Matilda shrank back; for she suddenly found
That a finger was pressed on the yet
bleeding wound
She herself had but that day perceived
in her breast.

"You are sad," . . . said the Duke
(and that finger yet pressed
With a cruel persistence the wound
it made bleed)—

"You are sad, Lady Alfred, because
the first need
Of a young and a beautiful woman is
to be

Beloved, and to love. You are sad;
for you see

That you are not beloved, as you
deemed that you were:

You are sad: for that knowledge
hath left you aware

That you have not yet loved, though
you thought that you had.

Yes, yes! . . . you are sad—because
knowledge is sad!"

He could not have read more profoundly
her heart.

"What gave you," she cried, with a
terrified start,

"Such strange power?" . . .
"To read in your thoughts?" he
exclaimed,

"O lady,—a love, deep, profound,—
be it blamed

Or rejected,—a love, true, intense,—
such, at least,
As you, and you only, could wake in
my breast!"

"Hush, hush! . . . I beseech you . . .
for pity!" she gasped,
Snatching hurriedly from him the
hand he had clasped
In her effort instinctive to fly from
the spot.

"For pity?" . . . he echoed, "for
pity! and what
Is the pity you owe him? his pity for
you!

He, the lord of a life, fresh as new-
fallen dew!

The guardian and guide of a woman,
young, fair,

And matchless! (whose happiness
did he not swear

To cherish through life?) he neglects
her—for whom?

For a fairer than she? No! the rose
in the bloom

Of that beauty which, even when
hidden, can prevail

To keep sleepless with song the
aroused nightingale,

Is not fairer; for even in the pure
world of flowers

Her symbol is not, and this poor
world of ours

Has no second Matilda! For whom?
Let that pass!

'Tis not I, 'tis not you, that can name
her, alas!

And I dare not question or judge her.
But why,

Why cherish the cause of your own
misery?

Why think of one, lady, who thinks
not of you?

Why be bound by a chain which him-
self he breaks through?

And why, since you have but to
stretch forth your hand,

The love which you need and deserve
to command,

Why shrink? Why repel it?"

"O hush, sir! O hush!"
Cried Matilda as though her whole
heart were one blush.

"Cease, cease, I conjure you, to
trouble my life!

Is not Alfred your friend? and am I
not his wife?"

IX.

'And have I not, lady," he an-
swered, . . . "respected

His rights as a friend, till himself he
neglected

Your rights as a wife? Do you think
'tis alone

For three days I have loved you?
My love may have grown

I admit, day by day, since I first felt
your eyes.

In watching their tears, and in sound-
ing your sighs.

But, O lady! I loved you before I
believed

That your eyes ever wept, or your
heart ever grieved.

Then I deemed you were happy—I
deemed you possessed

All the love you deserved,—and I
hid in my breast

My own love, till this hour—when I
could not but feel

Your grief gave me the right my
own grief to reveal!

I knew, years ago, of the singular
power

Which Lucile o'er your husband pos-
sessed. Till the hour

In which he revealed it himself, did
I,—say!—

By a word, or a look, such a secret
betray?

No! no! do me justice. I never
have spoken

Of this poor heart of mine, till all
ties he had broken

Which bound *your* heart to him.
And now—now, that his love

For another hath left your own heart
free to rove,

What is it,—even now,—that I kneel
to implore you?

Only this, Lady Alfred! . . . to let
me adore you

Unblamed: to have confidence in
me: to spend

On me not one thought, save to think
me your friend.

Let me speak to you,—ah, let me
speak to you still!

Hush to silence my words in your
heart, if you will.

I ask no response: I ask only your
leave

To live yet in your life, and to grieve
when you grieve!"

X.

"Leave me, leave me!" . . . she
gasped, with a voice thick and
low

From emotion. "For pity's sake,
Duke, let me go!

I feel that to blame we should both
of us be,

Did I linger."

"To blame? yes, no doubt!" . . .
answered he,

"If the love of your husband, in
bringing you peace,

Had forbidden you hope. But he
signs your release

By the hand of another. One mo-
ment! but one!

Who knows when, alas! I may see
you alone

As to-night I have seen you! or
when we may meet

As to-night we have met? when, en-
tranced at your feet,

As in this blessed hour, I may ever
avow

The thoughts which are pining for
utterance now!"

"Duke! Duke!" . . . she exclaimed
. . . "for heaven's sake let me
go!

It is late. In the house they will
miss me, I know.

We must not be seen here together.
The night

Is advancing. I feel overwhelmed
with affright!

It is time to return to my lord."
 "To your lord?"
 He repeated, with lingering reproach
 on the word,
 "To your lord? do you think he
 awaits you, in truth?
 Is he anxiously missing your pres-
 ence, forsooth?
 Return to your lord! . . . his restraint
 to renew?
 And hinder the glances which are
 not for you?
 No, no! . . . at this moment his
 looks seek the face
 Of another! another is there in your
 place!
 Another consoles him! another re-
 ceives
 The soft speech which from silence
 your absence relieves!"

XI.

"You mistake, sir!" . . . responded
 a voice, calm, severe,
 And sad, . . . "You mistake, sir!
 that other is here."
 Eugène and Matilda both started.
 "Lucile!"
 With a half-stifled scream, as she felt
 herself reel
 From the place where she stood,
 cried Matilda.
 "Ho, oh!
 What! eaves-dropping, madam?"
 . . . the Duke cried . . . "And
 so
 You were listening?"
 "Say, rather," she said, "that I
 heard,
 Without wishing to hear it, that in-
 famous word,—
 Heard—and therefore reply."
 "Belle Comtesse," said the Duke,
 With concentrated wrath in the sav-
 age rebuke,
 Which betrayed that he felt himself
 baffled . . . "you know
 That your place is not *here*."
 "Duke," she answered him slow,
 "My place is wherever my duty is
 clear,

And therefore my place, at this mo-
 ment, is here.
 O lady, this morning my place was
 beside
 Your husband, because (as she said
 this she sighed)
 I felt that from folly fast growing
 to crime—
 The crime of self-blindness—Heaven
 yet spared me time
 To save for the love of an innocent
 wife
 All that such love deserved in the
 heart and the life
 Of the man to whose heart and whose
 life you alone
 Can with safety confide the pure
 trust of your own."

She turned to Matilda, and lightly
 laid on her
 Her soft, quiet hand . . .
 "'Tis, O lady, the honor
 Which that man has confided to you,
 that, in spite
 Of his friend, I now trust I may yet
 save to-night—
 Save for both of you, lady! for yours
 I revere;
 Duc de Luvois, what say you?—my
 place is not here?"

XII.

And, so saying, the hand of Matilda
 she caught,
 Wound one arm round her waist un-
 resisted, and sought
 Gently, softly, to draw her away
 from the spot.
 The Duke stood confounded, and
 followed them not.
 But not yet the house had they
 reached when Lucile
 Her tender and delicate burden could
 feel
 Sink and falter beside her. O, then
 she knelt down,
 Flung her arms round Matilda, and
 pressed to her own
 The poor bosom beating against her.

The moon,
Bright, breathless, and buoyant, and
brimful of June,
Floated up from the hillside, sloped
over the vale,
And poised herself loose in mid-
heaven, with one pale,
Minute, scintillessent, and tremu-
lous star
Swinging under her globe like a
wizard-lit car,
Thus to each of those women reveal-
ing the face
Of the other. Each bore on her
features the trace
Of a vivid emotion. A deep inward
shame
The cheek of Matilda had flooded
with flame.
With her enthusiastic emotion, Lu-
cile
Trembled visibly yet ; for she could
not but feel
That a heavenly hand was upon her
that night.
And it touched her pure brow to a
heavenly light.
“In the name of your husband, dear
lady,” she said ;
“In the name of your mother, take
heart ! Lift your head,
For those blushes are noble. Alas !
do not trust
To that maxim of virtue made ashes
and dust,
That the fault of the husband can
cancel the wife’s.
Take heart ! and take refuge and
strength in your life’s
Pure silence,—there, kneel, pray,
and hope, weep, and wait !”
“Saved, Lucile !” sobbed Matilda,
“but saved to what fate ?
Tears, prayers, yes ! not hopes.”
“Hush !” the sweet voice replied.
“Fooled away by a fancy, again to
your side
Must your husband return. Doubt
not this. And return
For the love you can give, with the
love that you yearn

To receive, lady. What was it chilled
you both now ?
Not the absence of love, but the ig-
norance how
Love is nourished by love. Well !
henceforth you will prove
Your heart worthy of love,—since it
knows how to love.”

XIII.

“What gives you such power over
me, that I feel
Thus drawn to obey you ? What are
you, Lucile ?”
Sighed Matilda, and lifted her eyes
to the face
Of Lucile.

There passed suddenly through it
the trace
Of deep sadness ; and o’er that fair
forehead came down
A shadow which yet was too sweet
for a frown.

“The pupil of sorrow, perchance”
... she replied.

“Of sorrow ?” Matilda exclaimed
... “O confide

To my heart your affliction. In all
you made known
I should find some instruction, no
doubt, for my own !”

“And I some consolation, no doubt ;
for the tears
Of another have not flowed for me
many years.”

It was then that Matilda herself
seized the hand
Of Lucile in her own, and uplifted
her ; and
Thus together they entered the house

XIV.

’Twas the room
Of Matilda.
The languid and delicate gloom
Of a lamp of pure white alabaster,
aloft
From the ceiling suspended, around
it slept soft.

The casement oped into the garden.

The pale

Cool moonlight streamed through it.

One lone nightingale

Sung aloof in the laurels.

And here, side by side,
Hand in hand, the two women sat
down undescried,

Save by guardian angels.

As, when, sparkling yet
From the rain, that, with drops that
are jewels, leaves wet

The bright head it humbles, a young
rose inclines

To some pale lily near it, the fair
vision shines

As one flower with two faces, in
hushed, tearful speech,

Like the showery whispers of flow-
ers, each to each

Bluked, and leaning together, so lov-
ing, so fair,

So united, yet diverse, the two wo-
men there

Looked, indeed, like two flowers
upon one drooping stem,

In the soft light that tenderly rested
on them.

All that soul said to soul in that
chamber, who knows ?

All that heart gained from heart ?

Leave the lily, the rose,
Undisturbed with their secret within
them. For who

To the heart of the floweret can fol-
low the dew ?

A night full of stars ! O'er the si-
lence, unseen,

The footsteps of sentinel angels, be-
tween

The dark land and deep sky were
moving. You heard

Passed from earth up to heaven the
happy watchword

Which brightened the stars as
amongst them it fell

From earth's heart, which it eased
... "All is well ! all is well !"

CANTO IV.

I.

THE Poets pour wine ; and, when
'tis new, all decry it,
But, once let it be old, every trifler
must try it.

And Polonius, who praises no wine
that's not Massie,
Complains of my verse, that my verse
is not classic.

And Miss Tilburina, who sings, and
not badly,

My earlier verses, sighs " Common-
place sadly !"

As for you, O Polonius, you vex me
but slightly ;

But you, Tilburina, your eyes beam
so brightly

In despite of their languishing looks,
on my word,

That to see you look cross I can
scarcely afford.

Yes ! the silliest woman that smiles
on a bard

Better far than Longinus himself
can reward

The appeal to her feelings of which
she approves ;

And the critics I most care to please
are the Loves.

Alas, friend ! what boots it, a stone
at his head

And a brass on his breast,—when a
man is once dead ?

Ay ! were fame the sole guerdon,
poor guerdon were then

Theirs who, stripping life bare, stand
forth models for men.

The reformer's ?—a creed by poster-
ity learnt

A century after its author is burnt !

The poet's ?—a laurel that hides the
bald brow

It hath blighted ! The painter's ?—
ask Raphael now

Which Madonna's authentic ! The
statesman's ?—a name

For parties to blacken, or boys to de-
claim !

The soldier's?—three lines on the cold Abbey pavement !
 Were this all the life of the wise and the brave meant,
 All it ends in, thrice better, Neara, it were
 Unguarded to sport with thine odorous hair,
 Untroubled to lie at thy feet in the shade
 And be loved, while the roses yet bloom overhead,
 Than to sit by the lone hearth, and think the long thought,
 A severe, sad, blind schoolmaster, envied for naught
 Save the name of John Milton ! For all men, indeed,
 Who in some choice edition may graciously read,
 With fair illustration, and erudite note,
 The song which the poet in bitterness wrote,
 Beat the poet, and notably beat him, in this—
 The joy of the genius is theirs, whilst they miss
 The grief of the man : Tasso's song, —not his madness !
 Dante's dreams.—not his waking to exile and sadness !
 Milton's music,—but not Milton's blindness ! . . .

Yet rise,
 My Milton, and answer, with those noble eyes
 Which the glory of heaven hath blinded to earth !
 Say—the life, in the living it, savors of worth :
 That the deed, in the doing it, reaches its aim :
 That the fact has a value apart from the fame :
 That a deeper delight, in the mere labor, pays
 Scorn of lesser delights, and laborious days :
 And Shakespeare, though all Shakespeare's writings were lost,

And his genius, though never a trace of it crossed
 Posterity's path, not the less would have dwelt
 In the isle with Miranda, with Hamlet have felt
 All that Hamlet hath uttered, and haply where, pure
 On its death-bed, wronged Love lay, have moaned with the Moor !

II.

When Lord Alfred that night to the salon returned
 He found it deserted. The lamp dimly burned
 As though half out of humor to find itself there
 Forced to light for no purpose a room that was bare.
 He sat down by the window alone. Never yet
 Did the heavens a lovelier evening beget
 Since Latona's bright childbed that bore the new moon !
 The dark world lay still, in a sort of sweet swoon,
 Wide open to heaven ; and the stars on the stream
 Were trembling like eyes that are loved on the dream
 Of a lover ; and all things were glad and at rest
 Save the inquiet heart in his own troubled breast.
 He endeavored to think,—an unwonted employment,
 Which appeared to afford him no sort of enjoyment.

III.

“Withdraw into yourself. But, if peace you seek there for,
 Your reception, beforehand, be sure to prepare for,”
 Wrote the tutor of Nero ; who wrote, be it said,
 Better far than he acted,—but peace to the dead !

He bled for his pupil : what more
 could he do ?
 But Lord Alfred, when into himself
 he withdrew,
 Found all there in disorder. For
 more than an hour
 He sat with his head drooped like
 some stubborn flower
 Beaten down by the rush of the rain,
 —with such force
 Did the thick, gushing thoughts hold
 upon him the course
 Of their sudden descent, rapid, rush-
 ing, and dim,
 From the cloud that had darkened
 the evening for him.
 At one moment he rose,—rose and
 opened the door,
 And wistfully looked down the dark
 corridor
 Toward the room of Matilda. Anon,
 with a sigh [quietly
 Of an incomplete purpose, he crept
 Back again to his place in a sort of
 submission
 To doubt, and returned to his former
 position,—
 That loose fall of the arms, that dull
 droop of the face,
 And the eye vaguely fixed on impal-
 pable space.
 The dream, which till then had been
 lulling his life,
 As once Circe the winds, had sealed
 thought ; and his wife
 And his home for a time he had
 quite, like Ulysses,
 Forgotten ; but now o'er the troubled
 abysses [forth leapt
 Of the spirit within him, æolian,
 To their freedom new-found, and re-
 sistlessly swept
 All his heart into tumult, the
 thoughts which had been
 Long pent up in their mystic recesses
 unseen.

IV.

How long he thus sat there, himself
 he knew not,
 Till he started, as though he were
 suddenly shot,

To the sound of a voice too familiar
 to doubt,
 Which was making some noise in the
 passage without.
 A sound English voice, with a round
 English accent,
 Which the scared German echoes re-
 sentfully back sent ;
 The complaint of a much disappoint-
 ed cab-driver
 Mingled with it, demanding some
 ultimate stiver :
 Then, the heavy and hurried ap-
 proach of a boot
 Which revealed by its sound no di-
 minutive foot :
 And the door was flung suddenly
 open, and on
 The threshold Lord Alfred by bach-
 elor John
 Was seized in that sort of affection-
 ate rage or
 Frenzy of hugs which some stout
 Ursa Major
 On some lean Ursa Minor would
 doubtless bestow
 With a warmth for which only star-
 vation and snow
 Could render one grateful. As soon
 as he could,
 Lord Alfred contrived to escape, nor
 be food
 Any more for those somewhat vorac-
 ious embraces.
 Then the two men sat down and
 scanned each other's faces ;
 And Alfred could see that his cousin
 was taken
 With unwonted emotion. The hand
 that had shaken
 His own trembled somewhat. In
 truth he descried,
 At a glance, something wrong.

V.

“What's the matter ?” he cried.
 “What have you to tell me ?”

JOHN.

What ! have you not heard ?

ALFRED.

Heard what ?

JOHN.
This sad business—

ALFRED.
I? no, not a word.

JOHN.
You received my last letter?

ALFRED.
I think so. If not,
What then?

JOHN.
You have acted upon it?

ALFRED.
On what?

JOHN.
The advice that I gave you—

ALFRED.
Advice?—let me see!
You *always* are giving advice, Jack,
to me.
About Parliament was it?

JOHN.
Hang Parliament! no,
The Bank, the Bank, Alfred!

ALFRED.
What Bank?

JOHN.
Heavens! I know
You are careless;—but surely you
have not forgotten,—
Or neglected . . . I warned you the
whole thing was rotten.
You have drawn those deposits at
least?

ALFRED.
No, I meant
To have written to-day; but the
note shall be sent
To-morrow, however.

JOHN.
To-morrow? too late!
Too late! O, what devil bewitched
you to wait?

ALFRED.
Mercy save us! you don't mean to
say . . .

JOHN.
Yes, I do.

ALFRED.
What! Sir Ridley? . . .

JOHN.
Smashed, broken, blown up, bolted,
too!

ALFRED.
But his own niece? . . . In heav-
en's name, Jack . . .

JOHN.
O, I told you
The old hypocritical scoundrel
would . . .

ALFRED.
Hold! you
Surely can't mean we are ruined?

JOHN.
Sit down!
A fortnight ago a report about town
Made me most apprehensive. Alas,
and alas!
I at once wrote and warned you.
Well, now let that pass.
A run on the Bank about five days
ago
Confirmed my forebodings too terri-
bly, though
I drove down to the city at once:
found the door
Of the Bank close: the Bank had
stopped payment at four.
Next morning the failure was known
to be fraud:
Warrant out for MacNab; but Mac-
Nab was abroad:
Gone—we cannot tell where. I en-
deavored to get
Information: have learned nothing
certain as yet,—
Not even the way that old Ridley
was gone:
Or with those securities what he had
done:

Or whether they had been already
called out :
If they are not, their fate is, I fear,
past a doubt.
Twenty families ruined, they say :
what was left,—
Unable to find any clew to the cleft
The old fox ran to earth in,—but
join you as fast
As I could, my dear Alfred ? *

VI.

He stopped here, aghast
At the change in his cousin, the hue
of whose face
Had grown livid ; and glassy his
eyes fixed on space.
“ Courage, courage ! ” . . . said
John, . . . “ bear the blow like
a man ! ”
And he caught the cold hand of
Lord Alfred. There ran
Through that hand a quick tremor.
“ I hear it,” he said,
“ But Matilda ? the blow is to her ! ”
And his head
Seemed forced down, as he said it.

JOHN.

Matilda ? Pooh, pooh !
I half think I know the girl better
than you.
She has courage enough—and to
spare. She cares less
Than most women for luxury, non-
sense, and dress.

ALFRED.

The fault has been mine.

* These events, it is needless to say, Mr. Morse, Took place when Bad News as yet travelled by horse. Ere the world, like a cockchafer, buzzed on a wire, Or Time was calined by electrical fire ; Ere a cable went under the hoary Atlantic, Or the word Telegram drove grammarians frantic.

JOHN.

Be it yours to repair it,
If you did not avert, you may help
her to bear it.

ALFRED.

I might have averted.

JOHN.

Perhaps so. But now
There is clearly no use in consider-
ing how,
Or whence, came the mischief. The
mischief is here.
Broken shins are not mended by cry-
ing,—that's clear !
One has but to rub them, and get up
again,
And push on,—and not think too
much of the pain.
And at least it is much that you see
that to her
You owe too much to think of your-
self. You must stir
And arouse yourself, Alfred, for her
sake. Who knows ?
Something yet may be saved from
this wreck. I suppose
We shall make him disgorge all he
can, at the least.

“ O Jack, I have been a brute idiot !
a beast !
A fool ! I have sinned, and to *her*
I have sinned !
I have been heedless, blind, inex-
cusably blind !
And now, in a flash, I see all
things ! ”

As though
To shut out the vision, he bowed his
head low
On his hands ; and the great tears
in silence rolled on.
And fell momentarily, heavily, one af-
ter one.
John felt no desire to find instant
relief

For the trouble he witnessed.

He guessed, in the grief
Of his cousin, the broken and heart-
felt admission

Of some error demanding a heartfelt
contrition :

Some oblivion perchance which could
plead less excuse

To the heart of a man re-aroused to
the use

Of the conscience God gave him,
than simply and merely

The neglect for which now he was
paying so dearly.

So he rose without speaking, and
paced up and down

The long room, much afflicted, in-
deed, in his own

Cordial heart for Matilda.

Thus, silently lost
In his anxious reflections, he crossed
and recrossed

The place where his cousin yet hope-
lessly hung

O'er the table; his fingers entwisted
among

The rich curls they were knotting
and dragging : and there,

That sound of all sounds the most
painful to hear,

The sobs of a man ! Yet so far in
his own

Kindly thoughts was he plunged, he
already had grown

Unconscious of Alfred.

And so for a space
There was silence between them.

VII.

At last, with sad face
He stopped short, and bent on his
cousin awhile

A pained sort of wistful, passion-
ate smile,

Approached him,—stood o'er him,—
and suddenly laid

One hand on his shoulder—

“Where is she ?” he said.
Alfred lifted his face all disfigured
with tears

And gazed vacantly at him, like one
that appears

In some foreign language to hear
himself greeted,

Unable to answer.

“Where is she ?” repeated
His cousin.

He motioned his hand to the door;
“There, I think,” he replied. Cousin

John said no more,
And appeared to relapse to his own

cogitations,
Of which not a gesture vouchsafed
indications.

So again there was silence.

A tinypiece at last
Struck the twelve strokes of mid-
night.

Roused by them, he cast
A half-look to the dial; then quietly

threw
His arm round the neck of his cousin,
and drew

The hands down from his face.

“It is time she should know
What has happened,” he said, . . .

“let us go to her now.”
Alfred started at once to his feet.

Drawn and wan
Though his face, he looked more
than his wont was—a man.

Strong for once, in his weakness.
Uplifted, filled through

With a manly resolve.

If that axiom be true
Of the “*Sum quia cogito*,” I must
opine

That “*id sum quod cogito*”—that
which, in fine,

A man thinks and feels, with his
whole force of thought

And feeling, the man is himself.

He had fought
With himself, and rose up from his
self-overthrow

The survivor of much which that
strife had laid low.

At his feet, as he rose at the nam
of his wife, life

Lay in ruins the brilliant unrealized
Which, though yet unfulfilled, seem-
ed till then, in that name,

To be his, had he claimed it. The
man's dream of fame

And of power fell shattered before
him ; and only

There rested the heart of the woman,
 so lonely
 In all save the love he could give
 her. The lord
 Of that heart he arose. Blush not,
 Muse, to record
 That his first thought, and last, at
 that moment was not
 Of the power and fame that seemed
 lost to his lot,
 But the love that was left to it ; not
 of the pelf
 He had cared for, yet squandered ;
 and not of himself,
 But of her ; as he murmured,
 "One moment, dear Jack !
 We have grown up from boyhood to-
 gether. Our track
 Has been through the same meadows
 in childhood : in youth
 Through the same silent gateways,
 to manhood. In truth,
 There is none that can know me as
 you do ; and none
 To whom I more wish to believe my-
 self known.
 Speak the truth ; you are not wont
 to mince it, I know.
 Nor I, shall I shirk it, or shrink
 from it now. [spite
 In despite of a wanton behavior, in
 Of vanity, folly, and pride, Jack,
 which might
 Have turned from me many a heart
 strong and true
 As your own, I have never turned
 round and missed YOU
 From my side in one hour of afflic-
 tion or doubt
 By my own blind and heedless self-
 will brought about.
 Tell me truth. Do I owe this alone
 to the sake
 Of those old recollections of boyhood
 that make
 In your heart yet some clinging and
 crying appeal
 From a judgment more harsh, which
 I cannot but feel
 Might have sentenced our friendship
 to death long ago ?

Or is it . . . (I would I could deem it
 were so !)
 That, not all overlaid by a listless
 exterior,
 Your heart has divined in me some-
 thing superior
 To that which I seem ; from my in-
 nermost nature
 Not wholly expelled by the world's
 usurpature ?
 Some instinct of earnestness, truth,
 or desire
 For truth ? Some one spark of the
 soul's native fire
 Moving under the ashes, and cinders,
 and dust
 Which life hath heaped o'er it ?
 Some one fact to trust
 And to hope in ? Or by you alone
 am I deemed
 The mere frivolous fool I so often
 have seemed
 To my own self ?"

JOHN.

No Alfred ! you will, I believe,
 Be true, at the last, to what now
 makes you grieve
 For having belied your true nature
 so long.
 Necessity is a stern teacher. Be
 strong !
 "Do you think," he resumed . . .
 "what I feel while I speak
 Is no more than a transient emotion,
 as weak
 As these weak tears would seem to
 betoken it ?"

JOHN.

No !

ALFRED.

Thank you, cousin ! your hand then.
 And now I will go
 Alone. Jack. Trust to me.

VIII.

JOHN.

I do. But tis late.
 If she sleeps, you'll not wake her.

ALFRED.

No, no ! it will wait
 (Poor infant !) too surely, this mis-
 sion of sorrow ;
 If she sleeps, I will not mar her
 dreams of to-morrow.
 He opened the door, and passed out.
 Cousin John
 Vatched him wistful, and left him
 to seek her alone.

IX.

His heart beat so loud when he
 knocked at her door,
 He could hear no reply from within.
 Yet once more
 He knocked lightly. No answer.
 The handle he tried :
 The door opened : he entered the
 room undescried.

X.

No brighter than is that dim circlet
 of light
 Which enhaloes the moon when rains
 form on the night,
 The pale lamp and indistinct radi-
 ance shed
 Round the chamber, in which at her
 pure snowy bed
 Matilda was kneeling ; so wrapt in
 deep prayer
 That she knew not her husband
 stood watching her there.
 With the lamplight the moonlight
 had mingled a faint
 And unearthly effulgence which
 seemed to acquaint
 The whole place with a sense of deep
 peace made secure
 By the presence of something an-
 gelic and pure.
 And not purer some angel Grief
 carves o'er the tomb
 Where Love lies, than the lady that
 kneeled in that gloom.
 She had put off her dress ; and she
 looked to his eyes
 Like a young soul escaped from its
 earthly disguise ;

Her fair neck and innocent shoulders
 were bare,
 And over them rippled her soft gol-
 den hair ;
 Her simple and slender white bodice
 unlaced
 Confined not one curve of her deli-
 cate waist.
 As the light that, from water reflect-
 ed, forever
 Trembles up through the tremulous
 reeds of a river,
 So the beam of her beauty went
 trembling in him,
 Through the thoughts it suffused
 with a sense soft and dim,
 Reproducing itself in the broken and
 bright [tions.
 Lapse and pulse of a million emo-
 That sight
 Bowed his heart, bowed his knee.
 Knowing scarce what he did,
 To her side through the chamber he
 silently slid,
 And knelt down beside her,—and
 prayed at her side.

XI.

Upstarting, she then for the first
 time descried
 That her husband was near her ;
 suffused with the blush
 Which came o'er her soft pallid
 cheek with a gush
 Where the tears sparkled yet.
 As a young fawn unconches
 Shy with fear, from the fern where
 some hunter approaches,
 She shrank back ; he caught her,
 and circling his arm
 Round her waist, on her brow
 pressed one kiss long and
 warm.
 Then her fear changed in impulse ;
 and hiding her face
 On his breast, she hung locked in a
 clinging embrace
 With her soft arms wound heavily
 round him, as though
 She feared, if their clasp were re-
 laxed, he would go :

Her smooth naked shoulders, uncared for, convulsed
 By sob after sob, while her bosom yet pulsed
 In its pressure on his, as the effort within it
 Lived and died with each tender tumultuous minute.
 "O Alfred, O Alfred! forgive me," she cried,—
 "Forgive me!"
 "Forgive you, my poor child!" he sighed;
 "But I never have blamed you for aught that I know,
 And I have not one thought that reproaches you now."
 From her arms he unwound himself gently. And so
 He forced her down softly beside him. Below
 The canopy shading their couch, they sat down.
 And he said, clasping firmly her hand in his own,
 "When a proud man, Matilda, has found out at length,
 That he is but a child in the midst of his strength,
 But a fool in his wisdom, to whom can he own
 The weakness which thus to himself hath been shown?
 From whom seek the strength which his need of is sore,
 Although in his pride he might perish, before
 He could plead for the one, or the other avow
 'Mid his intimate friends? Wife of mine, tell me now,
 Do you join me in feeling, in that darkened hour,
 The sole friend that *can* have the right or the power
 To be at his side, is the woman that shares
 His fate, if he falter; the woman that bears
 The name dear for *her* sake, and hallows the life

She has mingled her own with,—in short, that man's wife!"
 "Yes," murmured Matilda, "O yes!"
 "Then," he cried,
 "This chamber in which we two sit, side by side
 (And his arm, as he spoke, seemed more softly to press her),
 Is now a confessional,—*you* my confessor!"
 "I?" she faltered, and timidly lifted her head.
 "Yes! but first answer one other question," he said:
 "When a woman once feels that she is not alone;
 That the heart of another is warmed by her own;
 That another feels with her whatever she feel,
 And halves her existence in woe or in weal;
 That a man for her sake will, so long as he lives,
 Live to put forth his strength which the thought of her gives;
 Live to shield her from want, and to share with her sorrow;
 Live to solace the day, and provide for the morrow;
 Will that woman feel less than another, O say,
 The loss of what life, sparing this, takes away?
 Will she feel (feeling this), when calamities come,
 That they brighten the heart, though they darken the home?"
 She turned, like a soft rainy heaven, on him
 Eyes that smiled through fresh tears trustful, tender, and dim.
 "That woman," she murmured, "indeed were thrice blest!"
 "Then courage, true wife of my heart!" to his breast
 As he folded and gathered her closely, he cried.
 "For the refuge, to-night in these arms opened wide

To your heart, can be never closed to
it again.

And this room is for both an asylum!

For when

I passed through that door, at the
door I left there [bear.

A calamity, sudden, and heavy to

One step from that threshold, and
daily, I fear,

We must face it henceforth : but it
enters not here,

For that door shuts it out, and
admits here alone

A heart which calamity leaves all
your own !”

She started . . . “ Calamity, Alfred !
to you ?”

“ To both, my poor child, but ’twill
bring with it too

The courage, I trust, to subdue it.”

“ O speak !

Speak !” she faltered in tones timid,
anxious, and weak.

“ O yet for a moment,” he said,
“ hear me on !”

Matilda, this morn we went forth in
the sun,

Like those children of sunshine, the
bright summer dies.

That sport in the sunbeam, and play
through the skies

While the skies smile, and heed not
each other : at last,

When their sunbeam is gone, and
their sky overcast,

Who recks in what ruin they fold
their wet wings ?

So indeed the morn found us,—poor
frivolous things !

Now our sky is o’ercast, and our sun-
beam is set,

And the night brings its darkness
around us. O, yet,

Have we weathered no storm through
those twelve cloudless hours ?

Yes ; you, too, have wept !

“ While the world was yet ours,
While its sun was upon us, its in-
cense streamed to us,

And its myriad voices of joy seemed
to woo us,

We strayed from each other, too far,
it may be, [I see,

Nor, wantonly wandering, then did
How deep was my need of thee,

dearest, how great
Was thy claim on my heart and thy
share in my fate !

But, Matilda, an angel was near us,
meanwhile,

Watching o’er us, to warn, and to
rescue !

“ That smile

Which you saw with suspicion, that
presence you eyed

With resentment, an angel’s they
were at your side

And at mine ; nor perchance is the
day all so far,

When we both in our prayers, when
most heartfelt they are,

May murmur the name of that wo-
man now gone

From our sight evermore.

“ Here, this evening, alone,
I seek your forgiveness, in opening
my heart

Unto yours,—from this clasp be it
never to part !

Matilda, the fortune you brought me
is gone,

But a prize richer far than that for-
tune has won

It is yours to confer, and I kneel for
that prize.

’Tis the heart of my wife !” With
suffused happy eyes

She sprang from her seat, flung her
arms wide apart,

And tenderly closing them round
him, his heart

Clasped in one close embrace to her
bosom ; and there

Drooped her head on his shoulder
and sobbed.

Not despair,

Not sorrow, not even the sense of
her loss,

Flowed in those happy tears, so ob-
livious she was

Of all save the sense of her own
love ! Anon,

However, his words rushed back to her. "All gone,

The fortune you brought me!"

And eyes that were dim
With soft tears she upraised: but
those tears were for *him*.

"Gone! my husband?" she said,

"tell me all! see! I need,
To sober this rapture, so selfish in-
deed,

Fuller sense of affliction."

"Poor innocent child!"
He kissed her fair forehead, and
mournfully smiled,

As he told her the tale he had heard,
—something more

The gain found in loss of what gain
lost of yore.

"Rest, my heart, and my brain, and
my right hand for you;

And with these, my Matilda, what
may I not do?

You know not, I knew not myself
till this hour,

Which so sternly revealed it, my
nature's full power."

"And I too," she murmured, "I too
am no more

The mere infant at heart you have
known me before.

I have suffered since then. I have
learned much in life.

O take, with the faith I have pledged
as a wife, [to feel!

The heart I have learned as a woman
For I—love you, my husband!"

As though to conceal
Less from him, than herself, what
that motion expressed,

She dropped her bright head, and hid
all on his breast.

"O lovely as woman, beloved as
wife!

Evening star of my heart, light for-
ever my life!

If from eyes fixed too long on this
base earth thus far

You have missed your due homage,
dear guardian star,

Believe that, uplifting those eyes
unto heaven,

There I see you, and ~~know you~~, and
bless the light given

To lead me to life's late achieve-
ment; my own,

My blessing, my treasure, my all
things in one!"

XII.

How lovely she looked in the lovely
moonlight,

That streamed through the pane from
the blue balmy night!

How lovely she looked in her own
lovely youth,

As she clung to his side full of trust,
and of truth!

How lovely to *him* as he tenderly
pressed

Her young head on his bosom, and
sadly caressed

The glittering tresses which now
shaken loose

Showered gold in his hand, as he
smoothed them!

XIII.

O Muse,

Interpose not one pulse of thine own
beating heart

'Twixt these two silent souls!
There's a joy beyond art.

And beyond sound the music it
makes in the breast.

XIV.

Here were lovers twice wed, that
were happy at least!

No music, save such as the nightin-
gales sung,

Breathed their bridal abroad; and
no cresset, uplung,

Lit that festival hour, save what soft
light was given

From the pure stars that peopled the
deep-purple heaven.

He opened the casement: he led her
with him,

Hushed in heart, to the terrace,
dipped cool in the dim

Lustrous gloom of the shadowy lau-
rels. They heard

Aloof the invisible, rapturo as bird,

With her wild note bewildering the
 woodlands : they saw
 Not unheard, afar off, the hill-rivulet
 draw
 His long ripple of moon-kindled
 wavelets with cheer
 From the throat of the vale ; o'er the
 dark-sapphire sphere
 The mild, multitudinous lights lay
 asleep,
 Pastured free on the midnight, and
 bright as the sheep
 Of Apollo in pastoral Thrace ; from
 unknown
 Hollow glooms freshened odors
 around them were blown
 Intermittingly ; then the moon
 dropped from their sight,
 Immersed in the mountains, and put
 out the light
 Which no longer they needed to read
 on the face
 Of each other's life's last revelation.
 The place
 Slept sumptuous round them ; and
 Nature, that never
 Sleeps, but waking reposes, with
 patient endeavor
 Continued about them, unheeded,
 unseen, [green
 Her old, quiet toil in the heart of the
 Summer silence, preparing new buds
 for new blossoms,
 And stealing a finger of change o'er
 the bosoms
 Of the unconscious woodlands ; and
 Time, that halts not
 His forces, how lovely soever the
 spot
 Where their march lies,—the wary,
 gray strategist, Time,
 With the armies of Life, lay en-
 camped,—Grief and Crime,
 Love and Faith, in the darkness un-
 heeded ; maturing,
 For his great war with man, new sur-
 prises ; securing
 All outlets, pursuing and pushing his
 foe
 To his last narrow refuge,—the
 grave.

xv.

Sweetly though
 Smiled the stars like new hopes out
 of heaven, and sweetly
 Their hearts beat thanksgiving for
 all things, completely
 Confiding in that yet untrodden ex-
 istence
 Over which they were pausing. To
 morrow, resistance
 And struggle ; to-night, Love his
 hallowed device
 Hung forth, and proclaimed his
 serene armistice.

CANTO V.

I.

WHEN Lucile left Matilda, she sat
 for long hours
 In her chamber, fatigued by long
 overwrought powers,
 'Mid the signs of departure, about to
 turn back
 To her old vacant life, on her old
 homeless track.
 She felt her heart falter within her.
 She sat
 Like some poor player, gazing de-
 jectedly at
 The insignia of royalty worn for a
 night ;
 Exhausted, fatigued, with the dazzle
 and light,
 And the effort of passionate feign-
 ing ; who thinks
 Of her own meagre, rush-lighted gar-
 ret, and shrinks
 From the chill of the change that
 awaits her.

II.

From these
 Oppressive, and comfortless, blank
 reveries,
 Unable to sleep, she descended the
 stair
 That led from her room to the gar-
 den.

The air,
With the chill of the dawn, yet un-
risen, but at hand,
Strangely smote on her feverish fore-
head. The land
Lay in darkness and change, like a
world in its grave :

No sound, save the voice of the long
river wave, [night !

And the crickets that sing all the
She stood still,

Vaguely watching the thin cloud that
curled on the hill.

Emotions, long pent in her breast,
were at stir,

And the deeps of the spirit were
troubled in her.

Ah, pale woman ! what, with that
heart-broken look,

Didst thou read then in nature's
weird heart-breaking book ?

Have the wild rains of heaven a
father ? and who

Hath in pity begotten the drops of
the dew ?

Orion, Arcturus, who pilots them
both ?

What leads forth in his season the
bright Mazaroth ?

Hath the darkness a dwelling,—save
there, in those eyes ?

And what name hath that half-re-
vealed hope in the skies ?

Ay, question, and listen ! What an-
swer ?

The sound
Of the long river wave through its
stone-troubled bound,
And the crickets that sing all the
night.

There are hours
Which belong to unknown, super-
natural powers,

Whose sudden and solemn sugges-
tions are all

That to this race of worms—stinging
creatures, that crawl,

Lie, and fear, and die daily, beneath
their own stings—

Can excuse the blind boast of inher-
ited wings.

When the soul, on the impulse of
anguish, hath passed
Beyond anguish, and risen into rap-
ture at last ;

When she traverses nature and
space, till she stands
In the Chamber of Fate ; where,
through tremulous hands,

Hum the threads from an old-fash-
ioned distaff uncurled,

And those three blind old women sit
spinning the world.

III.

The dark was blanched wan, over-
head. One green star

Was slipping from sight in the pale
void afar ;

The spirits of change, and of awe,
with faint breath

Were shifting the midnight, above
and beneath.

The spirits of awe and of change
were around.

And about, and upon her.

A dull muffled sound,
And a hand on her hand, like a
ghostly surprise,

And she felt herself fixed by the hot
hollow eyes

Of the Frenchman before her : those
eyes seemed to burn,

And scorch out the darkness between
them, and turn

Into fire as they fixed her. He looked
like the shade

Of a creature by fancy from solitude
made,

And sent forth by the darkness to
scare and oppress

Some soul of a monk in a waste
wilderness.

IV.

“ At last, then,—at last, and alone,—
I and thou,

Lucile de Nevers, have we met ?

“ Hush ! I know
Not for me was the tryst. Never
mind ! it is mine ;

And whatever led hither those proud
steps of thine,

They remove not, until we have spoken. My hour is come; and it holds thee and me in its power, As the darkness holds both the horizons. 'Tis well! The timidest maiden that e'er to the spell

Of her first lover's vows listened, hushed with delight, When soft stars were brightly up-lighting the night, Never listened, I swear, more unquestioningly Than thy fate hath compelled thee to listen to me!"

To the sound of his voice, as though out of a dream, She appeared with a start to awaken.

The stream, When he ceased, took the night with its moaning again, Like the voices of spirits departing in pain.

"Continue," she answered, "I listen to hear."

For a moment he did not reply.

Through the drear And dim light between them, she saw that his face Was disturbed. To and fro he continued to pace, With his arms folded close, and the low restless stride Of a panther, in circles around her, first wide,

Then narrower, nearer, and quicker. At last

He stood still, and one long look upon her he cast.

"Lucile, dost thou dare to look into my face?"

Is the sight so repugnant? ha, well! Canst thou trace

One word of thy writing in this wicked scroll,

With thine own name scrawled through it, defacing a soul?"

In his face there was something so wrathful and wild,

That the sight of it scared her.

He saw it, and smiled, And then turned him from her, re-
newing again

That short, restless stride; as though searching in vain For the point of some purpose within him.

"Lucile, You shudder to look in my face: do you feel

No reproach when you look in your own heart?"

"No, Duke, In my conscience I do not deserve your rebuke:

Not yours!" she replied.

"No," he muttered again, "Gentle justice! you first bid Lite hope not, and then

To Despair you say 'Act not!'"

v.

He watched her awhile With a chill sort of restless and suffering smile.

They stood by the wall of the garden. The skies.

Dark, sombre, were troubled with vague prophecies

Of the dawn yet far distant. The moon had long set,

And all in a glimmering light, pale, and wet

With the night-dews, the white roses sullenly loomed

Round about her. She spoke not. At length he resumed.

"Wretched creatures we are! I and thou,—one and all!

Only able to injure each other, and fall

Soon or late, in that void which ourselves we prepare

For the souls that we boast of! weak insects we are!

O heaven! and what has become of them? all

Those instincts of Eden surviving the Fall:

That glorious faith in inherited things:

That sense in the soul of the length
 of her wings ;
 Gone ! all gone ! and the wail of the
 night-wind sounds human,
 Bewailing those once nightly visit-
 ants ! Woman,
 Woman, what hast thou done with
 my youth ? Give again,
 Give me back the young heart that
 I gave thee . . . in vain !
 " Duke ! " she faltered.
 " Yes, yes ! " he went on, " I was
 not
 Always thus ! what I once was, I
 have not forgot."

VI.

As the wind that heaps sand in a
 desert, there stirred
 Through his voice an emotion that
 swept every word
 Into one angry wail ; as, with fever-
 ish change,
 He continued his monologue, fitful
 and strange.
 " Woe to him, in whose nature, once
 kindled, the torch
 Of Passion burns downward to black-
 en and scorch !
 But shame, shame and sorrow, O
 woman, to thee
 Whose hand sowed the seed of de-
 struction in me !
 Whose lip taught the lesson of false-
 hood to mine !
 Whose looks made me doubt lies that
 looked so divine !
 My soul by thy beauty was slain in
 its sleep :
 And if tears I mistrust, 'tis that thou
 too canst weep !
 Well ! . . . how utter soever it be,
 one mistake
 In the love of a man, what more
 change need it make
 In the steps of his soul through the
 course love began,
 Than all other mistakes in the life
 of a man ?
 And I said to myself, ' I am young
 yet : too young

To have wholly survived my own
 portion among
 The great needs of man's life, or ex-
 hausted its joys ;
 What is broken ? one only of youth's
 pleasant toys ;
 Shall I be the less welcome, where-
 ever I go,
 For one passion survived ? No ! the
 roses will blow
 As of yore, as of yore will the night-
 ingales sing,
 Not less sweetly for one blossom can-
 celled from Spring !
 Hast thou loved, O my heart ? to
 thy love yet remains
 All the wide loving-kindness of
 nature. The plains
 And the hills with each summer
 their verdure renew.
 Wouldst thou be as they are ? do
 thou then as they do,
 Let the dead sleep in peace. Would
 the living divine
 Where they slumber ? Let only new
 flowers be the sign !
 " Vain ! all vain ! . . . For when,
 laughing, the wine I would
 quaff,
 I remembered too well all it cost me
 to laugh.
 Through the revel it was but the old
 song I heard,
 Through the crowd the old footsteps
 behind me they stirred,
 In the night-wind, the starlight, the
 murmurs of even,
 In the ardors of earth, and the lan-
 guors of heaven,
 I could trace nothing more, nothing
 more through the spheres,
 But the sound of old sobs, and the
 tracks of old tears !
 It was with me the night long in
 dreaming or waking,
 It abided in loathing, when daylight
 was breaking,
 The burden of the bitterness in me !
 Behold,
 All my days were become as a tale
 that is told.

And I said to my sight, 'No good
thing shalt thou see,
For the noonday is turned to dark-
ness in me.
In the house of Oblivion my bed I
have made.'
And I said to the grave, 'Lo, my
father!' and said
To the worm, 'Lo, my sister!' The
dust to the dust,
And one end to the wicked shall be
with the just!"

VII.

He ceased, as a wind that wails out
on the night,
And moans itself mute. Through
the indistinct light
A voice clear, and tender, and pure
with a tone
Of ineffable pity replied to his own.
"And say you, and deem you, that
I wrecked your life?
Alas! Duc de Luvois, had I been
your wife
By a fraud of the heart which could
yield you alone
For the love in your nature a lie in
my own,
Should I not, in deceiving, have in-
jured you worse?
Yes, I then should have merited
justly your curse,
For I then should have wronged
you!"

"Wronged! ah, is it so?
You could never have loved me?"
"Duke!"
"Never? O no!"
'He broke into a fierce, angry laugh,
as he said)
"Yet, lady, you knew that I loved
you: you led
My love on to lay to its heart, hour
by hour,
All the pale, cruel, beautiful, passion-
less power
Shut up in that cold face of yours!
was this well?
But enough, not on you would I vent
the wild-bell

Which has grown in my heart. O
that man, first and last
He tramples in triumph my life! he
has cast
His shadow 'twixt me and the sun
. . . let it pass!
My hate yet may find him!"

She murmured, "Alas!
These words, at least, spare me the
pain of reply.

Enough, Duc de Luvois! farewell.
I shall try [every sight
To forget every word I have heard,
That has grieved and appalled me in
this wretched night
Which must witness our final fare-
well. May you, Duke.

Never know greater cause your own
heart to rebuke
Than mine thus to wrong and afflict
you have had!

Adieu!"
"Stay, Lucile, stay!" . . . he
groaned, . . . "I am mad,
Brutalized, blind with pain! I know
not what I said.

I meant it not. But" (he moaned,
drooping his head)

"Forgive me! I—have I so wrong-
ed you, Lucile?
I . . . have I . . . forgive me, for-
give me!"

"I feel
Only sad, very sad to the soul," she
said, "far,
Far too sad for resentment."

"Yet stand as you are
One moment," he murmured. "I
think, could I gaze
Thus awhile on your face, the old in-
nocent days

Would come back upon me, and thi
scorching heart
Free itself in hot tears. Do not, do
not depart

Thus, Lucile! stay one moment. I
know why you shrink,
Why you shudder; I read in your
face what you think.

Do not speak to me of it. And yet,
if you will.

Whatever you say, my own lips shall be still.

I lied. And the truth, now, could justify naught.

There are battles, it may be, in which to have fought

Is more shameful than, simply, to fail. Yet, Lucile,

Had you helped me to bear what you forced me to feel—”

“Could I help you,” she murmured, but what can I say

Tha. your life will respond to?”

“My life?” he sighed. “Nay, My life hath brought forth only evil, and there

The wild wind hath planted the wild weed : yet ere

You exclaim, ‘Fling the weed to the flames,’ think again

Why the field is so barren. With all other men” [only goes

First love, though it perish from life, Like the primrose that falls to make way for the rose.

For a man, at least most men, may love on through life :

Love in fame ; love in knowledge ; in work : earth is rife

With labor, and therefore with love, for a man.

If one love fails, another succeeds, and the plan

Of man’s life includes love in all objects ! But I ?

All such loves from my life through its whole destiny

Fate excluded. The love that I gave you, alas !

Was the sole love that life gave to me. Let that pass !

It perished, and all perished with it. Ambition ?

Wealth left nothing to add to my social condition.

Fame ? But fame in itself presupposes some great

Field wherein to pursue and attain it. The State ?

I, to cringe to an upstart ? The Camp ? I, to draw

From its sheath the old sword of the Dukes of Luvois

To defend usurpation ? Books, then ? Science, Art ?

But, alas ! I was fashioned for action : my heart,

Withered thing though it be, I should hardly compress

’Twi’x the leaves of a treatise on Statics : life’s stress

Needs scope, not contraction ! what rests ? to wear out

At some dark northern court an existence, no doubt,

In wretched and paltry intrigues for a cause

As hopeless as is my own life ! By the laws [dispute,

Of a fate I can neither control nor I am what I am !”

VIII.

For a while she was mute. Then she answered, “We are our own fates. Our own deeds

Are our doomsmen. Man’s life was made not for men’s creeds,

But men’s actions. And, Duc de Luvois, I might say

That all life attests, that ‘the will makes the way.’

Is the land of our birth less the land of our birth,

Or its claim the less strong, or its cause the less worth

Our upholding, because the white lily no more

Is as sacred as all that it bloomed for of yore ?

Yet be that as it may be ; I cannot perchance

Judge this matter I am but a woman, and France

Has for me simpler duties. Large hope, though, Eugène

De Luvois, should be yours. There is purpose in pain,

Otherwise it were devilish. I trust in my soul

That the great master hand which sweeps over the whole

Of this deep harp of life, if at moments it stretch
 To shrill tension some one wailing nerve, means to fetch
 Its response the truest, most stringent, and smart,
 Its paths the purest, from out the wrung heart,
 Whose faculties, flaccid it may be, if less
 Sharply strung, sharply smitten, had failed to express
 Just the one note the great final harmony needs.
 And what best proves there's life in a heart?—that it bleeds!
 Grant a cause to remove, grant an end to attain,
 Grant both to be just, and what mercy in pain!
 Cease the sin with the sorrow! See morning begin!
 Pain must burn itself out if not fuelled by sin.
 There is hope in yon hill-tops, and love in yon light.
 Let hate and dependency die with the night!"

He was moved by her words. As some poor wretch confined
 In cells loud with meaningless laughter, whose mind
 Wanders trackless amidst its own ruins, may hear
 A voice heard long since, silenced many a year,
 And now, 'mid mad ravings recaptured again,
 Singing through the caged lattice a once well-known strain,
 Which brings back his boyhood upon it, until
 The mind's ruined crevices graciously fill
 With music and memory, and, as it were,
 The long-troubled spirit grows slowly aware
 Of the mockery round it, and shrinks from each thing

It once sought,—the poor idiot who passed for a king,
 Hard by, with his squalid straw crown, now confessed
 A madman more painfully mad than the rest,—
 So the sound of her voice, as it there wandered o'er
 His echoing heart, seemed in part to restore
 The forces of thought: he recaptured the whole
 Of his life by the light which, in passing, her soul
 Reflected on his: he appeared to awake
 From a dream, and perceived he had dreamed a mistake:
 His spirit was softened, yet troubled in him:
 He felt his lips falter, his eyesight grow dim,
 But he murmured . . .
 "Lucile, not for me that sun's light
 Which reveals—not restores—the wild havoc of night.
 There are some creatures born for the night, not the day.
 Broken-hearted the nightingale hides in the spray,
 And the owl's moody mind in his own hollow tower
 Dwells muffled. Be darkness her cease-forward my dower.
 Light, be sure, in that darkness there dwells, by which eyes
 Grown familiar with ruins may yet recognize
 Enough desolation."

IX.

"The pride that claims here
 On earth to itself (howsoever severe
 To itself it may be) God's dread office
 and right
 Of punishing sin, is a sin in heaven's sight,
 And against heaven's service.
 "Eugène de Luvois.
 Leave the judgment to Him who
 alone knows the law.

Surely no man can be his own judge,
least of all

His own doomsman."

Her words seemed to fall
With the weight of tears in them.

He looked up, and saw
That sad serene countenance, mourn-
ful as law

And tender as pity, bowed o'er him:
and heard

Is some thicket the matinal chirp of
a bird.

x.

"Vulgar natures alone suffer vainly.

"Eugène,"

She continued, "in life we have met
once again,

And once more life parts us. Yon
day-spring for me

Lifts the veil of a future in which it
may be

We shall meet nevermore. Grant,
O grant to me yet

The belief that it is not in vain we
have met!

I plead for the future. A new horo-
scope

I would east: will you read it? I
plead for a hope:

I plead for a memory; yours, yours
alone,

To restore or to spare. Let the hope
be your own,

Be the memory mine.

"Once of yore, when for man
Faith yet lived, ere this age of the
sluggard began,

Men, aroused to the knowledge of
evil, fled far

From the fading rose-gardens of
sense, to the war

With the Pagan, the cave in the
desert, and sought

Not repose, but employment in action
or thought,

I life's strong earnest, in all things!

O think not of me,
But yourself! for I plead for your
own destiny:

I plead for your life, with its duties
undone,

With its claims unappeased, and its
trophies unwon;

And in pleading for life's fair fulfil-
ment, I plead

For all that you miss, and for all that
you need."

XI.

Through the calm crystal air, faint
and far, as she spoke,

A clear, chilly chime from a church-
turret broke;

And the sound of her voice, with the
sound of the bell,

On his ear, where he kneeled, softly,
soothingly fell.

All within him was wild and con-
fused, as within

A chamber deserted in some roadside
inn,

Where, passing, wild travellers
paused, over-night,

To quaff and carouse; in each socket
each light

Is extinct; crashed the glasses, and
scrawled is the wall

With wild ribald ballads: serenely
o'er all,

For the first time perceived, where
the dawn-light creeps faint

Through the wrecks of that orgy, the
face of a saint,

Seen through some broken frame,
appears noting meanwhile

The ruin all round with a sorrowful
smile.

And he gazed round. The curtains
of Darkness half drawn

Oped behind her; and pure as the
pure light of dawn,

She stood, bathed in morning, and
seemed to his eyes

From their sight to be melting away
in the skies

That expanded around her.

XII.

There passed through his head
A fancy,—a vision. That woman
was dead

He had loved long ago,—loved and
lost! dead to him,

Dead to all the life left him ; but
 there, in the dim
 Dewy light of the dawn, stood 'a
 spirit ; 'twas hers ;
 And he said to the soul of Lucile de
 Nevers : [away !
 "O soul to its sources departing
 Pray for mine, if one soul for another
 may pray.
 to ask have no right, thou to give
 hast no power,
 One hope to my heart. But in this
 parting hour
 I name not my heart, and I speak
 not to thine.
 Answer, soul of Lucile, to this dark
 soul of mine,
 Does not soul owe to soul, what to
 heart heart denies,
 Hope, when hope is salvation ? Be-
 hold, in yon skies,
 This wild night is passing away while
 I speak :
 Lo, above us, the day-spring begin-
 ning to break !
 Something wakens within me, and
 warms to the beam.
 Is it hope that awakens ? or do I but
 dream ?
 I know not. It may be, perchance,
 the first spark
 Of a new light within me to solace
 the dark
 Unto which I return ; or perchance
 it may be
 The last spark of fires half extin-
 guished in me.
 I know not. Thou goest thy way : I
 my own :
 For good or for evil, I know not.
 Alone
 This I know ; we are parting. I
 wished to say more,
 But no matter ! 'twill pass. All be-
 tween us is o'er.
 Forget the wild words of to-night.
 'Twas the pain
 For long years hoarded up, that rush-
 ed from me again.
 I was unjust : forgive me. Spare
 now to reprove

Other words, other deeds. It was
 madness, not love.
 That you thwarted this night. What
 is done is now done.
 Death remains to avenge it, or life to
 atone.
 I was maddened, delirious ! I saw
 you return
 To him—not to me ; and I felt my
 heart burn
 With a fierce thirst for vengeance—
 and thus . . . let it pass !
 Long thoughts these, and so brief
 the moments, alas .
 Thou goest thy way, and I mine. .
 suppose
 'Tis to meet nevermore. Is it not
 so ? Who knows,
 Or who heeds, where the exile from
 Paradise flies ?
 Or what altars of his in the desert
 may rise ?
 Is it not so, Lucile ? Well, well !
 Thus then we part
 Once again, soul from soul, as before
 heart from heart !"

XIII.

And again, clearer far than the chime
 of the bell,
 That voice on his sense softly, sooth-
 ingly fell.
 "Our two paths must part us, Eu-
 gène ; for my own
 Seems no more through that world
 in which henceforth alone
 You must work out (as now I believe
 that you will)
 The hope which you speak of. That
 work I shall still
 (If I live) watch and welcome, and
 bless far away.
 Doubt not this. But mistake not the
 thought, if I say,
 That the great moral combat between
 human life
 And each human soul must be single.
 The strife
 None can share, though by all its re-
 sults may be known.

When the soul arms for battle, she
goes forth alone.

I say not, indeed, we shall meet never
ermore,

For I know not. But meet, as we
have met of yore,

I know that we cannot. Perchance
we may meet

By the death-bed, the tomb, in the
crowd, in the street,

Or in solitude even, but never again
Shall we meet from henceforth as
we have met, Eugène.

For we know not the way we are go-
ing, nor yet

Where our two ways may meet, or
may cross. Life hath set

No landmarks before us. But this,
this alone,

I will promise : whatever your path,
or my own,

If, for once in the conflict before you,
it chance

That the Dragon prevail, and with
cleft shield, and lance

Lost or shattered, borne down by the
stress of the war,

You falter and hesitate, if from afar
I, still watching (unknown to your-
self, it may be)

O'er the conflict to which I conjure
you, should see

That my presence could rescue, sup-
port you, or guide,

In the hour of that need I shall be
at your side,

To warn, if you will, or incite, or
control ;

And again, once again, we shall
meet, soul to soul !”

XIV.

The voice ceased.

He uplifted his eyes.

All alone

He stood on the bare edge of dawn.
She was gone,

Like a star, when up bay after bay
of the night,

Ripples in, wave on wave, the broad
ocean of light.

And at once, in her place, was the
Sunrise ! It rose

In its sumptuous splendor and
solemn repose,

The supreme revelation of light.
Domes of gold,

Realms of rose, in the Orient ! And
breathless, and bold,

While the great gates of heaven roll-
ed back one by one.

The bright herald angel stood stern,
in the sun !

Thrice holy Eospheros ! Light's
reign began

In the heaven, on the earth, in the
heart of the man.

The dawn on the mountains ! the
dawn everywhere !

Light ! silence ! the fresh innovations
of air !

O earth, and O ether ! A butterfly
breeze

Floated up, fluttered down, and
poised blithe on the trees.

Through the revelling woods, o'er
the sharp-rippled stream.

Up the vale slow uncoiling itself out
of dream,

Around the brown meadows, adown
the hill-slope,

The spirits of morning were whisper-
ing, “ *Hope !* ”

XV.

He uplifted his eyes. In the place
where she stood

But a moment before, and where
now rolled the flood

Of the sunrise all golden, he seemed
to behold,

In the young light of sunrise, an
image unfold

Of his own youth.—its ardors,—its
promise of fame,—

Its ancestral ambition ; and France
by the name

Of his sires seemed to call him
There, hovered in light,

That image aloft, o'er the shapeless
and bright

And Aurorean clouds, which themselves seemed to be
Brilliant fragments of that golden
world, wherein he
Hæd once dwelt, a native !

There, rooted and bound
To the earth, stood the man, gazing
at it ! Around
The rims of the sunrise it hovered
and shone
Transcendent, that type of a youth
that was gone ;
And he,—as the body may yearn for
the soul,
So he yearned to embody that image.
His whole

Heart arose to regain it.
“ And is it too late ? ”
No ! For time is a fiction, and limits
not fate.

Thought alone is eternal. Time
thralls it in vain.

For the thought that springs upward
and yearns to regain

The pure source of spirit, there is no
TOO LATE.

As the stream to its first mountain
levels, elate

In the fountain arises, the spirit in
him

Arose to that image. The image
waned dim

Into heaven ; and heavenward with
it, to melt

As it melted, in day's broad expansion,
he felt

With a thrill, sweet and strange, and
intense,—awed, amazed,—

Something soar and ascend in his
soul, as he gazed.

JANTO VI.

I.

MAN is born on a battle-field. Round
him, to rend

Or resist, the dread Powers he dis-
places attend,

By the cradle which Nature, amidst
the stern shocks

That have shattered creation, and
shapen it, rocks.

He leaps with a wail into being ;
and lo !

His own mother, fierce Nature her-
self, is his foe.

Her whirlwinds are roused into
wrath o'er his head :

'Neath his feet roll her earthquakes
her solitudes spread

To daunt him : her forces dispute
his command :

Her snows fall to freeze him : her
suns burn to brand :

Her seas yawn to engulf him : her
rocks rise to crush :

And the lion and leopard, allied, lurk
to rush

On their startled invader.
In lone Malabar,

Where the infinite forest spreads
breathless and far,

'Mid the cruel of eye and the stealthy
of claw

(Striped and spotted destroyers !) he
sees, pale with awe,

On the menacing edge of a fiery sky
Grim Doorga, blue-limbed and red-

handed, go by, [Terror.
And the first thing he worships is

Anon,
Still impelled by necessity hungrily

on,
He conquers the realms of his own

self-reliance,
And the last cry of fear wakes the

first of defiance.
From the serpent he crushes its poi-

sonous soul :
Smitten down in his path see the

dead lion roll !
On toward Heaven the son of Alc-

mena strides high on
The heads of the Hydra, the spoils

of the lion :
And man, conquering Terror, is wor-

shipped by man.
A camp has this world been since

first it began !
From his tents sweeps the roving

Arabian ; at peace,

A mere wandering shepherd that follows the fleece ;
 But, warring his way through a world's destinies,
 Lo, from Delhi, from Bagdadt, from Cordova, rise
 Domes of empiry, dowered with science and art,
 Schools, libraries, forums, the palace, the mart !

New realms to man's soul have been conquered. But those,
 Forthwith they are peopled for man by new foes !
 The stars keep their secrets, the earth hides her own,
 And bold must the man be that braves the Unknown !
 Not a truth has to art or to science been given,
 But brows have ached for it, and souls toiled and striven ;
 And many have striven, and many have failed,
 And many died, slain by the truth they assailed.
 But when Man hath tamed Nature, asserted his place
 And dominion, behold ! he is brought face to face
 With a new foe,—himself !

Nor may man on his shield
 Ever rest, for his foe is forever afield.
 Danger ever at hand, till the armed Archangel
 Sound o'er him the trump of earth's final evangel.

II.

Silence straightway, stern Muse, the soft cymbals of pleasure,
 Be all bronzen these numbers, and martial the measure !
 Breathe, scornously breathe, o'er the spirit in me
 One strain, sad and stern, of that deep Epopée
 Which thou, from the fashionless cloud of far time,
 Chantest lonely, when Victory, pale, and sublime

In the light of the aureole over her head,
 Hears, and heeds not the wound in her heart fresh and red.
 Blown wide by the blare of the clarion, unfold
 The shrill clanging curtains of war !
 And behold

A vision !

The antique Heracleian seats ;
 And the long Black Sea billow that once bore those fleets,
 Which said to the winds, " Be ye, too, Genoese !"
 And the red angry sands of the chafed Chersonese ;
 And the two foes of man, War and Winter, allied
 Round the Armies of England and France, side by side
 Enduring and dying (Gaul and Britain abreast !)
 Where the towers of the North fret the skies of the East.

III.

Since that sunrise, which rose through the calm linden stems
 O'er Lucile and Eugène, in the garden at Ems,
 Through twenty-five seasons encircling the sun,
 This planet of ours on its pathway hath gone.
 And the fates that I sing of have flowed with the fatés
 Of a world, in the red wake of war, round the gates
 Of that doomed and heroical city, in which
 (Fire crowning the rampart, blood bathing the ditch !)
 At bay, fights the Russian as some hunted bear,
 Whom the huntsmen have hemmed round at last in his lair.

IV.

A fanged, arid plain, sapped with underground fire,
 Soaked with snow, torn with shot, mashed to one gory mire !

There Fate's iron scale hangs in horrid suspense,
 While those two famished ogres,—
 the Siege, the Defence,
 Face to face, through a vapor froze,
 dismal, and dun,
 Glare, scenting the breath of each other.

The one
 Double-bodied, two-headed,—by separate ways
 Winding, serpent-wise, nearer ; the other, each day's
 Sullen toil adding size to,—concentrated, solid,
 Indefatigable, — the brass-fronted, embodied,
 And audible *avros* gone sombrelly forth
 To the world from that Autocrat
 Will of the north !

V.

In the dawn of a moody October, a pale
 Ghostly motionless vapor began to prevail
 Over city and camp ; like the garment of death
 Which (is formed by) the face it conceals.

'Twas the breath
 War, yet drowsily yawning, began to suspire ;
 Wherethrough, here and there, flashed an eye of red fire,
 And closed, from some rampart beginning to bellow
 Hoarse challenge ; replied to anon, through the yellow
 And sulphurous twilight : till day reeled and rocked,
 And roared into dark. Then the midnight was mocked
 With fierce apparitions. Ringed round by a rain
 Of red fire, and of iron, the murderous plain
 Flared with fitful combustion ; where fitfully fell
 Afar off the fatal, disgorged *scharpenelle*,

And fired the horizon, and singed the coiled gloom
 With wings of swift flame round that City of Doom.

VI.

So the day—so the night ! So by night, so by day,
 With stern patient pathos, while time wears away,
 In the trench flooded through, in the wind where it wails,
 In the snow where it falls, in the fire where it hails
 Shot and shell—link by link, out of hardship and pain,
 Toil, sickness, endurance, is forged the bronze chain
 Of those terrible siege-lines !

No change to that toil
 Save the mine's sudden leap from the treacherous soil,
 Save the midnight attack, save the groans of the maimed,
 And Death's daily obolus due, whether claimed
 By man or by nature.

VII.

Time passes. The dumb,
 Bitter, snow-bound, and sullen November is come.
 And its snows have been bathed in the blood of the brave :
 And many a young heart has glutted the grave :
 And on Inkerman yet the wild bramble is gory,
 And those bleak heights henceforth shall be famous in story

VIII.

The moon, swathed in storm, has long set : through the camp
 No sound save the sentinel's slow sullen tramp,
 The distant explosion, the wild sleety wind,
 That seems searching for something it never can find.
 The midnight is turning : the lamp is nigh spent :

And, wounded and lone, in a desolate tent

Lies a young British soldier whose sword . . .

In this place,
However, my Muse is compelled to retrace

Her precipitous steps and revert to the past.

The shock which had suddenly shattered at last

Alfred Vargrave's fantastical holiday nature,

Had sharply drawn forth to his full size and stature

The real man, concealed till that moment beneath

All he yet had appeared. From the gay broidered sheath

Which a man in his wrath flings aside, even so

Leaps the keen trenchant steel summoned forth by a blow.

And thus loss of fortune gave value to life.

The wife gained a husband, the husband a wife,

In that home which, though humbled and narrowed by fate,

Was enlarged and ennobled by love. Low their state,

But large their possessions.

Sir Ridley, forgiven
By those he unwittingly brought nearer heaven

By one fraudulent act, than through all his sleek speech

The hypocrite brought his own soul, safe from reach

Of the law, died abroad.

Cousin John, heart and hand,
Purse and person, henceforth (honest man !) took his stand

By Matilda and Alfred ; guest, guardian, and friend

Of the home he both shared and assured, to the end,

With his large lively love. Alfred Vargrave meanwhile

Faced the world's frown, consoled by his wife's faithful smile.

Late in life he began life in earnest ; and still,

With the tranquil exertion of resolute will,

Through long, and laborious, and difficult days,

Out of manifold failure, by wearisome ways,

Worked his way through the world till at last he began

(Reconciled to the work which man kind claims from man).

After years of unwitnessed, unwearied endeavor,

Years impassioned yet patient, to realize ever

More clear on the broad stream of current opinion

The reflex of powers in himself,— that dominion

Which the life of one man, if his life be a truth,

May assert o'er the life of mankind. Thus, his youth

In his manhood renewed, fame and fortune he won

Working only for home, love, and duty.

One son
Matilda had borne him ; but scarce had the boy,

With all Eton yet fresh in his full heart's frank joy,

The darling of young soldier comrades, just glanced

Down the glad dawn of manhood at life, when it chanced

That a blight sharp and sudden was breathed o'er the bloom

Of his joyous and generous years, and the gloom

Of a grief premature on their fair promise fell :

No light cloud like those which, for June to dispel,

Captious April engenders ; but leap as his own

Deep nature. Meanwhile, ere I fully make known

The cause of this sorrow, I track the event.

When first a wild war-note through
 England was sent,
 He, transferring without either to-
 ken or word,
 To friend, parent, or comrade, a yet
 virgin sword,
 From a holiday troop, to one bound
 for the war,
 Had marched forth, with eyes that
 saw death in the star
 Whence others sought glory. Thus,
 fighting, he fell
 On the red field of Inkerman ; found,
 who can tell
 By what miracle, breathing, though
 shattered, and borne
 To the rear by his comrades, pierc-
 ed, bleeding, and torn.
 Where for long days and nights,
 with the wound in his side,
 He lay, dark.

IX.

But a wound deeper far, unde-
 scribed,
 In the young heart was rankling ;
 for there, of a truth,
 In the first earnest faith of a pure
 pensive youth,
 A love large as life, deep and
 changeless as death,
 Lay ensheathed : and that love, ever
 fretting its sheath,
 The frail scabbard of life pierced and
 wore through and through.
 There are loves in man's life for
 which time can renew
 All that time may destroy. Lives
 there are, though, in love,
 Which cling to one faith, and die
 with it ; nor move,
 Though earthquakes may shatter the
 shrine.

Whence or how
 Love laid claim to this young life, it
 matters not now.

X.

O, is it a phantom ? a dream of the
 night ?
 A vision which fever hath fashioned
 to sight ?

The wind wailing ever, with motion
 uncertain,
 Sways sighingly there the drenched
 tent's tattered curtain,
 'To and fro, up and down.

But it is not the wind
 That is lifting it now : and it is not
 the mind
 That hath moulded that vision.

A pale woman enters
 As wan as the lamp's waning light,
 which concentrates
 Its dull glare upon her. With eyes
 dim and dimmer

There, all in a slumberous and shad-
 ovy glimmer,
 The sufferer sees that still form float-
 ing on,
 And feels faintly aware that he is
 not alone.

She is sitting before him. She
 pauses. She stands
 By his bedside, all silent. She lays
 her white hands

On the brow of the boy. A light
 finger is pressing
 Softly, softly the sore wounds : the
 hot blood-stained dressing
 Slips from them. A comforting
 quietude steals

Through the racked weary frame :
 and, throughout it, he feels
 The slow sense of a merciful, mild
 neighborhood.

Something smooths the tossed pillow.
 Beneath a gray hood
 Of rough serge, two intense tender
 eyes are bent o'er him.

And thrill through and through him.
 The sweet form before him.

It is surely Death's angel Life's last
 vigil keeping !

A soft voice says . . . " Sleep !"
 And he sleeps : he is sleeping.

XI.

He waked before dawn. Still the
 vision is there :
 Still that pale woman moves not. A
 ministering care

Meanwhile has been silently chang-
 ing and cheering
 The aspect of all things around him.
 Revering
 Some power unknown and benign-
 ant, he blessed
 In silence the sense of salvation.
 And rest
 Having loosened the mind's tangled
 meshes, he faintly
 Sighed . . . "Say what thou art,
 blessed dream of a saintly
 And ministering spirit!"
 A whisper serene
 Slid, softer than silence . . . "The
 Sœur Seraphine,
 A poor Sister of Charity. Shun to
 inquire
 Aught further, young soldier. The
 son of thy sire,
 For the sake of that sire, I reclaim
 from the grave.
 Thou didst not shun death: shun
 not life. 'Tis more brave
 To live, than to die. Sleep!"
 He sleeps: he is sleeping.

XII.

He wakened again, when the dawn
 was just sleeping
 The skies with chill splendor. And
 there, never flitting,
 Never flitting, that vision of mercy
 was sitting.
 As the dawn to the darkness, so life
 seemed returning
 Slowly, feebly within him. The
 night-lamp, yet burning,
 Made ghastly the glimmering day-
 break.

He said,

'If thou be of the living, and not of
 the dead,
 Sweet minister, pour out yet further
 the healing [revealing
 Of that balmy voice; if it may be,
 Thy mission of mercy! whence art
 thou?'

"O son

Of Matilda and Alfred, it matters
 not! One

Who is not of the living nor yet of
 the dead:

To thee, and to others, alive yet"

. . . she said . . .

"So long as there liveth the poor
 gift in me "to thee,
 Of this ministrations; to them, and
 Dead in all things beside. A French
 Nun, whose vocation
 Is now by this bedside. A nun hath
 no nation.

Wherever man suffers or woman
 may soothe,

There her land! there her kindred!"
 She bent down to smooth

The hot pillow; and added . . .

"Yet more than another
 Is thy life dear to me. For thy
 father, thy mother,
 I knew them,—I know them."

"O can it be? you!
 My dearest dear father! my mother!
 you knew,

You know them?"

She bowed, half averting, her head
 In silence.

He brokenly, timidly said,
 "Do they know I am thus?"

"Hush!" . . . she smiled, as she
 drew

From her bosom two letters; and—
 can it be true?

That beloved and familiar writing!
 He burst

Into tears . . . "My poor mother—
 my father! the worst
 Will have reached them!"

"No, no!" she exclaimed with a
 smile.

"They know you are living; they
 know that meanwhile

I am watching beside you. Young
 soldier, weep not!"

But still on the nun's nursing bosom,
 the hot

Fevered brow of the boy weeping
 wildly is pressed.

There, at last, the young heart sobs
 itself into rest:

And he hears, as it were between
 smiling and weeping.

The calm voice say . . . "Sleep!"
And he sleeps, he is sleeping.

XIII.

And day followed day. And, as
wave follows wave,
With the tide, day by day, life, re-
suing, drave
Through that young hardy frame
novel currents of health.
Yet some strange obstruction, which
life's self by stealth
Seemed to cherish, impeded life's
progress. And still
A feebleness, less of the frame than
the will,
Clung about the sick man: hid and
harbored within
The sad hollow eyes: pinched the
cheek pale and thin:
And clothed the wan fingers with
langnor.

And there,
Day by day, night by night, unre-
mitting in care,
Unwearied in watching, so cheerful
of mien,
And so gentle of hand, sat the Sœur
Seraphine!

XIV.

A strange woman truly! not young;
yet her face,
Wan and worn, as it was, bore about
it the trace
Of a beauty which time could not
ruin. For the whole
Quirk cheek, youth's lost bloom left
transparent, the soul
Seemed to fill with its own light, like
some sunny fountain
Everlastingly fed from far off in the
mountain
That pours, in a garden deserted, its
streams,
And all the more lovely for loneli-
ness seems.
So that, watching that face, you
would scarce pause to guess
The years which its calm careworn
lines might express,

Feeling only what suffering with
these must have passed
To have perfected there so much
sweetness at last.

XV.

Thus, one bronzen evening, when
day had put out
His brief thrifty fires, and the win
was about,
The nun, watchful still by the boy,
on his own
Laid a firm quiet hand, and the deep
tender tone
Of her voice moved the silence.
She said . . . "I have healed
These wounds of the body. Why
hast thou concealed,
Young soldier, that yet open wound
in the heart?"

Wilt thou trust *no* hand near it?"
He winced, with a start,
As of one that is suddenly touched
on the spot
From which every nerve derives
suffering.

"What?
Lies my heart, then, so bare?" he
moaned bitterly.

"Nay,"
With compassionate accents she
hastened to say,
"Do you think that these eyes are
with sorrow, young man,
So all unfamiliar, indeed, as to scan
Her features, yet know them not?"
"O, was it spoken,
'Go ye forth, heal the sick, lift the
low, bind the broken!'
Of the body alone? Is our mission,
then, done,
When we leave the bruised hearts, if
we bind the bruised bone!
Nay, is not the mission of mercy
twofold?
Whence twofold, perchance, are the
powers, that we hold
To fulfil it, of Heaven! For Heaven
doth still
To us, Sisters, it may be, who seek
it, send skill

Won from long intercourse with affliction, and art

Helped of Heaven, to bind up the broken of heart.

Trust to me!" (His two feeble hands in her own

She drew gently.) "Trust to me!" (she said, with soft tone):

"I am not so dead in remembrance to all

I have died to in this world, but what I recall [trial,

Enough of its sorrow, enough of its To grieve for both,—save from both

haply! The dial Receives many shades, and each

points to the sun. The shadows are many, the sunlight

is one. Life's sorrows still fluctuate: God's love does not.

And His love is unchanged, when it changes our lot.

Looking up to this light, which is common to all,

And down to these shadows, on each side, that fall

In time's silent circle, so various for each,

Is it nothing to know that they never can reach

So far, but what light lies beyond them forever?

Trust to me! O, if in this hour I endeavor

To trace the shade creeping across the young life

Which, in prayer till this hour, I have watched through its strife

With the shadow of death, 'tis with this faith alone,

That, in tracing the shade, I shall find out the sun.

Trust to me!"

She paused. he was weeping. Small need

Of added appeal, or entreaty, indeed, Had those gentle accents to win from

his pale And parched, trembling lips, as it rose, the brief tale

Of a life's early sorrow. The story is old.

And in words few as may be shall straightway be told.

XVI.

A few years ago, ere the fair form of Peace

Was driven from Europe a young girl—the niece

Of a French noble, leaving an old Norman pile

By the wild northern seas, came to dwell for a while

With a lady allied to her race,—an old dame

Of a threefold legitimate virtue, and name,

In the Faubourg Saint Germain. Upon that fair child,

From childhood, nor father nor mother had smiled.

One uncle their place in her life had supplied,

And their place in her heart: she had grown at his side,

And under his roof-tree, and in his regard,

From childhood to girlhood. This fair orphan ward

Seemed the sole human creature that lived in the heart

Of that stern rigid man, or whose smile could impart

One ray of response to the eyes which, above

Her fair infant forehead, looked down with a love

That seemed almost stern, so intense was its chill

Lofty stillness, like sunlight on some lonely hil.

Which is colder and stiller than sunlight elsewhere.

Grass grew in the court-yard; the chambers were bare

In that ancient mansion; when first the stern tread

Of its owner awakened their echoes long dead:

Bringing with him th's infant (the
child of a brother),
Whom, dying, the hands of a deso-
late mother
Had placed on his bosom. 'Twas
said—right or wrong—
That, in the lone mansion, left ten-
antless long,
To which, as a stranger, its lord now
returned,
In years yet recalled, through loud
midnights had burned
The light of wild orgies. Be that
false or true,
Slow and sad was the footstep which
now wandered through
Those desolate chambers ; and calm
and severe
Was the life of their inmate.

Men now saw appear
Every morn at the mass that firm
sorrowful face,
Which seemed to lock up in a cold
iron case
Tears hardened to crystal. Yet harsh
if he were,
His severity seemed to be trebly se-
vere
In the rule of his own rigid life,
which, at least,
Was benignant to others. The poor
parish priest,
Who lived on his largess, his piety
praised.
The peasant was fed, and the chapel
was raised,
And the cottage was built, by his
liberal hand.
Yet he seemed in the midst of his
good deeds to stand
A lone, and unloved, and unlovable
man.
There appeared some inscrutable
flaw in the plan
Of his life, that love failed to pass
over.

That child
Alone did not fear him, nor shrink
from him ; smiled
To his frown, and dispelled it.

The sweet sportive elf

Seemed the type of some joy lost,
and missed, in himself.
Ever welcome he suffered her glad
face to glide
In on hours when to others his door
was denied :
And many a time with a mute mood-
look
He would watch her at prattle and
play, like a brook
Whose babble disturbs not the quiet-
est spot,
But soothes us because we need a re-
sponse to it not.

But few years had passed o'er that
childhood before
A change came among them. A let-
ter, which bore
Sudden consequence with it, one
morning was placed
In the hands of the lord of the châ-
teau. He paced
To and fro in his chamber a whole
night alone
After reading that letter. At dawn
he was gone.
Weeks passed. When he came back
again he returned
With a tall ancient dame, from
whose lips the child learned
That they were of the same race and
name. With a face
Sad and anxious, to this withered
stock of the race
He confided the orphan and left
them alone
In the lonely old house.

In a few days 'twas known,
To the angry surprise of half Paris,
that one
Of the chiefs of that party which,
still clinging on
To the banner that bears the white
lilies of France,
Will fight 'neath no other, nor yet
for the chance
Of restoring their own, had re-
nounced the watchword
And the creed of his youth in un-
sheathing his sword

For a Fatherland fathered no more
(such is fate !)

By legitimate parents.

And meanwhile, elate
And in no wise disturbed by what
Paris might say,

The new soldier thus wrote to a friend
far away :—

“To the life of inaction farewell !
After all,

Creeds the oldest may crumble, and
dynasties fall,

But the sole grand Legitimacy will
endure,

In whatever makes death noble, life
strong and pure.

Freedom ! action ! . . . the desert to
breathe in,—the lance

Of the Arab to follow ! I go ! *Vive
la France !*”

Few and rare were the meetings
henceforth, as years fled,

Twixt the child and the soldier.

The two women led
Lone lives in the lone house. Mean-
while the child grew

Into girlhood ; and, like a sunbeam,
sliding through

Her green quiet years, changed by
gentle degrees

To the loveliest vision of youth a
youth sees

In his loveliest fancies : as pure as a
pearl,

And as perfect : a noble and inno-
cent girl,

With eighteen sweet summers dis-
solved in the light

Of her lovely and lovable eyes, soft
and bright !

Then her guardian wrote to the
dame, . . . “Let Constance

Go with you to Paris. I trust that
in France

I may be ere the close of the year.
I confide

My life's treasure to you. Let her
see, at your side,

The world which we live in.”

To Paris then came

Constance to abide with that old
stately dame

In that old stately Faubourg.

The young Englishman
Thus met her. 'Twas there their
acquaintance began,

There it closed. That old miracle—
Love-at-first-sight—

Needs no explanations. The hear
reads aright

Its destiny sometimes. His love nei-
ther chidden

Nor checked, the young soldier was
graciously bidden

An habitual guest to that house by
the dame.

His own candid graces, the world-
honored name

Of his father (in him not dishonored)
were both [ing loath,

Fair titles to favor. His love, noth-
The old lady observed, was returned
by Constance.

And as the child's uncle his absence
from France

Yet prolonged, she (thus easing long
self-gratulation)

Wrote to him a lengthened and mov-
ing narration

Of the graces and gifts of the young
English wooer :

His father's fair fame ; the boy's
deference to her ;

His love for Constance,—unaffected,
sincere ;

And the girl's love for him, read by
her in those clear

Limpid eyes ; then the pleasure with
which she awaited

Her cousin's approval of all she had
stated.

At length from that cousin an an-
swer there came,

Brief, stern ; such as stunned and
astonished the dame.

“Let Constance leave Paris with you
on the day

You receive this. Until my return
she may stay

At her convent awhile. If my niece
wishes ever
To behold me again, understand, she
will never
Wed that man.
‘You have broken faith with me.
Farewell!’

No appeal from that sentence.
It needs not to tell
The tears of Constance, nor the grief
of her lover:
The dream they had laid out their
lives in was over.
Bravely strove the young soldier to
look in the face
Of a life, where invisible hands
seemed to trace
O’er the threshold, these words . . .
“Hope no more!”

Unreturned
Had his love been, the strong manful
heart would have spurned
That weakness which suffers a wo-
man to lie
At the roots of man’s life, like a
canker, and dry
And wither the sap of life’s purpose.
But there
Lay the bitterer part of the pain!
Could he dare
To forget he was loved? that he
grieved not alone?
Recording a love that drew sorrow
upon
The woman he loved, for himself
dare he seek
Surcease to that sorrow, which thus
held him weak,
Beat him down, and destroyed him?
News reached him indeed,
Through a comrade, who brought
him a letter to read
From the dame who had care of
Constance (it was one
To whom, when at Paris, the boy
had been known,
A Frenchman, and friend of the Fau-
bourg), which said
That Constance, although never a
murmur betrayed

What she suffered, in silence grew
paler each day.
And seemed visibly drooping and
dying away.
It was then he sought death.

XVII.

Thus the tale ends. ’Twas told
With such broken, passionate words,
as unfold
In glimpses alone, a coiled grief.
Through each pause
Of its fitful recital, in raw gusty
flaws,
The rain shook the canvas, unheed-
ed; aloof,
And unheeded, the night-wind
around the tent-roof
At intervals wirbled. And when all
was said,
The sick man, exhausted, drooped
backward his head,
And fell into a feverish slumber.

Long while
Sat the Sœur Seraphine, in deep
thought. The still smile
That was wont, angel-wise, to inhab-
it her face
And make it like heaven, was fled
from its place
In her eyes, on her lips; and a deep
sadness there
Seemed to darken the lines of long
sorrow and care,
As low to herself she sighed . . .

“Hath it, Eugène,
Been so long, then, the struggle? . . .
and yet, all in vain!
Nay, not all in vain! Shall the
world gain a man,
And yet Heaven lose a soul? Hav-
I done all I can?
Soul to soul, did he say? Soul to
soul, be it so!
And then,—soul of mine, whither?
whither?”

XVIII.

Large, slow,
Silent tears In those deep eyes as-
cended, and fell.

"Here, at least, I have failed not"
 . . . she mused . . . "this is
 well!"

She drew from her bosom two letters.

In one,
 A mother's heart, wild with alarm
 for her son,

Breathed bitterly forth its despairing
 appeal.

"The pledge of a love owed to thee,
 O Lucile!

The hope of a home saved by thee,—
 of a heart

Which hath never since then (thrice
 endeared as thou art!)

Ceased to bless thee, to pray for thee,
 save! . . . save my son!

And if not" . . . the letter went bro-
 kenly on,

"Heaven help us!"

Then followed, from Alfred, a few
 Blotted heart-broken pages. He
 mournfully drew,

With pathos, the picture of that
 earnest youth,

So unlike his own: how in beauty
 and truth

He had nurtured that nature, so
 simple and brave!

And how he had striven his son's
 youth to save

From the errors so sadly redeemed
 in his own,

And so deeply repented: how thus,
 in that son,

In whose youth he had garnered his
 age, he had seemed

To be blessed by a pledge that the
 past was redeemed,

And forgiven. He bitterly went on
 to speak

Of the boy's baffled love; in which
 fate seemed to break

Unawares on his dreams with re-
 tributive pain,

And the ghosts of the past rose to
 scourge back again

The hopes of the future. To sue for
 consent

Pride forbade: and the hope his old
 foe might relent

Experience rejected . . . "My life
 for the boy's!"

(He exclaimed); "for I die with my
 son, if he dies!

Lucile! Heaven bless you for all you
 have done!

Save him, save him, Lucile! save
 my son! save my son!"

XIX.

"Ay!" murmured the Scur Sera-
 phine . . . "heart to heart!

There, at least, I have failed not!
 Fulfilled is my part?

Accomplished my mission? One act
 crowns the whole.

Do I linger? Nay, be it so, then!
 . . . Soul to soul!"

She knelt down, and prayed. Still
 the boy slumbered on.

Dawn broke. The pale nun from
 the bedside was gone.

XX.

Meanwhile, 'mid his aides-de-camp,
 busily bent

O'er the daily reports, in his well-
 ordered tent

There sits a French General, —
 bronzed by the sun

And seared by the sands of Algeria.
 One

Who forth from the wars of the wild
 Kabylee

Had strangely and rapidly risen to
 be

The idol, the darling, the dream, and
 the star

Of the younger French chivalry:
 daring in war,

And wary in council. He entered
 indeed,

Late in life (and discarding his
 Bourbonite creed)

The Army of France: and had risen,
 in part,

From a singular aptitude proved for
 the art

Of that wild desert warfare of am-
 bush, surprise,

And stratagem, which to the French
 camp supplies

Its subtlest intelligence ; partly from
chance ;
Partly, too, from a name and position
which France
Was proud to put forward ; but
mainly, in fact,
From the prudence to plan, and the
daring to act.
In frequent emergencies startlingly
shown,
To the rank which he now held,—
intrepidly won
With many a wound, trenched in
many a scar,
From fierce Milianah and Sidi-Sakh-
dar.

XXI.

All within, and without, that warm
tent seems to bear
Smiling token of provident order and
care.
All about, a well-fed, well-clad soldiery
stands
In groups round the music of mirth-
breathing bands.
In and out of the tent, all day long,
to and fro,
The messengers come, and the mes-
sengers go,
Upon missions of mercy, or errands
of toil :
To report how the sapper contends
with the soil
In the terrible trench, how the sick
man is faring
In the hospital tent : and, combin-
ing, comparing,
Constructing, within moves the
brain of one man,
oving all.
He is bending his brow o'er some
plan
For the hospital service, wise, skil-
ful, humane.
The officer standing beside him is
fain
To refer to the angel solicitous
cares
Of the Sisters of Charity : one he
declares

To be known through the camp as a
seraph of grace :
He has seen, all have seen her in-
deed, in each place
Where suffering is seen, silent, ac-
tive,—the Sœur . . .
Sœur . . . how do they call her ?
“ Ay, truly, of her
I have heard much,” the General,
musing, replies ;
“ And we owe her already (unless
rumor lies)
The lives of not few of our bravest.
You mean . . .
Ay, how do they call her ? . . . the
Sœur—Seraphine,
(Is it not so ?) I rarely forget names
once heard.”

“ Yes ; the Sœur Seraphine. Her I
meant.”

“ On my word,
I have much wished to see her. I
fancy I trace,
In some facts traced to her, some-
thing more than the grace
Of an angel : I mean an acute
human mind,
Ingenious, constructive, intelligent.
Find
And, if possible, let her come to me.
We shall,
I think, aid each other.

“ *Oui, mon Général ;*
I believe she has lately obtained the
permission
To tend some sick man in the Second
Division
Of our Ally : they say a relation.

“ Ay, so ?
A relation ? ”

“ ’Tis said so.”
“ The name do you know ? ”
“ *Non, mon Général.* ”

While they spoke yet, there went
A murmur and stir round the door
of the tent.

“ A Sister of Charity craves, in a
case
Of urgent and serious importance,
the grace

Of brief private speech with the
General there.

Will the General speak with her?"

"Bid her declare
Her mission."

"She will not. She craves to be
seen

And be heard."

"Well, her name then?"

"The Sœur Seraphine."

"Clear the tent. She may enter."

XXII.

The tent has been cleared.
The chieftain stroked moodily some-
what his beard.

A sable long silvered : and pressed
down his brow

On his hand, heavy veined. All his
countenance, now

Unwitnessed, at once fell dejected,
and dreary,

As a curtain let fall by a hand that's
grown weary,

Into puckers and folds. From his
lips, unrepressed,

Steals th' impatient quick sigh,
which reveals in man's breast

A conflict concealed, an experience
at strife

With itself,—the vexed heart's pass-
ing protest on life.

He turned to his papers. He heard
the light tread

Of a faint foot behind him : and,
lifting his head,

Said, "Sit, Holy Sister ! your worth
is well known

To the hearts of our soldiers ; nor
less to my own.

I have much wished to see you. I
owe you some thanks :

In the name of all those you have
saved to our ranks

I record them. Sit ! Now then, your
mission ?"

Paused silent. The nun
her anon

More keenly. His aspect grew
troubled. A change

Darkened over his features. He
muttered "Strange !
strange !

Any face should so strongly remind
me of *her* !

Fool ! again the delirium, the dream !
does it stir ?

Does it move as of old ? Psha !

"Sit, Sister ! I wai

Your answer, my time halts but hur-
riedly. State

The cause why you seek me ?"

"The cause ? ay, the cause !"

She vaguely repeated. Then, after
a pause,—

As one who, awaked unawares,
would put back

The sleep that forever returns in the
track

Of dreams which, though scared and
dispersed, not the less

Settle back to faint eyelids that yield
'neath their stress,

Like doves to a penthouse,—a move-
ment she made,

Less toward him than away from
herself ; drooped her head

And folded her hands on her bosom :
long, spare.

Fatigued, mournful hands ! Not a
stream of stray hair

Escaped the pale bands ; scarce more
pale than the face

Which they bound and locked up in
a rigid white case.

She fixed her eyes on him. There
crept a vague awe

O'er his sense, such as ghosts cast.

"Eugène de Luvois,
The cause which recalls me again to
your side

Is a promise that rests unfulfilled,
she replied.

"I come to fulfil it."

He sprang from the place
Where he sat, pressed his hand, as
in doubt, o'er his face ;

And, cautiously feeling each step o'er
the ground

That he trod on (as one who walks
fearing the sound

Of his footstep may startle and scare
 out of sight
 Some strange sleeping creature on
 which he would light
 Unawares), crept towards her ; one
 heavy hand laid
 On her shoulder in silence ; bent o'er
 her his head,
 earched her face with a long look
 of troubled appeal
 Against doubt ; staggered backward,
 and murmured . . . " Lucile !
 Thus we meet then ? . . . here ! . .
 thus ? "

" Soul to soul, ay, Eugène,
 As I pledged you my word that we
 should meet again.
 Dead, . . ." she murmured, " long
 dead ! all that lived in our
 lives,—
 Thine and mine,—saving that which
 ev'n life's self survives,
 The soul ! 'Tis my soul seeks thine
 own. What may reach
 From my life to thy life (so wide
 each from each !)
 Save the soul to the soul ? To the
 soul I would speak.
 May I do so ? "

He said (worked and white was his
 cheek
 As he raised it), " Speak to me ! "
 Deep, tender, serene,
 And sad was the gaze which the
 Sœur Seraphine
 Held on him. She spoke.

XXIII.

As some minstrel may fling,
 Preluding the music yet mute in each
 string,
 A swift hand athwart the hushed
 heart of the whole,
 Seeking which note most fitly may
 first move the soul ;
 And, leaving untroubled the deep
 chords below,
 Move pathetic in numbers remote ;—
 even so
 The voice which was moving the
 heart of that man

Far away from its yet voiceless pur-
 pose began,
 Far away in the pathos remote of
 the past ;
 Until, through her words, rose be-
 fore him, at last,
 Bright and dark in their beauty, the
 hopes that were gone
 Unaccomplished from life.

He was mute.

XXIV.

She went on.
 And still further down the dim past
 did she lead
 Each yielding remembrance, far, far
 off, to feed
 'Mid the pastures of youth, in the
 twilight of hope,
 And the valleys of boyhood, the
 fresh-flowered slope
 Of life's dawning land !
 'Tis the heart of a boy,
 With its indistinct, passionate pre-
 science of joy !
 The unproved desire,—the unaimed
 aspiration.—
 The deep conscious life that fore-
 stalls consummation ;
 With ever a fitting delight,—one
 arm's length
 In advance of the august inward im-
 pulse.

The strength
 Of the spirit which troubles the seed
 in the sand
 With the birth of the palm-tree !
 Let ages expand
 The glorious creature ! The ages lie
 shut
 (Safe, see !) in the seed, at time's
 signal to put
 Forth their beauty and power, leaf
 by leaf, layer on layer,
 Till the palm strikes the sun, and
 stands broad in blue air.
 So the palm in the palm-seed ! so,
 slowly—so, wrought
 Year by year unperceived, hope on
 hope, thought by thought,
 Trace the growth of the man from its
 germ in the boy.

Ah, but Nature, that nurtures, may
also destroy!

Charm the wind and the sun, lest
some chance intervene!

While the leaf's in the bud, while
the stem's in the green,

A light bird bends the branch, a light
breeze breaks the bough,

Which, if spared by the light breeze,
the light bird, may grow

To baffle the tempest, and rock the
high nest,

And take both the bird and the breeze
to its breast.

Shall we save a whole forest in spar-
ing one seed?

Save the man in the boy? in the
thought save the deed?

Let the whirlwind uproot the grown
tree, if it can!

Save the seed from the north-wind.
So let the grown man

Face out fate. Spare the man-seed
in youth.

He was dumb.

She went one step further.

XXV.

Lo! manhood is come.

And love, the wild song-bird, hath
flown to the tree,

And the whirlwind comes after.
Now prove we, and see:

What shade from the leaf? what
support from the branch?

Spreads the leaf broad and fair?
holds the bough strong and
staunch?

There, he saw himself,—dark, as he
stood on that night,

The last when they met and they
parted: a sight

For heaven to mourn o'er, for hell to
rejoice!

An ineffable tenderness troubled her
voice;

It grew weak, and a sigh broke it
through.

Then he said

(Never looking at her, never lifting
his head,

As though, at his feet, there lay
visibly hurled

Those fragments), "It was not a love,
'twas a world,

'Twas a life that lay ruined, Lucile!"

XXVI.

She went on.

"So be it! Perish Babel, aris
Babylon!

From ruins like these rise the faes
that shall last,

And to build up the future heaven
shatters the past."

"Ay," he moodily murmured, "and
who cares to scan

The heart's perished world, if the
world gains a man?

From the past to the present, though
late, I appeal;

To the nun Seraphine, from the wo-
man Lucile!"

XXVII.

Lucile! . . . the old name, — the
old self! silenced long:

Heard once more! felt once more!

As some soul to the throng
Of invisible spirits admitted, baptized

By death to a new name and nature,
—surprised

'Mid the songs of the seraphs, hears
faintly, and far,

Some voice from the earth, left be-
low a dim star,

Calling to her forlornly; and (sad-
dening the psalms

Of the angels, and piercing the Para-
dise palms!)

The name borne 'mid earthly be-
loveds on earth

Sighed above some lone grave in th
land of her birth;—

So that one word . . . Lucile! . . .
stirred the Sœur Seraphine,

For a moment. Anon she resumed
her serene

And concentrated calm.

"Let the Nun, then, retraco
The life of the Soldier!" . . . she

said, with a face

That glowed, gladdening her words.

"To the present I come ;
Leave the Past."

There her voice rose, and seemed
as when some

Pale Priestess proclaims from her
temple the praise

Of the hero whose brows she is
crowning with bays.

Step by step did she follow his path
from the place

Where their two paths diverged.

Year by year did she trace
(Familiar with all) his, the soldier's
existence.

Her words were of trial, endurance,
resistance ;

Of the leaguer around this besieged
world of ours :

And the same sentinels that ascend
the same towers

And report the same foes, the same
fears, the same strife,

Waged alike to the limits of each
human life.

She went on to speak of the lone
moody lord,

Shut up in his lone moody halls :
every word

Held the weight of a tear : she re-
corded the good

He had patiently wrought through a
whole neighborhood ;

And the blessing that lived on the
lips of the poor,

As the peasant's hearthstone, or the
cottager's door.

There she paused : and her accents
seemed dipped in the hue

Of his own sombre heart, as the pic-
ture she drew

Of the poor, proud, sad spirit, reject-
ing love's wages,

Yet working love's work ; reading
backwards life's pages

For penance ; and stubbornly, many
a time,

Both missing the moral, and mar-
ring the rhyme.

Then she spoke of the soldier ! . . .
the man's work and fame,

The pride of a nation, a world's just
acclaim !

Life's inward approval !

XXVIII.

Her voice reached his heart,
And sank lower. She spoke of her-
self : how, apart

And unseen,—far away,—she had
watched, year by year,

With how many a blessing, how
many a tear,

And how many a prayer, every stage
in the strife :

Guessed the thought in the deed :
traced the love in the life :

Blessed the man in the man's work !
"Thy work . . . O, not mine !

Thine, Lucile !" . . . he exclaimed
. . . "all the worth of it thine

If worth there be in it !"

Her answer conveyed
His reward, and her own ; joy that
cannot be said

Alone by the voice . . . eyes—face
—spoke silently :

All the woman, one grateful emotion !
And she

A poor Sister of Charity ! hers a life
spent

In one silent effort for others ! . . .
She bent

Her divine face above him and filled
up his heart

With the look that glowed from it.
Then slow, with soft art,

Fixed her aim, and moved to it.

XXIX.

He, the soldier humane
He, the hero ; whose heart hid i
glory the pain

Of a youth disappointed ; whose life
had made known

The value of man's life ! . . . that
youth overthrown

And retrieved, had it left him no
pity for youth

In another ? his own life of strenu-
ous truth

<p>Accomplished in act, had it taught Lim no care For the life of another? . . . O no! everywhere In the camp which she moved through, she came face to face With some noble token, some gener- ous trace of his active humanity . . . "Well," he replied, "If it be so?" "I come from the solemn bedside Of a man that is dying," she said. "While we speak A life is in jeopardy." "Quick then! you seek Aid or medicine, or what?" "'Tis not needed," she said. "Medicine? yes, for the mind! 'Tis a heart that needs aid! You, Eugène de Luvois, you (and you only) can [save it?]" Save the life of this man. Will you "What man?" How? . . . where? . . . can you ask?"</p> <p style="text-align: right;">She went rapidly on To her object in brief vivid words . . . The young son Of Matilda and Alfred—the boy ly- ing there Half a mile from that tent-door—the father's despair, The mother's deep anguish—the pride of the boy In the father—the father's one hope and one joy In the son:—the son now—wounded, dying! She told Of the father's stern struggle with life: the boy's bold, Pure, and beautiful nature: the fair life before him If that life were but spared . . . yet a word might restore him! The boy's broken love for the niece of Eugène! Its pathos: the girl's love for him; how, half slain In his tent she had found him won from him the tale;</p>	<p>Sought to nurse back his life found her efforts still fail; Beaten back by a love that was stronger than life; Of how bravely till then he had stood in that strife Wherein England and France in their best blood, at last, Had bathed from remembrance the wounds of the past. And shall nations be nobler than men? Are not great Men the models of nations? For what is a state But the many's confused imitation of one? Shall he, the fair hero of France on the son Of his ally seek vengeance, destroy- ing perchance An innocent life,—here when Eng- land and France Have forgiven the sins of their fathers of yore, And baptized a new hope in their sons' recent gore?</p> <p>She went on to tell how the boy had clung still [until To life, for the sake of life's uses, From his weak hands the strong ef- fort dropped, stricken down By the news that the heart of Con- stance, like his own, Was breaking beneath . . . But there "Hold!" he exclaimed, Interrupting, "forbear!" . . . his whole face was inflamed With the heart's swarthy thunder which yet, while she spoke, Had been gathering silent,—at last the storm broke In grief or in wrath . . . "'Tis to him, then," he cried, . . . Checking suddenly short the tu- multuous stride, "That I owe these late greetings,— for him you are here,— For his sake you seek me,—for him, it is clear, You have deigned at the last to be- think you again</p>
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Of this long-forgotten existence !”
 “ Eugène !”
 “ Ha ! fool that I was !” . . . he
 went on, . . . “ and just now,
 While you spoke yet, my heart was
 beginning to grow
 Almost boyish again, almost sure of
one friend !
 Set this was the meaning of all,—
 this the end !
 Be it so ! There’s a sort of slow
 justice (admit !)
 In this,—that the word that man’s
 finger hath writ |last.
 In fire on my heart, I return him at
 Let him learn that word,—Never !”
 “ Ah, still to the past
 Must the present be vassal ?” she
 said. “ In the hour
 We last parted I urged you to put
 forth the power
 Which I felt to be yours, in the con-
 quest of life.
 Yours, the promise to strive : mine,—
 to watch o’er the strife.
 I foresaw you would conquer ; you
have conquered much,
 Much, indeed, that is noble ! I hail
 it as such,
 And am here to record and applaud
 it. I saw
 Not the less in your nature, Eugène
 de Luvois,
 One peril,—one point where I feared
 you would fail
 To subdue that worst foe which a
 man can assail,—
 Himself : and I promised that, if I
 should see
 My champion once falter, or bend
 the brave knee,
 That moment would bring me again
 to his side.
 That moment is come ! for that
 peril was pride,
 And you falter. I plead for your-
 self, and one other,
 For that gentle child without father
 or mother,
 To whom you are both. I plead,
 soldier of France,

For your own nobler nature,—and
 plead for Constance !”
 At the sound of that name he avert-
 ed his head.
 “ Constance ! . . . Ay, she entered
 my lone life” (he said)
 “ When its sun was long set ; and
 hung over its night
 Her own starry childhood. I have
 but that light,
 In the midst of much darkness
 Who names me but she
 With titles of love ? and what rests
 there for me
 In the silence of age save the voice
 of that child ?
 The child of my own better life, un-
 defiled ?
 My creature, carved out of my heart
 of hearts !”
 “ Say,”
 Said the Sœur Seraphine,—“ are you
 able to lay
 Your hand as a knight on your heart
 as a man
 And swear that, whatever may hap-
 pen, you can
 Feel assured for the life you thus
 cherish ?”
 “ How so ?”
 He looked up. “ If the boy should
 die thus ?”
 “ Yes, I know
 What your look would imply . . .
 this sleek stranger forsooth !
 Because on his cheek was the red
 rose of youth
 The heart of my niece must break
 for it !”
 She cried,
 “ Nay, but hear me yet further !”
 With slow heavy stride
 Unheeding her words, he was pacing
 the tent, [he went.
 He was muttering low to himself as
 “ Ay, these young things lie safe in
 our heart just so long
 As their wings are in growing ; and
 when these are strong
 They break it, and farewell ! the
 bird flies !” . . .

The nun
Laid her hand on the soldier, and
murmured, "The sun
Is descending, life fleets while we
talk thus! O, yet
Let this day upon one final victory
set,
And complete a life's conquest!"

He said, "Understand!
If Constance wed the son of this
man, by whose hand
My heart hath been robbed, she is
lost to my life!
Can her home be my home? Can I
claim in the wife
Of that man's son the child of my
age? At her side
Shall he stand on my hearth?
Shall I sue to the bride
Of . . . enough!

"Ah, and you immemorial halls
Of my Norman forefathers, whose
shadow yet falls
On my fancy, and fuses hope,
memory, past,
Present,—all, in one silence! old
trees to the blast
Of the North Sea repeating the tale
of old days,
Nevermore, nevermore in the wild
bosky ways
Shall I hear through your umbrage
ancestral the wind
Prophecy as of yore, when it shook
the deep mind
Of my boyhood, with whispers from
out the far years
Of love, fame, the raptures life cools
down with tears!
Henceforth shall the tread of a Var-
grave alone

Rouse your echoes?" [son
"O, think not," she said, "of the
Of the man whom unjustly you hate;
only think
Of this young human creature, that
cries from the brink
Of a grave to your mercy!

"Recall your own words
(Words my memory mournfully ever
records!)

How with love may be wrecked a
whole life! then, Eugène,
Look with me (still those words in
our ears!) once again
At this young soldier sinking from
life here,—dragged down
By the weight of the love in his
heart: no renown.

No fame comforts him! nations
shout not above
The lone grave down to which he is
bearing the love
Which life has rejected! Will you
stand apart?

You, with such a love's memory
- deep in your heart!
You the hero, whose life hath per-
chance been led on
Through the deeds it hath wrought
to the fame it hath won,

By recalling the visions and dreams
of a youth,
Such as lies at your door now: who
have but, in truth,
To stretch forth a hand, to speak
only one word,
And by that word you rescue a
life!"

He was stirred.
So'd he sought to put from him the
cup; bowed his face
On his hand; and anon, as though
wishing to chase
With one angry gesture his own
thoughts aside,
He sprang up, brushed past her, and
bitterly cried,
"No!—Constance wed a Vargrave!
—I cannot consent!"
Then arose the Sœur Seraphine.

The low tent
In her sudden uprising, seemed
dwarfed by the height
From which those imperial eyes
poured the light [him.
Of their deep silent sadness upon
No wonder
He felt, as it were, his own stature
shrink under

The compulsion of that grave re-
gard! For between

The Duc de Luvois and the Sœur
Seraphine

At that moment there rose all the
height of one soul

O'er another ; she looked down on
him from the whole

Lonely length of a life. There were
sad nights and days,

There were long months and years
in that heart-searching gaze ;

And her voice, when she spoke, with
sharp pathos thrilled through,

And transfixed him.

“Eugène de Luvois, but for you,
I might have been now,—not this
wandering nun,

But a mother, a wife,—pleading, not
for the son

Of another, but blessing some child
of my own,

His,—the man's that I once loved! . .

Hush ! that which is done
I regret not. I breathe no re-
proaches. That's best

Which God sends. 'Twas His will :
it is mine. And the rest

Of that riddle I will not look back
to. He reads

In your heart,—He that judges of
all thoughts and deeds,

With eyes, mine forestall not ! This
only I say :

You have not the right (read it, you,
as you may !)

To say . . . ‘I am the wronged.’” . . .

“Have I wronged thee?—wronged
thee!”

He faltered, “Lucile, ah, Lucile !”
“Nay, not me.”

She murmured, “but man ! The
lone nun standing here

Has no claim upon earth, and is
passed from the sphere

Of earth's wrongs and earth's repar-
ations. But she,

The dead woman, Lucile, she whose
grave is in me,

Demands from her grave reparation
to man,

Reparation to God. Heed, O heed,
while you can,

This voice from the grave !”

“Hush !” he moaned. “I obey
The Sœur Seraphine. There, Lucile !

let this pay
Every debt that is due to that grave.

Now lead on :

I follow you, Sœur Seraphine ! . . .
To the son

Of Lord Alfred Vargrave . . . and
then,” . . .

As he spoke
He lifted the tent-door, and down
the dun smoke

Pointed out the dark bastions, with
batteries crowned,

Of the city beneath them . . .

“Then, *there*, underground,
And *valete et plaudite*, soon as may
be !

Let the old tree go down to the earth,
—the old tree,

With the worm at its heart ! Lay
the axe to the root !

Who will miss the old stump, so we
save the young shoot ?

A Vargrave ! . . . this pays all . . .
Lead on ! . . . in the seed

Save the forest ! . . .
“I follow . . . forth, forth ! where
you lead.”

xxx.

The day was declining ; a day sick
and damp.

In a blank ghostly glare shone the
bleak ghostly camp

Of the English. Alone in his dim,
spectral tent

(Himself the wan spectre of youth),
with eyes bent

On the daylight departing, the sic
man was sitting

Upon his low pallet. These thoughts,
vaguely flitting,

Crossed the silence between him and
death, which seemed near.

—“Pain o'erreaches itself, so is
balked ! else, how bear

This intense and intolerable soli
tude,

With its eye on my heart, and its
hand on my blood ?
Pulse by pulse ! Day goes down :
yet she comes not again.
Other suffering, doubtless, where
hope is more plain,
(Claims her elsewhere. I die, strange !
and scarcely feel sad.
O, to think of *Constance thus*, and
not to go mad !
But Death, it would seem, dulls the
sense to his own
Dull doings . . . ”

XXXI.

Between those sick eyes and the
sun
A shadow fell thwart.

XXXII.

'Tis the pale nun once more !
But who stands at her side, mute
and dark in the door ?
How oft had he watched through
the glory and gloom
Of the battle, with long, longing
looks that dim plume
Which now (one stray sunbeam
upon it) shook, stooped
To where the tent-curtain, dividing,
was looped !
How that stern face had haunted
and hovered about
The dreams it still scared ! through
what fond fear and doubt
Had the boy yearned in heart to the
hero ! (What's like
A boy's love for some famous
man ?) . . . O, to strike
A wild path through the battle, down
striking perchance
Some rash foeman too near the great
soldier of France,
And so fall in his glorious re-
gard ! . . . Oft, how oft
Had his heart flashed this hope out,
whilst watching aloft
The dim battle that plume dance and
dart,—never seen
So near till this moment ! how eager
to glean

Every stray word, dropped through
the camp-babble in praise
Of his hero,—each tale of old ven-
turous days
In the desert ! And now . . . could
he speak out his heart
Face to face with that man ere he
died !

XXXIII.

With a start
The sick soldier sprang up : the
blood sprang up in him,
To his throat, and o'erthrew him :
he reeled back : a dim
Sanguine haze filled his eyes, in his
ears rose the din
And rush, as of cataracts loosened
within,
Through which he saw faintly, and
heard, the pale nun
(Looking larger than life, where she
stood in the sun)
Point to him and murmur, “Be-
hold !” Then that plume
Seemed to wave like a fire, and fade
off in the gloom
Which momentarily put out the world.

XXXIV.

To his side
Moved the man the boy dreaded yet
loved . . . “ Ah ! ” . . . he sighed,
“ The smooth brow, the fair Var-
grave face ! and those eyes,
All the mother's ! The old things
again !

“ Do not rise.
You suffer, young man ? ”

THE BOY.

Sir, I die.

THE DUKE.

Not so young !

THE BOY.

So young ? yes ! and yet I have
tangled among
The frayed warp and woof of this
brief life of mine



"THE SICK SOLDIER SPRANG UP."



Other lives than my own. Could my
 death but untwine
 The vext skein . . . but it will not.
 Yes, Duke, young—so young !
 And I knew you not ? yet I have done
 you a wrong
 Irreparable ! . . . late, too late to
 repair.
 If I knew any means . . . but I know
 none ! . . . I swear,
 If this broken fraction of time could
 extend [end
 Into infinite lives of atonement, no
 Would seem too remote for my grief
 (could that be !)
 To include it ! Not too late, how-
 ever, for me
 To entreat : is it too late for you to
 forgive ?

THE DUKE.

You wrong—my forgiveness—ex-
 plain.

THE BOY.

Could I live !

Such a very few hours left to life,
 yet I shrink,
 I falter ! . . . Yes, Duke, your for-
 giveness I think
 Should free my soul hence.

Ah ! you could not surmise
 That a boy's beating heart, burning
 thoughts, longing eyes
 Were following you evermore (heed-
 ed not !)

While the battle was flowing between
 us : nor what

Eager, dubious footsteps at nightfall
 oft went

With the wind and the rain, round
 and round your blind tent,

Persistent and wild as the wind and
 the rain,

Unnoticed as these, weak as these,
 and as vain !

O, how obdurate then looked your
 tent ! The waste air

Grew stern at the gleam which said
 . . . "Off ! he is there !"

I know not what merciful mystery
 now

Brings you here, whence the man
 whom you see lying low
 Other footsteps (not those !) must
 soon bear to the grave.
 But death is at hand, and the few
 words I have
 Yet to speak, I must speak them at
 once.

Duke, I swear,

As I lie here (Death's angel too close
 not to hear !)

That I meant not this wrong to you.

Duc de Luvois,

I loved your niece—loved ? why, I
 love her ! I saw,

And, seeing, how could I but love
 her ? I seemed

Born to love her. Alas, were that
 all ! had I dreamed

Of this love's cruel consequence as
 it rests now

Ever fearfully present before me, I
 vow

That the secret, unknown, had gone
 down to the tomb

Into which I descend . . . O why,
 whilst there was room

In life left for warning, had no one
 the heart

To warn me ? Had anyone whis-
 pered . . . "Depart !"

To the hope the whole world seemed
 in league then to nurse !

Had anyone hinted . . . "Beware
 of the curse

Which is coming !" There was not
 a voice raised to tell,

Not a hand moved to warn from the
 blow ere it fell,

And then . . . then the blow fell on
both ! This is why

I implore you to pardon that grea
 injury

Wrought on her, and, through her,
 wrought on you, Heaven knows

How unwittingly !

THE DUKE.

Ah ! . . . and, young soldier, suppose
 That I came here to seek, not grant,
 pardon ?—

THE BOY.

Of whom ?

THE DUKE.

Of yourself.

THE BOY.

Duke, I bear in my heart to the tomb

No boyish resentment ; not one lonely thought

That honors you not. In all this there is nought

'Tis for me to forgive.

Every glorious act
Of your great life starts forward, an eloquent fact,

To confirm in my boy's heart its faith in your own.

And have I not hoarded, to ponder upon,

A hundred great acts from your life ?

Nay, all these,

Were they so many lying and false witnesses,

Does there rest not *one* voice, which was never untrue ?

I believe in Constance, Duke, as she does in you !

In this great world around us, wherever we turn,

Some grief irremediable we discern ;

And yet—there sits God, calm in Heaven above !

Do we trust one whit less in His justice or love ?

I judge not.

THE DUKE.

Enough ! hear at last, then, the truth. Your father and I,—foes we were in our youth.

It matters not why. Yet thus much understand :

The hope of my youth was signed out by his hand.

I was not of those whom the buffets of fate

Tame and teach : and my heart buried slain love in hate.

If your own frank young heart, yet unconscious of all

Which turns the heart's blood in its springtide to gall,

And unable to guess even aught that the furrow

Across these gray brows hides of sin or of sorrow,

Comprehends not the evil and grief of my life,

'Twill at least comprehend how intense was the strife

Which is closed in this act of atonement, whereby

I seek in the son of my youth's enemy

The friend of my age. Let the present release

Here acquitted the past ! In the name of my niece,

Whom for my life in yours as a hostage I give,

Are you great enough, boy, to forgive me,—and live ?

Whilst he spoke thus, a doubtful tumultuous joy

Chased its fleeting effects o'er the face of the boy :

As when some stormy moon, in a long cloud confined,

Struggles outward through shadows, the varying wind

Alternates, and bursts, self-surprised, from her prison,

So that slow joy grew clear in his face. He had risen

To answer the Duke ; but strength failed every limb ;

A strange, happy feebleness trembled through him.

With a fainter joy of rapturous wonder, he sank [near.

On the breast of the nun, who stood " Yes, boy ! thank

This guardian angel," the Duke said. " I—you,

We owe all to her. Crown her work. Live ! be true

To your young life's fair promise, and live for her sake !"

" Yes, Duke : I will live. I must live,—live to make

My whole life the answer you claim,"
 the boy said,
 "For joy does not kill!"
 Back again the faint head
 Declined on the nun's gentle bosom.
 She saw
 His lips quiver, and motioned the
 Duke to withdraw
 And leave them a moment together.
 He eyed
 Them both with a wistful regard;
 turned, and sighed,
 And lifted the tent-door, and passed
 from the tent.

XXXV.

Like a furnace, the fervid, intense
 occident
 From its hot seething levels a great
 glare struck up
 On the sick metal sky. And, as out
 of a cup
 Some witch watches boiling wild por-
 tents arise,
 Monstrous clouds, massed, misshap-
 en, and tinged with strange
 dyes,
 Hovered over the red fume, and
 changed to weird shapes
 As of snakes, salamanders, efts, liz-
 ards, storks, apes,
 Chimeras, and hydras: whilst—ever
 the same—
 In the midst of all these (creatures
 fused by his flame,
 And changed by his influence!)
 changeless, as when,
 Ere he lit down to death generations
 of men,
 O'er that crude and ungainly crea-
 tion, which there
 With wild shapes this cloud-world
 seemed to mimic in air.
 The eye of Heaven's all-judging wit-
 ness, he shone,
 And shall shine on the ages we reach
 not,—the sun!

XXXVI.

Nature posted her parable thus in
 the skies,
 And the man's heart bore witness.
 Life's vapors arise

And fall, pass and change, group
 themselves and revolve
 Round the great central life, which
 is Love: these dissolve
 And resume themselves, here assume
 beauty, there terror;
 And the phantasmagoria of infinite
 error,
 And endless complexity lasts but a
 while;
 Life's self, the immortal, immutable
 smile
 Of God, on the soul, in the deep
 heart of Heaven
 Lives changeless, unchanged: and
 our morning and even
 Are earth's alterations, not Heaven's.

XXXVII.

While he yet
 Watched the skies, with this thought
 in his heart; while he set
 Thus unconsciously all his life forth
 in his mind,
 Summed it up, searched it out, proved
 it vapor and wind,
 And embraced the new life which
 that hour had revealed,—
 Love's life, which earth's life had
 defaced and concealed;
 Lucile left the tent and stood by him.
 Her tread
 Aroused him; and, turning towards
 her, he said:
 "O Sœur Seraphine, are you
 happy?"

"Eugène,

What is happier than to have hoped
 not in vain?"

She answered,—“And you?”

“Yes.”

“You do not repent?”

“No.”

“Thank Heaven!” she mur-
 mured. He musingly bent
 His looks on the sunset, and some-
 what apart

Where he stood, sighed, as though to
 his innermost heart,

“O blessed are they, amongst whom
 I was not,

Whose morning unclouded, without
stain or spot,
Predicts a pure evening ; who, sun-
like, in light
Have traversed, unsullied, the world,
and set bright !”

But she in response, “Mark yon ship
far away,

Asleep on the wave, in the last light
of day,

With all its hushed thunders shut
up ! Would you know

A thought which came to me a few
days ago,

Whilst watching those ships ? . . .
When the great Ship of Life,

Surviving, though shattered, the
tumult and strife

Of earth’s angry element,—masts
broken short,

Decks drenched, bulwarks beaten,—
drives safe into port,

When the Pilot of Galilee, seen on
the strand,

Stretches over the waters a welcom-
ing hand ;

When, heeding no longer the sea’s
baffled roar,

The mariner turns to his rest ever-
more ;

What will then be the answer the
helmsman must give ?

Will it be . . . ‘Lo our log-book !
Thus once did we live

In the zones of the South ; thus we
traversed the seas

Of the Orient ; there dwelt with the
Hesperides ;

Thence followed the west-wind ;
here, eastward we turned ;

The stars failed us there ; just here
land we discerned

On our lee ; there the storm over-
took us at last ;

That day went the bowsprit, the
next day the mast ;

There the mermen came round us,
and there we saw bask

A siren ?’ The Captain of Port will
he ask

Any one of such questions ? I can-
not think so !

But . . . ‘What is the last Bill of
Health you can show ?’

Not—How fared the soul through the
trials she passed ?

But—What is the state of that soul
at the last ?”

“May it be so !” he sighed. “There
the sun drops, behold !”

And indeed, whilst he spoke, all the
purple and gold

In the west had turned ashen, save
one fading strip

Of light that yet gleamed from the
dark nether lip

Of a long reef of cloud ; and o’er
sullen ravines

And ridges the raw damps were
hanging white screens

Of melancholy mist.
“*Nunc dimittis !*” she said.

“O God of the living ! whilst yet
’mid the dead

And the dying we stand here alive,
and thy days

Returning, admit space for prayer
and for praise,

In both these confirm us !
“The helmsman, Eugène,

Needs the compass to steer by. Pray
always. Again

We two part : each to work out
Heaven’s will : you, I trust,

In the world’s ample witness ; and I,
as I must,

In secret and silence : you, love,
fame, await ;

Me, sorrow and sickness. We meet
at one gate

When all’s over. The ways they are
many and wide,

And seldom are two ways the same.
Side by side

May we stand at the same little door
when all’s done !

The ways they are many, the end it
is one.

He that knocketh shall enter : who
asks shall obtain :

And who seeketh, he findeth. Remember, Eugène !”

She turned to depart.

“Whither? whither?” . . . he said.

She stretched forth her hand where, already outspread

On the darkened horizon, remotely they saw

The French camp-fires kindling.

“O Duc de Luvois,

See yonder vast host, with its manifold heart

Made as one man's by one hope !

That hope 'tis your part

To aid towards achievement, to save from reverse :

Yine, through suffering to soothe, and through sickness to nurse.

I go to my work : you to yours.”

XXXVIII.

Whilst she spoke,

On the wide wasting evening there distantly broke

The low roll of musketry. Straightway, anon,

From the dim Flag-staff Battery bel- lowed a gun.

“Our chasseurs are at it !” he mut- tered.

She turned,

Smiled, and passed up the twilight.

He faintly discerned

Her form, now and then, on the flat lurid sky

Rise, and sink, and recede through the mists ; by and by

The vapors closed round, and he saw her no more.

XXXIX.

Nor shall we. For her mission, ac- complished, is o'er.

The mission of genius on earth ! To uplift,

Purify, and confirm by its own gra- cious gift,

The world, in despite of the world's dull endeavor

To degrade, and drag down, and op- pose it forever.

The mission of genius : to watch, and to wait,

To renew, to redeem, and to regen- erate.

The mission of woman on earth ! to give birth

To the mercy of Heaven descending on earth.

The mission of woman : permitted to bruise

The head of the serpent, and sweetly infuse,

Through the sorrow and sin of earth's registered curse,

The blessing which mitigates all : born to nurse,

And to soothe, and to solace, to help and to heal

The sick world that leans on her. This was Lucile.

XL.

A power hid in pathos : a fire veiled in cloud :

Yet still burning outward : a branch which, though bowed

By the bird in its passage, springs upward again :

Through all symbols I search for her sweetness—in vain !

Judge her love by her life. For our life is but love

In act. Pure was hers : and the dear God above,

Who knows what His creatures have need of for life,

And whose love includes all loves through much patient strife

Led her soul into peace. Love though love may be given

In vain, is yet lovely. Her own na- tive heaven

More clearly she mirrored, as life's troubled dream

Wore away ; and love sighed into rest, like a stream

That breaks its heart over wild rocks toward the shore

<p>Of the great sea which hushes it up evermore With its little wild wailing. No stream from its source Flows seaward, how lonely soever its course, But what some land is gladdened. No star ever rose And set, without influence some- where. Who knows What earth needs from earth's low- est creature? No life Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife And all life not be purer and strong- er thereby. The spirits of just men made perfect on high, The army of martyrs who stand by the Throne And gaze into the Face that makes glorious their own, Know this, surely, at last. Honest love, honest sorrow, Honest work for the day, honest hope for the morrow,</p>	<p>Are these worth nothing more than the hand they make weary, The heart they have saddened, the life they leave dreary? Hush! the sevenfold heavens to the voice of the Spirit Echo: He that o'ercometh shall all things inherit.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">XII.</p> <p>The moon was, in fire, carried up through the fog; The loud fortress barked at her like a chained dog. The horizon pulsed flame, the air sound. All without, War and winter, and twilight, and terror, and doubt; All within, light, warmth, calm! In the twilight, long while Eugène de Luvois with a deep, thoughtful smile Lingered, looking, and listening, lone by the tent. At last he withdrew, and night closed as he went.</p>
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THE APPLE OF LIFE.

From the river Euphrates, the river whose source is in Paradise, far
 As red Egypt,—sole lord of the land and the sea, 'twixt the home of the
 star
 That is born in the blush of the East, and the porch of the chambers of
 rest
 Where the great sea is girded with fire, and Orion returns in the West,
 And the ships come and go in grand silence,—King Solomon reigned.
 And behold,
 In that time there was everywhere silver as common as stones be, and
 gold
 That for plenty was 'counted as silver, and cedar as sycamore-trees
 That are found in the vale, for abundance. For GOD to the King gave all
 these,
 With glory exceeding; moreover all kings of the earth to him came,
 Because of his wisdom, to hear him. So great was King Solomon's
 fame.

And for all this the King's soul was sad. And his heart said within him, "Alas !
 For man dies ! if his glory abideth, himself from his glory shall pass.
 And that which remaineth behind him, he seeth it not any more :
 For how shall he know what comes after, who knoweth not what went
 before ?
 I have planted me gardens and vineyards, and gotten me silver and
 gold,
 And my hand from whatever my heart hath desired I did not not with-
 hold :
 And what profit have I in the works of my hands which I take not away ?
 I have searched out wisdom and knowledge : and what do they profit me,
 they ?
 As the fool dieth, so doth the wise. What is gathered is scattered again.
 As the breath of the beasts, even so is the breath of the children of men :
 And the same thing befalleth them both. And not any man's soul is his
 own."

This he thought, as he sat in his garden and watched the great sun
 going down
 In the glory thereof ; and the earth and the sky by the beam of the same
 Were clothed with the gladness of color, and bathed in the beauty of
 flame.
 And "Behold," said the King, "in a moment the glory shall vanish !"
 Even then,
 While he spake, he was 'ware of a man drawing near him, who seemed to
 his ken
 (By the hair in its blackness like flax that is burned in the hemp-dresser's
 shed,
 And the brow's smoky hue, and the smouldering eyeball more livid than
 lead)
 As the sons of the land lies under the sword of the Cherub whose wing
 Wraps in wrath the shut gateways of Paradise. He, being come to the
 King,
 Seven times made obeisance before him. To whom, "What art thou,"
 the King cried,
 "That thus unannounced to King Solomon comest ?" The man, spread-
 ing wide
 The palm of his right hand, showed in it an apple yet bright from the
 Tree
 In whose stem springs the life never-failing which Sin lost to Adam,
 when he,
 Tasting knowledge forbidden, found death in the fruit of it. . . . So doth
 the Giver
 Evil gifts to the evil apportion. And "Hail ! let the King live forever !"
 Bowing down at the feet of the monarch, and laughingly, even as one
 Whose meaning, in joy or in jest, hovers 'twixt the word and the
 tone,
 Said the stranger, "For lo ye" (and lightly he dropped in the hand of the
 King
 That apple), "from 'twixt the four rivers of Eden, GOD gave me to bring

To his servant King Solomon, even to my lord that on Israel's throne
 He hath 'stablish't, this fruit from the Tree in whose branch Life abideth :
 for none
 Shall taste death, having tasted this apple."

And therewith he vanished.

Remained
 In the hand of the King the life-apple : ambrosial of breath, golden-grained,
 Rosy-bright as a star dipt in sunset. The King turned it o'er, and perused
 The fruit, which, alluring his lip, in his hand lay untasted.

He mused,
 "Life is good : but not life in itself. Life eternal, eternally young,
 That were life to be lived, or desired ! Well it were if a man could prolong
 The manhood that moves in the muscles, the rapture that mounts in the
 brain

When life at the prime, in the pastime of living, led on by the train
 Of the jubilant senses, exulting goes forth, brave of body and spirit,
 To conquer, choose, claim, and enjoy what 'twas born to achieve or inherit.
 The dance, and the festal procession ! the pride in the strenuous play
 Of the sinews that, pliant of power, the will, though it wanton, obey !
 When the veins are yet wishful, and in them the bountiful impulses beat,
 When the lilies of Love are yet living, the roses of Beauty yet sweet :
 And the eye glows with glances that kindle, the lip breathes the warmth
 that inspires,

And the hand hath yet vigor to seize the good thing which the spirit desires !
 O well for the foot that bounds forward ! and ever the wind it awakes
 Lifts no lock from the forehead yet white, not a leaf that is withered yet
 shakes

From the loose crown that laughs on young tresses ! and ever the earth and
 the skies

Are crammed with audacious contingencies, measureless means of surprise !
 Life is sweet to the young that yet know not what life is. But life, after
 Youth,

The gay liar, leaves hold of the bauble, and Age, with his terrible truth,
 Picks it up, and perceives it is broken, and knows it unfit to engage
 The care it yet craves. . . . Life eternal, eternally wedded to Age !
 What gain were in that ? Why should any man seek what he loathes to
 prolong ?

The twilight that darkens the eyeball : the dull ear that's deaf to the song,
 When the maidens rejoice and the bride to the bridegroom, with music,
 is led :

The palsy that shakes 'neath the blossoms that fall from the chill bridal be I.
 When the hand saith ' *I did,*' not ' *I will do,*' the heart saith ' *It was,*' not
 ' *Twill be,*'

Too late in man's life is Forever,—too late comes this apple to me !"
 Then the King rose. And lo, it was evening. And leaning, because he
 was old,

On the sceptre that, curiously sculptured in ivory garnished with gold,
 To others a rod of dominion, to him was a staff for support,
 Slow paced he the murmurous pathways where myrtles, in court up to court,
 Mixt with roses in garden on garden, were ranged around fountains that fed

With cool music green odorous twilights : and so, never lifting his head
To look up from the way he walked wearily, he to the House of his Pride
Reascended, and entered.

In cluster, high lamps, spices, odors, each side,
Burning inward and onward, from cinnamon ceilings, down distances vast
Of voluptuous vistas, illumined deep halls through whose silentness passed
King Solomon sighing ; where columns colossal stood, gathered in groves
As the trees of the forest in Libanus,—there where the wind, as it moves,
Whispers, “ I, too, am Solomon’s servant ! ”—huge trunks aid in garlands
of gold,

On whose tops the skilled sculptors of Sidon had granted men’s gaze to
behold

How the phoenix that sits on the cedar’s lone summit ’mid fragrance and fire,
Ever dying, and living, hath loaded with splendors her funeral pyre ;
How the stork builds her nest on the pine-top ; the date from the palm-
branch depends ;

And the aloe’s great blossom bursts, crowning with beauty the life that it
ends. [eyed,

And from hall on to hall, in the doors, mute, magnificent slaves, watchful-
Bowed to earth as King Solomon passed them. And, passing, King Solo-
mon sighed.

And, from hall on to hall pacing feebly, the king mused . . . “ O fair Shula-
mite !

Thy beauty is brighter than starlight on Hebron when Hebron is bright,
Thy sweetness is sweeter than Carmel. The King rules the nations ; but
thou,

Thou rulest the King, my Belovéd.”

So murmured King Solomon low

To himself, as he passed through the portal of porphyry, that dripped, as
he passed

From the myrrh-sprinkled wreaths on the locks and the lintels ; and en-
tered at last,

Still sighing, the sweet cedarn chamber, contrived for repose and delight,
Where the beautiful Shulamite slumbered. And straightway, to left and
to right,

Bowing down as he entered, the Spirits in bondage to Solomon, there
Keeping watch o’er his love, sank their swords, spread their wings, and
evanished in air.

The King with a kiss woke the sleeper. And, showing the fruit in his hand,
“ Behold ! this was brought me erewhile by one coming,” he said, “ from
the land

That lies under the sword of the Cherub. ’Twas pluckt by strange hands
from the Tree

Of whose fruit whoso tastes lives forever. And therefore I bring it to thee,
My Belovéd. For thou of the daughters of women art fairest. And lo,
I, the King, I that love thee, whom men of man’s sons have called wisest,
I know

That in knowledge is sorrow. Much thought is much care. In the beauty
of youth,

Not the wisdom of age, is enjoyment. Nor spring, is it sweeter, in truth,
Than winter to roses once withered. The garment, though broidered with
gold,

Fades apace where the moth frets the fibres. So I, in my glory, grow old.
And this life maketh mine (save the bliss of my soul in the beauty of thee)
No sweetness so great now that greatly unsweet 'twere to lose what to me
Life prolonged, at its utmost, can promise. But thine, O thou spirit of
bliss,

Thine is all that the living desire,—youth, beauty, love, joy in all this !
And O were it not well for the praise of the world to maintain evermore
This mould of a woman, God's masterwork, made for mankind to adore ?
Wherefore keep thou the gift I resign. Live forever, rejoicing in life !
And of women unborn yet the fairest shall still be King Solomon's wife.”
So he said, and so dropped in her bosom the apple.

But when he was gone,
And the beautiful Shulamite, eyeing the gift of the King, sat alone
With the thoughts the King's words had awakened, as ever she turned and
perused

The fruit that, alluring her lip, in her hand lay untasted—she mused,
“ Life is good ; but not life in itself. So is youth, so is beauty. Mere stuff
Are all these for Love's usance. To live, it is well ; but it is not enough.
Well, too, to be fair, to be young ; but what good is in beauty and youth
If the lovely and young are not surer than they that be neither, forsooth,
Young nor lovely, of being beloved ? O my love, if thou lovest not me,
Shall I love my own life ? Am I fair, if not fair, Azariah, to thee.”
Then she hid in her bosom the apple. And rose.

And, reversing the ring
That, inscribed with the word that works wonders, and signed with the
seal of the King,

Compels even spirits to obedience—(for she, for a plaything, erewhile
From King Solomon's awful forefinger, had won it away with a smile)—
The beautiful Shulamite folded her veil o'er her forehead and eyes,
And unseen from the sweet cedarn chamber, unseen through the long
galleries,

Unseen from the palace, she passed, and passed down to the city unseen,
Unseen passed the green garden wicket, the vineyard, the cypresses green,
And stood by the doors of the house of the Prince Azariah. And cried,
In the darkness she cried,—“ Azariah, awaken ! ope, ope to me wide
Ope the door, ope the lattice ! Arise ! Let me in, O my love ! It is I.
I, the bride of King Solomon, love thee. Love, tarry not. Love, shall I
die

At thy doors ? I am sick of desire. For my love is more comely than
gold.

More precious to me is my love than the throne of a king that is old.
Behold, I have passed through the city, unseen of the watchmen. I stand
By the doors of the house of my love, till my love lead me in by the hand.”
Azariah arose. And unbolted the door to the fair Shulamite.

“ O my queen, what dear folly is this, that hath led thee alone, and by
night,

To the house of King Solomon's servant? For lo you, the watchmen awake.

And much for my own, O my queen, must I fear, and much more for thy sake.

For at that which is done in the chamber the leek on the house-top shall peep :

And the hand of a king it is heavy : the eyes of a king never sleep :
But the bird of the air beareth news to the king, and the stars of the sky
Are as soldiers by night on the turrets. I fear, O my queen, lest we die."
"Fear thou not, O my love! Azariah, fear nothing. For lo, what I bring !

'Tis the fruit of the Tree that in Paradise God hideth under the wing
Of the Cherub that chased away Adam. And whoso this apple doth eat
Shall live—live forever! And since unto me my own life is less sweet
Than thy love, Azariah, (sweet only my life is if thou lovest me!)
Therefore eat! Live, and love, for life's sake, still, the love that gives
life unto thee!"

Then she held to his lips the life-apple, and kissed him.

But soon as alone,
Azariah leaned out from his lattice, he muttered, "'Tis well! She is gone."

While the fruit in his hand lay untasted. "Such visits," he mused, "may cost dear.

In the love of the great is great danger, much trouble, and care more than cheer."

Then he laughed and stretched forth his strong arms. For he heard from the streets of the city

The song of the women that sing in the doors after dark their love ditty.
And the clink of the wine-cup, the voice of the wanton, the tripping of feet,

And the laughter of youths running after, allured him. And "*Life, it is sweet*

While it lasts," sang the women, "*and sweeter the good minute, in that it goes.*

For who, if the rose bloomed forever, so greatly would care for the rose? Wherefore haste! pluck the time in the blossom." The prince mused, "The counsel is well."

And the fruit to his lips he uplifted : yet paused. "Who is he that can tell

What his days shall bring forth? Life forever . . . But what sort of life? Ah, the doubt!"

'Neath his cloak then he thrust back the apple. And opened the door and passed out

To the house of the harlot Egyptian. And mused, as he went, "Life is good :

But not life in itself. It is well while the wine-cup is hot in the blood,
And a man goeth whither he listeth, and doeth the thing that he will,
And liveth his life as he lusteth, and taketh in freedom his fill
Of the pleasure that pleaseth his humor, and feareth no snare by the way.
I shall I care to be loved by a queen, if my pride with my freedom I pay?

Better far is a handful in quiet than both hands, though filled to o'erflow
With pride, in vexation of spirit. And sweeter the roses that blow
From the wild seeds the wind, where he wanders, with heedless benefi-
cence flings,

Than those that are guarded by dragons to brighten the gardens of kings.
Let a man take his chance, and be happy. The hart by the hunter pur-
sued,

That far from the herd on the hill-top bounds swift through the blue
solitude,

Is more to be envied, though Death with his dart follow fast to destroy,
Than the tame beast that, pent in the paddock, tastes neither the danger
nor joy

Of the mountain, and all its surprises. The main thing is, not to live
long,

But to *live*. Better moments of rapture soon ended than ages of wrong.
Life's feast is best spiced by the flavor of death in it. Just the one chance
To lose it to-morrow the life that a man lives to-day doth enhance.

The may-be for me, not the must-be ! Best flourish while flourish the
flowers,

And fall ere the frost falls. The dead, do they rest or arise with new
powers ?

Either way, well for them. Mine, meanwhile, be the cup of life's fulness
to-night.

And to-morrow . . . Well, time to consider" (he felt at the fruit).
"What delight

Of his birthright had Esau, when hungry ? To-day with its pottage is
sweet.

For a man cannot feed and be full on the faith of to-morrow's baked
meat.

Open ! open, my dark-eyed beguiler of darkness.

Up rose to his knock,
Light of foot, the lascivious Egyptian, and lifted the latch from the lock,
And opened. And led in the prince to her chamber, and shook out her
hair,

Dark, heavy, and humid with odors ; her bosom beneath it laid bare,
And sleek fallow shoulder ; and sloped back her face, as, when falls the
slant South

In wet whispers of rain, flowers bend back to catch it ; so she, with shut
mouth

Half-unfolded for kisses ; and sank, as they fell, 'twixt his knees, with a
laugh,

On the floor, in a flood of deep hair flung behind her full throat ; held him
half

Aloof with one large, languid arm, while the other uppropped, where she
Limbs flowing in fulness and lucid in surface as waters at play,

Though in firmness as slippery marble. Anon she sprang loose from his
clasp,

And whirled from the table a flagon of silver twined round by an asp
That glittered,—rough gold and red rubies ; and poured him, and praised
him, the wine

Wherewith she first brightened the moist lip that lured, "Ha, fool!
art thou mine?"

I am thine. This will last for an hour." Then, humming strange words
of a song,

Sung by maidens in Memphis the old, when they bore the Crowned Image
along,

Apples yellow and red from a basket with vine-leaves o'erlaid she 'gan take,
And played with, peeled, tost them, and caught them, and bit them, for
idleness' sake;

But the rinds on the floor she flung from her, and laughed at the figures
they made,

As her foot pusht them this way and that way together. And "Look,
fool," she said,

"It is all sour fruit, this! But those I fling from me,—see here by the
stain!—

Shall carry the mark of my teeth in their flesh. Could they feel but the
pain,

O my soul, how these teeth should go through them! Fool, fool, what
good gift dost thou bring?

For thee have I sweetened with cassia my chambers." "A gift for a king,"
Azariah laughed loud; and tost to her the apple. "This comes from the
Tree

Of whose fruit whoso tastes lives forever. I care not. I give it to thee.
Nay, witch! 'tis worth more than the shekels of gold thou hast charmed
from my purse.

Take it. Eat, and thank me for the meal, witch! for Eve, thy sly mother,
fared worse,

O thou white-toothéd taster of apples?" "Thou liest, fool!" "Taste,
then, and try.

For the truth of the fruit's in the eating. 'Tis thou art the serpent, not I."
And the strong man laughed loud as he pushed at her lip the life-apple.

She caught
And held it away from her, musing; and muttered . . . "Go to! It is
naught.

Fool, why dost thou laugh?" And he answered, "Because, witch, it
tickles my brain

Intensely to think that all we, that be Something while yet we remain,
We, the princes of people,—ay, even the King's self,—shall die in our day,
And thou, that art Nothing, shalt sit on our graves, with our grandsons.
and play."

So he said, and laughed louder.

But when, in the gray of the dawn, he was gone,
And the wan light waxed large in the window, as she on her bed sat
alone,

With the fruit that, alluring her lip, in her hand lay untasted, perusing,
Perplexed, the gay gift of the Prince, the dark woman thereat fell a musing,
And she thought . . . "What is Life without Honor? And what can the
life that I live

Give to me, I shall care to continue, not caring for aught it can give?
I, despising the fools that despise me,—a plaything not pleasing myself,—
Whose life, for the pelf that maintains it, must sell what is paid not by
pelf!

I? . . . the man called me Nothing. He said well. 'The great in their glory must go.'
 And why should I linger, whose life leadeth nowhere?—a life which I know
 To name is to shame—struck, unsexed, by the world from its list of the lives
 Of the women whose womanhood, saved, gets them leave to be mothers and wives.
 And the fancies of men change. And bitterly bought is the bread that I eat;
 For, though purchased with body and spirit, when purchased 'tis yet all unsweet."
 Her tears fell: they fell on the apple. She sighed . . . "Sour fruit, like the rest!
 Let it go with the salt tears upon it. Yet life . . . it were sweet if possessed
 In the power thereof, and the beauty. 'A gift for a king' . . . did he say?
 Ay, a king's life is a life as it should be,—a life like the light of the day, Wherein all that liveth rejoiceth. For is not the King as the sun That shineth in heaven and seemeth both heaven and itself all in one? Then to whom may this fruit, the life-giver, be worthily given? Not me. Nor the fool Azariah that sold it for folly. The King! only he,— Only he hath the life that's worth living forever. Whose life, not alone Is the life of the King, but the life of the many made mighty in one. To the King will I carry this apple. And he (for the hand of a king Is a fountain of hope) in his handmaid shall honor the gift that I bring. And men for this deed shall esteem me, with Rahab by Israel praised, As first among those who, though lowly, their shame into honor have raised:
 Such honor as lasts when life goes, and, while life lasts, shall lift it above What, if loved by the many I loathe, must be loathed by the few I could love."

So she rose, and went forth through the city. And with her the apple she bore
 In her bosom: and stood 'mid the multitude, waiting therewith in the door
 Of the hall where the King, to give judgment, ascended at morning his throne:
 And, kneeling there, cried, "Let the King live forever! Behold, I am one
 Whom the vile of themselves count the vilest. But great is the grace of my lord.
 And now let my lord on his handmaid look down, and give ear to her word."
 Thereat, in the witness of all, she drew forth, and (uplifting her head) Showed the Apple of Life, which who tastes, tastes not death. "And this apple," she said,
 "Last night was delivered to me, that thy servant should eat, and not die. But I said to the soul of thy servant, 'Not so. For behold, what am I?"



“AND, KNEELING THERE, CRIED, ‘LET THE KING LIVE FOREVER!’”¹²⁹

That the King, in his glory and gladness, should cease from the light of the sun,
 Whiles I, that am least of his slaves, in my shame and abasement live on.'
 For not sweet is the life of thy servant, unless to thy servant my lord
 Stretch his hand, and show favor. For surely the frown of a king is a
 sword,
 But the smile of the King is as honey that flows from the clefs of the
 rock,
 And his grace is as dew that from Horeb descends on the heads of the
 flock :
 In the King is the heart of a host : the King's strength is an army of men .
 And the wrath of the King is a lion that roareth by night from his den :
 But as grapes from the vines of En-Gedi are favors that fall from his
 hands,
 And as towers on the hill-tops of Shenir the throne of King Solomon
 stands.
 And for this, it were well that forever the King, who is many in one,
 Should sit, to be seen through all time, on a throne 'twixt the moon and
 the sun !
 For how shall one lose what he hath not ? Who hath, let him keep what
 he hath.
 Wherefore I to the King give this apple."

Then great was King Solomon's wrath.

And he rose, rent his garment, and cried, "Woman, whence came this
 apple to thee ?"
 But when he was 'ware of the truth, then his heart was awakened. And he
 Knew at once that the man who, erewhile, unawared coming to him, had
 brought
 That Apple of Life was, indeed, GOD's good Angel of Death. And he
 thought
 "In mercy, I doubt not, when man's eyes were opened, and made to see
 plain
 All the wrong in himself, and the wretchedness, GOD sent to close them
 again
 For man's sake, his last friend upon earth—Death, the servant of GOD, who
 is just.
 Let man's spirit to Him whence it cometh return, and his dust to the
 dust !"

Then the Apple of Life did King Solomon seal in an urn that was signed
 With the sea of Oblivion : and summoned the Spirits that walk in the
 wind
 Unseen on the summits of mountains, where never the eagle yet flew ;
 And these he commanded to bear far away,—out of reach, out of view,
 Out of hope, out of memory,—higher than Ararat buildeth his throne,
 In the Urn of Oblivion the Apple of Life.

But on green jasper-stone

Did the King write the story thereof for instruction. And Enoch, the seer,
 Coming afterward, searched out the meaning. And he that hath ears, let
 him hear.

THE WANDERER.

DEDICATION.

To J. F.

As, in the laurel's murmurous leaves
'Twas fabled, once, a Virgin dwelt;
Within the poet's page yet heaves
The poet's Heart, and loves or grieves
Or triumphs, as it felt.

A human spirit here records
The annals of its human strife.
A human hand hath touched these
chords.
These songs may all be idle words :
And yet—they once were life.

I gave my harp to Memory.
She sung of hope, when hope was
young,
Of youth, as youth no more may be;
And, since she sung of youth, to
thee,
Friend of my youth, she sung.

For all youth seeks, all manhood
needs,
All youth and manhood rarely
find :
A strength more strong than codes
or creeds,
In lofty thoughts and lovely deeds
Revealed to heart and mind ;

A staff to stay, a star to guide ;
A spell to soothe, a power to raise ;
A faith by fortune firmly tried ;
A judgment resolute to preside
O'er days at strife with days.

O large in lore, in nature sound !
O man to me, of all men, dear !
All these in thine my life hath found,
And force to tread the rugged ground
Of daily toil, with cheer.

Accept—not these, the broken cries
Of days receding far from me—
But all the love that in them lies,
The man's heart in the melodies,
The man's heart honoring thee !

Sighing I sung ; for some sublime
Emotion made my music jar :
The forehead of this restless time
Pales in a fervid, passionate clime,
Lit by a changeful star ;

And o'er the Age's threshold, traced
In characters of hectic fire,
The name of that keen, fervent-faced
And toiling seraph, hath been placed
Which men have called Desire.

But thou art strong where, even of
old,
The old heroic strength was rare ;
In high emotions self-controlled,
And insight keen, but never cold,
To lay all falsehood bare ;

Despising all those glittering lies
Which in these days can fool man-
kind ;
But full of noble sympathies
For what is genuinely wise,
And beautiful, and kind.

And thou wilt pardon all the touch
Of weakness which doth here
abound,
Till music, little prized as such,
Wit and thee find worth from one true
touch
Of nature in its sound.

Though mighty spirits are no more,
Yet spirits of beauty still remain.
Gone is the Seer that, by the shore
Of lakes as limpid as his lore,
Lived to one ceaseless strain

And strenuous melody of mind.
But one there rests that hath the
power [bind
To charm the midnight moon, and
All spirits of the sweet south-wind,
And steal from every shower

That sweeps green England cool and
clear.
The violet of tender song.
Great Alfred ! long may England's
ear
His music fill, his name be dear
To English bosoms long !

And one . . . in sacred silence
sheathed
That name I keep, my verse would
shame.
The name my lips in prayer first
breathed
Was his : and prayer hath yet be-
queathed
Its silence to that name ;—

Which yet an age remote shall hear,
Borne on the fourfold wind sub-
lime
B. Where, where, with some faded
year
These songs shall sink, like leaflets
sere,
In avenues of Time.

Love on my harp his finger lays ;
His hand is held against the
chords.
My heart upon the music weighs,
And, beating, hushes foolish praise
From desultory words :

And Childhood steals, with wistful
grace,
'Twixt him and me ; an infant
hand [chase
Chides gently back the thoughts that
The forward hour, and turns my
face
To that remembered land

Of legend, and the Summer sky,
And all the wild Welsh waterfalls,
And haunts where he, and thou,
and I
Once wandered with the wandering
Wye,
And scaled the airy walls

Of Chepstow, from whose ancient
height
We watched the liberal sun go
down ; [night,
Then onward, through the gradual
Till, ere the moon was fully bright,
We supped in Monmouth Town.

And though, dear friend, thy love
retains
The choicest sons of song in fee,
To thee not less I pour these strains,
Knowing that in thy heart remains
A little place for me.

Nor wilt thou all forget the time
Though it be past, in which to-
gether,
On many an eve, with many a rhyme
Of old and modern bards sublime
We soothed the summer weather :

And, citing all he said or sung
With praise reserved for bards like
him,
Spake of that friend who dwells
among
The Apennine, and there hath strung
A harp of Anakim ;

Than whom a mightier master never
Touched the deep chords of hid-
den things ;
Nor error did from truth dis sever
With keener glance ; nor made en-
deavor
To rise on bolder wings

In those high regions of the soul
 Where thought itself grows dim
 with awe.
 But now the star of eve hath stole
 Through the deep sunset, and the
 whole
 Of heaven begins to draw
 FLORENCE, September 24, 1857.

The darkness round me, and the
 dew.
 And my pale Muse doth fold her
 eyes.
 Adieu, my friend ; my guide, adieu!
 May never night, 'twixt me and you,
 With thoughts less fond arise !
 THE AUTHOR.

PROLOGUE.

PART I.

SWEET are the rosy memories of the
 lips,
 That first kissed ours, albeit they
 kiss no more :
 Sweet is the sight of sunset-sailing
 ships,
 Although they leave us on a lonely
 shore :
 Sweet are familiar songs, though
 Music dips
 Her hollow shell in Thought's for-
 lornest wells :
 And sweet, though sad, the sound
 of midnight bells,
 When the oped casement with the
 night-rain drips.
 There is a pleasure which is born of
 pain :
 The grave of all things hath its
 violet.
 Else why, through days which never
 come again,
 I jams Hope with that strange
 longing, like Regret ?
 Why put the posy in the cold dead
 hand ?
 Why plant the rose above the
 lonely grave ?
 Why bring the corpse across the
 salt sea-wave ?
 Why deem the dead more near in
 native land ? life
 Thy name hath been a silence in my
 So long, it falters upon language
 now,

O more to me than sister or than
 wife
 Once . . . and now—nothing ! It
 is hard to know
 That such things have been, and are
 not, and yet
 Life loiters, keeps a pulse at even
 measure,
 And goes upon its business and its
 pleasure,
 And knows not all the depths of its
 regret.
 Thou art not in thy picture, O my
 friend !
 The years are sad and many since
 I saw thee,
 And seem with me to have survived
 their end.
 Far otherwise than thus did mem-
 ory draw thee
 I ne'er shall know thee other than
 thou wast.
 Yet save, indeed, the same sad
 eyes of old,
 And that abundant hair's warm
 silken gold,
 Thou art changed, if this be like the
 look thou hast.
 Changed ! There the epitaph of all
 the years
 Was sounded ! I am changed too.
 Let it be.
 Yet it is sad to know my latest tears
 Were faithful to a memory,—not
 to thee.

Nothing is left us ! nothing—save
the soul.

Yet even the immortal in us alters
too.

Who is it his old sensations can
renew ?

Slowly the seas are changed. Slow
ages roll

The mountains to a level. Nature
sleeps,

And dreams her dream, and to
new work awakes

After a hundred years are in the
deeps.

But Man is changed before a
wrinkle breaks

The brow's sereneness, or the curls
are gray.

We stand within the flux of sense:
the near

And far change place : and we see
nothing clear.

That's false to-morrow which was
true to-day.

Ah, could the memory cast her spots,
as do

The snake's brood theirs in spring!
and be once more

Wholly renewed, to dwell i' the time
that's new,

With no reiteration of those pangs
of yore.

Peace, peace ! My wild song will go
wandering

Too wantonly, down paths a pri-
vate pain

Hath trodden bare. What was it
jarred the strain ?

Some crush'd illusion, left with crum-
pled wing

Tangled in Music's web of twin'd
strings—

That started that false note, and
cracked the tune

In its beginning. Ah, forgotten
things

Stumble back strangely ! And the
ghost of June

Stands by December's fire, cold, cold !
and puts

The last spark out.

How could I sing aright

With those old airs haunting me all
the night

And those old steps that sound when
daylight shuts ?

For back she comes, and moves re-
proachfully,

The mistress of my moods, and
looks bereft

(Cruel to the last !) as though 'twere
I, not she,

That did the wrong, and broke the
spell, and left

Memory comfortless.

Away ! away !

Phantoms, about whose brows the
bindweed clings,

Hopeless regret !

In thinking of these things

Some men have lost their minds,
and others may.

Yet, O, for one deep draught in this
dull hour !

One deep, deep draught of the de-
parted time ;

O, for one brief strong pulse of an-
cient power,

To beat and breathe through all
the valves of rhyme !

Thou, Memory, with the downward
eyes, that art

The cupbearer of gods, pour deep
and long,

Brim all the vacant chalices of
song

With health ! Droop down thine
urn.

I hold my heart.

One draught of what I shall not
taste again,

Save when my brain with thy dark
wine is brimmed,—

One draught ! and then straight on-
ward, spite of pain,

And spite of all things changed,
with gaze undimmed,

Love's footsteps through the waning
 Past to explore
 Undaunted ; and to carve, in the
 wan light
 Of Hope's last outposts, on Song's
 utmost height
 The sad resemblance of an hour no
 more.

Midnight, and love, and youth, and
 Italy !
 Love in the land where love most
 lovely seems !
 Land of my love, though I be far
 from thee,
 Lend, for love's sake, the light of
 thy moonbeams,
 The spirit of thy cypress-groves, and
 all
 Thy dark-eyed beauty, for a little
 while
 To my desire. Yet once more let
 her smile
 Fall o'er me : o'er me let her long
 hair fall,

The lady of my life, whose lovely
 eyes
 Dreaming, or waking, lure me. I
 shall know her
 By Love's own planet o'er her in the
 skies,
 And Beauty's blossom in the grass
 below her !
 Dreaming, or waking, in her soft,
 sad gaze
 Let my heart bathe, as on that
 fated night
 I saw her, when my life took in
 the sight
 Of her sweet face for all its nights
 and days.

Her winsome head was bare : and
 she had twined
 Through its rich curls wild red
 anemones ;
 One stream of her soft hair strayed
 unconfined
 Down her ripe cheek, and shad-
 owed her deep eyes.

The bunch of sword-grass fell from
 her loose hand.
 Her modest foot beneath its snowy
 skirt
 Peeped, and the golden daisy was
 not hurt.
 Stately, yet slight, she stood, as fai-
 ies stand.

Under the blessed darkness unre-
 proved
 We were alone, in that blest hour
 of time,
 Which first revealed to us how much
 we loved,
 'Neath the thick starlight. The
 young night sublime
 Hung trembling o'er us. At her
 feet I knelt,
 And gazed up from her feet into
 her eyes.
 Her face was bowed : we breathed
 each other's sighs :
 We did not speak : not move : we
 looked : we felt.

The night said not a word. The
 breeze was dead.
 The leaf lay without whispering
 on the tree,
 As I lay at her feet. Droopt was her
 head :
 One hand in mine : and one still
 pensively
 Went wandering through my hair.
 We were together.
 How ? Where ? What matter ?
 Somewhere in a dream,
 Drifting, slow drifting, down a
 wizard stream :
 Whither ? Together : then wha
 matter whither ?

It was enough for me to clasp her
 hand :
 To blend with her love-looks my
 own : no more.
 Enough (with thoughts like ships
 that cannot land,
 Blown by faint winds about a
 magic shore)

To realize, in each mysterious feeling,
 The droop of the warm cheek so near my own :
 The cool white arm about my shoulder thrown :
 Those exquisite frail feet, where I was kneeling.

How little know they life's divinest bliss,
 That know not to possess and yet refrain !

Let the young Psyche roam, a fleeting kiss :—

Grasp it—a few poor grains of dust remain.

See how those floating flowers, the butterflies,

Hover the garden through, and take no root !

Desire forever hath a flying foot.

Free pleasure comes and goes beneath the skies.

Close not thy hand upon the innocent joy

That trusts itself within thy reach.

It may,

Or may not, linger. Thou canst but destroy

The winged wanderer. Let it go or stay.

Love thou the rose, yet leave it on its stem.

Think ! Midas starved by turning all to gold.

Blesséd are those that spare, and that withhold.

Because the whole world shall be trusted then.

The foolish Faun pursues the unwilling Nymph

That culls her flowers beside the precipice,

Or dips her shining ankles in the lymph :

But, just when she must perish or be his,

Heaven puts an arm out. She is safe. The shore

12

Gains some new fountain ; or the lilled lawn

A rarer sort of rose : but, ah, poor Faun !

To thee she shall be changed forevermore.

Chase not too close the fading rapture. Leave [see].

To Love his long auroras, slowly Be ready to release, as to receive.

Deem those the nearest, soul to soul, between

Whose lips yet lingers reverence on a sigh.

Judge what thy sense can reach not, most thine own,

If once thy soul hath seized it. The unknown

Is life to love, religion, poetry.

The moon had set. There was not any light,

Save of the lonely legioned watch-stars pale [bright

In outer air, and what by fits made Hot oleanders in a rosy vale

Searched by the lamping fly, whose little spark

Went in and out, like passion's bashful hope.

Meanwhile the sleepy globe began to slope

A ponderous shoulder sunward through the dark.

And the night passed in beauty like a dream.

Aloof in these dark heavens paused Destiny,

With her last star descending in the gleam

Of the cold morrow, from the emptied sky.

The hour, the distance from her old self, all

The novelty and loneliness of the place,

Had left a lovely awe on that fair face,

And all the land grew strange and magical.

As droops some billowing cloud to
 the crouched hill,
 Heavy with all heaven's tears, for
 all earth's care,
 She drooped unto me, without force
 or will,
 And sank upon my bosom, mur-
 muring there,
 A woman's inarticulate, passionate
 words. | earth!
 O moment of all moments upon
 O life's supreme! How worth,
 how wildly worth,
 Whole worlds of flame, to know this
 world affords

What even Eternity cannot restore!
 When all the ends of life take
 hands, and meet
 Round centres of sweet fire. Ah,
 never more,
 Ah never, shall the bitter with the
 sweet
 Be mingled so in the pale after-
 years!
 One hour of life immortal spirits
 possess.
 This drains the world, and leaves
 but weariness,
 And parching passion, and perplex-
 ing tears.

Sad is it, that we cannot even keep
 That hour to sweeten life's last
 toil: but Youth
 Grasps all, and leaves us: and, when
 we would weep,
 We dare not let our tears flow
 lest, in truth,
 They fall upon our work which must
 be done.
 And so we bind up our torn hearts
 from breaking:
 Our eyes from weeping, and our
 brows from aching:
 And follow the long pathway all
 alone.

O moment of sweet peril, perilous
 sweet!
 When woman joins herself to man;
 and man

Assumes the full-lived woman, to
 complete
 The end of life, since human life
 began!
 When in the perfect bliss of union,
 Body and soul triumphant rapture
 claim,
 When there's a spirit in blood, in
 spirit a flame,
 And earth's lone hemispheres glow,
 fused in one!

Rare moment of rare peril! . . . The
 bard's song,
 The mystic's musings fancy. Did
 there ever
 Two perfect souls, in perfect forms,
 belong
 Perfectly to each other? Never,
 never!
 Perilous were such moments, for a
 touch
 Might mar their clear perfection.
 Exquisite
 Even for the peril of their frail de-
 light.
 Such things man feigns: such seeks:
 but finds not such.

No! for 'tis in ourselves our love
 doth grow:
 And, when our love is fully risen
 within us,
 Round the first object doth it over-
 flow,
 Which, be it fair or foul, is sure to
 win us
 Out of ourselves. We clothe with
 our own nature
 The man or woman its first want
 doth find.
 The leafless prop with our own
 buds we bind,
 And hide in blossoms: fill the empty
 feature
 With our own meanings: even prize
 defects
 Which keep the mark of our own
 choice upon
 The chosen: bless each fault whose
 spot protects

Our choice from possible confusion
 With the world's other creatures :
 we believe them
 What most we wish, the more we
 find they are not :
 Our choice once made, with our
 own choice we war not :
 We worship them for what ourselves
 we give them.

Doubt is this otherwise. . . . When
 fate removes
 The unworthy one from our re-
 luctant arms,
 We die with that lost love to other
 loves,
 And turn to its defects from other
 charms.
 And nobler forms, where moved
 those forms, may move
 With lingering looks : our cold
 farewells we wave them.
 We loved our lost loves for the
 love we gave them,
 And not for anything they gave our
 love.

Old things return not as they were
 in Time.
 Trust nothing to the recompense
 of Chance,
 Which deals with novel forms. This
 falling rhyme
 Fails from the flowery steeps of
 old romance,
 Down that abyss which Memory
 droops above,
 And, gazing out of hopelessness
 down there,
 I see the shadow creep through
 Youth's gold hair
 And white Death watching over red-
 lipped Love.

PART II.

THE soul lives on. What lives on
 with the soul ?
 Glimpses of something better than
 her best ;

Truer than her truest : motion to a
 pole
 Beyond the zones of this orb's dim-
 ness guest :
 And (since life dies not with the first
 dead bliss)
 Blind notions of some meaning
 moved through time,
 Some purpose in the deeps of the
 sublime,
 That stirs a pulse here, could we find
 out this.

Visions and noises rouse us. I dis-
 cern
 Even in change some comfort, O
 Beloved !
 Suns rise and set ; stars vanish and
 return ;
 But never quite the same. And
 life is moved
 Toward new experience. Every eve
 and morn
 Descends and springs with increase
 on the world.
 And what is death but life in this
 life furled ?
 The outward cracks, the inward life
 is born.

Friends pass beyond the borders of
 this Known,
 And draw our thoughts up after
 them. We say
 "They are : but their relations now
 are done
 With Nature, and the plan of night
 and day."
 If never mortal man from this world's
 light
 Did pass away to that surrounding
 gloom,
 'Twere well to doubt the life be-
 yond the tomb ;
 But now is Truth's dark side revealed
 to sight.

Father of spirits ! Thine all secrets
 be.
 I bless Thee for the light Thou
 hast revealed,

And that Thou hidest. Part of me
I see,
And part of me Thy wisdom hath
concealed,
That the new life divulge it. Lord,
imbuë me
With will to work in this diurnal
sphere,
Knowing myself my life's day-lab-
orer here,
Where evening brings the day's
work's wages to me.

I work my work. All its results are
Thine.
I know the loyal deed becomes a
fact,
Which Thou wilt deal with : nor will
I repine
Although I miss the value of the
act.
Thou carest for the creatures : and
the end
Thou seest. The world unto Thy
hands I leave :
And to Thy hands my life. I will
not grieve
Because I know not all Thou dost in-
tend.

Something I know. Oft, shall it
come about
When every heart is full with hope
for man
The horizon straight is darkened,
and a doubt
Clouds all. The work the world
so well began
Wastes down, and by some deed of
shame is finished.
Ah ! yet, I will not be dismayed :
yet though
The good cause flourish fair, and
Freedom flow
All round, my watch beyond shall
be diminished.

What seemed the triumph of the
Fiend at length
Might be the effort of some dying
Devil,

Permitted to put forth his fullest
strength
To lose it all forever. While, the
evil
Whose cloven crest our pæans float
above
Might have been less than what
unnoticed lies
'Neath our rejoicings. Which of
us is wise ?
We know not what we mourn : nor
why we love.

But teach me, O Omnipotent, since
strife,
Sorrow, and pain are but occur-
rences
Of that condition through which
flows my life,
Not part of me, the immortal,
whom distress
Cannot retain, to vex not thought
for these :
But to be patient, bear, forbear,
restrain,
And hold my spirit pure above my
pain.
No star that looks through life's dark
lattices,

But what gives token of a world
elsewhere.
I bless Thee for the loss of all
things here
Which proves the gain to be : the
hand of Care
That shades the eyes from earth,
and beckons near
The rest which sweetens all : the
shade Time throws
On Love's pale countenance, that
he may gaze
Across Eternity for better days
Unblinded ; and the wisdom of all
woes :

I bless Thee for the life Thou gavest,
albeit
It hath known sorrow : for the sor-
row's self
I bless Thee ; and the gift of wings
to flee it,

Led by this spirit of song,—this
 ministering elf,
 That to sweet uses doth unwind my
 pain,
 And spin his palace out of poison-
 flowers,
 To float, an impulse, through the
 livelong hours,
 From sky to sky, on Fancy's glitter-
 ing skein.

Aid me, sweet Spirit, escaping from
 the throng
 Of those that raise the Corybantic
 shout,
 And barbarous, dissonant cymbal's
 clash prolong,
 In fear lest any hear the God cry
 out,
 Now that the night resumes her
 bleak retreat
 In these dear lands, footing the
 unwandered waste
 Of Loss, to walk in Italy, and
 taste
 A little while of what was once so
 sweet.

PART III.

NURSE of an ailing world, beloved
 Night!

Our days are fretful children, weak
 to bear

△ little pain : they wrangle, wound,
 and fight

Each other, weep, and sicken, and
 despair.

Thou, with thy motherly hand that
 healeth care,

Stillest our little noise : rebukest
 one,

Soothest another : blamest tasks
 undone :

Refreshest jaded hope ; and teachest
 prayer.

'Thine is the mother's sweet hush-
 hush, that stills

The flutterings of a plaintive heart
 to rest.

'Thine is the mother's medicining
 hand that fills

Sleep's opiate : thine the mother's
 patient breast :

Thine, too, the mother's mute re-
 proachful eyes,

That gently look our angry noise
 to shame

When all is done : we dare not
 meet their blame :

They are so silent, and they are so
 wise.

Thou that from this lone casement,
 while I write,

Seen in the shadowy upspring,
 swift dost post

Without a sound the polar star to
 light,

Not idly did the Chaldee shepherds
 boast

By thy stern lights man's life aright
 to read.

All day he hides himself from his
 own heart,

Swaggers and struts, and plays his
 foolish part :

Thou only seest him as he is indeed.

For who could feign false worth, or
 give the nod

Among his fellows, or this dust
 disown,

With naught between him and those
 lights of God,

Left awfully alone with the Alone ?

Who vaunt high words, whose least
 heart's beating jars

The hush of sentinel worlds that
 take mute note

Of all beneath yon judgment
 plains remote ?—

A universal cognizance of stars !

And yet, O gentlest angel of the
 Lord !

Thou ledest by the hand the
 artisan

Away from work. Thou bringest,
 on ship-board,

When gleam the dead-lights, to the
 lonely man

That turns the wheel, a blessed
memory
Of apple-blossoms, and the moun-
tain vales
About his little cottage in Green
Wales,
Miles o'er the ridges of the rolling
sea.

Thou bearest divine forgiveness
amongst men.
Relenting Anger pauses by the bed
Where Sleep looks so like Death.
The absent then
Return; and Memory beckons
back the dead,
Thou helpest home (thy balmy hand
it is!)
The hard-worked husband to the
pale-cheeked wife,
And hushes up the poor day's
household strife
On marriage pillows, with a good-
night kiss.

Thou bringest to the wretched and
forlorn
Woman, that down the glimmer-
ing by-street hovers,
A dream of better days: the gleam
of corn
About her father's field, and her
first lover's
Grave, long forgotten in the green
churchyard:
Voices, long-stilled, from purer
hours, before
The rushlight, Hope, went out;
and, through the door
Of the lone garret, when the nights
were hard,

Hunger, the wolf, put in his paw,
and found her
Sewing the winding-sheet of
Youth, alone;
And griped away the last cold com-
forts round her:—
Her little bed; the mean clothes
she had on:
Her mother's picture—the sole saint
the knew:

Till nothing else was left for the
last crust
But the poor body, and the heart's
young trust
In its own courage: and so these
went too.

Home from the heated Ball flushed
Beauty stands,
Musing beside her costly couch
alone:
But while she loosens, faint, with
jewelled hands,
The diamonds from her dark hair.
one by one,
Thou whisperest in her empty heart
the name
Of one that died heart-broken for
her sake
Long since, and all at once the
coiled hell-snake
Turns stinging in his egg, — and
pomp is shame.

Thou comest to the man of many
pleasures
Without a joy, that, soulless, plays
for souls,
Whose life's a squandered heap of
plundered treasures,
While, listless loitering by, the
moment rolls
From nothing on to nothing. From
the shelf
Perchance he takes a cynic book.
Perchance
A dead flower stains the leaves.
The old romance
Returns. Ere morn, perchance, he
shoots himself.

Thou comest, with a touch of scorn,
to me,
That o'er the broken wine-cup of
my youth
Sit brooding here, and pointest
silently
To thine unchanging stars. Yes!
yes! in truth,
They seem more reachless now than
when of yore

Above the promised land I watch
 them shine,
 And all among their cryptic ser-
 pentine
 Went climbing Hope, new planets to
 explore.

Not for the flesh that fades — al-
 though decay

This thronged metropolis of sense
 o'erspread :

No! for the joys of youth, that fleet
 away

When the wise swallows to the
 south are fled ;

Not that, beneath the law which
 fades the flower,

An earthly hope should wither in
 the cells

Of this poor earthly house of life,
 where dwells

Unseen the solitary Thinking-
 Power ;

But that where fades the flower the
 weed should flourish ;

For all the baffled efforts to achieve
 The imperishable from the things
 that perish,

For broken vows, and weakened
 will, I grieve.

Knowing that night of all is creeping
 on

Wherein can no man work, I
 sorrow most

For what is gained, and not for
 what is lost ;

Nor mourn alone what's undone,
 but what's done.

What light, from yonder windless
 cloud released,

Is widening up the peaks of yon
 black hills ?

It is the full moon in the mystic
 east,

Whose coming half the the un-
 ravished darkness fills

Till all among the ribbed light
 cloudlets pale,

From shore to shore in sapphire
 deeds divine,

The orbéd splendor seems to slide
 and shine
 Aslope the roling vapors in the vale.

Abroad the stars' majestic light is
 flung,

And they fade brightening up the
 steps of Night.

Cold mysteries of the midnight !
 that, among

The sleeps and pauses of this
 world, in sight,

Reveal a doubtful hope to wild De-
 sire ;

Which, hungering for the sources
 of the suns,

Makes moan beyond the blue Sep-
 tentrions,

And spidery Saturn in his webs of
 fire ;

Whether the unconscious destinies of
 man

Move with the motions of your
 spheréd lights,

And his brief course, foredoomed
 ere he began,

Your shining symbols fixed in
 reachless heights,

Or whether all the purpose of his
 pain

Be shut in his wild heart and
 feverish will,

He knows no more than this :—
 that you are still,

But he is moved : he goes, but you
 remain.

Fooled was the human vanity that
 wrote

Strange names in astral fire on
 yonder pole.

Who and what were they—in what
 age remote—

That scrawled weak boasts on yon
 sidereal scroll ?

Orion shines. Now seek for Nim-
 rod. Where ?

Osiris is a fable, and no more :
 But Sirius burns as brightly as of
 yore.

There is no shade on Berenice's hair.

You that outlast the Pyramids, as they
 Outlast their founders, tell us of
 our doom !
 You that see love depart, and Error
 stray,
 And Genius toiling at a splendid
 tomb,
 Like those Egyptian slaves : and
 Hope deceived :
 And strength still failing when the
 goal is near :
 And Passion parcht : and Rapture
 claspt to Fear :
 And Trust betrayed : and Memory
 bereaved !

Vain question ! Shall some other
 voice declare
 What my soul knows not of her-
 self? Ah no !
 Dumb patient Monster, grieving
 everywhere,
 Thou answerest nothing which I
 did not know.
 The broken fragments of ourselves
 we seek
 In alien forms, and leave our lives
 behind.
 In our own memories our graves
 we find.
 And when we lean upon our hearts,
 they break.

I seem to see 'mid yonder glimmer-
 ing spheres
 Another world :—not that our
 prayers record,
 Wherein our God shall wipe away all
 tears,
 And never voice of mourning shall
 be heard ;
 But one between the sunset and
 moonrise :
 Near night, yet neighboring day :
 a twilight land,
 And peopled by a melancholy
 band—
 The souls that loved and failed—
 with hopeless eyes ;

More like that Hades of the antique
 creeds ;—
 A land of vales forlorn, where
 Thought shall roam
 Regretful, void of wholesome human
 deeds, [home,
 An endless, homeless pining after
 To which all sights and sounds shall
 minister
 In vain :—white roses glimmering
 all alone
 In an evening light, and, with his
 haunting tone,
 The advancing twilight's shard-born
 trumpeter.

A world like this world's worst come
 back again ;
 Still groaning 'neath the burthen
 of a Fall :
 Eternal longing with eternal pain,
 Want without hope, and memory
 saddening all.
 All congregated failure and despair
 Shall wander there, through some
 old maze of wrong :—
 Ophelia drowning in her own
 death-song,
 And First-Love strangled in his
 golden hair.

Ah well, for those that overcome, no
 doubt
 The crowns are ready ; strength is
 to the strong.
 But we—but we—weak hearts that
 grope about
 In darkness, with a lamp that fails
 along
 The lengthening midnight, dying ere
 we reach
 The bridal doors ! O, what for us
 remains,
 But mortal effort with immortal
 pains ?
 And yet—God breathed a spirit into
 each !

I know this miracle of the soul is
 more
 Than all the marvels that it looks
 upon.

And we are kings whose heritage
was before

The spheres, and owes no homage
to the sun.

In my own breast a mightier world I
bear

Than all those orbs on orbs about
me rolled ;

Nor are you kinglier, stars, though
throned on gold,

And given the empires of the mid-
night-air.

For I, too, am undying as you are.

O teach me calm, and teach me
self-control :—

To sphere my spirit like yon fixed
star

That moves not ever in the utmost
pole,

But whirls, and sleeps, and turns all
heaven one way.

So, strong as Atlas, should the
spirit stand,

And turn the great globe round in
her right hand,

For recreation of her sovereign sway.

Ah yet !—For all, I shall not use my
power,

Nor reign within the light of my
own home,

Till speculation fades, and that
strange hour

Of the departing of the soul is
come ;

Till all this wrinkled husk of care
falls by,

And my immortal nature stands
upright

In her perpetual morning, and the
light

Of suns that set not on Eternity !

BOOK I.—IN ITALY.

THE MAGIC LAND.

By woodland belt, by ocean bar,
The full south breeze our fore-
heads fanned,

And, under many a yellow star,
We dropped into the Magic Land.

There, every sound and every sight
Means more than sight or sound
elsewhere ;

Each twilight star a twofold light ;
Each rose a double redness, there.

By ocean bar, by woodland belt,
Our silent course a syren led,
Till dark in dawn began to melt,
Through the wild wizard-work
o'erhead.

A murmur from the violet vales !
A glory in the goblin dell !

There Beauty all her breast unveils,
And Music pours out all her shell.

We watched, toward the land of
dreams,

The fair moon draw the murmur-
ing main ;

A single thread of silver beams
Was made the monster's rippling
chain.

We heard far off the syren's song ;
We caught the gleam of sea-maid's
hair. [among,

The glimmering isles and rocks
We moved through sparkling pur-
ple air.

Then Morning rose, and smote from
far,

Her elfin harps o'er land and sea ;
And woodland belt, and ocean bar,
To one sweet note, sighed " Italy !"

DESIRE.

THE golden Planet of the Occident
 Wario from his bath comes up,
 i' the rosy air,
 And you may tell which way the
 Daylight went,
 Only by his last footsteps shining
 there :

For now he dwells
 Sea-deep o'er the other shore of
 the world,
 And winds himself in the pink-
 mouthed shells ;

Or, with his dusky, sun-dyed Priest,
 Walks in the gardens of the gorgeous
 East ;

Or hides in Indian hills ; or saileth
 where
 Floats, curiously curled,
 Leagues out of sight and scent of
 spicy trees,
 The cream-white nautilus on sap-
 phrine seas.

But here the Night from the hill-top
 yonder,
 Steals all alone, nor yet too soon ;
 I have sighed for, and sought for,
 her ; sadder and fonder
 (All through the lonely and linger-
 ing noon)

Than a maiden that sits by the lat-
 tice to ponder
 On vows made in vain, long since,
 under the moon.

Her dusky hair she hath shaken free,
 And her tender eyes are wild with
 love ;

And her balmy bosom lies bare to me.
 She hath lighted the seven sweet
 Pleiads above,
 She is breathing over the dreaming
 sea,
 She is murmuring low in the cedar
 grove ;
 She hath put to sleep the moaning
 dove

In the silent cypress-tree.
 And there is no voice nor whisper,—
 No voice nor whisper,

In the hillside olives all at rest,
 Underneath blue-lighted Hesper,
 Sinking, slowly, in the liquid west :
 For the night's heart knoweth best
 Love by silence most exprest.

The nightingales keep mute
 Each one his fairy flute,
 Where the mute stars look down,
 And the laurels close the green sea-
 side :

Only one amorous lute
 Twangs in the distant town,
 From some lattice opened wide :
 The climbing rose and vine are here,
 are there.

On the terrace, around, above me :
 The lone Ledaean * lights from you
 enchanted air
 Look down upon my spirit, like a
 spirit's eyes that love me.

How beautiful, at night, to muse on
 the mountain height,
 Moated in purple air, and all
 alone !

How beautiful, at night, to look into
 the light
 Of loving eyes, when loving lips
 lean down unto our own !
 But there is no hand in mine, no
 hand in mine,
 Nor any tender cheek against me
 prest :

O stars that o'er me shine, I pine, I
 pine, I pine,
 With hopeless fancies hidden in an
 ever-hungering breast !

O where, O where is she that should
 be here,
 The spirit my spirit dreameth ?
 With the passionate eyes, so deep, so
 dear,
 Where a secret sweetness beam-
 eth ?

O sleepeth she, with her soft gold
 hair

* " How oft, unwearied, have we spent the
 nights,
 Till the Ledaean stars, so famed for love,
 Wondered at us from above."—COWLEY.

Streaming over the fragrant pillow,
 And a rich dream glowing in her ripe
 cheek,
 Far away, I know not where,
 By lonely shores, where the tum-
 bling billow
 Sounds all night in an emerald
 creek ?

Or doth she lean o'er the casement
 stone
 When the day's dull noise is done
 with,
 And the sceptred spirit remounts
 alone
 Into her long-usurpéd throne,
 By the stairs the stars are won with ?
 Hearing the white owl call
 Where the river draws through the
 meadows below,
 By the beeches brown, and the
 broken wall,

His silvery, seaward waters, slow
 To the ocean bounding all :
 With, here a star on his glowing
 breast,
 And, there a lamp down-stream-
 ing,
 And a musical motion towards the
 west
 Where the long white cliffs are
 gleaming ;
 While, far in the moonlight, lies at
 rest
 A great ship, asleep and dream-
 ing ?

Or doth she linger yet
 Among her sisters and brothers,
 In the chamber where happy faces
 are met,
 Distinct from all the others ?
 As my star up there, be it never so
 bright.
 No other star resembles.
 Doth she steal to the window, and
 strain her sight
 While the pearl in her warm hair
 trembles)
 Over the dark, the distant night,

Feeling something changed in her
 home yet ;
 That old songs have lost their old
 delight,
 And the true soul is not come yet ?
 Till the nearest star in sight
 Is drowned in a tearful light.

I would that I were nigh her,
 Wherever she rest or rove !
 My spirit waves as a spiral fire
 In a viewless wind doth move.
 Go forth, alone, go forth, wild-
 winged Desire,
 Thou art the bird of Jove,
 That broodest lone by the Olympian
 throne ;
 And strong to bear the thunders
 which destroy,
 Or fetch the ravisht, flute-playing
 Phrygian boy ;
 Go forth, across the world, and find
 my love !

FATALITY.

I HAVE seen her, with her golden
 hair,
 And her exquisite primrose face,
 And the violet in her eyes ;
 And my heart received its own de-
 spair—
 The thrall of a hopeless grace,
 And the knowledge of how youth
 dies.

Live hair afloat with snakes of gold,
 And a throat as white as snow,
 And a stately figure and foot ;
 And that faint pink smile, so sweet,
 so cold,
 Like a wood anemone, closed be-
 low
 The shade of an ilex root.

And her delicate milk-white hand in
 mine,
 And her pensive voice in my ear,
 And her eyes downcast as we
 speak.
 I am filled with a rapture, vague and
 fine ;

For there has fallen a sparkling
 tear
 Over her soft, pale cheek.
 And I know that all is hopeless now.
 And that which might have been,
 Had she only waited a year or
 two,
 Is turned to a wild regret, I know,
 Which will haunt us loth, what-
 ever the scene,
 And whatever the path we go.
 Meanwhile, for one moment, hand
 in hand,
 We gaze on each other's eyes ;
 And the red moon rises above
 us ;
 We linger with love in the lovely
 land,—
 Italy with its yearning skies,
 And its wild white stars that
 love us.

A VISION.

THE hour of Hesperus ! the hour
 when feeling
 Grows likest memory, and the full
 heart swells
 With pensive pleasure to the mellow
 pealing
 Of mournful music upon distant
 bells :
 The hour when it seems sweetest to
 be loved,
 And saddest to have loved in days
 no more.
 O love, O life, O lovely land of
 yore,
 Through which, erewhile, these
 weary footsteps roved,
 Was it a vision ? Or Irene, sitting,
 Lone in her chamber, on her snowy
 bed,
 With listless fingers, lingeringly un-
 knitting
 Her silken bodice ; and, with
 bended head,
 Hiding in warm hair, half-way to her
 knee,

Her pearl-pale shoulder, leaning
 on one arm,
 Athwart the darkness, odorous and
 warm,
 To watch the low, full moon set,
 pensively ?
 A fragrant lamp burned dimly in the
 room,
 With scarce a gleam in either look-
 ing-glass.
 The mellow moonlight, through the
 deep-blue gloom,
 Did all along the dreamy chamber
 pass, [awe
 As though it were a little toucht with
 (Being new-come into that quiet
 place
 In such a quiet way) at the strange
 grace
 Of that pale lady, and what else it
 saw ;—
 Rare flowers : narcissi ; irises, each
 crowned ;
 Red oleander blossoms ; hyacinth
 Flooding faint fragrance, richly
 curled all round,
 Corinthian, cool columnar flowers
 on plinths ;
 Waxed camelias, white and crimson
 ones ;
 And amber lilies, and the regal
 rose,
 Which for the breast of queens
 full-scornful grows ;
 All pinnacled in urns of carven
 bronze :
 Tables of inwrought stone, true
 Florentine.—
 Olympian circles thronged with
 Mercuries,
 Minervas, little Junos dug i' the
 green
 Of ruined Rome ; and Juno's own
 rich eyes
 Vivid on peacock plumes Sidonian :
 A ribboned lute, young Music's
 cradle : books,
 Vellumed and claspt : and with
 bewildered looks,
 Madonna's picture,—the old smile
 grown wan.

From bloomed thickets, firefly-
lamped, beneath

The terrace, fluted cool the night-
ingale.

In at the open window came the
breath

Of many a balny, dim blue, dream-
ing vale.

At intervals the howlet's note came
clear,

Fluttering dark silence through the
cypress grove ;

An infant breeze from the elf-land
of Love,

Lured by the dewy hour, crept, lisp-
ing, near.

And now is all the night her own, to
make it

Or grave or gay with throngs of
waking dreams.

Now grows her heart so ripe, a sigh
might shake it

To showers of fruit, all golden as
beseems

Hesperian growth. Why not, on
nights like this,

Should Daphne out from yon
green laurel slip ?

A Dryad from the ilex, with white
hip

Quivered and thonged to hunt with
Artemis ?

To-night, what wonder were it,
while such shadows

Are taking up such shapes on
moonlit mountains,

Such star-flies kindling o'er low
emerald meadows,

Such voices floating out of hillside
fountains,

If some full face should from the
window greet her,

Whose eyes should be new planet-
ary lights,

Whose voice a well of liquid love-
delights,

And to the distance sighingly entreat
her ?

EROS.

WHAT wonder that I loved her thus,
that night ?

The Immortals know each other at
first sight,

And Love is of them.

In the fading light

Of that delicious eve, whose stars
even yet

Gild the long dreamless nights, and
cannot set,

She passed me, through the silence :
all her hair,

Her waving, warm, bright hair
neglectfully

Poured round her showy throat as
without care

Of its own beauty.

And when she turned on me

The sorrowing light of desolate eyes
divine,

I knew in a moment what our lives
must be

Henceforth. It lightened on me
then and there.

How she was irretrievably all mine,
I hers,—through time, become eter-
nity.

It could not ever have been other-
Gazing into those eyes.

And if, before I gazed on them, my
soul,

Oblivious of her destiny, had fol-
In days forever silent, the control

Of any beauty less divinely hal-
lowed

Than that upon her beautiful white
brows,

(The serene summits of all earthly
sweetness !,

Straightway the records of all other
vows

Of idol-worship faded silently
Out of the folding leaves of memory,

Forever and forever ; and my heart
became

Pure white at once, to keep in its
completeness,

And perfect purity,
Her mystic name.

INDIAN LOVE-SONG.

My body sleeps : my heart awakes.
 My lips to breathe thy name are
 moved
 In slumber's ear : then slumber
 breaks ;
 And I am drawn to thee, beloved.
 Thou drawest me, thou drawest me,
 'Through sleep, through night, I
 hear the rills,
 And hear the leopard in the hills,
 And down the dark I feel to thee.
 The vineyards and the villages
 Were silent in the vales, the rocks.
 I followed past the myrrhy trees,
 And by the footsteps of the flocks.
 Wild honey, dropt from stone to
 stone,
 Where bees have been, my path
 suggests.
 The winds are in the eagles' nests.
 The moon is hid. I walk alone.
 Thou drawest me, thou drawest me
 Across the glimmering wilder-
 nesses,
 And drawest me, my love, to thee,
 With dove's eyes hidden in thy
 tresses.
 The world is many : my love is one.
 I find no likeness for my love.
 The cinnamons grow in the grove :
 The Golden Tree grows all alone.
 O who hath seen her wondrous
 hair !
 Or seen my dove's eyes in the
 woods ?
 Or found her voice upon the air ?
 Her steps along the solitudes ?
 O my here is beauty like to hers ?
 She draweth me, she draweth me.
 I sought her by the incense-tree,
 And in the aloes, and in the firs.
 Where art thou, O my heart's de-
 light,
 With dove's eyes hidden in thy
 locks ?
 My hair is wet with dews of night.
 My feet are torn upon the rocks.

The cedarn soents, the spices, fail
 About me. Strange and stranger
 seems
 The path. There comes a sound
 of streams
 Above the darkness on the vale.
 No trees drop gums ; but poison
 flowers
 From rifts and clefts all round me
 fall ;
 The perfumes of thy midnight
 bowers,
 The fragrance of thy chambers, all
 Is drawing me, is drawing me.
 Thy baths prepare ; anoint thine
 hair :
 Open the window : meet me there :
 I come to thee, to thee, to thee !
 Thy lattices are dark, my own.
 Thy doors are still. My love, look
 out.
 Arise, my dove with tender tone.
 The camphor-clusters all about
 Are whitening. Dawn breaks silent-
 ly.
 And all my spirit with the dawn
 Expands ; and, slowly, slowly
 drawn,
 Through mist and darkness moves
 toward thee.

MORNING AND MEETING.

ONE yellow star, the largest and the
 last
 Of all the lovely night, was fading
 slow
 (As fades a happy moment in the
 past)
 Out of the changing east, when,
 yet aglow
 With dreams her looks made mag-
 ical, from sleep
 I waked ; and oped the lattice.
 Like a rose
 All the red-opening morning 'gan
 disclose
 A ripened light upon the distant
 steep.

A bell was chiming through the
crystal air

From the high convent-church
upon the hill.

The folk were loitering by to matin
prayer.

The church-bell called me out,
and seemed to fill

The air with little hopes. I reached
the door [rise,

Before the chanted hymn began to
And float its liquid Latin melodies

O'er pious groups about the marble
floor.

Breathless, I slid among the kneel-
ing folk.

A little bell went tinkling through
the pause

Of inward prayer. Then forth the
low chant broke

Among the glooming aisles, that
through a gauze

Of sunlight glimmered.
Thickly throbbéd my blood.

I saw, dark-tresséd in the rose-lit
shade,

Many a little dusk Italian maid,
Kneeling with fervent face close
where I stood.

The morning, all a misty splendor,
shook

Deep in the mighty window's
flame-lit webs.

It touched the crowned Apostle with
his hook,

And brightened where the sea of
jasper ebbs

About those Saints' white feet that
stand serene

Each with his legend, each in his
own hue

Attired : some beryl-golden : sap-
phire blue

Some : and some ruby-red : some
emerald-green.

Wherefrom, in rainbow-wreaths, the
rich light rolled

About the snowy altar, sparkling
clean.

The organ groaned and pined, then,
growing bold,

Revelled the cherubs' golden wings
atween.

And in the light, beneath the music,
kneeled

(As pale as some stone Virgin
bending solemn

Out of the red gleam of a granite
column)

Irene with claspt hands and cold
lips sealed.

As one who, pausing on some
mountain-height,

Above the breeze that breaks o'er
vineyard walls,

Leans to the impulse of a wild de-
light,

Bows earthward, feels the hills
bow too, and falls—

I dropt beside her. Feeling seemed
to expand

And close : a mist of music filled
the air :

And, when it ceased in heaven, I
was aware

That, through a rapture, I had
toucht her hand.

THE CLOUD.

With shape to shape, all day,
And change to change, by foreland,

firth, and bay,

The cloud comes down from wan-
dering with the wind,

Through gloom and gleam across
the green waste seas ;

And, leaving the white cliff and lone
tower bare

To empty air,
Slips down the windless sea :

and grows defined
In splendor by degrees.

And, blown by every wind
Of wonder through all regions of the
mind,

From hope to fear, from doubt to
sweet desprite

Changing all shapes, and mingling
 snow with fire,
 The thought of her descends, sleeps
 o'er the bounds
 Of passion, grows, and rounds
 Its golden outlines in a gradual
 light
 Of still desire.

ROOT AND LEAF.

THE love that deep within me lies
 Unmoved abides in conscious
 power ;
 Yet in the heaven of thy sweet eyes
 It varies every hour.

A look from thee will flush the
 cheek :

A word of thine awaken tears .
 And ah, in all I do and speak
 How frail my love appears !

In yonder tree, Beloved, whose
 boughs
 Are household both to earth and
 heaven,
 Whose leaves have murmured of our
 vows
 To many a balmy even,

The branch that wears the liveliest
 green,
 Is shaken by the restless bird ;
 The leaves that nighest heaven are
 seen,
 By every breeze are stirred :

But storms may rise, and thunders
 roll,
 Nor move the giant roots below ;
 So, from the bases of the soul,
 My love for thee doth grow.

It seeks the heaven, and trembles
 there
 To every light and passing breath ;
 But from the heart no storm can tear
 Its rooted growth beneath.

WARNINGS.

BEWARE. beware of witchery !
 And fall not in the snare
 That lurks and lies in wanton eyes,
 Or hides in golden hair :
 For the Witch hath sworn to catch
 thee,
 And her spells are on the air.
 "Thou art fair, fair, fatal fair,
 O Irene !

What is it, what is it,
 In the whispers of the leaves ?
 In the night-wind, when its bosom,
 With the shower in it, grieves ?
 In the breaking of the breaker,
 As it breaks upon the beach
 Through the silence of the night ?
 Cordelia ! Cordelia !

A warning in my ear—
 "Not here ! not here ! not here !
 But seek her yet, and seek her,
 See her ever out of reach,
 Out of reach, and out of sight !"
 Cordelia !

Eyes on mine, when none can view
 me !
 And a magic murmur through me !
 And a presence out of Fairyland,
 Invisible, yet near !
 Cordelia !

"In a time which hath not been :
 In a land thou hast not seen :
 Thou shalt find her, but not now :
 Thou shalt meet her, but not
 here :"
 Cordelia ! Cordelia !

"In the falling of the snow .
 In the fading of the year :
 When the light of hope is low,
 And the last red leaf is sore."
 Cordelia !
 And my senses lie asleep, fast asleep,
 O Irene !

In the chambers of this Sorceress,
 the South,
 In a slumber dim and deep,
 She is seeking yet to keep,
 Brimful of poisoned perfumes,
 The shut blossom of my youth.
 O fatal, fatal fair Irene !

But the whispering of the leaves,
 And the night-wind, when it grieves,
 And the breaking of the breaker,
 As it breaks upon the beach
 Through the silence of the
 night,

Cordelia!

Whisper ever in my ear

“Not here! not here! not
 here!

But awake, O wanderer! seek
 her,

P’er seek her out of reach,
 Out of reach, and out of sight!”

Cordelia!

There is a star above me
 Unlike all the millions round it.
 There is a heart to love me,
 Although not yet I have found it.
 And awhile,

O Cordelia, Cordelia!

A light and careless singer,
 In the subtle South I linger,
 While the blue is on the mountain,
 And the bloom is on the peach,
 And the fire-fly on the night,
 Cordelia!

But my course is ever nor-
 ward,

And a whisper whispers “For-
 ward!”

Arise, O wanderer, seek her,
 Seek her ever out of reach,
 Out of reach and out of sight!

Cordelia!

Out of sight,
 Cordelia! Cordelia!

Out of reach, out of sight,
 Cordelia!

A FANCY.

How sweet were life,—*this* life, if
 we

(My love and I) might dwell to-
 gether

Here beyond the summer sea,
 In the heart of summer weather!

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With pomegranates on the bough,
 And with lilies in the bower;
 And a sight of distant snow,
 Rosy in the sunset hour.

And a little house,—no more
 In state than suits two quiet
 lovers;

And a woodbine round the door,
 Where the swallow builds and
 hovers;

With a silver sickle-moon,
 O’er hot gardens, red with roses:
 And a window wide, in June,
 For serenades when evening
 closes:

In a chamber cool and simple,
 Trellised light from roof to base-
 ment;

And a summer wind to dimple
 The white curtain at the case-
 ment:

Where, if we at midnight! wake,
 A green acacia-tree shall quiver
 In the moonlight, o’er some lake
 Where nightingales sing songs for-
 ever.

With a pine-wood dark in sight;
 And a bean-field climbing to us,
 To make odors faint at night
 Where we roam with none to view
 us.

And a convent on the hill,
 Through its light green olives
 peeping

In clear sunlight, and so still,
 All the nuns, you’d say, wert
 sleeping.

Seas at distance, seen beneath
 Grated garden-wildernesses;—
 Not so far but what their breath
 At eve may fan my darling’s
 tresses.

A piano, soft in sound,
 To make music when speech
 wanders,

Poets reverently bound,
 O’er whose pages rapturo ponders.

Canvas, brushes, hues, to catch
Fleeting forms in vale or moun-
tain :

And an evening star to watch
When all's still, save one sweet
fountain.

Ah ! I idle time away
With impossible fond fancies !
For a lover lives all day
In a land of lone romances.

But the hot light o'er the city
Drops,—and see ! on fire departs.
And the night comes down in pity
To the louging of our hearts.

Bind thy golden hair from falling,
O my love, my one, my own !
'Tis for thee the cuckoo's calling
With a note of tenderer tone.

Up the hillside, near and nearer,
Through the vine, the corn, the
flowers,

Till the very air grows dearer,
Neighboring our pleasant bowers.

Now I pass the last Poderè :
There, the city lies behind me.
See her fluttering like a fairy
O'er the happy grass to find me !

ONCE.

A FALLING star that shot across
The intricate and twinkling dark
Vanisht, yet left no sense of loss
Throughout the wide ethereal arc

Of those serene and solemn skies
That round the dusky prospect
rose,

And ever seemed to rise, and rise,
Through regions of unreached re-
pose.

Far, on the windless mountain-
range,

One crimson sparklet died : the
blue

Flushed with a brilliance, faint and
strange,

The ghost of daylight, dying too.

But half-revealed, each terrace urn
Glimmered, where now, in filmy
flight,

We watched return, and still return,
The blind bats searching air for
sight.

With sullen fits of fleeting sound,
Borne half asleep on slumbrous
air,

The drowsy beetle hummed around,
And passed, and oft repassed us,
there ;

Where, hand in hand, our looks
alight

With thoughts our pale lips left
untold,

We sat, in that delicious night,
On that dim terrace, green and
old.

Deep down, far off, the city lay,
When forth from all its spires was
swept

A music o'er our souls ; and they
To music's midmost meanings
leapt ;

And, crushing some delirious cry
Against each other's lips, we clung
Together silent, while the sky
Throbbing with sound around us
hung ;

For, borne from bells on music soft,
That solemn hour went forth
through heaven,

To stir the starry airs aloft,
And thrill the purple pulse of
even.

O happy hush of heart to heart !
O moment molten through with
bliss !

O Love, delaying long to part
That first, fast, individual kiss !

Whereon two lives on glowing lips
Hung claspt, each feeling fold in
fold,

Like daisies closed with crimson
tips,

That sleep about a heart of gold.

Was it some drowsy rose that moved ?

Some dreaming dove's pathetic moan ?

Or was it my name from lips beloved ?

And was it thy sweet breath, mine own,

That made me feel the tides of sense
O'er life's low levels rise with might,

And pour my being down the immense

Shore of some mystic Infinite ?

"O, have I found thee, my soul's soul !

My chosen forth from time and space !

And did we then break earth's control ?

And have I seen thee face to face ?

"Close, closer to thy home, my breast,

Closer thy darling arms enfold !

I need such warmth, for else the rest
Of life will freeze me dead with cold.

"Long was the search, the effort long,

Ere I compelled thee from thy sphere,

I know not with what mystic song
I know not with what nightly

tear :

"But thou art here, beneath whose eyes

My passion falters, even as some
Pale wizard's taper sinks, and dies,
When to his spell a spirit is come.

My brow is pale with much of pain :

Though I am young, my youth is gone,

And, shouldst thou leave me lone again,

I think I could not live alone.

"As some idea, half divined,
With tumult works within the brain

Of desolate genius, and the mind
Is vassal to imperious pain,

"For toil by day, for tears by night,
Till, in the sphere of vision brought,

Rises the beautiful and bright
Predestined, but relentless
Thought ;

"So, gathering up the dreams of years,

Thy love doth to its destined seat
Rise sovran, through the light of tears—

Achieved, accomplisht, and complete !

"I fear not now lest any hour
Should chill the lips my own have prest ;

For I possess thee by the power
Whereby I am myself possest.

"These eyes must lose their guiding light :

These lips from thine, I know,
must sever ;

O looks and lips may disunite,
But ever love is love forever !"

SINCE.

WORDS like to these were said, or dreamed

(How long since !) on a night divine,

By lips from which such rapture streamed

I cannot deem those lips were mine.

The day comes up above the roofs,
All sallow from a night of rain ;

The sound of feet, and wheels, and hoofs

In the blurred street begins again :

The same old toil—no end—no aim!
 The same vile babble in my ears ;
 The same unmeaning smiles : the
 same
 Most miserable dearth of tears.

The same dull sound : the same dull
 lack
 Of lustre in the level gray :
 It seems like Yesterday come back
 With his old things, and not To-
 day.

But now and then her name will fall
 From careless lips with little
 praise,
 On this dry shell, and shatter all
 The smooth indifference of my
 days.

They chatter of her — deem her
 light—
 The apes and liars ! they who
 know
 As well to sound the unfathomed
 Night
 As her impenetrable woe !

And here, where Slander's scorn is
 spilt.
 And gabbling Folly clucks above
 Her addled eggs, it feels like guilt,
 To know that far away, my love

Her heart on every heartless hour
 Is bruising, breaking, for my sake:
 While, coiled and numbed, and void
 of power,
 My life sleeps like a winter snake.

I know that at the mid of night,
 (When she flings by the glittering
 stress
 Of Pride, that mocks the vulgar slight,
 And fronts her chamber's loncl-
 ness,)

She breaks in tears, and, overthrown
 With sorrowing, weeps the night
 away,
 Till back to his unlovely throne
 Returns the unrelenting day.

All treachery could devise hath
 wrought
 Against us :—letters robbed and
 read :
 Snares hid in smiles : betrayal
 bought :
 And lies imputed to the dead.

I will arise, and go to her,
 And save her in her own despite :
 For in my breast begins to stir
 A pulse of its old power and might.

They cannot so have slandered me
 But what, I know, if I should call
 And stretch my arms to her, that she
 Would rush into them, spite of all.

In Life's great lazar-house, each
 breath
 We breathe may bring or spread
 the pest ; [death
 And, woman, each may catch his
 From those that lean upon his
 breast.

I know how tender friends of me
 Have talked with broken hint, and
 glance :
 —The choicest flowers of calumny,
 That seem, like weeds, to spring
 from chance ;—

That small, small, imperceptible
 Small talk, which cuts like pow-
 dered glass
 Ground in Tophana—none can tell
 Where lurks the power the poison
 has !

I may be worse than they would
 prove,
 (Who knows the worst of any
 man ?)
 But, right or wrong, be sure my
 love
 Is not what they conceive, or can.

Nor do I question what thou art,
 Nor what thy life, in great or
 small,
 Thou art, I know, what all my heart
 Must beat or break for. That is
 all.

A LOVE-LETTER.

My love, — my chosen, — but not mine ! I send

My whole heart to thee in these words I write ;

So let the blotted lines, my soul's sole friend,

Lie upon thine, and there be blest at night.

This flower, whose bruised purple blood will stain

The page now wet with the hot tears that fall—

(Indeed, indeed, I struggle to restrain

This weakness, but the tears come, spite of all !)

I plucked it from the branch you used to praise,

The branch that hides the wall. I tend your flowers.

I keep the paths we paced in happier days.

How long ago they seem, those pleasant hours.

The white laburnum's out. Your judas-tree

Begins to shed those crimson buds of his. [ously

The nightingales sing—ah, too joy— Who says those birds are sad ? I think there is

That in the books we read, which deeper wrings

My heart, so they lie dusty on the shelf.

Ah me, I meant to speak of other things

Less sad. In vain ! they bring me to myself.

I know your patience. And I would not cast

New shade on days so dark as yours are grown

By weak and wild repining for the past,

Since it is past forever, O mine own !

For hard enough the daily cross you bear,

Without that deeper pain reflection brings ;

And all too sore the fretful household care,

Free of the contrast of remembered things.

But ah ! It little profits, that we thrust

For all that's said, what both must fell, unnamed.

Better to face it boldly, as we must, Than feel it in the silence, and be shamed.

Irene, I have loved you, as men love

Light, music, odor, beauty, love itself !—

Whatever is apart from, and above Those daily needs which deal with dust and self.

And I had been content, without one thought

Our guardian angels could have blusht to know,

So to have lived and died, demanding nought

Save, living dying, to have loved you so.

My youth was orphaned, and my age will be

Childless. I have no sister. None, to steal

One stray thought from the many thoughts of thee,

Which are the source of all I think and feel.

My wildest wish was vassal to thy will :

My haughtiest hope, a pensioner on thy smile,

Which did with light my barren being fill,

As moonlight glorifies some desert isle.

I never thought to know what I
 have known,—
 The rapture, dear, of being loved
 by you :
 I never thought, within my heart, to
 own
 One wish so blest that you should
 share it too :

Nor ever did I deem, contemplating
 The many sorrows in this place of
 pain,
 So strange a sorrow to my life could
 cling,
 As, being thus loved, to be beloved
 in vain.

But now we know the best, the
 worst. We have
 Interred, and prematurely, and un-
 known,
 Our youth, our hearts, our hopes, in
 one small grave,
 Whence we must wander, wid-
 owed, to our own.

And if we comfort not each other,
 what
 Shall comfort us, in the dark days
 to come ?
 Not the light laughter of the world,
 and not
 The faces and the firelight of fond
 home.

And so I write to you ; and write,
 and write,
 For the mere sake of writing to
 you, dear.

What can I tell you, that you know
 not ? Night
 Is deepening through the rosy
 atmosphere

About the lonely casement of this
 room,
 Which you have left familiar with
 the grace
 That grows where you have been.
 And on the gloom
 I almost fancy I can see your face.

Not pale with pain, and tears re-
 strained for me.

As when I last beheld it ; but as
 first,

A dream of rapture and of poesy,
 Upon my youth, like dawn on
 dark, it burst.

Perchance I shall not ever see again
 That face. I know that I shall
 never see

Its radiant beauty as I saw it then,
 Save by this lonely lamp of
 memory,

With childhood's starry graces linger-
 ing yet

'T the rosy orient of young woman-
 hood ;

And eyes like woodland violets newly
 wet ;

And lips that left their meaning
 in my blood !

I will not say to you what I might
 say

To one less worthily loved, less
 worthy love.

I will not say . . . "Forget the past.
 Be gay.

And let the all ill-judging world
 approve

"Light in your eyes, and laughter
 on your lip."

I will not say . . . "Dissolve in
 thought forever

Our sorrowful, but sacred, fellow-
 ship."

For that would be, to bid you,
 dear, dissever

Your nature from its nobler heritage
 In consolations registered in hea-
 ven,

For griefs this world is barren to as-
 suage,

And hopes to which, on earth, no
 home is given.

But I would whisper, what forever-
 more

My own heart whispers through
 the wakeful night, . . .

"This grief is but a shadow, flung
before,
From some refulgent substance
out of sight."

Wherefore it happens, in this riddling
world,

That, where sin came not, sorrow
yet should be ;

Why heaven's most hurtful thunders
should be hurled

At what seems noblest in human-
ity ;

And we are punished for our purest
deeds,

And chastened for our holiest
thoughts ; . . . alas !

There is no reason found in all the
creeds,

Why these things are, nor whence
they come to pass.

But in the heart of man, a secret
voice

There is, which speaks, and will
not be restrained,

Which cries to Grief . . . "Weep
on, while I rejoice,

Knowing that, somewhere, all will
be explained."

I will not cant that commonplace of
friends,

Which never yet hath dried one
mourner's tears,

Nor say that grief's slow wisdom
makes amends

For broken hearts and desolated
years.

For: wh would barter all he hopes
from life,

To be a little wiser than his kind ?

Who arm his nature for continued
strife,

Where all he seeks for hath been
left behind ?

But I would say, O pure and perfect
pearl

Which I have dived so deep in life
to find,

Locked in my heart thou nest. The
wave may curl,
The wind may wail above us.
Wave and wind,

What are their storm and strife to
me and you ?

No strife can mar the pure heart's
inmost calm.

This life of ours, what is it ? A very
few

Soon-ended years, and then,—the
ceaseless psalm,

And the eternal sabbath of the
soul !

Hush ! . . . while I write, from
the dim Carminé

The midnight angelus begins to roll,
And float athwart the darkness up
to me.

My messenger (a man by danger
tried)

Waits in the courts below ; and
ere our star [died,

Upon the forehead of the dawn hath
Belovéd one, this letter will be far

Athwart the mountain, and the mist,
to you.

I know each robber hamlet. I
know all

This mountain people. I have
friends, both true

And trusted, sworn to aid whate'er
befall.

I have a bark upon the gulf. And I,
If to my heart I yielded in this
hour,

Might say . . . "Sweet fellow-suf-
ferer, let us fly !

I know a little isle which doth em-
bower

"A home where exiled angels might
forbear

A while to mourn for paradise" . .
But no !

Never, whate'er fate now may bring
us, dear,

Shalt thou reproach me for that
only woe

Which even love is powerless to con-
sole ;

Which dwells where duty dies :
and haunts the tomb

Of life's abandoned purpose in the
soul ;

And leaves to hope, in heaven it-
self, no room.

Man cannot make, but may ennoble,
fate,

By nobly bearing it. So let us
trust,

Not to ourselves, but God, and calm-
ly wait

Love's orient, out of darkness and
of dust.

Farewell, and yet again farewell, and
yet

Never farewell,—if farewell mean
to fare

Alone and disunited. Love hath set
Our days, in music, to the self-
same air ;

And I shall feel, wherever we may
be,

Even though in absence and an
alien clime,

The shadow of the sunniness of
thee,

Hovering, in patience, through a
clouded time.

Farewell ! The dawn is rising, and
the light

Is making, in the east, a faint en-
deavor

To illuminate the mountain peaks.
Good-night.

Thine own, and only thine, my
love, forever.

(ONDEMNED ONES.

ABOVE thy child I saw thee bend,
Where in that silent room we sat
apart.

I watched the involuntary tear de-
scend ;

The firelight was not all so dim, my
friend,

But I could read thy heart.

Yet when, in that familiar room,
I strove, so moveless in my place,
To look with comfort in thy face,
That child's young smile was all that
I could see

Ever between us in the thoughtful
gloom.—

Ever between thyself and me,—
With its bewildering grace.

Life is not what it might have been,
Nor are we what we would !

And we must meet with smiling
mien,

And part in careless mood,
Knowing that each retains unseen,
In cells of sense subdued,
A little lurking secret of the blood—
A little serpent - secret rankling
keen—

That makes the heart its food.

Yet is there much for grateful tears,
if sad ones,

And Hope's young orphans Memory
mothers yet ;

So let them go, the sunny days we
had once,

Our night hath stars that will not
ever set.

And in our hearts are harps, albeit
not glad ones,

Yet not all unmelodious, through
whose strings

The night-winds murmur their fa-
miliar things,

Unto a kindred sadness : the sea
brings

The spirits of its solitude, with
wings

Folden about the music of its lyre,
Thrilled with deep duals by sublime
desire,

Which never can attain, yet ever
must aspire,

And glorify regret.

What might have been, I know, is
not :

What must be, must be borne :
But, ah ! what hath been will not
be forgot,

Never, oh ! never, in the years to
follow !

Though all their summers light a
waste forlorn,

Yet shall there be (hid from the care-
less swallow

And sheltered from the bleak wind
in the thorn)

In Memory's mournful but beloved
hollow,

One dear green spot !

Hope, the high will of Heaven
To help us hath not given,
But more than unto most of consol-
ation :

Since heart from heart may borrow
Healing for deep heart-sorrow,
And draw from yesterday, to soothe
to-morrow,

The sad, sweet divination
Of that unuttered sympathy, which
is

Love's sorceress, and for Love's dear
sake,

About us both such spells doth
make,

As none can see, and none can
break,

And none restrain ;—a secret pain
Claspt to a secret bliss.

A tone, a touch,
A little look, may be so much !
Those moments brief, nor often,
When, leaning laden breast to
breast,

Pale cheek to cheek, life, long re-
quest,

May gush with tears that leave half
blest

The want of bliss they soften.
The little glance across the crowd,
None else can read, wherein there
lies

A life of love at once avowed—

The embrace of pining eyes. . . .
So little more had made earth heav-
en,

That hope to help us was not given !

THE STORM.

BOTH hollow and hill were dumb as
death,

While the skies were silently
changing form ;

And the dread forecast of the
thunder-storm

Made the crouched land hold in its
breath.

But the monstrous vapor as yet was
unriven

That was breeding the thunder
and lightning and rain ;

And the wind that was waiting to
ruin the plain

Was yet fast in some far hold of
heaven.

So, in absolute absence of stir or
strife,

The red land lay as still as a
drifted leaf :

The roar of the thunder had been
a relief,

To the calm of that death-brooding
life.

At the wide-flung casement she stood
full height,

With her long rolling hair tumbled
all down her back ;

And, against the black sky's super-
natural black,

Her white neck gleamed scornfully
white.

I could catch not a gleam of her
angered eyes

(She was sullenly watching the
slow storm roll),

But I felt they were drawing down
into her soul

The thunder that darkened the skies.

And how could I feign, in that heart-
less gloom,
To be carelessly reading that
stupid page?
What harm, if I flung it in anguish
and rage,
Her book, to the end of the room?

“And so, do we part thus forever?”

. . . I said,

“O, speak only one word, and I
pardon the rest!”

She drew her white scarf tighter
over her breast,
But she never once turned round
her head.

“In this wicked old world is there
naught to disdain?”

Or”—I groaned—“are those
dark eyes such deserts of
blindness,

That, O Woman! your heart must
heard all its unkindness.

For the man on whose breast it hath
lain?

“Leave it nameless, the grave of the
grief that is past;

Be its sole sign the silence we
keep for its sake.

I have loved you—lie still in my
heart till it break:

As I loved, I must love to the last.

“Speak! the horrible silence is
stifling my soul.”

She turned on me at once all the
storm in her eyes;

And I heard the low thunder aloof
in the skies,

Beginning to mutter and roll.

She turned—by the lightning re-
vealed in its glare,

And the tempest had clothed her
with terror: it clung

To the folds of her vaporous gar-
ments, and hung

On the heaps of her heavy wild hair.

But one word broke the silence; but
one; and it fell

With the weight of a mountain
upon me. Next moment

The fierce levin flashed in my eyes.
From my comment

She was gone when I turned. Who
can tell

How I got to my home on the
mountain? I know

That the thunder was rolling, the
lightning still flashing,

The great bells were tolling, my
very brain crashing

In my head, a few hours ago:

Then all hushed. In the distance
the blue rain receded;

And the fragments of storm were
spread out on the hills;

Hard by, from my lattice, I heard
the far rills

Leaping down their rock-channels,
wild-weeded.

The round, red moon was yet low in
the air. . . .

O, I knew it, foresaw it, and felt
it, before

I heard her light hand on the
latch of the door!

When it opened at last,—she was
there.

Childlike, and wistful, and sorrow-
ful-eyed,

With the rain on her hair, and the
rain on her cheek;

She knelt down, with her fair
forehead fallen and meek

In the light of the moon at my side.

And she called me by every caressing
old name

She of old had invented and chosen
for me:

She crouched at my feet, with her
cheek on my knee,

Like a wild thing grown suddenly
tame.

In the world there are women
 enough, maids or mothers ;
 Yet, in multiplied millions, I never
 should find
 The symbol of aught in her face,
 or her mind.
 She has nothing in common with
 others.

And she loves me ! This morning the
 earth, pressed beneath
 Her light foot, keeps the print.
 'Twas no vision last night,
 For the lily she dropped, as she
 went, is yet white
 With the dew on its delicate sheath !

THE VAMPIRE.

I FOUND a corpse, with golden hair,
 Of a maiden seven months dead.
 But the face, with the death in it,
 still was fair,
 And the lips with their love were
 red.
 Rose leaves on a snow-drift shed,
 Blood-drops by Adonis bled,
 Doubtless were not so red.

I combed her hair into curls of gold,
 And I kissed her lips till her lips
 were warm,
 And I bathed her body in moonlight
 cold,
 Till she grew to a living form :
 Till she stood up bold to a magic of
 old,
 And walked to a muttered
 charm—
 Life-like, without alarm.

And she walks by me and she talks
 by me,
 Evermore, night and day ;
 For she loves me so, that, wherever
 I go,
 She follows me all the way—
 This corpse—you would almost
 say
 There pined a soul in the clay.

Her eyes are so bright at the dead of
 night

That they keep me awake with
 dread ;
 And my life-blood fails in my veins,
 and pales

At the sight of her lips so red :
 For her face is as white as the pillow
 by night

Where she kisses me on my bed :
 All her gold hair outspread—
 Neither alive nor dead.

I would that this woman's head
 Were less golden about the hair :
 I would her lips were less red,
 And her face less deadly fair.
 For this is the worst to bear—
 How came that redness there ?

'Tis my heart, be sure, she eats for
 her food ;
 And it makes one's whole flesh
 creep

To think that she drinks and drains
 my blood

Unawares, when I am asleep.
 How else could those red lips
 keep

Their redness so damson-deep ?

There's a thought like a serpent,
 slips

Ever into my heart and head,—
 There are plenty of women, alive
 and human,

One might woo, if one wished, and
 wed—

Women with hearts, and brains,—ay
 and lips

Not so very terribly red.

But to house with a corpse—and she
 so fair,

With that dim, unearthly, golden
 hair,

And those sad, serene, blue eyes,
 With their looks from who knows
 where,

Which Death has made so wise,
 With the grave's own secret
 there—

It is more than a man can
bear !
It were better for me, ere I came
nigh her, [her,
This corpse—ere I looked upon
Had they burned my body in flame
and fire
With a sorcerer's dishonor.
For when the Devil hath made his
lair,
And lurks in the eyes of a fair
young woman
(To grieve a man's soul with her
golden hair,
And break his heart if his heart
be human),
Would not a saint despair
To be saved by fast or prayer
From perdition made so fair ?

CHANGE.

SHE is unkind, unkind !
On the windy hill, to-day,
I sat in the sound of the wind.
I knew what the wind would say.
It said or seemed to my
mind . . .
The flowers are falling away.
The summer," . . . it said,
" will not stay,
And Love will be left behind."
The swallows were swinging them-
selves
In the leaden-gray air aloft ;
Flitting by tens and twelves,
And returning oft and oft ;
Like the thousand thoughts in me,
That went, and came, and went,
Not letting me even be
Alone with my discontent.
The hard-vext weary vane
Rattled, and moaned and was still,
In the convent over the plain,
By the side of the windy hill.
It was sad to hear it complain,
So fretful, and weak, and shrill,
Again, and again, and in vain,
While the wind was changing his
will.

I thought of our walks last summer
By the convent-walls so green ;
On the first kiss stolen from her,
With no one near to be seen.
I thought (as we wandered on,
Each of us waiting to speak)
How the daylight left us alone,
And left his last light on her cheek.

The plain was as cold and gray
(With its villas like glimmering
shells)
As some north-ocean bay.
All dumb in the church were the
bells.
In the mist, half a league away,
Lay the little white house where she
dwells.

I thought of her face so bright,
By the firelight bending low
O'er her work so neat and white ;
Of her singing so soft and slow ;
Of her tender-toned " Good-night ;"
But a very few nights ago.

O'er the convent doors, I could see
A pale and sorrowful-eyed
Madonna looking at me,
As when Our Lord first died.

There was not a lizard or spider
To be seen on the broken walls.
The ruts, with the rain, had grown
wider
And blacker since last night's falls.
O'er the universal dulness
There broke not a single beam.
I thought how my love at its fulness
Had changed like a change in a
dream.

The olives were shedding fast
About me, to left and right,
In the lap of the scornful blast
Black berries and leaflets white.
I thought of the many romances
One wintry word can blight ;
Of the tender and timorous fancies
By a cold look put to flight.

How many noble deeds
Strangled perchance at their birth !
The smoke of the burning weeds
Came up with the steam of the
earth,

From the red, wet ledges of soil,
And the sere vines, row over row,—
And the vineyard-men at their toil,
Who sang in the vineyard below.

Last Spring, while I thought of her
here,
I found a red rose on the hill.
There it lies, withered and sere !
Let him trust to a woman who will.

I thought how her words had grown
colder,
And her fair face colder still,
From the hour whose silence had
told her
What has left me heart-broken and
ill ;
And " Oh ! " I thought, . . . " if I
behold her
Walking there with him under the
hill ! "

O'er the mist, from the mournful
city
The bleak lamps gleamed aghast,—
—" She has neither justice, nor
pity,"

I thought, . . . " all's over at last,"
The cold eve came. One star
Through a ragged gray gap forlorn
Fell down from some region afar,
And sickened as soon as born.
I thought, " How long and how lone
The years will seem to be,
When the last of her looks is gone,
And my heart is silent in me ! "

One streak of scornful gold,
In the cloudy and billowy west,
Burned with a light as cold
As love in a much-wronged breast.
I thought of her face so fair ;
Of her perfect bosom and arm ;
Of her deep sweet eyes and hair ;
Of her breath so pure and warm ;

Of her foot so fine and fairy
Through the meadows where she
would pass ;
Of the sweep of her skirts so airy
And fragrant over the grass.

I thought . . . " Can I live without
her

Whatever she do, or say ? "

I thought . . . " Can I dare to doubt
her,

Now when I have given away
My whole self, body and spirit,
To keep, or to cast aside,
To dower or disinherit,—
To use as she may decide ? "

The West was beginning to close
O'er the last light burning there.
I thought . . . " And when that
goes,
The dark will be everywhere ! "

Oh ! well is it hidden from man
Whatever the Future may bring.
The bells in the church began
On a sudden to sound and swing.
The chimes on the gust were caught
And rolled up the windy height.
I rose, and returned, and thought . . .
" I SHALL NOT SEE HER TO-
NIGHT."

A CHAIN TO WEAR.

AWAY ! away ! The dream was
vain.

We meet too soon, or meet too
late :

Still wear, as best you may, the
chain

Your own hands forged about your
fate,

Who could not wait !

What ! . . . you had given your life
away

Before you found what most life
misses ?

Forsworn the bridal dream, you say
Of that ideal love, whose kisses
Are vain as this is !

Well, I have left upon your mouth
The seal I know must burn there
yet ;

My claim is set upon your youth ;
My sign upon your soul is set :
Dare you forget ?

And you 'll haunt, I know, where
music plays,

Yet find a pain in music's tone ;
You 'll blush, of course, when others
praise

That beauty scarcely now your
own.

What's done, is done !

For me, you say, the world is
wide,—

Too wide to find the grave I seek !
Enough ! whatever now betide,

No greater pang can blanch my
cheek.

Hush ! . . . do not speak.

SILENCE.

WORDS of fire, and words of scorn,
I have written. Let them go !

Words of love—heart-broken, torn,
With this strong and sudden woe.

All my scorn, she could not doubt,
Was but love turned inside out.

Silence, silence, still unstirred ;
Long, unbroken, unexplained :

Not one word, one little word,
Even to show her touched or
pained :

Silence, silence, all unbroken :
Not a sound, a sign, a token.

Well, let silence gather round
All this shattered life of mine.

Shall I break it by a sound ?
Let it grow, and be divine—

Divine as that Prometheus kept
When for his sake the sea-nymphs
wept.

Let silence settle, still and deep ;
As the mist, the thunder-cloud,

O'er the lonely blasted steep,
Which the red bolt hath not
bowed,

Settle, to drench out the star,
And cancel the blue vales afar.

In this silence I will sheathe
The sharp edge and point of all
Not a sigh my lips shall breathe ;
Not a groan, what'er befall.
And let this sworded silence be
A fence 'twixt prying fools and me,

Let silence be about her name,
And o'er the things which once
have been :

Let silence cover up my shame,
And annul that face, once seen
In fatal hours, and all the light
Of those eyes extinguish quite.

In silence, I go forth alone
O'er the solemn mystery
Of the deeds which, to be done,
Yet undone in the future lie.
I peer in Time's high nests, and there
Espy the callow brood of Care,

The fledgeless nurselings of Regret,
With beaks forever stretched for
food :

But why should I forecount as yet
The ravage of that vulture brood ?
O'er all these things let silence stay,
And lie, like snow, along my way.

Let silence in this outraged heart
Abide, and seal these lips forever ;
Let silence dwell with me apart
Beside the ever-babbling river
Of that loud life in towns, that runs
Blind to the changes of the suns.

Ah ! from what most mournful star,
Wasting down on evening's edge,
Or what barren isle afar
Flung by on some bare ocean ledge,
Came the wicked hag to us,
That changed the fairy revel thus ?

There were sounds from sweet gui-
tars
Once, and lights from lamps of
amber ;

Both went up among the stars
 From many a perfumed palaco-
 chamber :
 Suddenly the place seemed dead ;
 Light and music both were fled.

Darkness in each perfumed chamber ;
 Darkness, silence, in the stars ;
 Darkness on the lamps of amber ;
 Silence in the sweet guitars :
 Darkness, silence, evermore
 Guard empty chamber, moveless
 door.

NEWS.

News, news, news, my gossiping
 friends !
 I have wonderful news to tell.
 A lady, by me, her compliments
 sends ;
 And this is the news from Hell :

The Devil is dead. He died resigned,
 Though somewhat opprest by
 cares ;
 But his wife, my friends, is a woman
 of mind,
 And looks after her lord's affairs.

I have just come back from that
 wonderful place,
 And kist hands with the Queen
 down there ;
 But I cannot describe Her Majesty's
 face.
 It has filled me so with despair.

The place is not what you might
 suppose :
 It is worse in some respects.
 But all that I heard there, I must
 not disclose,
 For the lady that told me objects.

The laws of the land are not Salique.
 But the King never dies, of course ;
 The new Queen is young, and pretty,
 and *chic*,
 There are women, I think, that are
 worse.

But however that be, one thing I
 know,
 And this I am free to tell ;
 The Devil, my friends, is a woman,
 just now ;
 'Tis a woman that reigns in Hell.

COUNT RINALDO RINALDI.

'Tis a dark-purple, moonlighted mid-
 night :
 There is music about on the air.
 And, where, through the water, fall
 flashing
 The oars of each gay gondolier,
 The lamp-lighted ripples are dashing,
 In the musical moonlighted air.
 To the music, in merriment ; wash-
 ing,
 And splashing, the black marble
 stair
 That leads to the last garden-terrace,
 Where many a gay cavalier
 And many a lady yet loiter,
 Round the Palace in festival there.

'Tis a terrace all paven mosaic, —
 Black marble, and green malachite ;
 Round an ancient Venetian Palace,
 Where the windows with lampions
 are bright.

'Tis an evening of gala and festival,
 Music, and passion, and light.
 There is love in the nightingales'
 throats,
 That sing in the garden so well :
 There is love in the face of the moon :
 There is love in the warm languid
 glances
 Of the dancers adown the dim
 dances :
 There is love in the low languid notes
 That rise into rapture, and swell,
 From viol, and flute, and bassoon.

The tree that bends down o'er the
 water
 So black, is a black cypress-tree.
 And the statue, there, under the
 terrace,
 Mnemosyne's statue must be.

There comes a black gondola slowly
To the Palace in festival there :
And the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi
Has mounted the black marble stair.

There was nothing but darkness, and
midnight,
And tempest, and storm, in the
breast

Of the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi,
As his foot o'er the black marble
prest :—

The glimmering black marble stair
Where the weed in the green ooze
is clinging,

That leads to the garden so fair,
Where the nightingales softly are
singing,—

Where the minstrels new music
are stringing,
And the dancers for dancing prepare.

There rustles a robe of white satin :
There's a footstep falls light by the
stair :

There rustles a robe of white satin :
There's a gleaming of soft golden
hair :

And the Lady Irene Ricasoli
Stands near the cypress-tree
there,—

Near Mnemosyne's statue so fair,—
The Lady Irene Ricasoli,
With the light in her long golden
hair.

And the nightingales softly are sing-
ing

In the mellow and moonlighted
And the minstrels their viols are
stringing ;

And the dancers for dancing pre-
pare.

"Siora," the Count said unto her,
"The shafts of ill-fortune pursue
me ;

The old grief grows newer and newer,
The old pangs are never at rest ;
And the foes that have sworn to
undo me

Have left me no peace in my
breast.

They have slandered, and wronged,
and maligned me :

Though they broke not my sword
in my hand,

They have broken my heart in my
bosom

And sorrow my youth has un-
But I love you, Irene, Irene,

With such love as the wretche
alone

Can feel from the desert within them
Which only the wretched have
known !

And the heart of Rinaldo Rinaldi
Dreads, Lady, no frown but your
own.

To others be all that you are, love—
A lady more lovely than most ;

To me—be a fountain, a star, love,
That lights to his haven the lost ;

A shrine that with tender devotion,
The mariner kneeling, doth deck
With the dank weeds yet dripping
from ocean,

And the last jewel saved from the
wreck.

"None heeds us, beloved Irene !
None will mark if we linger or fly.

Amid all the mad masks in yon revel,
There is not an ear or an eye,—

Not one,—that will gaze or will
listen ;

And, save the small star in the sky
Which, to light us, so softly doth
glisten,

There is none will pursue us, Irene.
O love me, O save me, I die !

I am thine, O be mine, O beloved !

"Fly with me, Irene, Irene !
The moon drops : the morning is
near,

My gondola waits by the garden
And fleet is my own gondolier !"

What the Lady Irene Ricasoli,
By Mnemosyne's statue in stone,

Where she leaned, 'neath the black
cypress-tree,

To the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi
Replied then, it never was known.

And known, now, it never will be.

But the moon hath been melted in
morning :

And the lamps in the windows are
dead :

And the gay cavaliers from the ter-
race,

And the ladies they laughed with,
are fled ;

And the music is hush'd in the viols :
And the minstrels, and dancers,
are gone ;

And the nightingales now in the
garden. [one :

From singing have ceased, one by
But the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi
Still stands, where he last stood,
alone,

'Neath the black cypress-tree, near
the water,

By Mnemosyne's statue in stone.

O'er his spirit was silence and mid-
night,

In his breast was the calm of de-
spair.

He took, with a smile, from a casket
A single soft curl of gold hair,—

A wavy warm curl of gold hair,
And into the black-bosomed water

He flung it athwart the black stair.
The skies they were changing above
him ;

The dawn, it came cold on the air ;
He drew from his bosom a kerchief—

“Would,” he sighed, “that her
face was less fair !

That her face was less hopelessly
fair.”

And folding the kerchief, he covered
The eyes of Mnemosyne there.

THE LAST MESSAGE.

FLING the lattice open,
And the music plain you'll hear ;
Lean out of the window,
And you'll see the lamplight clear.

There, you see the palace
Where the bridal is to-night.
You may shut the window.
Come here, to the light.

Take this portrait with you,
Look well before you go.
She can scarce be altered
Since a year ago.

Women's hearts change lightly,
(Truth both trite and olden !)
But blue eyes remain blue ;
Golden hair stays golden.

Once I knew two sisters :
One was dark and grave
As the tomb ; one radiant
And changeful as the wave.

Now away, friend, quickly !
Mix among the masks :
Say you are the bride's friend,
If the bridegroom asks.

If the bride have dark hair,
And an olive brow,
Give her this gold bracelet ;—
Come and let me know.

If the bride have bright hair,
And a brow of snow,
In the great canal there
Quick the portrait throw :

And you'll merely give her
This poor faded flower.
Thanks ! now leave your stilet
With me for an hour.

You're my friend : whatever
I ask you now to do,
If the case were altered,
I would do for you.

And you'll promise me, my mother
Shall never miss her son,
If anything should happen
Before the night is done.

VENICE.

THE sylphs and ondines,
And the sea-kings and queens,
Long ago, long ago, on the waves
built a city,
As lovely as seems
To some bard, in his dreams,
The soul of his latest love-ditty.

Long ago, long ago,—ah ! that was
 long ago
 Thick as gems on the chalices
 Kings keep for treasure,
 Were the temples and palaces
 In this city of pleasure ;
 And the night broke out shining
 With lamps and with festival,
 O'er the squares, o'er the
 streets ;
 And the soft sea went, pining
 With love, through the musical,
 Musical bridges, and marble
 retreats
 Of this city of wonder, where dwelt
 the ondines,
 Long ago, and the sylphs, and the
 sea-kings and queens,
 —Ah ! that was long ago !
 But the sylphs and ondines,
 And the sea-kings and queens
 Are fled under the waves :
 And I glide, and I glide
 Up the glimmering tide
 Through a city of graves.
 Here will I bury my heart,
 Wrapt in the dream it dream-
 ed ;
 One grave more to the many !
 One grave as silent as any ;
 Sculptured about with art,—
 For a palace this tomb once
 seemed.
 Light lips have laughed there,
 Bright eyes have beamed.
 Revel and dance ;
 Lady and lover !
 Pleasure hath quaffed there :
 Beauty hath gleamed,
 Love wooed Romance.
 Now all is over !
 And I glide, and I glide
 Up the glimmering tide,
 'Mid forms silently passing, as silent
 as any,
 Here, 'mid the waves,
 In this city of graves,
 To bury my heart—one grave more
 to the many !

ON THE SEA.

COME ! breathe thou soft, or blow
 thou bold,
 Thy coming be it kind or cold,
 Thou soul of the heedless ocean
 wind ;—
 Little I rede and little I reck,
 Though the mast be snapt on the
 mizzen-deck,
 So thou blow her last kiss from my
 neck,
 And her memory from my mind !
 Comrades around the mast,
 The welkin is o'er cast :
 One watch is wellnigh past—
 Out of sight of shore at last !
 Fade fast, thou falling shore,
 With that fair false face of yore,
 And the love, and the life, now o'er !
 What she sought, that let her have—
 The praise of traitor and knave,
 The simper of coward and slave,
 And the worm that clings and
 stings—
 The knowledge of nobler things.
 But here shall the mighty sea
 Make moan with my heart in me,
 And her name be torn
 By the winds in scorn,
 In whose march we are moving free.
 I am free, I am free, I am free !
 Hark ! how the wild waves roar !
 Hark ! how the wild winds rave !
 Courage, true hearts and brave,
 Whom Fate can afflict no more !
 Comrades, the night is long.
 I will sing you an ancient song
 Of a tale that was told
 In the days of old,
 Of a Baron blithe and strong,—
 High heart and bosom bold,
 To strive for the right with wrong !
 “ Who left his castled home,
 When the Cross was raised in Rome,
 And swore on his sword
 To fight for the Lord,
 And the banners of Christendom.
 To die or to overcome !

"In hauberk of mail, and helmet of
 steel,
 And armor of proof from head to
 heel,
 O, what is the wound which he shall
 feel?
 And where the foe that shall make
 him reel?
 True knight on whose crest the cross
 doth shine!
 They buckled his harness, brought
 him his steed—
 A stallion black of the land's best
 breed—
 Belted his spurs, and bade him God-
 speed
 'Mid the Paynim in Palestine.
 But the wife that he loved, when she
 poured him up
 A last deep health in her golden cup,
 Put poison into the wine.

"So he rode till the land he loved
 grew dim,
 And that poison began to work in
 him,
 A true knight chanting his Chris-
 tian hymn,
 With the cross on his gallant crest.
 Eastward, aye, from the waning
 west,
 Toward the land where the bones of
 the Saviour rest,
 And the Battle of God is to win:
 With his young wife's picture upon
 his breast,
 And her poisoned wine within.

"Alas! poor knight, poor knight!
 He carries the foe he cannot fight
 In his own true breast shut up.
 He shall die or ever he fight for the
 Lord,
 And his heart be broken before his
 sword.
 He hath pledged his life

To a faithless wife,
 In the wine of a poisoned cup!"

Comrade, thy hand in mine!
 Pledge me in our last wine,
 While all is dark on the brine.
 My friend, I reckon not now
 If the wild night-wind should blow
 Our bark beyond the poles:—
 To drift through fire or snow,
 Out of reach of all we know—
 Cold heart, and narrow brow,
 Smooth faces, sordid souls!
 Lost, like some pale crew
 From Ophir, in golden galleys,
 On a witch's island! who
 Wander the tamarisk alleys,
 Where the heaven is blue,
 And the ocean too,
 That murmurs among the valleys,
 "Perisht with all on board!"
 So runs the vagrant fame—
 Thy wife weds another lord,
 My children forget my name,
 While we count new stars by night.
 Each wanders out of sight
 Till the beard on his chin grows
 white
 And scant grow the curls on his
 head.
 One paces the placid hours
 In dim enchanted bowers,
 By a soft-eyed Panther led
 To a magical milk-white bed
 Of deep, pale poison-flowers.
 With ruined gods one dwells,
 In caverns among the fells,
 Where, with desolate arms out-
 spread,
 A single tree stands dead,
 Smitten by savage spells,
 And striking a silent dread
 From its black and blighted head
 Through the horrible, hopeless,
 sultry dells
 Of Elephanta, the Red.

BOOK II.—IN FRANCE.

"PRENSUS IN ÆGÆO."

'Tis toi! must help us to forget.
In strife, they say, grief finds re-
pose.

Well, there's the game! I throw
the stakes :—

A life of war, a world of foes,
A heart that triumphs while it
breaks.

Some day I too, perchance, may
lose

This shade which memory o'er me
throws,

And laugh as others laugh, (who
knows?)

But ah, 'twill not be yet!

How many years since she and I
Walked that old terrace, hand-in-
hand!

Just one star in the rosy sky,
And silence on the summer land.
And she? . . .

I think I hear her sing
That song,—the last of all our
songs.

How all comes back!—thing after
thing,

The old life o'er me throngs!

But I must to the palace go;

The ambassador's to-morrow:

Here's little time for thought, I
know,

And little more for sorrow.

Already in the *porte-cochère*

The carriage sounds . . . my hat
and gloves!

I hear my friend's foot on the stair,—
How joyously it moves!

He must have done some wicked
thing

To make him tread so light:

'Tis only that the king

Admired his wife last night?

'Tis talk of nations by the way,

And praise the Nuncio's manners,
And end with something fine to say
About the "allied banners."

'Tis well to mix with all conditions
Of men in every station:

I sup to-morrow with musicians,
Upon the invitation

Of my clever friend, the journalist,
Who writes the reading plays

Which no one reads; a socialist
Most social in his ways.

But I am sick of all the din

That's made in praising Verdi,
Who only know a violin

Is not a hurly-gurdy.

Here oft, while on a nerveless hand
An aching brow reclining,
Through this tall window where I
stand,

I see the great town shining.

Hard by, the restless Boulevard
roars,

Heard all the night through, even
in dreaming:

While from its hundred open doors
The many-headed Life is stream-
ing. [fares

Upon the world's wide thorough-
My lot is cast. So be it!

Each on his back his burthen bears,
And feels, though he may not
see it.

My life is not more hard than theirs
Who toil on either side:

They cry for quiet in their prayers,
And it is still denied.

But sometimes, when I stand alone,
Life pauses.—now and then:

And in the distance dies the moan
Of miserable men.

As in a dream (how strange!) I seem
To be lapsing, slowly, slowly,

From noise and strife, to a stiller
life,

Where all is hush and holy

Ah, love! our way's in a stranger land.

We may not rest together.
For an Angel takes me by the hand,
And leads me . . . whither?
whither?

A L'ENTRESOL.

ONE circle of all its golden hours
The flitting hand of the Time-
piece there,
In its close white bower of china
flowers,
Hath rounded unaware :

While the firelight, flung from the
flickering wall

On the large and limpid mirror be-
hind,
Hath reddened and darkened down
o'er all,

As the fire itself declined.

Something of pleasure and something
of pain

There lived in that smking light.
What is it?

Faces I never shall look at again,
In places you never will visit,

Revealed themselves in each falter-
ing ember,

While, under a palely wavering
flame,

Half of the years life aches to re-
member

Reappeared, and died as they
came.

To its dark Forever an hour hath
gone

Since either you or I have spoken:
Each of us might have been sitting
alone

In a silence so unbroken.

I never shall know what made me
look up

(In this cushioned chair so soft
and deep,

By the table where, over the empty
cup, I was leaning, half asleep)

To catch a gleam on the picture up
there

Of the saint in the wilderness
under the oak ;

And a light on the brow of the bronze
Voltaire,

Like the ghost of a cynical joke.

To mark, in each violet velvet fold
Of the curtains that fall 'twixt

room and room,
The dip and dance of the manifold
Shadows of rosy gloom.

O'er the Rembrandt there — the
Caracci here—

Flutter warmly the ruddy and
wavering hues ;

And St. Anthony over his book has
a leer

At the little French beauty by
Greuze.

There,—the Leda, weighed over her
white swan's back,

By the weight of her passionate
kiss, ere it falls ;

O'er the ebony cabinet, glittering
black

Through its ivory cups and balls :

Your scissors and thimble, and work
laid away,

With its silks, in the scented rose-
wood box ;

The journals, that tell truth every
day,

And that novel of Paul de Koek's:

The flowers in the vase, with their
bells shut close

In a dream of the far green fields
where they grew ;

The cards of the visiting people and
shows

In that bowl with the sea-green
hue.

Your shawl, with a queenly droop of
its own,

Hanging over the arm of the crim-
son chair :

And, last,—yourself, as silent as
stone,
In a glow of the firelight there !

I thought you were reading all this
time.

And was it some wonderful page
of your book
Telling of love, with its glory and
crime,
That has left you that sorrowful
look ?

For a tear from those dark, deep,
humid orbs
'Neath their lashes, so long, and
soft, and sleek,
All the light in your lustrous eyes
absorbs,
As it trembles over your cheek.

Were you thinking how we, sitting
side by side,
Might be dreaming miles and miles
apart ?
Or if lips could meet over a gulf so
wide
As separates heart from heart ?

Ah, well ! when time is flown, how
it fled
It is better neither to ask nor tell.
Leave the dead moments to bury
their dead.
Let us kiss and break the spell !

Come, arm in arm, to the window
here ;
Draw by the thick curtain, and see
how, to-night,
In the clear and frosty atmosphere,
The lamps are burning bright.

All night, and forever, in yon great
town,
The heaving Boulevard flares and
roars ;
And the streaming Life flows up
and down
From its hundred open doors.

It is scarcely so cold, but I and you,
With never a friend to find us out,
May stare at the shops for a moment
or two,
And wander awhile about.

For when in the crowd we have
taken our place,
(—Just two more lives to the
mighty street there !)
Knowing no single form or face
Of the men and women we meet
there,—

Knowing, and known of, none in the
whole
Of that crowd all round, but our
two selves only,
We shall grow nearer, soul to soul,
Until we feel less lonely.

Here are your bonnet and gloves,
dear. There,—
How stately you look in that long
rich shawl !

Put back your beautiful golden hair,
That never a curl may fall.

Stand in the firelight . . . so, . . . as
you were,—
O my heart, how fearfully like her
she seemed !

Hide me up from my own despair,
And the ghost of a dream I
dreamed !

TERRA INCOGNITA.

How sweet it is to sit beside her,
When the hour brings nought
that's better !

All day in my thoughts to hide her,
And, with fancies free from fetter,
Half remember, half forget her.

Just to find her out by times
In my mind, among sweet fancies
Laid away :

In the fall of mournful rhymes ;
In a dream of distant climes ;
In the sights a lonely man sees

Well ! there in our front-row box we
sat,

Together, my bride-betrothed and
I ;

My gaze was fixed on my opera-hat,
And hers on the stage hard by.

And both were silent, and both were
sad.

Like a queen, she leaned on her
full white arm,
With that regal, indolent air she
had ;
So confident of her charm !

I have not a doubt she was thinking
then

Of her former lord, good soul that
he was !

Who died the richest and roundest
of men,
The Marquis of Carabas.

I hope that, to get to the kingdom of
heaven,

Through a needle's eye he had not
to pass.

I wish him well, for the jointure
given
To my lady of Carabas.

Meanwhile, I was thinking of my
first love,

As I had not been thinking of
aught for years,

Till over my eyes there began to
move

Something that felt like tears.

I thought of the dress that she wore
last time,

When we stood, 'neath the cypress-
trees, together,

At that lost land, in that soft clime,
In the crimson evening weather :

Of that muslin dress (for the eve was
hot),

And her warm white neck in its
golden chain,

And her full, soft hair, just tied in a
knot,

And falling loose again :

And the jasmín-flower in her fair
young breast :

(O the faint, sweet smell of that
jasmín-flower !)

And the one bird singing alone to
his nest :

And the one star over the tower.

I thought of our little quarrels and
strife ;

And the letter that brought me
back my ring.

And it all seemed then, in the waste
of life,

Such a very little thing !

For I thought of her grave below the
hill,

Which the sentinel cypress-tree
stands over.

And I thought . . . " were she only
living still,

How I could forgive her, and love
her ! "

And I swear, as I thought of her
thus, in that hour,

And of how, after all, old things
were best,

That I smelt the smell of that jas-
mín-flower,

Which she used to wear in her
breast.

It smelt so faint, and it smelt so
sweet,

It made me creep, and it made me
cold !

Like the scent that steals from the
crumbling sheet

Where a mummy is half unrolled.

And I turned and looked. She was
sitting there

In a dim box, over the stage ; and
drest

In that muslin dress, with that full
soft hair,

And that jasmín in her breast !

I was here : and she was there :

And the glittering horseshoe curved
between :—

From my bride-betrothed, with her
raven hair.

And her sumptuous, scornful
mien.

To my early love, with her eyes
downcast,

And over her primrose face the
shade,

In short, from the Future back to
the Past)

There was but a step to be made.

To my early love from my future
bride

One moment I looked. Then I
stole to the door,

I traversed the passage ; and down
at her side,

I was sitting, a moment more.

My thinking of her, or the music's
strain,

Or something which never will be
expressed,

Had brought her back from the grave
again,

With the jasmin in her breast.

She is not dead, and she is not wed !
But she loves me now, and she

loved me then !

And the very first word that her
sweet lips said,

My heart grew youthful again.

The Marchioness there, of Carabas,
She is wealthy, and young, and

handsome still,

And but for her . . . well, we'll let
that pass,

She may marry whomever she
will.

But I will marry my own first love,
With her primrose face : for old

things are best,

And the flower in her bosom, I prize
it above

The brooch in my lady's breast.

The world is filled with folly and
sin,

And Love must cling where it can,
I say :

For Beauty is easy enough to win ;
But one isn't loved every day.

And I think, in the lives of most wo-
men and men,

There's a moment when all would
go smooth and even.

If only the dead could find out when
To come back, and be forgiven.

But O the smell of that jasmin-
flower !

And O that music ! and O the way
That voice rang out from the donjon
tower

Non ti scordar di me,

Non ti scordar di me !

PROGRESS.

WHEN Liberty lives loud on every
lip.

But Freedom moans,

Trampled by Nations whose faint
foot-falls slip

Round bloody thrones ;

When, here and there, in dungeon
and in thrall,

Or exile pale,

Like torches dying at a funeral,
Brave natures fail :

When Truth, the armed archangel,
stretches wide

God tromp in vain,

And the world, drowsing, turns up-
on its side

To drowse again ;

O Man, whose course hath called it-
self sublime

Since it began,

What art thou in such dying age of
time,

As man to man ?

When Love's last wrong hath been
forgotten coldly,

As First Love's face :

And, like a rat that comes to wanton
boldly

In some lone place,

Once festal,—in the realm of light
and laughter
Grim Doubt appears ;
Whilst weird suggestions from
Death's vague Hereafter,
O'er ruined years,
Creep, dark and darker, with new
dread to mutter
Through Life's long shade,
Yet make no more in the chill breast
the flutter
Which once they made :
Whether it be,—that all doth at the
grave
Round to its term,
That nothing lives in that last dark-
ness, save
The little worm ;
Or whether the tired spirit prolong
its course
Through realms unseen,—
Secure, that unknown world cannot
be worse
Than this hath been ;
Then when through Thought's gold
chain, so frail and slender,
No link will meet ;
When all the broken harps of
Language render
No sound that's sweet :
When, like torn books, sad days
weigh down each other
I' the dusty shelf ;
O Man, what art thou, O my friend,
my brother,
Even to thyself ?

THE PORTRAIT.

MIDNIGHT past ! Not a sound of
aught
Through the silent house, but the
wind at his prayers.
I sat by the dying fire, and thought
Of the dear dead woman up stairs.
A night of tears ! for the gusty rain
Had ceased, but the eaves were
dripping yet ;

And the moon looked forth, as
though in pain,
With her face all white and wet :
Nobody with me, my watch to keep
But the friend of my bosom, the
man I love :
And grief had sent him fast to sleep
In the chamber up above.
Nobody else, in the country place
All round, that knew of my loss
beside,
But the good young Priest with the
Raphael-face, [died,
Who confessed her when she
That good young Priest is of gentle
nerve,
And my grief had moved him be-
yond control ;
For his lip grew white, as I could
observe,
When he speeded her parting soul.
I sat by the dreary hearth alone :
I thought of the pleasant days of
yore :
I said " the staff of my life is gone :
The woman I loved is no more.
" On her cold, dead bosom my por-
trait lies,
Which next to her heart she used
to wear—
Haunting it o'er with her tender
eyes
When my own face was not there.
" It is set all round with rubies red,
And pearls which a Peri might
have kept.
For each ruby there, my heart hath
bled :
For each pearl, my eyes have
wept."
And I said—" the thing is precious
to me :
They will bury her soon in the
churchyard clay ;
It lies on her heart, and lost must
be,
If I do not take it away."

I lighted my lamp at the dying
 flame,
 And crept up the stairs that
 creaked for fright,
 Till into the chamber of death I
 came,
 Where she lay all in white.

The moon shone over her winding-
 sheet.

There, stark she lay on her carven
 bed :
 Seven burning tapers about her feet,
 And seven about her head.

As I stretched my hand, I held my
 breath ;
 I turned as I drew the curtains
 apart :

I dared not look on the face of
 death :

I knew where to find her heart,

I thought, at first, as my touch fell
 there,

It had warmed that heart to life,
 with love ;

For the thing I touched was warm,
 I swear,

And I could feel it move.

'Twas the hand of a man, that was
 moving slow

O'er the heart of the dead,—from
 the other side ;

And at once the sweat broke over
 my brow,

“ Who is robbing the corpse ? ” I
 cried.

Opposite me by the tapers' light,

The friend of my bosom, the man
 I loved,

Stood over the corpse and all as
 white,

And neither of us moved.

“ What do you here, my friend ? ”

. . . The man

Looked first at me, and then at
 the dead.

“ There is a portrait here,” he
 began ;

“ There is. It is mine,” I said.

Said the friend of my bosom, “ yours
 no doubt,

The portrait was, till a month ago,
 When this suffering angel took that
 out,

And placed mine there, I know.”

“ This woman, she loved me well,
 said I.

“ A month ago,” said my friend
 to me ;

“ And in your throat,” I groaned,
 “ you lie ! ”

He answered . . . “ let us see.”

“ Enough ! ” I returned, “ let the
 dead decide :

And whose soever the portrait
 prove,

His shall it be, when the cause is
 tried,

Where Death is arraigned by
 Love.”

We found the portrait there, in its
 place :

We opened it, by the tapers' shine:
 The gems were all unchanged : the
 face

Was—neither his nor mine.

“ One nail drives out another, at
 least !

The face of the portrait there,” I
 cried,

“ Is our friend's, the Raphael-faced
 young Priest,

Who confessed her when she
 died.”

The setting is all of rubies red,

And pearls which a Peri might
 have kept.

For each ruby there my heart hath
 bled :

For each pearl my eyes have wept.

ASTARTE.

WHEN the latest strife is lost, and all
 is done with,

Ere we slumber in the spirit and
 the brain,

We drowse back, in dreams, to days
that life begun with,
And their tender light returns to
us again.

I have cast away the tangle and the
torment
Of the cords that bound my life up
in a mesh :
And the pulse begins to throb that
long lay dormant
'Neath their pressure ; and the
old wounds bleed afresh.

I am touched again with shades of
early sadness,
Like the summer-cloud's light
shadow in my hair :
I am thrilled again with breaths of
boyish gladness,
Like the scent of some last prim-
rose on the air.

And again she comes, with all her
silent graces
The lost woman of my youth, yet
unpossest :
And her cold face so unlike the
other faces
Of the women whose dead lips I
since have prest.

The motion and the fragrance of her
garments
Seem about me, all the day long,
in the room :
And her face, with its bewildering
old endearments
Comes at night between the
curtains, in the gloom.

When vain dreams are stirred with
sighing, near the morning,
To my own her phantom lips I
feel approach :
And her smile, at eve, breaks o'er
me without warning
From his speechless, pale, per-
petual reproach.

When Life's dawning glimmer yet
had all the tint there
Of the orient, in the freshness of
the grass,

(Ah, what feet since then have
trodden out the print there !)
Did her soft, her silent footsteps
fall, and pass.

They fell lightly, as the lew falls,
'mid ungathered
Meadow - flowers ; and lightly
lingered with the dew.
But the dew is gone, the grass is
dried and withered,
And the traces of those steps
have faded too.

Other footsteps fall about me,—faint,
uncertain,
In the shadow of the world, as it
recedes :
Other forms peer through the half-
uplifted curtain
Of that mystery which hangs be-
hind the creeds.

What is gone, is gone forever. And
new fashions
May replace old forms which noth-
ing can restore :
But I turn from sighing back de-
parted passions
With that pining at the bosom as
of yore.

I remember to have murmured, morn
and even,
“ Though the Earth dispart these
Earthlies, face from face,
Yet the Heavnelies shall surely join
in Heaven,
For the spirit hath no bonds in
time or space.

“ Where it listeth, there it bloweth ;
all existence
Is its region ; and it houseth,
where it will.

I shall feel her through immeasur-
able distance,
And grow nearer and be gathered
to her still.

"If I fail to find her out by her gold tresses,
 Brows, and breast and lips, and language of sweet strains,
 I shall know her by the traces of dead kisses,
 And that portion of myself which she retains."

But my being is confused with new experience,
 And changed to something other than it was ;
 And the Future with the Past is set at variance ;
 And Life falters with the burthens which it has.

Earth's old sins press fast behind me,
 weakly wailing :
 Faint before me fleets the good I have not done :
 And my search for her may still be unavailing
 'Mid the spirits that are passed beyond the sun.

AT HOME DURING THE BALL.

'Tis hard upon the dawn, and yet
 She comes not from the Ball.
 The night is cold, and bleak, and wet,
 And the snow lies over all.

I praised her with her diamonds on :—
 And, as she went, she smiled.
 And yet I sighed, when she was gone,
 Above our sleeping child.

And all night long, as soft and slow
 As falls the falling rain,
 'The thoughts of days gone long ago
 Have filled my heart again.

Once more I hear the Rhine rush down,
 (I hear it in my mind !)
 Once more, about the sleeping town,
 The lamps wink in the wind.

The narrow, silent street I pass :
 The house stands o'er the river :
 A light is at the casement-glass,
 That leads my soul forever.

I feel my way along the gloom,
 Stair after stair, I push the door
 I find no change within the room,
 And all things as of yore.

One little room was all we had
 For June and for December.
 The world is wide, but O how sad
 It seems, when I remember !

The cage with the canary-bird
 Hangs in the window still :
 The small red rose-tree is not stirred
 Upon the window-sill.

Wide open her piano stands ;
 —That song I made to ease
 A passing pain while her soft hands
 Went faintly o'er the keys !

The fire within the stove burns down ;
 The light is dying fast.
 How dear is all it shines upon,
 That firelight of the Past !

No sound ! the drowsy Dutch-clock ticks,
 O, how should I forget
 The slender ebon crucifix,
 That by her bed is set ?

Her little bed is white as snow,—
 How dear that little bed !
 Sweet dreams about the curtains go
 And whisper round her head.

That gentle head sleeps o'er her arm
 —Sleeps all its soft brown hair :
 And those dear clothes, of hers, ye warm,
 Droop open on the chair.

Yet warm the snowy petticoat !
 The dainty corset too !
 How warm the ribbon from her throat,
 And warm each little shoe !

Lie soft, dear arm upon the pillow !
 Sleep, foolish little head !
 Ah, well she sleeps ! I know the wil-
 low
 That curtains her cold bed.—

Since last I trod that silent street
 'Tis many a year ago :
 And, if I there could set my feet
 Or be more, I do not know

If I should find it where it was,
 That house upon the river :
 But the light that lit the easement-
 glass
 I know is dark forever.

Hark ! wheels below, . . . my lady's
 knock !
 —Farewell, the old romance !—
 Well, dear, you're late,—past four
 o'clock !—
 How often did you dance ?

Not cooler from the crowning waltz,
 She takes my half the pillow.—
 Well,—well !—the women free from
 faults
 Have beds below the willow !

AT HOME AFTER THE BALL.

THE clocks are calling Three
 Across the silent floors.
 The fire in the library
 Dies out ; through the open doors
 The red empty room you may see.

In the nursery, up stairs,
 The child had gone to sleep,
 Half-way 'twixt dreams and prayers,
 When the hall-door made him leap
 To its thunders unawares.

Like love in a worldly breast,
 Alone in my lady's chamber,
 The lamp burns low, suppress
 'Mid satins of brodered amber,
 Where she stands, half undrest :

Her bosom all unlaced :
 Her cheeks with a bright red stop:
 Her long dark hair displaced,
 Down streaming, heeded not,
 From her white throat to her waist :

She stands up her full height,
 With her ball-dress slipping down
 her,
 And her eyes as fixed and bright
 As the diamond stars that crown
 her,—
 An awful, beautiful sight.

Beautiful, yes . . . with her hair
 So wild, and her cheeks so dusht !
 Awful, yes . . . for there
 In her beauty she stands husht
 By the pomp of her own despair !

And fixt there, without doubt,
 Face to face with her own sorrow
 She will stand, till, from without,
 The light of the neighboring mor-
 row
 Creeps in, and finds her out.

With last night's music pealing
 Youth's dirges in her ears :
 With last night's lamps revealing,
 In the charnels of old years,
 The face of each dead feeling.

Ay, Madam, here alone
 You may think, till your heart is
 broken,
 Of the love that is dead and done,
 Of the days that, with no token,
 Forevermore are gone.—

Weep if you can, beseech you !
 There's no one by to curb you :
 Your child's cry cannot reach you :
 Your lord will not disturb you :
 Weep ! . . . what can weeping teach
 you ?

Your tears are dead in you.
 "What harm, where all things
 change,"
 You say, "if we change too ?
 —The old still sunny Grango!
 Ah, that's far off i' the dew.

"Were those not pleasant hours,
Ere I was what I am?
My garden of fresh flowers!
My milk-white weanling lamb!
My bright laburnum bowers!

"The orchard walls so trim!
The redbreast in the thorn!
The twilight soft and dim!
The child's heart! eve and morn,
So rich with thoughts of *him!*"

Hush! your weanling lamb is dead:
Your garden trodden over.
They have broken the farm shed:
They have buried your first lover
With the grass above his head.

Has the Past, then, so much power,
You dare take not from the shelf
That book with the dry flower,
Lest it make you hang yourself
For being yourself for an hour?

Why can't you let thought be
For even a little while?
There's nought in memory
Can bring you back the smile
Those lips have lost. Just see,

Here what a costly gem
To-night in your hair you wore—
Pearls on a diamond stem!
When sweet things are no more,
Better not think of them.

Are you saved by pangs that pained
you,
Is there comfort in all it cost you,
Before the world had gained you,
Before that God had lost you,
Or your soul had quite disdained
you?

For your soul (and this is worst
To bear, as you well know)
Has been watching you, from first,
As sadly as God could do;
And yourself yourself have curst.

Talk of the flames of Hell!
We fuel ourselves, I conceive,
The fire the Fiend lights. Well,

Believe or disbelieve,
We know more than we tell!

Surely you need repose!
To-morrow again—the Ball.
And you must revive the rose
In your cheek, to bloom for all
Not go? . . . why the whole world
goes.

To bed! to bed! 'Tis sad
To find that Fancy's wings
Have lost the hues they had.
In thinking of these things
Some women have gone mad.

AU CAFE * * *

A PARTY of friends, all light-hearted
and gay,
At a certain French café, where
everyone goes,
Are met, in a well-curtained warm
cabinet,
Overlooking a street there, which
every one knows.

The guests are, three ladies well
known and admired:
One adorns the *Lyrique*; one . . .
I oft have beheld her
At the *Vaudeville*, with raptures;
the third lives retired
" *Dans ses meubles*" . . . (we all
know her house) . . . Rue de
Helder.

Besides these is a fourth . . . a
young Englishman, lately
Presented the round of the clubs
in the town.

A taciturn Anglican coldness so-
dately
Invests him: unthawed by Clar-
isse, he sits down.

But little he speaks, and but rarely
he shares
In the laughter around him; his
smiles are but few;
There's a sneer in the look that his
countenance wears
In repose; and fatigue in the eyes'
weary blue.

The rest are three Frenchmen. Three
Frenchmen (thank heaven !)

Are but rarely morose, with Cham-
pagne and Bordeaux :

And their wit, and their laughter,
suffices to lighten

With mirth their mute guest's im-
itation of snow.

The dinner is done : the Lafitte in
its basket,

The Champagne in its cooler, is
passed in gay haste ;

Whatever you wish for, you have but
to ask it :

Here are coffee, cigars, and li-
queurs to your taste.

And forth from the bottles the corks
fly ; and chilly,

The bright wine, in bubbling and
blushing, confounds

Its warmth with the ice that it
seethes round ; and shrilly
(Till stifled by kisses) the laughter
resounds.

Strike, strike the piano, beat loud at
the wall !

Let wealthy old Lycus with jeal-
ousy groan

Next door, while fair Chloris responds
to the call,

Too fair to be supping with Lycus
alone !*

Clarisse, with a smile, has subsided,
opprest,

Half, perhaps, by Champagne . . .
half, perhaps, by affection,—

In the arms of the taciturn, cold,
English guest,

With, just rising athwart her im-
perial complexion,

One tinge that young Evian himself
have kist

From the fairest of Mænads that
danced in his troop ;

And her deep hair, unloosed from its
sumptuous twist,
Overshowering her throat and her
bosom a-droop.

The soft snowy throat, and the
round, dimpled chin,

Upturned from the arm-fold where
hangs the rich head !

And the warm lips apart, while the
white lips begin

To close over the dark languid eyes
which they shade !

And next to Clarisse (with her wild
hair all wet

From the wine, in whose blush its
faint fire-fly gold

She was steeping just now), the blue-
eyed Juliette

Is murmuring her witty bad things
to Arnold.

Cries Arnold to the dumb English
guest . . . "*Mon ami,*

What's the matter ? . . . you can't
sing . . . well, speak, then, at
least :

More grave, had a man seen a ghost,
could he be ?

*Mais quel drôle de farceur ! . . .
comme il a le vin triste !*"

And says Charles to Eugène (vainly
seeking to borrow

Ideas from a yawn . . . "At the
club there are three of us

With the Duke, and we play lans-
quenet till to-morrow :

I am off on the spur . . . what
say *you* ? . . . will you be of
us ?"

"*Mon enfant, tu me boudes—tu me
boudes, cheri,*"

Sighs the soft Celestine on the
breast of Eugène ;

"*Ah bah ! ne me fais pas poser, mon
amie,*"

Laughs her lover, and lifts to his
lips—the Champagne.

* "*Audeat invidus
Dementem strepitum Lycus
Et vicina seculi non habilis Lyco.*"

And loud from the bottles the corks
fly ; and chilly

The wine gurgles up to its fine
crystal bounds.

While Charles rolls his paper cigars
round, how shrilly
(Till kist out) the laughter of Juli-
ette resounds !

Strike, strike the piano ! beat loud at
the wall !

Let wealthy old Lycus with jeal-
ousy groan

Next door, while fair Chloris responds
to the call,

Too fair to be supping with Lycus
alone.

There is Celestine singing, and Eu-
gène is swearing.—

In the midst of the laughter, the
oaths, and the songs,

Falls a knock at the door ; but
there's nobody hearing :

Each, uninterrupted, the revel pro-
longs.

Said I . . . "nobody hearing?" one
only ;—the guest,

The morose English stranger, so
dull to the charms

Of Clarisse, and Juliette, Celestine,
and the rest ;

Who sits, cold as a stone, with a
girl in his arms.

Once, twice, and three times, he has
heard it repeated ;

And louder, and fiercer, each time
the sound falls.

And his cheek is death pale, 'mid
the others so heated ;

There's a step at the door, too, his
fancy recalls.

And he rises . . . (just so an automa-
ton rises,—

So the man of mechanics made
up,—that must move

In the way that the wheel moves
within him ;—there lies his

Sole path fixt before him, below
and above).

He rises . . . and, scarcely a glance
casting on her,

Flings from him the beauty asleep
on his shoulder ;

Charles springs to his feet ; Eugène
mutters of honor ;

But there's that in the stranger
that awes each beholder.

For the hue on his cheek, it is whiter
than whiteness :

The hair creeps on his head like a
strange living thing.

The lamp o'er the table has lost half
its brightness ;

Juliette cannot laugh ; Celestine
cannot sing.

He has opened the door in a silence
unbroken :

And the gaze of all eyes where he
stands is fixt wholly :

Not a hand is there raised ; not a
word is there spoken :

He has opened the door ; . . . and
there comes through it slowly

A woman, as pale as a dame on a
tombstone,

With desolate violet eyes, open
wide ;

Her look, as she turns it, turns all
in the room stone :

She sits down on the sofa, the
stranger beside.

Her hair it is yellow, as moonlight
on water

Which stoves in some eddy tor-
ment into waves ;

Her lips are as red as new blood spilt
in slaughter ;

Her cheek like a ghost's seen by
night o'er the graves.

Her place by the taciturn guest she
has taken ;

And the glass at her side she has
filled with Champagne.

As she bows o'er the board, all the
revellers awaken.

She has pledged her mute friend
and she fills up again.

Clarisse has awaked ; and with
shrieks leaves the table.

Juliette wakes, and faints in the
arms of Arnold.

And Charles and Eugène, with what
speed they are able,

Are off to the club, where this tale
shall be told.

Celestine for her brougham, on the
stairs, was appealing,

With hysterical sobs, to the surly
concierge,

When a ray through the doorway
stole to her, revealing

A sight that soon changed her ap-
peal to "*La vierge*."

All the light-hearted friends from
the chamber are fled :

And the café itself has grown si-
lent by this.

From the dark street below, you can
scarce hear a tread,

Save the Gendarme's, who reigns
there as gloomy as Dis.

The shadow of night is beginning to
flit :

Through the gray window shim-
mers the motionless town.

The ghost and the stranger, together
they sit

Side by side at the table—the place
is their own.

They nod and change glances, that
pale man and woman ;

For they both are well known to
each other : and then

Some ghosts have a look that's so
horribly human,

In the street you might meet them,
and take them for men.

"Thou art changed, my beloved ! and
the lines have grown stronger,
And the curls have grown scanted,
that meet on thy brow.

Ah, faithless ! and dost thou remem-
ber no longer

The hour of our passion, the words
of thy vow ?

"Thy kiss, on my lips it is burning
forever !

I cannot sleep calm, for my bed is
so cold.

Embrace me ! close . . . closer . . .
let us part never,

And let all be again as it once was
of old !"

So she murmurs repiningly ever.
Her breath

Lifts his hair like a night-wind in
winter. And he . . .

"Thy hand, O Irene, is icy as death,
But thy face is unchanged in its
beauty to me."

"'Tis so cold, my beloved one, down
there, and so drear."

"Ah, thy sweet voice, Irene,
sounds hollow and strange !"

"'Tis the chills of the grave that
have changed it, I fear :

But the voice of my heart there's
no chill that can change."

"Ha ! thy pale cheek is flushed with
a heat like my own.

Is it breath, is it flame, on thy
lips that is burning ?

Ha ! thy heart flutters wild, as of
old, 'neath thy zone.

And those cold eyes of thine fill
with passionate yearning."

Thus, embracing each other, they
bend and they waver,

And, laughing and weeping, con-
verse. The pale ghost,

As the wine warms the grave worm
within her, grown braver,

Fills her glass to the brim, and
proposes a toast.

"Here's a health to the glow-worm,
Death's sober lamplighter,

That saves from the darkness be-
low the gravestone

The tomb's pallid pictures . . . the
sadder the brighter ;

Shapes of beauty each stony-eyed
corpse there hath known :

- Mere rough sketches of life, where
 a glimpse goes for all,
 Which the Master keeps (all the
 rest let the world have !)
 But though only rough-scrawled on
 the blank charnel wall,
 Is their truth the less sharp, that
 'tis sheathed in the grave ?
- “ Here’s to Love . . . the prime pas-
 sion . . . the harp that we
 sung to
 In the orient of youth, in the days
 pure of pain ;
 The cup that we quaffed in : the
 stirrup we sprung to,
 So light, ere the journey was
 made—and in vain !
- “ O the life that we lived once ! the
 beauty so fair once !
 Let them go ! wherefore weep for
 what tears could not save ?
 What old trick sets us aping the
 fools that we were once,
 And tickles our brains even under
 the grave ?
- “ There’s a small stinging worm
 which the grave ever breeds
 From the folds of the shroud that
 around us is spread :
 There’s a little blind maggot that
 revels and feeds
 On the life of the living, the sleep
 of the dead.
- “ To our friends ! . . . ” But the
 full flood of dawn through the
 pane,
 Having slowly rolled down the
 huge street there unheard
 (While the great, new, blue sky, o’er
 the white Madeleine
 Was wide opening itself), from her
 lip washed the word ;
 Washed her face faint and fainter ;
 while, dimmer and dimmer,
 In its seat, the pale form flickered
 out like a flame,
- As broader, and brighter, and fuller,
 the glimmer
 Of day through the heat-clouded
 window became.
- And the day mounts apace. Some
 one opens the door.
 In shuffles a waiter with sleepy
 red eyes :
 He stares at the cushions flung loose
 on the floor,
 On the bottles, the glasses, the
 plates, with surprise.
- Stranger still ! he sees seated a man
 at the table,
 With his head on his hands : in a
 slumber he seems,
 So wild, and so strange, he no longer
 is able
 In silence to thrid through the
 path of his dreams.
- For he moans, and he mutters : he
 moves and he motions :
 To the dream that he dreams o’er
 his wine-cup he pledges.
 And his sighs sound, through sleep,
 like spent winds over ocean’s
 Last verge, where the world hides
 its outermost edges.
- The gas-lamp falls sick in the tube :
 and so, dying,
 To the fumes of spilt wine, and
 cigars but half smoked,
 Adds the stench of its last gasp :
 chairs broken are lying
 All about o’er the carpet stained
 littered, and soaked.
- A touch starts the sleeper. He
 wakes. It is day.
 And the beam that dispels all the
 phantoms of night
 Through the rooms sends its kindly
 and comforting ray :
 The streets are new-peopled : the
 morning is bright.

And the city's so fair ! and the dawn
breaks so brightly !

With gay flowers in the market,
gay girls in the street.

Whate'er the strange beings that
visit us nightly,

When Paris awakes, from her
smile they retreat.

I myself have, at morning, beheld
them departing ;

Some in masks, and in dominos,
footing it on ;

Some like imps, some like fairies ;
at cockcrow all starting,

And speedily flitting from sight
one by one.

And that wonderful night-flower,
Memory, that, tearful,

Unbosoms to darkness her heart
full of dew,

Folds her leaves round again, and
from day shrinks up fearful

In the cleft of her ruin, the shade
of her yew.

This broad daylight life's strange
enough : and wherever

We wander, or walk ; in the club,
in the streets ;

Not a straw on the ground is too
trivial to sever

Each man in the crowd from the
others he meets.

Each walks with a spy or a jallar be-
hind him

(Some word he has spoken, some
deed he has done) ;

And the step, now and then, quick-
ens, just to remind him,

In the crowd, in the sun, that he
is not alone.

But 'tis hard, when by lamplight,
'mid laughter and songs too,

Those return, . . . we have buried,
and mourned or, and prayed
for,

And done with . . . and, free of the
grave it belongs to,

Some chest drinks your health in
the wine you have paid for.

Wreathe the rose, O Young Man ;
pour the wine. What thou hast

That enjoy all the days of thy
youth. Spare thou naught.

Yet beware ! . . . at the board sits a
ghost—'tis the Past ;

In thy heart lurks a weird necro-
mancer—'tis Thought.

THE CHESS-BOARD.

My little love, do you remember,

Ere we were grown so sadly wise,
Those evenings in the bleak Decem-
ber,

Curtained warm from the snowy
weather,

When you and I played chess to-
gether,

Checkmated by each other's eyes ?

Ah, still I see your soft white hand
Hovering warm o'er Queen and
Knight.

Brave Pawns in valiant battle
stand.

The double Castles guard the wings :
The Bishop, bent on distant things,
Moves, sidling through the fight.

Our fingers touch ; our glances
meet,

And falter ; falls your golden hair
Against my cheek ; your bosom
sweet

Is heaving. Down the field, your
Queen

Rides slow her soldiery all between,
And checks me unaware.

Ah me ! the little battle's done,

Disperst is all its chivalry ;
Full many a move, since then, have
we

'Mid Life's perplexing checkers
made,

And many a game with Fortune
played,—

What is it we have won ?

This, this at least—if this alone ;—
That never, never, never more,

As in those old still nights of yore
(Ere we were grown so sadly wise),

Can you and I shut out the skies,
 Shut out the world, and wintry
 weather,
 And, eyes exchanging warmth with
 eyes,
 'Lay bless, as then we played, to-
 gether !

SONG.

If Sorrow have taught me anything,
 She hath taught me to weep for
 you ;
 And if Falsehood have left me a tear
 to shed
 For Truth, these tears are true.
 If the one star left by the morning
 Be dear to the dying night,
 If the late lone rose of October
 Be sweetest to scent and sight,
 If the last of the leaves in December
 Be dear to the desolate tree,
 Remember, beloved, O remember
 How dear is your beauty to me !

And more dear than the gold, is the
 silver
 Grief hath sown in that hair's
 young gold :
 And lovelier than youth is the lan-
 guage
 Of the thoughts that have made
 youth old ;
 We must love, and unlove, and for-
 get, dear—
 Fashion and shatter the spell
 Of how many a love in a life, dear—
 Ere life learns to love once and
 love well.
 Then what matters it, yesterday's
 sorrow ?
 Since I have outlived it—see !
 And what matter the cares of to-
 morrow,
 Since you, dear, will share them
 with me ?

To love it is hard, and 'tis harder
 Perchance to be loved again :
 But you'll love me, I know, now I
 love you.—

What I seek I am patient to gain.
 To the tears I have shed, and regret
 not,

What matter a few more tears ?
 Or a few days' waiting longer,
 To one that has waited for years ?
 Hush ! lay your head on my breast,
 there.

Not a word ! . . . while I weep for
 your sake,
 Sleep, and forget me, and rest there :
 My heart will wait warm till you
 wake.

For—if Sorrow have taught me any-
 thing [you ;
 She hath taught me to weep for
 And if Falsehood have left me a tear
 to shed
 For Truth, these tears are true !

THE LAST REMONSTRANCE.

Yes ! I am worse than thou didst
 once believe me.

Worse than thou deem'st me now
 I cannot be—

But say "the Fiend's no blacker,"
 . . . canst thou leave me ?

Where wilt thou flee ?

Where wilt thou bear the relics of
 the days

Squandered round this dethroned
 love of thine ?

Hast thou the silver and the gold to
 raise

A new God's shrine ?

Thy cheek hath lost its roundness
 and its bloom :

Who will forgive those signs where
 tears have fed

On thy once lustrous eyes,—save *he*
 for whom

Those tears were shed ?

Know I not every grief whose course
 hath sown

Lines on thy brow, and silver in
 thy hair ?

Will new love learn the language,
 mine alone

Hath graven there ?

- Despite the blemisht beauty of thy
brow,
Thou wouldest be lovely, couldst
thou love again ;
For Love renews the Beautiful : but
thou
Hast only pain.
- How wilt thou bear from pity to im-
plore
What once those eyes from rapture
could command ?
How wilt thou stretch—who wast a
Queen of yore—
A suppliant's hand ?
- Even were thy heart content from
love to ask
No more than needs to keep it
from the chill,
Hast thou the strength to recom-
mence the task
Of pardoning still ?
- Wilt thou to one, exacting all that I
Have lost the right to ask for, still
extend
Forgiveness on forgiveness, with that
sigh
That dreads the end ?
- Ah, if thy heart can pardon yet, why
yet
Should not its latest pardon be for
me ?
For who will bend, the boon he seeks
to get,
On lowlier knee ?
- Where wilt thou find the unworthier
heart than mine,
That it may be more grateful, or
more lowly ?
To whom else, pardoning much, be-
come divine
By pardoning wholly ?
- Hath not thy forehead paled beneath
my kiss ?
And through thy life have I not
writ my name ?
Hath not my soul signed thine ? . . .
I gave thee bliss,
If I gave shame :
- The shame, but not the bliss.
where'er thou goest,
Will haunt thee yet : to me no
shame thou hast :
To me alone, what now thou art,
thou knowest
By what thou wast.
- What other hand will help .by heart
to swell
To raptures mine first taught it
how to feel ?
Or from the unchorded harp and va-
cant shell
New notes reveal ?
- Ah, by my dark and sullen nature
nurst,
And rocked by passion on this
stormy heart,
Be mine the last, as thou wert mine
the first !
We dare not part !
- At best a fallen Angel to mankind,
To me be still the seraph I have
dared
To show my hell to, and whose love
resigned
Its pain hath shared.
- If, faring on together, I have fed
Thy lips on poisons, they were
sweet at least,
Nor couldst thou thrive where ho-
lier Love hath spread
His simpler feast.
- Change would be death. Could sev-
erance from my side
Bring thee repose, I would not
bid thee stay.
My love should meet, as calmly as
my pride,
That parting day.
- It may not be : for thou couldst not
forget me,—
Not that my own is more than
other natures.
But that 'tis different : and thou
wouldest regret me
'Mid purer creatures.

Then, if love's first ideal now grows
 wan,
 And thou wilt love again,—again
 love me,
 For what I am :—no hero, but a man
 Still loving thee.

SORCERY.

TO —.

YOU'RE a milk-white Panther :
 I'm a Genius of the air.
 You're a Princess once enchanted ;
 That is why you seem so fair.

For a crime untold, unwritten,
 That was done an age ago,
 I have lost my wings, and wander
 In the wilderness below.

In a dream too long indulged,
 In a Palace by the sea,
 You were changed to what you are
 By a muttered sorcery.

Your name came on my lips
 When I first looked in your eyes :
 At my feet you fawned, you knew
 me
 In despite of all disguise.

The black elephants of Delhl
 Are the wisest of their kind,
 And the libbards of Soumatra
 Are full of eyes behind :

But they guessed not, they divined
 not,
 They believed me of the earth,
 When I walked among them, mourn-
 ing
 For the region of my birth.

Till I found you in the moonlight.
 Then at once I knew it all.
 You were sleeping in the sand here,
 But you wakened to my call.

I knew why, in your slumber,
 You were moaning piteously :
 You heard a sound of harping
 From a Palace by the sea.

Through the wilderness together
 We must wander everywhere,
 Till we find the magic berry
 That shall make us what we were.

'Tis a berry sweet and bitter,
 I have heard ; there is but one ;
 On a tall tree, by a fountain,
 In the desert all alone.

When at last 'tis found and eaten,
 We shall both be what we were ;
 You, a Princess of the water,
 I, a Genius of the air.

See ! the Occident is flaring
 Far behind us in the skies,
 And our shadows float before us.
 Night is coming forth. Arise !

ADIEU, MIGNONNE, MA BELLE.

ADIEU, Mignonne, ma belle . .
 when you are gone,
 Vague thoughts of you will wan-
 der, searching love
 Through this dim heart : through
 this dim room, Mignonne,
 Vague fragrance from your hair
 and dress will move.

How will you think of this poor
 heart to-morrow,
 This poor fond heart with all its
 joy in you ?
 Which you were fain to lean on,
 once, in sorrow,
 Though now you bid it such
 light adieu.

You'll sing perchance . . . " I passed
 a night of dreams
 Once, in an old inn's old worm-
 eaten bed,
 Passing on life's highway. How
 strange it seems,
 That never more I there shall lean
 my head ! "

Adieu, Mignonne, adieu, Mignonne,
ma belle !

Al, little witch, our greeting was
so gay,
Our love so painless, who'd have
thought "Farewell"
Could ever be so sad a word to
say ?

I leave a thousand fond farewells
with you :
Some for your red wet lips, which
were so sweet :
Some for your darling eyes, so dear,
so blue
Some for your wicked, wanton
little feet :

But for your little heart, not yet
awake,—

What can I leave your little heart,
Mignonne ?
It seems so fast asleep, I fear to
break
The poor thing's slumber. Let it
still sleep on !

TO MIGNONNE.

At evening, from the sunlight
I miss your sunny face,
Leaning, laughing, on my shoulder
With its careless infant grace ;
And your hand there,

With its rosy, inside color,
And the sparkle of its rings ;
And your soul from this old chamber
Missed in fifty little things,
When I stand there.

And the roses in the garden
Droop stupid all the day,—
Sad, thirsty mouths wide open,
With not a word to say !
Their last meaning

Is all faded, like a fragrance,
From the languishing late flowers,
With your feet, your slow white
movements,
And your face, in silent hours,
O'er them leaning.

And, in long, cool summer evenings,
I shall never see you, drest
In those pale violet colors
Which suit your sweet face best.
Here's your glove, child,

Soiled and empty, as you left it,
Yet your hand's warmth seems to
stay
In it still, as though this moment
You had drawn your hand away ;
Like your love, child,

Which still stays about my fancy.
See this little, silken boot.—
What a plaything ! was there ever
Such a slight and slender foot ?
Is it strange now

How that, when your lips are nearest
To the lips they feed upon
For a summer time, till bees sleep,
On a sudden you are gone ?
What new change now

Sets you sighing . . . eyes uplifted
To the stary night above ?
"God is great . . . the soul's im-
mortal . . .
Must we die, though ! . . . Do you
love ?

One kiss more, then :
"Life might end now !" . . . And
next moment
With those wicked little feet,
You have vanished,—like a Fairy
From a fountain in the heat,
And all's o'er, then.

Well, no matter ! . . . hearts are
breaking
Every day, but not for you,
Little wanton, ever making
Chains of rose, to break then
through.
I would mourn you,

But your red smile was too warm,
Sweet,
And your little heart too cold,
And your blue eyes too blue merely,
For a strong, sad man to scold,
Weep, or scorn, you.

For that smile's soft, transient sun-
shine

At my hearth, when it was chill,
I shall never do your name wrong,
But think kindly of you still ;
And each moment

If your pretty infant angers,
(Who could help but smile at . . .
when

Those small feet would stamp our
love out ?)

Why, I pass them now, as then,
Without comment.

Only, here, when I am searching
For the book I cannot find,
I must sometimes pass your boudoir,
Howsoever disinclined ;
And must meet there

The gold bird-cage in the window,
Where no bird is singing now ;
The small sofa and the footstool,
Where I miss . . . I know not
how . . .

Your young feet there,

Silken-soft in each quaint slipper ;
And the jewelled writing-case,
Where you never more will write
now ;
And the vision of your face,
Just turned to me :—

I would save this, if I could, child,
But that's all. . . . September's
here !

I must write a book : read twenty :
Learn a language . . . what's to
fear ?

Who grows gloomy

Being free to work, as I am ?
Yet these autumn nights are cold.
How I wonder how you'll pass them !
Ah, . . . could all be as of old !
But 'tis best so.

All good things must go for better,
As the primrose for the rose.
Is love free ? why so is life, too !
Holds the grave fast ? . . . I sup-
pose
Things must rest so.

COMPENSATION.

WHEN the days are silent all
Till the drear light falls ;
And the nights pass with the pall
Of Love's funerals ;
When the heart is weighed with
years ;

And the eyes too weak for tears ;
And life like death appears ;

Is it naught, O soul of mine,
To hear i' the windy track
A voice with a song divine
Calling thy footsteps back
To the land thou lovest best,
Toward the Garden in the West
Where thou hast once been blest ?

Is it naught, O aching brow,
To feel in the dark hour,
Which came, though called, so slow,
And, though loathed, yet lingers
slower,

A hand upon thy pain,
Lovingly laid again,
Smoothing the ruffled brain ?

O love, my own and only !
The seraphs shall not see
By my looks that life was lonely ;
But that 'twas blest by thee.
If few lives have been more lone
Few have more rapture known,
Than mine and thine, my own !

When the lamp burns dim and dim-
mer ;

And the curtain close is drawn :
And the twilight seems to glimmer
With a supernatural dawn ;
And the Genius at the door
Turns the torch down to the floor,
Till the world is seen no more ;

In the doubt, the dark, the fear,
'Mid the spirits come to take thee
Shall mine to thine be near,
And my kiss the first to wake
thee.

Meanwhile, in life's December,
On the wind that strews the ember,
Shall a voice still moan . . . " Re-
member ! "

TRANSLATIONS FROM PETER
RONSARD.

"VOICILF BOIS QUE MA SAINCTE
ANGELETTE."

HERE is the wood that freshened to
her song ;

See here, the flowers that keep her
footprints yet ;

Where, all alone, my saintly
Angelette

Went wandering, with her maiden
thoughts, along.

Here is the little rivulet where she
stopped ;

And here the greenness of the
grass shows where

She lingered through it, searching
here and there

Those daisies dear, which in her
breast she dropped.

Here did she sing, and here she
wept, and here

Her smile came back ; and here I
seem to hear

Those faint half-words with which
my thoughts are rife ;

Here did she sit ; here, childlike,
did she dance,

To some vague impulse of her own
romance—

Ah, Love, on all these thoughts,
winds out my life !

'CACHE POUR CETTE NUICT.'

HIDE, for a night, thy horn, good
Moon ! Fair Fortune

For this shall keep Endymion ever
prest

Deep-dreaming, amorous, on thine
argent breast,

Not ever shall enchanter thee impor-
tune.

Happy to me the day ; most sweet
the night !

I fear the myriad meddling eyes of
day ;

But courage comes with night.
Close, close, I pray,
Your curtains, dear dark skies, on
my delight !

Thou too, thou Moon, thou too hast
felt love's power !

Pan, with a white fleece, won thee
for an hour ;

And you, sidereal Signs in yonder
blue,

Favor the fire to which my heart is
moved.

Forget not, Signs, the greater part
of you

Was only set in heaven for having
loved !

"PAGE, SUY MOY."

FOLLOW, my Page, where the green
grass embosoms

The enamelled Season's freshest-
fallen dew ;

Then home, and my still house
with handfuls strew

Of frail-lived April's newlied nur-
tured blossoms.

Take from the wall now, my song-
tuned Lyre ;

Here will I sit and charm out the
sweet pain

Of a dark eye whose light hath
burned my brain,

The unloving loveliness of my desire !

And here my ink, and here my
papers, place :—

A hundred leaves of white, whereon
to trace

A hundred words of desultory
woe—

Words which shall last, like graven
diamonds, sure ;—

That, some day hence, a future
race may know

And ponder on the pain which I
endure.

“*LES ESPICES SONT A CERES.*”

CERES hath her harvest sweet :
 Chloris is the young green grass :
 Woods for Fauns with cloven feet :
 His green laurel Phoebus has :
 Minerva has her Olive-tree :
 And the Pine's for Cybele.

Sweet sounds are for Zephyr's wings :
 Sweet fruit for Pomona's bosom :
 For the Nymphs are crystal springs
 And for Flora bud and blossom :
 But sighs and tears, and sad ideas,
 These alone are Cytherea's.

“*MA DOUCE JOUVENCE.*”

MY sweet youth now is all done ;
 The strength and the beauty are
 gone.

The tooth now is black, and the
 head now is white,
 And the nerves now are loosed : in
 the veins
 Only water (not blood now) remains,
 Where the pulse beat of old with
 delight.

Adieu, O my lyre, O adieu.
 You sweet women, my lost loves,
 and you
 Each dead passion ! . . . The end
 creepeth nigher.
 Not one pastime of youth has kept
 pace
 With my age. Naught remains in
 their place
 But the bed, and the cup, and the
 fire.

My head is confused with low fears,
 And sickness, and too many years,
 Some care in each corner I meet—
 And, wherever I linger or go,
 I turn back, and look after, to know
 If the Death be still dogging my
 feet :—

Dogging me down the dark stair,
 Which windeth, I cannot tell where,
 To some Pluto that opens forever
 His cave to all comers—Alas !
 How easily down it all pass,
 And return from it—never, ah,
 never !

BOOK III.—IN ENGLAND.

THE ALOE.

A STRANGER sent from burning
 lands,
 In realms where buzz and mutter
 yet
 Old gods, with hundred heads and
 hands,
 On jewelled thrones of jet,—
 (Old gods as old as Time itself,)
 And, in a hot and level calm,
 Recline o'er many a sandy shelf
 Dusk forms beneath the palm,—
 To Lady Eve, who dwells beside
 The river-meads, and oak-trees
 tall,

Whose dewy shades encircle wide
 Her old Baronial Hall,
 An Indian plant with leaves like
 horn,
 And, all along its stubborn spine,
 Mere humps, with angry spike and
 thorn
 Armed like the porcupine.
 In midst of which one sullen bud
 Surveyed the world, with head
 aslant,
 High-throned, and looking like the
 god
 Of this strange Indian plant.

A stubborn plant, from looking cross
It seemed no kindness could re-
trieve!

But for his sake whose gift it was
It pleased the Lady Eve.

She set it on the terraced walk,
Within her own fair garden-
ground;
And every morn and eve its stalk
Was duly watered round.

And every eve and morn, the while
She tended this uncourteous thing,
I stood beside her,—watched her
smile,
And often heard her sing.

The roses I at times would twist
To deck her hair, she oft forgot;
But never that dark aloe missed
The daily watering-pot.

She seemed so gay,—I felt so sad,—
Her laugh but made me frown the
more:

For each light word of hers I had
Some sharp reply in store.

Until she laughed . . . “This aloe
shows
A kindlier nature than your
own” . . .

Ah, Eve, you little dreamed what
foes
The plant and I had grown!

At last, one summer night, when all
The garden-flowers were dreaming
still,

And still the old Baronial Hall,
The oak-trees on the hill,

A loud and sudden sound there
stirred,

As when a thunder-cloud is torn;
Such thunder-claps are only heard
When little gods are born.

The echo went from place to place,
And wakened every early sleeper.
Some said that poachers in the chase
Had slain a buck—or keeper.

Some hinted burglars at the door:
Some questioned if it had not
lightened:

While all the maids, as each one
swore,

From their seven wits were fright-
ened.

The peacocks screamed, and every
rook

Upon the elms at roost did caw:
Each inmate straight the house for-
sook:

They searched—and, last,—they
saw

That sullen bud to flower had burst
Upon the sharp-leaved aloe
there;—

A wondrous flower, whose breath
disperst

Rich odors on the air.

A flower, colossal—dazzling white,
And fair as is a Sphinx's face,
Turned broadly to the moon by night
From some vast temple's base.

Yes, Eve! your aloe paid the pains
With which its sullen growth you
nurst.

But ah! my nature yet remains
As churlish as at first.

And yet, and yet—it might have
proved

Not all unworth your heart's ap-
proving.

Ah, had I only been beloved,—
(Beloved as I was loving!)

I might have been . . . how much,
how much,

I am not now, and shall not be!
One gentle look, one tender touch,
Had done so much for me!

I too, perchance, if kindly tended,
Had roused the napping genera-
tion,

With something novel, strange, and
splendid,

Deserving admiration:

For all the while there grew, and
 grew
 A germ,—a bud, within my bos-
 som
 No flower, fair Eve!—for, thanks to
 you,
 It never came to blossom.

“MEDIO DE FONTE LEPO-
 RUM SURGIT AMARI ALI-
 QUID.”

LUCRETIUS.

We walked about at Hampton
 Court,
 Alone in sunny weather,
 And talked—half earnest, and half
 sport,
 Linked arm in arm together.

I pressed her hand upon the steps.
 Its warmest light the sky lent.
 She sought the shade : I sought her
 lips :
 We kissed : and then were silent.

Clare thought, no doubt, of many
 things,
 Besides the kiss I stole there :—
 The sun, in sunny founts in rings,
 The bliss of soul with soul there,

The bonnet, fresh from France, she
 wore,
 My praise of how she wore it,
 The arms above the carven door,
 The orange-trees before it ;—

But I could only think, as, mute
 I watched her happy smile there,
 With rising pain, of this curst boot,
 That pinched me all the while
 there.

THE DEATH OF KING HACON.

It was Odin that whispered in Vin-
 golf,
 “Go forth to the heath by the
 sea ;
 Find Hacon before the moon rises,
 And bid him to supper with me.”

They go forth to choose from the
 Princes
 Of Yugvon, and summons from
 flight
 A man who must perish in battle,
 And sup where the gods sup to-
 night.

Leaning over her brazen spear, Gon-
 dula
 Thus bespake her companions,
 “The feast
 Of the gods shall, in Vingolf, this
 evening,
 O ye Daughters of War, be in-
 creast.

“For Odin hath beckoned unto me,
 For Odin hath whispered me forth,
 To bid to his supper King Hacon
 With the half of the hosts of the
 North.”

Their horses gleamed white through
 the vapor :
 In the moonlight their corselets
 did shine :
 As they wavered and whispered to-
 gether,
 And fashioned their solemn de-
 sign.

Hacon heard them discoursing—
 “Why hast thou
 Thus disposed of the battle so
 soon ?
 O, were we not worthy of conquest ?
 Lo ! we die by the rise of the
 moon.”

“It is not the moon that is rising.
 But the glory which penetrates
 death,
 When heroes to Odin are summoned
 Rise, Hacon, and stand on the
 heath !

“It is we,” she replied, “that have
 given
 To thy pasture the flower of the
 fight,
 It is we, it is we that have scattered
 Thine enemies yonder in flight.

Come now, let us push on our
horses
Over yonder green worlds in the
east,
Where the great gods are gathered
together,
And the tables are piled for the
feast.

"Betimes to give notice to Odin,
Who waits in his sovran abodes,
That the King to his palace is com-
ing
This evening to visit the gods."

Odin rose when he heard it, and
with him
Rose the gods, every god to his
feet.

He beckoned Hermoder and Brago,
They came to him, each from his
seat.

"Go forth, O my sons, to King Ha-
con,
And meet him and greet him from
all,
A King that we know by his valor
Is coming to-night to our hall."

Then faintly King Hacon ap-
proaches,
Arriving from battle, and sore
With the wounds that yet bleed
through his armor
Bedabbled and dripping with gore.

His visage is pallid and awful
With the awe and the pallor of
death,
Like the rook that at midnight arises
Where the battle lies strewn on the
heath.

To him spake Hermoder and Brago.
'We meet thee and greet thee
from all,
To the gods thou art known by thy
valor,
And they bid thee a guest to their
hall.

"Come hither, come hither, King
Hacon,
And join those eight brothers of
thine,
Who already, awaiting thy coming,
With the gods in Walhala recline.

"And loosen, O Hacon, thy corselet.
For thy wounds are yet ghastly to
see.
Go pour ale in the circle of heroes,
And drink, for the gods drink to
thee."

But he answered, the hero, "I never
Will part with the armor I wear.
Shall a warrior stand before Odin
Unshamed, without helmet and
spear?"

Black Fenris, the wolf, the destroyer,
Shall arise and break loose from his
chain
Before that a hero like Hacon
Shall stand in the battle again.

"CARPE DIEM."

HORACE.

TO-MORROW is a day too far
To trust, whate'er the day be.
We know, a little, what we are,
But who knows what he may be?

The oak that on the mountain grows
A goodly ship may be,
Next year; but it is as well (who
knows?)
May be a gallows-tree.

'Tis God made man, no doubt,—no
Chance:
He made us, great and small:
But, being made, 'tis Circumstance
That finishes us all.

The Author of this world's great plan
The same results will draw
From human life, however man
May keep, or break, His law

The Artist to his Art doth look ;
And Art's great laws exact
That those portrayed in Nature's
Book,
Should freely move and act.

The moral of the work unchanged
Endures eternally,
How'er by human wills arranged
The work's details may be.

"Give us this day our daily bread,
The morrow shall take heed
Unto itself." The Master said
No more. No more we need.

To-morrow cannot make or mar
To-day, whate'er the day be :
Nor can the men which now we are
Foresee the men we may be.

THE FOUNT OF TRUTH.

It was the place by legends told.
I read the tale when yet a child.
The castle on the mountain hold,
The woodland in the wild.

The wrecks of unremembered days
Were heaped around. It was the
hour
When bold men fear, and timorous
fays
Grow bold, and know their power.

The month was in the downward
year.
The breath of Autumn chilled the
sky :
And useless leaves, too early sere,
Muttered and eddied by.

It seemed that I was wending back
Among the ruins of my youth,
Along a wild night-haunted track
To seek the Fount of Truth.

The Fount of Truth,—that wondrous
fount !
Its solemn sound I seem to hear
Wind-borne adown the clouded
mount,
Desolate, cold, and clear.

By clews long lost, and found again
I know not how, my course was
led
Through lands remote from living
men,
As life is from the dead.

Yet up that wild road, here and
there,
Large awful footprints did I meet :
Footprints of gods perchance they
were,
Prints—not of human feet.

The mandrake underneath my foot
Gave forth a shriek of angry pain.
I heard the roar of some wild brute
Prowling the windy plain.

I reached the gate. I blew with
power
A blast upon the darkness wide.
"Who art thou ?" from the gloomy
tower
The sullen warder cried.

"A Pilgrim to the Fount of Truth."
He laughed a laugh of scornful
spleen.
"Art thou not from the Land of
Youth ?
Report where thou hast been."

"The Land of Youth ! an alien
race
There, in my old dominions,
reign ;
And, with them, one whose false
face
I will not gaze again.

"From to and fro the world I come,
Where I have fared as exiles fare,
Mocked by the memories of home
And homeless everywhere.

"The snake that slid through
Paradise
Yet on my pathway slides and
slips :
The apple plucked in Eden twice
Is yet upon my lips.

"I can report the world is still
Where it hath been since it began:
And Wisdom, with bewildered will,
Is still the same sick man,

"Whom yet the self-same visions
fool.
The self-same nightmares haunt
and scare.
Folly still breeds the Public Fool,
Knowledge increaseth care :

"Joy hath his tears, and Grief her
smile ;
And still both tears and smiles de-
ceive.
And in the Valley of the Nile
I hear—and I believe—

"The Fiend and Michael, as of
yore,
Yet wage the ancient war : but
how
This strife will end at last, is more
Than our new sages know."

I heard the gate behind me close.
It closed with a reluctant wail.
Roused by the sound from her re-
pose
Started the Porteress pale :

In pity, or in scorn . . . "Forbear,
Madam," she cried, . . . "thy
search for Truth.
The curl is in thy careless hair.
Return to Love and Youth.

* What lured thee here, through dark,
and doubt,
The many - perilled prize to
win ?"—
"The dearth" . . . I said . . . "of
all without,
The thirst of all within.

"Age comes not with the wrinkled
brow
But earlier, with the ravaged heart ;
Full oft hath fallen the winter snow
Since Love from me did part.

"Long in dry places, void of cheer,
Long have I roamed. These
features scan :
If magic lore be thine, look here,
Behold the Talisman!"

I crossed the court. The blood-
hound bayed
Behind me from the outer wall.
The drowsy grooms my call obeyed
And lit the haunted hall.

They brought me horse, and lance,
and helm,
They bound the buckler on my
breast,
Spread the weird chart of that wild
realm,
And armed me for the quest.

Uprose the Giant of the Keep.
"Rash fool, ride on!" . . . I
heard him say,
"The night is late, the heights are
steep,
And Truth is far away!"

And . . . "Far away!" . . . the
echoes fell
Behind as from that grisly hold
I turned. No tongue of man may
tell
What mine must leave untold.

The Fount of Truth,—that wondrous
fount !
Far off I heard its waters play.
But ere I scaled the solemn mount,
Dawn broke. The trivial day

To its accustomed course flowed
back,
And all the glamour faded round.
Is it forever lost,—that track ?
Or—was it never found ?

MIDGES.

SHE is talking æsthetics, the dea
clever creature !
Upon Man, and his functions, she
speaks with a smile.

Her ideas are divine upon Art, upon
Nature,
The sublime, the Heroic, and Mr.
Carlyle.

i no more am found worthy to join
in the talk, now ;
So I follow with my surreptitious
cigar ;

While she leads our poetical friend
up the walk, now,
Who quotes Wordsworth and
praises her "*Thoughts on a
Star.*"

Meanwhile, there is dancing in
yonder green bower
A swarm of young midges. They
dance high and low.

'Tis a sweet little species that lives
but one hour,
And the eldest was born half an
hour ago.

One impulsive young midge I hear
ardently pouring

In the ears of a shy little wanton
in gauze, [adoring :
His eternal devotion ; his ceaseless
Which shall last till the Universe
breaks from its laws :

His passion is not, he declares, the
mere fever
Of a rapturous moment. It knows
no control :

It will burn in his breast through
existence forever,
Immutably fixed in the deeps of
the soul !

She wavers : she flutters : . . . male
midges are fickle :

Dare she trust him her future ? . . .
she asks with a sigh :

He implores, . . . and a tear is be-
ginning to trickle :

She is weak : they embrace, and
. . . the lovers pass by.

While they pass me, down here on a
rose leaf has lighted

A pale midge, his feelers all droop-
ing and torn :

His existence is withered ; its future
is blighted :

His hopes are betrayed : and his
breast is forlorn.

By the midge his heart trusted his
heart is deceived, now,

In the virtue of midges no more he
believes :

From love in its falsehood, once
wildly believed, now

He will bury his desolate life in
the leaves.

His friends would console him . . .
the noblest and sagest

Of midges have held that a midge
lives again.

In Eternity, they say, the strife thou
now wagest

With sorrow shall cease . . . but
their words are in vain !

Can Eternity bring back the seconds
now wasted

In hopeless desire ? or restore to
his breast

The belief he has lost, with the bliss
he once tasted,

Embracing the midge that his
being loved best ?

His friends would console him . . .
life yet is before him ;

Many hundred long seconds he
still has to live :

In the state yet a mighty career
spreads before him :

Let him seek in the great world of
action to strive !

There is Fame ! there's Ambition .
and, grander than either,

There is Freedom ! . . . the pro-
gress and march of the
race ! . . .

But to Freedom his breast beats no
longer, and neither

Ambition nor action her loss can
replace.

If the time had been spent in acquiring æsthetics

I have squandered in learning this language of midges,

There might, for my friend in her peripatetics,

Have been now *two* asses to help o'er the bridges.

As it is, . . . I'll report her the whole conversation.

It would have been longer ; but, somehow or other

(In the midst of that misanthrope's long lamentation),

A midge in my right eye became a young mother.

Since my friend is so clever, I'll ask her to tell me

Why the least living thing (a mere midge in the egg !)

Can make a man's tears flow, as now it befell me . . .

O you dear clever woman, explain it, I beg !

THE LAST TIME THAT I MET LADY RUTH.

THERE are some things hard to understand.

O help me, my God, to trust in thee !

But I never shall forget her soft white hand,

And her eye when she looked at me.

It is hard to pray the very same prayer

Which once at our mother's knee we prayed—

When, where we trusted our whole heart, there

Our trust hath been betraycd.

I swear that the milk-white muslin so light

On her virgin breast, where it lay demure,

Seemed to be toucht to a purer white

By the touch of a breast so pure.

I deemed her the one thing undefiled

By the air we breathe, in a world of sin :

The truest, the tenderest, purest child

A man ever trusted in !

When she blamed me (she, with her fair child's face !)

That never with her to the Church — I went

To partake of the Gospel of truth and grace,

And the Christian sacrament,

And I said I would go for her own sweet sake,

Though it was but herself I should worship there,

How that happy child's face strove to take

On its dimples a serious air !

I remember the chair she would set for me,

By the flowers when all the house was gone

To drive in the Park, and I and she Were left to be happy alone.

There she leaned her head on my knees, my Ruth,

With the primrose loose in her half-closed hands :

And I told her tales of my wandering youth

In the far fair foreign lands.—

The last time I met her was here in town,

At a fancy ball at the Duchess of D.,

On the stairs, where her husband was handing her down

—There we met, and she talked to me.

She, with powder in hair, and patch
on chin,
And I, in the garb of a pilgrim
Priest,
And between us both, without and
within,
A hundred years at least !

We talked of the House, and the late
long rains,
And the crush at the French Am-
bassador's ball,
And . . . well, I have not blown
out my brains.
You see I can laugh. That is all.

MATRIMONIAL COUNSELS.

You are going to marry my pretty
relation,
My dove-like young cousin, so soft
in the eyes,
You are entering on life's settled
dissimulation,
And, if you'd be happy, in season
be wise.

Take my counsel. The more that,
in church, you are tempted
To yawn at the sermon, the more
you'll attend.
The more you'd from milliner's bills
be exempted,
The more on your wife's little
wishes you'll spend.

You'll be sure, every Christmas, to
send to the rector
A dozen of wine, and a hamper or
two.
The more your wife plagues you,
the more you'll respect her,
She'll be pleasing your friend, if
she's not plaguing you.

For women of course, like ourselves,
need emotion ;
And happy the husband, whose
fallings afford
To the wife of his heart, such good
cause for commotion
That she seeks no excitement, save
plaguing her lord.

Above all, you'll be careful that
nothing offends, too,
Your wife's lady's maid, though
she give herself airs.
With the friend of a friend it is well
to be friends too,
And especially so, when that
friend lives up stairs.

Under no provocation you'll ever
avow yourself
A little put out, when you're kept
at the door,
And you never, I scarcely need say,
will allow yourself
To call your wife's mother a vulgar
old bore.

However she dresses, you'll never
suggest to her
That her taste, as to colors, could
scarcely be worse,
Of the rooms in your house, you will
give up the best to her,
And you never will ask for the
carriage, of course.

If, at times with a doubt on the soul
and her future,
Revelation and reason, existence
should trouble you,
You'll be always on guard to keep
carefully mute your
Ideas on the subject, and read
Dr. W.

Bring a shawl with you, home, when
you come from the club, sir,
Or a ring, least your wife, when
you meet her, should pout ;
And don't fly in a rage and behave
like a cub, sir,
If you find that the fire, like your
self, has gone out.

In eleven good instances out of a
dozen,
'Tis the husband's a cur, when the
wife is a cat.
She is meekness itself, my soft-eyed
little cousin,
But a wife has her rights, and I'd
have you know that.

Keep my counsel. Life's struggles
are brief to be borne, friend.

In Heaven there's no marriage nor
giving in marriage.

When Death comes, think how
truly your widow will mourn,
friend,

And your worth not the best of
your friends will disparage !

SEE-SAW.

SHE was a barlot, and I was a thief :
But we loved each other beyond
belief :

She lived in the garret, and I in the
kitchen,

And love was all that we both were
rich in.

When they sent her at last to the
hospital,

Both day and night my tears did fall ;
They fell so fast that, to dry their
grief,

I borrowed my neighbor's handker-
chief.

The world, which, as it is brutally
taught,

Still judges the act in lieu of the
thought,

Found my hand in my neighbor's
pocket,

And clapped me, at once, under chain
and locket.

When they asked me about it, I told
them plain,

Love it was that had turned my
brain :

How should I heed where my hand
had been,

When my heart was dreaming of
Celestine ?

Twelve friends were so struck by my
woful air,

That they sent me abroad for change
of air :

And, to prove me the kindness of
their intent,

They sent me at charge of the Gov-
ernment.

When I came back again,—whom,
think you, I meet

But Celestine, here, in Regent
Street ?

In a carriage adorned with a coronet,
And a dress, all flounces, and lace,
and jet :

For her carriage drew up to the
bookseller's door,

Where they publish those nice little
books for the poor :

I took off my hat : and my face she
knew,

And gave me—a sermon by Mr. Bel-
lew.

But she gave me (God bless her !)
along with the book,

Such a sweet sort of smile, such a
heavenly look,

That, as long as I live, I shall never
forget

Celestine, in her coach with the earl's
coronet.

There's a game that men play at in
great London-town ;

Whereby some must go up, sir, and
some must go down :

And, since the mud sticks to your
coat if you fall,

Why, the strongest among us keep
close to the wall.

But some day, soon or late, in my
shoes I shall stand,

More exalted than any great Duke
in the land ;

A clean shirt on my back, and a rose
in my coat,

And a collar conferred by the Queen
round my throat.

And I know that my Celestine will
not forget

To be there, in her coach with my
lord's coronet :

She will smile to me then, as she
smiled to me now :
I sha'l nod to her gayly, and make
her my bow ;—

Before I rejoin all those famous old
thieves
Whose deeds have immortalized
Rome, sir, and Greece :
Whose names are inscribed upon
History's leaves,
Like my own on the books of the
City Police :—

Alexander, and Cæsar, and other
great robbers,
Who once tried to pocket the whole
universe :
Not to speak of our own parliament-
ary jobbers,
With their hands, bless them all, in
the popular purse !

BABYLONIA.

ENOUGH of simpering and grimace !
Enough of damning one's soul for
nothing !
Enough of Vacuity trimmed with
lace !
And Poverty proud of her purple
clothing !
In Babylon, when'er there's a wind
(Whether it blow rain, or whether
it blow sand),
The weathercocks change their
mighty mind ;
And the weathercocks are forty
thousand.
Forty thousand weathercocks,
Each well-minded to keep his
place,
Turning about in the great and
small ways !
Each knows, whatever the weather's
shocks,
That the wind will never blow in
his face ;
And in Babylon the wind blows
always.

I cannot tell how it may strike you,
But it strikes me now, for the first
and last time,
That there may be better things to do,
Than watching the weathercocks
for pastime.

And I wish I were out of Babylon,
Out of sight of column and steeple,
Out of fashion and form, for one,
And out of the midst of this
double-faced people.
Enough of catgut ! Enough of the
sight
Of the dolls it sets dancing all the
night !

For there is a notion come to me,
As here, in Babylon, I am lying,
That far away, over the sea,
And under another moon and
star,
Braver, more beautiful beings are
dying
(Dying, not dancing, dying, dying !)
To a music nobler far.

Full well I know that, before it came
To inhabit this feeble, faltering
frame,
My soul was weary ; and, ever
since then,
It has seemed to me, in the stir
and bustle
Of this eager world of women and
men,
That my life was tired before it
began,
That even the child had fatigued the
man,
And brain and heart have done
their part
To wear out sinew and muscle.

Yet, sometimes, a wish has come to
me,
To wander, wander, I know not
where,
Out of the sight of all that I see,
Out of the hearing of all that I
hear ;
Where only the tawny, bold, wild
beast
Roams his realms ; and find, at least,

The strength which even the beast
finds there,
A joy, though but a savage joy ;—
Were it only to find the food I
need,
The scent to track, and the force to
destroy,
And the very appetite to feed ;
The bliss of the sense without the
thought,
And the freedom, for once in my
life, from aught
That fills my life with care.

And never this thought hath so
wildly crost
My mind, with its wildering,
strange temptation,
As just when I was enjoying the
most
The blessings of what is called
Civilization :—
The glossy boot which tightens the
foot ;
The club at which my friend was
black-balled
(I am sorry, of course, but one
must be exclusive) ;
The yellow kid glove whose shape I
approve,
And the journal in which I am
kindly called
Whatever's not libellous—only
abusive :

The ball to which I am careful to go,
Where the folks are so cool, and
the rooms are so hot ;
The opera, which shows one what
music—is not ;
And the simper from Lady . . . but
why should you know ?

Yet, I am a part of the things I de-
spise,
Since my life is bound by their
common span :
And each idler I meet, in square
or in street,
Hath within him what all that's
without him belies,—
The miraculous, infinite heart of
man,

With its countless capabilities !
The sleekest guest at the general
feast,
That at every sip, as he sups, says
grace,
Hath in him a touch of the untamed
beast ;
And change of nature is change of
place.
The judge on the bench, and the
scamp at the dock,
Have, in each of them, much that
is common to both ;
Each is part of the parent stock,
And their difference comes of their
different cloth.

'Twi'x the Seven Dials and Exeter
Hall
The gulf that is fixed is not so
wide :
And the fool that, last year, at Her
Majesty's Ball,
Sickened me so with his simper of
pride,
Is the hero now heard of, the first on
the wall,
With the bayonet-wound in his
side.

O, for the times which were (if any
Time be heroic) heroic indeed !
When the men were few,
And the deeds to do
Were mighty, and many,
And each man in his hand held
a noble deed.
Now the deeds are few,
And the men are many,
And each man has, at most, but
a noble need.

Blind fool ! . . . I know that all acted
time
By that which succeeds it, is ever
received
As calmer, completer, and more sub-
lime,
Only because it is finished : be-
cause
We only behold the thing it
achieved :

We behold not the thing that it
 was.
 For, while it stands whole and im-
 mutable,
 In the marble of memory—we,
 who have seen
 But the statue before us,—how can
 we tell
 That the men that have hewn at
 the block may have been ?
 Their passion is merged in its pas-
 sionlessness ;
 Their strife in its stillness closed
 forever :
 Their change upon change in its
 changelessness ;
 In its final achievement, their fe-
 verish endeavor :
 Who knows how sculptor on sculptor
 starved
 With the thought in the head by the
 hand uncarved ?
 And he that spread out in its ample
 repose [brow,
 That grand, indifferent, godlike
 How faintly his own may have ached,
 who knows,
 'Twixt the laurel above and the
 wrinkle below ?
 So again to Babylon I come back,
 Where this fettered giant of Hu-
 man Nature
 Cramped in limb, and constrained
 in stature,
 In the torture-chamber of Van-
 ity lies :
 Helpless and weak, and compelled to
 speak
 The things he must despise.
 You stars, so still in the midnight
 blue,
 Which over these huddling roofs I
 view,
 Out of reach of this Babylonian
 riot,—
 We so restless, and you so quiet,
 What is difference 'twixt us and you ?
 You each may have pined with a
 pain divine,
 For aught I know,

As wildly as this weak heart of mine,
 In an Age ago :
 For whence should you have that
 stern repose,
 Which, here, dwells but on the brows
 of those
 Who have lived, and survived life's
 fever,
 Had you never known the ravag
 and fire
 Of that inexpressible Desire,
 Which wastes and calcines whatever
 is less
 In the soul, than the soul's deep con-
 sciousness
 Of a life that shall last forever ?
 Doubtless, doubtless, again and
 again,
 Many a mouth has starved for
 bread
 In a city whose wharves are
 choked with corn
 And many a heart hath perished
 dead
 From being too utterly forlorn,
 In a city whose streets are choked
 with men.
 Yet the bread is there, could one find
 it out :
 And there is a heart for a heart, no
 doubt,
 Wherever a human heart may
 beat ;
 And room for courage, and truth,
 and love,
 To move, wherever a man may move,
 In the thickest crowded street.
 O Lord of the soul of man, whose
 will
 Made earth for man, and man for
 heaven,
 Help all thy creatures to fulfil
 The hopes to each one given !
 So fair thou madest, and so complete,
 The little daisies at our feet ;
 So sound, and so robust in heart,
 The patient beasts, that bear their
 part
 In this world's labor, never asking
 The reason of its ceaseless tasking ;

Hast thou made man, though more
 in kind,
 By reason of his soul and mind,
 Yet less in unison with life,
 By reason of an inward strife,
 Than these thy simpler creatures,
 Submitted to his use and care ?
 For these, indeed, appear to live
 To the full verge of their own
 power,
 Nor ever need that time should give
 To life one space beyond the hour.
 They do not pine for what is not ;
 Nor quarrel with the things which
 are ;
 Their yesterdays are all forgot ;
 Their morrows are not feared from
 far :
 They do not weep, and wail, and
 moan,
 For what is past, or what's to be,
 Or what's not yet, and may be
 never ;
 They do not their own lives disown,
 Nor haggle with eternity
 For some unknown Forever.

Ah yet,—in this must I believe
 That man is nobler than the rest :—
 That, looking in on his own breast,
 He measures thus his strength
 and size
 With supernatural destinies,
 Whose shades o'er all his
 being fall ;
 And, in that dread comparison
 'Twixt what is deemed and what
 is done,
 He can, at intervals, perceive
 How weak he is, and small.

Therefore, he knows himself a child,
 Set in this rudimental star,
 To learn the alphabet of Being .
 By straws dismayed, by toys beguiled.
 Yet conscious of a home afar ;
 With all these things here but ill
 agreeing,
 Because he trusts, in manhood's
 prime,
 To walk in some celestial clime ;
 Sit in his Father's house ; and be
 The inmate of Eternity.

BOOK IV.—IN SWITZERLAND.

THE HEART AND NATURE.

THE lake is calm ; and, calm, the
 skies
 In yonder silent sunset glow,
 Where, o'er the woodland, home-
 ward flies
 The solitary crow ;
 The woodman to his hut is gone ;
 The wood-dove in the elm is still ;
 The last sheep drinks, and wanders
 on
 To graze at will.
 Nor aught the pensive prospect
 breaks,
 Save where my slow feet stir the

Or where the trout to diamonds
 breaks
 The lake's pale glass.
 No moan the cushat makes, to heave
 A leaflet round her windless nest ;
 The air is silent in the eve ;
 The world's at rest.
 All bright below ; all calm above ;
 No sense of pain, no sign of wrong
 Save in thy heart of hopeless love,
 Poor child of Song !
 Why must the soul through Nature
 rove,
 At variance with her general plan ?

A stranger to the Power, whose love
Soothes all save Man ?

Why lack the strength of meaner
creatures ?

The wandering sheep, the grazing
kine,
Are surer of their simple natures
Than I of mine.

For all their wants the poorest land
Affords supply ; they browse and
breed ;
I scarcee divine, and ne'er have found,
What most I need.

O God, that in this human heart
Hath made Belief so hard to grow,
And set the doubt, the pang, the
smart
In all we know—

Why hast thou, too, in solemn jest
At this tormented thinking-power,
Inscribed, in flame on yonder West,
In hues on every flower,

Through all the vast unthinking
sphere
Of mere material Force without,
Rebuke so vehement and severe
To the least doubt ?

And robbed the world and hung the
night,
With silent, stern, and solemn
forms ;
And strown with sounds of awe and
might,
The seas and storms,—

All lacking power to impart
To man the secret he assails,
But armed to crush him, if his heart
Once doubts or fails !

To make him feel the same forlorn
Despair the Fiend hath felt ere
now,
In gazing at the stern sweet scorn
On Michael's brow.

A QUIET MOMENT.

STAY with me, Lady, while you
may !

For life's so sad,—this hour's so
sweet ;

Alh, Lady,—life too long will stay ;
Too soon this hour will fleet.

How fair this mountain's purple
bust,

Alone in high and glimmering air!
And see, . . . those village spires,
upthrust

From yon dark plain,—how fair !

How sweet yon lone and lovely scene,
And yonder dropping fiery ball,
And eve's sweet spirit, that steals,
unseen,

With darkness over all !

This blessed hour is yours, and
eve's ;

And this is why it seems so sweet
To lie, as husht as fallen leaves
In autumn, at your feet ;

And watch, awhile released from
care,

The twilight in yon quiet skies,
The twilight in your quiet hair,
The twilight in your eyes :

Till in my soul the twilight stays,
—Eve's twilight, since the dawn's
is o'er !

And life's too well-known worthless
days
Become unknown once more.

Your face is no uncommon face ;
Like it, I have seen many a one,
And may again, before my race
Of care be wholly run.

But not the less, those earnest
brows,

And that pure oval cheek can
charm ;—

Those eyes of tender deep repose ;
That breast, the heart keeps warm

Because a sense of goodness sleeps
 In every sober, soft, brown tress,
 That o'er those brows, uncared for,
 keeps

Its shadowy quietness :

Because that lip's soft silence shows,
 Though passion it hath never
 known,
 That well, to kiss one kiss, it
 knows—

—A woman's holiest one !

Yours is the charm of calm good
 sense,
 Of wholesome views of earth and
 heaven,

Of pity, touched with reverence,
 'To all things freely given.

Your face no sleepless midnight fills,
 For all its serious sweet endeavor;
 It plants no pang, no rapture thrills,
 But ah !—it pleases ever !

Not yours is Cleopatra's eye,
 And Juliet's tears you never knew :
 Never will amorous Antony
 Kiss kingdoms out for you !

Never for you will Romeo's love,
 From deeps of moonlit musing,
 break

To poetry about the glove
 Whose touch may press your
 cheek.

But ah, in one,—no Antony
 Nor Romeo now, nor like to
 these,—

(Whom neither Cleopatra's eye,
 Nor Juliet's tears, could please)

How well they lull the lurking care
 Which else within the mind en-
 dures,—

That soft white hand, that soft dark
 hair,
 And that soft voice of yours !

So, while you stand, a fragile form,
 With that close shawl around you
 drawn,

And ev'rs last ardors fading warm
 Adown the mountain lawn,

'Tis sweet, although we part to-mor-
 row,
 And ne'er, the same, shall meet
 again,

Awhile, from old habitual sorrow
 To cease ; to cease from pain ;

To feel that, ages past, the soul
 Hath lived—and ages hence will
 live ;

And taste, in hours like this, the
 whole

Of all the years can give.

Then, Lady, yet one moment stay,
 While your sweet face makes all
 things sweet,

For ah, the charm will pass away
 Before again we meet !

NÆNIE.

SOFT, soft be thy sleep in the land of
 the West,
 Fated maiden !

Fair lie the flowers, love, and light,
 on thy breast

Passion-laden,

In the place where thou art, by the
 storm-beaten strand

Of the moaning Atlantic,

While, alone with my sorrow, I roam
 through thy land,

The beloved, the romantic !

And thy faults, child, sleep where in
 those dark eyes Death closes

All their doings and undoings ;

For who counts the thorns on last
 year's perisht roses ?

Smile, dead rose, in thy ruins !

With thy beauty, its frailty is over.
 No token

Of all which thou wast !

Not so much as the stem whence the
 blossom was broken

Hath been spared by the frost.

With thy lips, and thine eyes, and
 thy long golden tresses,

Cold . . . and so young too !

All lost, like the sweetness which
 died with our kisses,

On the lips we once clung to.
 Be it so ! O too loved, and too lovely,
 to linger
 Where Age in its bareness
 Creeps slowly, and Time with his
 terrible finger
 Effaces all fairness.
 Thy being was but beauty, thy life
 only rapture,
 And, ere both were over,
 Or yet one delight had escaped from
 thy capture,
 Death came,—thy last lover,
 And found thee, . . . no care on thy
 brow, in thy tresses
 No silver—all gold there !
 On thy lips, when he kissed them,
 their last human kisses
 Had scarcely grown cold there.
 Thine was only earth's joy, not its
 sorrow, its sinning,
 Its friends that are foes too.
 O, fair was thy life in its lovely begin-
 ning,
 And fair in its close too !
 But I ? . . . since we parted, both
 mournful and many
 Life's changes have been to me :
 And of all the love-garlands Youth
 wove me, not any
 Remain that are green to me.
 O, where are the nights, with thy
 touch and thy breath in them,
 Faint with heart-beating ?
 The fragrance, the darkness, the life
 and the death in them,
 —Parting and meeting ?
 All the world ours in that hour ! . . .
 O, the silence,
 The moonlight, and, far in it,
 The one nightingale singing a mile
 hence ! | it !
 The oped window—one star in
 its witness of stolen sweet mo-
 ments, unguessed of
 By the world in its primness ;—
 Just one smile to adore by the star-
 light : the rest of
 Thy soul in the dimness !
 U - glide through the door of thy
 chamber, and sit there,

The old, faint, uncertain
 Fragrance, that followed thee, surely
 will flit there,—
 O'er the chairs,—in the cur-
 tain :—
 But thou ? . . . O thou missed, and
 thou mourned one ! O never,
 Nevermore, shall we rove
 Through chamber, or garden, or by
 the dark river
 Soft lamps burn above !
 O dead, child, dead, dead—all the
 shrunken romance
 Of the dream life begun with !
 But thou, love, canst alter no more—
 smile or glance ;
 Thy last change is done with.
 As a moon that is sunken, a sunset
 that's o'er,
 So thy face keeps the semblance
 Of the last look of love, the last grace
 that it wore,
 In my mourning remembrance.
 As a strain from the last of thy songs,
 when we parted,
 Whose echoes thrill yet,
 Through the long dreamless nights
 of sad years, lonely-hearted,
 With their haunting regret,—
 Though nerveless the hand now, and
 shattered the lute too,
 Once vocal for me,
 There floats through life's ruins,
 when all's dark and mute too,
 The music of thee !
 Beauty, how brief ! Life, how long !
 . . . well, love's done now !
 Down the path fate arranged for
 me
 I tread faster, because I must tread
 it alone now.
 —This is all that is changed for
 me.
 My heart must have broken, ere I
 broke the fetter
 Thyself didst undo, love.
 —Ah, there's many a purer, and
 many a better,
 But more loved, . . . O, how few,
 love !

BOOK V.—IN HOLLAND.

AUTUMN.

So now, then, Summer's over—by degrees.

Hark ! 'tis the wind in yon red region grieves.

Who says the world grows better, growing old ?

See ! what poor trumpery on those pauper trees,

That cannot keep, for all their fine gold leaves,

Their last bird from the cold.

This is Dame Nature, puckered, pinched, and sour,

Of all the charms her poets praised, bereft,

Scowling and scolding (only hear her, there !)

Like that old spiteful Queen, in her last hour,

Whom Spenser, Shakespeare, sung to . . . nothing left

But wrinkles and red hair !

LEAFLESS HOURS.

THE pale sun, through the spectral wood,

Gleams sparely, where I pass :

My footstep, silent as my mood,
Falls in the silent grass.

Only my shadow points before me,
Where I am moving now :

Only sad memories murmur o'er me
From every leafless bough :

And out of the nest of last year's
Redbreast

Is stolen the very snow.

ON MY TWENTY-FOURTH
YEAR.

THE night's in November : the winds are at strife :

The snow's on the hill, and the ice on the mere :

The world to its winter is turned
and my life
To its twenty-fourth year.

The swallows are flown to the south
long ago :

The roses are fallen : the woodland is sere.

Hope's flown with the swallows :
Love's rose will not grow

In my twenty-fourth year.

The snow on the threshold : the cold
at the heart :

But the fagot to warm, and the wine-cup to cheer :

God's help to look up to : and courage to start

On my twenty-fourth year.

And 'tis well that the month of the roses is o'er !

The last, which I plucked for Nereæ to wear,

She gave her new lover. A man should do more

With his twenty-fourth year

Than mourn for a woman, because she's unkind,

Or pine for a woman, because she is fair.

Ah, I loved you, Nereæ ! But now . . . never mind,

'Tis my twenty-fourth year !

What a thing ! to have done with the follies of Youth,

Ere Age brings its follies ! . . . though many a tear

It should cost, to see Love fly away,
and find Truth

In one's twenty-fourth year.

The Past's golden valleys are drained.
I must plant

On the Future's rough upland new harvests, I fear.

Ho, the plough and the team! . . .
 who would perish of want
 In his twenty-fourth year?

Man's heart is a well, which forever
 renews

The void at the bottom, no sound-
 ing comes near:
 And Love does not die, though its
 object I lose

In my twenty-fourth year.

The great and the little are only in
 name.

The smoke from my chimney casts
 shadows as drear

On the heart, as the smoke from
 Vesuvius in flame:

And my twenty-fourth year,

From the joys that have cheered it,
 the cares that have troubled,

What is wise to pursue, what is
 well to revere,

May judge all as fully as though life
 were doubled

To its forty-eighth year!

If the prospect grow dim, 'tis be-
 cause it grows wide.

Every loss hath its gain. So, from
 sphere on to sphere,

Man mounts up the ladder of Time:
 so I stride

Up my twenty-fourth year!

Exulting? . . . no . . . sorrowing?
 . . . no . . . with a mind

Whose regret chastens hope, whose
 faith triumphs o'er fear:

Not repining: not confident: no,
 but resigned

To my twenty-fourth year.

JACQUELINE,

COUNTESS OF HOLLAND AND HAIN-
 AULT.*

Is it the twilight, or my fading sight,
 Makes all so dim around me? No,
 the night

Is come already. See! through yon-
 der pane,

Alone in the gray air, that star
 again—

Which shines so wan, I used to call
 it mine

For its pale face: like Countess
 Jacqueline

Who reigned in Brabant once . .
 that's years ago.

I called so much mine, then: so
 much seemed so!

And see, my own!—of all those
 things, my star

(Because God hung it there, in
 heaven, so far

Above the reach and want of those
 hard men) [Then

Is all they have not taken from me.
 I call it still My Star. Why not?

The dust
 Hath claimed the dust: no more.

And moth and rust
 May rot the throne, the kingly pur-
 ple fray:

What then? Yon star saw king-
 doms rolled away

Ere mine was taken from me. It
 survives.

But think, Beloved,—in that high
 life of lives,

When our souls see the suns them-
 selves burn low

Before that Sun of Righteousness,—
 and know

What is, and was, before the suns
 were lit,—

How love is all in all . . . Look, look
 at it,

My star,—God's star,—for being
 God's 'tis mine:

Had it been man's . . . no matte-
 . . . see it shine—

* "good Duke Humphry," of Gloucester, and finally wedded to Frank von Borseien, a gentleman of Zealand, in consequence of which marriage she lost even the title of Countess. She died at the age of thirty-six, after a life of unparalleled adventure and misfortune. See any Biographical Dictionary, or any History of the Netherlands.

* Who was married to the impotent and worthless John of Brabant, affianced to

The old wan beam, which I have
 watched ere now
 So many a wretched night, when this
 poor brow
 Ached 'neath the sorrows of its
 thorny crown.
Its crown! . . . ah, droop not, dear,
 those fond eyes down.
 No gem in all that shattered cor-
 net
 Was half so precious as the tear
 which wet
 Just now this pale sick forehead. O
 my own,
 My husband, need was, that I should
 have known
 Much sorrow,—more than most
 Queens,—all know some,—
 Ere, dying, I could bless thee for the
 home
 Far dearer than the Palace,—call thy
 tear.
 The costliest gem that ever sparkled
 here.
 Infold me, my Belovéd. One more
 kiss.
 O, I must go! 'Twas willed I should
 not miss
 Life's secret, ere I left it. And now
 see,—
 My lips touch thine—thine arm en-
 circles me—
 The secret's found—God beckons—
 I must go.
 Earth's best is given.—Heaven's
 turn is come to show
 How much its best earth's best may
 yet exceed,
 Let earth's should seem the very
 best indeed.
 So we must part a little; but not
 long.
 I seem to see it all. My lands be-
 long
 To Philip still; but thine will be
 my grave,
 (The only strip of land which I could
 save!)
 Not much, but wide enough for some
 few flowers,
 Thou'lt plant there, by and by, in
 later hours:
 Duke Humphry, when they tell him
 I am dead
 (And so young too!) will sigh, and
 shake his head,
 And if his wife should chide, "Poor
 Jacqueline,"
 He'll add, "You know she never
 could be mine."
 And men will say, when some one
 speaks of me,
 "Alas, it was a piteous history,
 The life of that poor countess!"
 For the rest
 Will never know, my love, how I
 was blest.
 Some few of my poor Zealanders,
 perchance,
 Will keep kind memories of me; and
 in France
 Some minstrel sing my story. Piti-
 less John
 Will prosper still, no doubt, as he
 has done,
 And still praise God with blood up-
 on the Rood.
 Philip will, doubtless, still be called
 "The Good."
 And men will curse and kill: and
 the old game
 Will weary out new hands: the love
 of fame
 Will sow new sins: thou wilt not be
 renowned:
 And I shall lie quite quiet under
 ground.
 My life is a torn book. But at the
 end
 A little page, quite fair, is saved, my
 friend,
 Where thou didst write thy name.
 No stain is there,
 No blot,—from marge to marge, all
 pure—no tear;—
 The last page, saved from all, and
 writ by thee,
 Which I shall take safe up to Hea-
 ven with me.
 All's not in vain, since this be so.
 Dost grieve?

Belovéd, I beseech thee to believe
 Although this be the last page of my
 life,
 It is my heart's first, only one. Thy
 wife,
 Poor though she be, O thou sole
 wealth of mine,
 Is happier than the Countess Jacque-
 line !
 And since my heart owns thine, say,
 —am I not
 A Queen, my chosen, though by all
 forgot ?
 Though all forsake, yet is not this
 thy hand ?
 I, a lone wanderer in a darkened
 land,
 I, a poor pilgrim with no staff of
 hope,
 I, a late traveller down the evening
 slope,
 Where any spark, the glow-worm's
 by the way,
 Had been a light to bless . . . have
 I, O say,
 Not found, Belovéd, in thy tender
 eyes,
 A light more sweet than morning's ?
 As there dies
 Some day of storm all glorious in its
 even,
 My life grows loveliest as it fades in
 heaven.
 This earthly house breaks up. This
 flesh must fade.
 So many shocks of grief slow breach
 have made
 Of the poor frame. Wrongs, insults,
 Treacheries,
 Houses broken down, and memory
 which sighs
 In like a night-wind ! Life was
 never meant
 To bear so much in such frail tene-
 ment.
 Why should we seek to patch and
 plaster o'er
 This shattered roof, crushed windows,
 broken door
 The light already shines through ?
 Let them break.

Yet would I gladly live for thy dear
 sake,
 O my heart's first and last, if that
 could be !
 In vain ! . . . yet grieve not thou.
 I shall not see
 England again, and those white
 cliffs ; nor ever
 Again those four gray towers beside
 the river,
 And London's roaring bridges : never
 more
 Those windows with the market-
 stalls before,
 Where the red-kirtled market-girls
 went by
 In the great square, beneath the
 great gray sky,
 In Brussels : nor in Holland, night
 or day,
 Watch those long lines of siege, and
 fight at bay
 Among my broken army, in default
 Of Gloucester's failing forces from
 Hainault :
 Nor shall I pace again those gardens
 green,
 With their clipt alleys, where they
 called me Queen,
 In Brabant once. For all these
 things are gone.
 But thee I shall behold, my chosen
 one,
 Though we should seem whole
 worlds on worlds apart,
 Because thou wilt be ever in my
 heart.
 Nor shall I leave thee wholly. I
 shall be
 An evening thought,—a morning
 dream to thee,—
 A silence in thy life when, through
 the night,
 The bell strikes, or the sun, with
 sinking light,
 Smites all the empty windows. / s
 there sprout
 Daisies, and dimpling tufts of v
 lets, and
 Among the grass where some corse
 lies asleep,

So round thy life, where I lie buried deep,
 A thousand little tender thoughts shall spring,
 A thousand gentle memories wind and cling.
 O, promise me, my own, before my soul
 Is houseless,—let the great world turn and roll
 Upon its way unvest . . . Its pomps, its powers!
 The dust says to the dust, . . . “the earth is ours.”
 I would not, if I could, be Queen again
 For all the walls of the wide world contain.
 Be thou content with silence. Who would raise
 A little dust and noise of human praise,
 If he could see, in yonder distance dim, [him?
 The silent eye of God that watches
 Oh! couldst thou see all that I see to-night
 Upon the brinks of the great Infinite!
 “Come out of her, my people, lest ye be
 Partakers of her sins!” . . . My love, but we
 Our treasure where no thieves break in and steal.
 Have stored, I trust. Earth’s wealth is not our wealth.
 Let the world mind its business—peace or war,
 Ours is elsewhere. Look, look,—my star, my star!
 It grows, it glows, it spreads in light unfurled;—
 Said I “my star?” No star—a world—God’s world!
 What hymns adown the jasper sea are rolled,
 Even to these sick pillows! Who unfold
 White wings about me? Rest, rest, rest . . . I come!

O Love! I think that I am near my home.
 Whence was that music? Was it Heaven’s I heard?
 Write “Blesséd are the dead that die!” the Lord,
 Because they rest,” . . . because their toil is o’er.
 The voice of weeping shall be heard no more
 In the Eternal city. Neither dying
 Nor sickness, pain nor sorrow, neither crying,
 For God shall wipe away all tears.
 Rest, rest,
 Thy hand, my husband,—so—upon thy breast!

MACROMICROS.

It is the star of solitude
 Alight in yon lonely sky.
 The sea is silent in its mood,
 Motherlike moaning a lullaby
 To hush the hungering mystery
 To sleep on its breast subdued.
 The night is alone, and I.

It is not the scene I am seeing,
 The lonely sky and the sea,
 It is the pathos of Being
 That is making so dark in me
 This silent and solemn hour :—
 The bale of baffled power,
 The wail of unballed desire,
 The fire that must ever devour
 The source by which it is fire.

My spirit expands, expands!
 I spread out my soul on the sea—
 I feel for yet unfound lands,
 And I find but the land where She
 Sits, with her sad white hands,
 At her golden broidery,
 In sight of the sorrowful sands,
 In an antique gallery,
 Where, ever beside her, stands
 (Moodily mimicking me)
 The ghost of a something her heart
 demands
 For a blessing which cannot be.

And broder, broider by night and day

The brede of thy blazing broidery!
T'U thy beauty be wholly wovon
away

Into the desolate tapestry.
Let the thread be scarlet, the gold
be gay,
For the damp to dim, and the moth
to fray :

Weave in the azure, and crimson,
and green !
Till the slow threads, needling out
and in,

To take a fashion and form begin :
Yet, for all the time and toil, I see
'The work is vain, and will not be
Like what it was meant to have
been.

O woman, woman, with face so
pale !

Pale woman, weaving away
A frustrate life at a lifeless
loom,
Early or late, 'tis of little avail
That thou lightest the lamp in
the gloom.

Full well, I see, there is coming a
day

When the work shall forever rest
incomplete.

Fling, fling the foolish blazon away,
And weave me a winding-sheet !

It is not for thee in this dreary hour,
That I walk, companionless here
by the shore.

I am caught in the eddy and whirl
of a power

Which is not grief, and is not love,
Though it loves and grieves,

Within me, without me, wherever I
move

In the going out of the ghostly
eyes,
And is changing me more and
more.

I am not mourning for thee, al-
though

I love thee, and thou art lost :
Nor yet for myself, albeit I know

That my life is flawed and croct :
But for that sightless, sorrowing
Soul

That is feeling blind with immortal
pain,
All round, for what it can never
attain ;

That prisoned, pining, and passion-
ate soul,
So vast, and yet so small ;

That seems, now nothing, now all,
That moves me to pity beyond con-
trol,

And repulses pity again.
I am mourning, since mourn I must,
With those patient Powers that
bear,

'Neath the unattainable stars up
there,

With the pomp and pall of funeral,
Subject and yet august,
The weight of this world's dust :—

The ruined giant under the rock :
The stricken spirit below the
ocean :

And the winged things wounded of
old by the shock

That set the earth in motion.

Ah yet, . . . and yet, and yet,
If She were here with me,

If she were here by the sea,
With the face I cannot forget,

Then all things would not be
So fraught with my own regret,

But what I should feel and see,
And seize it at last, at last,—

The secret known and lost in the
past,

To unseal the Genii that sleep
In vials long hid in the deep ;

By forgotten, fashionless spells held
fast,

Where through streets of the cities
of coral, aghast,

The sea-nymphs wander and weep.

MYSTERY.

THE hour was one of mystery,
When we were sailing, I and she,

Down the dark, the silent stream,
The stars above were pale with love,
And a wizard wind did faintly move,
Like a whisper through a dream.

Her head was on my breast,
Her loving little head !
Her hand in mine was prest,
And not a word we said ;
But round and round the night we
wound,
Till we came at last to the Isle of
Fays ;
And, all the while, from the magic
isle,
Came that music, that music of
other days !

The lamps in the garden gleamed.
The Palace was all alight.
The sound of the viols streamed
Through the windows over the
night.
We saw the dancers pass
At the windows, two by two.
The dew was on the grass,
And the glow-worm in the dew.

We came through the grass to the
cypress-tree.
We stood in its shadow, I and she.
"Thy face is pale, thine eyes are
wild.
What aileth thee, what aileth
thee ?"

"Naught aileth me," she murmured
mild,
"Only the moonlight makes me
pale ;
The moonlight, shining through the
veil
Of this black cypress-tree."

"By yonder moon, whose light so
soon
Will fade upon the gloom,
And this black tree, whose mystery
Is mingled with the tomb,—
By Love's brief moon, and Death's
dark tree,
Lovest thou me ?"

Upon my breast she leaned her
head ;
"By yonder moon and tree,
I swear that all my soul," she said,
"Is given to thee."

"I know not what thy soul may be,
Nor canst thou make it mine.
Yon stars may all be worlds : for me
Enough to know they shine.
Thou art mine evening star. I know
At dawn star-distant thou wilt be ;
I shall not hear thee murmuring
low ;
Thy face I shall not see.
I love thy beauty : 'twill not stay
Let it be all mine while it may.
I have no bliss save in the kiss
Thou givest me."

We came to the statue carved in
stone,
Over the fountain. We stood there
alone.
"What aileth thee, that thou dost
sigh ?
And why is thy hand so cold ?"
"'Tis the fountain that sighs,"
. . . she said, "not I ;
And the statue, whose hand thou
dost hold."

"By yonder fount, that flows for-
ever,
And this statue, that cannot
move,—
By the fountain of Time, that ceases
never,
And the fixedness of Love,—
By motion and immutability
Lovest thou me ?"

"By the fountain of Time, with its
ceaseless flow,
And the image of Love that rests,"
sighed she,
"I love thee, I swear, come joy,
come woe,
For eternity !"

“Eternity is a word so long
That I cannot spell it now ;
For the nightingale is singing her
 song
From yon pomegranate bough.
Let it mean what it may—Eternity,
If thou lovest me now as I love thee,
As I love thee !”

We came to the Palace. We
 mounted the stair.
The great hall-doors wide open
 were.
And all the dancers that danced in
 the hall
Greeted us to the festival.

There were ladies, as fair as fair
 might be,
But not one of them all was as fair
 as she.
There were knights that looked at
 them lovingly,
But not one of them all was loving
 as I.

Only, each noble cavalier
Had his throat red-lined from ear
 to ear ;
'Twas a collar of merit, I have
 heard,
Which a Queen upon each had once
 conferred.
And each lovely lady that oped her
 lip
Let a little mouse's tail outslip ;
'Twas the fashion there, I know not
 why,
But fashions are changing con-
 stantly.
From the crescented naphtha lamps
 each ray
 Streamed into a still enchanted
 blaze ;—
And forth from the deep-toned
 orchestra
 That music, that music of other
 days !

My arm enlaced her winsome waist,
And down the dance we flew :

We flew, we raced : our lips em-
 braced :
And our breath was mingled too.
Round, and round, to a magic
 sound—

(A wizard waltz to a wizard
 air !)
Round and round, we whirled, we
 wound,
In a circle light and fine :
 My cheek was fanned by her
 fragrant hair,
And her bosom beat on mine :
And all the while, in the winding
 ways,
That music, that music of other
 days,
 With its melodies divine !

The palace clock stands in the hall,
And talks, unheard, of the fight
 of time :
With a face too pale for a festival
 It telleth a tale too sad for rhyme.

The palace clock, with a silver note,
Is chanting the death of the hou-
 that dies.

“What aileth thee ? for I see float
 A shade into thine eyes.”

“Naught aileth me,” . . . low
 murmured she,

“I am faint with the dance, my
 love,
Give me thine arm : the air is
 warm :
 Lead me unto the grove.”

We wandered into the grove. We
 found
A bower by woodbine woven round.

Upon my breast she leaned her
 head :

I drew her into the bower apart.
“I swear to thee, my love,” she
 said,
 “Thou hast my heart !”

“Ah, leave thy little heart at rest !
For it is so light, I think, so
 light,

Some wind would blow it away to-night,
If it were not safe in thy breast.

But the wondrous brightness on
thine hair

Did never seem more bright :
And thy beauty never looked more
fair

Than thy beauty looks to-night :
And this dim hour, and this wild
bower,

Were made for our delight :
Here we will stay, until the day,
In yon dark east grows white."

"This may not be," . . . she answered me,

"For I was lately wed
With a diamond ring to an Ogre-
king.

And I am his wife," . . . she
said.

"My husband is old, but his crown
is of gold :

And he hath a cruel eye :
And his arm is long, and his hand is
strong,

And his body is seven ells high :
And alas ! I fear, if he found us
here,

That we both should surely die.

"All day I take my harp, and
play

To him on a golden string :
Thorough the weary livelong day
I play to him, and sing :

I sing to him till his white hair
Begins to curl and creep :

And his wrinkles old slowly unfold,
And his brows grow smooth as
sleep.

But at night, when he calls for his
golden cup,

Into his wine I pour
A juice which he drinks duly up,
And sleeps till the night is o'er.

For one moment I wait : I look at
him straight,

And tell him for once how much
I detest him :

I have no fear lest he should hear,

The drug he hath drained hath so
opprest him.

Then, finger on lip, away I slip,
And down the hills, till I reach the
stream :

[pear,
I call to thee clear, till the boat ap-
And we sail together through dark
and drear.

And sweet it is, in this Isle of Fays,
To wander at will through a garden
of flowers,

While the flowers that bloom, and
the lamps that blaze,

And the very nightingales seem
ours !

[ways
And sweeter it is, in the winding
Of the waltz, while the music falls
in showers,

While the minstrel plays, and the
moment stays,

And the sweet brief rapture of
love is ours !

"But the night is far spent ; and
before the first rent

In yon dark blue sky overhead,
My husband will wake, and the spell
will break,

And peril is near," . . . she said.

"For if he should wake, and not find
me.

By bower and brake, thorough bush
and tree,

He will come to seek me here ;

And the Palace of Fays, in one vast
blaze,

Will sink and disappear ;

And the nightingales will die in the
vales,

And all will be changed and
drear !

For the fays and elves can take care
of themselves :

They will slip on their slippers,
and go :

In their little green cloaks they will
hide in the oaks,

And the forests and brakes, for
their sweet sakes,

Will cover and keep them, I
know.

And the knights, with their spurs,
 and velvets and furs,
 Will take off their heads, each
 one,
 And to horse, and away, as fast as
 they may,
 O'er brook, and bramble, and
 stone ;

And each dame of the house has a
 little dun mouse,

That will whisper her when to be
 gone ;

But we, my love, in this desolate
 grove,

We shall be left alone ;

And my husband will find us, take
 us and bind us :

In his cave he will lock me up,
 And pledge me for spite in thy blood
 by night

When he drains down his golden
 cup."

"Thy husband, dear, is a monster,
 'tis clear,

But just now I will not tarry

Thy choice to dispute—how on earth
 such a brute

Thou hadst ever the fancy to
 marry.

For wherefore, meanwhile, are we
 two here,

In a fairy island under a spell,
 By night, in a magical atmosphere,

In a lone enchanted dell,

If we are to say and do no more
 Than is said and done by the dull
 daylight,

In that dry old world, where both
 must ignore,

To-morrow, the dream of to-
 night."

Her head drooped on my breast,
 Fair foolish little head !

Her lips to mine were prest.

Never a word was said.

If it were but a dream of the night,
 A dream that I dreamed in sleep—

Why, then, is my face so white,

And this wound so red and deep ?

But whatever it was, it all took place
 In a land where never your steps
 will go,

Though they wander, wherever they
 will, through space ;

In an hour you never will know,

Though you should outlive the
 crow

That is like to outlive your race.

And if it were but a dream, it broke
 Too soon, albeit too late I wcke.

Waked by the smart of a sound...g
 stroke

Which has so confused my wits,
 That I cannot remember, and never
 shall,

What was the close of that festival,
 Nor how the Palace was shat-
 tered to bits :

For all that, just now, I think I
 know,

Is what is the force of an Ogre's
 blow,

As my head, by starts and fits,
 Aches and throbs ; and, when I look
 round,

All that I hear is the sickening
 sound

Of the nurse's watch, and the doc-
 tor's boots,

Instead of the magical fairy flutes ;
 And all that I see, in my love's lost
 place,

Is that gin-drinking hag, with her
 nut-cracker face,

By the earth's half-burned out
 wood :

And the only stream is this stream
 of blood

That flows from me, red and wide :
 Yet still I hear,—as sharp and clear,
 In the horrible, horrible silence out-
 side,

The clock that stands in the empty
 hall,

And talks to my soul of the flight of
 time ;

With a face like a face at a fu-
 neral,

Telling a tale too sad for rhyme :

And still I hear, with as little cheer,
 In the yet more horrible silence
 inside,
 Chanted, perchance, by elves and
 fays,
 From some far island, out of my
 gaze,
 Where a house has fallen, and
 some one has died,
 That music, that music of other
 days,
 With its minstrelsy undescried !
 For time, which surviveth every-
 thing,
 And Memory which surviveth
 Time :—
 These two sit by my side, and sing,
 A song too sad for rhyme.

THE CANTICLE OF LOVE.

I ONCE heard an angel, by night, in
 the sky,
 Singing softly a song to a deep
 golden lute :
 The polestar, the seven little planets,
 and I,
 To the song that he sung listened
 mute.
 For the song that he sung was so
 strange and so sweet,
 And so tender the tones of his
 lute's golden strings,
 That the Seraphs of Heaven sat
 hush'd at his feet,
 And folded their heads in their
 wings.
 And the song that he sung by those
 Seraphs up there
 Is called . . . "Love." But the
 words, I had heard them else-
 where.
 For, when I was last in the nether-
 most Hell,
 On a rock 'mid the sulphurous
 surges, I heard
 A pale spirit sing to a wild hollow
 shell,

And his song was the same, every
 word.
 But so sad was his singing, all Hell
 to the sound
 Moaned, and, wailing, complained
 like a monster in pain,
 While the fiends hovered near o'er
 the dismal profound,
 With their black wings weigh'd
 down by the strain.

And the song that was sung by the
 Lost Ones down there
 Is called . . . "Love." But the
 spirit that sung was Despair.

When the moon sets to-night, I will
 go down to ocean,
 Bare my brow to the breeze, and
 my heart to its anguish ;
 And sing till the Siren with pining
 emotion
 (Unrous'd in her sea-caves) shall
 languish.
 And the Sylphs of the water shall
 crouch at my feet,
 With their white wistful faces
 turned upward to hear,
 And the soft Salamanders shall float,
 in the heat
 Of the ocean volcanoes, more near.

For the song I have learned, all that
 listen shall move :
 But there's one will not listen, and
 that one I love.

THE PEDLER.

THERE was a man, whom you might
 see,
 Toward nightfall, on the dusty
 track,
 Faring, footsore and wearily—
 A strong box on his back.

A speck against the flaring sky,
 You saw him pass the line o'
 dates,
 The camel-drivers loitering by
 From Bagdad's dusking gates.

The merchants from Bassora stared,
And of his wares would question
him.

But, without answer, on he fared
Into the evening dim.

Nor only in the east : but oft
In northern lands of ice and snow,
You might have seen, past field and
croft,
That figure faring slow.

His cheek was worn ; his back bent
double
Beneath the iron box he bore ;
And in his walk there seemed such
trouble,
You saw his feet were sore.

You wondered if he ever had
A settled home, a wife, a child :
You marvelled if a face so sad
At any time had smiled.

The cheery housewife oft would
fling
A pitying alms, as on he strode,
Where, round the hearth, a rosy
ring,
Her children's faces glowed :

In the dark doorway, oft the maid,
Late-lingering on her lover's arm,
Watched through the twilight, half
afraid,
That solitary form.

The traveller hailed him oft, . . .
"Good night :
The town is far : the road is lone :
God speed !" . . . already out of
sight,
The wayfarer was gone.

But, when the night was late and
still,
And the last star of all had crept
Into his place above the hill,
He laid him down and slept.

His head on that strong box he laid :
And there, beneath the star-cold
skies,
In slumber, I have heard it said,
There rose before his eyes

A lovely dream, a vision fair,
Of some far-off, forgotten land,
And of a girl with golden hair,
And violets in her hand.

He sprang to kiss her . . . "Ah !
once more
Return, beloved, and bring with
thee
The glory and delight of yore,—
Lost evermore to me !

Then, ere she answered, o'er his
back
There fell a brisk and sudden
stroke,—
So sound and resolute a thwack
That, with the blow, he woke . . .

There comes out of that iron box
An ugly hag, an angry crone ;
Her crutch about his ears she
knocks :
She leaves him not alone :

"Thou lazy vagabond ! come, budge,
And carry me again," . . . she
says :
"Not half the journey's over . . .
trudge !"
. . . He groans, and he obeys.

Oft in the sea he sought to fling
That iron box. But witches swim :
And wave and wind were sure to
bring
The old hag back to him ;

Who all the more about his brains
Belabored him with such hard
blows,
That the poor devil, for his pains,
Wished himself dead, heaven
knows !

Love, is it thy hand in mine ? . . .
Behold !
I see the crutch uplifted high.
The angry hag prepares to scold.
*O, yet we might Good
by !*

A GHOST STORY.

I LAY awake past midnight :
The moon set o'er the snow :
The very cocks, for coldness,
Could neither sleep nor crow.

There came to me, near morning,
A woman pale and fair :
She seemed a monarch's daughter,
By the red gold round her hair.

The ring upon her finger
Was one that well I know :
I knew her fair face also,
For I had loved it so !

But I felt I saw a spirit,
And I was sore afraid ;
For it is many and many a year
Ago, since she was dead.

I would have spoken to her,
But I could not speak, for fear :
Because it was a homeless ghost
That walked beyond its sphere ;

Till her head from her white shoulders
She lifted up : and said . . .
*"Look in ! you'll find I'm hollow.
Pray do not be afraid !"*

SMALL PEOPLE.

THE warm moon was up in the sky,
And the warm summer out on the
land.

There trembled a tear from her eye:
There trembled a tear on my hand.

Her sweet face I could not see clear,
For the shade was so dark in the
tree :

I only felt touched by a tear,
And I thought that the tear was
for me.

In her small car I whispered a word—
With her sweet lips she laughed in
my face

And, as light through the leaves as a
bird,
She flitted away from the place.

Then she told to her sister, the
Snake,
All I said, and her cousin the
Toad.
The Snake slipped away to the brake,
The Toad went to town by the
road.

The Toad told the Devil's coach-
horse,
Who cock'd up his tail at the
news.

The Snake hissed the secret, of
course,
To the Newt, who was changing
her shoes.

The Newt drove away to the ball,
And told it the Scorpion and Asp.
The Spider, who lives in the wall,
Overheard it, and told it the Wasp.

The Wasp told the Midge and the
Gnat :
And the Gnat told the Flea and
the Nit.

The Nit dropped an egg as she sat :
The Flea shrugged his shoulders,
and bit.

The Nit and the Flea are too small.
And the Snake slips from under
my foot :

I wish I could find 'mid them all
A man,—to insult and to shoot !

METEMPSYCHOSIS.

SHE fanned my life out with her soft
little sighs :

She hushed me to death with her
face so fair :

I was drunk with the light of her
wild blue eyes,
And strangled dumb in her long
gold hair.

So now I'm a blessed and wandering
ghost,
Though I cannot quite find out my
way up to heaven :
But I hover about o'er the long
reedy coast,
In the wistful light of a low red
even.

I have borrowed the coat of a little
gray gnat :
There's a small sharp song I have
learned how to sing :
I know a green place she is sure to
be at :
I shall light on her neck there,
and sting, and sting.

Tra-la-la, tra-la-la, life never pleased
me !
I fly where I list now, and sleep at
my ease.
Buzz, buzz, buzz ! the dead only are
free.
Yonder's my way now. Give place,
if you please.

TO THE QUEEN OF SERPENTS.

I TRUST that never more in this
world's shade
Thine eyes will be upon me : never
more
Thy face come back to me. For
thou hast made
My whole life sore :

And I might curse thee, if thou
camest again
To mock me with the memory in
thy face
Of days I would had been not. So
much pain
Hath made me base—

Enough to wreak the wrath of years
of wrong
Even on so frail and weak a thing
as thou !
Fare hence, and be forgotten. . . .
Sing thy song,
And braid thy brow,

And be beloved, and beautiful,
and be
In beauty baleful still . . . a Ser-
pent Queen
To others not yet curst by kissing
thee,
As I have been.

But come not nigh me till my erd
be near,
And I have turned a dying face
toward heaven.
Then, if thou wilt, approach,—and
have no fear,
And be forgiven.

Close, if thou wilt, mine eyes, and
smooth my hair :
Fond words will come upon my
parting breath.
Nor, having desolated life, forbear
Kind offices to death.

BLUEBEARD.

I WAS to wed young Fatima,
As pure as April's snowdrops are,
In whose love lay hid my crooked
life,
As in its sheath my cimeter.

Among the hot pomegranate boughs,
At sunset, here alone we sat.
To call back something from that
hour
I'd give away my Caliphate.

She broke her song to gaze at me :
Her lips she leaned my lips
above . . .

"Why art thou silent all this while,
Lord of my life, and of my love?"

"*Silent I am, young Fatima,
For silent is my soul in me,
And language will not help the want
Of that which cannot ever be.*"

"But wherefore is thy spirit sad,
My lord, my love, my life?" . . .
she said.

"*Because thy face is wondrous like
The face of one I knew, that's
dead.*"

"Ah cruel, cruel," cried Fatima,
 "That I should not possess the
 past!
 What woman's lips first kissed the
 lips
 Where my kiss lived and lingered
 last."

"And *sae* that's dead was loved by
 thee,
 That so her memory moves thee
 yet? . . .
 Thy face grows cold and white, as
 looks
 The moon o'er yonder minaret!"

"Ay, Fatima! I loved her well,
 With all of love's and life's de-
 spair,
 Or else I had not strangled her,
 That night, in her own fatal hair."

FATIMA.

A YEAR ago thy cheek was bright,
 As oleander buds that break
 The dark of yonder dells by night
 Above the lamp-lit lake.

Pale as a snowdrop in Cashmere
 Thy face to-night, fair infant,
 seems.

Ah, wretched child! What dost
 thou hear
 When I talk in my dreams?

GOING BACK AGAIN.

I DREAMED that I walked in Italy
 When the day was going down,
 By a water that flowed quite silently
 Through an old dim-lighted town:

Till I came to a Palace fair to see:
 Wide open the windows were:
 My love at a window sat, and she
 Beckoned me up the stair.

I roamed through many a corridor
 And many a chamber of state:
 I passed through many an open door,
 While the day was growing late:

Till I came to the Bridal Chamber at
 last,
 All dim in the darkening weather
 The flowers at the window were talk-
 ing fast,
 And whispering all together.

The place was so still that I could
 hear
 Every word that they said:
 They were whispering under their
 breath with fear,
 For somebody there was dead.

When I came to the little rose-colored
 room,
 From the window there flew a bat.
 The window was opened upon the
 gloom:
 My love at the window sat.

She sat with her guitar on her knee,
 But she was not singing a note,
 For some one had drawn (ah, who
 could it be?)
 A knife across her throat.

THE CASTLE OF KING MAC-
BETH.

THIS is the castle of King Macbeth.
 And here he feasts—when the
 daylight wanes,
 And the moon goes softly over the
 heath—
 His Earls and Thanes.

A hundred harpers with harps of gold
 Harp through the night high festi-
 val:
 And the sound of the music they
 make is rolled
 From hall to hall.

They drink deep healths till the
 rafters rock
 In the Banquet Hall; and the
 shout is borne
 To the courts outside, where the
 crowing cock
 Is waked ere morn.

And the castle is all in a blaze of light
 From cresset, and torch, and
 sconce : and there
 Each warrior dances all the night
 With his lady fair.

The dance and sing till the raven is
 stirred
 On the wicked elm-tree outside in
 the gloom :
 And the rustle of silken robes is
 heard
 From room to room.

But there is one room in that castle
 old,
 In a lonely turret where no one
 goes,
 And a dead man sits there, stark and
 cold,
 Whom no one knows.

DEATH-IN-LIFE.

BLEST is the babe that dies within
 the womb.
 Blest is the corpse which lies within
 the tomb.
 And blest that death for which this
 life makes room.
 But dreary is the tomb where the
 corpse lies :
 And wretched is the womb where
 the child dies :
 And curst that death which steals
 this life's disguise.

KING LIMOS.

THERE once was a wicked, old, gray
 king—
 Long damned, as I have reason to
 know,
 For he was buried (and no bad
 thing !)
 Hundreds of years ago.

His wicked old heart had grown so
 chilled
 That the leech, to warn him, did
 not shrink
 To give him each night a goblet,
 filled
 With a virgin's blood, to drink.

"A splenetic legend," . . . you say,
 of course !
 Yet there may be something in it,
 too.
 Kill, or be killed . . . which choice
 were the worse ?
 I know not. Solve it you.

But even the wolf must have his
 prey :
 And even the gallows will have
 her food :
 And a king, my friend, will have his
 way,
 Though that way may lie through
 blood.

My heart is hungry, and must be fed ;
 My life is empty, and must be filled ;
 One is not a Ghoul, to live on the
 dead :
 What then if fresh blood be spilled ?

We follow the way that nature leads.
 What's the very first thing that we
 learn ? To devour.
 Each life the death of some other
 needs
 To help it from hour to hour.

From the animalcule that swallows
 his friends,
 Nothing loath, in the wave as it
 rolls,
 To man, as we see him, this law
 ascends ;
 'Tis the same in the world of souls.

The law of the one is still to absorb :
 To be absorbed is the other's lot :—
 The lesser orb by the larger orb,
 The weak by the strong . . . why
 not ?

My want's at the worst : so why
 should I spare
 (Since just such a thing my want
 supplies)

This little girl with the silky hair,
 And the love in her two large eyes ?

THE FUGITIVE.

THERE is no quiet left in life,
 Not any moment brings me rest :
 Forevermore, from shore to shore,
 I bear about a laden breast.

I see new lands : I meet new men :
 I learn strange tongues in novel
 places.

I cannot chase one phantom face
 That haunts me, spite of newer
 faces.

For me the wine is poured by night,
 And deep enough to drown much
 sadness ;
 But from the cup that face looks up,
 And mirth and music turn to mad-
 ness.

There's many a lip that's warm for
 me :
 Many a heart with passion bound-
 ing :

But ah, my breast, when closest
 prest,
 Creeps to a cold step near me
 sounding.

To this dark penthouse of the mind
 I lure the bat-winged Sleep in
 vain ;

For on his wings a dream he brings
 That deepens all the dark with
 pain.

I may write books which friends will
 praise,

I may win fame, I may win treas-
 ure ;

But hope grows less with each suc-
 cess,

And pain grows more with every
 pleasure.

The draughts I drain to slake my
 thirst

But fuel more the infernal flame.

There tangs a sting in everything :—
 The more I change, the more the
 same !

A man that flies before the pest,
 From wind to wind my course is
 whirled.

This fly accurst stung to first,
 And drove her wild across the
 world !

THE SHORE.

CAN it be women that walk in the sea-mist under the cliffs there ?
 Where, 'neath a briny bow, creaming, advances the lip
 Of the foam, and out from the sand-choked anchors, on to the skiffs there,
 The long ropes swing through the surge, as it tumbles ; and glitter, and
 drip.

All the place in a lurid, glimmering, emerald glory,
 Glares like a Titan world come back under heaven again :
 Yonder, up there, are the steepes of the sea-kings, famous in story
 But who are they on the beach ? They are neither women, nor men

Who knows, are they the land's, or the water's, living creatures ?
 Born of the boiling sea ? nursed in the seething storms ?
 With their woman's hair dishevelled over their stern male features,
 Striding, bare to the knee ; and magnified maritime forms !

They may be the mothers and wives, they may be the sisters and daughters
 Of men on the dark mid-seas, alone in those black-coiled hulls,
 That toil 'neath yon white cloud, whence the moon will rise o'er the waters
 To-night, with her face on fire, if the wind in the evening lulls.

But they may be merely visions, such as only sick men witness
 (Sitting as I sit here, filled with a wild regret).
 Framed from the sea's misshapen spume with a horrible fitness
 To the winds in which they walk, and the surges by which they ar
 . wet :—

Salamanders, sea-wolves, witches, warlocks ; marine monsters,
 Which the dying seaman beholds, when the rats are swimming away,
 And an Indian wind 'gins hiss from an unknown isle, and alone stirs
 The broken cloud which burns on the verge of the dead, red day,

I know not. All in my mind is confused ; nor can I dis sever
 The mould of the visible world from the shape of my thoughts in me.
 The Inward and Outward are fused : and, through them, murmur forever
 The sorrow whose sound is the wind, and the roar of the limitless sea.

THE NORTH SEA.

By the gray sand-hills, o'er the cold sea-shore ; where, dumbly peering,
 Pass the pale-sailed ships, scornfully, silently ; wheeling and veering
 Swift out of sight again ; while the wind searches what it finds never,
 O'er the sand-reaches, bays, billows, blown beaches,—homeless forever !
 And, in a vision of the bare heaven seen and soon lost again,
 Over the rolling foam, out in the mid-seas, round by the coast again,
 Hovers the sea-gull, poised in the wind above, o'er the bleak surges,
 In the green briny gleam, briefly revealed and gone ; . . . fleet, as emerges
 Out of the tumult of some brain where memory labors, and fretfully
 Moans all the night-long,—a wild wingéd hope, soon fading regretfully.
 Here walk the lost Gods o' dark Scandinavia, morning and even ;
 Faint pale divinities, realmless and sorrowful, exiled from Heaven ;
 Burthened with memories of old theogonies ; each ruined monarchy
 Roaming amazed by seas oblivious of ancient fealty.
 Never, again at the tables of Odin, in their lost Banquet Hall,
 Shall they from golden cups drink, hearing golden harps, harping high
 festival.

Never praise bright-haired Freya, in Vingolf, for her lost loveliness !
 Never, with Ægir, sail round cool moonlit isles of green wilderness !
 Here on the lone wind, through the long twilight, when day is waning,
 Many a hopeless voice near the night is heard coldly complaining,
 Here, in the glimmering darkness, when winds are dropped, and not a
 seaman sings

From cape or foreland, pause, and pass silently, forms of discrowned
 kings,

With sweeping, floating folds of dim garments ; wandering in wonder
 Of their own aspect ; trooping towards midnight ; feeling for thunder.

Here, in the afternoon ; while, in her father's boat, heavily laden,
Mending the torn nets, sings up the bleak bay the Fisher-Maiden,
I too, forlornly wandering, wandering, see, with the mind's eye,
Shadows beside me, . . . (hearing the wave moan, hearing the wind
sigh) . . .

Shadows, and images balefully beautiful, of days departed :

Sounds of faint footsteps, gleams of pale foreheads, make me sad-hearted
Sad for the lost, ir retrievable sweetness of former hours ;
Sad with delirious, desolate odors, from faded flowers ;
Sad for the beautiful gold hair, the exquisite, exquisite graces
Of a divine face, hopelessly unlike all other faces !

O'er the gray sand-hills (where I sit sullenly, full of black fancies),
Nipt by the sea-wind, drenched by the sea-salt, little wild pansies
Flower, and freshly tremble, and twinkle ; sweet sisterhoods,
Lone, and how lovely, with their frail green stems, and dark purple
hoods !

Here, even here in the midst of monotonous, fixt desolation,
Nature has touches of tenderness, beauties of young variation ;
Where, O my heart, in thy ruined, and desolate, desolate places,
Springs there a floweret, or gleams there the green of a single oasis ?
Hidden, :: may be perchance, and I know it not . . . hidden yet invio-
late,

Pushes the germ of an unconscious rapture in me, like the violet
Which, on the bosom of March, the snows cover and keep till the coming
Of April, the first bee shall find, when he wanders, and welcome it hum-
ming.

Teach me, thou North where the winds lie in ambush ; the rains and foul
weather

Are stored in the house of the storms ; and the snow-flakes are garnered
together ;

Where man's stern, dominate, sovereign intelligence holds in allegiance
Whatever blue Sirins beholds on this Earth-ball,—all seas, and all regions ;
The iron in the hill's heart ; the spirit in the loadstone ; the ice in the
poles ;

All powers, all dominions ; ships · merchandise ; armaments ; beasts ,
human souls ; . . .

Teach me thy secrets : teach to refrain, to restrain, to be still ;

Teach me unspoken, steadfast endurance ;—the silence of Will !

A NIGHT IN THE FISHER- MAN'S HUT.

PART I.

THE FISHERMAN'S DAUGHTER.

If the wind had been blowing the
Devil this way
The midnight could scarcely have
grown more unholy,

Or the sea have found secrets mor
wicked to say
To the toothless old crags it is
hiding there wholly.

I love well the darkness. I love
well the sound
Of the thunder-drift, howling this
way over ocean.

For 'tis though as in nature my
spirit has found
A trouble akin to its own free
emotion.

The hoarse night may howl herself
silent for me.

When the silence comes, then
comes the howling within.

am drenched to my knees in the
surf of the sea,

And wet with the salt bitter rain
to the skin.

Let it thunder and lighten ! this
world's ruined angel

Is but fooled by desire like the
frailest of men ;

Both seek in hysterics life's awful
evangel,

Then both settle down to life's si-
lence again.

Well I know the wild spirits of water
and air,

When the lean morrow turns up
its cynical gray,

Will, baffled, revert with familiar
despair

To their old listless work, in their
old helpless way.

Yonder's the light in the Fisher-
man's hut ;

But the old wolf himself is, I
know, off at sea.

And I see through the chinks, though
the shutters be shut,

By the firelight that some one is
watching for me.

Three years ago, on this very same
night,

I walked in a ball-room of perfume
and splendor

With a pearl-bedecked lady below the
lamplight :—

Now I walk with the wild wind,
whose breath is more tender.

Hark ! the horses of ocean that
crouch at my feet,

They are moaning in impotent
pain on the beach !

Lo ! the storm-night, that swathes in
its blue winding-sheet
That lone desert of sky, where the
stars are dead, each !

Holloa, there ! open, you little wild
girl !

Hush, . . . 'tis her soft little feet
o'er the floor.

Stay not to tie up a single dark curl,
But quick with the candle, and
open the door.

One kiss ? . . . there's twenty ! . . .
but first, take my coat there,
Salt as a sea-sponge, and dripping
all through.

The old wolf, your father, is out in
the boat there.

Hark to the thunder ! . . . we're
safe,—I and you.

Put on the kettle. And now for the
cask

Of that famous old rum of your
father's, the king

Would have clawed on our frontier.
There, fill me the flask.

Ah, what a quick, little, neat-
handed thing !

There's my pipe. Stuff it with black
negro-head.

Soon I shall be in the cloud-land
of glory.

Faith, 'tis better with you, dear,
than 'fore the mast-head,

With such lights at the windows
of night's upper story !

Next, over the round open hole in
the shutter

You may pin up your shawl, . . .
lest a mermaid should peep.

Come, now, the kettle's beginning to
splutter,

And the cat recomposes herself
into sleep.

Poor little naked feet, . . . put them
up there . . .

Little white foam-flakes ! and now
the soft head,

Here, on my shoulder ; while all
the dark hair
Falls round us like sea-weed.
What matter the bed

If sleep will visit it, if kisses feel
there
Sweet as they feel under curtains
of silk ?

So, shut your eyes, while the fire-
light will steal there
O'er the black bear-skin, the arm
white as milk !

Meanwhile I'll tell to you all I re-
member
Of the old legend, the northern
romance

I heard of in Sweden, that snowy
December
I passed there, about the wild Lord
Rosenerantz.

Then, when you're tired, take the
cards from the cupboard,
Thumbed over by every old thief
in our crew,
And I'll tell you your fortune, you
little Dame Hubbard ;
My own has been squandered on
witches like you.

Knave, King, and Queen, all the vil-
lanous pack of 'em,

I know what they're worth in the
game, and have found
Upon all the trump-cards the small
mark at the back of 'em,
The Devil's nail-mark, who still
cheats us all round.

PART II.

THE LEGEND OF LORD ROSE-
NERANTZ.

THE lamps in the castle hall burn
bright,
And the music sounds, and the
dancers dance,
And lovely the young Queen looks
to-night,
But pale is Lord Rosenerantz.

Lord Rosenerantz is always pale,
But never more deadly pale than
now . . .

O, there is a whisper, an ancient
tale.—

A rumor, . . . but who should
know ?

He has stepped to the daïs. He has
taken her hand.

And she gives it him with a tender
glance.

And the hautboys sound, and the
dancers stand,

And envy Lord Rosenerantz.

That jewelled hand to his lips he
prest ;

And lightly he leads her towards
the dance :

And the blush on the young Queen's
cheek confest

Her love for Lord Rosenerantz.

The moon at the mullioned window
shone ;

There a face and a hand in the
moonlight glance ;

But that face and that hand were
seen of none,

Save only Lord Rosenerantz.

A league aloof in the forest-land

There's a dead black pool, where a
man by chance

. . . Again, again, that beckoning
hand !

And it beckons Lord Rosenerantz.

While the young Queen turned to
whisper him,

Lord Rosenerantz from the ball
was gone ;

And the hautboys ceased, and the
lamps grew dim,

And the castle clock struck One !

* * * *

It is a bleak December night,

And the snow on the highway
gleams by fits :

But the fire on the cottage-heartly
burns bright,

Where the little maiden sits.

Her spinning-wheel she has laid
aside ;

And her blue eyes soft in the fire-
light glance ;

As she leans with love, and she leans
with pride,

On the breast of Lord Rosen-
crantz.

Mother's asleep, up stairs in bed :

And the black cat, she looks won-
drous wise

As she licks her paws in the firelight
red,

And glares with her two green
eyes :

And the little maiden is half afraid,

And closely she clings to Lord
Rosencrantz ;

For she has been reading, that little
maid,

All day, in an old romance,

A legend wild of a wicked pool

A league aloof in the forest-land,
And a crime done there, and a sinful

soul,
And an awful face and hand.

"Our little cottage is bleak and
drear,"

Says the little maid to Lord Rosen-
crantz ;

"And this is the loneliest time of the
year,

And oft, when the wind, by
chance,

"The ivy beats on the window-pane,
I wake to the sound in the gusty

nights ;

And often, outside, in the drift and
rain.

There seem to pass strange sights.

"And O, it is dreary here alone !
When mother's asleep, in bed, up

stairs,
And the black cat, there, to the

forest is gone,
—Look at her, how she glares !"

"Thou little maiden, my heart's own
bliss,

Have thou no fear, for I love thee
well ;

And sweetest it is upon nights like
this,

When the wind, like the blast of
hell,

"Roars up and down in the chimney
old,

And the wolf howls over the distant
snow,

To kiss away both the night and the
cold

With such kisses as we kiss now."

"Ah ! more than life I love thee,
dear !"

Says the little maiden with eyes so
blue ;

"And, when thou art near, I have
no fear,

Whatever the night may do.

"But O, it is dreary when thou art
away !

And in bed all night I pray for
thee :

Now tell me, thou dearest heart, and
say,

Dost thou ever pray for me ?"

"Thou little maiden, I thank thee
much,

And well I would thou shouldst
pray for me ;

But I am a sinful man, and such
As ill should pray for thee."

Hist ! . . . was it a face at the win-
dow past ?

Or was it the ivy leaf, by chance,
Tapping the pane in the fitful blast

That startled Lord Rosencrantz ?

The little maid, she has seen it plain,
For she shrieked, and down she

fell in a swoon :

Mutely it came, and went again,
In the light of the winter moon.

* * * *

The young Queen.—O, but her face
was sweet !—

She died on the night that she was
wed :

And they laid her out in her wind-
ing-sheet,
Stark on her marriage-bed.

The little maiden, she went mad ;
But her soft blue eyes still smiled
the same,

With ever that wistful smile they
had :

Her mother, she died of shame.

The black cat lived from house to
house,

And every night to the forest
lied ;

And she killed many a rat and
mouse

Before the day she died.

And do you wish that I should de-
clare

What was the end of Lord Rosen-
crantz ?

Ah ! look in my heart, you will find
it there,

—The end of the old romance !

PART III.

DAYBREAK.

YES, you have guessed it. The wild
Rosencrantz,

It is I, dear, the wicked one ; who
but I, maiden ?

My life is a tattered and worn-out
romance,

And my heart with the curse of
the Past hatL been laden :

For still, where I wander or linger,
forever

Comes a skeleton hand that is
beckoning for me ;

And still, dogging my footsteps, life's
long Never-never

Pursues me, wherever my footsteps
may be :

The star of my course hath been long
ago set, dear ;

And the wind is my pilot wher-
ever he blows :

He cannot blow from me what I
would forget, dear,

Nor blow to me that which I seek
for,—repose.

What ! if I were the Devil himself,
would you cling to me,

Bear my ill humors, and share my
wild nights ?

Crouch by me, fear me not, stay by
me, sing to me,

While the dark haunts us with
sounds and with sights ?

Follow me far away, pine not, but
smile to me,

Never ask questions, and always
be gay ?

Still the dear eyes meekly turned all
the while to me,

Watchful the night through, and
patient the day ?

What ! if this hand, that now strays
through your tresses,

Three years ago had been dabbled
in gore ?

What ! if this lip, that your lip now
caresses,

A corpse had been pressing but
three years before ?

Well then, behold ! . . . 'tis the
gray light of morning

That breaks o'er the desolate wa-
ters . . . and hark !

'Tis the first signal shot from my
boat gives me warning :

The dark moves away : and I fol-
low the lark.

On with your hat and your cloak !
you are mine, child,

Mine and the fiend's that pursues
me, henceforth !

We must be far, ere day breaks, o'er
the brine, child :

It may be south I go, it may be
north.

What ! really fetching your hat and
your cloak, dear ?

Sweet little fool. Kiss me quick
now, and laugh !

All I have said to you was but a joke,
dear :

Half was in folly, in wantonness
half.

PART IV.

BREAKFAST.

AY, maiden : the whole of my story
to you

Was but a deception, a silly ro-
mance :

From the first to the last word, no
word of it true ;

And my name's Owen Meredith,
not Rosencrantz.

I never was loved by a Queen, I de-
clare :

And no little maiden for me has
gone mad :

I never committed a murder, I
swear ;

And I probably should have been
hanged if I had.

I never have sold to the Devil my
soul ;

And but small is the price he
would give me, I know :

I live much as other folks live, on
the whole :

And the worst thing in me's my
digestion . . . heigh ho !

Let us leave to the night-wind the
thoughts which he brings,

And leave to the darkness the
powers of the dark ;

For my hopes o'er the sea lightly
flit, like the wings

Of the curlews that hover and
poise round my bark.

Leave the wind and the water to
mutter together

Their weird metaphysical grief, as
of old,

For day's business begins, and the
clerk of the weather

To the powers of the air doth his
purpose unfold.

Be you sure those dread Titans,
whatever they be,

That sport with this ball in the
great courts of Time,

To play practical jokes upon you
dear, and me,

Will never desist from a sport so
sublime.

The old Oligarchy of Greece, now
abolished,

Were idle aristocrats fond of the
arts,

But though thus refined, all their
tastes were so polished,

They were turbulent, dissolute
gods, without hearts.

They neglected their business, they
gave themselves airs,

Read the poets in Greek, sipped
their wine, took their rest,

Never troubling their beautiful
heads with affairs,

And as for their morals, the least
said, the best.

The scandal grew greater and great-
er : and then

An appeal to the people was for-
mally made.

The old gods were displaced by the
suffrage of men.

And a popular government formed
in their stead.

But these are high matters of state, --
I and you

May be thankful, meanwhile, we
have something to eat,

And nothing, just now, more impor-
tant to do,

Than to sit down at once, and say
grace before meat.

You may boil me some coffee, an
egg, if it's handy,

The sea's rolling mountains just
now. I shall wait

For King Neptune's *mollissima tempora sandi*,

Who will presently lift up his curly white pate,

Bid Eurus and Notus to mind their own business,

And make me a speech in Hexameters slow ;

While I, by the honor elated to dizziness,

Shall yield him my offerings, and make him my bow.

A DREAM.

I HAD a quiet dream last night :

For I dreamed that I was dead ;
 Wrapped around in my grave-clothes white,

With my gravestone at my head.

I lay in a land I have not seen,

In a place I do not know,
 And the grass was deathly, deathly green

Which over my grave did grow.

The place was as still as still could be,

With a few stars in the sky,
 And an ocean whose waves I could not see,

Though I heard them moan hard by.

There was a bird in a branch of yew,
 Building a little nest.

The stars looked far and very few,
 And I lay all at rest.

There came a footstep through the grass,

And a feeling through the mould :
 And a woman pale did over me pass,
 With hair like snakes of gold.

She read my name upon my grave :

She read my name with a smile.

A wild moan came from a wandering wave,

But the stars smiled all the while.

The stars smiled soft. That woman pale

Over my grave did move,
 Singing all to herself a tale
 Of one that died for love.

There came a sparrow-hawk to the tree,

The little bird to slay :

There came a ship from over the sea
 To take that woman away.

The little bird I wished to save,

To finish his nest so sweet :

But so deep I lay within my grave
 That I could not move my feet.

That woman pale I wished to keep

To finish the tale I heard :

But within my grave I lay so deep
 That I could not speak a word.

KING SOLOMON.

KING Solomon stood, in his crown of gold,

Between the pillars, before the altar

In the House of the Lord. And the King was old,

And his strength began to falter,
 So that he leaned on his ebony staff,
 Sealed with the seal of the Pentagraph.

All of the golden fretted work,

Without and within so rich and rare,

As high as the nest of the building stork,

Those pillars of cedar were :—

Wrought up to the brazen chapters
 Of the Sidonian artificers.

And the King stood still as a carved king,

The carved cedarn beams below,
 In his purple robe, with his signet-ring,

And his beard as white as snow,
 And his face to the Oracle, where the hymn

Dies under the wing of the cherubim.

The wings fold over the Oracle,
 And cover the heart and eyes of
 God :
 The Spouse with pomegranate, lily,
 and bell,
 Is glorious in her abode ;
 For with gold of Ophir, and scent of
 myrrh,
 And purple of Tyre, the King clothed
 her.

By the soul of each slumbrous instru-
 ment
 Drawn soft, through the musical
 misty air,
 The stream of the folk that came
 and went,
 For worship, and praise, and
 prayer,
 Flowed to and fro, and up and down,
 And round the King in his golden
 crown.

And it came to pass, as the King
 stood there,
 And looked on the house he had
 built, with pride,
 That the Hand of the Lord came
 unaware,
 And touched him ; so that he died,
 In his purple robe, with his signet-
 ring,
 And the crown wherewith they had
 crowned him king.

And the stream of the folk that
 came and went
 To worship the Lord with prayer
 and praise,
 Went softly ever, in wonderment,
 For the King stood there always ;
 And it was solemn and strange to
 behold
 'That dead king crowned with a
 crown of gold.

For he leaned on his ebony staff up-
 right ;
 And over his shoulders the purple
 robe ;
 And his hair and his beard were
 both snow-white

And the fear of him filled the
 globe ;
 So that none dared touch him,
 though he was dead,
 He looked so royal about the head.

And the moons were changed : and
 the years rolled on :
 And the new king reigned in the
 old king's stead :
 And men were married and buried
 anon ;
 But the King stood, stark and
 dead ;
 Leaning upright on his ebony staff ;
 Preserved by the sign of the Pente-
 graph.

And the stream of life, as it went
 and came,
 Ever for worship and praise and
 prayer,
 Was awed by the face, and the fear,
 and the fame
 Of the dead king standing there ;
 For his hair was so white, and his
 eyes so cold,
 That they left him alone with his
 crown of gold.

So King Solomon stood up, dead, in
 the House
 Of the Lord, held there by the
 Pentegraph,
 Until out from a pillar there ran a
 red mouse,
 And gnawed through his ebony
 staff :
 Then, flat on his face, the King fell
 down :
 And they picked from the dust a
 golden crown.*

* My knowledge of the Rabbinical legend which suggested this Poem is one among the many debts I owe to my friend Robert Browning. I hope these lines may remind him of hours which his society rendered precious and delightful to me, and which are among the most pleasant memories of my life.

CORDELIA.

THOUGH thou never hast sought to
 divine it,
 Though to know it thou hast not a
 care,
 Yet my heart can no longer confine
 it,
 'hough my lip may be blanched to
 declare
 That I love thee, revere thee, adore
 thee,
 O my dream, my desire, my despair !
 Though in life it may never be given
 To my heart to repose upon thine ;
 Though neither on earth, nor in
 heaven,
 May the bliss I have dreamed of be
 mine ;
 Yet thou canst not forbid me, in
 distance.
 And silence, and long lonely years,
 To love thee, despite thy resistance,
 And bless thee, despite of my tears,

 Ah me, *couldst* thou love me ! . . .
 Believe me,
 How I hang on the tones of thy voice ;
 How the least sign thou sighest can
 grieve me,
 The least smile thou smilest rejoice :
 In thy face, how I watch every shade
 there ;
 In thine eyes, how I learn every
 look ;
 How the least sigh thy spirit hath
 made there
 My heart reads, and writes in its
 book !

 And each day of my life my love
 shapes me
 From the mien that thou wearest,
 Beloved.
 Thou hast not a grace that escapes
 me,
 Nor a movement that leaves me un-
 moved.
 I live but to see thee, to hear thee ;
 I count but the hours where thou
 art ;

I ask—only ask—to see thee,
 Albeit so far from thy hear

 In my life's lonely galleries never
 Will be silenced thy lightest foot-
 fall :
 For it lingers, and echoes, forever
 Until Memory mourning o'er all.
 All thy fair little footsteps are
 bright
 O'er the dark troubled spirit in me,
 As the tracts of some sweet water-
 sprite
 O'er the heaving and desolate sea.
 And, though cold and unkind be
 thine eyes,
 Yet, unchilled their unkindness be-
 low,
 In my heart all its love for thee lies,
 Like a violet covered by snow.

 Little child ! . . . were it mine to
 watch o'er thee,
 To guide, and to guard, and to
 soothe ;
 To shape the long pathway before
 thee,
 And all that was rugged to smooth ;
 To kneel at one bedside by night,
 And mingle our souls in one prayer ;
 And, awaked by the same morning-
 light,
 The same daily duties to share ;

 Until Age with his silver dimmed
 slowly
 Those dear golden tresses of thine ;
 And Memory rendered thrice holy
 The love in this poor heart of mine ,

 Ah, never . . . (recalling together,
 By one hearth, in our life's winter
 time,
 Our youth, with its lost summer
 weather,
 And our love, in its first golden
 prime),
 Should those loved lips have cause
 to record
 One word of unkindness from me,
 Or my heart cease to bless the least
 word

Of kindness once spoken by thee !
But, whatever my path, and what-
ever

The future may fashion for thine,
Thy life, O believe me, can never,
My beloved, be indifferent to mine.
When far from the sight of thy
beauty,

Pursuing, unaided, alone,
The path of man's difficult duty
In the land where my lot may be
thrown ;
When my steps move no more in the
place

Where thou art : and the brief days
of yore

Are forgotten : and even my face
In thy life is remembered no more ;
Yet in *my* life will live thy least
feature ;

I shall mourn the lost light of thine
eyes ;

And on earth there will yet be one
nature

That must yearn after thine til' it
dies.

"YE SEEK JESUS OF NAZ-
ARETH WHICH WAS CRU-
CIFIED : HE IS RISEN : HE IS
NOT HERE."

MARK xvi. 6.

If Jesus came to earth again,
And walked, and talked, in field,
and street,

Who would not lay his human pain
Low at those heavenly feet ?

And leave the loom, and leave the
lute,

And leave the volume on the
shelf, [mute,
To follow Him, unquestioning,
If 'twere the Lord himself ?

How many a brow with care o'er-
worn,

How many a heart with grief o'er-
laden,

How many a youth with love for-
lorn,

How many a mourning maiden,

Would leave the baffling earthly
prize

Which fails the earthly, weak en-
deavor,
To gaze into those holy eyes,
And drink content forever !

The mortal hope, I ask with tears
Of Heaven, to soothe this mor'a
pain,—

The dream of all my darkened
years,—
I should not cling to them.

The pride that prompts the bitter
jest—

(Sharp styptic of a bleeding heart!)
Would fail, and humbly leave con-
fest

The sin that brought the smart,

If I might crouch within the fold
Of that white robe (a wounded
bird) ;

The face that Mary saw behold,
And hear the words she heard.

I would not ask one word of all
That now my nature yearns to
know ;—

The legend of the ancient Fall ;
The source of human woe :

What hopes in other worlds may
hide ;

What griefs yet unexplored in
this ;

How fares the spirit within the wide
Waste tract of that abyss

Which scares the heart (since all w
know

Of life is only conscious sorrow)
Lest novel life be novel woe
In death's undawned to-morrow ;

I would not ask one word of this,
If I might only hide my head
On that beloved breast, and kiss
The wounds where Jesus bled.

And I, where'er He went, would go,
Nor question where the path
might lead,
Enough to know that, here below,
I walked with God indeed !

His sheep along the cool, the shade,
By the still watercourse he leads,
His lambs upon His breast are laid,
His hungry ones He feeds.

Safe in His bosom I should lie,
Hearing, where'er His steps might
be,
Calm waters, murmuring, murmuring
by,
To meet the mighty sea.

If this be thus, O Lord of mine,
In absence is Thy love forgot ?
And must I, where I walk, repine
Because I see Thee not ?

If this be thus, if this be thus
And our poor prayers yet reach
Thee, Lord,
Since we are weak, once more to us
Reveal the Living Word !

Yet is my heart, indeed, so weak
My course alone I dare not trace ?
Alas ! I know my heart must break
Before I see Thy face.

I loved, with all my human soul,
A human creature, here below,
And, though thou bad'st thy sea to
roll
Forever 'twixt us two,

And though her form I may not see
Through all my long and lonely
life,
And though she never now may be
My helpmate and my wife,

Yet in my dreams her dear eyes
shine,
Yet in my heart her face I bear,
And yet each holiest thought of
mine
I seem with her to share.

But, Lord, Thy face I never saw,
Nor ever heard Thy human voice :
My life, beneath an iron law,
Moves on without my choice.

No memory of a happier time,
When in Thine arms, perchance, I
slept,

In some lost ante-natal clime,
My mortal frame hath kept :

And all is dark—before—behind.
I cannot reach Thee, where thou
art,

I cannot bring Thee to my mind,
Nor clasp Thee to my heart.

And this is why, by night and day,
Still with so many an unseen tear
These lonely lips have learned to
pray

That God would spare me here,

While yet my doubtful course I go
Along the vale of mortal years,
By life's dull stream, that will not
flow

As fast as flow my tears,

One human hand, my hand to take:
One human heart, my own to
raise :

One loving human voice, to break
The silence of my days.

Saviour, if this wild prayer be
wrong,

And what I seek I may not find,
O, make more hard, and stern, and
strong,

The framework of my mind !

Or, nearer to me, in the dark
Of life's low hours, one moment
stand,

And give me keener eyes to mark
The moving of Thy hand.

TO CORDELIA.

I do not blame thee, that my life
Is lonelier now than even before ;
For hadst thou been, indeed, my
wife,

(Vain dream that cheats no more!)

The fate, which from my earliest
 years | tread,
 Hath made so dark the path I
 Had taught thee too, perchance,
 such tears
 As I have learned to shed.

And that fixed gloom, which souls
 like mine
 Are schooled to wear with stub-
 born pride,
 Had cast too dark a shade o'er
 thine,—
 Hadst thou been by my side.

I blame thee not, that thou shouldst
 flee
 From paths where only weeds have
 sprung,
 Though loss of thee is loss to me
 Of all that made youth young.

For 'tis not mine, and 'twas not
 thine,
 To shape our course as first we
 strove :
 And powers which I could not com-
 bine
 Divide me from thy love.

Alas ! we cannot choose our lives,—
 We can but bear the burthen
 given.
 In vain the feverish spirit strives
 With unrelenting heaven.

For who can bid those tyrant stars
 The injustice of their laws repeal ?
 Why ask who makes our prison bars,
 Since they are made of steel ?

The star that rules my darkened
 hour
 Is fixt in reachless spheres on
 high :
 The curse which foils my baffled
 power
 Is scrawled across the sky.

My heart knows all it felt, and feels :
 But more than this I shall not
 know,
 Till he that made the heart reveals
 Why mine must suffer so.

I only know that, never yet,
 My life hath found what others
 find.—
 That peace of heart which will not
 fret
 The fibres of the mind.

I only know that not for me
 The human love, the clasp, the
 kiss ;
 My love in other worlds must be,—
 Why was I born in this ?

The bee is framed to find her food
 In every wayside flower and bell,
 And build within the hollow wood
 Her own ambrosial cell :

The spider hath not learned her art,
 A home in ruined towers to spin ;
 But what it seeks, my heart, my
 heart
 Is all unskilled to win.

The world was filled, ere I was born,
 With man and maid, with bower
 and brake,
 And nothing but the barren thorn
 Remained for me to take :

I took the thorn, I wove it round,
 I made a piercing crown to wear :
 My own sad hands myself have
 crowned,
 Lord of my own despair.

That which we are, we are. 'Twere
 vain
 To plant with toil what will not
 grow.

The cloud will break, and bring the
 rain,
 Whether we reap or sow.

I cannot turn the thunder-blast,
 Nor pluck the levin's lurid root ;
 I cannot change the changeless past,
 Nor make the ocean mute.

And if the bolt of death must fall
 Where, bare of head I walk my
 way
 Why let it fall ! I will not call
 To bid the Thunderer stay.

'Tis much to know, whate'er betide
The pilgrim path I pace alone,
Thou wilt not miss me from thy side
When its brief course is done.

I hadst thou been mine,—when skies
were drear
And waves were rough, for thy
sweet sake

I should have found in all some fear
My inmost breast to shake :

But now, his till the blast may blow,
The sea may rage, the thunder
roll,

For every path by which I go
Will reach the self-same goal.

Too proud to fly, too weak to cope,
I yet will wait, nor bow my head.
Those who have nothing left to hope,
Have nothing left to dread.

A LETTER TO CORDELIA.

PERCHANCE, on earth, I shall not
see thee ever

Ever again : and my unwritten
years
Are signed out by that desolating
"Never,"
And blurred with tears.

'Tis hard, so young—so young as I
am still,

To feel forevermore from life de-
part
All that can flatter the poor human
will,
Or fill the heart.

Yet there was nothing in that sweet,
and brief,

And perisht intercourse, now
closed for me,
To add one thought unto my bitter-
est grief
Upbraiding thee.

'Tis somewhat to have known, al-
beit in vain,
One woman in this sorrowful bad
earth,

Whose very loss can yet bequeath
to pain
New faith in worth.

If I have overrated, in the wild
Blind heat of hope, the sense of
aught which hath
From the lost vision of thy beauty
smiled
On my lone path,

My retribution is, that to the last
I have o'errated, too, my power to
cope

With this fierce thought . . . that
life must all be past
Without life's hope ;

And I would bless the chance which
let me see

Once more the comfort of thy face,
although

It were with beauty never born for
me
That face should glow.

To see thee—all thou wilt be—loved
and loving—

Even though another's—in the
years to come—

To watch, once more, thy gracious
sweetness moving
Through its pure home,—

Even this would seem less desolate,
less drear,

Than never, never to behold thee
more—

Never on those beloved lips to hear
The voice of yore !

These weak words, O my friend, fell
not more fast

Than the weak scalding tears that
with them fell.

Nor tears, nor words came, when I
saw thee last . . .

Enough ! . . . Farewell.

Farewell. If that dread Power
which fashioned man

To till this planet, free to search
and find

The secret of his source as best he
can,
In his own mind,

Hath any care, apart from that
which moves
Earth's myriads through Time's
ages as they roll,
For any single human life, or loves
One separate soul,

May He, whose wisdom portions out
for me
The moonless, changeless mid-
night of the heart,
Still all his softest sunshine save for
thee,
Where'er thou art :

And if, indeed, not any human eyes
From human tears be free,—may
Sorrow bring
Only to thee her April-rain, whose
sighs
Soothe flowers in Spring.

FAILURE.

I HAVE seen those that wore Heav-
en's armor worsted :
I have heard Truth lie :
Seen Life, beside the founts for which
it thirsted,
Curse God and die :

I have felt the hand, whose touch
was rapture, braiding
Among my hair
Love's choicest flowerets, and have
found how fading
Those garlands were :

I have watched my first and holiest
hopes depart,
One after one :

I HAVE held the hand of Death upon
my heart,
And made no moan :

I HAVE seen her whom life's whole
sacrifice
Was made to keep.

Pass coldly by me with a stranger's
eyes.
Yet did not weep :

Now even my body fails me ; and
my brow
Aches night and day :
I am weak with over-work : how
can I now
Go forth and play ?

What ! now that Youth's forgotten
aspirations
Are all no more,
Rest there, indeed, all Youth's glad
recreations,
—An untried store ?

Alas, what skills this heart of sad
experience,
This frame o'erwrought,
This memory with life's motion all
at variance,
This aching thought ?

How shall I come, with these, to
follow pleasure
Where others find it ?
Will not their sad steps mar the
merriest measure,
Or lag behind it ?

Still must the man move sadlier for
the dreams
That mocked the boy :
And, having failed to achieve, must
still, it seems,
Fail to enjoy.

It is no common failure, to have
failed
Where man hath given
A whole life's effort to the task as
sailed—
Spent earth on heaven.

If error and if failure enter here,
What helps repentance ?
Remember this, O Lord, in thy se-
vere
Last sentence !

MISANTHROPOS.

ΠΑΡΤΑ ΚΟΙΝΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΤΑ ΓΕΛΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΤΑ ΤΟ
μηδεν.

DAY's last light is dying out.
All the place grows dim and drear:
See! the grisly bat's about.
There is nothing left to fear;
Little left to doubt.

'Tis not a note of music flits
O'er the slackened harpstrings yon-
der

From the skeleton that sits
By the broken harp, to ponder
(While the spider knits

Webs in each black socket-hole)
Where is all the music fled.

Music, hath it, then, a goal? . . .
Broken harp, and brainless head!
Silent song and soul!

Not a light in yonder sky,
Save that single wicked star,
Leering with its wanton eye
Through the shattered window-
bar;

Come to see me die!

All, save this, the monstrous night
Hath erased and blotted bare
As the fool's brain . . . God's last
light

Winking at the Fiend's work
there,—

Wrong made worse by right!

Gone the voice, the face, of yore!
Gone the dream of golden hair!
Gone the garb that Falsehood wore!
Gone the shame of being bare!
We may close the door.

All the guests are slunk away.
Not a footstep on the stairs!

Not a friend here, left to say
"Amen" to a sinner's prayers,
If he cared to pray!

Gone is Friendship's friendliness,
After Love's fidelity:

Gone is honor in the mess
Spat upon by Charity:
Faith has fled Distress

Those grim tipstaves at the gate
Freely may their work begin.
Let them in! they shall not wait.
There is little now within
Left for Scorn and Hate.

O, no doubt the air is foul!
'Tis the last lamp spits and stinks,
Shuddering downward in the bow
Of the socket, from the brinks.
What's a burned-out soul?

Let them all go, unreprieved!
For the source of tears is dried.
What! . . . One rests? . . . hath
nothing moved

That pale woman from my side,
Whom I never loved?

You, with those dim eyes of yours,
Sadder than all eyes save mine!
That dim forehead which immures
Such faint helpless griefs, that
pine
For such hopeless cures!

Must you love me, spite of loathing?
Can't you leave me where I'm ly-
ing?

O, . . . you wait for our betrothing?
I escape you, though,—by dying!
Lay out my death-clothing.

Well I would that your white face
Were abolisht out of sight,
With the glory and the grace
Swallowed long ago in night,—
Gone,—without a trace!

Reach me down my golden harp.
Set it here, beside my knee.
Never fear that I shall warp
All the chords of ecstasy,
Striking them too sharp!

Crown me with my crown of flowers
Faded roses every one!
Pluckt in those long-perisht bowers,
By the nightshade overrun,—
Fit for brows like ours!

Fill me, now, my golden cup.
Pour the black wine to the brim
Till within me, while I sup,

All the fires, long quenched and dim,
Flare, one moment, up.

I will sing you a last song.
I will pledge you a last health . . .
Here's to weakness seeming strong !
Herets to Want that follows
Wealth !
Here's to Right gone wrong !

Curse me now the Oppressor's rod,
And the meanness of the weak ;
And the fool that apes the nod ;
And the world at hide and seek
With the wrath of God.

Dreams of man's unvalued good,
By mankind's unholy means !
Curse the people in their mud !
And the wicked Kings and Queens,
Lying by the Rood.

Fill ! to every plague . . . and first,
Love, that breeds its own decay ;
Rotten, ere the blossom burst.
Next, the friend that slinks away,
When you need him worst.

O the world's inhuman ways !
And the heartless social lie !
And the coward, cheapening praise !
And the patience of the sky,
Lighting such bad days !

Curséd be the heritage
Of the sins we have not sinned !
Curséd be this boasting age,
And the blind that lead the blind
O'er its creaking stage !

O the vice within the blood,
And the sin within the sense !
And the fallen angelhood,
With its yearnings, too immense
To be understood !

Curse the hound with beaten hide,
When he turns and licks the
hand.

Curse this woman at my side !
And the memory of the land
Where my first love died.

Curséd be the next and most
(With whatever curse most kills),
Me . . . the man whose soul is lost ;
Fouled by each of all these ills,—
Filled with death and dust !

Take away the harp of gold,
And the empty wine-cup too.
Lay me out : for I grow cold.

There is something dim in view,
Which must pass untold :—

Something dim, and something
vast,—

Out of reach of all I say.
Language ceases . . . hush, aghast.
What am I, to curse or pray ?
God succeeds at last !

BOOK VI.—PALINGENESIS.

A PRAYER.

My Saviour, dare I come to Thee,
Who let the little children come ?
But I ? . . . my soul is faint in me !
I come from wandering to and fro
This weary world. There still his
round
The Accuser goes : but Thee I
found

Not anywhere. Both joy and woe
Have passed me by. I am too weak
To grieve or smile. And yet I know
That tears lie deep in all I do.
The homeless that are sick for home
Are not so wretched. Ere it break,
Receive my heart ; and for the sake,
Not of my sorrows, but of Thine,
Bend down Thy holy eyes on mine,
Which are too full of misery

To see Thee clearly, though they
seek.
Yet, if I heard Thy voice say . . .
"Come,"
So might I, dying, die near Thee.
It shames me not, to have passed by
The temple-doors in every street
Where men profaned Thee : but
that I
Have left neglected, choked with
weeds,
Defrauded of its incense sweet
From holy thoughts and loyal
deeds,
Thy fane Thou gavest me to en-
shrine
Thee in, this wretched heart of
mine.
The Satyr there hath entered in ;
The Owl that loves the darkened
hour ;
And obscene shapes of night and
sin
Still haunt, where God designed a
bower
For angels.

Yet I will not say
How oft I have aspired in vain,
How toiled along the rugged way,
And held my faith above my pain,
For this Thou knowest. Thou
knowest when
I faltered, and when I was strong ;
And how from that of other men
My fate was different : all the
wrong
Which devastated hope in me :
The ravaged years ; the excited
heart,
That found in pain its only part
Of love : the master misery
That shattered all my early years,
From which, in vain, I sought to
flee :
Thou knowest the long repentant
tears,
Thou heard'st me cry against the
spheres,
So sharp my anguish seemed to be !
All this Thou knowest. Though I
should keep

Silence, Thou knowest my hands
were free
From sin, when all things cried to
me
To sin. Thou knowest that, bad I
rolled
My soul in hell-flame fifty-fold,
My sorrow could not be more deep.
Lord ! there is nothing hid from
Thee.

EUTHANASIA.

(WRITTEN AFTER A SEVERE ILLNESS.)

SPRING to the world, and strength
to me, returns ;
And flowers return,—but not the
flowers I knew.
I live : the fire of life within me
burns ;
But all my life is dead. The land
I view
I know not ; nor the life which I re-
gain.
Within the hollow of the hand of
death
I have lain so long, that now I
draw the breath
Of life as unfamiliar, and with pain.
Of life : but not the life which is no
more ;—
That tender, tearful, warm, and
passionate thing ;
That wayward, restless, wistful life
of yore ;
Which now lies, cold, beneath the
clasp of Spring,
As last year's leaves : but such a life
as seems
A strange new-comer, coy and all
afraid.
No motion leaves the heart wher
it is laid,
Save when the past returns to me in
dreams.
In dreams, like memories of another
world :
The beauty, and the passion, and
the pain,

The wizardry by which my youth
 was whirled
 Round vain desires,—so violent,
 yet so vain !
 The love which desolated life, yet
 made
 So dear its desolation : and the
 creeds
 Which, one by one, snapped in my
 hold like reeds,
 Beneath the weight of need upon
 them laid !

 For each man dreams his own sand-
 house secure
 While life's wild waves are lulled ;
 yet who can say,
 If yet his faith's foundations do en-
 dure,
 It is not that no wind hath blown
 that way ?
 Must we even for their beauty's
 sake, keep furled
 Our fairest creeds, lest earth should
 sully them,
 And take what ruder help chance
 sends, to stem
 The rubs and wrenchings of this
 boisterous world ?

 Alas ! 'tis not the creed that saves
 the man :
 It is the man that justifies the
 creed :
 And each must save his own soul as
 he can,
 Since each is burthened with a
 different need.
 Round each the bandit passions
 lurk ; and, fast
 And furious, swarm to strip the
 pilgrim bare ;
 Then, oft, in lonely places un-
 aware,
 Fall on him, and do murder him at
 last.

 And oft the light of truth, which
 through the dark
 We fetched such toilsome compass
 to detect,

Glares through the broken cloud on
 the lost bark,
 And shows the rock—too late,
 when all is wrecked !
 Not from one watch-tower o'er the
 deep, alone,
 It streams, but lightens there and
 lightens here
 With lights so numberless (like
 heaven's eighth sphere)
 That all their myriad splendors seem
 but one.

 Time was, when it seemed possible
 to be
 (Then, when this shattered prow
 first felt the foam)
 Columbus to some far Philosophy,
 And bring, perchance, the golden
 Indies home.
 O siren isles of the enchanted main
 Through which I lingered ! altars,
 temples, groves,
 Whelmed in the salt sea wave, that
 rolls and roves
 Around each desolated lost domain !

 Over all these hath passed the deluge.
 And,
 Saved from the sea, forlornly face
 to face
 With the gaunt ruin of a world, I
 stand.
 But two alone of all that perished
 race
 Survive to share with me my wan-
 derings ;
 Doubt and Experience. These
 my steps attend,
 Ever ; and oft above my harp they
 bend,
 And, weeping with me, weep among
 its strings.

 Yet,—saved, though in a land un-
 consecrate
 By any memory, it seems good to
 me
 To build an altar to the Lord ; and
 wait
 Some token, either from the land
 or sea,



“FOR EACH MAN DEEMS HIS OWN SAND-HOUSE SECURE.”

To point me to my rest, which
should be near.

Rude is the work, and simple is
my skill ;

Yet, if the hand could answer to
the will,

This pile should lack not incense.
Father, hear

My cry unto thee. Make thy cov-
enant

Fast with my spirit. Bind within
Thy bow

The whole horizon of my tears. I
pant.

For Thy refreshing. Bid Thy
fountains flow

In this dry desert, where no springs
I see.

Before I venture in an unknown
land,

Here will I clear the ground on
which I stand,

And justify the hope Thou gavest
me.

I cannot make quite clear what
comes and goes

In fitful light, by waning gleams
descried.

The Spirit, blowing where it listeth,
blows

Only at times, some single fold
aside

Of that great veil which hangs o'er
the Unknown :

Yet do the feeble, fleeting lights
that fall,

Reveal enough, in part, for hope in
all :

And that seems surest which the
least is shown.

God is a spirit. It is also said
Man is a spirit. Can I therefore
deem

The two in nature separate? The
made

Hath in it of the Maker. Hence I
seem

A step towards light ;—since 'tis the
property

Of spirit to possess itself in all
It is possess by ;—halved yet in-
tegral ;

One person, various personality.

To say the Infinite is that which lies
Beyond the Finite, . . . were it
not to set

A border mark to the immensities ?
Far as these mortal senses measure
yet

Their little region of the mighty
plan,

Through valves of birth and death
—are heard forever

The finite steps of infinite en-
deavor

Moving through Nature and the
mind of man.

If man,—the finite spirit,—in in-
finity

Alone can find the truth of his
ideal,

Dare I not deem that infinite Div-
inity

Within the finite must assume the
real ?

For what so feverish fancy, reckless
hurled

Through a ruined brain, did ever
yet descry

A symbol sad enough to signify
The conscious God of an unconscious
world ?

Wherefore, thus much perceived, to
recognize

In God, the infinite spirit of Unity,
In man, the finite spirit, here implies

An interchanged perception ;—
Deity

Within humanity made manifest :
Not here man lonely, there a lonely
God ;

But, in all paths by human nature
trod,

Infinity in Finitude exprest.

This Interchange, upon man's part,
I call

Religion . revelation on the part

Of Deity : wherefrom there seems to
fall

'Tis consequence (the point from
which I start)

If God and man be one (a unity
Of which religion is the human
side)

This must in man's religion be
descried,

A consciousness and a reality.

Whilst man in nature dwells, his
God is still

In nature ; thence, in time, there
intervenes

The Law : he learns to fortify his
will

Against his passions, by external
means :

And God becomes the Lawgiver : but
when

Corruption in the natural state we
see,

And in the legal hopeless tyranny,
We seem to need (if needed not till
then) .

That which doth uplift nature, and
yet makes

More light the heavy letter of the
law.

Then for the Perfect the Imperfect
aches,

Till love is born upon the deeps of
awe.

Yet what of this, . . . that God in
man may be,

And man, though mortal, of a
race divine,

If no assurance lives which may
incline

The heart of man to man's divinity ?

"There is no God" . . . the Fool
saith—to his *heart*,

Yet shapes a godhead from his *in-
tellect*.

Is mind than heart less human, . . .
that we part

'Thought from affection, and from
mind erect

A deity merely intellectual ?

If God there be, devoid of sym-
pathy

For man, he is not man's divinity.
A God unloving were no God at all.

This felt, . . . I ask not . . . "What
is God ?" but "What

Are my relations with Him ?" thi
alone

Concerns me now : since, if I know
this not,

Though I should know the sources
of the sun,

Or what within the hot heart of the
earth

Lulls the soft spirit of the fire,
although

The mandate of the thunder I
should know,

To me my knowledge would be noth-
ing worth.

What message, or what messenger to
man ?

Whereby shall revelation reach
the soul ?

For who, by searching, finds out
God ? How can

My utmost steps, unguided, gain
the goal

Of necessary knowledge ? It is clear
I cannot reach the gates of heaven,

and knock

And enter : though I stood upon
the rock

Like Moses, God must speak ere I
can hear,

And touch me ere I feel him. He
must come

To me (I cannot join Him in the
cloud), [home ;

Stand at the dim doors of my mortals
Lift the low latch of life ; and

enter, bowed
Unto this earthly roof ; and sit
within

The circle of the senses ; at the
hearth

Of the affections ; be my guest on
earth,

Loving my love, and sorrowing in
my sin.

Since, though I stripped Divinity, in
 thought,
 From passion, which is personal-
 ity,
 My God would still be human :
 though I sought
 In the bird's wing or in the in-
 sect's eye,
 Rather than in this broken heart of
 mine,
 His presence, human still: human
 would be
 All human thought conceives.
 Humanity,
 Being less human, is not more divine.
 The soul, then, cannot stipulate or
 refuse [bassy.
 The fashion of the heavenly em-
 Since God is here the speaker, He
 must choose
 The words He wills. Already I
 desery
 That God and man are one, divided
 here,
 Yet reconcilable. One doubt sur-
 vives.
 There is a dread condition to
 men's lives :
 We die : and, from its death, it
 would appear
 Our nature is not one with the
 divine.
 Not so. The Man-God dies ; and
 by his death
 Doth with his own immortal life
 combine
 The spirit pining in this mortal
 breath. [ate
 Who from himself himself did alien-
 That he, returning to himself,
 might pave
 A pathway hence, to heaven from
 the grave,
 For man to follow—through the
 heavenly gate.
 Wert thou, my Christ, not ignorant
 of grief ?
 A man of sorrows ? Not for sor-
 row's sake

(Lord, I believe : help thou mine un-
 belief !)
 Beneath the thorns did thy pure
 forehead ache :
 But that in sorrow only, unto sor-
 row,
 Can comfort come ; in manhood
 only, man
 Perceive man's destiny. In
 Nature's plan
 Our path is over Midnight to To-
 morrow.
 And so the Prince of Life, in dying,
 gave
 Undying life to mortals. Once he
 stood
 Among his fellows, on this side the
 grave,
 A man, perceptible to flesh and
 blood :
 Now, taken from our sight, he dwells
 no less
 Within our mortal memory and
 thought ;
 The mystery of all he was, and
 wrought,
 Is made a part of general conscious-
 ness.
 And in this consciousness I reach
 repose.
 Spent with the howling main and
 desert sand
 Almost too faint to pluck the unfad-
 ing rose
 Of peace, that bows its beauty to
 my hand.
 Here Reason fails, and leaves me ;
 my pale guide
 Across the wilderness—by a stern
 command,
 Shut out, like Moses, from the
 Promist Land.
 Touching its own achievement, it
 hath died.
 Ah yet ! I have but wrung the vic-
 tory
 From Thought ! Not passionless
 will be my path.

Yet on my life's pale forehead I can
see

The flush of squandered fires.
Passion hath

Yct, in the purpose of my days, its
place.

But changed in aspect : turned
unto the East,

Whence grows the dayspring from
on high, at least

A finer fervor trembles on its face.

THE SOUL'S SCIENCE.

CAN History prove the truth which
hath

Its record in the silent soul ?

Or mathematics mete the path
Whereby the spirit seeks its goal ?

Can Love of aught but Love inherit
The blessing which is born of

Love ?

The spirit knoweth of the spirit :
The soul alone the soul can prove.

The eye to see ; the ear to hear :
The working hand to help the
will :

To every sense his separate sphere :
And unto each his several skill.

The ear to sight, the eye to sound,
Is callous : unto each is given

His lorddom in his proper bound.
The soul, the soul to find out

heaven !

There is a glory veiled to sight ;
A voice which never ear hath
heard ;

There is a law no hand can write,
Yet stronger than the written
word.

And hast thou tidings for my soul,
O teacher ? to my soul intrust

Alone the purport of thy scroll :
Or vex me not with learned dust.

A PSALM OF CONFESSION.

FULL soon doth Sorrow make her
covenant

With Life ; and leave her shadow
in the door :

And all those future days, for which
we pant,

Do come in mourning for the days
of yore.

Still through the world gleams Mem-
ory seeking Love,

Pale as the torch which grieving
Ceres bore,

Seeking Proserpina, on that dark
shore

Where only phantoms through the
twilight move.

The more we change, the more is all
the same,

Our last grief was a tale of other
years

Quite outworn, till to our own hearts
it came.

Wishes are pilgrims to the Vale of
Tears.

Our brightest joys are but as airy
shapes

Of cloud, that fade on evening's
glimmering slope ;

And disappointment hawks the
hovering hope

Forever pecking at the painted
grapes.

Why can we not one moment pause,
and cherish

Love, though love turn to tears ?
or for hope's sake

Bless hope, albeit the thing we hope
may perish ?

For happiness is not in what we
take,

But what we give. What matter
though the thing

We cling to most should fail us ?
dust to dust,

It is the *feeling* for the thing,—the
trust

In beauty somewhere, to which souls
should cling.

My youth has failed, if failure lies
 in aught
 The warm heart dreams, or which
 the working hand
 Is set to do. I have failed in aimless
 thought,
 And steadfast purpose, and in self-
 command.
 I have failed in hope, in health, in
 love : failed in the word,
 And in the deed too I have failed.
 Ah yet,
 Albeit with eyes from recent weep-
 ings wet,
 Sing thou, my Soul, thy psalm unto
 the Lord !

The burthen of the desert and the
 sea ! [vale !
 The burthen of the vision in
 My threshing-floor, my threshing-
 floor ! ah me,
 Thy wind hath strewn my corn,
 and spoiled the flail !
 The burthen of Dumah and of Ded-
 anim !
 What of the night, O watchman,
 of the night ?
 The glory of Kedar faileth : and
 the might
 Of mighty men is minished and dim.

The morning cometh, and the night,
 he cries.
 The watchman cries the morning,
 too, is nigher.
 And, if ye would inquire, lift up
 your eyes,
 Inquire of the Lord, return, in-
 quire !
 I stand upon the watchtower all day
 long : [ward.
 And all the night long I am set in
 Is it thy feet upon the mountains,
 Lord ?
 I sing against the darkness : hear
 my song

The majesty of Kedar hath been
 spoiled :
 Bound are the arrows : broken is
 the bow.

I come before the Lord with gar-
 ments soiled.
 The ashes of my life are on my
 brow.
 Take thou thy harp, and go about
 the city.
 O daughter of Desire, with gar-
 ments torn :
 Sing many songs, wake melody
 and mourn,
 That thou may'st be remembered
 unto pity.

Just, awful God ! here at thy feet I
 lay
 My life's most precious offering :
 dearly bought,
 Thou knowest with what toil by
 night and day :
 Thou knowest the pain, the pas-
 sion, and the thought.
 I bring thee my youth's failure. I
 have spent
 My youth upon it. All I have is
 here.
 Were it worth all it is not, price
 more dear
 Could I have paid for its accomplish-
 ment ?

Yet it is much. If I could say to
 thee,
 "Acquit me, Judge ; for I am
 thus, and thus ;
 And have achieved—even so much,"
 —should I be
 Thus wholly fearless and impetu-
 ous
 To rush into thy presence ? I might
 weigh
 The little done against the undone
 much :
 My merit with thy mercy : and, a
 such,
 Haggle with pardon for a price to
 pay.

But now the fulness of its failure
 makes
 My spirit fearless ; and despair
 grows bold.

My brow, beneath its sad self-knowledge, aches.

Life's presence passes Thine a thousand-fold

In contemplated terror. Can I lose
Aught by that desperate temerity
Which leaves no choice but to surrender Thee

My life witho it condition? Could I choose

A stipulated sentence, I might ask
For ceded dalliance to some cher-
ished vice :

Or half-remission of some desperate
task :

Now, all I have is hateful. What
is the price ?

Speak, Lord ! I hear the Fiend's
hand at the door.

Hell's slavery or heaven's service
is it the choice ?

How can I palter with the terms ?
O voice,

Whence do I hear thee . . . "Go :
and sin no more" ?

No more, no more ? But I have kist
dead white

The cheek of Vicc. No more the
harlot hides

Her loathsomeness of lineament from
my sight.

No more within my bosom there
abides

Her poisoned perfume. O, the
witch's mice

Have eat her scarlet robe and
diaper,

And she fares naked ! Part from
her—from her ?

Is this the price, O Lord, is this the
price ?

Yet, though her web be broken,
bonds, I know,

Slow custom frames in the strong
forge of time,

Which outlast love, and will not wear
with woe,

Nor break beneath the cognizance
of crime.

The witch goes bare. But he,—the
father fiend,

That roams the unthrifty furrows
of my days,

Yet walks the field of life ; and,
where he strays,

The husbandry of heaven for hell is
gleaned.

Lulls are there in man's life which
are not peace.

Tumults which are not triumphs.
Do I take

The pause of passion for the fiend's
decease ?

This frost of grief hath numbed
the drowsing snake ;

Which yet may wake, and sting me
in the heat

Of new emotions. What shall bar
the door

Against the old familiar, that of
yore

Came without call, and sat within
my seat ?

When evening brings its dim grim
hour again,

And hell lets loose its dusky brood
awhile,

Shall I not find him in the darkness
then ?

The same subservient and yet in-
solent snile ?

The same indifferent ignominious
face ?

The same old sense of household
horror, come

Like a tame creature, back into its
home ?

Meeting me, haply, in my wonted
place,

With the loathed freedom of an un-
loved mate,

Or crouching on my pillow as of
old ?

Knowing I hate him, impotent in
hate !

Therefore more subtle, strenuous
and bold.

Thus ancient habit will usurp young
will,
And each new effort rivet the old
thrall.
No matter ! those who climb must
count to fall,
But each new fall will prove them
climbing still.

Wretched man ! the body of this
death
Which, groaning in the spirit, I
yet bear [breath
On to the end (so that I breathe the
Of its corruption, even though
breathing prayer),
What shall take from me ? Must I
drag forever
The cold corpse of the life which I
have killed
But cannot bury ? Must my heart
be filled
With the dry dust of every dead en-
deavor ?

For often, at the mid of the long
night,
Some devil enters into the dead
clay,
And gives it life unnatural in my
sight. [away,
The dead man rises up ; and roams
Back to the mouldered mansions of
the Past :
And lights a lurid revel in the halls
Of vacant years ; and lifts his
voice, and calls,
Till troops of phantoms gather round
him fast.

Frail gold-haired corpses, in whose
eyes there lives
A strange regret too wild to let
them rest :
Crowds of pale maidens, who were
never wives
And infants that all died upon the
breast [revelry
That suckled them. And these make
Mingled with wailing all the mid-
night through,

Till the sad day doth with stern
light renew
The toiling land, and the complain-
ing sea.

Full well I know that in this world
of ours
The dreadful Commonplace suc-
ceeds all change ;
We catch at times a gleam of flying
powers
That pass in storm some windy
mountain range :
But, while we gaze, the cloud returns
o'er all.
And each, to guide him up the
devious height,
Must take, and bless, whatever
earthly light
From household hearths, or shep-
herd fires, may fall.

This wave, that groans and writhes
upon the beach,
To-morrow will submit itself to
calm ; [of reach,
That wind that rushes, moaning, out
Will die anon beneath some breath-
less pain ;
These tears, these sighs, these mo-
tions of the soul,
This inexpressible pining of the
mind,
The stern indifferent laws of life
shall bind,
And fix forever in their old control.

Behold this half-tamed universe of
things !
That cannot break, nor wholly
bear, its chain.
Its heart by fits grows wild : it leaps,
it springs ;
Then the chain galls, and kennels
it again.

If man were formed with all his
faculties
For sorrow, I should sorrow for
him less. [stress
Considering a life so brief, the
Of its short passion I might well
despise :

But all man's faculties are for de-
light ;

But all man's life is compassed
with what seems

Framed for enjoyment : but from all
that sight

And sense reveal a magic murmur
streams

Into man's heart, which says, or
seems to say,

"Be happy !" . . . and the heart
of man replies,

"Leave happiness to brutes : I
would be wise :

Give me, not peace, but science,
glory, art."

Therefore, age, sickness, and mor-
tality [pain :

Are but the lightest portion of his

Therefore, shut out from joy, inces-
santly

Death finds him toiling at a task
that's vain. have :

I weep the want of all he pines to
I weep the loss of all he leaves be-
hind :—

Contentment, and repose, and
peace of mind,

Pawned for the purchase of a little
grave :

I weep the hundred centuries of
time ;

I weep the millions that have
squandered them

In error, doubt, anxiety, and crime,
Here, where the free birds sing

from leaf and stem :

I weep . . . but what are tears ?
What I deplore

I knew not, half a hundred years
ago :

And half a hundred years from
hence, I know

That what I weep for I shall know
no more.

The spirit of that wide and leafless
wind

That wanders o'er the uncom-
panioned sea,

Searching for what it never seems to
find,

Stirred in my hair, and moved my
heart in me,

To follow it, far over land and main :
And everywhere over this earth's

scarred face

The footsteps of a God I seemed
to trace ;

But everywhere steps of a God ir-
paine.

If, haply, he that made this heart of
mine,

Himself in sorrow walked the
world erewhile,

What then am I, to marvel or repine
That I go mourning ever in the

smile

Of universal nature, searching ever
The phantom of a joy which here

I miss ?

My heart inhabits other worlds
than this,

Therefore my search is here a vain
endeavor.

Methought, . . . (it was the mid-
night of my soul,

Dead midnight) that I stood on
Calvary :

I found the cross, but not the Christ.
The whole

Of heaven was dark : and I went
bitterly

Weeping, because I found him not.
Methought, . . .

(It was the twilight of the dawn
and mist)

I stood before the sepulchre of
Christ :

The sepulchre was vacant, void of
aught

Saving the cere-clothes of the grave,
which were

Upfolden straight and empty :
bitterly

Weeping I stood, because not even
there

I found him. Then a voice spake
unto me,

"Whom seekest thou? Why is thy heart dismayed?

Jesus of Nazareth, he is not here: Behold, the Lord is risen. Be of cheer:

Approach, behold the place where he was laid."

And while he spake, the sunrise smote the world.

"Go forth, and tell thy brethren," spake the voice:

"The Lord is risen." Suddenly unfurled,

The whole unclouded Orient did rejoice

In glory. Wherefore should I mourn that here

My heart feels vacant of what most it needs?

Christ is risen! . . . the cere-clothes and the weeds

That wrapped him lying in his sepulchre

Of earth, he hath abandoned; being gone

Back into heaven, where we too must turn

Our gaze to find him. Pour, O risen Sun

Of Righteousness, the light for which I yearn

Upon the darkness of this mortal hour,

This track of night in which I walk forlorn:

Behold the night is now far spent. The morn

Leaks, breaking from afar through a night shower.

REQUIESCAT.

I SOUGHT to build a deathless monument

To my dead love. Therein I meant to place

All precious things, and rare: as Nature blent

All single sweetnesses in one sweet face.

I could not build it worthy her mute merit,

Nor worthy her white brows and holy eyes,

Nor worthy of her perfect and pure spirit,

Nor of my own immortal memories.

But as some wrapt artificer of old,

To enshrine the ashes of a virgin saint,

Might scheme to work with ivory, and fine gold,

And carven gems, and legended and quaint

Seraphic heraldries; searching far lands,

Orient and occident, for all things rare,

To consecrate the toil of reverent hands,

And make his labor, like her virtue, fair;

Knowing no beauty beautiful as she, And all his labor void, but to beguile

A sacred sorrow; so I worked. Ah, see

Here are the fragments of my shattered pile!

I keep them, and the flowers that sprang between

Their broken workmanship—the flowers and weeds!

Sleep soft among the violets, O my Queen,—

Lie calm among my ruined thoughts and deeds.

EPILOGUE.

PART I.

CHANGE without term, and strife without result,

Persons that pass, and shadows that remain,

One strange, impenetrable, and occult

Suggestion of a hope, that's hoped
 in vain,
 Behold the world man reigns in !
 His delight
 Deceives ; his power fatigues ;
 his strength is brief ;
 Even his religion presupposes
 grief,
 His morning is not certain of the
 night.

I have beheld, without regret, the
 trunk,
 Which propped three hundred
 summers on its boughs,
 Which housed, of old, the merry
 bird, and drunk
 The divine dews of air, and gave
 carouse
 To the free winds of heaven, lie
 overthrown
 Amidst the trees which its own
 fruitage bore.
 Its promise is fulfilled. It is no
 more,
 But it hath been. Its destiny is
 done.

But the wild ash, that springs above
 the marsh !
 Strong and superb it rises o'er the
 wild.
 Vain energy of being ! For the
 harsh
 And fetid ooze already hath de-
 filed
 The roots by whose sap it lives by.
 Heaven doth give
 No blessing to its boughs. The
 humid wind
 Rots them. The vapors warp
 them. All declined,
 Its life hath ceased, ere it hath
 ceased to live.

Child of the waste, and nursling of
 the pest !
 A kindred fate hath watched and
 wept thy own.
 Thine epitaph is written in my
 breast.

Years change. Day treads out
 day. For me alone
 No change is nursed within the
 brooding bud.
 Satiety I have not known, and
 yet,
 I wither in the void of life, and
 fret
 A futile time, with an unpeaceful
 blood.

The days are all too long, the nights
 too fair,
 And too much redness satiates the
 rose.
 O blissful season ! blest and balmy
 air !
 Waves ! moonlight ! silence !
 years of lost repose !
 Bowers and shades that echoed to
 the tread
 Of young Romance ! birds that,
 from woodland bars,
 Sang, serenading forth the timid
 stars !
 Youth ! beauty ! passion ! whither
 are ye fled ?
 I wait, and long have waited, and
 yet wait
 The coming of the footsteps which
 ye told
 My heart to watch for. Yet the
 hour is late,
 And ye have left me. Did they
 lie, of old,
 Your thousand voices prophesying
 bliss ?
 That troubled all the current of a
 fate
 Which else might have been peace-
 ful ! I await
 The thing I have not found, yet
 would not miss.

To face out childhood, and grow
 up to man,
 To make a noise, and question all
 one sees,
 The astral orbit of a world to span.
 And, after a few days, to take one's
 ease

Under the graveyard grasses,—this,
my friend,
Appears to me a thing too strange
but what
I wish to know its meaning. I
would not
Depart before I have perceived the
end.

And I would know what, here below
the sun,
He is, and what is his place, that
being which seems
The end of all means, yet the means
of none ;
Who searches and combines,
aspires and dreams ;
Seeking new things with ever the
same hope,
Seeking new hopes in ever the
same thing ;
A king without the powers of a
king,
A beggar with a kingdom in his
scope ;

Who only sees in what he hath at-
tained
The means whereby he may attain
to more ;
Who only finds in that which he
hath gained
The want of what he did not want
before ;
Whom weakness strengthens ; who
is soothed by strife ;
Who seeks new joys to prize the
absent most ;
Still from illusion to illusion tost,
Himself the great illusion of his
—te !

Why is it, all deep emotion makes
us sigh
To quit this world ? What better
thing than death
Can follow after rapture ? “ Let us
die ; ”
This is the last wish on the lover’s
breath.

If thou wouldst live, content thee.
To enjoy
Is to begin to perish. What is
bliss,
But transit to some other state
from this ?
That which we live for must our life
destroy.

Hast thou not ever longed for death
If not,
Not yet thy life’s experience is at-
tained.
But if thy days be favored, if thy lot
Be easy, if hope’s summit thou
hast gained,
Die ! Death is the sole future left
to thee.
The knowledge of this life is
bound, for each,
By his own powers. Death lies
between our reach
And all which, living, we have lived
to be.

Death is no evil, since it comes to
all.
For evil is the exception, not the
law.
What is it in the tempest that doth
call
Our spirits down its pathways ?
or the awe
Of that abyss and solitude beneath
High mountain passes, which doth
aye attract
Such strange desire ? or in the cat-
aract ?
The sea ? It is the sentiment of
death.

If life no more than a mere seeming
be,
Away with the imposture ! If it
tend
To nothing, and to have lived seem-
ingly
Prove to be vain and futile in the
end,

Then let us die, that we may really
live.

Or cease to feign to live. Let us
possess

Lasting delight, or lasting quiet-
ness.

What life desires, death, only death,
can give.

Where are the violets of vanished
years?

The sunsets Rachel watched by
Laban's well?

Where is Fidele's face? where Ju-
liet's tears?

There comes no answer. There
is none to tell

What we go questioning, till our
mouths are stopt

By a clod of earth. Ask of the
plangent sea,

The wild wind wailing through the
leafless tree,

Ask of the meteor from the mid-
night dropt!

Dome, Death, and bring the beauty
back to all!

I do not seek thee, but I will not
shun.

And let thy coming be at even-fall,
Thy pathway through the setting
of the sun.

And let us go together, I with thee,
What time the lamps in Eden
dowers are lit,

And Melancholy, all alone, doth
sit

By the wide marge of some neglected
sea.

PART II.

THE hour of English twilight once
again!

Lo! in the rosy regions of the dew
The confines of the world begin to
wane,

And Hesper doth his trembling
lamp renew.

Now is the inauguration of the
night!

Nature's release to wearied earth
and skies!

Sweet truce of Care! Labor's
brief armistice!

Best, loveliest interlude of dark and
light!

The rookery, babbling in the sunken
wood;

The watchdog, barking from the
distant farm,

The dim light fading from the horned
flood,

That winds the woodland in its
silver arm;

The massed and immemorial oaks,
whose leaves

Tre husht in yonder healthy dells
below;

The fragrance of the meadows that
I know;

The bat, that now his wavering cir-
cle weaves

Around these antique towers, and
casements deep

That glimmer, through the ivy and
the rose,

To the faint moon, which doth be-
gin to creep

Out of the inmost heart o' the
heavens' repose,

To wander, all night long, without
a sound,

Above the fields my feet oft wan-
dered once;

The larches tall and dark, which
do ensconce

The little churchyard, in whose hal-
lowed ground

Sleep half the simple friends my
childhood knew:

All, all the sounds and sights of
this blest hour,

Sinking within my heart of hearts,
like dew,

Revive that so long parcht and
drooping flower

Of youth, the world's hot breath for
many years

Hath burned and withered ; till
 once more, once more,
 The revelation and the dream of
 yore
 Return to solace these sad eyes with
 tears !

Where now, alone, a solitary man,
 I pace once more the pathways of
 my home,
 Light-hearted, and together, once we
 ran,
 I, and the infant guide that used
 to roam
 With me, the meads and meadow-
 banks among,
 At dusk and dawn. How light
 those little feet
 Danced through the dancing grass
 and waving wheat,
 Where'er, far off, we heard the
 cuckoo's song !

I know now, little Ella, what the
 flowers
 Said to you then, to make your
 cheek so pale ;
 And why the blackbird in our laurel
 bowers
 Spake to you, only ; and the poor,
 pink snail
 Feared less your steps than those of
 the May-shower.
 It was not strange these creatures
 loved you so,
 And told you all. 'Twas not so
 long ago
 You were, yourself, a bird, or else a
 flower

And, little Ella, you were pale, be-
 cause
 So soon you were to die. I know
 that now.
 And why there ever seemed a sort of
 gauze
 Over your deep blue eyes, and sad
 young brow.
 You were too good to grow up,
 Ella, you,
 And be a woman, such as I have
 known !

And so upon your heart they put
 a stone,
 And left you, dear, amongst the
 flowers and dew.

God's will is good. He knew what
 would be best.
 I will not weep thee, darling, any
 more ;
 I have not wept thee ; though my
 heart, opprest
 With many memories, for thy sake
 is sore.
 God's will is good, and great His
 wisdom is.
 Thou wast a little star, and thou
 didst shine
 Upon my cradle ; but thou wast
 not mine,
 Thou wast not mine, my darling
 thou art His.

My morning star ! twin sister of m
 soul !
 My little elfin friend from Fai /
 Land !
 Whose memory is yet innocent of
 the whole
 Of that which makes me doubly
 need thy hand,
 Thy little guiding hand so soon with-
 drawn !
 Here where I find so little like to
 thee.
 For thou wert as the breath of
 dawn to me,
 Starry, and pure, and brief as s he
 dawn.

Thy knight was I, and thou my
 Fairy Queen.
 ('Twas in the days of love and
 chivalry !)
 And thou didst hide thee in a bower
 of green.
 But thou so well hast hidden thee,
 that I
 Have never found thee since. And
 thou didst set
 Many a task, and quest, and high
 emprise,

Ere I should win my guerdon from
thine eyes,
So many, and so many, that not yet

My tasks are ended, or my wander-
ings o'er.

But some day thou wilt send across
the main

A magic bark, and I shall quit this
shore

Of care, and find thee, in thy
bower, again ;

And thou wilt say, "My brother,
hast thou found

Our home, at last ?" . . . Whilst I,
in answer, Sweet,

Shall heap my life's last booty at
thy feet,

And bare my breast with many a
bleeding wound.

The spoils of time ! the trophies of
the world !

The keys of conquered towns, and
captived kings ;

And many a broken sword, and ban-
ner furled ;

The heads of giants, and swart
Soldan's rings ;

And many a maiden's scarf ; and
many a wand

Of baffled wizard ; many an amu-
let ;

And many a shield, with mine
own heart's blood wet ;

And jewels, dear, from many a dis-
tant land !

God's will is good. He knew what
would be best.

I thought last year to pass away
from life.

I thought my toils were ended, and
my quest

Completed, and my part in this
world's strife

Accomplish'd. And, behold ! about
me now

There rest the gloom, the glory,
and the awe

Of a new martyrdom, no dreams
foresaw ;
And the thorn-crown hath blossomed
on my brow.

A martyrdom, but with a martyr's
joy !

A hope I never hoped for ! and
sense

That nothing henceforth ever can
destroy :—

Within my breast the serene con-
fidence

Of mercy in the misery of things ;
Of meaning in the mystery of all ;

Of blessing in whatever may be-
fall ;

Of rest predestined to all wanderings.

How sweet, with thee, my sister, to
renew,

In lands of light, the search for
those bright birds

Of plumage, so ethereal in its hue,
And music sweeter than all mortal

words,
Which some good angel to our child-
hood sent

With messages from Paradisal
flowers,

So lately left, the scent of Eden
bowers

Yet lingered in our hair, where'er
we went !

Now, they are all fled by, this many
a year,

Adown the viewless valleys of the
wind,

And never more will cross this
hemisphere,

Those birds of passage ! Neve
shall I find,

Dropt from the flight, you followed,
dear, so far

That you will never come again,
I know,

One plumelet on the paths by
which I go,

Missing thy light there, O my morn-
ing star !

Soft, over all, doth ancient twilight
cast

Her dim gray robe, vague as fu-
turity,

And sad and hoary as the ghostly
past,

Till earth assumes invisibility.

Hear the night-bird's note, where-
with she starts

The bee within the blossom from
his dream.

A light, like hope, from yonder
pane doth beam,

And now, like hope, it silently de-
parts.

Hush! from the clock within yon
dark church spire,

Another hour broke, clanging, out
of time,

And passed me, throbbing like my
my own desire,

Into the seven-fold heavens. And
now, the chime

Over the vale, the woodland, and
the river,

More faint, more far, a quivering
echo, strays

From that small twelve-houred
circle of our days,

And spreads, and spreads, to the
great round Forever.

Pensive, the sombre ivied porch I
pass.

Through the dark hall, the sound
of my own feet

Pursues me, like the ghost of what I
was,

Into this silent chamber, where I
meet

From wall to wall the fathers of my
race;

The pictures of the past from wall
to wall;

Wandering o'er which, my wistful
glances fall,

To sink, at last, on little Ella's face.

This is my home. And hither I re-
turn,

After much wandering in the ways
of men,

Weary but not outworn. Here, with
her urn

Shall Memory come, and be my
denizen.

And blue-eyed Hope shall through
the window look,

And lean her fair child's face int
the room,

What time the hawthorn bud
anew, and bloom

The bright forget-me-nots beside the
brook.

Father of all which is, or yet may be,
Ere to the pillow which my child-
hood prest

This night restores my troubled
brows, by Thee

May this, the last prayer I have
learned, be blest!

Grant me to live that I may need
from life

No more than life hath given me,
and to die

That I may give to death no more
than I

Have long abandoned. And, if toil
and strife

Yet in the portion of my days must
be,

Firm be my faith, and quiet be my
heart!

That so my work may with my will
agree,

And strength be mine to calmly
fill my part

In Nature's purpose, questioning not
the end.

For love is more than raiment
than food.

Shall I not take the evil with th
good?

Blessed to me be all which thou dost
send!

Nor blest the least, recalling what
hath been,

The knowledge of the evil I have
known

Without me, and within me. Since,
to lean

Upon a strength far mightier than
 my own
 Such knowledge brought me. In
 whose strength I stand,
 Firmly upheld, even though, in
 ruin hurled,
 The fixed foundations of this roll-
 ing world
 should topple at the waving of Thy
 hand.

PART III.

HAIL thou! sole Muse that, in an
 age of toil,
 Of all the old Uranian sisterhood,
 Art left to light us o'er the furrowed
 soil
 Of this laborious star! Muse, un-
 subdued
 By that strong hand which hath in
 ruin razed
 The temples of dread Jove! Muse
 most divine,
 Albeit but ill by these pale lips of
 mine,
 In days degenerate, first named and
 praised!
 Now the high airy kingdoms of the
 day
 Hyperion holds not. The disloyal
 seas
 Have broken from Poseidon's purple
 sway.
 Through Heaven's harmonious
 golden palaces
 No more the silver-sandalled mes-
 sengers
 Slide to sweet airs. Upon Olym-
 pus brow
 The gods' great citade is vacant
 now.
 And not a lute to Love in Lesbos
 stirs.
 But thou wert born not on the
 Forkéd Hill,
 Nor fed from Hybla's hives by
 Attic bees,
 Nor on the honey Crotan oaks distil,

Or once distilled, when gods had
 homes in trees,
 And young Apollo knew thee not.
 Yet thou
 With Ceres wast, when the pale
 mother trod
 The gloomy pathway to the nether
 god,
 And spake with that dim Power
 which dwells below

The surface of whatever, where he
 wends,
 The circling sun illumineth. And
 thou
 Wast aye a friend to man. Of all
 his friends,
 Perchance the friend most needed:
 needed now
 Yet more than ever; in a complex
 age
 Which changes while we gaze at
 it: from heaven
 Seeking a sign, and finding no
 sign given,
 And questioning Life's worn book
 at every page.

Nor ever yet, was song, untaught by
 thee,
 Worthy to live immortally with
 man.
 Wherefore, divine Experience, bend
 on me
 Thy deep and searching eyes.
 Since life began,
 Meek at thy mighty knees, though
 oft reproved,
 I have sat, spelling out slow time
 with tears,
 Where down the riddling alphabet
 of years
 Thy guiding finger o'er the horn-
 book moved.

And I have put together many
 names:
 Sorrow, and Joy, and Hope, and
 Memory,
 And Love, and Anger; as an infant
 frames

The initials of a language wherein
 he
 In manhood must with men com-
 municate.
 And oft, the words were hard to
 understand,
 Harder to utter ; still the solemn
 hand
 Would pause, and point, and wait,
 and move, and wait ;
 Till words grew into language. Lan-
 guage grew
 To utterance. Utterance into mu-
 sic passed.
 I sang of all I learned, and all I
 knew.
 And, looking upward in thy face,
 at last,
 Beheld it flusht, as when a mother
 hears
 Her infant feebly singing his first
 hymn,
 And dreams she sees, albeit unseen
 of him,
 Some radiant listener lured from
 other spheres.
 Such songs have been my solace
 many a while
 And oft, when other solace I had
 none,
 From grief which lay heart-broken
 on a smile,
 And joy that glittered like a win-
 ter sun,
 And froze, and fevered : from the
 great man's scorn,
 The mean man's envy ; friend's
 unfriendliness ;
 Love's want of human kindness,
 and the stress
 Of nights that hoped for nothing
 from the morn.
 From these, and worse than these,
 did song unbar
 A refuge through the ivory gate of
 dreams,
 Wherein my spirit grew familiar
 With spirits that glide by spiritual
 streams ;

Song hath, for me, unsealed the
 geni sleeping
 Under mid seas, and lured out of
 their lair
 Beings with wondering eyes, and
 wondrous hair,
 Tame to my feet at twilight softly
 creeping.
 And song hath been my cymbal i
 the hours
 Of triumph ; when behind me, far
 away,
 Lay Egypt, with its plagues ; and,
 by strange powers,
 Not mine, upheld, life's heaped
 ocean lay
 On either side a passage for my soul.
 A passage to the Land of Prom-
 ise ! trod
 By giants, where the chosen race
 of God
 Shall find, at last, its long predes-
 tined goal.
 The breath which stirred these songs
 a little while
 Has fled by ; and, with it,
 fled too
 The days I sought, thus singing, to
 beguile
 Of thoughts that spring like
 weeds, which will creep
 through
 The blank interstices of ruined
 fanes,
 Where Youth, adoring, sacrifi-
 ced—its heart,
 To gods forever fallen.
 Now, we part,
 My songs and I. We part, and what
 remains ?
 Perchance an echo, and perchance
 no more,
 Harp of my heart, from thy brief
 music dwells
 In hearts, unknown, afar : as the
 wide shore
 Retains within its hundred hollow
 shells
 The voices of the spirits of the foam,

Which murmur in the language
of the deeps,
Though haply far away, to one
who keeps
Such ocean wealth to grace an in-
land home.

Within these cells of song, how frail
soe'er,
The vast and wandering tides of
human life
Have murmured once ; and left, in
passing, there,
Faint echoes of the tumult and the
strife

Of the great ocean of humanity.
Fairies have danced within these
hollow caves,
And Memory mused above the
moonlit waves,
And Youth, the lover, here hath
lingered by.

I sung of life, as life would have me
sing,
Of falsehood, and of evil, and of
wrong ;

For many a false, and many an evil
thing,

I found in life ; and by my life my
song
Was shaped within me while I sung :

I sung
Of Good, for good is life's predestined end ;
Of Sorrow, for I knew her as my
friend ;
Of Love, for by his hand my harp
was strung.

Have not scrawled above the tomb
of Youth
Those lying epitaphs, which rep-
resent

All virtues, and all excellence, save
truth.

'Twere easy, thus, to have been
eloquent,
If I had held the fashion of the age
Which loves to hear its sounding
flattery

Blown by all dusty winds from sky
to sky,
And finds its praises blotting every
page.

And yet, the Poet and the Age are
one.

And if the age be flawed, howe'er
minute,

Deep through the poet's heart that
rent doth run,

And shakes and mars the music
of his lute.

It is not that his sympathy is less
With all that lives and all that
feels around him,

But that so close a sympathy hath
bound him

To these, that he must utter their
distress.

We build the bridge, and swing the
wondrous wire,

Bind with an iron hoop the rolling
world ;

Sport with the spirits of the ductile
fire ;

And leave our spells upon the va-
por furled ;

And cry—Behold the progress of the
time !

Yet are we tending in an unknown
land,

Whither, we neither ask nor un-
derstand,

Far from the peace of our unvalued
prime !

And Strength and Force, the fiends
which minister

To some new-risen Power beyond
our span,

On either hand, with hook and nail
confer

To rivet the Promethean heart of
man

Under the ravening and relentless
beak

Of unappeasable Desire, which yet
The very vitals of the age doth fret.

The limbs are mighty, but the heart
is weak.

Writhe on, Prometheus ! or whate'er
 thou art,
 Thou giant sufferer, groaning for
 a race
 Thou canst not save, for all thy
 bleeding heart !
 Thy wail my harp hath wakened ;
 and my place
 Shall be beside thee ; and my bless-
 ing be
 On all that makes me worthy yet
 to share
 Thy lonely martyrdom, and with
 thee wear
 That crown of anguish given to
 poets, and thee !
 If to have wept, and wildly ; to have
 loved
 Till love grew torture ; to have
 grieved till grief
 Became a part of life ; if to have
 proved
 The want of all things ; if, to draw
 relief
 From poesy for passion, this avail,
 I lack no title to my crown. The
 sea
 Hath sent up nymphs for my so-
 ciety,
 The mountains have been moved to
 hear my wail.
 Nature and man were children long
 ago
 In glad simplicity of heart and
 speech.
 Now they are stranger's to each
 other's woe ;
 And each hath language different
 from each.
 The simplest songs sound sweetest
 and most good.
 The simplest loves are the most
 loving ones.
 Happier were song's forefathers
 than their sons.
 And Homer sung as Byron never
 could.
 But Homer cannot come again : nor
 ever

The quiet of the age in which he
 sung.
 This age is one of tumult and en-
 deavor,
 And by a fevered hand its harps
 are strung.
 And yet, I do not quarrel with the
 time ;
 Nor quarrel with the tumult of my
 heart,
 Which of the tumult of the age is
 part ;
 Because its very weakness is sublime.
 The passions are as winds on the
 wide sea
 Of human life ; which do impel
 the sails
 Of man's great enterprise, whate'er
 that be.
 The reckless helmsman, caught
 upon these gales,
 Under the roaring gulfs goes down
 aghast.
 The prudent pilot to the steadying
 breeze
 Sparely gives head ; and, over
 perilous seas,
 Drops anchor 'mid the Fortunate
 Isles, at last.
 We pray against the tempest and
 the strife,
 The storm, the whirlwind, and the
 troublous hour,
 Which vex the fretful element of life.
 Me rather save, O dread disposing
 Power,
 From those dead calms, that flat and
 hopeless lull,
 In which the dull sea rots around
 the bark,
 And nothing moves save the sure-
 creeping dark,
 That slowly settles o'er an idle hull.
 For in the storm, the tumult, and
 the stir
 That shakes the soul, man finds
 his power and place
 Among the elements. Deeps with
 deeps confer,

<p>And Nature's secret settles in her face. Let ocean to his inmost caves be stirred ; Let the wild light be smitten from the cloud. The decks may reel, the masts be snapt and bowed, But God hath spoken out, and man hath heard !</p> <p>Farewell, you lost inhabitants of my mind, You fair ephemerals of faded hours ! Farewell, you lands of exile, whence each wind Of memory steals with fragrance over flowers ! Farewell, Cordelia ! Ella ! . . . But not so Farewell the memories of you which I have Till strangers shall be sitting on my grave And babbling of the dust which lies below.</p> <p>Bless'd the man whose life, how sad soe'er, Hath felt the presence, and yet keeps the trace Of one pure woman ! With religious care We close the doors, with reverent feet we pace The vacant chambers, where, of yore, a Queen One night hath rested. From my Past's pale walls Yet gleam the unfaded fair memorials Of her whose beauty there, awhile, hath been.</p> <p>She passed, into my youth, at its night-time, When low the lamplight, and the music husht. She passed and passed away. Some broken rhyme</p>	<p>Scrawled on the panel or the pane : the crusht And faded rose she dropped : the page she turned And finished not : the ribbon or the knot That fluttered from her Stranger, harm them not ! I keep these sacred relics undiscerned.</p> <p>Men's truths are often lies, and women's lies Often the setting of a truth most tender In an unconscious poesy. The child cries To clutch the star that lights its rosy splendor In airy Edens of the west afar. "Ah, folly !" sighs the father, o'er his book. "Millions of miles above thy foolish nook Of infantile desire, the Hesperus-star "Descends not, child, to twinkle on thy cot." Then readjusts his blind-wise spectacles, While tears to sobs are changing, were it not The mother, with those tender syllables Which even Dutch mothers can make musical too, Murmurs, "Sleep, sleep, my little one ! and I Will pluck thy star for thee, and by and by Lay it upon thy pillow bright with dew."</p> <p>And the child sleeps, and dreams of stars whose light Beams in his own bright eyes when he awakes. So sleep ! so dream ! If aught I read aright That star, poor babe, which o'er thy cradle shak's,</p>
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Thy fate may fall, in after years, to
be

That other child that, like thee,
loves the star,

And, like thee, weeps to find it all
so far,

Feeling its force in his nativity :—

Tha other infant, all as weak, as
wild,

As passionate, and as helpless, as
thou art,

Whom men will call a Poet (Poet, or
child,

The star is still so distant from the
heart !)

If so, heaven grant that thou mayst
find at last,

Since such there are, some woman,
whose sweet smile,

Pitying, may thy fond fancy yet
beguile

To dream the star, which thou hast
sought, thou hast !

For men, if thou shouldst heed what
they may say,

Will break thy heart, or leave
thee, like themselves,

No heart for breaking. Wherefore
I do pray

My book may lie upon no learned
shelves,

But that in some deep summer eve,
perchance,

Some woman, melancholy-eyed,
and pale,

Whose heart, like mine, hath suf-
fered, may this tale
Read by the soft light of her own ro-
mance.

Go forth over the wide world, Song
of mine !

As Noah's dove out of his bosom
flew

Over the desolate, vast, and wander-
ing brine.

Seek thou thy nest afar. Thy
plaint renew

From heart to heart, and on from
land to land

Fly boldly, till thou find that un-
known friend

Whose face, in dreams, above my
own doth bend,

Then tell that spirit what it will un-
derstand,

Why men can tell to strangers all
the tale

From friends reserved. And tell
that spirit, my Song,

Wherefore I have not faltered to un-
veil

The cryptic forms of error and of
wrong.

And say, I suffered more than I re-
corded,

That each man's life is all men's
lesson. Say,

And let the world believe thee, as
it may,

Thy tale is true, however weakly
worded.

TANNHÄUSER ; *

OR,

THE BATTLE OF THE BARDS.

A portion of this poem was written by another hand.

<p>THIS is the Land, the happy valleys these, Broad breadths of plain, blue-veined by many a stream, Umbrageous hills, sweet glades, and forests fair, O'er which our good liege, Landgrave Herman, rules. This is Thuringia : yonder, on the heights, Is Wartburg, seat of our dear lord's abode, Famous through Christendom for many a feat Of deftest knights, chief stars of chivalry, At tourney in its courts ; nor more renowned For deeds of Prowess than exploits of Art, Achieved when, vocal in its Muses' hall, The minstrel-knights their glorious jousts renew, And for the laurel wage harmonious war. On this side spreads the Chase in wooded slopes And sweet acclivities ; and, all be- yond,</p>	<p>The open flats lie fruitful to the sun Full many a league ; till dark against the sky, Bounding the limits of our lord's do- main, The Hill of Hørsel rears his horrid front. Woe to the man who wanders in the vast Of those unhallowed solitudes, if Sin, Quickening the lust of carnal appe- tite, Lurk secret in his heart : for all their caves Echo weird strains of magic, direful- sweet, That lap the wanton sense in bliss- ful ease ; While through the ear a reptile mu- sic creeps, And, blandly-busy, round about the soul Weaves its fell web of sounds. The unhappy wight Thus captive made in soft and silken bands Of tangled harmony, is led away— Away adown the ever-darkening caves,</p>
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* The reader is solicited to adopt the German pronunciation of TANNHAUSER, by sounding it as if it were written, in English, Tannhoiser.

<p>Away from fairness and the face of God, Away into the mountain's mystic womb, To where, reclining on her impious couch All the fair length of her lascivious limbs, languid in light from roseate tapers flung, nensed with perfumes, tended on by fays. The lustful Queen, waiting damna- tion, holds Her bestial revels. The Queen of Beauty once, A goddess called and worshipped in the days When men their own infirmities adored, Deeming divine who in themselves summed up The full-blown passions of human- ity. Large fame and lavish service had she then, Venus ycleped, of all the Olympian crew Least continent of Spirits and most fair. So reaped she honor of unwistful men, Roman, or Greek, or dwellers on the plains Of Egypt, or the isles to utmost Ind; Till came the crack of that tremen- dous Doom That sent the false gods shivering from their seats, Shattered the superstitious dome that bleared Heaven's face to man, and on the lurid world Let in effulgence of untainted light. As when, laid bare beneath the del- ver's toil Ou some huge bulk of buried masonry Li hoar Assyria, suddenly revealed A chamber, gay with sculpture and the pomp</p>	<p>Of pictured tracery on its glowing walls, No sooner breathes the wholesome heavenly air Then fast its colored bravery tades, and fall Its ruined statues, crumbled from their crypts, And all its gauds grow dark at sight of day; So darkened and to dusty ruin fell The fleeting glories of a Pagan faith Bared to Truth's influences bland and snit Blind by the splendors of the Beth- lehem Dawn. Then from their shattered temple in the minds Of men, and from their long familiar homes, Their altars, fanes, and shrines, the sumptuous seats Of their mendacious oracles, out- slunk The wantons of Olympus. Forth they fled, Forth from Dodona, Delos, and the depths Of wooded Ida; from Athenæ forth, Cithæron, Paphos, Thebes, and all their groves Of oak or poplar, dismally to roam About the new baptizéd earth; ex- iled, Bearing the curse, yet suffered for a space, By Heaven's clear sapience and in- scrutible ken, To range the wide world, and assay their powers To unregenerate redeemed man- kind: If haply they by shadows and by shows, Phantasmagoria, and illusions wrought Of sight or sound by sorcery, may draw Unwary men, or weak, into the nets Of Satan their great Captain. She renowned</p>
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<p> "The fairest," fleeing from her Cyprian isle, Swept to the northwards many a league, and lodged At length on Hørsel, into whose dark womb She crept confounded. Thither soon she drew Lewd Spirits to herself, and there abides, Holding her devilish orgies; and has power With siren voices crafty to compel Into her wanton home unhappy men Whose souls to sin are prone. The pure at heart Nathless may roam about her pesti- lent hill Untainted, proof against perfidious sounds Within whose ears an angel ever sings Good tidings of great joy. Nor even they, Whose hearts are gross, and who inflamed with lust Enter, entrapped by sorceries, to her cave, Are damned beyond redemption. For a while, Slaves of their bodies, in the sloughs of Sin, They roll contented, wallowing in the arms Of their libidinous goddess. But, erelong, Comes loathing of the sensual air they breathe, Loathing of light unhallowed, sick- ening sense Of surfcited enjoyment; and their lips, Spurning the reeky pasture, yearn for draughts Of rock-rebounding rills, their eyes for sight Of Heaven, their limbs for lengths of dewy grass : What time sharp Conscience pricks them, and awake </p>	<p> Starts the requicken'd soul with all her powers, And breaks, if so she will, the mur- derous spell, Calling on God. God to her rescue sends Voiced seraphims that lead the sinner forth From darkness unto day, from fou embrace Of that bloat Queen into the mother lap Of earth, and the caressent airs of Heaven ; Where he, by strong presistency of prayer, By painful pilgrimage, by lengths of fast That tame the rebel flesh, by many a night Of vigil, days of deep repentant tears, May cleanse his soul of her adulter- ate stains, May from his sin-incrusted spirit shake The leprous scales,—and, purely at the feet Of his redemption falling, may arise Of Christ accepted. Whoso doubts the truth, Doubting how deep divine Compas- sion is, Lend to my tale a willing ear, and learn. Full twenty summers have fled o'er the land, A score of winters on our Land- grave's head Have showered their snowy honors, since the days When in his court no nobler knight was known, And in his halls no happier bard was heard, Than bright Tannhäuser. Warrior, minstrel, he Throve for a while within the general eye, As some king-cedar, in Crusader </p>
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The stateliest growth of Lebanonian
groves :
For now I sing him in his matchless
prime,
Not, as in latter days, defaced and
marred
By secret sin, and like the wasted
torch
Found in the dank grass at the
ghastly dawn,
After a witches' revel. He was a
man
In whom prompt Nature, as in those
soft climes
Where life is indolently opulent,
Blossomed unbid to graces barely
won
From tedious culture, where less
kindly stars
Cold influence keep ; and trothful
men, who once
Looked in his lordly, luminous eyes,
and scanned
His sinewous frame, compact of
pliant power,
Aver he was the fairest-favored
knight
That ever, in the light of ladies'
looks,
Made gay these goodly halls. Oh !
deeper dole, [fair,
That so august a Spirit, sphered so
'round from the starry sessions of
his peers
Decline, to quench so bright a
brilliancy
In Hell's sick spume. Ay me, the
deeper dole !
From yonder tower the wheeling
lapwing loves
Beyond all others, that o'ertops the
pines,
And from his one white, wistful
window stares
into the sullen heart o' the land,—
erewhile
The wandering woodman oft, at
night-fall, heard
A sad, wild strain of solitary song
float o'er the forest. Whoso heard
it, paused

Compassionately, crossed himself,
and sighed,
"Alas ! poor Princess, to thy piteous
moan
Heaven send sweet peace !" Heaven
heard, and now she lies
Under the marble, 'mid the silent
tombs,
Calm with her kindred ; as her son
above
Rests with the saints of God.
The brother's child
Of our good lord the Landgrave was
this maid,
And here with him abode ; for in the
breach
At Ascalon, her sire in Holy Land
Had fallen, fighting for the Cross.
These halls
Sheltered her infancy, and here she
grew
Among the shaggy barons, like the
pale,
Mild-eyed, March-violet of the North,
that blows
Bleak under bergs of ice. Full fair
she grew,
And all men loved the rare Eliza-
beth ;
But she, of all men, loved one man
the most,
Tannhäuser, minstrel, knight, the
man in whom
All mankind flowered. Fairer growth
indeed,
Of knighthood never blossomed to
the eye ;
But, furred beneath that florid sur-
face, lurked
A vice of nature, breeding death,
not life ;
Such as where some rich Roman, t
delight
Luxurious days with labyrinthial
walks
Of rose and lily, marble fountains,
forms
Wanton of Greece or Nymph, and
winding frieze
With sculpture rough, hath decked
the summer haunts

Of his voluptuous villa,—there, festooned

With flowers, among the Graces and the Gods,

The lurking fever glides.

A dangerous skill,
Caught from the custom of those troubadours

That roam the wanton South, too near the homes

Of the lost gods, had crept in careless use

Among our northern bars ; to play the thief

Upon the poets of a pagan time,

And steal, to purple their embroidered lays,

Voluptuous trappings of lascivious lore.

Hence had Tannhäuser, from of old, indulged

In song too lavish license to mislead The sense among those fair but phantom forms

That haunt the unhallowed past : wherefrom One Shape

Forth of the cloudy circle gradual grew

Distinct, in dissolute beauty. She of old,

Who from the idle foam uprose, to reign

In fancies all as idle,—that fair Venus, whose temples are the veins in youth.

Now more and ever more she mixed herself

With all his moods, and whispered in his walks ;

Or through the misty minster, when he kneeled

Seek on the flint, athwart the incense-smoke

She stole on sleeping sunbeams, sprinkled sounds

Of cymbals through the silver psalms, and marred

His adoration : most of all, whene'er He sought to fan those fires of holy love

That, sleeping oftenest, sometimes leapt to flame,

Kindled by kindred passion in the eyes

Of sweet Elizabeth, round him rose and rolled

That miserable magic ; and, at times, It drove him forth to wander in the waste

And desert places, there where prayerless man

Is most within the power of prowling fiends.

Time put his sickle in among the days.

Outcropped the coming harvest ; and there came

An evening with the Princess, when they twain

Together ranged the terrace that o'erlaps

The great south garden. All her simple hair

A single sunbeam from the sleepy west

O'erfloated ; swam her soft blue eyes suffused

With tender ruth, and her meek face was moved

To one slow, serious smile, that stole to find

Its resting-place on his.

Then, while he looked On that pure loveliness, within himself

He faintly felt a mystery like pure love :

For through the arid hollows of a heart

Sered by delirious dreams, the dewy sense

Of innocent worship stole. The one great word

That long had hovered in the silent mind

Now on the lip half settled ; for not yet

Had love between them been a spoken sound

For after speech to lean on ; only here

And there, where scattered pauses
 strewed their talk,
 Love seemed to o'erpoise the silence,
 like a star
 Seen through a tender trouble of
 light clouds.
 But, in that moment, some myste-
 rious touch,
 A thought—who knows?—a memory
 —something caught
 Perchance from flying fancies, taking
 form
 Among the sunset clouds, or scented
 gusts
 Of evening through the gorgeous
 glooms, shrunk up
 His better angel, and at once awaked
 THE carnal creature sleeping in the
 flesh.
 Then died within his heart that word
 of life
 Unspoken, which, if spoken, might
 have saved
 The dreadful doom impending. So
 they twain
 Parted, and nothing said : she to her
 tower,
 There with meek wonder to renew
 the calm
 And customary labor of the loom ;
 And he into the gradual-creeping
 dark
 Which now began to draw the rooks
 to roost
 Along the windless woods.
 His soul that eve
 Shook strangely if some flickering
 shadow stole
 Across the slopes where sunset,
 sleeping out
 The day's last dream, yet lingered
 low. Old songs
 Were sweet about his brain, old
 fancies fair
 O'erflowed with lurid life the lonely
 land :
 The twilight trooped with antic
 shapes, and swarmed
 Above him, and the deep mysterious
 woods [doom.
 With mystic music drew him to his

So rapt, with idle and with errant
 foot
 He wandered on to Hürsel, and those
 glades
 Of melancholy fame, whose poison-
 ous glooms,
 Decked with the gleaming hemiocl,
 darkly fringe
 The Mount of Venus. There,
 drowsy sense
 Of languor seized him ; and he sat
 him down
 Among a litter of loose stones and
 blocks
 Of broken columns, overrun with
 weed,
 Remnants of heathen work that
 sometime propped
 A pagan temple.
 Suddenly, the moon,
 Slant from the shoulder of the mon-
 strous hill,
 Swung o'er a sullen lake, and softly
 touched
 With light a shattered statue in the
 weed.
 He lifted up his eyes, and all at once
 Bright in her baleful beauty, he be-
 held
 The goddess of his dreams. Be-
 holding whom,
 Lost to his love, forgetful of his faith,
 And fevered by the stimulated sense
 Of reprobate desire, the madman
 cried :
 " Descend, Dame Venus, on my soul
 descend !
 Break up the marble sleep of those
 still brows
 Where beauty broods ! Down all my
 senses swim,
 As yonder moon to yonder love-li
 lake
 Swins down in glory !"
 Hell the horrid prayer
 Accorded with a curse. Scarce those
 wild words
 Were uttered, when like mist the
 marble moved,
 Flusht with false life. Deep in a
 sleepy cloud

He seemed to sink beneath the
sumptuous face
Leared o'er him,—all the whiteness,
all the warmth,
And all the luxury of languid limbs,
Where violet vein-streaks, lost in
limpid lengths
Of snowy surface, wander faint and
fine ;

Whilst cymballed music, stolen from
underneath,
Creeps through a throbbing light that
grows and glows
From glare to greater glare, until it
gluts
And gulfs him in.

And from that hour, in court,
And chase, and tilted tourney, many
a month,
From mass in holy church, and mirth
in hall,
From all the fair assemblage of his
peers,
And all the feudatory festivals,
Men missed Tannhäuser.

At the first, as when
From some great oak his goodliest
branch is lopped,
The little noisy birds, that built
about
The foliage, gather in the gap with
shrill

And querulous curiosity ; even so,
From all the twittering tongues that
thronged the court
Rose general hubbub of astonish-
ment,

And vext surmise about the absent
man :

Why absent ? whither wandered ? on
what quest

Of errant prowess ?—for, as yet,
none knew

His miserable fall. But time wore
on,

The wonder wore away ; round ab-
sence crept

The weed of custom, and the absent
one

Became at last a memory, and no
more.

One heart within that memory lived
aloof ;
One face, remembering his, forgot to
smile ;
Our Landgrave's niece the old
familiar ways
Walked like a ghost with unfamiliar
looks.

Time put his sickle in among the
days.

The rose burned out ; red Autumn
lit the woods ;

The last snows, melting, changed to
snowy clouds ;

And Spring once more with incan-
tations came

To wake the buried year. Then did
our liege,

Lord Landgrave Herman,—for he
loved his niece,

And lightly from her simple heart
had won

The secret of lost smiles, and why
she drooped,

A wilted flower,—thinking to dispel.
If that might be, her mournfulness,
let cry

By heralds that, at coming Whitsun-
tide,

The minstrel-knights in Wartburg
should convene

To hold high combat in the craft of
song,

And sing before the Princess for the
prize.

But, ere that time, it fell upon a day
When our good lord went forth to
hunt the hart,

That he with certain of his court,
'mid whom

Was Wolfram,—once Tannhäuser's
friend, himself

Among the minstrels held in high re-
nown,—

Came down the Wartburg valley,
where they deemed

To hold the hart at siege, and
found him not :

But found, far down, at bottom of
 the glade,
 Beneath a broken cross, a lonely
 knight
 Who sat on a great stone, watching
 the clouds.
 And Wolfram, being a little in the
 van
 Of all his fellows, eager for the
 hunt,
 Hurriedly ran to question of the
 knight
 If he had viewed the hart. But when
 he came
 To parley with him, suddenly he
 gave
 A shout of great good cheer ; for, all
 at once,
 In that same knight he saw, and
 knew, though changed,
 Tannhäuser, his old friend and
 fellow-bard.

Now, Wolfram long had loved
 Elizabeth
 As one should love a star in heaven,
 who knows
 The distance of it, and the reachless-
 ness.
 But when he knew Tannhäuser in
 her heart
 (For loving eyes, in eyes beloved, are
 swift
 To search out secrets) not the less
 his own
 Clave unto both ; and, from that
 time, his love
 Lived like an orphan child in
 charity,
 Whose loss came early, and is gently
 borne,
 Too deep for tears, too constant for
 complaint.
 And, therefore, in the absence of his
 friend
 His inmost heart was heavy, when
 he saw
 The shadow of that absence in the
 face
 He loved beyond all faces upon
 earth.

So that when now he found that
 friend again
 Whom he had missed and mourned
 right glad was he
 Both for his own and for the
 Princess' sake :
 And ran and fell upon Tannhäuser's
 neck,
 And all for joy constrained him to
 his heart,
 Calling his fellows from the neigh-
 boring hills,—
 Who, crowding, came, great hearts
 and open arms
 To welcome back their peer. The
 Landgrave then,
 When he perceived his well-belovéd
 knight,
 Was passing glad, and would have
 questioned him
 Of his long absence. But the man
 himself
 Could answer nothing ; staring with
 blank eyes
 From face to face, then up into the
 blue
 Bland heavens above ; astonished, and
 like one
 Who, suddenly awaking out of sleep
 After sore sickness, knows his friends
 again,
 And would peruse their faces, but
 breaks off
 To list the frolic bleating of the
 lamb
 In far-off fields, and wonder at the
 world
 And all its strangeness. Then, while
 the glad knights
 Clung round him, wrung his hands,
 and dinned his ears
 With clattering query, our fair lord
 himself
 Unfolded how, upon the morrow
 morn,
 There should be holden festive in
 his halls
 High meeting of the minstrels of
 the land,
 To sing before the Princess for the
 prize :

Whereto he bade him with, "O sir,
 be sure
 There lives a young voice that shall
 tax your wit
 To justify this absence from your
 friends.
 We trust, at least, that you have
 brought us back
 A score of giants' beards, or dragons'
 tails,
 To lay them at the feet of our fair
 niece.
 For think not, truant, that Eliza-
 beth
 Will hold you lightly quitted."
 At that name,
 Elizabeth, he started as a man
 That hears on foreign shores, from
 alien lips,
 Some name familiar to his father-
 land ;
 And all at once the man's heart inly
 yearns
 For brooks that bubble, and for
 woods that wave
 Before his father's door, while he
 forgets
 The forms about him. So, Tann-
 häuser mused
 A little space, then faltered : "O my
 liege,
 Fares my good lady well?—I pray
 my lord
 That I may draw me hence a little
 while,
 For all my mind is troubled : and,
 indeed,
 I know not if my harp have lost his
 skill,
 But, skilled, or skillless, it shall find
 some tone
 To render thanks to-morrow to my
 lord ;
 To whose behests a bondsman, in so
 far
 As my poor service holds, I will
 assay
 To sing before the Princess for the
 prize."
 Then, on the morrow morn, from far
 and near

Flowed in the feudatory lords. The
 hills
 Broke out ablaze with banners, and
 rung loud
 With tingling trumpet notes, and
 neighing steeds.
 For all the land, elate with lusty
 life,
 Buzzed like a beehive in the sun
 and all
 The castle swarmed from bridge to
 barbican
 With mantle and with mail, whilst
 minster bells
 Rang hoarse their happy chimes, till
 the high noon
 Clanged from the towers. Then,
 o'er the platform stoled
 And canopied in crimson, lightly
 blew
 The sceptred heralds on the silver
 trump
 Intense sonorous music, sounding
 in
 The knights to hall. Shriil clinked
 the corridors
 Through all the courts with clashing
 heels, or moved
 With silken murmurs, and elastic
 sounds
 Of lady laughers light ; as in they
 flowed
 Lord, Liegeman, Peer, and Prince,
 and Paladin,
 And dame and damsel, clad in dimp-
 ling silk
 And gleaming pearl ; who, while
 the groaning roofs
 Re-echoed royal music, swept adown
 The spacious hall, with due obeis-
 sance made
 To the high dais, and on glittering
 seats
 Dropped one by one, like flocks of
 burnished birds
 That settle down with sunset-painted
 plumes
 On gorgeous woods. Again from
 the outer wall
 The intermitted trumpet blared ; and
 each

Pert page, a-tiptoe, from the benches
leaned

To see the minstrel-knights, gold-
filleted,

That entered now the hall: Sir
Mandeville,

The Swan of Elnach; Wilfrid of
the Hills;

Wolfram, surnamed of Willow-
brook; and next

Tan häuser, christened of the Gold-
e Harp;

With Walter of the Heron-chase;
and Max,

The seer; Sir Rudolph, of the
Ravencrest;

And Franz, the falconer. They en-
tered, each

In order, followed by a blooming boy
That bore his harp, and, pacing for-
ward, bowed

Before the Landgrave and Elizabeth.

Pale sat the Princess in her chair of
state, [lied

Perusing with fixed eyes, that all be-
Her throbbing heart, the carven

architrave,
Whereon the intricate much-vexed

design
Of leaf and stem disintertwined itself

With infinite laboriousness, at last
Escaping in a flight of angel forms:

As though the carver's thought had
been to show

The weary struggle of the soul to free
Her flight from earth's bewilder-

ment, and all
That frets her in the flesh. But

when, erewhile,
The minstrels entered, and Tann-

häuser bowed
Before the daïs, the Landgrave, at

her side,
saw as he mused what theme to

give for song,
The pallid forehead of Elizabeth

Flush to the fair roots of her golden
hair,

And thought within himself: "Our
knight delays

To own a love that aims so near our
throne;

Hence, haply, this late absence from
our court,

And those bewildered moods which
I have marked:

But since love lightly catches, who o
it can,

At any means to make itself ap-
proved,

And since the singer may to song
confide

What the man dares not trust to
simple speech,

I, therefore, so to ease two hearts at
once,

And signify our favor unto both,
Will to our well-beloved minstrels

give
No theme less sweet than Love:

for, surely, he
That loves the best, will sing the
best, and bear

The prize from all." Therewith the
Landgrave rose,

And all the murmuring Hall was
hushed to hear.

"O well-beloved minstrels, in my
mind

I do embrace you all, and heartily
Bid you a lavish welcome to these

halls.
Oft have you flooded this fair space

with song,
Waked these voiced walls, and vocal

made von roof,
As waves of surging music lapped

against
Its resonant rafters. Often hav

your strains
Ennobled souls of true nobility,

Rapt by your perfect pleadings in th
cause

Of all things pure unto a purer sense
Of their exceeding loveliness. No

power
Is subtler o'er the spirit of man than

Song—
Sweet echo of great thoughts, that,

in the mind

Of Lim who hears congenial echoes
 waking,
 Multiplies the praise of what is
 good.
 Song cheers the emulous spirit to
 the top
 Of Virtue's rugged steep, from
 whence, all heights
 If human worth attained, the mor-
 tal may
 Conjecture of God's unattainable,
 Which is Perfection.—Faith, with
 her sisters twain
 Of Hope and Charity, ye oft have
 sung,
 And loyal Truth have lauded, and
 have wreathed
 A coronal of music round the brows
 Of stainless Chastity ; nor less have
 praised
 High-minded Valor, in whose right-
 eous hand
 Burns the great sword of flaming
 Fortitude,
 And have stirred up to deeds of high
 emprise
 Our noble knights (yourselves among
 the noblest)
 Whether on German soil for me,
 their prince,
 Fighting, or in the Land of Christ
 for God.
 Sing ye to-day another theme ; to-day
 Within our glad society we see,
 To fellowship of loving friends re-
 stored,
 A long-missed face ; and hungerly
 our ears
 Wait the melodious murmurs of a
 harp
 That went to feed them daintily.
 What drew
 Our singer forth, and led the fairest
 light
 Of all our galaxy to swerve astray
 From his fixed orbit, and what now
 re-spheres,
 After deflection long, our errant orb,
 Implies a secret that the subtle power
 Of Song, perchance, may solve. Be
 then your theme

As universal as the heart of man,
 Giving you scope to touch its deepest
 depths,
 Its highest heights, and reverently
 to explore
 Its mystery of mysteries. Sing of
 Love :
 Tell us, ye noble poets, from what
 source
 Springs the prime passion ; to what
 goal it tends !
 Sing it how brave, how beautiful,
 how bright,
 In essence how ethereal, in effect
 How palpable, how human yet di-
 vine.
 Up ! up ! loved singers, smite into
 the chords,
 The lists are opened, set your lays in
 rest,
 And who of Love best chants the
 perfect praise,
 Him shall Elizabeth as conqueror
 hail
 And round his royal temples bind
 the bays."

He said, and sat. And from the
 middle-hall
 Four pages, bearers of the blazoned
 urn
 That held the name-scrolls of the
 listed bards,
 Moved to Elizabeth. Daintily her
 hand
 Dipped in the bowl, and one drawn
 scroll delivered
 Back to the pages, who, perusing,
 cried :
 "Sir Wolfram of the Willow-
 brook,
 —begin."

Up rose the gentle singer—he whose
 lays,
 Melodious-melancholy, through the
 Land
 Live to this day—and, fair obeisance
 made,
 Assumed his harp and stood in act
 to sing.

Awhile, his dreamy fingers o'er the
chords
Wandered at will, and to the roof
was turned
His meditative face ; till, suddenly,
A soft light from his spiritual eyes
Broke, and his canticle he thus be-
gan :—

“ Love among the saints of God,
Love within the hearts of men,
Love in every kindly sod
That breeds a violet in the glen ;
Love in heaven, and Love on earth,
Love in all the amorous air ;
Whence comes Love ? ah ! tell
me where
Had such a gracious Presence
birth ?
Lift thy thoughts to Him, all-
knowing,
In the hallowed courts above ;
From His throne, forever flowing,
Springs the fountain of all Love :
Down to earth the stream de-
scending
Meets the hills, and murmurs then,
In a myriad channels wending,
Through the happy haunts of men.
Blesséd ye, earth's sons and daugh-
ters,
Love among you flowing free ;
Guard, oh ! guard its sacred waters,
Tend on them religiously :
Let them through your hearts
steal sweetly,
With the Spirit, wise and bland,
Minister unto them meetly,
Touch them not with carnal hand.

“ Maiden, fashioned so divinely,
Whom I worship from afar,
Smile thou on my soul benignly
Sweet, my solitary star :
Gentle harbinger of gladness,
Still be with me on the way ;
Only soother of my sadness,
Always near, though far away :
Always near, since first upon me
Fell thy brightness from above,
And my troubled heart within me

Felt the sudden flow of Love ;
At thy sight that gushing river
Paused, and fell to perfect rest,
And the pool of Love forever
Took thy image to its breast.

“ Let me keep my passion purely
Guard its waters free from blame
Hallow Love, as knowing surely
It returneth whence it came ;
From all channels, good or evil,
Love, to its pure source enticed,
Finds its own immortal level
In the charity of Christ.
“ Ye who hear, behold the river.
Whence it cometh, whither goes ;
Glory be to God, the Giver,
From whose grace the fountain
flows,
Flows and spreads through all crea-
tion,
Counter-charm of every curse,
Love, the waters of Salvation,
Flowing through the universe ? ”

And still the rapt bard, though his
voice had ceased,
And all the Hall had murmured into
praise,
Pursued his plaintive theme among
the chords,
Blending with instinct fine the intri-
cate throng
Of thoughts that flowed beneath his
touch to find
Harmonious resolution. As he
closed,
Tannhäuser rising, fretted with de-
lay,
Sent flying fingers o'er the strings,
and sang :—

“ Love be my theme ! Sing hei
awake,
My harp, for she hath tamely
slept
In Wolfram's song, a stagnant
lake
O'er which a shivering star hath
crept.

“Awake, dull waters, from your sleep,
Rise, Love, from thy delicious well,
A fountain!—yea, but flowing deep
With nectar and with hydromel ;

“With gurgling murmurs sweet,
that teach
My soul a sleep-distracting dream,
Till on the marge I lie, and reach
My longing lips towards the stream ;

“Whose waves leap upwards to
the brink
With drowning kisses to invite
And drag me, willing, down to drink
Delirious draughts of rare Delight ;

“Who careless drink, as knowing well
The happy pastime shall not tire,
For Love is inexhaustible,
And all-unfailing my Desire.

“Love’s fountain-marge is fairly spread
With every incense-flower that blows,
With flossy sedge, and moss that grows
For fervid limbs a dewy bed ;

“And fays and fairies flit and wend
To keep the sweet stream flowing free,
And on Love’s languid votary
The little elves delighted tend ;

“And bring him honey-dews to sip,
Rare balms to cool him after play,
Or with sweet unguents smooth away
His kiss-crease on his ruffled lip ;

“And lilywhite his limbs they lave,
And roses in his cheeks renew,
That he, refreshed, return to glue
His lips to Love’s caressent wave ;

“And feel, in that immortal kiss,
His mortal instincts die the death
And human fancy fade beneath
The taste of unimagined bliss !

“Thus, gentle audience, since your ear
Best loves a metaphoric lay,
Of mighty Love I warble here
In figures, such as Fancy may :

“Now know ye how of Love I think
As of a fountain, failing never,
On whose soft marge I lie, and drink
Delicious draughts of Joy forever.”

Abrupt he ceased, and sat. And for a space,
No longer than the subtle lightning rests
Upon a sultry cloud at eventide,
The Princess smiled, and on her parted lips
Hung inarticulate applause ; but she
Sudden was ’ware that all the hall
was mute
With blank disapprobation ; and her smile
Died, and vague fear was quickened
in her heart
As Walter of the Heron-chase began :—

“O fountain ever fair and bright,
He hath beheld thee, source of Love,
Who sung thee springing from above,
Celestial from the founts of Light.

“ But he who from thy waters rare
Hath thought to drain a gross de-
light.

Blind in his spiritual sight,
Hath ne'er beheld thee, fountain
fair !

“ Hath never seen the silver glow
Of thy glad waves, crystalline
clear,
Hath never heard within his ear
The music of thy murmurous flow.

“ The essence of all Good thou art,
Thy waters are immortal Ruth,
Thy murmurs are the voice of
Truth,
And music in the human heart :

“ Thou yieldest Faith that soars
on high,
And Sympathy that dwells on
earth ;
The tender trust in human worth,
The hope that lives beyond the
sky.

“ Oh ! waters of the living Word,
Oh ! fair vouchsafed us from
above,
Oh ! fountain of immortal Love,
What song of thee erewhile I
heard !

“ Learn, sacrilegious bard, from
me
How all ignoble was thy strain,
That sought with trivial song to
stain
The fountain of Love's purity ;

“ That fountain thou hast never
found,
And shouldst thou come with lips
of fire
To slake the thirst of brute De-
sire,
'Twould shrink and shrivel to the
ground :

“ Who seeks in Love's pure stream
to lave
His gross heart, finds damnation
near ;

Who laves in Love his spirit clear
Shall win Salvation from the
wave.”

And now again, as when the plain-
tive lay
Of Wolfram warbled to harmonious
close,
The crowd grew glad with plaudits ;
and again
Tannhäuser, ruffled, rose his height,
and smote
Rude in the chords his prelude of
reply :--

“ What Love is this that melts
with Ruth,
Whose murmurs are the voice of
Truth ?
Ye dazél singers, cease to dream,
And learn of me your human
theme :
Of that great Passion at whose
feet
The vassal-world lies low,
Of Love the mighty, Love the
sweet,
I sing, who reigns below ;
Who makes men fierce, tame,
wild, or kind,
Sovran of every mood,
Who rules the heart, and rules the
mind,
And courses through the blood :
Slave of that levisli Power I sing,
Dispenser of all good,
Whose pleasure-fountain is the
spring
Of sole beatitude.

“ Sing ye of Love ye ne'er pos-
sessed
In wretched tropes—a vain em-
ployment !
I sing the passion in my breast,
And know Love only in Enjoy-
ment.”

To whom, while all the rustling hall
was moved
With stormy indignation, stern up-
rose,

⁂ arp in retort, Sir Wilfrid of the
Hills :

“ Up, minstrels ! rally to the cry
Of outraged Love and Loyalty ;
Drive on this slanderer, all the
throng,

And slay him in a storm of song.
O lecher ! shall I sing to thee
Of Love's untainted purity,
Of simple Faith, and tender Ruth,
Of Chastity and loyal Truth ?

As well sing Day's resplendent
birth

To the blind mole that delves the
earth,

As seek from gross hearts, slough-
ed in sin,

Approval of pure Love to win !
Rather from thee I'll wring ap-
plause

For Love, the Avenger of his
cause ;

Great Love, the chivalrous and
strong,

To whose wide grasp all arms be-
long,

The lance, the battle-axe, and
thong,—

And eke the mastery in song.

“ Love in my heart in all the pride
Of kingdom sits, and at his side,
To do the bidding of his lord,
Martial Valor holds the sword ;
He strikes for honor, in the name
Of Virtue and fair woman's fame,
And bids me shed my dearest
blood

To avenge asperséd maidenhood :
Who soils her with licentious lie,
Him will I hew both hip and
thigh,

Or in her cause will dearly die.
But thou, who in thy flashy song
Hast sought to do *all* Honor
wrong,

Pass on,—I will not stoop my
crest

To smite thee, nor lay lance in
in rest.

Thy brawling words, of riot born,
Are worthy only of my scorn ;
Thus at thy ears this song I fling,
Which in thy heart may plant its
sting,

If ruined Conscience yet may wring
Remorse from such a guilty thing.”

Scarce from his lips had parted the
last word

When, through the rapturous prais-
that rang around,

Fierce from his seat, uprising, red
with rage,

With scornful lip, and contumelious
eye,

Tannhäuser clanged among the
chords, and sang :

“ Floutest thou me, thou grisly
Bard ?

Beware, lest I the just reward
On thy puffed insolence bestow,
And cleave thee with my falchion's
blow,—

When I in song have laid thee low.
I serve a Mistress mightier far
Than tinkling rill, or twinkling
star,

And, as in my great Passion's glow
Thy passion-dream will melt like
snow,

So I, Love's champion, at her call,
Will make thee shrink in field or
hall,

And roll before me like a ball.

“ Thou pauper-minded pedant
din,

Thou starveling-soul, lean heart
and grin,

Wouldst thou of Love the praises
hymn ?

Then let the gaunt hyena howl
In praise of Pity ; let the owl
Whoop the high glories of the
noon,

And the hoarse chough bellow the
moon !

What canst thou prate of Love ? I
trow

She never graced thy open brow,
Nor flushed thy cheek, nor blossomed fair

Upon thy parted lips ; nor e'er
Bade unpent passion wildly start
Through the forced portals of thy heart

To stream in triumph from thine eye,

Or else delicious death to die
On other lips, in sigh on sigh.

“Of Love, dispenser of all bliss,
Of Love, that crowns me with a kiss,

I here proclaim me champion-knight ;

And in her cause will dearly fight
With sword or song, in hall or plain,

And make the welkin ring again
With my fierce blows, or fervent strain.

But for such Love as thou canst feel,

Thou wisely hast adjured the steel,
Averse to lay thy hand on hilt,
Or in her honor ride a tilt :

Tame Love full tamely may'st thou jilt,

And keep bone whole, and blood unspilt.”

Out flushed Sir Wilfrid's weapon,
and out leapt

From every angry eye a thousand darts

Of unsheathed indignation, and a shout

Went up among the rafters, and the Hall

Swayed to and fro with tumult ; till the voice

Of our llege lord roared “Peace !” and, midst the clang

Of those who parted the incensed bards,

Sounded the harp of Wolfram. Calm he stood.

He only calm of all the brawling crowd

Which yet, as is its wont, contagion caught

From neighboring nobleness, and a stillness fell

On all, and in the stillness soft he sang :

“O, from your sacred seats loo'down,

Angels and ministers of good ;
With sanctity our spirits crown,
And crush the vices of the blood !

“Open our hearts and set them free,

That heavenly light may enter in ;
And from this fair society
Obliterate the taint of sin.

“Thee, holy Love, I bid arise
Propitious to my votive lay ;
Shine thou upon our darkened eyes,

And lead us on the perfect way ;

“As, in the likeness of a Star,
Thou once arosest, guidance meet,
And led'st the sages from afar
To sit at holy Jesu's feet :

“So guide us, safe from Satans snares,

Shine out, sweet Star, around, above,

Till we have scaled the mighty stairs,

And reached thy mansions, Heavenly Love !”

Then, while great shouts went up of “Give the prize

To Wolfram,” leapt Tannhäuser from his seat,

Fierce passion flaming from his lustrous orbs.

And, as a sinner, desperate to add Depth to damnation by one latest crime,

Dies boastful of his blasphemies—even so,

Tannhäuser, conscious of the last disgrace

Incurred by such song in such company,
 Intent to vaunt the vastness of his sin,
 Thus, as in ecstasy, the song renewed :

“Goddess of Beauty, thee I hymn,
 And ever worship at thy shrine ;
 Thou, who on mortal senses dim
 Descending, makest man divine.

“Who hath embraced thee on thy throne,
 And pastured on thy royal kiss,
 He, happy, knows, and knows alone,
 Love’s full beatitude of bliss.

“Grim bards, of Love who nothing know,
 Now cease the unequal strife between us ;
 Dare as I dared ; to Hörsel go,
 And taste Love on the lips of Venus.”

Uprose on every side and rustled down
 The affrighted dames ; and, like the shuddering crowd
 Of party-colored leaves that flits before
 The gust of mid October, all at once
 A hundred jewelled shoulders, huddling, swept
 The hall, and slanted to the doors, and fled
 Before the storm, which now from shaggy brows
 Utan dart indignant lightnings. One alone
 If all that awe-struck womanhood remained,
 The Princess. She, a purple harebell frail,
 That, swathed with whirlwind, to the bleak rock clings
 When half a forest falls before the blast,
 Rooted in utter wretchedness, and robed

In mockery of splendid state, still sat ;
 Still watched the waste that widened in her life ;
 And looked as one that in a nightmare hangs
 Upon an edge of horror, while from beneath
 The creeping billow of calamity
 Sprays all his hair with cold ; but hand or foot
 He may not move, because the formless Fear
 Gapes vast behind him. Grief within the void
 Of her stark eyes stood tearless : terror blanched
 Her countenance ; and, over cloudy brows,
 The shaken diamond made a restless light,
 And trembled as the trembling star that hangs
 O’er Cassiopeia in the windy north.

But now, from farthest end to end of all
 The sullen movement swarming underneath,
 Uproled deep hollow groans of growing wrath.
 And, where erewhile in rainbow crescent ranged
 The bright-eyed beauties of the court, fast thronged
 Faces inflamed with wrath, that rose and fell
 Tumultuously gathering from between
 Sharp-slanting lanes of steel. For every sword
 Flashed bare upon a sudden ; and over these,
 Through the wide bursten doors the sinking sun
 Streamed lurid, lighting up that steely sea ;
 Which, spotted white with foamy plumes, and ridged
 With glittering iron, clashed together and closed

About Tannhäuser. Careless of the
wrath
Roused by his own rash song, the
singer stood ; [fooled
Rapt in remembrance, or by fancy
A visionary Venus to pursue,
With eyes that roamed in rapture
the blank air.

Until the sharp light of a hundred
swords
Smote on the fatal trance, and scat-
tered all
Its fervid fascination. Swift from
sheath

Then leapt the glaive and glittered
in his hand,
And warily, with eye upon the watch,
Receding to the mighty main sup-
port

That, from the centre, propped the
ponderous roof,
There, based against the pillar, front-
ing full
His sudden foes, he rested resolute,
Awaiting assault.

But, hollow as a bell,
That tolls for tempest from a storm-
clad tower,
Rang through the jangling shock of
arms and men
The loud voice of the Landgrave.
Wide he swept
The solemn sceptre, crying "Peace!"
then said :

"Ye Lieges of Thuringia! whose
just scorn,
In judgment sitting on your right-
eous brows,
Would seem to have forecast the
dubious doom
Awaiting our decision; ye have
heard,
Not wrung by torture from your
reluctant lips,
Nor yet breathed forth with peni-
tential pain
In prayer for pardon, nay, but rather
fledged
And barbed with boasted insolence,
such a crime

Confest, as turns to burning coals of
wrath

The dewy eyes of Pity, nor 'to Hope
One refuge spares, save such as rests
perchance

Within the bounteous bosom of the
Church ;

Who, caring for the frailty of her
flock,

Holds mercy measureless as heaven
is high.

Shuddering, ourselves have listened
to what breaks

All bonds that bound to this un-
happy man

The covenanted courtesies of knights,
The loyalties of lives by faith knit
fast

In spiritual communion. What be-
hooves,

After deliberation, to award
In sentence, I to your high council
leave,

Undoubting. What may mitigate
in aught

The weight of this acknowledged
infamy

Weigh with due balance. What to
justice stern

Mild-minded mercy yet may reconcile
Search inly. Not with rashness, not
in wrath,

Invoking from the right hand of
high God

His dread irrevocable angel, Death ;
Yet not unwary how one spark of
hell,

If unextinguished down the night
of time

May, like the wreckers' beacon from
the reefs,

Lure many to destruction: not
indeed

Unmindful of the doom by fire or
steel

This realm's supreme tribunals have
reserved

For those that, dealing in damna-
tion, hold

Dark commerce with the common
foe of man.

Weigh you in all its circumstance
 this crime :
 And, worthily judging, though your
 judgment be
 As sharp as conscience, be it as con-
 science clear."

He ended : and a bitter interval
 Of silence o'er the solemn hall con-
 gealed,
 Like frost on a waste water, in a
 place

Where rocks confront each other.
 Marshalled round,
 Black-bearded cheek and chin, with
 hand on left
 Bent o'er the pommels of their
 planted swords

A dreary cirque of faces ominous,
 The sullen barons on each other
 stared
 Significant. As, ere the storm de-
 scends

Upon a Druid grove, the great trees
 stand

Looking one way, and stiller than
 their wont,
 Until the thunder, rolling, frees the
 wind

That rocks them altogether; even so,
 That savage circle of grim-gnarled
 men,

Awhile in silence storing stormy
 thoughts,

Stood breathless; till a murmur
 moved them all,
 And louder growing, and louder,
 burst at last

To a universal irrepressible roar
 Of voices roaring, "Let him die the
 death!"

And, in that roar released, a hundred
 swords

Rushed forward, and in narrowing
 circle sloped

Sharp rims of shining horror round
 the doomed,

Undaunted minstrel. Then a pite-
 ous cry;

And from the purple baldachin down
 sprang

The princess, gleaming like a ghost,
 and slid

Among the swords, and standing in
 the midst

Swept a wild arm of prohibition
 forth.

Cowering, recoiled the angry, baffled
 surge,

Leaving on either side a horrid hedge
 Of rifted glare, as when the Red Sea

waves
 Hung heaped and Sundered, ere they
 roaring fell

On Egypt's chariots. So there came
 a hush;

And in the hush her voice, heavy
 with scorn :

"Or shall I call you men? or beasts?
 who seem

No nobler than the bloodhound and
 the wolf

Which scorn to prey upon their
 proper kind!

Christians I will not call you! who
 defraud

That much-misapprehended holy
 name

Of reverence due by such a deed as,
 done,

Will clash against the charities of
 Christ,

And make a marred thing and a
 mockery

Of the fair face of Mercy. You
 dull hearts,

And hard! have ye no pity for your-
 selves?

For man no pity? man whose com-
 mon cause

Is shamed and saddened by the stain
 that falls

Upon a noble nature! You blind
 hands,

Thrust out so fast to smite a fallen
 friend!

Did ye not all conspire, whilst yet he
 stood [forth

The statelyest soul among you, to set
 And fix him in the foremost ranks
 of men?

Content that he, your best, should
 bear the brunt,
 And lead the van against the scorn-
 ful fiend
 That will not waste his weapons on
 the herd,
 But saves them for the noblest.
 And shall Hell
 Triumph through you, that triumph
 in the shame
 Of this eclipse that blots your bright-
 est out,
 And leaves you dark in his extin-
 guished light?
 O, who that lives but hath within
 his heart
 Some cause to dread the suddenness
 of death?
 And God is merciful; and suffers us,
 Even for our sins' sake; and doth
 spare us time,
 Time to grow ready, time to take
 farewell!
 And send us monitors and min-
 isters—
 Old age, that steals the fullness from
 the veirs;
 And griefs, that take the glory from
 the eyes;
 And pains, that bring us timely news
 of death;
 And tears, that teach us to be glad
 of him.
 For who can take farewell of all his
 sins
 Of such a sudden summons to the
 grave?
 Against high Heaven hath this man
 sinned, or you?
 O, if it be against high Heaven, to
 Heaven
 Submit the compt! lest, from the
 armory
 Of the Eternal Justice ye pluck
 down,
 Heedless, that bolt the Highest yet
 withholds
 From this low-fallen head,—how
 fallen! how low!
 Yet not so fallen, not so low fallen,
 but what

Divine Redemption, reaching every-
 where,
 May reach at last even to this
 wretchedness,
 And, out of late repentance, raise it
 up
 With pardon into peace.”

She paused: she touched,
 As with an angel's finger, him
 whose pride
 Obdurate now had yielded, and he
 laid
 Vanquished by Pity, broken at her
 feet.
 She, lingering, waited answer, but
 none came
 Across the silence. And again she
 spake:

“O, not for him alone, and not for
 that
 Which to remember now makes life
 for me
 A wilderness of homeless griefs, I
 plead
 Before you; but, O Princes, for
 yourselves;
 For all that in your nobler nature
 stirs
 To vindicate Forgiveness and en-
 large
 The lovely laws of Pity! Which of
 you,
 Here in the witness of all-judging
 God,
 Stands spotless? Which of you will
 boast himself
 More miserably injured by this
 man
 Than I, whose heart of all that lived
 in it
 He hath untenanted? O, horrible
 Unheard of! from the blessed lap of
 life [sins,
 To send the soul, asleep in all her
 Down to perdition! Be not yours
 the hands
 To do this desperate wrong in sight
 of all
 The ruthless faces of the Saints in
 Heaven.”

She passionately pleading thus, her
voice
Over their hearts moved like that
earnest wind
That, laboring long against some
great high cloud,
ets free, at last, a solitary star,
Then sinks ; but leaves the night
not all forlorn
ere the soft rain o'ercomes it.

This long while
Wolfram, whose harp and voice were
overborne
By burly brawlers in the turbulence
That shook that stormy senate,
stood apart
With vainly-vigilant eye, and writhen
hands,
All in mute trouble : too gentle to-
approve,
Too gentle to prevent, what passed :
and still
Divided himself 'twixt sharpest
grief
To see his friend so fallen, and a
drear
Strange horror of the crime whereby
he fell.
So, like a headland light that down
dark waves
Shines o'er some sinking ship it fails
to save,
Looked the pale singer down the
lurid hall.
But when the pure voice of Eliza-
beth
Ceased, and clear-lighted all with
noble thoughts
Her face glowed as an angel's, the
sweet Bard,
Whose generous heart had scaled
with that loved voice
p to the lofty levels where it
ceased,
Stood forth, and from the dubious
silence caught
And carried up the purpose of her
prayer ; [heart,
And drew it out, and drove it to the
And clenched it with conviction in
the mind,

And fixed it firm in judgment.
From deep muse
The Landgrave started, toward
Tannhäuser strode,
And, standing o'er him with an eye
wherein
Salt sorrow and a moody pity
gleamed,
Spake hoarse of utterance :
" Arise ! go forth !
Go from us, mantled in the shames
which make
Thee, stranger whom mine eye
henceforth abhors,
The mockery of the man I loved,
and mourn.
Go from these halls yet holy with
the voice
Of her whose intercession for thy
sake,—
If any sacred sorrow yet survive
All ruined virtues,—in remorse shall
steep
The memory of her wrongs. For
thee remains
One hope, unhappiest ! reject it not.
There goeth a holy pilgrimage to
Rome,
Which not yet from the borders of
our land
Is parted ; pious souls and meek,
whom thou
Haply may'st join, and of those holy
hands,
Which sole have power to bind or
loose, receive
Remission of thy sin. For save
alone
The hand of Christ's high Vicar
upon earth
A hurt so heinous what may heal ?
What save
A soul so fallen ? Go forth upon
thy ways,
Which are not ours : for we no more
may mix
Congenial minds in converse sweet,
no more [hear
Together pace these halls, nor ever
Thy harp as once when all was pure
and glad,

Among the days which have been.
 All thy paths
 Henceforth be paths of penitence
 and prayer,
 Whilst over ours thy memory mov-
 ing makes
 A shadow, and a silence in our talk.
 Get thee from hence, O all that now
 remains
 Of one we honored ! Till the hand
 that holds
 The keys of heaven hath oped for
 thee the doors
 Of life in that far distance, let mine
 eye
 See thee no more. Go from us !”

Even then,
 Even whilst he spake, like some
 sweet miracle,
 From darkening lands that glim-
 mered through the doors
 Came, faintly heard along the filmy
 air
 That bore it floating near, a choral
 chant
 Of pilgrims pacing by the castle
 wall ;
 And “ *salvum me fac Domine* ” they
 sung
 Sonorous, in the ghostly going out
 Of the red-litten eve along the land.

Then, like a hand across the heart
 of him
 That heard it moved that music from
 afar,
 And beckoned forth the better hope
 which leads
 A man's life up along the rugged
 road
 Of high resolve. Tannhäuser mov-
 ed, as moves
 The folded serpent smitten by the
 spring
 And stirred with sudden sunlight,
 when he casts
 His spotted skin, and, renovated,
 gleams
 With novel hues. One lingering
 long look,

Wild with remorse and vague with
 vast regrets,
 He lifted to Elizabeth. His thoughts
 Were then as those dumb creatures
 in their pain
 That makes a language of a look.
 He tossed
 Aloft his arms, and down to the
 great doors
 With drooped brows striding, groaned
 “ To Rome, to Rome ! ”
 Whilst the deep hall behind him
 caught the cry
 And drove it clamorous after him,
 from all
 Its hollow roofs reverberating
 “ Rome ! ”

A fleeting darkness through the
 lurid arch ;
 A flying form along the glare be-
 yond ;
 And he was gone. The scowling
 Eve reached out
 Across the hills a fiery arm, and
 took
 Tannhäuser to her, like a sudden
 death.

So ended that great battle of the
 Bards,
 Whereof some rumor to the end of
 time
 Will echo in this land.

And, voided now
 Of all his multitudes, the mighty
 Hall,
 Dumb, dismally dispageanted, laid
 bare
 His ghostly galleries to the mournful
 moon ;
 And Night came down, and Silence
 and the twain
 Mingled beneath the starlight.
 Wheeled at will
 The flitter-winged bat round lonely
 towers
 Where, one by one, from darkening
 casements died
 The taper's shine ; the howlet from
 the hills

Whooped : and Elizabeth, alone
with Night
And Silence, and the Ghost of her
slain youth.

I lay lost among the ruins of that
day.

As when the buffeting gusts, that
adverse blow

Over the Caribbean Sea, conspire
Conflicting breaths, and, savagely
begot,

The fierce tornado rotatory wheels,
Or sweeps centripetal, or, all forces
joined.

Whirls circling o'er the maddened
waves, and they

Lift up their foaming backs beneath
the keel

Of some frail vessel, and, careering
high

Over a sunken rock, with a sudden
plunge

Confound her, — stunned and
strained, upon the peak

Poising one moment, ere she for-
ward fall

The float, dishelmed, a wreck upon
the waves :

So ~~was~~ engendered by what furious
blasts

Of passion, that fell hurricane that
swept

Elizabeth to her doom, and left her
now

A helmless hull upon the savage
seas

Of life, without an aim, to float for-
lorn.

Longwhile, still shuddering from the
shock that jarred

The bases of her being, piteous
wreck

Of ruined hopes, upon her couch she
lay,

Of life and time oblivious ; all her
mind,

Locked in a rigid agony of grief,
Clasping, convulsed, its unwept woe ;

her heart

Writhing and riven ; and her bur-
thened brain

Blind with the weight of tears that
would not flow.

But when, at last, the healing hand
of Time

Had wrought repair upon her shat-
tered frame :

And those unskilled physicians of
the mind—

Importunate, fond friends, a host of
kin—

Drew her perforce from solitude, she
passed

Back to the world, and walked its
weary ways

With dull mechanic motions, such as
make

A mockery of life. Yet gave she
never,

By weeping or by wailing, outward
sign

Of that great inward agony that she
bore ;

For she was not of those whose
sternest sorrow

Outpours in plaints, or weeps itself
in dew ;

Not passionate she, nor of the happy
souls

Whose grief comes tempered with
the gift of tears.

So, through long weeks and many a
weary moon,

Silent and self-involved, without a
sigh,

She suffered. There, whence con-
solation comes,

She sought it—at the foot of Jesu's
cross,

And on the bosom of the Virgin
spouse,

And in communion with the blessed
Saints.

But chief for him she prayed whose
grievous sin

Had wrought her desolation ; God
besought

To touch the leprous soul and make
it clean ;

And sue the Heavenly Pastor to recall
 The lost sheep, wandering from the pleasant ways,
 Back to the pasture of the paths of peace.
 So thrice a day, what time the blushing morn
 crimsoned the orient sky, and when the sun
 glared from mid-heaven or weltered in the west,
 Fervent she prayed; nor in the night forewent
 Her vigils; till at last from prayer she drew
 A calm into her soul, and in that calm
 Heard a low whisper—like the breeze that breaks
 The deep peace of the forest ere the chirp
 Of earliest bird salutes the advent Day—
 Thrill through her, herald of the dawn of Hope.

 Then most she loved from forth her leafy tower
 Listless to watch the irrevocable clouds
 Roll on, and daylight waste itself away
 Along those dreaming woods, whence evermore
 She mused, "He will return;" and fondly wove
 Her webs of wistful fantasy till the moon
 Was high in heaven, and in its light she kneeled,
 A faded watcher through the weary night,
 A meek, sweet statue at the silver shrines,
 In deep, perpetual prayer for him she loved.
 And from the pitying Sisterhood of Saints
 Haply that prayer shall win an angel down

To be his unseen minister, and draw
 A drowning conscience from the deeps of Hell.

 Time put his sickle in among the days.
 Blithe Summer came, and into dimples danced
 The fair and fructifying Earth, anon
 Showering the gathered guerdon of her play
 Into the lap of Autumn; Autumn stored
 The gift, piled ready to the palsied hand
 Of blind and begging Winter; and when he
 Closed his well-provendered days,
 Spring lightly came
 And scattered sweets upon his sullen grave.
 And twice the seasons passed, the sisters three
 Doing glad service for their hoary brother,
 And twice twelve moons had waxed and waned, and twice
 The weary world had pilgrimed round the sun,
 When from the outskirts of the land there came
 Rumor of footsore penitents from Rome
 Returning, jubilant of remitted sin.

 So chanced it, on a silent April eve
 The westering sun along the Wartburg vale
 Shot level beams, and into glory touched
 The image of Madonna,—where it stands
 Hard by the common way that climbs the steep.—
 The image of Madonna, and the face
 Of meek Elizabeth turned towards the Queen
 Of Sorrows, sorrowful in patient prayer;
 When, through the silence and the sleepy leaves,

<p>A breeze blew up the vale, and on the breeze Floated a plaintive music. She that heard, Trembled; the prayer upon her parted lips Suspended hung, and one swift hand she pressed Against the palpitating heart whose throbs Confused the cunning of her ears. Ah God ! Was this the voice of her returning joy ? The psalm of shriven pilgrims to their homes Returning ? Ay ! it swells upon the breeze The "<i>Nunc Dimittis</i>" of glad souls that sue After salvation seen to part in peace. Then up she sprung, and to a neigh- boring copse Swift as a startled hind, when the ghostly moon Draws sudden o'er the silvered heather-bells The monstrous shadow of a cloud, she sped ; Pausing, low-crouched, within a maze of shrubs, Whose emerald slivers fringed the rugged way So broad, the pilgrim's garments as they passed Would brush the leaves that hid her. And anon They came in double rank, and two by two, With cumbered steps, with haggard gait that told Of bodily toil and trouble, with be- soiled And tattered garments ; nathless with glad eyes, Whence looked the soul disburthened of her sin, Climbing the rude path, two by two they came. And she, that watched with what in- tensest gaze</p>	<p>Them coming, saw old faces that she knew, And every face turned skywards, while the lips Poured out the heavenly psalm, and every soul Sitting seraphic in the upturned eyes With holy fervor rapt upon the song: And still they came and passed, and still she gazed ; And still she thought, "Now comes he !" and the chant Went heavenwards, and the filéd pil- grims fared Beside her, till their tale wellnigh was told. Then o'er her soul a shuddering hor- ror crept, And, in that agony of mind that makes Doubt more intolerable than despair, With sudden hand she brushed aside the sprays, And from the thicket leaned and looked. The last [ken Of all the pilgrims stood within the Of her keen gaze,—save him all scanned, and he No sooner scanned than cancelled from her eyes By vivid lids swept down to lash away Him hateful, being other than she sought. So for a space, blind with dismay, she paused, But, he approaching, from the thicket leapt. Clutched with wrung hands his robe, and gasped, "The Knight That with you went, returns not?" In his psalm The fervid pilgrim made no pause yet gazed At his wild questioner, intelligent Of her demand, and shook his head and passed. Then she, with that mute answer stabbed to the heart, Sprung forward, clutched him yet once more, and cried,</p>
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“In Mary’s name, and in the name
of God,
Received the knight his shrift?”
And, once again,
The pilgrim, sorrowful, shook his
head and sighed,
Sighed in the singing of his psalm,
and passed.

Then prone she fell upon her face,
and prone
Within her mind Hope’s shattered
fabric fell,—
The dear and delicate fabric of frail
Hope
Wrought by the simple cunning of
her thoughts,
That, laboring long, through many
a dreamy day
And many a vigil of the wakeful
night,
Piecemeal had reared it, patiently,
with pain,
From out the ruins of her ancient
peace.
O ancient Peace! that never shalt
return;
O ruined hope! O Fancy! over-
fond,
Futile artificer that build’st on air,
Marred is thy handiwork, and thou
shalt please
With plastic fantasies her soul no
more.

So lay she cold against the callous
ground,
Her pale face pillowed on a stone,
her eyes
Wide open, fixed into a ghastly stare
That knew no speculation; for her
mind
Was dark, and all her faculty of
thought
Compassionately cancelled. But she
lay
Not in the embrace of loyal Death,
who keeps
His bride forever, but in treacherous
arms
Of Sleep that, sated, will restore to
Grief

Her, snatched a sweet space from
his cruel clutch,
So lay she cold against the callous
ground,
And none was near to heed her, as
the sun,
About him drawing the vast-skirted
clouds,
Went down behind the western hill
to die.

Now Wolfram, when the rumor
reached his ears
That, from their quest of saving
grace returned,
The pilgrims all within the castle-
court
Were gathered, flocked about by
happy friends,
Passed from his portal swiftly, and
ran out
And joined the clustering crowd.
Full many a face,
Wasted and wan, he recognized, and
clapsed
Full many a lean hand clutching at
his own,
Of those who, stretched upon the
grass, or propped
Against the bowlder-stones, were
pressed about
By weeping women, clamorous to
unbind
Their sandal-thongs and bathe the
bruised feet.
Then up and down, and swiftly
through and through,
And round about, skirting the
crowd, he hurried,
With greetings fair to all; till, filled
with fear,
Half-hopeless of his quest, yet har-
boring hope,
He paused perplexed besides the
castle gates.
There, at his side, the youngest of
the train,
A blue-eyed pilgrim tarried, and to
him
Turned Wolfram questioning of
Tannhäuser’s fate,

And learnt in few words how, his sin pronounced	Expectant of her spirit, at the foot Of flights of blinding brilliancy of stairs
Dadly and irremediable, the knight Had faded from before the awful face	Innumerable, that through the riven skies
Of Christ's incenséd Vicar; and none knew	Scaled to the City of the Saints of God.
Whither he wandered, to what desolate lands,	Then, when thick night fell on his soul, and all
Hiding his anguish from the eyes of men.	The vision fled, he solitary stood A crazéd man within the castle- court;
Then Wolfram groaned, and clasped his hands, and cried,	Whence issuing, with wild eyes and wandering gait
"Merciful God!" and fell upon his knees	He through the darkness, groaning, passed away.
In purpose as of prayer,—but, sud- denly,	All that lone night, along the haunted hills,
About the gate the crowd moved, and a cry	By dizzy brinks of mountain pre- cipices,
Went up for space, when, rising, he beheld	He fled, aimless as an unused wind
Four maids who on a pallet bore the form	That wastes itself about a wilder- ness.
Of wan Elizabeth. The whisper grew	Sometimes from low-browed caves, and hollow crofts,
That she had met the pilgrims, and had learned	Under the hanging woods there came and went
Tannhäuser's fate, and fallen beside the way.	A voice of wail upon the midnight air,
And Wolfram, in the ghastly torch- light, saw	As of a lost soul mourning; and the voice
The white face of the Princess tunned to his,	Was still the voice of his remem- bered friend.
And for a space their eyes met; then she raised	Sometimes (so fancy mocked the fears she bred!)
One hand towards Heaven, and smiled as who should say,	He heard along the lone and eery land
"O friend, I journey unto God; farewell!"	Low demon laughers; and a sullen strain
But he could answer nothing; for his eyes	Of horror swelled upon the breeze; and sounds
Were blinded by his tears, and through his tears	Of wizard dance, with shawm and timbrel, flew
Dimly, as in a dream, he saw her borne	Ever betwixt waste air and wander- ing cloud
Up the broad granite steps that wind within	O'er pathless peaks. Then, in the distance tolled,
The palace; and his inner eye, en- tranced,	Or seemed to toll, a knell: the breezes dropped:
Saw in a vision four great Angels stand,	

And, in the sudden pause, that
 passing bell
 With ghostly summons bade him
 back return
 To where, till dawn, a shade among
 the shades
 Of Wartburg, watching one lone
 tower, he saw
 A light that waned with all his
 earthly hopes.
 The calm Dawn came and from the
 eastern cliff,
 Athwart the glistening slopes and
 cold green copse,
 Called to him, careless of a grief
 not hers ;
 But he, from all her babbling birds,
 and all
 Her vexing sunlight, with a weary
 heart
 Drew close the darkness of the glens
 and glades
 About him, flying through the forest
 deeps.
 And day and night, dim eve and
 dewy dawn,
 Three times returning, went un-
 cared for by ;
 And thrice the double twilights rose
 and fell
 About a land where nothing seemed
 the same,
 At eve or dawn, as in the time gone
 by.
 But, when the fourth day like a
 stranger slipped
 To his unhonored grave, God's
 Angel passed
 Across the threshold of the Land-
 grave's hall,
 And in his bosom bore to endless
 peace
 The weary spirit of Elizabeth.
 Then, in that hour when Death with
 gentle hand
 Had' drooped the quiet eyelids o'er
 the eyes
 That Wolfram loved, to Wolfram's
 heart there came
 A calmness like the calmness of a
 grave

Walled safe from all the noisy walks
 of men
 In some green place of peace where
 daisies grow.
 His tears fell in the twilight with the
 dews,
 Soft as the dews that with the twi-
 light fell,
 When, over scarred and weather-
 wounded walls,
 Sharp-jaggéd mountain concs, and
 tangled quicks,
 Eve's spirit, settling, laid the land
 to sleep
 In skyeey trance. Nor yet less soft
 to fuse
 Memory with hope, and earth with
 heaven, to him,
 Athwart the harsher anguish of that
 day,
 There stole with tears the tender hu-
 man sense
 Of heavenly mercy. Through that
 milder mood,
 Like waifs that float to shore when
 storms are spent,
 Flowed to his heart old memories of
 his friend,
 O'erwoven with the weed of other
 griefs,
 Of other griefs for her that grieved
 no more—
 And of that time when, like a blaz-
 ing star
 That moves and mounts between the
 Lyre and Crown,
 Tannhäuser shone ; ere sin came,
 and with sin
 Sorrow. And now if yet Tannhäu-
 ser lived
 None knew : and if he lived, what
 hope in life ?
 And if he lived no more, what rest
 in death ?
 But every way the dreadful doom of
 sin.
 Thus, musing much on all the mys-
 tery
 Of life, and death, and love that will
 not die, [way ;
 He wandered forth, incurious of the

Which took the wont of other days,
 and wound
 Along the valley. Now the nodding
 star
 Of even, and the deep, the dewy
 hour
 Hel' all the sleeping circle of the
 hills ;
 Nor any cloud the stainless heavens
 obscured,
 Save where, o'er Hørsel folded in
 the frown
 Of all his wicked woods, a fleecy
 fringe
 Of vapor veiled the slowly sinking
 moon.
 There, in the shade, the stillness,
 o'er his harp
 Leaning, of love, and life, and death
 he sang
 A song to which from all her æry
 caves
 The mountain echo murmured in
 her sleep.
 But, as the last strain of his solemn
 song
 Died off among the solitary stars,
 There came in answer from the
 folded hills
 A note of human woe. He turned,
 he looked
 That way the sound came o'er the
 lonely air ;
 And, seeing, yet believed not that
 he saw,
 But, nearer moving, saw indeed
 hard by,
 Dark in the darkness of a neighbor-
 ing hill,
 Lying among the splintered stones
 and stubs
 Flat in the fern, with limbs diffused
 as one
 That, having fallen, cares to rise no
 more,
 A pilgrim ; all his weeds of pilgrim-
 age
 Hanging and torn, his sandals
 stained with blood
 Of bruised feet, and, broken in his
 hand,

His wreathed staff.

And Wolfram wistfully
 Looked in his face, and knew it not.

"Alas !
 Not him," he murmured, "not my
 friend !" And then,
 "What art thou, pilgrim ? whence
 thy way ? how fall'n
 In this wild glen ? at this lone hour
 abroad

When only Grief is stirring ?" Unto
 whom

That other, where he lay in the long
 grass,
 Not rising, but with petulant ges-
 ture, "Hence !"

Whate'er I am, it skills not. Thee I
 know

Full well, Sir Wolfram of the Wil-
 lowbrook,

The well-belovéd Singer !"

Like a dart
 From a friend's hand that voice
 through Wolfram went :

For Memory over all the ravaged
 form

Wherefrom it issued, wandering
 failed to find

The man she mourned ; but Wol-
 fram, to the voice

No stranger, started smit with pain,
 as all

The past on those sharp tones came
 back to break

His heart with hopeless knowledge
 And he cried,

"Alas, my brother !" Such a
 change, so drear,

In all so unlike all that once he was
 Showed the lost knight Tannhäuser,

where he lay
 Fallen across the split and morsell'd
 crags

Like a dismantled ruin. And Wol-
 fram said,

"O lost ! how comest thou, unab-
 solved, once more

Among these valleys visited by
 death,

And shadowed with the shadow of
 thy sin ?"

Whereto in scorn Tannhäuser, "Be
at rest,
O fearful in thy righteousness ! not
thee,
Nor grace of thine, I seek."

Speaking, he rose
The spectre of a beauty waned away;
And, like a hollow echo of himself
Mocking his own last words, he mur-
mured, "Seek !

Alas ! what seek I here, or any-
where ?

Whose way of life is like the crum-
bled stair

That winds and winds about a
ruined tower,
And leads nowhither !"

But Wolfram cried, "Yet turn !
For, as I live, I will not leave thee
thus.

My life shall be about thee, and my
voice

Lure scared Hope back to find a
resting-place

Even in the jaws of Death. I do
adjure thee,

By all that friendship yet may claim,
declare

That, even though unabsolved, not
uncontrite,

Thy soul no more hath lapsed into
the snare

Of that disastrous sorcery. Bid me
hail,

Seen through the darkness of thy
desolation,

Some light of purer purpose ; since
I deem

Not void of purpose has thou sought
these paths

That range among the places of the
past ;

And I will make defeat of Grief
with such [arm

True fellowship of tears as shall dis-
Her right hand of its scorpions ; nor
in vain

My prayers with thine shall batter at
the gates

Of Mercy, through all antagonisms
of fate

Forcing sharp inlet to her throne in
Heaven."

Wherewith Tannhäuser, turning tear-
less eyes

On Wolfram, murmured mournful-
ly, "If tears

Fiery as those from fallen seraphs
distilled,

Or centuries of prayers for pardon
sighed

Sad, as of souls in purgatorial
glooms,

Might soften condemnation, or re-
store

To her, whom most on earth I have
offended,

The holy freight of all her innocent
hopes

Wrecked in this ruined venture, I
would weep

Salt oceans from these eyes. But I
no more

May drain the deluge from my heart,
no more

On any breath of sigh or prayer re-
build

The rainbow of discovenanted Hope.
Thou, therefore, Wolfram—for her

face, when mine

Is dark forever, thine eyes may still
behold—

Tell her, if thou unblamed may'st
speak of one

Signed cross by the curse of God and
cancelled out,

How, at the last, though in remorse
of all

That makes allegiance void and
valueless,

To me has come, with knowledge of
my loss,

Faalty to that pure passion, once be-
trayed,

Wherewith I loved, and love her."

There his voice,
Even as a wave that, touching on
the shore

To which it travelled, is shivered
and diffused,

Sank, scattered into spray of waste-
ful sighs,
And back dissolved into the deeper
grief.

To whom, Wolfram, "O answer by
the faith
In which mankind are kindred, art
thou not

From Rome, unhappiest?" "From
Rome? ah me!"

He muttered, "Rome is far off, very
far,

And weary is the way!" But un-
deterred

Wolfram renewed, "And hast thou
not beheld

The face of Christ's High Vicar?"
And again,

"Pass on," he muttered, "what is
that to thee?"

Whereto, with sorrowful voice,
Wolfram, "O all,

And all in all to me that love my
friend!"

"My friend!" Tannhäuser laughed
a bitter laugh

Then sadlier said, "What thou
wouldst know, once known,

Will cause thee to recall that wasted
word

And cancel all the kindness in thy
thoughts;

Yet shalt thou learn my misery, and
learn

The man so changed, whom once
thou calledst 'friend,'

That unto him the memory of him-
self

Is as a stranger." Then, with eyes
that swam

True sorrow, Wolfram stretched his
arms and sought

To clasp Tannhäuser to him: but
the other

Waved him away and with a shout
that sprang

Fierce with self-scorn from misery's
deepest depth,

"Avaunt!" he cried, the ground
whereon I tread

Is ground accurst!

"Yet stand not so far off
But what thine ears, if yet they will,
may take

The tale thy lips from mine have
sought to learn;

Then, sign thyself, and peaceful go
thy ways."

And Wolfram, for the grief that
choked his voice,

Could only murmur "Speak!" But
for a while

Tannhäuser to sad silence gave his
heart;

Then fetched back some far thought,
sighing, and said:—

"O Wolfram, by the love of lovelier
days

Believe I am not so far fallen away
From all I was while we might yet

be friends,

But what these words, haply my
last, are true:

True as my heart's deep woe what
time I felt

Cold on my brow tears wept, and
wept in vain,

For me, among the scorn of altered
friends,

Parting that day for Rome. Re-
member this:

That when, in after years to which
I pass

A by-word, and a mockery, and no
more,

Thou, honored still by honorable
men,

Shalt hear my name dishonored,
thou may'st say,

'Greatly he grieved for that great
sin he sinned.'

"Ever, as up the windy Alpine way,
We halting oft by cloudy convent

doors,

My fellow-pilgrims warmed them-
selves within,

And ate and drank, and slept their
sleep, all night,

., fasting, slept not but in ice and
 snow
 Wept, aye remembering her that
 wept for me,
 And loathed the sin within me.
 When at length
 Our way lay under garden terraces
 strewn with their dropping blossoms,
 thick with scents,
 Among the towers and towns of
 Italy,
 Whose sumptuous airs along them,
 like the ghosts
 Of their old gods, went sighing. I
 nor looked
 Nor lingered, but with bandaged eye-
 balls prest,
 Impatient, to the city of the shrine
 Of my desired salvation. There by
 night
 We entered. There, all night, for-
 lorn I lay
 Bruised, broken, bleeding, all my
 garments torn,
 And all my spirit stricken with re-
 morse,
 Prostrate beneath the great cathedral
 stairs.
 So the dawn found me. From a
 hundred spires
 A hundred silvery chimes rang joy :
 but I
 Lay folded in the shadow of my
 shame,
 Darkening the daylight from me in
 the dust.
 Then came a sound of solemn music
 flowing
 To where I crouched ; voices and
 trampling feet ;
 And, girt by all his crimson car-
 dinals,
 In all his pomp the sovran Pontiff
 stood
 Before me in the centre of my
 hopes ;
 Which trembled round him into
 glorious shapes,
 Golden, as clouds that ring the risen
 sun. [fell
 And all the people, all the pilgrims,
 Low at his sacred feet, confessed
 their sins,
 And, pardoned, rose with psalms of
 jubilee
 And confident glad faces.
 Then I sprang
 To where he paused above me ; with
 wild hands
 Clutched at the skirts I could not
 reach ; and sank
 Shiveringly back ; crying, ' O holy,
 and high,
 And terrible, that hast the keys of
 heaven !
 Thou that dost bind and dost un-
 loose, from me,
 For Mary's sake, and the sweet
 saints', unbind
 The grievous burthen of the curse I
 bear.'
 And when he questioned, and I told
 him all
 The sin that sinouldered in my blood,
 how bred,
 And all the strangeness of it, then
 his face
 Was as the Judgment Angel's ; and
 I hid
 My own ; and, hidden from his eyes,
 I heard :
 " ' Hast thou within the nets of
 Satan lain ?
 Hast thou thy soul to her perdition
 pledged ?
 Hast thou thy lip to Hell's En-
 chatress lent,
 To drain damnation from her reek-
 ing cup ?
 Then know that sooner from the
 withered staff
 That in my hand I hold green leave
 shall spring,
 Than from the brand in hell-fire
 scorched rebloom
 The blossoms of salvation.'
 The voice ceased,
 And, with it all things from my
 sense. I waked
 I know not when, but all the place
 was dark :

Above me, and about me, and with-
 in
 Darkness: and from that hour by
 moon or sun
 Darkness unutterable as of death
 Where'er I walk. But death him-
 self is near!
 O, might I once more see her, un-
 seen; unheard,
 Hear her once more; or know that
 she forgives
 Whom Heaven forgives not, nor his
 own lost peace;
 I think that even among the nether
 fires
 And those dark fields of Doom to
 which I pass,
 Some blessing yet would haunt me." Sorrowfully
 He rose among the tumbled rocks
 and leaned
 Against the dark. As one that many
 a year,
 Sundered by savage seas unsociable
 From kin and country, in a desert
 isle
 Dwelling till half dishumanized, be-
 holds
 Haply, one eve far-off sail go by,
 That brings old thoughts of home
 across his heart;
 And still the man who thinks—
 "They are all gone,
 Or changed, that loved me once, and
 I myself
 No more the same"—watches the
 dwindling speck
 With weary eyes, nor shouts, nor
 waves a hand;
 But after, when the night is left
 alone,
 A sadness falls upon him, and he
 feels
 More solitary in his solitudes
 And tears come starting fast; so,
 tearful, stood
 Tannhäuser, whilst his melancholy
 thoughts, [hope,
 From following up far off a waning
 Back to himself came, one by one,
 more sad

Because of sadness troubled.
 Yet not long
 He rested thus; but murmured,
 "Now, farewell:
 I go to hide me darkly in the groves
 That she was wont to haunt; where
 some sweet chance
 Haply may yield me sight of her,
 and I
 May stoop, she passed away, to kiss
 the ground
 Made sacred by her passage ere I
 die."
 But him departing Wolfram held,
 "Vain! vain!
 Thy footstep sways with fever, and
 thy mind
 Wavers within thy restless eyes.
 Lie here,
 O unrejected, in my arms, and
 rest!"
 Now o'er the cumbrous hills began
 to creep
 A thin and watery light: a whisper
 went
 Vague through the vast and dusky-
 volumed woods,
 And, unaccompanied, from a drowsy
 copse
 Hard by a solitary chirp came cold,
 While, spent with inmost trouble,
 Tannhäuser leaned
 His wan cheek pillowed upon Wol-
 fram's breast,
 Calm, as in death, with placid lids
 down locked.
 And Wolfram prayed within his
 heart, "Ah, God!
 Let him not die, not yet, not thus,
 with all
 The sin upon his spirit!" But
 while he prayed
 Tannhäuser raised delirious looks,
 and sighed,
 "Hearest thou not the happy songs
 they sing me?
 Seest thou not the lovely floating
 forms?
 O fair, and fairer far than fancy
 fashioned!

O sweet the sweetness of the songs
they sing!

*For thee, . . . they sing . . . the
goddess waits: for thee*

*With braided blooms the balmy
couch is strewn,*

*And loosed for thee . . . they sing
. . . the golden zone.*

*“Fragrant for thee the lighted spices
fume*

*With streaming incense sweet, and
sweet for thee*

*The scattered rose, the myrtle crown,
the cup,*

*The nectar-cup for thee! . . . they
sing. Return,*

*Though late, too long desired, . . .
I hear them sing,*

*Delay no more delights too long de-
layed:*

*Turn to thy rest; . . . they sing . . .
the married doves*

*Murmur; the Fays soft-sparkling
tapers tend;*

*The odors burn the purple bowers
among;*

*And love for thee, and Beauty,
waits! they sing.”*

“Ah me! ah madman!” Wolfram
cried, “yet eam

Thy cheated ears, nor chase with
credulous heart

The fair dissembling of that dream.
For thee

Not roses now, but thorns; nor
myrtle wreath,

But cypress rather and the graveyard
flower

Befitting saddest brows; nor nectar
poured,

But prayers and tears! For thee in
yonder skies

An Angel strives with Sin and Death!
for thee

Yet pleads a spirit purer than thine
own:

For she is gone! gone to the breast
of God!

Thy Guardian Angel, while she
walked the earth.

Thine intercessionary Saint while
now

For thee she sues about the Throne
of Thrones,

Beyond the stars, our star, Eliza-
beth!”

Then Wolfram felt the shattered
frame that leaned

Across his breast with sudden spasms
convulsed.

“Dead! is she dead?” Tannhäuser
murmured, “dead!

Gone to the grave, so young! mur-
dered—by me!

Dead—and by my great sin! O Wol-
fram, turn

Thy face from mine. I am a dying
man!”

And Wolfram answered, “Dying?
ah, not thus!

Ye! make one sign thou dost repent
the past,

One word, but one! to say thou hast
abhorred

That false she-devil that, with her
damméd charms,

Hath wrought this ruin; and I,
though! all the world

Roar out against thee, ay! though
fiends of hell

Howl from the deeps, yet I, thy
friend, even yet

Will cry them ‘Peace!’ and trust
the hope I hold

Against all desperate odds, and deem
thee saved.”

Whereto Tannhäuser, speaking
faintly, “Friend,

The fiend that haunts in ruins
through my heart

Will wander sometimes. In the nets
I trip,

When most I fret the meshes. These
spent shafts

Are of a sickly brain that shoots
awry,

Aiming at something better. Bear
with me.

I die: I pass I know not whither:
yet know

That I die penitent. O Wolfram,
 pray,
 Pray for my soul! I cannot pray
 myself.
 I dare not hope: and yet I would
 not die
 Without a hope, if any hope, though
 faint
 And far beyond this darkness, yet
 may dwell
 In the dear death of Him that died
 for all."
 He whispering thus; far in the
 Aurorean East
 The ruddy sun, uprising, sharply
 snote
 A golden finger on the airy harps
 By Morning hung within her leafy
 bowers;
 And all about the budded dells, and
 woods
 With sparkling tasselled tops, from
 birds and brooks
 A hundred hallelujahs hailed the
 light.
 The whitehorn glistened from the
 wakening glen:
 O'er golden grass danced the dawn-
 ing rills
 All the delighted leaves by copse and
 glade
 Gambolled; and breezy bleatings
 came from flocks [dew.
 Far off in pleasant pastures fed with
 But whilst, unconscious of the silent
 change
 Thus stolen around him, o'er the
 dying bard
 Hung Wolfram, on the breeze there
 came a sound
 Of mourning moving down the nar-
 row glen;
 And, looking up, he suddenly was
 'ware
 Of four white maidens, moving in
 the van
 Of four black monks who bore upon
 her bier
 The flower-strewn corpse of young
 Elizabeth.

And after these, from all the castled
 hills,
 A multitude of lieges and lords;
 A multitude of men-at-arms, with
 all
 Their morions hung with mourning
 and in midst
 His worn cheek channelled with un-
 wonted tears,
 The Landgrave, weeping for Eliza-
 beth.
 These, as the sad procession nearer
 wound,
 And nearer, trampling bare the
 feathery weed
 To where Sir Wolfram rested o'er
 his friend,
 Tannhäuser caught upon his dying
 gaze;
 And caught, perchance, upon the in-
 ward eye,
 Far, far beyond the corpse, the bier,
 and far
 Beyond the widening circle of the
 sun,
 Some sequel of that vision Wolfram
 saw:
 The crowned Spirit by the Jasper
 Gates;
 The four white Angels o'er the walls
 of Heaven,
 The shores where, tideless, sleep the
 seas of Time
 Soft by the City of the Saints of God.
 Forth, with the strength that lastly
 comes to break
 All bonds, from Wolfram's folding
 arm he leapt,
 Clambered the pebbly path, and
 groaning, fell [last
 Flat on the bier of love—his bourn at
 Then, even then, while question
 question chased
 About the ruffled circle of that grief,
 And all was hubbub by the bier, a
 noise
 Of shouts and hymns brake in across
 the hills,
 That now o'erflowed with hurrying
 feet; and came,

Dashed to the hip with travel, and
 dewed with haste,
 A flying post, and in his hand he
 bore
 A withered staff o'erflourished with
 green leaves ;
 Who,—followed by a crowd of youth
 and old,
 That sang to stun with sound the
 iark in heaven,
 A miracle ! a miracle from Rome !
 Glory to God that makes the bare
 bough green !"—
 Sprang in the midst, and, hot for
 answer, asked
 News of the Knight Tannhäuser.
 Then a monk
 Of those that, stoled in sable, bore
 the bier
 Pointing, with sorrowful hand, "Be-
 hold the man !"
 But straight the other, "Glory be to
 God !
 This from the Vicar of the fold of
 Christ :
 The withered staff hath flourished
 into leaves,
 The brand shall bloom, though
 burned with fire, and thou
 —Thy soul from sin be saved !" To
 whom, with tears
 That flashed from lowering lids,
 Wolfram replied :
 "To him a swifter message, from a
 source
 Mightier than whence thou comest,
 hath been vouchsafed.
 See these dark hands, blind eyes, and
 bloodless lips,
 This shattered remnant of a once
 fair form,
 Late home of desolation, now the
 husk
 And ruined chrysalis of a regal spirit
 That up to heaven hath parted on
 the wing !
 But thou, to Rome returning with
 hot speed, [Christ
 Tell the high Vicar of the Fold of
 How that lost sheep his rescuing
 hand would reach,

Although by thee unfound, is found
 indeed,
 And in the Shepherd's bosom lies at
 peace."

And they that heard him lifted up
 the voice
 And wept. But they that stood
 about the hills
 Far off, not knowing, ceased not to
 cry out,
 "Glory to God that makes the bare
 bough green !"
 Till Echo, from the inmost heart of
 all
 That mellowing morn blown open
 like a rose
 To round and ripen to the perfect
 noon,
 Resounded, "Glory ! glory !" and
 the rocks
 From glen to glen rang, "Glory unto
 God !"

And so those twain, severed by Life
 and Sin,
 By Love and Death united, in one
 grave
 Slept. But Sir Wolfram passed into
 the wilds :
 There, with long labor of his hands,
 he hewed
 A hermitage from out the hollow
 rock,
 Wherein he dwelt, a solitary man.
 There, many a year, at nightfall or
 at dawn,
 The pilgrim paused, nor ever paused
 in vain,
 For words of cheer along his weary
 way.
 But once, upon a windy night, me
 heard
 A noise of rustling wings, and at th
 dawn
 They found the hermit parted to his
 peace.
 The place is yet. The youngest pil-
 grim knows,
 And loves it. Three gray rocks ;
 and, over these,

A mountain ash that, mourning,
 bead by bead,
 Drops her red rosary on a ruined cell.
 So sang the Saxon Bard. And when
 he ceased,

The women's cheeks were wet with
 tears ; but all
 The broad-blown Barons roared ap-
 plause, and flowed
 The jostling tankards prodigal of
 wine.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AGAMEMNON.
 ÆGISTHUS.
 ORESTES.
 PHOCIAN.
 HERALD.

CLYTEMNESTRA.
 ELECTRA.
 CASSANDRA.
 CHORUS.

SCENE.—*Before the Palace of Agamemnon in Argos. Trophies, amongst which the shield of Agamemnon, on the wall.*

TIME.—*Morning. The action continues till Sunset.*

I. CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

MORNING at last ! at last the linger-
 ing day
 Creeps o'er the dewy side of yon
 dark world.
 O dawning light already on the hills !
 O universal earth, and air, and thou,
 First freshness of the east, which art
 a breath
 Breathed from the rapture of the
 gods, who bless
 Almost all other prayers on earth
 but mine !
 Wherefore to me is solacing sleep
 denied ?
 And honorable rest, the right of all ?
 So that no medicine of the slumbrous
 shell,
 Brimmed with divinest draughts of
 melody,

Nor silence under dreamful canopy,
 Nor purple cushions of the lofty
 couch
 May lull this fever for a little while.
 Wherefore to me,—to me, of all
 mankind,
 This retribution for a deed undone ?
 For many men outlive their sum of
 crimes,
 And eat, and drink, and lift up thank-
 ful hands,
 And take their rest securely in the
 dark.
 Am I not innocent,—or more than
 these ?
 There is no blot of murder on my
 brow,
 Nor any taint of blood upon my robe.
 —It is the thought ! it is the thought !
 . . . and men
 Judge us by acts ! . . . as though
 one thunder-clap



"MORNING AT LAST! AT LAST THE LINGERING DAY."

Let all Olympus out. Unquiet heart,
 Ill fares it with thee since, ten sad
 years past,
 In one wild hour of unacquainted
 joy,
 Thou didst set wide thy lonely bridal
 doors
 For a forbidden guest to enter in !
 Last night, methought pale Helen,
 with a frown,
 Swept by me, murmuring, "I—such
 as thou—
 A Queen in Greece—weak-hearted,
 (woe is me !)
 Allured by love—did, in an evil hour,
 Fall off from duty. Sorrow came.
 Beware !"
 And then, in sleep, there passed a
 baleful band,
 The ghosts of all the slaughtered
 under Troy,
 From this side Styx, who cried,
 "For such a crime
 We fell from our fair palaces on
 earth,
 And wander, starless, here. For
 such a crime
 A thousand ships were launched,
 and tumbled down
 The topless towers of Ilion, though
 they rose
 To magic music, in the time of
 Gods !"
 With such fierce thoughts forever-
 more at war,
 Vext not alone by hankering wild
 regrets,
 But fears, yet worse, of that which
 soon must come,
 My heart waits armed, and from the
 citadel
 Of its high sorrow, sees far off dark
 shapes,
 And hears the footsteps of Necessity
 Tread near, and nearer, hand in
 hand with Woe.
 Last night the flaming Herald warn-
 ing urged
 Up all the hills,—small time to
 pause and plan ! [to do,
 Counsel is weak : and much remains

That Agamemnon, and, if else re-
 main
 Of that enduring band who sailed
 for Troy
 Ten years ago (and some sailed
 Letheward),
 Find us not unprepared for their
 return.

But—hark ! I hear the tread of nim-
 ble feet
 That sounds this way. The rising
 town is poured
 About the festive altars of the Gods,
 And from the heart of the great
 Agora,
 Lets out its gladness for this last
 night's news.
 —Ah, so it is ! Insidious, sly Re-
 port,
 Sounding oblique, like Loxian
 oracles,
 Tells double-tongued (and with the
 selfsame voice !)
 To some new gladness, new despair
 to some.

II. CHORUS AND CLYTEMNESTRA.

CHORUS.

O dearest Lady, daughter of Tyn-
 darus !
 With purple flowers we come, and
 offerings—
 Oil, and wine ; and cakes of honey,
 Soothing, unadulterate ; tapestries
 Woven by white Argive maidens,
 God-descended (woven only
 For the homeward feet of Heroes)
 To celebrate this glad intelligence
 Which last night the fiery courier
 Brought us, posting up from Ilion,
 Wheeled above the dusky circle
 Of the hills from lighted Ida.
 For now (Troy lying extinguish'd
 Underneath a mighty Woe)
 Our King and chief of men,
 Agamemnon, returning
 (And with him the hope of Argos)

Shall worship at the Tutelary Altars
Of their dear native land :
In the fane of ancient Herë,
Or the great Lycean God ;
Immortally crowned with reverend
honor !
But tell us wherefore, O godlike
woman,
Having a lofty trouble in your eye,
You walk alone with loosened
tresses ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Shall the ship toss, and yet the helm
not heave ?
Shall they drowse sitting at the
lower oars,
When those that hold the middle
benches wake ?
He that is yet sole eye of all our
state
Shining not here, shall ours be shut
in dreams ?
But haply you (thrice happy !) prove
not this,
The curse of Queens, and worse
than widowed wives—
To wake, and hear, all night, the
wandering gnat
Sing through the silent chambers,
while Alarin,
In place of Slumber, by the haunted
couch
Stands sentinel ; or when from
coast to coast
Wails the night wandering wind, or
when o'er heaven
Boötes hath unleashed his fiery
hounds,
And Night her glittering camps hath
set, and lit
Her watch-fires through the silence
of the skies,
—To count ill chances in the dark,
and feel
Deserted pillows wet with tears, not
kisses,
Where kisses once fell.
But now Expectation
Stirs up such restless motions of the
blood

As suffer not my lids to harbor
sleep.
Wherefore, O beloved companions,
I wake betimes, and wander up and
down,
Looking toward the distant hill-
tops.
From whence shall issue fair fulfil-
ment
Of all our ten-years' hoping. For,
behold !
Troy being captured, we shall see
once more
Those whom we loved in days of
old.
Yet some will come not from the
Phrygian shore,
But there lie weltering to the surf
and wind ;
Exiled from day, in darkness blind,
Or having crost unhappy Styx.
And some who left us full of vigor-
ous youth
Shall greet us now gray-headed
men.
But if our eyes behold again
Our long-expected chief, in truth,
Fortune for us hath thrown the
Treble Six.

CHORUS.

By us, indeed, these things are also
wisht.
Wherefore, if now to this great son
of Atreus
(Having survived the woeful walls
of Troy),
With us, once more, the Gods permit
to stand
A glad man by the pillars of his
hearth,
Let his dear life henceforth be such
wherein
The Third Libation often shall be
poured.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And let his place be numbered with
the Gods, [walls,
Who overlook the world's eternal
Out of all reach of sad calamities.

CHORUS.

It is not well, I think, that men
 should set
 Too near the Gods any of mortal
 kind :
 But brave men are as Gods upon the
 earth.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And whom Death daunts not, these
 are truly brave.

CHORUS.

But more than all I reckon that man
 blest,
 Who, having sought Death nobly,
 finds it not.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Except he find it where he does not
 seek.

CHORUS.

You speak in riddles.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

For so Wisdom speaks.
 But now do you with garlands
 wreath the altars,
 While I, within, the House prepare.
 That so our King, at his returning,
 With his golden armanent,
 Find us not unaware
 Of the greatness of the event.

CHORUS.

Soon shall we see the faces that we
 loved.
 Brother once more clasping brother,
 As in the unforgotten days :
 And heroes, meeting one another,
 (Men by glorious toils approved)
 Where once they roved,
 Shall rove again the old familiar
 ways.
 And they that from the distance
 come
 Shall feed their hearts with tales of
 home ;

And tell the famous story of the
 war,
 Rumored sometime from afar.
 Now shall these again behold
 The ancient Argos ; and the grove
 Long since trod
 By the frenzied child of Inachus ;
 And the Forum, famed of old,
 Of the wolf-destroying God ;
 And the opulent Mycenæ,
 Home of the Pelopidæ,
 While they rove with those they
 love,
 Holding pleasant talk with us.
 O how gloriously they went,
 That avenging armanent !
 As though Olympus in her womb
 No longer did entomb
 The greatness of a bygone world—
 Gods and godlike men—
 But east them forth again
 To frighten Troy : such storm was
 hurled

On her devoted towers
 By the retributive Deity,
 Whosoe'er he be
 Of the Immortal Powers—
 Or maddening Pan, if he chastise
 His Shepherd's Phrygian treach-
 eries ;
 Or vengeful Loxias ; or Zeus,
 Angered for the shame and abuse
 Of a great man's hospitality.

As wide as is Olympus' span
 Is the power of the high Gods ;
 Who, in their golden blest abodes
 See all things, looking from the sky ;
 And Heaven is hard to pacify
 For the wickedness of man.
 My heart is filled with vague fore-
 bodings,
 And opprest by unknown terrors
 Lest, in the light of so much glad-
 ness,
 Rise the shadow of ancient wrong.
 A Dæmon of the double lineage
 Of Tantalus ; and the Pleisthenidæ,
 Inexorable in thy mood,
 On the venerable threshold
 Of the ancient House of Pelops

Surely is enough of blood !
 Wherefore does my heart misgive
 me ? [me ?
 Wherefore comes this doubt to grieve
 O, may no Divine Envy
 Follow home the Argive army,
 Being vexed for things ill-done
 In wilful pride of stubborn war.
 Long since, in the distant lands !
 May no Immortal wrath pursue
 Our dear King, the Light of Argos,
 For the unhappy sacrifice
 Of a daughter ; working evil
 In the dark heart of a woman ;
 Or some household treachery,
 And a curse from kindred hands !

III. CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[*Re-entering from the house.*

To-morrow . . . ay, what if to-day ?
 . . . Well—then ?
 Why, if those tongues of flame, with
 which last night
 The land was eloquent, spoke cer-
 tain truth,
 By this perchance through green
 Saronic rocks
 Those black ships glide . . . per-
 chance . . . well, what's to
 fear ?
 'Twere well to dare the worst—to
 know the end—
 Die soon, or live secure. What's
 left to add
 To years of nights like those which
 I have known ?
 Shall I shrink now to meet one little
 hour
 Which I have dared to contemplate
 for years ?
 By all the Gods, not so ! The end
 crowns all.
 Which if we fail to seize, that's also
 lost
 Which went before : as who would
 lead a host
 Through desolate dry places, yet
 return

In sight of kingdoms, when the Gods
 are roused
 To mark the issue ? . . . And yet,
 yet—

I think
 Three nights ago there must have
 been sea-storms.
 The wind was wild among the Pal-
 ace towers :
 Far off upon the hideous Element
 I know it huddled up the petulant
 waves,
 Whose shapeless and bewildering
 precipices
 Led to the belly of Orcus . . . O, to
 slip
 Into dark Lethe from a dizzy plank,
 When even the Gods are reeling on
 the poop !
 To drown at night, and have no sep-
 ulchre !—
 That were too horrible ! . . . yet it
 may be
 Some easy chance, that comes with
 little pain,
 Might rid me of the haunting of
 those eyes,
 And these wild thoughts . . . To
 know he roved among
 His old companions in the Happy
 Fields,
 And ranged with heroes—I still in-
 nocent !
 Sleep would be natural then.
 Yet will the old time
 Never return ! never those peaceful
 hours !
 Never that careless heart ! and never
 more,
 Ah, nevermore that laughter with-
 out pain !
 But I, that languish for repose, mu-
 fly it,
 Nor, save in daring, doing, taste of
 rest.
 O, to have lost all these ! To have
 bartered calm.
 And all the irrevocable wealth of
 youth,
 And gained . . . what ? But this
 change had surely come,

Even were all things other than they
are.

I blame myself o'ermuch, who should
blame time,

And life's inevitable loss, and fate,
And days grown lovelier in the retro-
spect.

We change : wherefore look back ?
The path to safety

Lies forward . . . forward ever.

*[In passing toward the house she
recognizes the shield of Agamem-
non, and pauses before it.*

Ha ! old shield,
Hide up for shame that honest face
of thine.

Stare not so bluntly at us . . . O,
this man !

Why sticks the thought of him so in
my heart ?

If I had loved him once—if for one
hour—

Then were there treason in this fall-
ing off.

But never did I feel this wretched
heart

Until it leaped beneath Ægisthus'
eyes.

Who could have so forecounted all
from first ?

From that flush moment when his
hand in mine

Rested a thought too long, a touch
too kind,

To leave its pulse unwarmed . . .
but I remember

I dreamed sweet dreams that night,
and slept till dawn,

And woke with flutterings of a
happy thought,

And felt, not worse, but better . . .
And now . . . now ?

When first a strange and novel ten-
derness

Quivered in these salt eyes, had one
said then

"O bead of dew may drag a deluge
down :"—

In that first pensive pause, through
which I watched

Unwonted sadness on Ægisthus'
brows,

Had some one whispered, " Ay, the
summer-cloud

Comes first: the tempest follows."—
Well, what's past

Is past. Perchance the worst's to
follow yet.

How thou art haekt, and hewn, and
bruised, old shield !

Was the whole edge of the war
against one man ?

But one thrust more upon this dexter
ridge

Had quite cut through the double
inmost hide.

He must have stood to it well ! O, he
was cast

I' the mould of 'Titans : a magnifi-
cent man,

With head and shoulders like a
God's. He seemed

Too brimful of this merry vigorous
life

To spill it all out at one stab o' the
sword.

Yet that had helped much ill . . . O
Destiny

Makes cowards or makes culprits of
us all !

Ah, had some Trojan weapon . . .
Fool ! fool ! fool !

Surely sometimes the unseen Eume-
nides

Do prompt our musing moods with
wicked hints,

And lash us for our crimes ere we
commit them.

Here, round this silver boss, he cut
my name,

Once—long ago : he cut it as he lay
Tired out with brawling pastimes—

prone—his limbs

At length diffused—his head droopt
in my lap—

His spear flung by : Electra by the
hearth

Sat with the young Orestes on her
knee ;

While he, with an old broken sword,
hacked out

These crooked characters, and
laughed to see
(Sprawled from the unused strength
of his large hands)

The marks make CLYTEMNESTRA.

How he laughed !
Ægisthus' hands are smaller.

Yet I know
That matrons envied me my hus-
band's strength.

And I remember when he strode
among

The Argive crowd he topped them
by a head,

And tall men stood wide-eyed to
look at him,

Where his great plumes went tossing
up and down

The brazen proes drawn out upon
the sand.

War on his front was graved, as on
thy disk,

Shield ! which he left to keep his
memory

Grand in men's mouths : that some
revered old man

Winning to this the eyes of our hot
youth,

Might say, "'Twas here, and here—
this dent, and that—

An such, and such a field (which we
remember) [time.

That Agamemnon, in the great old
Held up the battle."

Now lie there, and rest !
Thy uses all have end. Thy master's
home

Should harbor none but friends.

O triple brass,
Iron, and oak ! the blows of blund-
ering men

Clang idly on you : what fool's
strength is yours !

For, surely, not the adamantine
tunic

Of Ares, nor whole shells of blazing
plates,

Nor ashen spear, nor all the cum-
brous coil

Of seven bulls' hides may guard the
strongest king

From one defenceless woman's quiet
hate.

What noise was that ? Where can
Ægisthus be ?

Ægisthus ! — my Ægisthus ! . . .
There again !

Louder, and longer — from the
Agora—

A mighty shout : and now I see it
the air

A rolling dust the wind blows near.
Ægisthus !

O much I fear . . . this wild-willed
race of ours

Doth ever, like a young unbroken
colt,

Chafe at the straightened bridle of
our state—

If they should find him lone, irreso-
lute,

As is his wont . . . I know he lacks
the eye

And forehead wherewith crowned
Capacity

Awes rash Rebellion back.
Again that shout !

Gods keep Ægisthus safe ! myself
will front

This novel storm. How my heart
leaps to danger !

I have been so long a pilot on rough
seas,

And almost rudderless !
O yet 'tis much

To feel a power, self-centred, self-
assured,

Bridling a glorious danger ! as when
one

That knows the nature of the
elements

Guides some frail plank with sublime
skill that wins

Progress from all obstruction ; and,
erect,

Looks bold and free down all the
dripping stars.

Hearing the hungry storm boom
baffled by.

Ægisthus ! . . . hark ! . . . Ægisthus !
. . . there . . . Ægisthus !

I would to a'! the Gods I knew him safe!

Who comes this way, guiding his racing feet

Safe to us, like a nimble charioteer?

IV. CLYTEMNESTRA. HERALD.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Now, gloom-bird! are there prodigies about?

What new ill-thing sent thee before?

HERALD.

O Queen—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Speak, if thou hast a voice! I listen.

HERALD.

O Queen—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hath an ox trodden on thy tongue?
... Speak then!

HERALD.

O Queen (for haste hath caught away my breath),
The King is coming.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Say again—the King is coming—

HERALD.

Even now, the broad sea-fields
Grow white with flocks of sails, and
towards the west
The sloped horizon teems with rising beaks.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The people know this?

HERALD.

Heard you not the noise?
For soon as this winged news had toucht the gate
The whole land shouted in the sun.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

So soon!
The thought's outsped by the reality,
And halts agape . . . the King—

HERALD.

How she is moved.
A noble woman!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Wherefore beat so fast,
Thou foolish heart? 'tis not thy master—

HERALD.

Truly
She looks all over Agamemnon's mate.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Destiny, Destiny! The deed's half done.

HERALD.

She will not speak, save by that brooding eye
Whose light is language. Some great thought, I see,
Mounts up the royal chambers of her blood.
As a king mounts his palace; holds high pomp
In her Olympian bosom; gains her face,
Possesses all her noble glowing cheek
With sudden state; and gathers grandly up
Its slow majestic meanings in her eyes!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

So quick this sudden joy hath taken us,
I scarce can realize the sum of it.
You say the King comes here,—the King, my husband,
Whom we have waited for ten tears,
—O joy!

Pardon our seeming roughness at the first.

Hope, that will often fawn upon despair

And flatter desperate chances, when the event

Falls at our feet, soon takes a querulous tone,

And jealous of that perfect joy she guards

(Lest the ambrosial fruit by some rude hand

Be stol'n away from her, and never tasted),

Barks like a lean watch-dog at all who come.

But now do you, with what good speed you may,

Make known this glad intelligence to all.

Ourselves, within, as best befits a wife

And woman, will prepare my husband's house.

Also, I pray you, summon to our side

Our cousin, Ægisthus. We would speak with him.

We wou'd that our own lips should be the first

To break these tidings to him ; so obtaining

New joy by sharing his. And, for yourself,

Receive our gratitude. For this great news

Henceforth you hold our royal love in fee.

Our fairest fortunes from this day I date,

And to the House of Tantalus new honor.

HERALD.

She's gone ! With what a majesty she filled

The whole of space ! The statues of the Gods

Are not so godlike. She has Herë's eyes,

And looks immortal !

V. CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*as she ascends the steps of the Palace*).

So . . . while on the verge
Of some wild purpose we hang
dizzily,

Weighing the danger of the leap
below

Against the danger of retreating
steps,

Upon a sudden, some forecast event,
Issuing full-armed from Councils of
the Gods,

Strides to us, plucks us by the hair,
and hurls

Headlong pale conscience to the
abyss of crime.

Well—I shrink not. 'Tis but a leap
in life.

There's fate in this. Why is he
here so soon ?

The sight of whose abhorred eyes
will add

Whatever lacks of strength to this
resolve.

Away with shame ! I have had
enough of it.

What's here for shame ? . . . the
weak against the strong ?

And if the weak be victor ? . . . what
of that ?

Tush ! . . . there,—my soul is set
to it. What need

Of argument to justify an act
Necessity compels, and must ab-
solve ?

I have been at play with scruples—
like a girl.

Now they are all flung by. I have
talked with Crime

Too long to play the prude. These
thoughts have been

Wild guests by night. Now I shall
dare to do

That which I did not dare to
think . . . O, now

I know myself ! Crime's easier than
we dream.

CHORUS.

Upon the everlasting hills
Thro'ed Justice works, and waits.
Between the shooting of a star,
That falls unseen on summer nights
Out of the bosom of the dark,
And the magnificent march of War,
Rolled from angry lands afar
Round some doomed city-gates.
Nothing is to her unknown ;

Nothing unseen.
Upon her hills she sits alone,
And in the balance of Eternity
Poises against the What-has-been
The weight of What-shall-be.
She sums the account of human ills.
The great world's hoarded wrongs
and rights

Are in her treasures. She will mark,
With inward-searching eyes sublime,
The frauds of Time.
The empty future years she fills
Out of the past. All human wills
Sway to her on her reachless heights.

Wisdom she teaches men, with
tears,
In the toilful school of years :
Climbing from event to event.
And, being patient, is content
To stretch her sightless arms about,
And find some human instrument,
From many sorrows to work out
Her doubtful, far accomplishment.

She the two Atridæ sent
Upon Iliou : being intent
The heapt-up wrath of Heaven to
move
Against the faithless Phrygian crime.
Them the Thunder-bird of Jove,
Swooping sudden from above,
Summoned to fates sublime.

She, being injured, for the sake
Of her, the often-wedded wife,
(Too loved, and too adoring !)
Many a brazen band did break
In many a breathless battle-strife ;
Many a noble life did take ;

Many a headlong agency,
Frenzied shout, and frantic cry,
For Greek and Trojan storing.
When, the spear in the onset being
shivered,
The reeling ranks were rolled to-
gether
Like mad waves mingling in windy
weather,
Dashed fearfully over and over each
other.
And the plumes of Princes were
tossed and thrust,
And dragged about in the shameful
dust ;
And the painful, panting breath
Came and went in the tug of death :
And the sinews were loosened, and
the strong knees stricken :
And the eyes began to darken and
thicken :
And the arm of the mighty and ter-
rible quivered.

O Love ! Love ! Love ! How terri-
ble art thou !

How terrible !
O, what hast thou to do
With men of mortal years,
Who toil below,
And have enough of griefs for tears
to flow ?

O, range in higher spheres !
Hast thou, O hast thou, no diviner
hues

To paint thy wings, but must trans-
fuse

An Iris-light from tears ?
For human hearts are all too weak
to hold thee.

And how, O Love, shall human arms
infold thee ?

There is a seal of sorrow on thy
brow.

There is a deadly fire in thy breath.
With life thou lurest, yet thou givest
death.

O Love, the Gods are weak by reason
of thee ;

And many wars have been upon the
earth.

Thou art the sweetest source of
 saltest sorrows.
 Thy blest to-days bring such unblest
 to-morrows ;
 Thy softest hope makes saddest
 memory.
 Thou hadst destruction in thee from
 the birth ;
 Incomprehensible !

O Love, thy brightest bridal gar-
 ments
 Are poisoned, like that robe of ag-
 onies
 Which Deianira wove for Hercules,
 And, being put on, turn presently
 to cerements !

Thou art unconquered in the fight.
 Thou rangest over land and sea.
 O let the foolish nations be !
 Keep thy divine desire
 To upheave mountains or to kindle
 fire

From the frore frost, and set the
 world alight.

Why make thy red couch in the
 damask cheek ?

Or light thy torch at languid eyes ?
 Or lie entangled in soft sighs
 On pensive lips that will not speak ?
 To sow the seeds of evil things

In the hearts of headstrong kings ?
 Preparing many a kindred strife
 For the fearful future hour ?

O leave the wretched race of man,
 Whose days are but the dying sea-
 sons' span ;

Vex not his painful life !
 Make thy immortal sport
 In heaven's high court,
 And cope with Gods that are of
 equal power.

VI. ELECTRA. CHORUS. CLY-
 TEMNESTRA.

ELECTRA.

Now is at hand the hour of retribu-
 tion.

For my father, at last returning,
 In great power, being greatly in-
 jured,
 Will destroy the base adulterer,
 And efface the shameful Past.

CHORUS.

O child of the Godlike Agamemnon.
 Leave vengeance to the power of
 Heaven ;
 Nor forestall with impious footsteps
 The brazen tread of black Erinnys.

ELECTRA.

Is it, besotted with the adulterous
 sin,
 Or, as with flattery pleasing present
 power,
 Or, being intimidate, you speak these
 words ?

CHORUS.

Nay, but desiring justice, like your-
 self.

ELECTRA.

Yet Justice oft times uses mortal
 means.

CHORUS.

But flings aside her tools when work
 is done.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O dearest friends, inform me, went
 this way
 Ægisthus ?

CHORUS.

• Even now, hurrying hitherward
 I see him walk, with irritated eyes.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A reed may show which way the
 tempest blows.
 That face is pale,—those brows are
 dark . . . ah !

VII. ÆGISTHUS. CLYTEMNESTRA.

ÆGISTHUS.

Agamemnon—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

My husband . . . well ?

ÆGISTHUS.

(Whom may the great Gods curse !)
Is scarce an hour hence.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Then that hour's yet saved
From sorrow. Smile, Ægisthus—

ÆGISTHUS.

Hear me speak.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not as your later wont has been to
smile—
Quick, fierce, as though you scarce
could hurry out
The wild thing fast enough ; for
smiling's sake,
As if to show you could smile, though
in fear
Of what might follow,—but as first
you smiled
Years, years ago, when some slow
loving thought
Stole down your face, and settled on
your lips,
As though a sunbeam halted on a
rose.
And mixed with fragrance, light.
Can you smile still
Just so, Ægisthus ?

ÆGISTHUS.

These are idle words,
And like the wanderings of some
fevered brain :
Extravagant phrases, void of import,
wild.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah, no ! you cannot smile so, more.
Nor I !

ÆGISTHUS.

Hark ! in an hour the King—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hush ! listen now,—
I hear, far down yon vale, a shepherd
piping
Hard by his milk-white flock. The
lazy things !
How quietly they sleep or feed among
The dry grass and the acanthus
there ! . . . and he,
He hath flung his faun-skin by, and
white-ash stick,
You hear his hymn ? Something of
Dryope.
Faunus, and Pan . . . an old wood
tale, no doubt !
It makes me think of songs when I
was young
I used to sing between the valleys
there,
Or higher up among the red ash-
berries,
Where the goats climb, and gaze.
Do you remember
That evening when we lingered all
alone,
Below the city, and one yellow star
Shook o'er yon temple ? . . . ah,
and you said then,
“ Sweet, should this evening never
change to night,
But pause, and pause, and stay just
so,—yon star
Still steadfast, and the moon behind
the hill,
Still rising, never risen,—would this
seem strange ?
Or should we say, ‘ why halts the
day so late ? ’ ”
Do you remember ?

ÆGISTHUS.

Woman ! woman ! this
Surpasses frenzy ! Not a breath of
time

Between us and the clutch of
Destiny,—
Already sound there footsteps at our
heels,
Already comes a heat against our
cheek,
Already fingers cold among our hair,
And you speak lightly thus, as
though the day
Lingered toward nuptial hours! . . .
awake! arouse!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I do wake . . . well, the King—

ÆGISTHUS.

Even while we speak
Draws near. And we—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Must meet him.

ÆGISTHUS.

Meet? ay . . . how?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

As mortals should meet fortune—
calmly.

ÆGISTHUS.

Quick!
Consult! consult! Yet there is time
to choose
The path to follow.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I have chosen it
long since.

ÆGISTHUS.

How?—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O, have we not had ten years
To ripen counsel, and mature re-
solve?
What's to add now?

ÆGISTHUS.

I comprehend you not.
The time is plucking at our sleeve.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ægisthus,
There shall be time for deeds, and
soon enough,
Let that come when it may. And it
may be

Deeds thus to be done shall shut and
shrivel up

All quiet thoughts, and quite pre-
clude repose

To the end of time. Upon this
awful strait

And promontory of our mortal life
We stand between what was, and is
not yet.

The Gods allot to us a little space,
Before the contests which must soon
begin,

For calmer breathing. All before
lies dark,

And difficult, and perilous, and
strange;

And all behind . . . What if we take
one look,

One last long lingering look (before
Despair,

The shadow of failure, or remorse,
which often

Waits on success, can come 'twixt us
and it,

And darken all) at that which yet
must seem

Undimmed in the long retrospect of
years,—

The beautiful imperishable Past!

Were this not natural, being inno-
cent now

—At least of that which is the greater
crime!

To-night we shall not be so.

ÆGISTHUS.

Ah, to-night!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

All will be done which now the Gods
foresee.

The sun shines still.

ÆGISTHUS.

I oft have marked some day
 Begin all gold in its flusht orient,
 With splendid promise to the wait-
 ing world.
 And turn to blackness ere the sun
 ran down.
 So draws our love to its dark close.
 To-night—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Shall bring our bridal, my Beloved !
 For, either
 Upon the melancholy shores of
 Death
 (One shadow near the doors of Pluto)
 greeted
 By pale Proserpina, our steps shall
 be,
 Or else, secure, in the great empty
 palace
 We shall sleep crowned—no noise to
 startle us—
 And Argos silent round us—all our
 own !

ÆGISTHUS.

In truth I do not dare to think this
 thing.
 For all the Greeks will hate us.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What of that ?
 If that they do not harm us,—as who
 shall ?

ÆGISTHUS.

Moreover, though we triumph in the
 act
 (And we may fail, and fall) we shall
 go down
 Covered with this reproach into the
 tomb,
 Hunted by all the red Eumenides ;
 And, in the end, the ghost of him we
 slew,
 Being beforehand there, will come
 between
 Us and the awful Judges of the
 dead !

And no one on this earth will pray
 for us ;
 And no hand will hang garlands on
 our urns,
 Either of man, or maid, or little
 child ;
 But we shall be dishonored.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O faint heart !

When this poor life of ours is done
 with—all
 Its foolish days put by—its bright
 and dark—
 Its praise and blame—rolled quite
 away—gone o'er
 Like some brief pageant—will it stir
 us more,
 Where we are gone, how men may
 hoot or shout
 After our footsteps, then the dust
 and garlands
 A few mad boys and girls fling in
 the air
 When a great host is passed, can
 cheer or vex
 The minds of men already out of
 sight
 Toward other lands, with pæan and
 with pomp
 Arrayed near vaster forces ? For
 the future,
 We will smoke hecatombs, and build
 new fanes,
 And be you sure the gods deal
 leniently
 With those who grapple for their
 life, and pluck it
 From the closed grip of Fate, albeit
 perchance
 Some ugly smutch, some drop of
 blood or so,
 A spot here, there a streak, or stain
 of gore,
 Should in the contest fall to them,
 and mar
 That life's original whiteness.

ÆGISTHUS.

Tombs have tongues

That talk in Hades. Think it!
Dare we hope,
This done, to be more happy?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

My Beloved,
We are not happy,—we may never
be,
Perchance, again. Yet it is much to
think
We have been so: and even though
we must weep,
We have enjoyed.

The roses and the thorns
We have plucked together. We
have proved both. Say,
Was it not worth the bleeding hands
they left us
To have won such flowers? And if
'twere possible
To keep them still,—keep even the
withered leaves,
Even the withered leaves are worth
our care.

We will not tamely give up life,—
such life!

What though the years before, like
those behind,

Be dark as clouds the thunder sits
among,

Tipt only here and there with a wan
gold

More bright for rains between?—
'tis much,—'tis more,

For we shall ever think "the sun's
behind.

The sun must shine before the day
goes down!"

Anything better than the long, long
night,

And that perpetual silence of the
tomb!

'Tis not for happier hours, but life
itself

Which may bring happier hours, we
strike at Fate.

Why, though from all the treasury
of the Past

'Tis but one solitary gem we save—
One kiss more such as we have kist,

one smile,

One more embrace, one night more
such as those

Which we have shared, how costly
were the prize,

How richly worth the attempt! In-
deed, I know,

When yet a child, in those dim
pleasant dreams

A girl will dream, perchance in
twilit hours,

Or under eve's first star (when we
are young

Happiness seems so possible,—so
near!

One says, "it must go hard, but I
shall find it!")

Ofttimes I mused,—“My life shall
be my own,

To make it what I will.” It is their
fault

(I thought) who miss the true de-
lights. I thought

Men might have saved themselves:
they flung away.

Too easily abashed, life's opening
promise:

But all things will be different for
me.

For I felt life so strong in me!
indeed

I was so sure of my own power to
love

And to enjoy,—I had so much to
give,

I said, “be sure it must win some-
thing back!”

Youth is so confident! And though
I saw

All women sad,—not only those I
knew,

As Helen (whom from youth I
knew, nor ever

Divined that sad impenetrable smile
Which oft would darken through

her lustrous eyes,
As drawing slowly down o'er her

cold cheek
The yellow braids of odorous hair,

she turned
From Menelaus praising her, and

sighed,—

That was before he, flinging bitterly
down
The trampled parsley-crown and
undrained goblet,
Cursed before all the Gods his sud-
den shame
And young Hermione's deserted
youth !)
Not only her.—but all whose lives I
learned,
Medea, Deianira, Ariadne,
And many others, — all weak,
wronged, opprest,
Or sick and sorrowful, as I am
now,—
Yet in their fate I would not see my
own,
Nor grant allegiance to that general
law
From which a few, I knew a very
few,
With whom it seemed I also might
be numbered,
Had yet escaped securely :—so ex-
empting
From this world's desolation every-
where
One fate—my own !
Well, that was foolish ! Now
I am not so exacting. As we move
Further and further down the path
of fate
To the sure tomb, we yield up, one
by one,
Our claims on Fortune, till with
each new year
We seek less and go further to ob-
tain it.
'Tis the old tale, —aye, all of us
must learn it !
But yet I would not empty-handed
stand
Before the House of Hades. Still
there's life,
And hope with life ; and much that
may be done.
Look up, O thou most dear and
cherisht head !
We'll strive still, conquering ; or, if
falling, fall
In sight of grand results.

ÆGISTHUS.

May these things be !
I know not. All is vague. I should
be strong.
Even were you weak. 'Tis other-
wise—I see,
No path to safety sure. We have
done ill things.
Best let the past be past, lest new
griefs come.
Best we part now.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Part ! what, to part from thee !
Never till death,—not in death even,
part !

ÆGISTHUS.

But one course now is left.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And that is—

ÆGISTHUS.

Flight.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Coward !

ÆGISTHUS.

I care not.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Flight ! I am a Queen.

A goddess once you said,—and why
not goddess ?
Seeing the Gods are mightier than
we
By so much more of courage. O,
not I,
But you, are mad.

ÆGISTHUS.

Nay, wiser than I was.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And you will leave me ?

ÆGISTHUS.

Not if you will come.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This was the Atlas of the world I
built!

ÆGISTHUS.

Flight! . . . yes, I know not . . .
somewhere . . . anywhere.
You come? . . . you come not?
well? . . . no time to pause!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And this is he—this he, the man I
loved!
And this is retribution! O my
heart!
O Agamemnon, how art thou
avenged!
And I have done so much for him!
. . . would do
So much! . . . a universe lies
ruined here.

Now by Apollo, be a man for once!
Be for once strong, or be forever
weak!

If shame be dead, and honor be no
more,

No more true faith, nor that which
in old time

Made us like Gods, sublime in our
high place,

Yet all surviving instincts warn
from flight.

Flight!—O, impossible! Even now
the steps

Of fate are at the threshold. Which
way fly?

For every avenue is barred by death.
Will these not scout your flying
heels? If now

They hate us powerful, will they
love us weak?

No land is safe; nor any neighbor-
ing king

Will harbor Agamemnon's enemy.
Lodest on Troy; her ashes smoul-
der yet.

ÆGISTHUS.

Her words compel me with their aw-
ful truth.

For so would vengeance hound and
earth us down.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

If I am weak to move you by that
love

You swore long since—and sealed it
with false lips!—

Yet lives there nothing of the ambi-
tious will?

Of those proud plots, and dexterous
policy,

On which you builded such high
hopes, and swore

To rule this people Agamemnon
rules;

Supplant him eminent on his own
throne,

And push our power through Greece?

ÆGISTHUS.

The dream was great.
It was a dream. We dreamt it like
a king.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, and shall so fulfil it—like a
King!

Who talks of flight? For now, be-
think you well,

If to live on, the byword of a world,
Be any gain, even such flight offers
not.

Will long-armed Vengeance never
find you out

When you have left the weapon in
her hands?

Be bold, and meet her! Who fore-
stall the bolts

Of heaven, the Gods deem worthy
of the Gods.

Success is made the measure of our
acts.

And, think, Ægisthus, there has
been one thought

Before us in the intervals of years,
Between us ever in the long dark
nights,

When, lying all awake, we heard the
wind.

Do you shrink then? or, only closer
drawing
Your lips to mine, your arms about
my neck,
Say, "Who would fear such chances,
when he saw
Behind them such a prize for him as
this?"
Do you shrink now? Dare you put
all this from you?
Revoke the promise of those years,
and say
This prospect meets you unprepared
at last?
Our motives are so mixt in their be-
ginnings
And so confused, we recognize them
not
Till they are grown to acts; but
ne'er were ours
So blindly wov'n, but what we both
untangled
Out of the intricacies of the heart
One purpose:—being found, best
grapple to it.
For to conceive ill deeds yet dare not
do them,
This is not virtue, but a twofold
shame.
Between the culprit and the demi-
god
There's but one difference men re-
gard—success.
The weakly-wicked shall be doubly
damned!

ÆGISTHUS.

I am not weak . . . what will you?
. . . O, too weak
To bear this scorn! . . . She is a
godlike fiend,
And hell and heaven seem meeting
in her eyes.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Those who on perilous ventures
once embark
Should burn their ships, nor ever
dream return.
Better, though all Olympus marched
on us,

To die like fallen Titans, scorning
Heaven,
Than live like slaves in scorn of our
own selves!

ÆGISTHUS.

We wait then? Good! and dare
this desperate chance.
And if we fall (as we, I think, must
fall)
It is but some few sunny hours we
lose,
Some few bright days. True! and
a little less
Of life, or else of wrong a little more,
What's that? For one shade more
or less the night
Will scarce seem darker or lighter,
—the long night!
We'll fall together, if we fall; and
if—
O, if we live!—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, that was noblier thought.
Now you grow back into yourself,
your true self.
My King! my chosen! my glad care-
less helpmate
In the old time! we shared its pleas-
ant days
Royally, did we not? How brief
they were!
Nor will I deem you less than what
I know
You have it in you to become, for
this
Strange freakish fear,—this passing
brief alarm.
Do I not know the noble steed will
start
Aside, scared lightly by a straw, &
shadow,
A thorn-bush in the way, while the
dull mule
Plods stupidly adown the dizziest
paths?
And oft indeed, such trifles will dis-
may
The finest and most eager spirits,
which yet

Daunt not a duller mind. O love,
 be sure
 Whate'er betide, whether for well or
 ill,
 Thy fate and mine are bound up in
 one skein ;
 Clotho must cut them both insepa-
 rate.
 You dare not leave me—had you
 wings for flight !
 You shall not leave me ! You are
 mine, indeed,
 (As I am yours !) by my strong right
 of grief.
 Not death together, but together
 life !
 Life—life with safe and honorable
 years,
 And power to do with these that
 which we would !
 —His lips comprest—his eye dilates
 —he is saved !
 O, when strong natures into frailer
 ones
 Have struck deep root, if one exalt
 not both,
 Both must drag down and perish !

ÆGISTHUS.

If we should live—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And we shall live.

ÆGISTHUS.

Yet . . . yet—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What ! shrinking still ?
 I'll do the deed. Do not stand off
 from me.

ÆGISTHUS.

Terrible Spirit !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Nay, not terrible,
 Not to thee terrible—O say not so !
 To thee I never have been anything

But a weak, passionate, unhappy
 woman,
 (O woe is me !) and now you fear
 me—

ÆGISTHUS.

No,

But rather worship.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O my heart, my heart,
 It sends up all its anguish in this
 cry—
 Love me a little?

ÆGISTHUS.

What a spell she has !
 To sway the inmost courses of the
 soul !
 My spirit is held up to such a height
 I dare not breathe. How finely sits
 this sorrow
 Upon her, like the garment of a
 God !
 I cannot fathom her. Does the
 same birth
 Bring forth the monster and the
 demigod ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I will not doubt ! All's lost, if love
 be lost,—
 Peace, honor, innocence, — gone,
 gone ! all gone
 And you, too — you, poor baffled
 crownless schemer,
 Whose life my love makes royal,
 clothes in purple,
 Establishes in state, without me,
 answer me,
 What should you do but perish, as is
 fit ?
 O love, you dare not cease to love
 me now !
 We have let the world go by us. We
 have trusted
 To ourselves only : if we fail our-
 selves
 What shall avail us now ? Without
 my love
 What rest for you but universal
 hate,

And Agamemnon's sword? Ah, —
—you love me,
Must love me, better than you ever
loved,—
Love me, I think, as you love life
itself!
Ægisthus! Speak, Ægisthus!

ÆGISTHUS.

O great heart,
I am all yours. Do with me what
you will.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O, if you love me, I have strength
for both.
And you do love me still?

ÆGISTHUS.

O more, thrice more,
Thrice more than wert thou Aphro-
ditë's self
Stept zoned and sandalled from the
Olympian Feasts
Or first revealed among the pink sea-
foam.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Whate'er I am, be sure that I am
that
Which thou hast made me,—noth-
ing of myself.
Once, all unheedful, careless of my-
self,
And wholly ignorant of what I was,
I grew up as a reed some wind will
touch,
And wake to prophecy,—till then all
mute,
And void of melody, — a foolish
weed!
My soul was blind, and all my life
was dark,
And all my heart pined with some
ignorant want.
I moved about, a shadow in the
house,
And felt unwedded though I was a
wife;
And all the men and women which
I saw

Were but as pictures painted on a
wall:
To me they had not either heart, or
brain,
Or lips, or language,—pictures! noth-
ing more.
Then, suddenly, athwart those
lonely hours
Which, day by day dreamed listlessly
away,
Led to the dark and melancholy
tomb,
Thy presence passed and touched
me with a soul.
My life did but begin when I found
thee.
O what a strength was hidden in this
heart!
As, all unvalued, in its cold dark
cave
Under snow hills, some rare and
priceless gem
May sparkle and burn, so in this
life of mine
Love lay shut up. You broke the
rock away,
You lit upon the jewel that it hid,
You plucked it forth,—to wear it,
my Beloved!
To set in the crown of thy dear life!
To embellish fortune! Cast it not
away.
Now call me by the old familiar
names:
Call me again your Queen, as once
you used;
You large-eyed Herë!

ÆGISTHUS.

O, you are a Queen
That should have none but Gods to
rule over!
Make me immortal with one costly
kiss!

VIII. CHORUS. ELECTRA. CLY-
TEMNESTRA. ÆGISTHUS.

CHORUS.

Io! Io! I hear the people shout.

ELECTRA.

See how these two do mutually confer,
Hatching new infamy. Now will he dare,
In his unbounded impudence, to meet
My father's eyes? The hour is nigh
at hand.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O love, be bold! the hour is nigh at hand.

ELECTRA.

Laden with retribution, lingering slow.

ÆGISTHIUS.

A time in travail with some great distress.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Nay, rather safety for the rest of time.

O love! O hate!

ELECTRA.

O vengeance!

ÆGISTHIUS.

O wild chance

If favoring fate—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Despair is more than fate.

CHORUS.

Io Io! The King is on his march.

ÆGISTHIUS.

Did you hear that?

ELECTRA.

The hour is nigh at hand!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Leave me to deal with these. I know the arts
That guide the doubtful purpose of discourse

Through many windings to the appointed goal.
I'll draw them on to such a frame of mind
As best befits our purpose. You, meanwhile,
Scatter vague words among the other crowd,
Least the event, when it is due, fall foul
Of unpropitious natures.

ÆGISTHIUS.

Do you fear
The helpless, blind ill-will of such a crowd?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He only fears mankind who knows them not.
But him I praise not who despises them.

Whence come, Electra?

ELECTRA.

From my father's hearth
To meet him; for the hour is nigh at hand.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

So do our hopes race hotly to one end,
(A noble rivalry!) as who shall first
Embrace this happy fortune. Tarry not.
We too will follow.

ELECTRA.

Justice, O be swift!

IX. CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS
SEMI-CHORUS. HERALD.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A forward child! She's gone. My blood's in her.
Her father's, too, looks out of that proud face.
She is too bold . . . ha, well—Ægisthus? . . . gone!

O fate ! to be a woman ! You great
 Gods,
 Why did you fashion me in this soft
 mould ?
 Give me these lengths of silky hair ?
 These hands
 Too delicately dimpled ! and these
 arms
 Too white, too weak ! yet leave the
 man's heart in me,
 To mar your masterpiece, — that I
 should perish,
 Who else had won renown among my
 peers,
 A man, with men,—perchance a god
 with you,
 Had you but better sexed me, you
 blind Gods !
 But, as for man, all things are fitting
 to him.
 He strikes his fellow 'mid the clang-
 ing shields,
 And leaps among the smoking walls,
 and takes
 Some long-haired virgin wailing at
 the shrines,
 Her brethren having fallen ; and
 you Gods
 Commend him, crown him, grant
 him ample days,
 And dying honor, and an endless
 peace
 Among the deep Elysian asphodels.
 O fate, to be a woman ! To be led
 Dumb, like a poor mule, at a mas-
 ter's will,
 And be a slave, though bred in pal-
 aces,
 And be a fool, though seated with
 the wise,—
 A poor and pitiful fool, as I am
 now,
 Loving and hating my vain life
 away !

CHORUS.

These flowers—we plucked them
 At morning, and took them
 From bright bees that sucked
 them

And warm winds that shook them
 'Neath blue hills that o'erlook
 them.

SEMI-CHORUS.

With the dew of the meadow
 Our rosy warm fingers
 Sparkle yet, and the shadow
 Of the summer-cloud lingers
 In the hair of us singers.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Ere these buds on our altars
 Fade ; ere the forked fire,
 Fed with pure honey, falters
 And fails : louder, higher
 Raise the Pæan.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Draw nigher,
 Stand closer ! First praise we
 The Father of all.
 To him the song raise we.
 Over Heaven's golden wall
 Let it fall ! Let it fall !

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Then Apollo, the king of
 The lyre and the bow ;
 Who taught us to sing of
 The deeds that we know,—
 Deeds well done long ago.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Next, of all the Immortals,
 Athenë's gray eyes ;
 Who sits throned in our portals,
 Ever fair, ever wise.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Neither dare we despise
 To extol the great Herë,

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

And then,
 As is due, shall our song
 Be of those among men
 Who were brave, who were strong,
 Who endured.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Then, the wrong
Of the Phrygian : and Iliion's false
sons :
And Scamander's wild wave
Through the bleak plain that runs.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Then, the death of the brave.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Last, of whom the Gods save
For new honors : of them none
So good or so great
As our chief Agamemnon
The crown of our State.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O friends, true hearts, rejoice with
me ! This day
Shall crown the hope of ten uncer-
tain years !

CHORUS.

For Agamemnon cannot be far off—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He comes—and yet—O Heaven pre-
serve us all !
My heart is weak—there's One he
brings not back ;
Who went with him ; who will not
come again ;
Whom we shall never see !—

CHORUS.

O Queen, for whom,
Lamenting thus, is your great heart
cast down ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The earliest loved—the early lost !
my child—

CHORUS.

Iphigenia ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

She—my child—

CHORUS.

—Alas

That was a terrible necessity !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Was it necessity ? O pardon, friends,
But in the dark, unsolaced solitude,
Wild thoughts come to me, and per-
plex my heart.
This, which you call a dread neces-
sity,
Was it a murder or a sacrifice ?

CHORUS.

It was a God that did decree the
death.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

'Tis through the heart the Gods do
speak to us.
High instincts are the oracles of
heaven.
Did ever heart,—did ever God, be-
fore,
Suggest such foul infanticidal lie ?

CHORUS.

Be comforted ! The universal good
Neded this single, individual loss.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Can all men's good be helped by one
man's crime ?

CHORUS.

He loosed the Greeks from Aulis by
that deed.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O casual argument ! Who gave the
Greeks
Such bloody claim upon a virgin's
life ?
Shall the pure bleed to purge impu-
rity ?

A hundred Helens were not worth that death !
 What ! had the manhood of combin'd Greece,
 Whose boast was in its untamed strength, no help
 Better than the spilt blood of one poor girl ?
 Or, if it were of need that blood should flow
 What God ordained him executioner ?
 Was it for him the armament was planned ?
 For him that angry Greece was leagu'd in war ?
 For him, or Menelaus, was this done ?
 Was the cause his, or Menelaus' cause ?
 Was he less sire than Menelaus was ?
 He, too, had children ; did he murder them ?
 O, was it manlike ? was it human, even ?

CHORUS.

Alas ! alas ! it was an evil thing.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O friends, if any one among you all,
 If any be a mother, bear with me !
 She was my earliest born, my best beloved.
 The painful labor of that perilous birth
 That gave her life did almost take my own.
 He had no pain. He did not bring her forth.
 How should he, therefore, love her as I loved ?

CHORUS.

Ai ! ai ! alas ! Our tears run down with yours.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O, who shall say with what delicious tears,
 With what ineffable tenderness, while he

Took his blithe pastime on the windy plain,
 Among the ringing camps, and neighing steeds,
 First of his glad compeers, I sat apart,
 Silent, within the solitary house :
 Rocking the little child upon my breast ;
 And soothed its soft eyes into sleep with song !

CHORUS.

Ai ! ai ! unhappy, sad, unchilded one !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Or, when I taught, from inarticulate sounds,
 The little, lispng lips, to breathe his name.
 Now they will never breathe that name again !

CHORUS.

Alas ! for Hades has not any hope,
 Since Thracian women lopped the tuneful head
 Of Orpheus, and Heracleus is no more.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Or, spread in prayer, the helpless, infant hands,
 That they, too, might invoke the Gods for him.
 Alas, who now invokes the Gods for her ?
 Unwedded, hapless, gone to glut the womb
 Of dark, untimely Orcus !

CHORUS.

Ai ! alas !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I would have died, if that could be, for her !
 When life is half-way set to feeble eld,

A little space,
 The speechless father turned. No
 word was said,
 He wrapped his mantle close about
 his face,
 In his dumb grief, without a moan.
 The lopping axe was lifted overhead.
 Then, suddenly,
 There sounded a strange motion of
 the sea,
 Booming far inland ; and above the
 east
 A ragged cloud rose slowly, and in-
 creased.
 Not one line in the horoscope of
 Time
 Is perfect. O, what falling off is
 this,
 When some grand soul, that else had
 been sublime,
 Falls unawares amiss,
 And stoops its crested strength to
 sudden crime !

So gracious a thing is it, and sweet,
 In life's clear centre one true man to
 see,
 That holds strong nature in a wise
 control ;
 Throbbing out, all round, the heat
 Of a large and liberal soul.
 No shadow, simulating life,
 But pulses warm with human nature,
 In a soul of godlike stature ;
 Heart and brain, all rich and rife
 With noble instincts ; strong to meet
 Time calmly, in his purposed place.
 Sound through and through, and all
 complete ;
 Exalting what is low and base ;
 Enlarging what is narrow and small ;
 He stamps his character on all,
 And with his grand identity
 Fills up Creation's eye.
 He will not dream the aimless years
 away
 In blank delay,
 But makes eternity of to-day,
 And reaps the full-eared time. For
 him
 Nature her affluent horn doth brim,

To strew with fruit and flowers his
 way—
 Fruits ripe and flowers gay.

The clear soul in his earnest eyes
 Looks through and through all
 plaited lies,
 Time shall not rob him of his youth,
 Nor narrow his large sympathies.
 He is not true, he is a truth,
 And such a truth as never dies.
 Who knows his nature, feels his
 right,
 And, toiling, toils for his delight ;
 Not as slaves toil : where'er he goes,
 The desert blossoms with the rose.
 He trusts himself in scorn of doubt,
 And lets orb'd purpose widen out.
 The world works with him ; all men
 see
 Some part of them fulfilled in him ;
 His memory never shall grow dim ;
 He holds the heaven and earth in
 fee,
 Not following that, fulfilling this,
 He is immortal, for he is !

O weep ! weep ! weep !
 Weep for the young that die ;
 As it were pale flowers that wither
 under
 The smiting sun, and fall asunder,
 Before the dews on the grass are dry,
 Or the tender twilight is out of the
 sky,
 Or the lilies have fallen asleep ;
 Or ships by a wanton wind cut short
 Are wrecked in sight of the placid
 port
 Sinking strangely, and suddenly—
 Sadly, and strangely, and suddenly—
 Into the black Plutonian deep.
 O weep ! weep ! weep !
 Weep, and bow the head,
 For those whose sun is set at noon ;
 Whose night is dark, without a moon ;
 Whose aim of life is sped
 Beyond pursuing woes,
 And the arrow of angry foes,
 To the darkness that no man knows—
 The darkness among the dead.

Let us mourn, and bow the head,
 And lift up the voice, and weep
 For the early dead !
 For the early dead we may bow the
 head,
 And strike the breast, and weep ;
 But, O, what shall be said
 For the living sorrow ?
 For the living sorrow our grief—
 Dumb grief—draws no relief
 From tears, nor yet may borrow
 Solace from sound or speech ;—
 For the living sorrow
 That heaps to-morrow upon to-mor-
 row
 In piled-up pain, beyond Hope's
 reach !
 It is well that we mourn for the early
 dead,
 Strike the breast, and bow the head ;
 For the sorrow for these may be sung,
 or said,
 And the chaplets be woven for the
 fallen head,
 And the urns to the stately tombs be
 led,
 And love from their memory may
 be fed,
 And song may ennoble the anguish ;
 But, O, for the living sorrow,—
 For the living sorrow what hopes re-
 main ?
 For the prisoned, pining, passionate
 pain,
 That is doomed forever to languish,
 And to languish forever in vain,
 For the want of the words that may
 bestead
 The hunger that out of loss is bred.
 O friends, for the living sorrow—
 For the living sorrow—
 For the living sorrow what shall be
 said ?

XI. A PHOCIAN. CHORUS.
 SEMI-CHORUS.

PHOCIAN.

O noble strangers, if indeed you be
 Such as you seem, of Argos, and the
 land

That the unconquer'd Agamemnon
 rules.
 Tell me is this the palace, these the
 roofs
 Of the Atreidæ, famed in ancient
 song ?

CHORUS.

Not without truth you name the
 neighborhood,
 Standing before the threshold, and
 the doors
 Of Pelops, and upon the Argive soil.
 That which you see above the Agora
 Is the old fane of the Lycæan God,
 And this the house of Agamemnon's
 queen.
 But whence art thou ? For if thy
 dusty locks,
 And those soiled sandals show with
 aught of truth,
 Thou shouldst be come from far.

PHOCIAN.

And am so, friends,
 But, by Heaven's favor, here my
 journey ends.

CHORUS.

Whence, then, thy way ?

PHOCIAN.

From Phocis ; charged with gifts
 For Agamemnon, and with messages
 From Strophius, and the sister of
 your king.
 Our watchmen saw the beacon on
 the hills,
 And leaped for joy. Say, is the king
 yet come ?

CHORUS.

He comes this way ; stand by, I hear
 them shout ;
 Here shall you meet him, as he
 mounts the hill.

PHOCIAN.

Now blest be all the Gods, from
 Father Zeus,

And memory more than hope, and
 to dim eyes
 The gorgeous tapestry of existence
 shows
 Mothed, fingered, frayed, and bare,
 'twere not so hard
 To fling away this ravelled skein of
 life,
 Which else, a little later, Fate had
 cut.
 And who would sorrow for the o'er-
 blown rose
 Sharp winter strews about its own
 bleak thorns?
 But, cropped before the time, to fall
 so young!
 And wither in the gloomy crown of
 Dis!
 Never to look upon the blessed sun—

CHORUS.

Ai! ai! alimon! woe is me, this
 grief
 Strikes pity paralyzed. All words
 are weak!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And I had dreamed such splendid
 dreams for her!
 Who would not so for Agamemnon's
 child?
 For we had hoped that she, too, in
 her time
 Would be the mother of heroic
 men!

CHORUS.

There rises in my heart an awful
 fear,
 Lest from these evils darker evils
 come;
 For heaven exacts, for wrong, the
 uttermost tear,
 And death hath language after life
 is dumb!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

It works! it works!

CHORUS.

Look, some one comes this way.

HERALD.

O Honor of the House of Tantalus!
 The king's wheels echo in the
 brazen gates.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Our heart is half-way there, to we-
 come him.
 How looks he? Well? And all
 our long-lost friends—
 Their faces grow before me. Lead
 the way
 Where we may meet them. All our
 haste seems slow.

CHORUS.

Would that he brought his dead
 child back with him!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Now let him come. The mischief
 works apace!

X. CHORUS.

CHORUS.

The winds were lulled in Aulis;
 and the day,
 Down-sloped, was loitering to the
 lazy west.
 There was no motion of the glassy
 bay,
 But all things by a heavy light
 oppress.
 Windless, cut off from the destined
 way,—
 Dark shrouds, distinct against the
 lurid hull,—
 Dark ropes hung useless, loose, from
 mast to hull.—
 The black ships lay abreast.
 Not any cloud would cross the
 brooding skies.
 The distant sea boomed faintly.
 Nothing more.
 They walked about upon the yellow
 shore;

Or, lying listless, huddled groups
 supine,
 With faces turned toward the flat
 sea-spine,
 They planned the Phrygian battle
 o'er and o'er ;
 Till each grew sullen, and would
 talk no more,
 But sat, dumb-dreaming. Then
 would some one rise,
 And look toward the hollow hulls,
 with haggard, hopeless eyes—
 Wild eyes—and, crowding round,
 yet wilder eyes—
 And gaping, languid lips ;
 And everywhere that men could see,
 About the black, black ships,
 Was nothing but the deep-red sea ;
 The deep-red shore ;
 The deep-red skies ;
 The deep-red silence, thick with
 thirsty sighs ;
 And daylight, dying slowly. Noth-
 ing more.
 The tall masts stood upright ;
 And not a sail above the burnished
 prows ;
 The languid sea, like one outwearied
 quite,
 Shrank, dying inward into hollow
 shores,
 And breathless harbors, under sandy
 bars ;
 And, one by one, down tracts of
 quivering blue,
 The singed and sultry stars
 Looked from the inmost heaven,
 far, faint, and few,
 While, all below, the sick and steaming
 brine
 The spilled-out sunset did incarna-
 dine.
 At last one broke the silenee ; and a
 word
 Was lisped and buzzed about, from
 mouth to mouth ;
 Pale faces grew more pale ; wild
 whispers stirred ;
 And men, with moody, murmuring
 lips, conferred

In ominous tones, from shaggy
 beards uncouth :
 As though some wind had broken
 from the blurred
 And blazing prison of the stagnant
 drouth,
 And stirred the salt sea in the stifled
 south.
 The long-robed priests stood round ;
 and, in the gloom,
 Under black brows, their bright and
 greedy eyes,
 Shone deathfully ; there was a
 sound of sighs,
 Thick-sobbed from choking throats
 among the crowd.
 That, whispering, gathered close,
 with dark heads bowed ;
 But no man lifted up his voice aloud,
 For heavy hung o'er all the helpless
 sense of doom.

Then, after solemn prayer,
 The father bade the attendants, ten-
 derly
 Lift her upon the lurid altar-stone.
 There was no hope in any face ;
 each eye
 Swan tearful, that her own did gaze
 upon.
 They bound her helpless hands with
 mournful care ;
 And looped up her long hair,
 That hung about her, like an amber
 shower,
 Mixed with the saffron robe, and
 falling lower,
 Down from her bare and cold white
 shoulder flung.
 Upon the heaving breast the pale
 cheek hung,
 Suffused with that wild light that
 rolled among
 The pausing crowd, out of the crim-
 son drouth.
 They held hot hands upon her
 pleading mouth ;
 And stifled on faint lips the natural
 cry.
 Back from the altar-stone,
 Slow-moving in his fixed place

Who reigns o'er windy Cæta, far
away,
To King Apollo, with the golden
horns.

CHORUS.

Look how they cling about him !
Far and near
The town breaks loose, and follows
after,

Crowding up the ringing ways.
The boy forgets to watch the steer ;
The grazing steer forgets to graze ;
The shepherd leaves the herd ;
The priest will leave the fane ;
The deep heart of the land is stirred
To sunny tears, and tearful laughter,
To look into his face again.
Burst, burst the brazen gates !
Throw open the hearths, and follow !
Let the shouts of the youths go up
to Apollo,

Lord of the graceful quiver :
Till the tingling sky dilates—
Dilates, and palpitates ;
And, Pæan Pæan ! the virgins
sing ;

Pæan ! Pæan ! the king ! the king !
Laden with spoils from Phrygia !
Io ! Io ! Io ! they sing
Till the pillars of Olympus ring :
Io ! to Queen Ortygia,
Whose double torch shall burn for-
ever ?

But thou, O Lord of the graceful
quiver,

Bid, bid thy Pythian splendor halt ;
Where'er he beams, surpassing sight ;
Or on some ocean isthmus bent,
Or wheeled from the dark continent,
Half-way down Heaven's rosy vault,
Toward the dewy cone of night.
Let not the breathless air grow dim,
Until the whole land look at him !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Stand back !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Will he come this way ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

No ; by us.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Gods, what a crowd !

SEMI-CHORUS.

How firm the old men walk !

SEMI-CHORUS.

There goes the king. I know him
by his beard.

SEMI-CHORUS.

And I, too, by the manner of his
gait.
That Godlike spirit lifts him from
the earth.

SEMI-CHORUS.

How gray he looks !

SEMI-CHORUS.

His cheek is seamed with scars.

SEMI-CHORUS.

What a bull's front !

SEMI-CHORUS.

He stands up like a tower.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Ay, like some moving tower of
armed men,
That carries conquest under city-
walls.

SEMI-CHORUS.

He lifts his sublime head, and in his
port
Bears eminent authority.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Behold,

His spear shows like the spindle of a
Fate !

SEMI-CHORUS.

O, what an arm !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Most fit for such a sword ;
Look at that sword.

SEMI-CHORUS.

What shoulders !

SEMI-CHORUS.

What a throat !

SEMI-CHORUS.

What are these bearing ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Urns.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Alas ! alas !

SEMI-CHORUS.

O friends, look here ! how are the
mighty men
Shrunk up into a little vase of earth,
A child might lift. Sheathed each
in brazen plates,
They went so heavy, they come
back so light,
Sheathed, each one, in the brazen
urn of death !

SEMI-CHORUS.

With what a stateliness he moves
along !

SEMI-CHORUS.

See, how they touch his skirt, and
grasp his hand !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Is that the queen ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Ay, how she matches him !
With what grand eyes she looks up,
full in his !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Say, what are these !

SEMI-CHORUS.

O Phrygians ! how they walk !
The only sad man in the crowd, I
think.

SEMI-CHORUS.

But who is this, that with such
scornful brows,
And looks averted, walks among the
rest ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

I know not, but some Phrygian wo-
man, sure.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Her heavy-fallen hair down her
white neck
(A dying sunbeam tangled in each
tress)
All its neglected beauty pours one
way.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Her looks bend ever on the alien
ground,
As though the stones of Troy were
in her path.
And in the pained paleness of her
brow
Sorrow hath made a regal tenement.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Here comes Electra ; young Orestes,
too ;
See how he emulates his father's
stride !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look at Ægisthus, where he walks
apart,
And bites his lip.

SEMI-CHORUS.

I oft have seen him so
When something chafes him in his
bitter moods.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Peace, here they come !

CHORUS.

Io ! Io ! The King !

XII. AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, ÆGISTHUS, ELECTRA, ORESTES, CASSANDRA, a Phocian, Chorus, Semi-Chorus, and others in the procession.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O blazing sun, that in thy skyey
tower,
Pauseth to see one kingly as thy-
self,
Lend all thy brightest beams to light
his head,
And guide our gladness ! Friends,
behold the King !
Nor hath Ætolian Jove, the arbiter
Of conquests, well disposed the issues
here ;
For every night that brought not
news from Troy
Heaped fear on fear, as waves suc-
ceed to waves,
When Northern blasts blow white
the Cretan main,—
Knowing that thou, far off, from
toil to toil
Climbest, uncertain. Unto such an
one
His children, and young offspring
of the house

Are as a field, which he, the hus-
bandman,

Owning far off does only look upon
At seedtime once, nor then till
harvest comes ;

And his sad wife must wet with
nightly tears

Unsolaced pillows, fearing for his
fate.

To these how welcome, then, his glad
return,

When he, as thou, comes heavy with
the weight

Of great achievements, and the spoils
of time.

AGAMEMNON.

Enough ! enough ! we weigh you at
full worth,

And hold you dear, whose gladness
equals yours ;

But women ever err by over-talk.

Silence to women, as the beard to
men,

Brings honor ; and plain truth is
hurt, not helped

By many words. To each his
separate sphere

The Gods allot. To me the sound-
ing camp,

Steeds, and the oaken spear ; to you
the hearth,

Children, and household duties of
the loom.

'Tis man's to win an honorable
name ;

Woman's to keep it honorable still.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

(O beast ! O weakness of this wo-
manhood !

To let these pompous male things
strut in our eyes,

And in their lordship lap themselves
secure,

Because the lots in life are fallen to
them.

Am I less heart and head, less blood
and brain,

Less force and feeling, pulse and
passion—I—

Than this self-worshipper—a lie all
through?)
Forgive if joy too long unloose our
lips,
Silent so long: your words fall on
my soul
As rain on thirsty lands, that feeds
the dearth
With blessed nourishment. My
whole heart hears.
You speaking thus, I would be
silent ever.

AGAMEMNON.

Who is this man?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A Phocian, by his look.

PHOCIAN.

O King, from Strophius, and your
sister's court,
Despatched with this sealed tablet,
and with gifts,
Though both express, so says my
royal Head,
But poorly the rich welcome they
intend.
Will you see this?—and these?

AGAMEMNON.

Anon! anon!

We'll look at them within. O child,
thine eyes
Look warmer welcome than all words
express.
Thou art mine own child by that
royal brow.
Nature hath marked thee mine.

ELECTRA.

O Father!

AGAMEMNON.

Come!

And our Orestes! He is nobly
grown;
He shall do great deeds when our
own are dim.
So shall men come to say "the
father's sword

In the son's hands hath hewn out
nobler fame."
Think of it, little one! where is our
cousin?

ÆGISTHUS.

Here! And the keys of the
Acropolis?

AGAMEMNON.

O well! this dust and heat are over-
much.
And, cousin, you look pale. Anon!
anon!
Speak to us by and by. Let business
wait.
Is our house ordered? we will take
the bath.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Will you withn? where all is ordered
fair
Befitting state: cool chambers,
marble-floored
Or piled with blazing carpets, scented
rare
With the sweet spirit of each odor-
ous gum
In dim, delicious, amorous mists
about
The purple-paven, silver-sided bath,
Deep, flashing, pure.

AGAMEMNON.

Look to our captives then.
I charge you chiefly with this woman
here,
Cassandra, the mad prophetess of
Troy.
See that you chafe her not in her
wild moods.

XIII. CLYTEMNESTRA. ÆGISTHUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Linger not!

ÆGISTHUS.

What? you will to-day—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

—This hour.

ÆGISTHUS.

O, if some chance mar all !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

We'll make chance sure.
Doubt is the doomsman of self-judged
disgrace :
But every chance brings safety to
self-help.

ÆGISTHUS.

Ay, but the means—the time—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

—Fulfil themselves.

O most irresolute heart ! is this a
time
When through the awful pause of
life, distinct,
The sounding shears of Fate slope
near, to stand
Meek, like tame wethers, and be
shorn ? How say you,
The blithe wind up, and the broad
sea before him,
Who would crouch all day long be-
side the mast
Counting the surges beat his idle
helm,
Because between him and the golden
isles
The shadow of a passing storm might
hang ?
Danger, being pregnant, doth beget
resolve.

ÆGISTHUS.

Thou wert not born to fail. Give
me thy hand.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Take it.

ÆGISTHUS.

It does not tremble.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O be strong !

The future hangs upon the die we
cast :

Fortune plays high for us—

ÆGISTHUS.

Gods grant she win.



XIV. CHORUS. SEMI-CHORUS
CASSANDRA.

CHORUS.

O thou that dost with globéd glory
Sweep the dark world at noon of
night,
Or among snowy summits, wild and
hoary,
Or through the mighty silences
Of immemorial seas,
With all the stars behind thee flying
white,
O take with thee, where'er
Thou wanderest, ancient Care,
And hide her in some interlunar
haunt ;
Where but the wild bird's chaunt
At night, through rocky ridges gaunt,
Or moanings of some homeless sea
may find her
There, Goddess, bar. and bind her ;
Where she may pine, but wander not ;
Loathe her haunts, but leave them
not ;
Wail and rave to the wind and wave
That hear, yet understand her not ;
And curse her chains, yet cleave
them not ;
And hate her lot, yet help it not.
Or let her rove with Gods undone
Who dwell below the setting sun,
And the sad western hours
That burn in fiery bowers ;
Or in Amphitritë's grot
Where the vexéd tides unite,
And the spent wind, howling, breaks
O'er sullen oceans out of sight
Among sea-snakes, that the white
moon wakes

Till they shake themselves into
diamond flakes.

Coil and twine in the glittering brine
And swing themselves in the long
moonshine ;

Or by wild shores hoarsely rage,
And moan, and vent her spite,
In some inhospitable harborage
Of Thracian waters, white.
There let her grieve, and grieve, and
hold her breath

Until she hate herself to death.
I seem with rapture lifted higher,
Like one in mystic trance.

O Pan ! Pan ! Pan !
First friend of man,
And founder of Heaven's choir,
Come thou from old Cyllenë, and in-
spire

The Gnosian, and Nysæan dance !
Come thou, too, Delian king,
From the blue Ægean sea,
And Mycone's yellow coast :
Give my spirit such a wing
As there the foolish Icarus lost,
That she may soar above the cope
Of this high pinnacle of gladness,
And dizzy height of hope ;
And there, beyond all reach of sad-
ness,

May tune my lips to sing
Great Pæans, full and free,
Till the whole world ring
With such heart-melting madness
As bards are taught by thee !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look to the sad Cassandra, how she
stands !

SEMI-CHORUS.

She turns not from the wringing of
her hands.

SEMI-CHORUS.

What is she doing ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look, her lips are moved.

SEMI-CHORUS.

And yet their motion shapes not any
sound.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Speak to her.

SEMI-CHORUS.

She will heed not.

SEMI-CHORUS.

But yet speak.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Unhappy woman, cease a little while
From mourning. Recognize the
work of Heaven.

Troy smoulders. Think not of it.
Let the past

Be buried in the past. Tears mend
it not.

Fate may be kindlier yet than she
appears.

SEMI-CHORUS.

She does not answer.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Call to her again.

SEMI-CHORUS.

O break this scornful silence ! Hear
us speak.

We would console you.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look, how she is moved !

SEMI-CHORUS.

O speak ! the heart's hurt oft is
helped by words.

CASSANDRA.

O Itys ! Itys ! Itys !

SEMI-CHORUS.

What a shriek !

She takes the language of the night-
ingale,

Unhappy lird ! that mourns her
perished form,
And leans her breast against a thorn,
all night.

CASSANDRA.

The bull is in the shambler.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Listen, friends !
She mutters something to herself.

CASSANDRA.

Alas !
Did any name Apollo ? woe is me !

SEMI-CHORUS.

She calls upon the God.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Unhappy one,
What sorrow strikes thee with be-
wildermment ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Now she is mute again.

CHORUS.

A Stygian cold
Creeps through my limbs, and
loosens every joint.
The hot blood freezes in its arteries,
And stagnates round the region of
the heart.
A cloud comes up from sooty Ache-
ron,
And clothes mine eyelids
With infernal night.
My hair stands up.
What supernatural awe
Shoots, shrivelling through me,
To the marrow and bone ?
O dread and wise Prophetic Powers,
Whose strong-compelling law
Doth hold in awe
The laboring hours,
Your intervention I invoke,

My soul from this wild doubt to
save ;
Whether you have
Your dwelling in some dark, oracu-
lar cave,
Or solemn, sacred oak ;
Or in Dodona's ancient, honored
beech,
Whose mystic boughs above
Sat the wise dove ;
Or if the tuneful voice of old
Awake in Delos, to unfold
Dark wisdom in ambiguous speech.
Upon the verge of strange despair
My heart grows dizzy. Now I seem
Like one that dreams some ghastly
dream,
And cannot cast away his care,
But harrows all the haggard air
With his hard breath. Above, be-
neath,
The empty silence seems to team
With apprehension. O declare
What hidden thing doth Fate pre-
pare,
What hidden, horrible thing doth
Fate prepare ?
For of some hidden grief my heart
seems half aware.

XV. CLYTEMNESTRA. CAS-
SANDRA. CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

One blow makes all sure. Ay, but
then,—beyond ?
I cannot trammel up the future
thus,
And so forecast the time, as with
one blow
To break the hundred Hydra-heads
of Chance.
Beyond—beyond I dare not look, for
who,
If first he scanned the space, would
leap the gulf ?
One blow secures the moment. O,
but he . .

Ay, there it lies ! I dread lest my
 love, being
 So much the stronger, scare his own
 to death ;
 As what they comprehended not,
 men abhor.
 He has a wavering nature, easily
 Unpoised ; and trembling ever on
 extremes.
 O, what if terror outweigh love, and
 love,
 Having defiled his countenance, take
 part
 Against himself, self-loathed, a
 fallen God ?
 Ah, his was never yet the loving
 soul,
 But rather that which lets itself be
 loved ;
 As some loose lily leans upon a
 lake,
 Letting the lymph reflect it, as it
 will,
 Still idly swayed, whichever way the
 stream
 Stirs the green tangles of the water
 moss.
 The flower of his love never bloomed
 upright,
 But a sweet parasite, that loved to
 lean
 On stronger natures, winning
 strength from them,—
 Not such a flower as whose delirious
 cup
 Maddens the bee, and never can give
 forth
 Enough of fragrance, yet is ever
 sweet.
 Yet which is sweetest,—to receive or
 give ?
 Sweet to receive, and sweet to give,
 in love !
 When one is never sated that re-
 ceives,
 Nor ever all exhausted one that
 gives.
 I think I love him more, that I re-
 semble
 So little aught that pleases me in
 him.

Perchance, if I dared question this
 dark heart,
 'Tis not for him, but for myself in
 him,
 For that which is my softer self in
 him,—
 I have done this, and this,—and
 shall do more :
 Hoped, wept, dared wildly, and will
 overcome !
 Does he not need me ? It is sweet
 to think
 That I am all to him, whate'er I be
 To others ; and to one,—little, I
 know !
 But to him, all things,—sceptre,
 sword, and crown.
 For who would live, but to be loved
 by some one ?
 Be fair, but to give beauty to an-
 other ?
 Or wise, but to instruct some sweet
 desire ?
 Or strong, but that thereby love may
 rejoice !
 Or who for crime's sake would be
 criminal ?
 And yet for love's sake would not
 dare wild deeds ?
 A mutual necessity, one fear,
 One hope, and the strange posture of
 the time
 Unite us now ;—but this need over-
 past,
 O, if, 'twixt his embrace and mine,
 there rise
 The reflex of a murdered head ! and
 he,
 Remembering the crime, remember
 not
 It was for him that I am criminal,
 But rather hate me for the part he
 took—
 Against his soul, as he will say—in
 this ?—
 I will not think it. Upon this wild
 venture,
 Freight with love's last wealthiest
 merchandise,
 My heart sets forth. To-morrow I
 shall wake

A beggar, as it may be, or thrice rich.

As one who plucks his last gem from his crown

(Some pearl for which, in youth, he bartered states)

And, sacrificing with an anxious heart,

Toward night puts seaward in a little bark

For lands reported far beyond the sun,

Trusting to win back kingdoms, or there drown—

So I—and with like perilous endeavor!

O, but I think I could implore the Gods

More fervently than ever, in my youth,

I prayed that help of Heaven I needed not,

And lifted innocent hands to their great sky.

So much to loose . . . so much to gain . . . so much . . .

I dare not think how . . .

Ha, the Phrygian slave! He dares to bring his mistress to the hearth!

She looks unhappy. I will speak to her.

Perchance her hatred may approve my own,

And help me in the work I am about.

'Twere well to sound her.

Be not so cast down, Unhappy stranger! Fear no jealous hand.

In sorrow I, too, am not all untried. Our fortunes are not so dissimilar,

Slaves both—and of one master.

Nay, approach. Is my voice harsh in its appeal to thee?

If so, believe me, it belies my heart. A woman speaks to thee.

What, silent still? O, look not on me with such sullen eyes,

There is no accusation in my own. Rather on him that brought thee,

than on thee,

Our scorn is settled. I would help thee. Come!

Mute still?

I know that shame is ever dumb, And ever weak; but here is no reproach.

Listen! Thy fate is given to thy hands.

Art thou a woman, and dost scorn contempt?

Art thou a captive, and dost loathe these bonds?

Art thou courageous, as men call thy race?

Or, helpless art thou, and wouldst overcome?

If so,—look up! For there is hope for thee.

Give me thy hand—

CASSANDRA.

Pal! there is blood on it!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What is she raving of?

CASSANDRA.

The place, from old, Is evil.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, there is a sickness, here, That needs the knife.

CASSANDRA.

O, horrible! blood! blood!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I see you are a Phrygian to the bone!

Coward and slave! be so forevermore!

CASSANDRA.

Apollo! O Apollo! O blood! blood! The whole place swims with it!

The slippery steps

Steam with the fumes ! The rank
air smells of blood !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Heed her not ! for she knows not
what she says.
This is some falling sickness of the
soul.
Her fever frights itself.

CASSANDRA.

It reeks ! it reeks !
It smokes ! it stifles ! blood ! blood,
everywhere !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

See, he hath brought this mad
woman from Troy,
To shame our honor, and insult our
care.
Look to her, friends, my hands have
other work !

CHORUS.

Alas ! the House of Tantalus is
doomed !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The King sleeps—like an infant.
His huge strength
Holds slumber thrice as close as
other men.
How well he sleeps ! Make garlands
for the Gods.
I go to watch the couch. Cull every
flower,
And honor all the tutelary fanes
With sacrifice as ample as our joy,
Lest some one say we reverence not
the Gods !

CHORUS.

O dooméd House and race !
O toilsome, toilsome horsemanship
Of Pelops ; that ill omen brought
to us !
For since the drownéd Myrtilus
Did from his golden chariot slip

To his last sleep, below the deep,
Nothing of sad calamitous disgrace
Hath angry Heaven ceased to heap
On this unhappy House of Tan-
talus.

Not only upon sacred leaves of old,
Preserved in many a guarded, mys-
tic fold,

But sometimes, too, enrolled
On tablets fair
Of stone or brass, with quaint and
curious care,

In characters of gold,
And many an iron-bound, melan-
choly book,

The wisdom of the wise is writ ;
And hardly shall a man,
For all he can,
By painful, slow degrees,
And nightly reveries,
Of long, laborious thought, grow
learned in these.

But who, that reads a woman's wily
look,
Shall say what evil hides, and lurks
in it ?

Or fathom her false wit ?
For by a woman fell the man
Who did Nemæa's pest destroy,
And the brinded Hydra slew,
And many other wonders wrought.
By a woman, fated Troy
Was overset, and fell to naught.
Royal Amphiaræus, too,
All his wisdom could not free
From his false Eriphyle,
Whom a golden necklace bought,—
So has it been, and so shall it be,
Ever since the world began !

O woman, woman, of what othe
earth
Hath dædal Nature moulded thee ?
Thou art not of our clay compact,
Not of our common clay ;—
But when the painful world in labor
lay—

Labor long—and agony,
In her heaving throes distract,
And vex with angry Heaven's red
ire,

Nature, kneading snow and fire,
 In thy mystic being pent
 Each contrary element.
 Life and death within thee blent :
 All despair and all desire :
 There to mingle and ferment.
 While, mad midwives, at thy birth,
 Furies mixt with Sirens bent,
 inter-wreathing snakes and smiles,—
 fairest dreams and falsest guiles.

Such a splendid mischief thou !
 With thy light of languid eyes ;
 And thy bosom of pure snow :
 And thine heart of fire below,
 Whose red light doth come and go -
 Ever o'er thy changeful cheek
 When love-whispers tremble weak :
 The warm lips and pensive sighs,
 That the breathless spirit bow :
 And the heavenward life that lies
 In the still serenities
 Of thy snowy, airy brow,—
 Thine ethereal airy brow.
 Such a splendid mischief, thou !
 What are all thy witcheries ?
 All thine evil beauty ? All
 Thy soft looks, and subtle smiles ?
 Tangled tresses ? Mad caresses ?
 Tenderness ? Tears and kisses ?
 And the long look, between whiles,
 That the helpless heart beguiles,
 Tranced in such a subtle thrall ?
 What are all thy sighs and smiles ?
 Fairest dreams and falsest guiles !
 Hoofs to horses, teeth to lions,
 Horns to bulls, and speed to hares,
 To the fish to glide through waters,
 To the bird to glide through airs,
 Nature gave : to men gave courage,
 And the use of brazen spears.
 What was left to give to woman,
 All her gifts thus given : Ah,
 tears,
 Smiles, and kisses, whispers,
 glances,
 Only these ; and merely beauty.
 On her archéd brows unfurled.
 And with these she shatters lances,
 All unarmed binds armed Duty,
 And in triumph drags the world !

XVI. SEMI-CHORUS. CHORUS.
 CASSANDRA. AGAMEMNON.
 CLYTEMNESTRA. ÆGIS
 THUS.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Break off, break off ! It seems I
 heard a cry.

CHORUS.

Surely one called within the house.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Stand by.

CHORUS.

The Prophetess is troubled. Look,
 her eye
 Rolls fearfully.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Now all is hush once more.

CHORUS.

I hear the feet of some one at the
 door.

AGAMEMNON (*within*).

Murderess ! oh, oh !

SEMI-CHORUS.

The house is filled with shrieks.

CHORUS.

The sound deceives or that was the
 King's voice.

SEMI-CHORUS.

The voice of Agamemnon !

AGAMEMNON (*within*).

Ai ! ai ! ai !

CASSANDRA.

The bull is in the toils.

AGAMEMNON (*within*).

I will not die !

ÆGISTHUS (*within*).

O Zeus ! he will escape.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*within*).

He has it.

AGAMEMNON (*within*).

Ai ! ai !

CHORUS.

Some hideous deed is being done
within.

Burst in the doors !

SEMI-CHORUS.

I cannot open them.
Barred, barred within !

CASSANDRA.

The axe is at the bull.

CHORUS.

Call the elders.

SEMI-CHORUS.

And the People. O Argives ! Ar-
gives !
Alinon ! Alinon !

CHORUS.

You to the Agora.

SEMI-CHORUS.

To the temples we.

CHORUS.

Hearken, O maidens !

SEMI-CHORUS.

This way.

CHORUS.

That way.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Quick ! quick !

CASSANDRA.

Seal my sight, O Apollo ! O Apollo !

CHORUS.

To the Agora :

SEMI-CHORUS.

To the temples !

CHORUS.

Haste ! haste !

AGAMEMNON (*within*).

Stabbed, oh !

CHORUS.

To late !

CASSANDRA.

The bull is bellowing.

ÆGISTHUS (*within*).

Thrust there again.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*within*).

One blow has done it all.

ÆGISTHUS (*within*).

Is it quite through ?

CLYTEMNESTRA (*within*).

He will not move again.

SEMI-CHORUS.

O Heaven and Earth ! My heart
stands still with awe !
Where will this murder end ?

CHORUS.

Hold ! some one comes !

XVII. ELECTRA. ORESTES.
CHORUS. A PHOCIAN.

ELECTRA (*leading* ORESTES).

Save us ! save him—Orestes !

CHORUS.

What has fallen ?

ELECTRA.

An evil thing. O, we are fatherless !

CHORUS.

Ill-starred Electra ! But how fell
this chance ?

ELECTRA.

Here is no time for words,—scarce
time for flight.

When from his royal bath the King;
would rise,—

That devilish woman, lying long in
lurk,

Behind him crept, with stealthy feet
unheard,

And flung o'er all his limbs a subtle
web.

Caught in the craft of whose con-
triv'd folds,

Stumbling, he fell. Ægisthus seized
a sword ;

But halted, half irresolute to strike.

My father, like a lion in the toils,
Upheaved his head, and, writhing,

roared with wrath,
And angry shame at this infernal
snare.

Almost he rent the blinding nets
atwain.

But Clytemnestra on him flung her-
self,

And caught the steel, and smit him
through the ribs.

He slipped, and reeled. She drove
the weapon through,

Piercing the heart !

CHORUS.

O woe ! what tale is this ?

ELECTRA.

I, too, with him, had died, but for
this child,

And that high vengeance which is
yet to be.

CHORUS.

Alas ! then Agamemnon is no more.
Who stood, but now, amongst us,

full of life,

Crowned with achieving years ! The
roof and cope

Of honor, fallen ! Where shall we
lift our eyes ?

Where set renown ? Where garner
up our hopes ?

All worth is dying out. The land is
dark,

And Treason looks abroad in th
eclipse.

He did not die the death of men that
live

Such life as he lived, fall'n among
his peers,

Whom the red battle rolled away,
while yet

The shout of Gods was ringing
through and through them ;

But Death that feared to front him
in full field,

Lurked by the hearth and smote him
from behind.

A mighty man is gone. A mighty
grief

Remains. And rumor of undying
deeds

For song and legend, to the end of
time !

What tower is strong ?

ELECTRA.

O friends—if friends you be—
For who shall say where falsehood

festers not,
Those being falsest, who should
most be true ?

Where is that Phocian ? Let him
take the boy,

And bear him with him to his
master's court.

Else will Ægisthus slay him.

CHORUS.

Orphaned one,
Fear you not ?

ORESTES.

I am Agamemnon's son.

CHORUS.

Therefore shouldst fear—

ORESTES.

And therefore cannot fear.

PHOCIAN.

I heard a cry. Did any call?

CHORUS.

O, well!

You happen this way in the need of time.

ELECTRA.

O loyal stranger, Agamemnon's child
Is fatherless. This boy appeals to you.

O save him, save him from his
father's foes!

PHOCIAN.

Unhappy lady, what wild words are these?

ELECTRA.

The house runs blood. Ægisthus,
like a fiend,
Is raging loose, his weapon dripping
gore.

CHORUS.

The king is dead.

PHOCIAN.

Is dead!

ELECTRA.

Dead.

PHOCIAN.

Do I dream?

ELECTRA.

Such dreams are dreamed in hell—
such dreams—O no!

Is not the earth as solid—heaven
above—

The sun in heaven—and Nature at
her work—

And men at theirs—the same? O,
no! no dream!

We shall not wake—nor he; though
the Gods sleep!

Unnaturally murdered—

PHOCIAN.

Murdered!

ELECTRA.

Ay.

And the sun blackens not; the world
is green;

The fires of the red west are not put
out.

Is not the cricket singing in the
grass?

And the shy lizard shooting through
the leaves?

I hear the ox low in the labored
field.

Those swallows build, and are as
garrulous

High up i' the towers. Yet I speak
the truth,

By Heaven, I speak the truth--

PHOCIAN.

Yet more, vouchsafe

How died the king?

ELECTRA.

O, there shall be a time
For words hereafter. While we dally
here,

Fate haunts, and hounds us. Friend,
receive this boy.

Bear him to Strophius. All this
tragedy

Relate as best you may; it beggars
speech.

Tell him a tower of hope is fallen
this day—

A name in Greece—

PHOCIAN.

—But you—

ELECTRA.

Away! away!

Destruction posts apace, while we
delay.

PHOCIAN.

Come then!

ELECTRA.

I dare not leave my father's hearth,

For who would then do honor to his
urn ?

It may be that my womanhood and
youth

May help me here. It may be I shall
fall,

And mix my own with Agamemnon's
blood.

No matter. On Orestes hangs the
hope

Of all this House. Him save for
better days,

And ripened vengeance.

PHOCIAN.

Noble-hearted one !

Come then, last offspring of this
fated race.

The future calls thee !

ORESTES.

Sister ! Sister !

ELECTRA.

Go !

ORESTES.

O Sister !

ELECTRA.

O my brother ! . . One last kiss,—
One last long kiss,—how I have loved
thee, boy !

Was it for this I nourished thy young
years

With stately tales, and legends of the
gods ?

For this ? . . . How the past crowds
upon me ! Ah—

Wilt thou recall, in lonely, lonely
hours,

How once we sat together on still
eyes,

(Ah me !) and brooded on all serious
themes

Of sweet, and high, and beautiful,
and good,

That throng the ancient years.
Alcmena's son,

And how his life went out in fire on
Ceta ;

Or of that bright-haired wanderer
after fame,

That brought the great gold-fleece
across the sea.

And left a name in Colchis ; or we
spake

Of the wise Theseus, councils, king-
doms, thrones,

And laws in distant lands ; or, later
still,

Of the great leaguer set round Ilium,
And what heart-stirring tidings of
the war

Bards brought to Hellas. But when
I would breathe

Thy father's name, didst thou not
grasp my hand,

And glorious deeds shone round us
like the stars

That lit the dark world from a great
way off,

And died up into heaven, among the
Gods ?

ORESTES.

Sister, O Sister !

ELECTRA.

Ah, too long we linger.

Away ! away !

PHOCIAN.

Come !

CHORUS.

Heaven go with thee !

To Crissa points the hand of Destiny.

ELECTRA.

O boy, on thee Fate hangs an awful
weight

Of retribution ! Let thy father's
ghost

Forever whisper in thine ear. Be
strong.

About thee, yet unborn, thy mother
wove

The mystic web of life in such-like
form

That Agamemnon's spirit in thine
eyes

Seems living yet. His seal is set on
thee ;

And Pelops' ivory shoulder marks
 thee his.
 Thee, child, nor contests on the
 Isthmian plain,
 Nor sacred apple, nor green laurel-
 leaf,
 But graver deeds await. Forget not,
 son,
 Whose blood, unwashed, defiles thy
 mother's doors !

CHORUS.

O haste ! I hear a sound within the
 house.

ELECTRA.

Farewell, then, son of Agamemnon !

PHOCIAN.

Come !

XVIII. ELECTRA. CHORUS.
 ÆGISTHUS.

ELECTRA.

Gone ! gone ! Ah saved ! . . . O
 fool, thou missest, here !

CHORUS.

Alas, Electra, whither wilt thou go ?

ELECTRA.

Touch me not ! Come not near me !
 Let me be !
 For this day, which I hoped for, is
 not mine.

CHORUS.

See how she gathers round her all
 her robe, [it be
 And sits apart with grief. O, can
 Great Agamemnon is among the
 shades ?

ELECTRA.

Would I had grasped his skirt, and
 followed him !

CHORUS.

Alas ! there is an eminence of joy,
 Where Fate grows dizzy, being
 mounted there,
 And so tilts over on the other side !

O fallen, O fallen
 The tower, which stood so high !
 Whose base and girth were strong
 i' the earth,
 Whose head was in the sky !
 O fall'n that tower of noble power,
 That filled up every eye !

He stood so sure, that noble tower !
 To make secure, and fill with power
 From length to length, the land o
 Greece !

In whose strong bulwarks all men
 saw,
 Garnered on the lap of law,
 For dearth or danger, spears of war,
 And harve t sheaves of peace !
 O fall'n, O fall'n that lofty tower,—
 The loftiest tower in Greece !

His brows he lift above the noon,
 Filled with the day, a noble tower !
 Who took the sunshine and the
 shower,
 And flung them back in merry scorn.
 Who now shall stand when tempests
 lower ?

He was the first to catch the morn,
 The last to see the moon.
 O friends, he was a noble tower !
 O friends, and fall'n so soon !

Ah, well ! lament ! lament !
 His walls are rent, his bulwarks
 bent,
 And stooped that crested eminence,
 Which stood so high for our de-
 fence !

For our defence,—to guard, and
 fence
 From all alarm of hurt and harm,
 The fulness of a land's content !
 O fall'n away, fall'n at midday,
 And set before the sun is down,
 The highest height of our renown !
 O overthrown, the ivory throne !
 The spoils of war, the golden crown,
 And chiefest honor of the state !
 O mourn with me ! what tower is
 free
 From over-topping destiny ?
 What strength is strong to fate ?

O mourn with me ! when shall we
see

Another such, so good, so great ?
Another such, to guard the state ?

ÆGISTHUS.

He should have stayed to shout
through Troy, or bellow
with bulls in Ida—

CHORUS.

Look ! Ægisthus comes !
Like some lean tiger, having dipt in
blood

His dripping fangs, and hot athirst
for more.

His lurid eyeball rolls, as though it
swam

Through sanguine films. He stag-
gers, drunk with rage
And crazy mischief.

ÆGISTHUS.

Hold ! let no one stir !
I charge you, all of you, who hear
me speak,

Where may the boy Orestes lie con-
cealed ?

I hold the life of each in gage for
his.

If any know where now he hides
from us,

Let him beware, not rendering true
reply !

CHORUS.

The boy is fled—

ELECTRA.

—is saved !

ÆGISTHUS.

Electra here !
How mean you ? What is this ?

ELECTRA.

Enough is left
Of Agamemnon's blood to drown
you in.

ÆGISTHUS.

You shall not trifle with me, by my
beard !

There's peril in this pastime.
Where's the boy ?

ELECTRA.

Half-way to Phocis, Heaven helping
him.

ÆGISTHUS.

By the black Styx !

ELECTRA.

Take not the oath of Gods,
Who art but half a man, blasphem-
ing coward !

ÆGISTHUS.

But you, by Heaven, if this be a
sword,
Shall not be any more—

ELECTRA.

A slave to thee,
Blundering bloodshedder, though
thou boast thyself

As huge as Ossa piled on Pelion,
Or anything but that weak wretch
thou art !

O, thou hast only half done thy
black work !

Thou shouldst have slain the young
lion with the old.

Look that he come not back, and
find himself

Ungiven food, and still the lion's
share !

ÆGISTHUS.

Insolent ! but I know to seal thy
lips—

ELECTRA.

—For thou art only strong among
the weak.

We know thou hast an aptitude for
blood.

To take a woman's is an easy task,
And one well worthy thee.

ÆGISTHUS.

O, but for words !

ELECTRA.

Yet, couldst thou feed on all the noble blood
Of godlike generations on this earth,
I should not help thee to a hero's heart.

CHORUS.

O peace, Electra, but for pity's sake !
Heap not his madness to such dangerous heights.

ELECTRA.

I will speak out my heart's scorn,
though I die.

ÆGISTHUS.

And thou shalt die, but not till I have tamed
That stubborn spirit to a wish for life.

CHORUS.

O cease, infatuate ! I hear the Queen.

[*By a movement of the Eecyclema the palace is thrown open, and discovers CLYTEMNESTRA standing over the body of AGAMEMNON.*]

XIX. CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS. ÆGISTHUS. ELECTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Argives ! behold the man who was your King !

CHORUS.

Dead ! dead !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not I, but Fate hath dealt this blow.

CHORUS.

Dead ! dead, alas ! look where he lies. O friends !
That noble head, and to be brought so low !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He who set light by woman, with blind scorn,
And held her with the beasts we sacrifice,
Lies, by a woman sacrificed himself.
This is high justice which appeals to you.

CHORUS.

Alas ! alas ! I know not words for this.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

We are but as the instrument of heaven.

Our work is not design, but destiny.
A God directs the lightning to its fall ;

It smites and slays, and passes elsewhere,
Pure in itself, as when, in light, it left

The bosom of Olympus, to its end
In this cold heart the wrong of a life past

Lies buried. I avenged, and I forgive.

Honor him yet. He is a king, though fallen.

CHORUS.

O, how she sets Virtue's own crest
on Crime,

And stands there stern as Fates wild arbitress !

Not any deed could make her less than great.

(*CLYTEMNESTRA descends the steps, and lays her hand on the arm of ÆGISTHUS.*)

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Put up the sword ! Enough of blood is spilt.

ÆGISTHUS.

Hist ! O, not half, — Orestes is escaped.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Sufficient for the future be that
thought.

What's done is well done. What's
undone—yet more :

Something still saved from crime.

ÆGISTHUS.

This lion's whelp
Will work some mischief yet.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He is a child—
—Our own—we will but war upon
the strong.

Not upon infants. Let this matter
rest.

ÆGISTHUS.

O, ever, in the wake of thy great
will

Let me steer sure! and we will leave
behind

Great tracks of light upon the won-
dering world.

If but you err not here—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

These pale-eyed groups !
See how they huddle shuddering,
and stand round ;

As when some mighty beast, the
brindled lord

Of the rough woodside, sends his
wild death-roar

Up the shrill caves, the meaner
denizens

Of ancient woods, shy deer, and
timorous hares,

Peer from the hairy thickets, and
shrink back.

We feared the lion, and we smote
him down.

Now fear is over. Shall we turn
aside

To harry jackals ? Laugh ! we have
not laughed

So long, I think you have forgotten
how !

Have we no right to laugh like
other men ?

Ha ! Ha ! I laugh. Now it is time
to laugh !

CHORUS.

O, awful sight ! Look where the
bloody sun,

As though with Agamemnon he
were slain,

Runs reeking, lurid, down the palace
floors !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O my beloved ! Now we will reign
sublime,

And set our foot upon the neck of
Fortune !

And for the rest—O, much re-
mains !—for you,

(To the CHORUS.)

A milder sway, if mildly you submit
To our free service and supremacy.

Nor tax, nor toll, to carry dim re-
sults

Of distant war beyond the perilous
seas.

But gateless justice in our halls of
state,

And peace in all the borders of our
land !

For you—

*(To ELECTRA, who has thrown
herself upon the body of AGA-
MEMNON.)*

ELECTRA.

O, hush ! What more remains to
me,

But this dead hand, whose clasp is
cold in mine ?

And all the baffled memory of the
past,

Buried with him ? What more ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

—A mother's heart,
If you will come to it. Free con-
fidence.

A liberal share in all our future hope.

Now, more than ever—mutually weak—

We stand in need, each of the other's love.

Our love ! it shall not sacrifice thee, child,

To wanton whims of war, as he, of old,

Did thy dead sister. If you will not these, [then—

But answer love with scorn, why

ELECTRA.

—What then ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Safe silence. And permission to forget.

XX. CHORUS. SEMI-CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA. CASSANDRA. ÆGISTHUS.

CHORUS.

What shall we say ? What has been done ?

Shed no tear ! O, shed no tear !

Hang up his harness in the sun ;

The hookéd ear, and barbéd spear ;

And all war's adamantiné gear

Of trophied spoils ; for all his toils

Are over, alas ! are over, and done !

What shall we say ? What has been done ?

Shed no tear ! O, shed no tear !

But keep solemn silence all,

As befits when heroes fall ;

Solemn as his fame is ; sad

As his end was ; earth shall wear

Mourning for him. See, the sun

Blushes red for what is done !

And the wild stars, one by one,

Peer out of the lurid air,

And shrink back with awe and fear,

Shuddering, for what is done.

When the night comes, dark and

dun

As our sorrow ; blackness far

Shutting out the crimson sun ;

Turn his face to the moon and star,— [are,

These are bright as his glories

And great Heaven shall see its son !

What shall we say ? What has been done ?

Shed no tear ! O, shed no tear !

Gather round him, friends ! Look here !

All the wreaths which he hath won

In the race that he hath run,—

Laurel garlands, every one !

These are things to think upon,

Mourning till the set of sun,

Till the mourning moon appear.

Now the wreaths which Fame begun

To uplift, to crown his head,

Memory shall seize upon,

And make chaplets for his bier.

He shall have wreaths though he be dead !

But his monument is here,

Built up in our hearts, and dear

To all honor. Shed no tear !

O, let not any tear be shed !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look at Cassandra ! she is stooping down.

SEMI-CHORUS.

She dips and moves her fingers in the blood !

SEMI-CHORUS.

Look to her ! There's a wildness in her eye !

SEMI-CHORUS.

What does she ?

SEMI-CHORUS.

O, in Agamemnon's blood, She hath writ *Orestes* on the palace steps !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ægisthus !

ÆGISTHUS.

Queen and bride !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

We have not failed.

CHORUS.

Come, venerable, and ancient Night!
 From sources of the western stars.
 In darkest shade that fits this woe.
 Consoler of a thousand griefs,
 And likest death unalterably calm.
 We toil, aspire, and sorrow,
 And in a little while shall cease.
 For we know not whence we came,
 And who can insure the morrow?
 Thou, eternally the same,
 From of old, in endless peace
 Eternally survivest;
 Enduring on through good and ill,
 Coeval with the Gods; and still
 In thine own silence livest.
 Our days thou ledest home [Again!
 To the great Whither which has no
 Impartiality to pleasure and to pain
 Thou sett'st the bourn. To thee
 shall all things come.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But, if he cease to love me, what is
 gained?

CASSANDRA.

With wings darkly spreading,
 Like ravens to the carcass
 Scenting far off the savor of blood,
 From shores of the unutterable
 River.

They gather and swoop,
 They waver, they darken.
 From the fangs that raven,
 From the eyes that glare
 Intolerably fierce,
 Save me, Apollo!
 Ai! Ai! Ai!
 Alinon! Alinon!
 Blood, blood! and of kindred nature,
 Which the young wolf returning
 Shall dip his fangs in,
 Thereby accursedly
 Imbibing madness!

CHORUS.

The wild woman is uttering strange
 things
 Fearful to listen to.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Within the house
 Straightway confine her,
 There to learn wisdom.

ÆGISTHUS.

Orestes—O, this child's life now out-
 weighs
 That mighty ruin, Agamemnon
 dead!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ægisthus, dost thou love me?

ÆGISTHUS.

As my life!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou lovest me! O love, we have
 not failed.
 Give me thy hand! So . . . lead me
 to the house.
 Let me lean on thee. I am very
 weak.

CHORUS.

Only Heaven is high.
 Only the Gods are great.
 Above the searchless sky,
 In unremoved state,
 They from their golden mansions
 Look over the lands, and the seas;
 The ocean's wide expansions,
 And the earth's varieties:
 Secure of their supremacy,
 And sure of affluent ease.
 Who shall say, "I stand!" nor
 fall?
 Destiny is over all!
 Rust will crumble old renown.
 Bust and column tumble down;
 Keep and castle; tower and town;
 Throne and sceptre; crest and
 crown.
 Destiny is over all!
 One by one the pale guests fall
 At lighted feast, in palace hall;
 And feast is turned to funeral.
 Who shall say, "I stand!" nor
 fall?
 Destiny is over all!

GOOD-NIGHT IN THE PORCH.

A LITTLE longer in the light, love, let me be. The air is warm.
I hear the cuckoo's last good-night float from the copse below the Farm.
A little longer, Sister sweet,—your hand in mine,—on this old seat.

In yon red gable, which the rose creeps round and o'er, your casement
shines

Against the yellow west, o'er those forlorn and solitary pines.
The long, long day is nearly done. How silent all the place is grown!

The stagnant levels, one and all, are burning in the distant marsh—
Hark! 'twas the bittern's parting call. The frogs are out : with murmurs
harsh

The low reeds vibrate. See! the sun catches the long pools one by one.

A moment, and those orange flats will turn dead gray or lurid white.
Look up! o'erhead the winnowing bats are come and gone, eluding sight.
The little worms are out. The snails begin to move down shining trails,

With slow pink cones, and soft wet horns. The garden-bowers are dim
with dew.

With sparkling drops the white-rose thorns are twinkling, where the sun
slips through

Those reefs of coral buds hung free below the purple Judas-tree.

From the warm upland comes a gust made fragrant with the brown hay
there,

The meek cows, with their white horns thrust above the hedge, stand still
and stare.

The steaming horses from the wains droop o'er the tank their plaited
manes.

And o'er yon hillside brown and barren (where you and I as children
played,

Starting the rabbit to his warren), I hear the sandy, shrill cascade
Leap down upon the vale, and spill his heart out round the muffled mill.

O can it be for nothing only that God has shown his world to me?
Or but to leave the heart more lonely with loss of beauty . . . can it be?
O closer, closer, Sister dear . . . nay, I have kist away that tear.

God bless you, Dear, for that kind thought which only upon tears could
rise!

God bless you for the love that sought to hide them in those drooping eyes,
Whose lids I kiss! . . . poor lids, so red! but let my kiss fall there
instead.

Yes, sad indeed it seems, each night,—and sadder, Dear, for your sweet
 sake!
 To watch the last low lingering light, and know not where the morn may
 break,
 To-night we sit together here. To-morrow night will come . . . ah,
 where?

O child! howe'er assured be faith, to say farewell is fraught with gloom,
 When, like one flower, the germs of death and genius ripen toward the
 tomb;
 And earth each day, as some fond face at parting, gains a graver grace.

There's not a flower, there's not a tree in this old garden where we sit,
 But what some fragrant memory is closed and folded up in it.
 To-night the dog-rose smells as wild, as fresh, as when I was a child.

'Tis eight years since (do you forget?) we set those lilies near the wall:
 You were a blue-eyed child: even yet I seem to see the ringlets fall,—
 The golden ringlets, blown behind your shoulders in the merry wind.

Ah, me! old times, they cling, they cling! And oft by yonder green old
 gate
 The field shows through, in morns of spring, an eager boy, I paused elate
 With all sweet fancies loosed from school. And oft, you know, when eves
 were cool,

In summer-time, and through the trees young gnats began to be about,
 With some old book upon your knees 'twas here you watched the stars
 come out.
 While oft, to please me, you sang through some foolish song I made for
 you.

And there's my epic—I began when life seemed long, though longer
 art—
 And all the glorious deeds of man made golden riot in my heart—
 Eight books . . . it will not number nine! I die before my heroine.

Sister! they say that drowning men in one wild moment can recall
 Their whole life long, and feel again the pain—the bliss—that thronged
 it all:—
 Last night those phantoms of the Past again came crowding round me
 fast.

Near morning, when the lamp was low, against the wall they seemed to
 flit;
 And, as the wavering light would glow or fall, they came and went with
 it.
 The ghost of boyhood seemed to gaze down the dark verge of vanished days.
 Once more the garden where she walked on summer eves to tend her
 flowers,
 Once more the lawn where first we talked of future years in twilight hours
 Arose; once more she seemed to pass before me in the waving grass

To that old terrace ; her bright hair about her warm neck all undone,
And waving on the balmy air, with tinges of the dying sun.
Just one star kindling in the west : just one bird singing near its nest.

So lovely, so beloved ! O, fair as though that sun had never set
Which stayed upon her golden hair, in dreams I seem to see her yet !
To see her in that old green place,—the same husht, smiling, cruel face !

✓ little older, love, than you are now ; and I was then a boy ;
And wild and wayward-hearted too ; to her my passion was a toy,
Soon broken ! ah, a foolish thing,—a butterfly with crumpled wing !

Her hair, too, was like yours,—as bright, but with a warmer golden tinge:
Her eyes,—a somewhat deeper light, and dreamed below a longer fringe :
And still that strange grave smile she had stays in my heart and keeps it
sad !

There's no one knows it, truest friend, but you, for I have never breathed
To other ears the frozen end of those spring-garlands Hope once wreathed ;
And death will come before again I breathe that name untouched by pain !

From little things—a star, a flower—that touched us with the self-same
thought,
My passion deepened hour by hour, until to that fierce heat 'twas wrought,
Which, shrivelling over every nerve, crumbled the outworks of reserve.

I told her then, in that wild time, the love I knew she long had seen ;
The accusing pain that burned like crime, yet left me nobler than I had
been ;
What matter with what words I wooed her ? She said I had misunderstood
her.

And something more—small matter what ! of friendship something—
sister's love—
She said that I was young—knew not my own heart—as the years would
prove—
She wished me happy—she conceived an interest in me—and believed

I should grow up to something great—and soon forget her—soon forget
This fancy—and congratulate my life she had released it, yet—
With more such words—a lie ! a lie ! She broke my heart, and flung it by !

life's libation lifted up, from her proud lip she dashed untasted :
here trampled lay love's costly cup, and in the dust the wine was
wasted.
She knew I could not pour such wine again at any other shrine.

Then I remember a numb mood : mad murmurings of the words she
said :
A slow shame smouldering through my blood ; that surged and sung with-
in my head :
And drunken sunlights reeling through the leaves : above, the burnish
blue

Hot on my eyes,—a blazing shield : a noise among the waterfalls :
 A free crow up the brown cornfield floating at will : faint shepherd-calls :
 And reapers reaping in the shocks of gold : and girls with purple frocks :

All which the more confused my brain : and nothing could I realize
 But the great fact of my own pain : I saw the fields : I heard the cries :
 The crow's shade dwindled up the hill : the world went on : my heart
 stood still.

I thought I held in my hot hand my life crushed up : I could have tost
 The crumpled riddle from me, and laughed loud to think what I had lost,
 A bitter strength was in my mind : like Samson, when she scorned him—
 blind,

And casting reckless arms about the props of life to hug them down,—
 A madman with his eyes put out. But all my anger was my own.
 I spared the worm upon my walk : I left the white rose on its stalk.

All's over long since. Was it strange that I was mad with grief and
 shame ?

And I would cross the seas, and change my ancient home, my father's
 name ?

In the wild hope, if that might be, to change my own identity !

I know that I was wrong : I know it was not well to be so wild.
 But the scorn stung so ! . . . Pity now could wound not ! . . . I have seen
 her child :

It had the self-same eyes she had : their gazing almost made me mad.

Dark violet eyes whose glances, deep with April hints of sunny tears,
 'Neath long soft lashes laid asleep, seemed all too thoughtful for her
 years ;

As though from mine her gaze had caught the secret of some mournful
 thought.

But, when she spoke her father's air broke o'er her . . . that clear con-
 fident voice !

Some happy souls there are, that wear their nature lightly ; these rejoice
 The world by living ; and receive from all men more than what they give.

One handful of their buoyant chaff exceeds our hoards of careful grain :
 Because their love breaks through their laugh, while ours is fraught with
 tender pain :

The world, that knows itself too sad, is proud to keep some faces glad :

And, so it is ! from such an one Misfortune softly steps aside
 To let him still walk in the sun. These things must be. I cannot chide.
 Had I been she I might have made the self-same choice. She shunned the
 shade.

To some men God hath given laughter ; but tears to some men he hath
 given :

He bade us sow in tears, hereafter to harvest holier smiles in Heaven :
 And tears and smiles, they are His gift : both good, to smite or to uplift :

He knows His sheep : the wind and showers beat not too sharply the
shorn lamb :

His wisdom is more wise than ours : He knew my nature—what I am :
He tempers smiles with tears : both good, to bear in time the Christian
mood.

O yet—in scorn of mean relief, let Sorrow bear her heavenly fruit !
Better the wildest hour of grief than the low pastime of the brute !
Better to weep, for He wept too, than laugh as every fool can do !

For sure, 'twere best to bear the cross ; nor lightly fling the thorns
behind ;
Lest we grow happy by the loss of what was noblest in the mind.
—Here—in the ruins of my years—Father, I bless Thee through these
tears !

It was in the far foreign lands this sickness came upon me first.
Below strange suns, 'mid alien hands, this fever of the south was nursed,
Until it reached some vital part. I die not of a broken heart.

O think not that ! If I could live . . . there's much to live for—
worthy life.
It is not for what fame could give—though that I scorn not—but the strife
Were noble for its own sake too. I thought that I had much to do—

But God is wisest ! Hark, again ! . . . 'twas yon black bittern, as he
rose
Against the wild light o'er the fen. How red your little casement glows !
The night falls fast. How lonely, Dear, this bleak old house will look
next year !

So sad a thought ? . . . ah, yes ! I know it is not good to brood on this :
And yet—such thoughts will come and go, unbidden. 'Tis that you
should miss,
My darling, one familiar tone of this weak voice when I am gone.

And, for what's past,—I will not say in what she did that all was right,
But all's forgiven ; and I pray for her heart's welfare, day and night. . .
All things are changed ! This cheek would glow even near hers but
faintly now !

Thou—God ! before whose sleepless eye not even in vain the sparrow's
fall,
Receive, sustain me ! Sanctify my soul. Thou know'st, Thou lovest all.
Too weak to walk alone—I see Thy hand : I falter back to Thee.

Saved from the curse of time which throws its baseness on us day by day :
Its wretched joys, and worthless woes ; till all the heart is worn away.
I feel Thee near. I hold my breath, by the half-open doors of Death.

And sometimes, glimpses from within of glory (wondrous sight and
sound !)

Float near me :—faces pure from sin ; strange music ; saints with splendor
crowned :

I seem to feel my native air blow down from some high region there,

And fan my spirit pure : I rise above the sense of loss and pain :
Faint forms that lured my childhood's eyes, long lost, I seem to find
again :

see the end of all : I feel hope, awe, no language can reveal.

Forgive me, Lord, if overmuch I loved that form Thou mad'st so fair ;
I know that Thou didst make her such ; and fair but as the flowers
were,—

Thy work : her beauty was but Thine ; the human less than the divine.

My life hath been one search for Thee 'mid thorns found red with Thy
dear blood ;

In many a dark Gethsemanë I seemed to stand where Thou hadst stood :
And, scorned in this world's Judgment-Place, at times, through tears, to
catch Thy face.

Thou suffered'st here, and didst not fail : Thy bleeding feet these paths
have trod :

But Thou wert strong, and I am frail : and I am man, and Thou wert
God.

Be near me : keep me in Thy sight : or lay my soul asleep in light.

O to be where the meanest mind is more than Shakespeare ! where one
look

Shows more than here the wise can find, though toiling slow from book to
book !

Where life is knowledge : love is sure : and hope's brief promise made
secure.

O dying voice of human praise ! the crude ambitions of my youth !

I long to pour immortal lays ! great peans of perennial Truth !

A larger work ! a loftier aim ! . . . and what are laurel-leaves and fame ?

And what are words ? How little these the silence of the soul express !

Mere froth.—the foam and flower of seas whose hungering waters heave
and press

Against the planets and the sides of night,—mute, yearning, mystic
tides !

To ease the heart with song is sweet : sweet to be heard if heard by love.
And you have heard me. When we meet shall we not sing the old songs
above

To grander music ? Sweet, one kiss. O blest it is to die like this !

To lapse from being without pain : your hand in mine, on mine your
heart :

The unshaken faith to meet again that sheathes the pang with which we
part :

My head upon your bosom, sweet : your hand in mine, on this old seat !

So ; closer wind that tender arm . . . How the hot tears fall ! Do not weep,
Beloved, but let your smile stay warm about me. "In the Lord they sleep."
You know the words the Scripture saith . . . O light, O Glory ! . . . is this death ?

THE EARL'S RETURN.

<p>RAGGED and tall stood the castle wall And the squires at their sport, in the great South Court, Lounged all day long from stable to hall Laughingly, lazily, one and all. The land about was barren and blue, And swept by the wing of the wet sea-mew. Seven fishermen's huts on a shelly shore ; Sand-heaps behind, and sand-banks before ; And a black champaign streaked white all through To a great salt pool which the ocean drew, Sucked into itself, and disgorged it again To stagnate and steam on the mineral plain ; Not a tree or a bush in the circle of sight, But a bare black thorn which the sea-winds had withered With the drifting scum of the surf and blight, And some patches of gray grass-land to the right, Where the lean red-hided cattle were tethered : ▲ reef of rock wedged the water in twain, And a stout stone tower stood square to the main.</p>	<p>And the flakes of the spray that were jerked away From the froth on the lip of the bleak blue sea Were sometimes flung by the wind, as it swung Over turret and terrace and balcony, To the garden below where, in desolate corners Under the mossy green parapet there, The lilies crouched, rocking their white heads like mourners, And burned off the heads of the flowers that were Pining and pale in their comfortless bowers, Dry-bushed with the sharp stubborn lavender, And paven with disks of the torn sunflowers, Which, day by day, were strangled, and stripped Of their ravelling fringes and brazen bosses, And the hardy mary-buds nipped and ripped Into shreds for the beetles that lurked in the mosses.</p> <p>Here she lived alone, and from year to year She saw the black belt of the ocean [appear At her casement each morn as she rose ; and each morn Her eye fell first on the bare black thorn.</p>
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This was all : nothing more : or
 sometimes on the shore
 The fishermen sang when the fish-
 ing was o'er ;
 Or the lowing of oxen fell dreamily,
 Close on the shut of the glimmering
 eyes,
 Through some gusty pause in the
 moaning sea,
 When the pools were splashed pink
 by the thirsty beeves
 Or sometimes, when the pearl-
 lighted morns drew the tinges
 Of the cold sunrise up their amber
 fringes,
 A white sail peered over the rim of
 the main,
 Looked all about o'er the empty sea,
 Staggering back from the fine line of
 white light again,
 And dropped down to another world
 silently.
 Then she breathed freer. With
 sickening dread
 She had watched five pale young
 moons unfold
 From their notchy cavern in light,
 and spread
 To the fuller light, and again grow
 old,
 And dwindle away to a luminous
 shred.
 "He will not come back till the
 Spring's green and gold.
 And I would that I with the leaves
 were dead,
 Quiet somewhere with them in the
 moss and the mould,
 When he and the summer come this
 way," she said.
 And when the dull sky darkened
 down to the edges,
 And the keen frost kindled in star
 and spar,
 The sea might be known by a noise
 on the ledges
 Of the long crags, gathering power
 from afar
 Through his roaring bays, and crawl-
 ing back [dragged
 Hissing, as o'er the wet pebbles he

His skirt of foam frayed, dripping,
 and jagged,
 And reluctantly fell down the smooth
 hollow shell
 Of the night, whose lustrous surface
 of black
 In spots to an intense blue was
 worn.
 But later, when up on the sullen sea-
 bar
 The wide large-lighted moon had
 arisen,
 Where the dark and voluminous
 ocean grew luminous,
 Helping after her slowly one little
 shy star
 That shook blue in the cold, and
 looked forlorn,
 The clouds were troubled, and the
 wind from his prison
 Behind them leaped down with a
 light laugh of scorn ;
 Then the last thing she saw was that
 bare black thorn ;
 Or the forked tree, as the bleak
 blast took it,
 Howled through it, and beat it, and
 bit it, and shook it,
 Seemed to visibly waste and wither
 and wizen.

And the snow was lifted into the air
 Layer by layer,
 And turned into vast white clouds
 that flew
 Silent and fleet up the sky, and
 were riven
 And jerked into chasms which the
 sun leaped through,
 Opening crystal gulfs of a breeze
 blue
 Fed with rainy lights of the April
 heaven.
 From eaves and leaves the quivering
 dew
 Sparkled off ; and the rich earth,
 black and bare,
 Was starred with snowdrops every-
 where ;
 And the crocus upturned its flame,
 and burned

Here and there.

“The Summer,” she said, “c’meth
blithe and bold :

And the crocus is lit for her welcom-
ing :

And the days will have garments of
purple and gold :

But I would be left by the pale green
Spring

With the snowdrops somewhere
under the mould :

For I dare not think what the
Summer may bring.”

Pale she was as the bramble blooms
That fill the long fields with their
faint perfumes.

When the May-wind flits finely
through sun-threaded showers,
Breathing low to himself in his dim
meadow-bowers.

And her cheek each year was paler
and thinner,

And white as the pearl that was hung
at her ear,

As her sad heart sickened and pined
within her,

And failed and fainted from year to
year.

So that the Seneschal, rough and
gray,

Said, as he looked in her face one
day,

“St. Catherine save all good souls,
I pray,

For our pale young lady is paling
away.

O the Saints,” he said, smiling bitter
and grim,

“Know she’s too fair and too good for
him !”

Sometimes she walked on the upper
leads,

And leaned on the arm of the
weatherworn Warden.

Sometimes she sat ’twixt the mildewy
beds

Of the sea-singed flowers in the
Pleasaunce Garden.

Till the rotting blooms that lay
thick on the walks

Were combed by the white sea-gust
like a rake,

And the stimulant steam of the
leaves and stalks

Made the coiled memory, numb and
cold,

That slept in her heart like a dream-
ing snake,

Drowsily lift itself, fold by fold,
And gnaw and gnaw hungrily, half
awake.

Sometimes she looked from the
window below

To the great South Court and the
squires, at their sport,

Loungingly loitering to and fro.
She heard the grooms there as they
cursed one another.

She heard the great bowls falling all
day long

In the bowling-alleys. She heard
the song

Of the shock-headed Pages that drank
without stint in

The echoing courts, and swore hard
at each other.

She saw the red face of the rough
wooden Quintin,

And the swinging sand-bag ready
to smother

The awkward Squire that missed the
mark.

And, all day long, between the dull
noises

Of the bowls, and the oaths, and the
singing voices,

The sea boomed hoarse till the skies
were dark.

But when the swallow, that sweet
new-comer,

Floated over the sea in the front of
the summer,

The salt dry sands burned white, and
sickened

Men’s sight in the glaring horn of the
bay ;

And all things that fasten, or float at
ease

In the silvery light of the lepreous
seas

With the pulse of a hideous life were quickened,
 Fell loose from the rocks, and crawled crosswise away,
 Slippery sidelong crabs, half strangled
 By the white sea grasses in which they were tangled,
 And those half-living creatures, orbéd, rayed, and sharp-angled,
 Fan-fish, and star-fish, and polypous lumps,
 Hueless and boneless, that languidly thickened,
 Or flat-faced, or spikéd, or ridgéd with humps,
 Melting off from their clotted clusters and clumps
 Sprawled over the shore in the heat of the day.

An hour before the sun was set
 A darker ripple rolled over the sea ;
 The white rocks quivered in wells of jet ;
 And the great West, opening breathlessly
 Up all his inmost orange, gave Hints of something distant and sweet
 That made her heart swell ; far up the wave
 The clouds that lay piled in the golden heat
 Were turned into types of the ancient mountains
 In an ancient land ; the weeds, which forlorn
 Waves were swaying neglectfully, By their sounds, as they dipped into sparkles that dripped
 In the emerald creeks that ran up from the shore,
 Brought back to her fancy the bubble of fountains
 Leaping and falling continually
 In valleys where she should wander no more.

And when, over all of these, the night

Among her mazy and milk white signs,
 And clustered orbs, and zigzag lines,
 Burst into blossom of stars and light,
 The sea was glassy : the glassy brine
 Was paven with lights,—blue, crystalline,
 And emerald keen ; the dark world hung
 Balanced under the moon, and swung
 In a net of silver sparkles. Then she
 Rippled her yellow hair to her knee,
 Bared her warm white bosom and throat,
 And from the lattice leaned athirst.
 There, on the silence did she gloat
 With a dizzy pleasure steeped in pain,
 Half catching the soul of the secret that blended
 God with his starlight, then feeling it vain,
 Like a pining poet ready to burst
 With the weight of the wonder that grows in his brain,
 Or a nightingale, mute at the sound of a lute
 That is swelling and breaking his heart with its strain,
 Waiting, breathless, to die when the music is ended.
 For the sleek and beautiful midnight stole,
 Like a faithless friend, her secret care,
 Crept through each pore to the source of the soul,
 And mocked at the anguish which he found there,
 Shining away from her, scornful and fair
 In his pitiless beauty, refusing to share
 The discontent which he could not control.

The water-rat, as he skulked in the moat,

Set all the slumbrous lilies afloat,
 And sent a sharp quick pulse along
 The stagnant light, that heaved and
 swung
 The leaves together. Suddenly
 At times a shooting star would spin
 Shell-like out of heaven, and tumble
 in,
 And burst o'er a city of stars ; but
 she,
 As he dashed on the back of the zo-
 diac,
 And quivered and glowed down arc
 and node,
 And split sparkling into infinity,
 Thought that some angel, in his rev-
 eries
 Thinking of earth, as he pensively
 Leaned over the star-grated balcony
 In his palace among the Pleiades,
 And grieved for the sorrow he saw
 in the land,
 Had dropped a white lily from his
 loose hand.

And thus many a night, steeped pale
 in the light
 Of the stars, when the bells and
 clocks
 Had ceased in the towers, and the
 sound of the hours
 Was eddying about in the rocks,
 Deep-sunken in bristling broidery
 between the black oak Fiends
 sat she,
 And under the moth-flitted canopy
 Of the mighty antique bed in her
 chamber,
 With wild eyes drinking up the sea,
 And her white hands heavy with
 jewelry,
 Flashing as she loosed languidly
 Her satins of snow and of amber.
 And as, fold by fold, these were rip-
 pled and rolled
 To her feet, and lay huddled in ruins
 of gold,
 She looked like some pale spirit
 above
 Earth's dazzling passions forever
 flung by,

Freed from the stains of an earthly
 love,
 And those splendid shackles of pride
 that press
 On the heart till it aches with the
 gorgeous stress,
 Quitting the base Past remorsefully.
 And so she put by the coil and care
 Of the day that lay furled like an
 idle weft
 Of heapéd spots which a bright snake
 hath left,
 Or that dark house, the blind worm's
 lair,
 When the star-wingéd moth from
 the windows hath crept,
 Steeped her soul in a tearful prayer,
 Shrank into her naked self, and
 slept.

And as she slumbered, starred and
 eyed
 All over with angry gems, at her
 side,
 The Fiends in the oak kept ward
 and watch ;
 And the querulous clock, on its rusty
 catch,
 With a quick tick, husky and thick,
 Clamored and clacked at her sharply,
 There was
 (Fronting a portrait of the Earl)
 A shrine with a dim green lamp, and
 a cross
 Of glowing cedar wreathed with
 pearl, [wit,
 Which the Arimathæan, so it was
 When he came from the holy Orient,
 Had worn, with his prayers embalm-
 ing it,
 As with the San-Grael through the
 world he went.
 Underneath were relics and gems
 From many an antique king-saint's
 crown,
 And some ('twas avouched) from the
 dusk diadems
 And mighty rings of those Wise
 Kings
 That evermore sleep 'mid the mar-
 ble stems,

'Twixt chancel and chalice in God
 his palace,
 The marvel of Cologne Town.
 In a halo dim of the lamp all night
 Smiled the sad Virgin, holy and
 white,
 With a face as full of the soul's af-
 fliction
 As one that had looked on the Cru-
 cifixion.

At moonrise the land was suddenly
 brighter ;
 And through all its length and
 breadth the casement
 Grew large with a luminous strange
 amazement,
 And, as doubting in dreams what
 that sudden blaze meant,
 The Lady's white face turned a
 thought whiter.

Sometimes in sleep light finger-tips
 Touched her behind ; the pain, the
 bliss
 Of a long slow despairing kiss
 Doubled the heat on her feverish
 lips,
 And down to her heart's-heart
 smouldering burned ;
 From lips long mute she heard her
 name ;
 Sad dreams and sweet to vex her
 came ;
 Sighing, upon her pillow, she turned,
 Like a weary waif on a weary sea
 That is heaving over continually,
 And finds no course, until for its
 sake
 The heart of the silence begins to
 ache.

Unsoothed from slumber she awoke
 An hour ere dawn. The lamp
 burned faint.
 The Fiends glared at her out of the
 oak.
 She rose, and fell at the shrine of
 the Saint.
 There with clasped hands to the
 Mother
 Of many sorrows, in sorrow, she
 prayed ;

Till all things in the room melted
 into each other,
 And vanished in gyres of flickering
 shade,
 Leaving her all alone, with the face
 Of the Saint growing large in its one
 bright place.

Then on a sudden, from far, a fear
 Through all her heart its horror
 drew,
 As of something hideous growing
 near.

Cold fingers seemed roaming through
 her damp hair ;
 Her lips were locked. The power of
 prayer
 Left her. She dared not turn. She
 knew,
 From his panel atilt on the wall up
 there,
 The grim Earl was gazing her
 through and through.

But when the casement, a grisly
 square,
 Flickered with day, she flung it wide,
 And looked below. The shore was
 bare.

In the mist tumbled the dismal tide.
 One ghastly pool seemed solid white ;
 The forked shadow of the thorn
 Fell through it, like a raven rent
 In the steadfast blank down which
 it went.

The blind world slowly gathered
 sight.
 The sea was moaning on to morn.

And the Summer into the Autumn
 waned.
 And under the watery Hyades
 The gray sea swelled, and the thick
 rained,
 And the land was darkened by slow
 degrees.

But oft, in the low West, the day
 Smouldering sent up a sullen flame
 Along the dreary waste of gray,
 As though in that red region lay,
 Heaped up, like Autumn weeds and
 flowers

For fire, its thorny fruitless hours,
And God said, "burn it all away!"

When all was dreariest in the skies,
And the gusty tract of twilight mut-
tered,

A strange slow smile grew into her
eyes,

As though from a great way off it
came

And was weary ere down to her lips
it fluttered,

And turned into a sigh, or some soft
name

Whose syllables sounded likest sighs,
Half smothered in sorrow before
they were uttered.

Sometimes, at night, a music was
rolled—

A ripple of silver harp-strings eold—
From the halls below where the
Minstrel sung,

With the silver hair, and the golden
tongue,

And the eyes of passionless, peaceful
blue

(Like twilight which faint stars gaze
through),

Wise with the years which no man
knew.

And first the music, as though the
wings

Of some blind angel were caught in
the strings,

Fluttered with weak endeavor : anon
The uncaged heart of music grew
bold

And cautiously loosened, length by
length,

The golden cone of its great under-
tone,

Like a strong man using mild lan-
guage to one

That is weaker, because he is sure of
his strength.

But once—and it was at the fall of
the day. [seem

When she, if she closed her eyes, did
To be wandering far, in a sort of
dream,

With some lost shadow, away,
away,

Down the heart of a golden land
which she

Remembered a great way over the
sea,

There came a trample of horses and
men ;

And a blowing of horns at the Castle-
Gate ;

Then a clattering noise ; then a
pause ; and then,

With the sudden jerk of a heavy
weight,

And a wrangling and jangling and
clinking and clanking,

The sound of the falling of cable and
chain ;

And a grumbling over the dewy
planking

That shrieked and sung with the
weight and strain ;

And the rough Seneschal bawled out
in the hall,

"The Earl and the Devil are come
back again !"

Her heart stood still for a moment
or more.

Then suddenly tugged, and strained,
and tore

At the roots, which seemed to give
way beneath.

She rushed to the window, and held
her breath.

High up on the beach were the long
black ships

And the brown sails hung from the
masts in strips :

And the surf was whirled over and
over them,

And swept them dripping from stern
to stem.

Within, in the great square court be-
low,

Were a hundred rough-faced men,
or so.

And one or two pale fair-haired
slaves

Whom the Earl had brought over
the winter waves.

There was a wringing of horny hands ;
 And a swearing of oaths ; and a great deal of laughter ;
 The grim Earl growling his hoarse commands
 To the Warden that followed him growling after ;
 A lowing of cattle along the wet sands ;
 And a plashing of hoofs on the slippery rafter,
 As the long-tailed black-maned horses each
 Went over the bridge from the gray sea-beach.

Then quoth the grim Earl, " fetch me a stoop !"
 And they brought him a great bowl that dripped from the brim,
 Which he seized upon with a satisfied whoop,
 Drained, and flung at the head of him
 That brought it ; then, with a laugh like a howl,
 Stroked his beard ; and strode in through the door with a growl.
 Meanwhile the pale lady grew white and whiter,
 As the poplar pales when the keen winds smite her :
 And, as the tree sways to the gust, and heaves
 Quick ripples of white alarm up the leaves,
 So did she seem to shrink and reel
 From the casement—one quiver from head to heel
 Of whitest fear. For she heard below,
 On the creaking stairway loud and slow,
 Like drops that plunge audibly down from the thunder
 Into a sea that is groaning under,
 The heavy foot of the Earl as he mounted
 Step after step to the turret : she counted

Step after step, as he hastened or halted ;
 Now clashing shrill through the archways vaulted ;
 Now muffled and thick ; now loud, and more
 Loud as he came near the Chamber door.
 Then there fell, with a rattle and shock,
 An iron glove on the iron lock,
 And the door burst open—the Earl burst through it—
 But she saw him not. The window-pane,
 Far off, grew large and small again ;
 The staggering light did wax and wane,
 Till there came a snap of the heavy brain ;
 And a slow-subsiding pulse of pain ;
 And the whole world darkened into rest.
 As the grim Earl pressed to his grausome breast
 His white wife. She hung heavy there
 On his shoulder without breath,
 Darkly filled with sleepy death
 From her heart up to her eyes ;
 Dead asleep : and ere he knew it
 (How Death took her by surprise
 Helpless in her great despair)
 Smoothing back her yellow hair,
 He kissed her icy brows : unwound
 His rough arms, and she fell to the ground.

*" The woman was fairer than she was wise :
 But the serpent was wiser than she was fair :
 For the serpent was lord in Paradise
 Or ever the woman came there.
 But when Eden-gates were barred
 again,
 And the fiery sword on guard in the East,
 The lion arose from a long repose,
 And quoth he, as he shook out his royal mane,*

'Now I am the strongest beast.'
Had the woman been wiser when she
was queen
The lion had never been king, I
ween.
But ever since storms began to lower
Beauty on earth hath been second to
Power."

And this is the song that the Minstrel
sung,
With the silver hair and the golden
tongue,
Who sung by night in the grim Earl's
hall.
And they held him in reverence one
and all.

And so she died,—the pale-faced
girl.

And, for nine days after that, the
Earl

Fumed and fret, and raved and
swore,

Pacing up and down the chamber-
floor,

And tearing his black beard as he
went,

In the fit of his sullen discontent.
And the Seneschal said it was fear-
ful to hear him ;

And not even the weather-worn
Warden went near him ;

And the shock-headed Pages huddled
anear,

And bit their white lips till they bled,
for fear.

But at last he bade them lift her
lightly,

And bury her by the gray sea-shore,
Where the winds that blew from her
own land nightly

Might wail round her grave through
the wild rocks hoar.

So they lifted her lightly at dead of
night,

And bore her down by the long torch-
light,—

Lank-haired faces, sallow and keen,
That burned out of the glassy pools
between

The splashing sands which, as they
plunged through,

The coffin-lead weighed them down
into ;

And their feet, as they plucked them
up, left pits

Which the water oozed into and out
of by fits—

—And so to the deep-mouthed bay'
black brim,

Where the pale priests, all white-
stoled and dim,

Lifted the cross and chanted the
hymn,

That her soul might have peace when
her bones were dust,

And her name be written among the
Just.

The Warden walked after the Sen-
eschal grim ;

And the shock-headed Pages walked
after him :

And with mattock and spade a grave
was made,

Where they carved the cross, and
they wrote her name,

And, returning each by the way that
he came,

They left her under the bare black
thorn.

The salt sea-wind sang shrill in the
head of it ;

And the bitter night grew chill with
the dread of it ;

When the great round moon rose up
forlorn

From the reefs, and whitened to-
wards the morn.

For the forked tree, as the bleak
blast took it,

Howled through it, and beat it, and
bit it, and shook it,

Like a living thing, bewitched and
bedeviled.

Visibly shrunk, and shuddered and
shrivelled.

And again the swallow, that false
new-comer,

Fluttered over the sea in the front
 of the summer ;
 A careless singer, as he should be
 That only skimmeth the mighty sea ;
 Dipped his wings as he came and
 went,
 And chirruped and twittered for
 heart's content,
 And built on the new-made grave.
 But when
 The Summer was over he flew back
 again.

And the Earl, as years went by, and
 his life
 Grew listless, took him another wife :
 And the Seneschal grim and the
 Warden gray
 Walked about in their wonted way :
 And the lean-jawed, sheek-haired
 Pages too
 Sung and swilled as they used to do.
 And the grooms and the squires
 gauced and swore
 And quarrelled again as they quar-
 relled before ;
 And the flowers decayed in their
 dismal beds,
 And dropped off from their lean
 shanks one by one,
 Till nothing was left but the stalks
 and the heads,
 Clumped into heaps, or ripped into
 shreds,
 To steam into salt in the sickly sun.

And the cattle lowed late up the
 glimmering plain,
 Or dipped knee-deep, and splashed
 themselves
 In the pools spat out by the spiteful
 main,
 Wallowing in sandy dykes and
 delves :
 And the blear-eyed filmy sea did
 boom
 With his old mysterious hungering
 sound :
 And the wet wind wailed in the
 chinks of the tomb,
 Till the weeds in the surf were
 drenched and drowned.

But once a stranger came over the
 wave,
 And paused by the pale-faced Lady's
 grave.

It was when, just about to set,
 A sadness held the sinking sun.
 The moon delayed to shine as yet :
 The Ave-Mary chime was done :
 And from the bell-tower, leaned the
 ringers ;
 And in the chancel paused the sing-
 ers,
 With lingering looks and clasped
 fingers :
 And the day reluctantly turned to
 his rest,
 Like some untold life, that leaves
 exprest
 But the half of its hungering love
 ere it close :
 So he went sadly toward his repose
 Deep in the heart of the slumbrous
 waves
 Kindled far off in the desolate West.
 And the breeze sprang up in the cool
 sea-caves,
 The castle stood with its courts in
 shade,
 And all its toothed towers imprest
 On the sorrowful light that sunset
 made.—
 Such a light as sleeps shut up in the
 breast
 Of some pining crimson-hearted
 rose,
 Which, as you gaze at it, grows and
 grows
 And all the warm leaves overflows ;
 Leaving its sweet source still to be
 guest.
 The crumpled shadow of the thorn
 Crawled over the sand-heaps rag-
 gedly,
 And over the gray stone cross for-
 lorn, [there
 And on to that one man musing
 Moveless, while o'er him the night
 crept on,
 And the hot yellow stars slowly, one
 after one,

Mounted into the dark blue air
 And brightened, and brightened.
 Then suddenly,
 And sadly and silently,
 Down the dim breezy brink of the
 sea sank the sun.

Ere the moon was abroad, the owl
 Made himself heard in the echoing
 tower
 Three times, four times. The bat
 with his cowl
 Came and went round the lonely
 Bower
 Where dwelt of yore the Earl's lost
 Lady.
 There night after night, for years, in
 vain
 The lingering moon had looked
 through the pane,
 And missed the face she used to find
 there,
 White and wan like some mountain
 flower
 In its rocky nook, as it paled and
 pined there,
 Only known to the moon and the
 wind there.
 Lights flitted faint in the halls down
 lower
 From lattice to lattice, and then
 glowed steady.

The dipping gull: and the long gray
 pool:
 And the reed that shows which way
 the breeze blows cool,
 From the wide warm sea to the low
 black land:
 And the wave makes no sound on
 the soft yellow sand:
 But the inland shallows sharp and
 small
 Are swarmed about with the sultry
 midge.
 And the land is still, and the ocean
 still:
 And the weeds in the rifted rocks at
 will
 Move on the tide, and float or glide.
 And into the silent western side

Of the heaven the moon begins to
 fall.
 But is it the fall of a plover's call
 That is answered warily; low yet
 shrill,
 From the sand-heapt mound and the
 rocky ridge?
 And now o'er the dark plain, so
 wild and wide
 Falls the note of a horn from the old
 drawbridge.
 Who is it that waits at the castle-
 gates?
 Call in the minstrel, and fill the
 bowl.
 Bid him loose the great music and
 let the song roll.
 Fill the bowl.
 And first, as was due, to the Earl he
 bowed:
 Next to all the Sea-chieftains, blithe
 friends of the Earl's:
 Then advanced through the praise
 of the murmuring crowd,
 And sat down, as they bade him,
 and all his black curls
 Bowed over his harp, as in doubt
 which to choose
 From the melodies coiled at his
 heart. For a man
 O'er some Beauty asleep for one
 moment might muse,
 Half in love, ere he woke her. So
 ere he began,
 He paused over his song. And they
 brought him, the Squires,
 A heavy gold cup with the red wine
 ripe in it,
 Then wave over wave of the sweet
 silver wires
 'Gan ripple, and the minstrel took
 heart to begin it.
 A harper that harps through moun-
 tain and glen,
 Wandering, wandering the wide
 world over,
 Sweetest of singers, yet saddest of
 men,
 His soul's lost Lady in vain to dis-
 cover.

Most fair and most frail of the daughters of men,
 O blest and O cursed, the man that should love her !
 Who has not loved ? and who has not lost ?
 Wherever he wander, the wide world over,
 Saging by city, and castle, and plain,
 Abiding never, forever a rover,
 Each man that shall hear him will swear almost
 In the minstrel's song that his heart can discover
 The self-same lady by whom it was crost,
 For love is love the wide world over.

What shall he liken his love unto ?
 Have you seen some cloud the sun sets through,
 When the lingering night is close at hand ?
 Have you seen some rose lie on the snow ?
 Or a summer bird in a winter land ?
 Or a lily dying for dearth of dew ?
 Or a pearl sea-cast on a barren strand ?
 Some garden never sunshine warms
 Nor any tend ? some lonely tree
 That stretches bleak its barren arms
 Turned inland from the blighting sea ?
 Her cheek was pale : her face was fair :
 Her heart, he sung, was weak and warm ;
 All golden was the sleepy hair
 That floated round about her form,
 And hid the sweetness breathing there.
 Her eyes were wild, like stars that shine
 Far off in summer nights divine :
 But her smile—it was like the golden wine
 Poured into the spirit, as into a cup,
 With passion brimming it up and up,

And marvellous fancies fair and fine.
 He took her hair to make sweet strings :
 He hid her smile deep in his song.
 This makes so rich the tune he sings
 That o'er the world 'twill linger long.

There is a land far, far away from yours.
 And there the stars are thrice as bright as these.
 And there the nightingale strange music pours
 All day out of the hearts of myrtle-trees.
 There the voice of the cuckoo sounds never forlorn
 As you hear it far off through the deep purple valleys
 And the fire-fly dances by night in the corn.
 And the little round owls in the long cypress alleys
 Whoop for joy when the moon is born. [tree,
 There ripen the olive and the tulip
 And in the sun broadens the green prickly pear ;
 And the bright galengales in the grass you may see ;
 And the vine, with her royal blue globes, dwelleth there.
 Climbing and hanging deliciously
 By every doorway and lone latticed chamber,
 Where the damsel-fly flits, and the heavy brown bee
 Hums alone, and the quick lizzards rustle and clamber.
 And all things, there, live and rejoice together.
 From the frail peach blossom that first appears
 When birds are about in the blue summer weather,
 To the oak that has lived through his eight hundred years.
 And the castles are built on the hills, not the plains.

(And the wild wind-flowers burn
about in the courts there)

They are white and undrenched by
the gray winter rains.

And the swallows, and all things,
are blithe at their sports
there.

O for one moment, at sunset, to
stand

Far, far away, in that dear distant
land

Whence they bore her,—the loveliest
lady that ever

Crosc the bleak ocean. O, never-
more, never,

Shall she stand with her feet in the
warm dry grasses

Where the faint balm-heaving breeze
heavily passes

And the white lotus-flower leans
lone on the river.

Rare were the gems which she had
for her dower.

But all the wild-flowers she left
behind her.

—A broken heart and a rose-roofed
bower.

O oft, and in many a desolate hour,
The cold strange faces she sees shall
remind her

Of hearts that were warmer, and
smiles that were kinder,

Lost, like the roses they plucked
from her bower!

Lonely and far from her own land
they laid her!

—A swallow flew over the sea to
find her.

Ah cold, cold and narrow, the bed
that they made her!

The swallow went forth with the
summer to find her.

The summer and the swallow came
back o'er the sea,

And strange were the tidings the
bird brought to me.

And the minstrel sung, and they
praised and listened,—

Gazed and praised while the min-
strel sung.

Flushed was each cheek, and each
fixt eye glistened,

And hush was each voice to the
minstrel's tongue.

But the Earl grew paler more and
more

As the song of the Singer grew
louder and clearer,

And so dumb was the hall, you
might hear the roar

Of the sea in its pauses grow nearer
and drearer.

And . . . hush! hush! hush!

O was it the wind? or was it the
rush

Of the restless waters that tumble
and splash

On the wild sea-rocks? or was it
the crash

Of stones on the old wet bridge up
there?

Or the sound of the tempest come
over the main?

—Nay, but just now the night was
fair.

Was it the march of the midnight
rain

Clattering down in the courts? or
the crash

Of armor yonder? . . . Listen
again!

Can it be lightning? can it be thun-
der?

For a light is all round the lurid
hall

That reddens and reddens the win-
dows all,

And far away you may hear the fall
As of rafter and bowlder splitting
asunder.

It is not the thunder, and it is not
the lightning

To which the castle is sounding and
brightening,

But something worse than lightning
or thunder;

For what is this that is coming yon-
der?

Which way? Here! Where?

Call the men! . . . Is it there?

Call them out ! Ring the bell !
 Ring the Fiend back to Hell !
 Ring, ring the alarum for mercy !
 . . . Too late !
 It has crawled up the walls—it has
 burst in the gate—
 It looks through the windows—it
 creeps near the hall—
 Near, more near—red and clear—
 It is here !
 Now the saints save us all !

And little, in truth, boots it ringing
 the bell.
 For the fire is loose on its way one
 may tell
 By the hot simmering whispers and
 humming up there
 In the oak-beams and rafters. Now
 one of the Squires
 His elbow hath thrust through the
 half-smouldered door,—
 Such a hole as some rat for his
 brown wife might bore,—
 And straightway in snaky, white
 wavering spires
 The thin smoke twirls through, and
 spreads eddying in gyres
 Here and there toucht with vanish-
 ing tints from the glare
 That has swathed in its rose-light
 the sharp turret stair.
 Soon the door ruined through : and
 in tumbled a cloud
 Of black vapor. And first 'twas all
 blackness, and then
 The quick forked fires leapt out
 from their shroud
 In the blackness : and through it
 rushed in the armed men
 From the court-yard. And then
 there was flying and fighting,
 And praying and cursing,—confusion
 confounded.
 Each man, at wild hazard, through
 smoke ramparts smiting,
 Has struck . . . is it friend ? is it
 foe ? Who is wounded ?
 But the Earl,—who last saw him ?
 Who cares ? who knows ?

Some one, no doubt, by the weight
 of his blows.
 And they all, at times, heard his
 oath—so they swore:—
 Such a cry as some speared wild
 beast might give vent to
 When the lean dogs are on him, and
 forth with that roar
 Of desolate wrath, the life is set
 too.
 If he die, he will die with the dying
 about him,
 And his red wet sword in his hand,
 never doubt him :
 If he live, perchance he will bear
 his new bride
 Through them all, past the bridge,
 to the wild seaside.
 And there, whether he leave, or
 keep his wife still,
 There's the free sea round him, new
 lands, and new life still.
 And . . . but ah, the red light there !
 And high up and higher
 The soft, warm, vivid sparkles crowd
 kindling, and wander
 Far away down the breathless blue
 cone of the night.
 Saints ! can it be that the ships are
 on fire,
 Those fierce hot clots of crimson
 light,
 Brightening, whitening in the
 distance yonder ?
 Slowly over the slumbrous dark
 Up from those fountains of fire spark
 on spark
 (You might count them almost)
 floats silent : and clear
 In the steadfast glow the great cross-
 beams,
 And the sharp and delicate mas-
 s show black ;
 While wider and higher the red
 light streams.
 And oozes and overflows at the back.
 Then faint through the distance a
 sound you hear,
 And the bare poles totter and dis-
 appear.

Of the Earl, in truth, the Seneschal
 swore
 (And over the ocean this tale he
 bore)
 That when, as he fled on that last
 wild night,
 He had gained the other side of the
 moat,
 Dripping, he shook off his wet
 leathern coat,
 And turning round beheld, from
 basement
 To cope, the castle swathed in light,
 And, revealed in the glare through
 My Lady's casement,
 He saw, or dreamed he saw, this
 sight—

Two forms (and one for the Earl's he
 knew,
 By the long shaggy beard and the
 broad back too)
 Struggling, grappling, like things half
 human.
 The other, he said, he but vaguely
 distinguished,
 When a sound like the shriek of an
 agonized woman
 Made him shudder, and lo, all the
 vision was gone !
 Ceiling and floor had fallen through,
 In a glut of vomited flame ex-
 tinguished ;
 And the still fire rose and broadened
 on.
 How fearful a thing is fire !
 You might make up your mind to die
 by water
 A slow cool death,—nay, at times,
 when weary
 Of pains that pass not, and pleasures
 that pall,
 When the temples throb, and the
 heart is dreary
 And life is dried up, you could even
 desire
 Through the flat green weeds to fall
 and fall
 Half asleep down the green light
 under them all,
 As in a dream, while all things seem

Wavering, wavering, to feel the
 stream
 Wind, and gurgle, and sound and
 gleam.
 And who would very much fear to
 expire
 By steel, in the front of victorious
 slaughter,
 The blithe battle about him, and
 comrades in call ?
 But to die by fire—
 O that night in the hall !

And the castle burned from base to
 top.
 You had thought that the fire would
 never stop,
 For it roared like the great north-
 wind in the pines,
 And shone as the boreal meteor
 shines
 Watched by wild hunters in shudder-
 ing bands,
 When wolves are about in the icy
 lands.
 From the sea you might mark for a
 space of three days,
 Or fainter or fiercer, the dull red
 blaze.
 And when this ceased, the smoke
 above it
 Hung so heavy not even the wind
 seemed to move it ;
 So it glared and groaned, and night
 after night
 Smouldered, — a terrible beacon-
 light.

Now the Earl's old minstrel,—he
 that had sung
 His youth out in those halls,—the
 man beloved. [tongue,
 With the silver hair and the golden
 They bore him out from the fire ; but
 he roved
 Back to the stifled courts ; and there
 They watched him hovering, day
 after day,
 To and fro, with his long white hair
 And his gold harp, chanting a lonely
 lay ;

Chanting and changing it o'er and
o'er,
Like the mournful mad melodious
breath
Of some wild swan singing himself to
death,
As he floats down a strange land
leagues away.
One day the song ceased. They
heard it no more.

Did you ever an Alpine eagle see
Come down from flying near the sun
To find his eyrie all undone
On lonely cliffs where chance hath
led
Some spying thief the brood to
plunder?
How hangs he desolate overhead,
And circling now aloft, now under,
His ruined home screams round and
round,
Then drops flat fluttering to the
ground.
So moaning round the roofs they saw
him,
With his gleaming harp and his
vesture white : [ing
Going, and coming, and ever return-
To those chambers, emptied of beauty
and state
And choked with blackness and
ruin and burning ;

Then, as some instinct seemed to
draw him,
Like hidden hands down to his fate,
He paused, plunged, dropped forever
from sight ;
And a cone of smoke and sparkles
rolled up,
As out of some troubled crater-cup

As for the rest, some died ; some
fled
Over the sea, nor ever returned.
But until to the living return the
dead,
And they each shall stand and take
their station
Again at the last great conflagration,
Never more will be seen the Earl or
the stranger.
No doubt there is much here that's
fit to be burned.
Christ save us all in that day from
the danger !
And this is why these fishermen say,
Sitting alone in their boats on the
bay,
When the moon is low in the wild
windy nights,
They hear strange sounds, and see
strange sights.
Spectres gathering all forlorn
Under the boughs of this bare black
thorn.

A SOUL'S LOSS.

"If Beauty have a soul this is not she."—TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

TWIXT the Future and the Past
There's a moment. It is o'er.
Kiss sad hands ! we part at last.
I am on the other shore.
Fly, stern Hour ! and hasten fast.
Nobler things are gone before.
From the dark of dying years
Grows a face with violet eyes,
Tremulous through tender tears,—

Warm lips heavy with rich sighs,—
Ah, they fade ! it disappears,
And with it my whole heart dies !
Dies . . . and this choked world is
sickening ;
Truth has nowhere room for breath.
Crusts of falsehood, slowly thicken-
ing
From the rottenness beneath

These rank social forms, are quick-
ening
To a loathsome life-in-death.

O those devil's market-places !
Knowing, nightly, she wa there,
Can I marvel that the traces
On her spirit are not fair ?
I forgot that air debases
When I knew she breathed such
air.

This a fair immortal spirit
For which God prepared his
spheres ?

What ! shall this the stars inherit ?
And the worth of honest tears ?
A fool's fancy all its mirth !
A fool's judgment all its fears !

No, she loves no other ! No,
That is lost which she gave me.
is this comfort,—that I know
All her spirit's poverty ?
When that dry soul is drained low,
His who wills the dregs may be !

Peace ! I trust a heart forlorn
Weakly upon boisterous speech.
Pity were more fit t an scorn.
Fingered moth, and bloomless
peach !

Gathered rose without a thorn,
Set to fleer in all men's reach !

I am clothed with her disgrace.
O her shame has made my own !
O I reel from my high place !
O All belief is overthrown
What ! This whirligig of lace,
This is the Queen that I have
known ?

Starry Queen that did confer
Beauty on the barren earth !
Woodlands, wandered oft with her
In her sadness and her mirth,
Feeling her ripe influence stir
Brought the violets to birth.

The great golden clouds of even,
They, too, knew her, and the
host

Of the eternal stars in heaven ;
And I deemed I knew he most.
I, to whom the Word was given
How archangels have been lost !

Given in vain ! . . . But all is over !
Every spell that bound me broken !
In her eyes I can discover
Of that perisht soul no token.
I can neither hate nor love her.
All my loss must be unspoken.

Mourn I may, that from her features
All the angel light is gone.
But I chide not. Human creatures
Are not angels. She was none-
Women have so many natures !
I think she loved me well with
one.

All is not with love departed.
Life remains, though toucht with
scorn.

Lonely, but not broken-hearted.
Nature changes not. The morn
Breathes not sadder. Buds have
started
To white clusters on the thorn.

And to-morow I shall see
How the leaves their green leaves
sheath

Have burst upon the chestnut-tree.
And the white rose-bush beneath
My lattice which, once tending, she
Made thrice sweeter with her
breath,

Its black buds through moss and
glue

Will swell greener. And at eve
Winking bats will waver through
The gray warmth from eave to
eave,

While the daisy gathers dew.
These things grieve not, though I
grieve.

What of that? Deep Nature's glad-
ness

Does not help this grief to less.
And the stars will show no sadness,
And the flowers no heaviness,
Though each thought should turn to
madness
'Neath the strain of its distress!

No, if life seem lone to me,
'Tis scarce lonelier that at first.
Lonely natures there must be.
Eagles are so. I was nurst
Far from love in infancy:
I have sought to slake my thirst

At high founts; to fly alone,
Haunt the heaven, and soar, and
sing.
Earth's warm joys I have not
known.

This one heart held everything.
Now my eyrie is o'erthrown!
As of old, I spread the wing,

And rise up to meet my fate
With a yet unbroken will.
When Heaven shut up Eden-gate,
Man was given the earth to till.
There's a world to cultivate,
And a solitude to fill.

Welcome man's old helpmate, Toil!
How may this heart's hurt be
healed?

Crush the olive into oil;
Turn the ploughshare; sow the
field.

All are tillers of the soil.
Each some harvest hopes to yield.

Shall I perish with the whole
Of the coming years in view
Unattempted? To the soul
Every hour brings something new.
Still suns rise: still ages roll.
Still some deed is left to do.

Some . . . but what? Small matter
now!
For one lily for her hair,

For one rose to wreath her brow,
For one gem to sparkle there,
I had . . . words, old words, I know!
What was I, that she should care

How I differed from the common
Crowd that thrills not to her
touch?

How I deemed her more than
human,
And had died to crown her such?
They? To them she is mere
woman.
O, her loss and mine is much!

Fool, she haunts me still! No
wonder!

Not a bud on you black bed,
Not a swatéd lily yonder,
But recalls some fragrance fled!
Here, what marvel I should ponder
On the last word which she said?

I must seek some other place
Where free Nature knows her not:
Where I shall not meet her face
In each old familiar spot.
There is comfort left in space.
Even this grief may be forgot.

Great men reach dead hands unto
me
From the graves to comfort me.
Shakspeare's heart is throbbing
through me.

All man has been man may be.
Plato speaks like one that knew
me.
Life is made Philosophy.

Ah, no, no! while yet the leaf
Turns, the truth upon its pall.
By the stature of this grief,
Even Shakspeare shows so small!
Plato palters with relief.
Grief is greater than them all!

They were pedants who could speak.
Greater souls have passed un-
heard:

Such as found all language weak ;
 Choosing rather to record
 Secrets before Heaven : nor break
 Faith with angels by a word.

And Heaven heeds this wretched-
 ness
 Which I suffer. Let it be.
 Would that I could love thee less !
 I, too, am dragged down by thee.

Thine—in weakness—thine—ah yes!
 Yet farewell eternally.

Child, I have no lips to chide thee.
 Take the blessing of a heart
 (Never more to beat beside thee !)
 Which in blessing breaks. De-
 part.
 Farewell. I that deified thee
 Dare not question what thou art.

THE ARTIST.

O ARTIST, range not over-wide :
 Lest what thou seek be haply hid
 In bramble blossoms at thy side,
 Or shut within the daisy-lid.

God's glory lies not out of reach.
 The moss we crush beneath our
 feet,

The pebbles on the wet sea-beach,
 Have solemn meanings strange and
 sweet.

The peasant at his cottage door
 May teach thee more than Plato
 knew :

See that thou scorn him not : adore
 God in him, and thy nature too.

Know well thy friends. The wood-
 bine's breath,

The woolly tendril on the vine,
 Are more to thee than Cato's death,
 Or Cicero's word to Catiline.

The wild rose is thy next in blood :
 Share Nature with her, and thy
 heart.

The kingcups are thy sisterhood :
 Consult them duly on thine art.

Nor cross the sea for gems. Nor
 seek :

Be sought. Fear not to dwell
 alone.

Possess thyself. Be proudly meek.
 See thou be worthy to be known.

The Genius on thy daily ways
 Shall meet, and take thee by the
 hand :

But serve him not as who obeys :
 He is thy slave if thou command :

And blossoms on the blackberry-
 stalks

He shall enchant as thou dost pass,
 Till they drop gold upon thy walks,
 And diamonds in the dewy grass.

Such largess of the liberal bowers
 From left to right is grandly flung,
 What time their subject blooms and
 flowers

King-Poets walk in state among.

Be quiet. Take things as they come ;
 Each hour will draw out some sur-
 prise.

With blessing let the days go home .
 Thou shalt have thanks from even-
 ing skies.

Lean not on one mind constantly :
 Lest, where one stood before, two
 fall.

Something God hath to say to thee
 Worth hearing from the lips of all.

All things are thine estate : yet must
Thou first display the title-deeds.
And sue the world. Be strong : and
trust
High instincts more than all the
creeds.

The world of Thought is packed so
tight,
If thou stand up another tumbles :
Heed it not, though thou have to
fight
With giants ; whoso follows
stumbles.

Assert thyself : and by and by
The world will come and lean on
thee.
But seek not praise of men : thereby
Shall false shows cheat thee.
Boldly be.

Each man was worthy at the first :
God spake to us ere we were born :
But we forget. The land is curst :
We plant the brier, reap the thorn.

Remember, every man He made
Is different : has some deed to do,
Some work to work. Be undis-
mayed,
Though thine be humble : do it
too.

Not all the wisdom of the schools
Is wise for thee. Hast thou to
speak ?
No man hath spoken for thee. Rules
Are well : but never fear to break

The scaffolding of other souls :
It was not meant for thee to mount ;
Though it may serve thee. Separate
wholes
Make up the sum of God's account.

Earth's number-scale is near us set ;
The total God alone can see :
But each some fraction : shall I fret
If you see Four where I saw
Three ?

A unit's loss the sum would mar ;
Therefore if I have One or Two,
I am as rich as others are,
And help the whole as well as you.

This wild white rosebud in my hand
Hath meanings meant for me
alone,
Which no one else can understand :
To you it breathe with altered
tone :

How shall I class its properties
For you ? or its wise whisperings
Interpret ? Other ears and eyes
It teaches many other things.

We number daisies, fringe and star :
We count the cinquefoils and the
poppies :
We know not what they mean. We
are
Degenerate copyists of copies.

We go to Nature, n. : as lords,
But servants : and she treats us
thus :
Speaks to us with indifferent words,
And from a distance looks at us.

Let us go boldly, as we ought,
And say to her, " We are a part
Of that supreme original Thought
Which did conceive thee what thou
art :

" We will not have this lofty look :
Thou shalt fall down, and recog-
nize
Thy kings : we will write in thy
book,
Command thee with our eyes."

She hath usurpt us. She should be
Our model : but we have become
Her miniature-painters. So when
we
Entreat her softly she is dumb.

Nor serve the subject overmuch :
Nor rhythm and rhyme, nor color
and form.

Know truth hath all great graces,
 such
 As shall with these thy work in-
 form.

We ransack History's tattered page:
 We prate of epoch and costume :
 Call this, and that, the Classic Age :
 Choose tunic now, now helm and
 plume :

But while we halt in weak debate:
 'Twixt that and this appropriate
 theme,
 The offended wild-flowers stare and
 wait,
 The bird hoots at us from the
 stream.

Next, as to laws. What's beautiful
 We recognize in form and face :
 And judge it thus, and thus, by rule,
 As perfect law brings perfect grace:

If through the effect we drag the
 cause,
 Dissect, divide, anatomize,
 Results are lost in loathsome laws,
 And all the ancient beauty dies :

Till we, instead of bloom and light,
 See only sinews, nerves, and veins:
 Nor will the effect and cause unite,
 For one is lost if one remains :

But from some higher point behold
 This dense, perplexing complica-
 tion ;
 And laws involved in laws unfold.
 And orb into thy contemplation.

God, when he made the seed, con-
 ceived
 The flower ; and all the work of
 sun
 And rain, before the stem was leaved,
 In that prenatal thought was done ;

The girl who twines in her soft hair
 The orange-flower, with love's
 devotion,

By the mere act of being fair
 Sets countless laws of life in mo-
 tion ;

So thou, by one thought thoroughly
 great,
 Shalt, without heed thereto, fulfil
 All laws of art. Create ! create !
 Dissection leaves the dead dead,
 still.

All Sciences are branches, each,
 Of that first science,—Wisdom.
 Seize
 The true point whence, if thou
 shouldst reach
 Thine arm out, thou may'st grasp
 all these,

And close all knowledge in thy palm.
 As History proves Philosophy :
 Philosophy, with warnings calm,
 Prophet-like, guiding History.

Burn catalogues. Write thine own
 books.
 What need to pore o'er Greece and
 Rome ?
 When whoso through his own life
 looks
 Shall find that he is fully come,

Through Greece and Rome, and
 Middle-Age :
 Hath been by turns, ere yet full-
 grown,
 Soldier, and Senator, and Sage,
 And worn the tunic and the gown.

Cut the world thoroughly to the
 heart.
 The sweet and bitter kernel crack.
 Have no half-dealings with thine art.
 All heaven is waiting : turn not
 back.

If all the world for thee and me
 One solitary shape possessed,
 What shall I say ? a single tree—
 Whereby to type and hint the rest,

And I could imitate the bark
And foliage, both in form and hue,
Or silvery-gray, or brown and dark,
Or rough with moss, or wet with
dew,

But thou, with one form in thine
eye,
Couldst penetrate all forms :
possess
The soul of form : and multiply
A million like it, more or less,—

Which were the Artist of us twain ?
The moral's clear to understand.
Where'er we walk, by hill or plain,
Is there no mystery on the land ?

The osiered, oozy water, ruffled
By fluttering swifts that dip and
wink :
Deep cattle in the cowslips muffled,
Or lazy-eyed upon the brink :

Or, when—a scroll of stars—the
night [away,
(By God withdrawn) is rolled
The silent sun, on some cold height,
Breaking the great seal of the day :

Are these not words more rich than
ours ?
O seize their import if you can !
Our souls are parched like withering
flowers, [gan.
Our knowledge ends where it be-

While yet about us fall God's dews,
And whisper secrets o'er the earth
Worth all the weary years we lose
In learning legends of our birth,

Arise, O Artist ! and restore
Their music to the moaning winds,
Love's broken pearls to life's bare
shore,
And freshness to our fainting
minds.

THE WIFE'S TRAGEDY.

I.

THE EVENING BEFORE THE FLIGHT.

TAKE the diamonds from my hair !
Take the flowers from the urn !
Fling the lattice wide ! more air !
Air—more air, or else I burn !

Put the bracelets by. And thrust
Out of sight these hated pearls.
I could trample them to dust,
Though they *were* his gift, the
Earl's !

Flusht I am ? The dance it was.
Only that. Now leave me, Sweet.
Take the flowers, Love, because
They will wither in this heat.

Good-night, dearest ! Leave the
door
Half-way open as you go.
—O, thank God ? . . . Alone once
more.
Am I dreaming ? . . . Dream-
ing ? . . . no !

Still that music underneath
Works to madness in my brain.
Even the roses seem to breathe
Poisoned perfumes, full of pain.

Let me think . . . my head is ach-
ing.
I have little strength to think.
And I know my heart is breaking.
Yet, O love, I will not shrink !

In his look was such sweet sadness.
And he fixed that look on me.
I was helpless . . . call it madness,
Call it guilt . . . but it must be.

I can bear it, if, in losing
All things else, I lose him not.
All the grief is my own choosing.
— Can I murmur at my lot ?

Ah, the night is bright and still
Over all the fields I know
And the chestnuts on the hill .
And the quiet lake below.

By that lake I yet remember
How, last year, we stood together
One wild eve in warm September
Bright with thunder : not a feather

Stirred the slumbrous swans that
floated
Past the reed-beds, husht and
white :

Towers of sultry cloud hung moated
In the lake's unshaken light :

Far behind us all the extensive
Woodland blackened against heav-
en :

And we spoke not :—pausing pen-
Till the thunder-cloud was riven,

And the black wood whitened under,
And the storm began to roll,
And the love laid up like thunder
Burst at once upon my soul.

There ! . . . the moon is just in
crescent

In the silent happy sky.
And to-night the meanest peasant
In her light's more blest than I.

Other moons I soon shall see
Over Asian headlands green :
Ocean-spaces sparkling free
Isles of breathless balm between.

And the rosy-rising star
At the setting of the day
From the distant sandy bar
Shining over Africa :

Steering through the glowing wea-
ther
Past the tracks of crimson light,
Down the sunset lost together
Far athwart the summer night.

“ Canst thou make such life thy
choice.
My heart's own, my chosen one ? ”
So he whispered and his voice
Had such magic in its tone ?

But one hour ago we parted.
And we meet again to-morrow.
Parted—silent, and sad-hearted
And we meet—in guilt and sor-
row.

But we *shall* meet . . . meet, O God,
To part never . . . the last time !
Yes ! the Ordeal shall be trod.
Burning ploughshares — love and
crime.

O with him, with him to wander
Through the wide world—only
his !

Heart and hope and heaven to
squander
On the wild wealth of his kiss !

Then ? . . . like these poor flowers
that wither

In my bosom, to be thrown
Lightly from him any whither
When the sweetness all is flown ?

O, I know it all, my fate !
But the gulf is crost forever.
And regret is born too late.
The shut Past reopens never.

Fear ? . . . I cannot fear ! for fear
Dies with hope in every breast.
O, I see the frozen sneer.
Careless smile, and callous jest !

But my shame shall yet be worn
Like the purple of a Queen.
I can answer scorn with scorn.
Fool ! I know not what I me

Yet beneath his smile (*his smile!*)
Smiles less kind I shall not see.
Let the whole wide world revile.
He is all the world to me.

So to-night all hopes, all fears,
All the bright and brief array
Of my lost youth's happier years,
With these gems I put away.

Gone! . . . so . . . one by one
all gone!
Not one jewel I retain.
Of my life's wealth. All alone
I tread boldly o'er my pain.

On to him . . . Ah, me! my child—
My own fair-haired, darling boy!
In his sleep just now he smiled
All his dreams are dreams of joy.

How those soft long lashes shade
That young cheek so husht and
warm,
Like a half-blown rosebud laid
On the little dimpled arm!

He will wake without a mother.
He will hate me when he hears
From the cold lips of another
All my faults in after years.

None will toll the deep devotion
Wherewith I have brooded o'er
His young life, since its first motion
Made me hope and pray once
more.

On my breast he smiled and slept,
Smiled between my wrongs and
me,
Till the weak warm tears I wept
Set my dry, coiled nature free.

Nay, . . . my feverish kiss would
wake him.
How can I dare bless his sleep?
They will change him soon, and
make him
Like themselves that never weep;

Fitted to the world's bad part:
Yet, with all their wealth afford
him
Aught more rich than this lost
heart
Whose last anguish yearns toward
him?

Ah, there's none will love him then
As I love that leave him now!
He will mix with selfish men.
Yes, he has his father's brow!

Lie thou there, thou poor rose-
blossom,
In that little hand more light
Than upon this restless bosom,
Whose last gift is given to-night.

God forgive me!—My God, cherish
His lone motherless infancy!
Would to-night that I might perish!
But heaven will not let me die.

O love! love! but this is bitter!
O that we had never met!
O but hate than love were fitter!
And he too may hate me yet.

Yet to him have I not given
All life's sweetness? . . . fame?
and name?
Hope? and happiness? and heaven?
Can he hate me for my shame?

"Child," he said, "thy life was
glad
In the dawning of its years:
And love's morn should be less sad,
For his eve may close in tears.

"Sweet in novel lands," he said,
"Day by day to share delight;
On by soft surprises led,
And together rest at night.

"We will see the shores of Greece,
And the temples of the Nile:
Sail where summer suns increase
Toward the south from isle to isle.

"Track the first star that swims on
Glowing depths toward night and
us,

While the heats of sunset crimson
All the purple Bosphorus.

"Leaning o'er some dark ship-side,
Watch the wane of mighty moons;
Or through starlit Venice glide,
Singing down the blue lagoons.

"So from coast to coast we'll range,
Growing nearer as we move
On our charmed way; each soft
change
Only deepening changeless love."

'Twas the dream which I, too,
dreamed
Once, long since, in days of yore.
Life's long-faded fancies seemed
At his words to bloom once more.

The old hope, the wreckt belief,
The lost light of vanisht years,
Ere my heart was worn with grief,
Or my eyes were dimmed with
tears!

When, a careless girl, I clung
With proud trust to my own pow-
ers;
Ah, long since I, too, was young,
I, too, dreamed of happier hours!

Whether this may yet be so
(Truth or dream) I cannot tell.
But where'er his footsteps go
Turns my heart, I feel too well.

Ha! the long night wears away.
Yon cold drowsy star grows dim.
The long-feared, long-wisht-for day
Comes, when I shall fly with him.

H. the laurel wakes the thrush.
Through these dreaming chambers
wide
Not a sound is stirring. Hush;
—O it was my child that cried!

II.

THE PORTRAIT.

YES, 'tis she! Those eyes! that
hair

With the self-same wondrous hue!
And that smile—which was so fair,
Is it strange I deemed it true?

Years, years, years I have not drawn
Back this curtain! there she
stands

By the terrace on the lawn,
With the white rose in her hands

And about her the armorial
Scutcheons of a haughty race,
Graven each with its memorial
Of the old Lords of the Place.

You, who do profess to see
In the face the written mind,
Look in that face, and tell me
In what part of it you find

All the falsehood, and the wrong,
And the sin, which must have
been

Hid in baleful beauty long,
Like the worm that lurks unseen.

In the shut heart of the flower.
'Tis the Sex, no doubt! And still
Some may lack the means, the power,
There's not one that lacks the will.

Their own way they seek the Devil,
Ever prone to the deceiver!
If too deep I feel this evil
And this shame, may God forgive
her!

For I loved her,—loved, ay, loved
her
As a man just once may love.
I so trusted, so approved her,
Set her, blindly, so above

This poor world which was about
her!

And (so loving her) because,
With a faith too high to doubt her,
I, forsooth, but seldom was

At her feet with clamorous praises
And protested tenderness
(These things some men can do),
phrases
On her face, perhaps her dress,

Or the flower she chose to braid
In her hair,—because, you see,
Thinking love's best proved unsaid,
And by words the dignity

Of true feeling's often lost,
I was vowed to life's broad duty ;
Man's great business uppermost
In my mind, not woman's beauty ;

Toiling still to win for her
Honor, fortune, state in life.
(“ Too much with the Minister,
And too little with the wife !”)

Just for this, she flung aside
All my toil, my heart, my name ;
Trampled on my ancient pride,
Turned my honor into shame.

O, if this old coronet
Weighed too hard on her young
brow,
Need she thus dishonor it,
Fling it in the dust so low ?

But 'tis just these women's way,—
All the same the wide world over !
Fooled by what's most worthless,
they
Cheat in turn the honest lover.

And I was not. I thank heaven,
Made, as some, to read them
through ;
Were life three times longer even,
There are better things to do.

No ! to let a woman lie
Like a canker, at the roots
Of a man's life,—burn it dry,
Nip the blossom, stunt the fruits,

This I count both shame and thrall !
Who is free to let one creature
Come between himself, and all
The true process of his nature,

While across the world the nations
Call to us that we should share
In their griefs, their exultations ?—
All they will be, all they are !

And so much yet to be done,—
Wrong to root out, good to
strengthen !
Such hard battles to be won !
Such long glories yet to lengthen !

'Mid all these, how small one grief,—
One wrecked heart, whose hopes
are o'er !
For myself I scorn relief.
For the people I care more.

Strange ! these crowds whose in-
stincts guide them
Fail to get the thing they would,
Till we nobles stand beside them,
Give our names, or shed our blood.

From of old this hath been so.
For we too were with the first
In the light fought long ago
When the chain of Charles was
burst.

Who but we set Freedom's border
Wrenched at Runnymede from
John ?

Who but we stand, towers of order,
'Twixt the red cap and the
throne ?

And they wrong us. England's Peers,
Us, the vanguard of the land,
Who should say the march of years
Makes us shrink at Truth's right
hand.

'Mid the armies of Reform,
To the People's cause allied,
We—the forces of the storm !
We—the planets of the tide !

Do I seem too much to fret
At my own peculiar woe ?
Would to heaven I could forget
How I loved her long ago !

As a father loves a child,
So I loved her :—rather thus
Than as youth loves, when our wild
New-found passions master us.

And—for I was proud of old
('Tis my nature)—doubtless she
In the man so calm, so cold,
All the heart's warmth could not
see.

Nay, I blame myself—nor lightly,
Whose chief duty was to guide
Her young careless life more rightly
Through the perils at her side.

Ah, but love is blind ! and I
Loved her blindly, blindly ! . . .
Well.

Who that ere loved trustfully
Such strange danger could fore-
tell ?

As some consecrated cup
On its saintly shrine secure,
All my life seemed lifted up
On that heart I deemed so pure.

Well, for me there yet remains
Labor—that's much : then, the
state :

And, what pays a thousand pains,
Sense of right and scorn of fate.

And, O, more ! . . . my own brave
boy,

With his frank and eager brow,
And his hearty innocent joy.
For as yet he does not know

All the wrong his mother did.
Would that this might pass un-
known !

For his young years God forbid
I should darken by my own.

Yet this must come . . . but I mean
He shall be, as time moves on,
All his mother might have been,
Comfort, counsel—both in one.

Doubtless, first, in that which moved
me
Man's strong natural wrath had
part.

Wronged by one I deemed had
loved me,
For I loved her from my heart !

But that's past ! If I was sore
To the heart, and blind with
shame,

I see calmly now. Nay, more,—
For I pity where I blame.

For, if he betray or grieve her,
What is her's to turn to still ?
And at last, when he shall leave
her,
As at last he surely will,

Where shall she find refuge ? what
That worst widowhood can
soothe ?

For the Past consoles her not,
Nor the memories of her youth,

Neither that which in the dust
She hath flung,—the name she
bore ;

But with her own shame she must
Dwell forsaken evermore.

Nothing left but years of anguish,
And remorse but not return :
Of her own self-hate to languish :
For her long-lost peace to yearn :

Or, yet worse beyond all measure,
Starting from wild reveries,
Drain the poison misnamed Pleas-
ure,
And laugh drunken on the lees.

O false heart ! O woman, woman,
Woman ! would thy treachery
Had been less ! For surely no man
Better loved than I loved thee.

We must never meet again.
Even shouldst thou repent the
past.

Both must suffer : both feel pain :
Ere God pardon both at last.

Farewell, thou false face! Life
 speeds me
 On its duties. I must fight :
 I must toil. The People needs me :
 And I speak for them to-night.

III.

THE LAST INTERVIEW.

THANKS, Dear! Put the lamp
 down . . . so,
 For my eyes are weak and dim.
 How the shadows come and go!
 Speak truth,—have they sent for
 him ?

Yes, thank Heaven! And he will
 come,
 Come and watch my dying hour,—
 Though I left and shamed his home.
 —I am withered like this flower

Which he gave me long ago.
 'Twas upon my bridal eve,
 When I swore to love him so
 As a wife should—smile or grieve

With him, for him—and not shrink.
 And now? . . . O the long, long
 pain!
 See this sunken cheek! You think
 He would know my face again?

All its wretched beauty gone!
 Only the deep eare survives.
 Ah, could years of grief atone
 For those fatal hours! . . . It
 drives

Past the pane, the bitter blast!
 In this garret one might freeze.
 Hark there! wheels below! At last
 He is come then? No . . . the
 trees

And the night-wind—nothing more!
 Set the chair for him to sit.
 When he comes. And close the
 door,
 For the gust blows cold through it.

When I think, I can remember
 I was born in castle-halls,—
 How you dull and dying ember
 Glares against the whitewash
 walls!

If he come not (but you said
 That the messenger was sent
 Long since?) Tell him when I'm
 dead
 How my life's last hours were
 spent

In repenting that life's sin.
 And . . . the room grows strangely
 dark!
 See, the rain is oozing in.
 Set the lamp down nearer. Hark,

Footsteps, footsteps on the stairs!
 His . . . no, no! 'twas *not* the
 wind.
 God, I know, has heard my prayers.
 We shall meet. I am resigned.

Prop me up upon the pillows.
 Will he come to my bedside?
 Once 'twas his . . . Among the
 willows
 How the water seems to glide!

Past the woods, the farms, the tow-
 ers,
 It seems gliding, gliding through.
 "Dearest, see, these young June
 flowers,
 I have pluckt them all for you,

"Here, where passed my boyhood
 musing
 On the bride which I might wed."
 Ah, it goes now! I am losing
 All things. What was that he
 said?

Say, where am I? . . . This strange
 room?

THE EARL.

Gertrude!

GERTRUDE.

Ah, his voice! I knew it
But this place? . . . Is this the
tomb,
With the cold dews creeping
through it?

THE EARL.

Gertrude! Gertrude!

GERTRUDE.

Will you stand
Near me? Sit down. Do not
stir.

Tell me, may I take your hand?
Tell me, will you look on her

Who so wronged you? I have wept
O such tears for that sin's sake!
And that thought has never slept,—
But it lies here, like a snake,

In my bosom,—gnawing, gnawing
All my life up! I had meant,
Could I live yet . . . Death is draw-
ing
Near me—

THE EARL.

God, thy punishment!
Dare I judge her?—

GERTRUDE.

O, believe me,
'Twas a dream, a hideous dream.
And I wake now. Do not leave me.
I am dying. All things seem

Failing from me—even my breath!
But my sentence is from old.
Sin came first upon me. Death
Follows sin, soon, soon! Behold,

Dying thus! Ah, why didst leave
Lonely Love's lost bridal bowers
Where I found the snake, like Eve,
Unsuspected 'mid the flowers?

Had I been some poor man's bride,
I had shared with love his lot:

Labored truly by his side,
And made glad his lowly cot.

I had been content to mate
Love with labor's sunburnt brows.
But to be a thing of state,—
Homeless in a husband's house!

In the gorgeous game—the strife
For the dazzling prize—that moved
you—
Love seemed crowded out of life—

THE EARL.

Ah fool! and I loved you, loved
you!

GERTRUDE.

Yes. I see it all at last—
All in ruins. I can dare
To gaze down o'er my lost past
From these heights of my despair.

O, when all seemed grown most
drear—
I was weak—I cannot tell—
But the serpent in my ear
Whispered, whispered—and I fell.

Lood around now. Does it cheer
you,
This strange place? the wasted
frame
Of the dying woman near you,
Weighed into her grave by shame?

Can you trace in this wan form
Aught resembling that young
girl's
Whom you loved once? See, this
arm—
Shrunken, shrunken! And my
curls,

They have cut them all away.
And my brows are worn with woe.
Would you, looking at me, say,
She was lovely long ago?

Husband, answer! in all these
Are you not avenged? If I

Could rise now, upon my knees,
 At your feet, before I die,
 I would fall down in my sorrow
 And my shame, and say "for-
 give,"
 That which will be dust to-morrow,
 This weak clay !

THE EARL.

Poor sufferer, live.
 God forgives. Shall I not so ?

GERTRUDE.

Nay, a better life, in truth,
 I do hope for. Not below.
 Partner of my perisht youth,

Husband, wronged one ! Let your
 blessing
 Be with me, before, to-night,
 From the life that's past redressing
 This strayed soul must take its
 flight !

Tears, warm tears ! I feel them
 creep
 Down my cheek. Tears—not my
 own.

It is long since I could weep.
 Past all tears my grief hath grown.

Over this dry withered cheek,
 Drop by drop, I feel them fall.
 But my voice is growing weak :
 And I have not spoken al'

I had much to say. My son,
 My lost child that never knew me !
 Is he like me ? One by one.
 All his little ways come to me.

Is he grown ? I fancy him !
 How that childish face comes
 back
 O'er my memory sweet and dim !
 And his long hair ? Is it black ?

Or as mine was once ? His mother
 Did he ever ask to see ?
 Has he grown to love another—
 Some strange woman not like me ?

Would he shudder to behold
 This pale face and faded form
 If he knew, in days of old,
 How he slumbered on my arm ?

How I nurst him ? loved him ?
 missed him
 All this long heartbroken time ?
 It is years since last I kissed him.
 Does he hate me for my crime ?

I had meant to send some token—
 If, indeed, I dared to send it.
 This old chain—the links are
 broken—
 Like my life—I could not mend it.

Husband, husband ! I am dying,
 Dying ! Let me feel your kiss
 On my brow where I am lying.
 You are great enough for this !

And you'll lay me, when I'm gone,
 —Not in those old sculptured
 walls !
 Let no name be carved—no stone—
 No ancestral funerals !

In some little grave of grass
 Anywhere, you'll let me lie :
 Where the night-winds only pass,
 Or the clouds go floating by ;

Where my shame may be forgot ;
 And the story of my life
 And my s'n remem'ere I not.
 So forget the faithless wife ;

Or if, haply, when I'm dead,
 On some worthier happier breast
 Than mine was, you lean your head,
 Should one thought of me molest

Those calm hours, recall me only
 As you see me,—worn with tears :
 Dying desolate here ; left lonely
 By the overthrow of years.

May I lay my arm, then, there ?
 Does it not seem strange to you,
 This old hand among your hair ?
 And these wasted fingers too ?

How the lamp wanes ! All grows dark—

Dark and strange. Yet now there shined [hark !

Something past me . . . Husband, There are voices on the wind.

Are they come ? and do they ask me For the songs we used to sing ? Strange that memory thus should task me !

Listen—

Birds are on the wing :

And thy Birthday Morn is rising.

May it ever rise as bright !

Wake not yet ! The day's devising Fair new things for thy delight.

Wake not yet ! Last night this flower

Near thy porch began to pout From its warm sheath : in an hour All the young leaves will be out.

Wake not yet ! So dear thou art, love,

That I grudge these buds the bliss Each will bring to thy young heart, love,

I would claim all for my kiss.

Wake not yet !

—There now, it fails me !

Is my lord there ? I am ill.

And I cannot tell what ails me.

Husband ! Is he near me still ?

O, this anguish seems to crush All my life up,—body and mind !

THE EARL.

Gertrude ! Gertrude ! Gertrude !

GERTRUDE.

Hush !

There are voices in the wind.

THE EARL.

Still she wanders ! Ah, the plucking

At the sheet !

GERTRUDE.

Hist ! do not take it

28

From my bosom. See, 'tis sucking ! If it sleep we must not wake it.

Such a little rosy mouth !

—Not to-night, O not to-night !

Did he tell me in the South [right ? That those stars were twice as

Off ! away ! unhand me—go !

I forgive thee my lost heaven.

And the wrong which thou didst do.

Would my sin, too, were forgiven !

Gone at last ! . . . Ah, fancy feigns

These wild visions ! I grow weak.

Fast, fast dying ! Life's warmth wanes

From me. Is the fire out ?

THE EARL.

Speak,

Gertrude, speak ! My wife, my wife !

Nay she is not dead.—not dead !

See, the lips move. There is life.

She is choking. Lift her head.

GERTRUDE.

* * * * *

Death ! . . . My eyes grow dim, and dimmer.

I can scarcely see thy face.

But the twilight seems to glimmer,

Lighted from some distant place.

Husband !

THE EARL.

Gertrude !

GERTRUDE.

Art thou near me ?

On thy breast—once more—thy breast ! [me.

I have sinned—and—nay, yet hear And repented—and—

THE EARL.

The rest

God hath heard, where now thou art, Thou poor soul,—in Heaven.

The door—

Close it softly, and depart.

Leave us !

She is mine once more.

MINOR POEMS.

THE PARTING OF LAUNCELOT
AND GUENEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

Now, as the time wore by to Our
Lady's Day,
Spring lingered in the chambers of
the South.

The nightingales were far in fairy
lands

Beyond the sunset: but the wet blue
woods

Were half aware of violets in the
wake

Of morning rains. The swallow still
delayed

To build and be about in noisy
roofs,

And March was moaning in the
windy elm.

But Arthur's royal purpose held to
keep

A joust of arms to solemnize the
time

In stately Camelot. So the King sent
forth

His heralds, and let cry through all
the land

That he himself would take the lists,
and tilt

Against all comers.

Hither came the chiefs
Of Christendom. The King of North-
galies;

Anguise, the King of Ireland; the
Haut Prince,

Sir Galahault; the King o' the
Hundred Knights;

The Kings of Scotland and of Brit-
tany;

And many more renowned knights
whereof

The names are glorious. Also all
the earls,

And all the dukes, and all the mighty
men

And famous heroes of the Table
Round,

From far Northumberland to where
the wave

Rides rough on Devon from the outer
main.

So that there was not seen for seven
years,

Since when, at Whitsuntide, Sir
Galahad

Departed out of Carlyel from the
court,

So fair a fellowship of goodly
knights.

Then would King Arthur that the
Queen should ride

With him from Carlyel to Camelot
To see the jousts. But she, because
that yet

The sickness was upon her, answered
nay.

Then said King Arthur, "This re-
penteth me.

For never hath been seen for seven
years, [tide,

No, not since Galahad at Whitsun-
Departed from us out of Carlyel,

So fair a fellowship of goodly
knights."

But the Queen would not, and the
king in wrath,

Brake up the court, and rode to As-
tolat.

On this side Camelot.

Now men said the Queen
Tarried behind because of Launce-
lot,

For Launcelot stayed to heal him of
his wound.

And there had been estrangement
 'twixt these two
 I' the later time, because of bitter
 words.
 So when the king with all his fellow-
 ship
 Was ridden out of Carlyel, the Queen
 Arose, and called to her Sir Launce-
 lot.

Then to Sir Launcelot spoke Queen
 Guenevere.

“Not for the memory of that love
 whereof
 No more than memory lives, but,
 Sir, for that
 Which even when love is ended yet
 endures
 Making immortal life with deathless
 deeds,
 Honor—true knighthood's golden
 spurs, the crown
 And priceless diadem of peerless
 Queens,—
 I make appeal to you, that hear per-
 chance
 The last appeal which I shall ever
 make.
 So weigh my words not lightly! for
 I feel
 The fluttering fires of life grow faint
 and cold
 About my heart. And oft, indeed,
 to me
 Lying whole hours awake in the
 dead nights
 The end seems near, as though the
 darkness knew
 The angel waiting there to call my
 soul
 Perchance before the house awakes;
 and oft
 When faint, and all at once, from
 far away,
 The mournful midnight bells begin
 to sound
 Across the river, all the days that
 were
 (Brief, evil days!) return upon my
 heart,

And, where the sweetness seemed, I
 see the sin.
 For, waking lone, long hours before
 the dawn,
 Beyond the borders of the dark I
 seem
 To see the twilight of another world,
 That grows and grows and glimmers
 on my gaze.
 And oft, when late, before the lan-
 guorous moon
 Through yonder windows to the
 West goes down
 Among the pines, deep peace upon
 me falls,
 Deep peace like death, so that I
 think I know
 The blessed Mary and the righteous
 saints
 Stand at the throne and intercede
 for me.
 Wherefore these things are thus I
 cannot tell.
 But now I pray you of your fealty,
 And by all knightly faith which may
 be left,
 Arise and get you hence, and join
 the King.
 For wherefore hold you thus behind
 the court,
 Seeing my liege the King is moved
 in wrath?
 For wete you well what say your
 foes and mine.
 “See how Sir Launcelot and Queen
 Guenevere
 Do hold them ever thus behind the
 King
 That they may take their pleasure!
 Knowing not
 How that for me all these delights
 are come
 To be as withered violets.”

Half in tears
 She ceased abrupt. Given up to the
 proud grief,
 Vexed to be vexed. With love and
 anger moved.
 Love toucht with scorn, and anger
 pierced with love.

About her, all unheeded, her long
 hair
 Loosed its warm, yellow, waving
 loveliness,
 And o'er her bare and shining shoul-
 der cold
 Fell floating free. Upon one full
 white arm,
 To which the amorous purple cover-
 let
 Clung dimpling close, her drooping
 state was propt.
 There, half in shadow of her soft
 gold curls,
 She leaned, and like a rose enrich
 with dew,
 Whose heart is heavy with the cling-
 ing bee,
 Bowed down toward him all her
 glowing face,
 While the light of her large angry
 eyes
 Uprose, and rose, a slow imperious
 sorrow,
 And o'er the shine of still, unquiver-
 ing tears
 Swam on to him.

But he, with brows averse
 And orgolous looks, three times to
 speech addressed,
 Three times in vain. The silence of
 the place
 Fell like a hand upon his heart, and
 hushed.
 His foolish anger with authority.
 He would not see the wretched
 Queen: he saw
 Only the hunter on the arrassed
 wall
 Prepare to wind amort his bugle
 horn,
 And the long daylight dying down
 the floors;
 For half-way through the golden
 gates of eve
 The sun was rolled. The dropping
 tapestry glowed
 With awful hues. Far off among
 his reeds [light,
 The river, smitten with a waning

Shone; and, behind black lengths of
 pine revealed,
 The red West smouldered, and the
 day declined.
 Then year by year, as wave on wave
 a sea,
 The tided Past came softly o'er his
 heart,
 And all the days which had been.

So he stood
 Long in his mind divided: with him-
 self
 At strife; and, like a steed that hotly
 chafes
 His silver bit, which yet some silken
 rein
 Swayed by a skilled accustomed
 hand restrains,
 His heart against the knowledge of
 its love
 Made vain revolt, and fretful rose and
 sunk.
 But at the last, quelling a wayward
 grief,
 That swelled against all utterance,
 and sought
 To force its salt and sorrowful over-
 flow
 Upon weak language, "Now in-
 deed," he cried,
 "I see the face of the old time is
 changed,
 And all things altered! Will the
 sun still burn?
 Still burn the eternal stars? For
 love was deemed
 Not less secure than these. Needs
 should there be
 Something remarkable to prove the
 world
 I am no more that Lameclot, nor
 thou
 That Guenevere, of whom, long
 since, the fame,
 Fruitful of noble deeds, with such a
 light
 Did fill this nook and cantle of the
 earth,
 That all great lands of Christendom
 beside

Showed darkened of their glory. But
I see

That there is nothing left for men to
swear by.

For then thy will did never urge me
hence,

But drew me through all dangers to
thy feet.

And none can say, least thou, I have
not been [fame.

The staff and burgonet of thy fair
Nor mind you, Madam, how in Sur-
luse once,

When all the estates were met, and
noble judges,

Armed clean with shields, set round
to keep the right,

Before you sitting throned with
Galahault

In great array, on fair green quilts
of samite,

Rich, ancient, fringed with gold,
seven summer days,

And all before the Earls of North-
galies,

Such service then with this old
sword was wrought,

To crown thy beauty in the courts of
Fame,

That in that time fell many noble
knights,

And all men marvelled greatly? So
when last

The loud horns blew to lodging, and
we supped

With Palamedes and with Lamorak,
All those great dukes and kings, and
famous queens,

Beholding us with a deep joy,
avouched

Across the golden cups of costly
wine

'There is no Queen of love but
Guenevere.

And no true knight but Launcelot of
the Lake!'"

Thus he, transported by the thought
of days

And deeds that, like the mournful
martial sounds

Blown through sad towns where
some dead king goes by,

Made music in the chambers of his
heart,

Swept by the mighty memory of the
past.

Nor spake the sorrowful Queen, nor
from deep muse

Unbent the grieving beauty of her
brows,

But held her heart's proud pain
superbly still.

But when he lifted up his looks, it
seemed

Something of sadness in the ancient
place,

Like dying breath from lips beloved
of yore,

Or unforgotten touch of tender
hands

After long years, upon his spirit
fell.

For near the carven casement hung
the bird,

With hood and jess, that oft had led
them forth,

These lovers, through the heart of
rippling woods

At morning, in the old and pleasant
time.

And o'er the broidered canopies of
state

Blazed Uther's dragons, curious,
wrought with gems.

Then to his mind that dear and dis-
tant dawn

Came back, when first, a boy at
Arthur's court,

He paused abasht before the youth-
ful Queen.

And, feeling now her long imploring
gaze

Holding him in its sorrow, when he
marked

How changed her state, and all un-
like to her,

The most renownéd beauty of the
time,

And pearl of chivalry, for whom
himself

All on a summer's day broke, long
of yore
A hundred lances in the field, he
sprang
And caught her hand, and, falling to
one knee,
Arched all his baughty neck to a
quick kiss.
And there was silence. Silently the
West
Grew red and redder, and the day
declined.

As o'er the hungering heart of some
deep sea,
That swells against the planets and
the moon
With sad continual strife and vain
unrest,
In silence rise and roll the laboring
clouds
That bind the thunder, o'er the
heaving heart
Of Guenevere all sorrows fraught
with love,
All stormy sorrows, in that silence
passed.
And like a star in that tumultuous
night
Love waxed and waned, and came
and went, changed hue,
And was and was not : till the cloud
came down,
And all her soul dissolved in show-
ers : and love
Rose through the broken storm ; and,
with a ery
Of passion sheathed in sharpest
pain, she stretched
Wide her warm arms : she rose, she
reeled, and fell
(All her great heart unqueened)
upon the breast
Of Launcelot ; and, lifting up her
voice,
She wept aloud, " Unhappy that I
am,"
She wept, " Unhappy ! Would that
I had died
Long since, long ere I loved thee,
Launcelot !

Would I had died long since ! ere I
had known
This pain, which hath become my
punishment,
To have thirsted for the sea : to have
received
A drop no bigger than a drop of
dew !
I have done ill," she wept, " I am
forlorn,
Forlorn ! I falter where I stood
secure :
The tower I built is fall'n, is fall'n :
the staff
I leaned upon hath broken in my
hand.
And I, disrobed, dethroned, dis-
crowned, and all undone,
Survive my kingdom, widowed of
all rule,
And men shall mock me for a foolish
Queen.
For now I see thy love for me is
dead,
Dead that brief love which was the
light of life,
And all is dark : and I have lived too
long.
For how henceforth, unhappy, shall
I bear
To dwell among these halls where
we have been ?
How keep these chambers emptied
of thy voice ?
The walks where we have lingered
long ago, [love,
The gardens and the places of our
Which shall recall the days that
come no more,
And all the joy which has been ?"
Thus o'erthrown,
And on the breast of Launcelot
weeping wild—
Weeping and murmuring — hung
Queen Guenevere.
But, while she wept, upon her brows
and lips
Warm kisses fell, warm kisses wet
with tears.
For all his mind was melted with re-
morse,

And all his scorn was killed, and all
 his heart
 Gave way in that caress, and all the
 love
 Of happier years rolled down upon
 his soul
 Redoubled ; and he bowed his head,
 and cried,
 * Though thou be variable as the
 waves,
 More sharp than winds among the
 Hebrides
 That shut the frozen Spring in
 stormy clouds.
 As wayward as a child, and all un-
 just,
 Yet must I love thee in despite of
 pain,
 Thou peerless Queen of perfect love!
 Thou star
 That draw'st all tides ! Thou god-
 dess far above
 My heart's weak worship ! so adored
 thou art,
 And I so irretrievably all thine !
 But now I will arise, as thou hast
 said.
 And join the King : and these thine
 enemies
 Shall know thee not defenceless any
 more.
 For, either, living, I yet hold my
 life
 To arm for thine, or, dying, by my
 death
 Will steep love's injured honor in
 such blood
 Shall wash out every stain ! And so
 farewell, [1ar.
 Beloved. Forget me not when I am
 But in thy prayers and in thine even-
 ing thoughts
 Remember me : as I, when sundown
 crowns
 The distant hills, and Ave-Mary
 rings.
 Shall pine for thee on ways where
 thou art not."
 So these two lovers in one long em-
 brace,

An agony of reconciliation, hung
 Blinded in tears and kisses, lip to
 lip,
 And tranced from past and future,
 time and space.
 But by this time, the beam of the
 slope day,
 Edging blue mountain glooms with
 sullen gold,
 A dying fire, fell mournfully athwart
 The purple chambers. In the courts
 below
 The shadow of the keep from wall to
 wall
 Shook his dark skirt : great chimes
 began to sound,
 And swing, and rock in glimmering
 heights, and roll
 A reeling music down : but ere it
 fell
 Faint bells in misty spires adown the
 vale
 Caught it, and bore it floating on to
 night.
 So from that long love-trance the
 envious time
 Reclaimed them. Then with a great
 pang he rose
 Like one that plucked his heart out
 from his breast,
 And, bitterly unwinding her white
 arms
 From the warm circle of their amor-
 ous fold,
 Left living on her lips the lingering
 heat
 Of one long kiss : and, gathering
 strongly back
 His poured-out anguish to his soul,
 he went.
 And the sun set.
 Long while she sat alone,
 Searching the silence with her fixed
 eyes,
 While far and farther off o'er dis-
 tant floors
 The intervals of brazen echoes fell.
 A changeful light, from varying pas-
 sions caught,

Flushed all her stately cheek from
white to red
In doubtful alternation, as some star
Changes his fiery beauty : for her
blood
Set headlong to all wayward moods
of sense,
Stirred with swift ebb and flow : till
suddenly all
The frozen heights of grief fell
loosed, fast, fast,
In cataract over cataract, on her soul.
Then at the last she rose, a reeling
shape
That like a shadow swayed against
the wall,
Her slight hand held upon her bosom,
and fell
Before the Virgin Mother on her
knees.
There, in a halo of the silver shrine,
That touched and turned to starlight
her slow tears,
Below the feet of the pale-pictured
saint
She lay, poured out in prayer.

Meanwhile, without,
A sighing rain from a low fringe of
cloud
Whispered among the melancholy
hills.
The night's dark limits widened : far
above
The crystal sky lay open : and the
star
Of eve, his rosy circlet trembling
clear,
Grew large and bright, and in the
silver moats,
Between the accumulated terraces,
Tangled a trail of fire : and all was
still.

- A SUNSET FANCY.

JUST at sunset, I would be
In some isle garden, where the sea
I look into shall seem more blue
Than those dear and deep eyes do.
And, if anywhere the breeze
Shall have stirred the cypress-trees,

Straight the yellow light falls
through,
Catching me, for once, at ease ;
Just so much as may impinge
Some tall lily with a tinge
Of orange ; while, above the wall,
Tumbles downward into view
(With a sort of small surprise)
One star more among them all,
For me to watch with half-shut eyes.

Or else upon the breezy deck
Of some felucca ; and one speck
'Twixt the crimson and the yellow,
Which may be a little fleck
Of cloud, or gull with outstretcht
neck,
To Spezia bound from Cape Circello ;
With a sea-song in my ears
Of the bronzed buccaneers :
While the night is waxing mellow,
And the helmsman slackly steers,—
Leaning, talking to his fellow,
Who has oaths for all he hears,—
Each thief swarthier than Othello.
Or, in fault of better things,
Close in sound of one who sings
To casements, in a southern city ;
Tinkling upon tender strings
Some melodious old love-ditty ;
While a laughing lady flings
One rose to him, just for pity.
But I have not any want
Sweeter than to be with you,
When the long light falleth slant,
And heaven turns a darker blue ;
And a deeper smile grows through
The glance asleep 'neath those soft
lashes,
Which the heart it steals into
First inspires and then abashes.
Just to hold your hand,—one touch
So light you scarce should feel it
such !
Just to watch you leaning o'er
Those window-roses, love, . . . no
more.

ASSOCIATIONS.

You know the place is just the same!
The rooks build here : the sandy
hill is

Ablaze with broom, as when she
came
Across the sea with her new name
To dwell among the moated lilies.

The trifoly is on the walls :
The daisies in the bowling-alley :
The ox at eve lows from the stalls :
At eve the cuckoo, floating, calls,
When foxgloves tremble in the
valley.

The iris blows from court to court :
The bald white spider flits, or
stays in

The chinks behind the dragonwort :
That Triton still, at his old sport,
Blows bubbles in his broken basin.

The terrace where she used to walk
Still shines at noon between the
roses :

The garden paths are blind with
chalk :

The dragon-fly from stalk to stalk
Swims sparkling blue till evening
closes.

Then, just above that long dark
copse,
One warm red star comes out, and
passes

Westward, and mounts, and mounts,
and stops

(Or seems to) o'er the turret-tops,
And lights those lonely casement-
glasses.

Sir Ralph still wears that old grim
smile.

The staircase creaks as up I
clamber

To those still rooms, to muse awhile.
I see the little meadow-stile
As I lean from the great south-
chamber.

And Lady Ruth is just as white.
(Ah, still, that face seems strangely
like her !)
The lady and the wicked knight—

All just the same—she swooned for
fright—
And he—his arm still raised to
strike her.

Her boudoir—no one enters there :
The very flowers which last she
gathered
Are in the vase ; the lute—the
chair—
And all things—just as then they
were !

Except the jasmins,—those are
withered.

But when along the corridors
The last red pause of day is stream-
ing,

I seem to hear her up the floors :
I seem to see her through the doors :
And then I know that I am dream-
ing.

MEETING AGAIN.

YES ; I remember the white rose.
And since then the young ivy
has grown :

From your window we could not
reach it, and now it is over the
stone.

We did not part as we meet, Dear.
Well, Time hath his own stern
cures !

And Alice's eyes are deeper, and
her hair has grown like yours.

Is our greeting all so strange then ?
But there's something here
amiss.

When it is not well to speak kindly.
And the olives are ripe by this.

I had not thought you so altered.
But all is changed, God
knows !

Good-night. It is night so soon,
now. Look there ! you have
dropt your rose.

Nay, I have one that is withered and
dearer to me. I came

To say good-night, little Alice. She
does not remember my name.
It is but the damp that is making
my head and my heart ache
so.

I never was strong in the old time,
as the others were, you know.

And you'll sleep well, will you not,
Darling? The old words
sound so dear!

'Tis the last time I shall use them;
you need show neither anger
nor fear.

It is well that you look so cheerful.
And is time so smooth with
you?

How foolish I am! Good night,
Dear. And bid Alice good
night too.

ARISTOCRACY.

To thee be all men heroes: every
race

Noble: all women virgins: and
each place

A temple: know thou nothing that
is base.

THE MERMAIDEN.

HE was a Prince with golden hair
(In a palace beside the sea),
And I but a poor Mermaid, —
And how should he care for me?

Last summer I came, in the long
blue nights,

To sit in the cool sea-caves:

Last summer he came to count the
stars

From his terrace above the waves.

There's nothing so fair in the sea
down there

As the light on his golden tresses:
There's nothing so sweet as his
voice: ah, nothing

So warm as the warmth of his
kisses!

I could not help but love him, love
him,

Till my love grew pain to me.
And to-morrow he weds the Princess
In that palace beside the sea.

AT HER CASEMENT.

I AM knee-deep in grass, in this
warm June night,
In the shade here, shut off from the
great moonlight.

All alone, at her casement there,
She sits in the light, and she combs
her hair.

She shakes it over the carven seat,
And combs it down to her stately
feet.

And I watch her, hid in the blue
June night,

Till my soul grows faint with the
costly sight.

There's no flaw on that fair fine brow
of hers,

As fair and as proud as Lucifer's.
She looks in the glass as she turns
her head:

She knows that the rose on her cheek
is red:

She knows how her dark eyes shine,
—their light

Would scarcely be dimmed though I
died to-night.

I would that there in her chamber I
stood,

Full-face to her terrible beauty! I
would

I were laid on her queenly breast, at
her lips,

With her warm hair wound through
my finger-tips,

Draining her soul at one deep-drawn
kiss

And I would be humbly content for
this

To die, as is due, before the morn,
Killed by her slowly returning
scorn.

A FAREWELL.

BE happy, child. The last wild
words are spoken.
To-morrow, mine no more, the world
will claim thee.
I blame thee not. But all my life is
broken.
Of that brief Past I have no single
token.
Never in years to come my lips shall
name thee,
Never, child, never !
I will not say "Forget me ;" nor
those hours
Which were so sweet. Some scent
dead leaves retain.
Keep all the flowers I gave thee—all
the flowers
Dead, dead ! Though years on years
of life were ours. [again ;
As we have met we shall not meet
Forever, child, forever !

AN EVENING IN TUSCANY.

Look ! the sun sets. Now's the
rarest
Hour of all the blessed day.
(Just the hour, love, you look
fairest !)
Even the snails are out to play.
Cool the breeze mounts, like this
Chianti
Which I drain down to the sun.
—There ! shut up that old green
Dante,—
Turn the page, where we begun,
At the last news of Ulysses,—
A grand image, fit to close
Just such grand gold eyes as this is,
Full of splendor and repose !
So loop up those long bright
tresses,—
Only, one or two must fall
Down your warm neck Evening
kisses
Through the soft curls spite of all.

Ah, but rest in your still place
there ! [pleasure
Stir not — turn not ! the warm
Coming, going in your face there.
And the rose (no richer treasure)

In your bosom, like my love there,
Just half secret and half seen ;
And the soft light from above there
Streaming o'er you where you
lean,

With your fair head in the shadow
Of that grass-hat's glancing brim.
Like a daisy in a meadow
Which its own deep fringes dim.

O you laugh, — you cry "What
folly !"
Yet you'd scarcely have me wise,
If I judge right, judging wholly
By the secret in your eyes.

But look down now, o'er the city
Sleeping soft among the hills,—
Our dear Florence ! That great Pitti
With its steady shadow fills

Half the town up : its unwinking
Cold white windows, as they
glare [ing
Down the long streets, set one think-
Of the old dukes who lived there ;

And one pictures those strange men
so !—
Subtle brains, and iron thews !
There, the gardens of Lorenzo,—
The long cypress avenues

Creep up slow the stately hillside
Where the merry loungers are.
But far more I love this still side,—
The blue plain you see so far !

Where the shore of bright white
villas
Leaves off faint : the purple
breadths
Of the olives and the willows :
And the gold-rimmed mountain-
widths :

All transfused in slumbrous glory
To one burning point—the sun!
But up here,—slow, cold, and hoary
Reach the olives, one by one :

And the land looks fresh : the yellow
Arbute-berries, here and there,
Growing slowly ripe and mellow
Through a flush of rosy hair.

For the Tramontana last week
Was about : 'tis scarce three
weeks
Since the snow lay, one white vast
streak,
Upon those old purple peaks.

So to-day among the grasses ·
One may pick up tens and twelves
Of young olives, as one passes,
Blown about, and by themselves

Blackening sullen-ripe. The corn
too
Grows each day from green to
golden.

The large-eyed wind-flowers forlorn
too
Blow among it, unbeholden :

Some white, some crimson, others
Purple blackening to the heart.
From the deep wheat-sea, which
smothers
Their bright globes up, how they
start !

And the small wild pinks from ten-
der
Feather-grasses peep at us :
While above them burns, on slender
Stems, the red gladiolus :

And the grapes are green : this sea-
son
They'll be round and sound and
true,

If no after-blight should seize on
Those young bunches turning blue.

O that night of purple weather !
(Just before the moon had set)
You remember how together
We walked home?—the grass was
wet—

The long grass in the Pod. sé—
With the heavy dew among it :
And that nightingale—the fairy
Song he sung—O how he sung it !

And the fig-trees had grown heavy
With the young figs white and
woolly.
And the fire-flies, bevy on bevy
Of soft sparkles, pouring fully

Their warm life through trance on
trances
Of thick citron-shades behind,
Rose, like swarms of loving fancies
Through some rich and pensive
mind.

So we reached the loggia. Leaning
Faint, we sat there in the shade.
Neither spoke. The night's deep
meaning
Filled the silence up unsaid.

Hoarsely through the cypress alley
A civetta out of tune
Tried his voice by fits. The valley
Lay all dark below the moon.

Until into song you burst out,—
That old song I made for you
When we found our rose,—the first
out
Last sweet Springtime in the dew.

Well ! . . . if things had gone less
wildly—
Had I settled down before
There, in England—labored mildly—
And been patient—and learned
more

Of how men should live in London—
Been less happy—or more wise—
Left no great works tried, and un-
done—
Never looked in your soft eyes—

I . . . but what's the use of think-
ing?
There ! our nightingale begins—
Now a rising note—now sinking
Back in little broken rings

Of wain song that spread and eddy—
Now he picks up heart—and draws
His great music, slow and steady,
To a silver-centred pause !

SONG.

THE purple iris hangs his head
On his lean stalk, and so declines:
The spider spills his silver thread
Between the bells of columbines :
An altered light in flickering eyes
Draws dews through these dim
eyes of ours :
Death walks in yonder waning
bowers,
And burns the blistering leaves.
Ah, well-a-day !
Blooms overflow :
Suns sink away :
Sweet things decay.

The drunken beetle, roused ere
night,
Breaks blundering from the rot-
ting rose.
Flits through blue spidery aconite,
And hums, and comes, and goes :
His thick, bewildered song receives
A drowsy sense of grief like ours :
He hums and hums among the
bowers,
And bangs about the leaves.
Ah, well-a-day !
Hearts overflow :
Joy flits away :
Sweet things decay.

Her yellow stars the jasmín drops
In mildewed mosses one by one :
The hollyhocks fall off their tops :
The lotus-blooms ail white i' the
sun :
The freckled foxglove faints and
grieves :
The smooth-paced slumbrous slug
devours
The gluey globes of gorgeous flow-
ers,
And smears the glistening leaves !
Ah, well-a-day !
Life leaves us so.

Love dare not stay.
Sweet things decay.

From brazen sunflowers, orb and
fringe,
The burning burnish dulls and
dies :
Sad Autumn sets a sullen tinge
Upon the scornful peonies :
The dewy frog limps out, and heaves
A speckled lump in speckled bow-
ers :
A reeking moisture, clings and
lowers
The lips of lapping leaves.
Ah, well-a-day !
Ere the cock crow,
Life's charmed array
Reels all away.

SEASIDE SONGS.

I.

DROP down below the orbéd sea.
O lingering light in glowing skies,
And bring my own true-love to me—
My dear true-love across the sea—
With tender-lighted eyes.
For now the gates of Night are flung
Wide open her dark coasts among :
And the happy stars crowd up,
and up,
Like bubbles that brighten, one
by one,
To the dark wet brim of some
glowing cup
Filled full to the parting sun.
And moment after moment grows
In grandeur up from deep to deep
Of darkness, till the night hath
clomb,
From star to star, heaven's
highest dome.
And, like a new thought born in
sleep,
The slumbrous glory glows, and
glows :
While, far below, a whisper goes
That heaves the happy sea :

For o'er faint tracts of fragrance
 wide,
 A rapture pouring up the tide—
 A freshness through the heat—a
 sweet,
 Uncertain sound, like fairy feet—
 The west-wind blows my love to
 me.

Love-laden from the lighted west
 Thou comest, with thy soul opprest
 For joy of him : all up the dim,
 Delicious sea blow fearlessly,
 Warm wind, that art the tenderest
 Or all that breathe from south or
 west.

Blow whispers of him up the sea :
 Upon my cheek, and on my breast,
 And on the lips which he hath prest,
 Blow all his kisses back to me !

Far off, the dark green rocks about,
 All night shines, faint and fair,
 the far light :

Far off, the lone, late fishers shout
 From boat to boat i' the listening
 starlight :

Far off, and fair, the sea lies bare,
 Leagues, leagues beyond the reach
 of rowing :

Up creek and horn the smooth wave
 swells
 And falls asleep ; or, inland flow-
 ing,

Twinkles among the silver shells,
 From sluice to sluice of shallow
 wells ;

Or, down dark pools of purple
 glowing,

Sets some forlorn star trembling
 there

In his own dim, dreamlike bril-
 liancy.

And I feel the dark sails grow-
 ing

Nearer, clearer, up the sea :

And I catch the warm west
 blowing

All my own love's sighs to me :
 On the deck I hear them singing
 Songs they sing in my own land :

Lights are swinging : bells are ring-
 ing :
 On the deck I see him stand !

II.

The day is down into his bower :
 In languid lights his feet he steeps :
 The flushed sky darkens, low and
 lower,
 And closes on the glowing deeps. :

In ereeping curves of yellow foam
 Up shallow sands the waters slide :
 And warmly blow what whispers
 roam
 From isle to isle the lulléd tide :

The boats are drawn : the nets drip
 bright :
 Dark casements gleam : old songs
 are sung :

And out upon the verge of night
 Green lights from lonely rocks are
 hung.

O winds of eve that somewhere
 rove
 Where darkest sleeps the distant
 sea,
 Seek out where haply dreams my
 love,
 And whisper all her dreams to
 me !

THE SUMMER-TIME THAT WAS.

THE swallow is not come yet ;
 The river-banks are brown ;
 The woodside walks are dumb ; yet,
 And dreary is the town.
 I miss a face from the window,
 A footstep from the grass ;
 I miss the boyhood of my heart,
 And the summer-time that was.

How shall I read the books I read,
 Or meet the men I met ?
 I thought to find her rose-tree dead,
 But it is growing yet.

And the river winds among the
flags,
And the leaf lies on the grass.
But I walk alone. My hopes are
gone,
And the summer-time that was.

ELAYNE LE BLANC.

O THAT sweet season on the April-
verge
Of womanhood ! When smiles are
touched with tears,
And all the unsolaced summer
seems to grieve
With some blind want : when Eden-
exiles feel
Their Paradisal parentage, and
search
Even yet some fragrance through
the thorny years
From reachless gardens guarded by
the sword.

Then those that brood above the
fallen sun,
Or lean from lonely casements to
the moon,
Turn round and miss the touching
of a hand :
Then sad thoughts seem to be more
sweet than gay ones :
Then old songs have a sound as
pitiful
As dead friends' voices, sometimes
heard in dreams :
And all a-tiptoe for some great
event,
The Present waits, her finger at her
lips,
The while the pensive Past with
meek pale palms,
Crost (where a child should lie) on
her cold breast,
And wistful eyes forlorn, stands
mutely by,
Reproaching Life with some un-
uttered loss ;
And the heart pines, a prisoned
Danaë,

Till some God comes, and makes
the air all golden.

In such a mood as this, at such an
hour
As makes sad thoughts fall saddest
on the soul,
She, in her topmost bower all alone,
High-up among the battlemented
roofs,
Leaned from the lattice, where the
road runs by
To Camelot, and in the bulrush beds
The marsh river shrinks his stag-
nant horn.
All round, along the spectral arras,
gleamed
(With faces pale against the dreary
light,
Forms of great Queens—the women
of old times.
She felt their frowns upon her, and
their smiles,
And seemed to hear their garments
rustling near.
Her lute lay idle her love-books
among :
And, at her feet, flung by, the
brodered scarf,
And velvet mantle. On the verge
of night
She saw a bird float by, and wished
for wings :
She heard the hoarse frogs quarrel
in the marsh :
And now and then, with drowsy
song and oar,
Some dim barge sliding slow from
bridge to bridge,
Down the white river past, and far
behind
Left a new silence. Then she fell
to muse
Unto what end she came into this
earth
Whose reachless beauty made her
heart so sad,
As one that loves, but hopes not,
Inly ails
In gazing on some fair unloving
face.

Anon, there dropt down a great gulf
 of sky
 A star she knew ; and as she looked
 at it,
 Down-drawn through her intensity
 of gaze,
 One angry ray fell tangled in her
 tears,
 And dashed its blinding brightness
 in her eyes.
 She turned, and caught her lute, and
 pensively
 Rippled a random music down the
 strings,
 And sang . . .

All night the moonbeams bathe
 the sward.
 There's not an eye to-night in Joy-
 ous-Gard
 That is not dreaming something
 sweet. I wake
 Because it is more sweet to dream
 awake :
 Dreaming I see thy face upon the
 lake.

I am come up from far, love, to be-
 hold thee,
 That hast waited for me so bravely
 and well
 Thy sweet life long (for the Fairies
 had told thee
 I am the Knight that shall loosen
 the spell),
 And to-morrow morn mine arms
 shall infold thee :
 And to-morrow night . . . ah, who
 can tell ?

As the spirit of some dark lake
 Pines at nightfall, wild-awake,
 For the approaching consumma-
 tion
 Of a great moon he divines
 Coming to her coronation
 Of the dazzling stars and signs,
 So my heart, my heart,
 Darkly (ah, and tremblingly !)
 Waits in mystic expectation
 (From its wild source far apart)

Until it be filled with thee.—
 With the full-orbed light of thee,—
 O beloved as thou art !
 With the soft sad smile that
 flashes
 Underneath thy long dark lashes ;
 And thy floating raven hair
 From its wreathed pearls let slip ;
 And thy breath, like balmy air ;
 And thy warm wet rosy lip.
 With my first kiss lingering there :
 Its sweet secret unrevealed.—
 Sealed by me, to me unsealed ;
 And . . . but, ah ! she lies asleep
 In yon gray stone castle-keep,
 On her lids the happy tear ;
 And alone I linger here ;
 And to-morrow morn the fight ;
 And . . . ah, me ! to-morrow
 night ?

Here she brake, trembling, off ; and
 on the lute,
 Yet vibrating through its melodious
 nerves,
 A great tear plashed and tinkled.
 For a while
 She sat and mused ; and, heavily,
 drop by drop,
 Her tears fell down ; then through
 them a slow smile
 Stole, full of April-sweetness ; and
 she sang—
 —It was a sort of ballad of the sea :
 A song of weather-beaten mariners,
 Gray-headed men that had survived
 all winds
 And held a perilous sport among
 the waves,
 Who yet sang on with hearts as bold
 as when
 They cleared their native harbor
 with a shout,
 And lifted golden anchors in the
 sun.

Merrily, merrily drove our barks,—
 Merrily up from the morning beach !
 And the brine broke under her
 prows in sparks ;
 For a spirit sat high at the helm of
 each.

We sailed all day ; and, when day
was done,
Steered after the wake of the sunken
sun,
For we meant to follow him out of
reach
Till the golden dawn was again
begun.

With lifted oars, with shout and
song.

Merry mariners all were we !
Every heart beat stout and strong.
Through all the world you would
not see,
Though you should journey wide
and long,
A comelier company.
And where, the echoing creeks
among,

Merrily, steadily,
From bay to bay our barks did fall,
You might hear us singing, one and
all.

A song of the mighty sea.
But, just at twilight, down the rocks
Dim forms trooped fast, and clearer
grew :

For out upon the sea-sand came
The island-people, whom we knew,
And called us :—girls with glowing
locks ;
And sunburnt boys that tend the
herd

Far up the vale ; gray elders too
With silver beards :—their cries we
heard :

They called us, each one by his
name.

“Could ye not wait a little while,”
We heard them sing, “for all our
sakes ?

A little while, in this old isle,”
They sung, “among the silver lakes?
For here,” they sung, “from horn
to horn

Of flowery bays the land is fair :
The hillside glows with grapes : the
corn

Grows golden in the vale down there.

Our maids are sad for you,” they
sung :

“Against the field no sickle falls :
Upon the trees our harps are hung :
Our doors are void : and in the
stalls

The little foxes nest ; among
The herd-roved hills no shepherd
calls :

Your brethren mourn for you,” they
sung.

“Here weep your wives : here passed
your lives

Among the vines, when you were
young :

Here dwell your sires : your house-
hold fires

Grow cold. Return ! Return !” they
sung.

Then each one saw his kinsman
stand

Upon the shore, and wave his hand :
And each grew sad. But still we
sung

Our ocean-chorus bold and clear ;
And still upon our oars we hung.

And held our course with steadfast
cheer.

“For we are bound for distant
shores,”

We cried, and faster swept our oars :
“We pine to see the faces there

Of men whose deeds we heard long
since,

Who haunt our dreams : gray he-
roes : kings

Whose fame the wandering minstrel
sings :

And maidens, too, more fair than
ours,

With deeper eyes and softer hair,
Like hers that left her island bowers

To wed the sullen Cornish Prince
Who keeps his court upon the hill

By the gray coasts of Tyntagill,
And each, before he dies, must gain

Some fairy-land across the main.”

But still “return, beloved, return !”
The simple island-people sung :

And still each mariner's heart did
burn,
As each his kinsman could discern,
Those dim green rocks among.

"O'er you the rough sea-blasts will
blow,"
They sung, "while here the skies
are fair :
Our paths are through the fields we
know :
And yours you know not where."

But we waved our hands . . . "fare-
well ! farewell !"

We cried . . . "our white sails flap
the mast :

Our course is set : our oars are wet :
One day," we cried, "is nearly past :
One day at sea ! Farewell ! fare-
well !

No more with you we now may
dwell !"

And the next day we were driving
free

(With never a sail in sight)
Over the face of the mighty sea,
And we counted the stars next night
Rise over us by two and three
With melancholy light :
A grave-eyed, earnest company,—
And all round the salt foam white !

With this, she ceased, and sighed
. . . "though I were far,
I know yon moated iris would not
shed

His purple crown : yon clover-field
would ripple

As merry in the waving wind as
now :

As soft the Spring down this bare
hill would steal,

And in the vale below fling all her
flowers :

Each year the wet primroses star the
woods :

And violets muffle the sharp rivu-
lets :

Round this lone casement's solitary
panes

The wandering ivy move and mount
each year :
Each year the red wheat gleam near
river-banks :

While, ah, with each my memory
from the hearts

Of men would fade, and from their
lips my name.

O which were best—the wide, the
windy sea,

With golden gleams of undiscovered
lands,

Odors, and murmurs—or the placid
Port,

From wanton winds, from scornful
waves secure,

Under the old, green, happy hills of
home ?"

She sat forlorn, and pondered. Night
was near,

And, marshalling o'er the hills her
dewy camps,

Came down the outposts of the sen-
tinel stars.

All in the owlet light she sat forlorn.

Now hostel, hall, and grange, that
eve were crammed :

The town being choked to bursting
of the gates :

For there the King yet lay with all
his Earls,

And the Round Table, numbering
all save one.

On many a curving terrace which
o'erhung

The long gray river, swan-like,
through the green

Of quaintest yews, moved, pacing
stately by,

The lovely ladies of King Arthur's
court.

Sighing, she eyed them from that
lonely keep.

The Dragon-banners o'er the turrets
drooped,

The heavy twilight hanging in their
folds.

And now and then, from posterns in
the wall
The knights stole, lingering for some
last Good night,
Whispered or sighed through closing
lattices ;
Or paused with reverence of bending
plumes,
And lips on jewelled fingers gayly
prest.
The silver cressets shone from pane
to pane :
And tapers flitted by with flitting
forms :
Clanged the dark streets with clash
of iron heels :
Or fell a sound of coits in clattering
courts,
And drowsy horse-boys singing in
the straw.

These noises floated upward. And
within,
From the great Hall, forever and
anon,
Brake gusts of revel ; snatches of
wild song,
And laughter ; where her sire among
his men
Caroused between the twilight and
the dark.
The silence round about her where
she sat,
Vext in itself, grew sadder for the
sound.
She closed her eyes : before them
seemed to float
A dream of lighted revels,—dance
and song
In Guenver's palace : gorgeous tour-
naments ;
And rows of glittering eyes about
the Queen
(Like stars in galaxies around the
moon),
That sparkled recognition down be-
low.
Where rode the Knights amont with
lance and plume ;
And each his lady's sleeve upon his
helm :

Murmuring . . . " none ride for me.
Am I not fair,
Whom men call the White Flower
of Astolat ? "

Far, far without, the wild gray mar-
ish spread,
A heron startled from the pools, and
flapped

The water from his wings, and
skirred away.

The last long limit of the dying light
Dropped, all on fire, behind an iron
cloud :

And, here and there, through some
wild chasm of blue,

Tumbled a star. The mist upon the
fens

Thickened. A billowy opal grew i'
the crofts,

Fed on the land, and sucked into
itself

Paling and park, close copse and
bushless down,

Changing the world for Fairies.

Then the moon
In the low east, unprisoned from
black bars

Of stagnant fog (a white light,
wrought to the full,

Summed in a perfect orb) rose sud-
denly up

Upon the silence with a great sur-
prise,

And took the inert landscape un-
awares.

White, white, the snaky river : dark
the banks :

And dark the folding distance, where
her eyes

Were wildly turned, as though the
whole world lay

In that far blackness over Carlyel.

There she espied Sir Launcelot, as
he rode

His coal-black courser downward
from afar,

For all his armor glittered as he
went,

And showed like silver : and his
mighty shield,

By dint of knightly combat hackt and
worn,
Looked like some cracked and frozen
moon that hangs
By night o'er Baltic headlands all
alone.

TO —.

As, in lone fairy-lands, up some rich
shelf
Of golden sand the wild wave moan-
ingly
Heaps its unvalued sea-wealth, weed
and gem,
Then creeps back slow into the salt
sad sea :
So from my life's new search'd deeps
to thee,
Beloved, I cast these weed-flowers.
Smile on them.
More than they mean I know not to
express.
So I shrink back into my old sad
self,
Far from all words where love lies
fathomless.

QUEEN GUENEVERE.

THENCE, up the sea-green floor,
among the stems
Of mighty columns whose unmeas-
ured shades
From aisle to aisle, unheeded in the
sun,
Moved without sound, I, following
all alone
A strange desire that drew me like a
hand,
Came unawares upon the Queen.
She sat
In a great silence, which her beauty
filled
Full to the heart of it, on a black
chair
Mailed all about with sullen gems,
and crusts
Of sultry blazonry. Her face was
bowed,
A pause of slumbrous beauty, o'er
the light

Of some delicious thought new-risen
above
The deeps of passion. Round her
stately head
A single circlet of the red gold fine
Burned free, from which, on either
side streamed down
Twilights of her soft hair, from neck
to foot. [is.
Green was her kirtle as the emeralde
And stiff from hem to hem with
seams of stones
Beyond all value ; which, from left
to right
Disparting, half revealed the snowy
gleam
Of a white robe of spotless samite
pure.
And from the soft repression of her
zone,
Which like a light hand on a lute-
string pressed
Harmony from its touch, flowed
warmly back
The bounteous outlines of a glowing
grace,
Nor yet outflowed sweet laws of
loveliness.

Then did I feel as one who, much
perplexed,
Led by strange legends and the light
of stars
Over long regions of the midnight
sand
Beyond the red tract of the Pyra-
mids,
Is suddenly drawn to look upon the
sky
From sense of unfamiliar light, and
sees,
Revealed against the constellated
cope
The great cross of the South.
The chamber round
Was dropt with arras green ; and I
could hear,
In courts far off, a minstrel praising
May,
Who sang . . . *Si douce, si douce
est la Margarete !*

To a faint lute. Upon the window-sill,
 Hard by a latoun bowl that blazed i' the sun
 Perched a strange fowl, a Falcon Peregrine ;
 With all his feathers puffed for pride,
 and all
 His courage glittering outward in his eye ;
 For he had flown from far, athwart
 strange hands,
 And o'er the light of many a setting
 sun,
 Lured by his love (such sovereignty
 of old
 Had Beauty in all coasts of Christendom !)
 To look into the great eyes of the
 Queen.

THE NEGLECTED HEART.

THIS heart, you would not have,
 I laid up in a grave
 Of song : with love enwound it ;
 And set sweet fancies blowing round
 it.

Then I to others gave it ;
 Because you would not have it.
 " See you keep it well," I said ;
 " This heart's sleeping—is not dead ;
 But will wake some future day :
 See you keep it while you may."

All great Sorrows in the world,—
 Some with crowns upon their heads,
 And in regal purple furled ;
 Some with rosaries and beads ;
 Some with lips of scorning, curled
 At false Fortune ; some, in weeds
 Of mourning and of widowhood,
 Standing tearful and apart,—
 Each one in his several mood,
 Came to take my heart.

Then in holy ground they set it ;
 With melodious weepings wet it
 And revered it as they found it,
 With wild fancies blowing round it.

And this heart (you would not have)
 Being not dead, though in the grave,
 Worked miracles and marvels
 strange,
 And healed many maladies :
 Giving sight to sealed-up eyes,
 And legs to lame men sick for change.

The fame of it grew great and
 greater.

Then said you, " Ah, what's the
 matter ?

How hath this heart I would not
 take,

This weak heart a child might
 break—

This poor, foolish heart of his—
 Since won worship such as this ? "

You bethought you then . . . " Ah
 me,

What if this heart, I did not choose
 To retain, hath found the key
 Of the kingdom ? and I lose
 A great power ? Me he gave it :
 Mine the right, and I will have it."

Ah, too late ! For crowds exclaimed,
 " Ours it is : and hath been claimed.
 Moreover, where it lies, the spot
 Is holy ground : so enter not.
 None but men of mournful mind,—
 Men to darkened days resigned ;
 Equal scorn of Saint and Devil ;
 Poor and outcast ; halt and blind ;
 Exiles from Life's golden revel ;
 Gnawing at the bitter rind
 Of old griefs ; or else, confined
 In proud cares, to serve and grind,—
 May enter : whom this heart shall
 cure.

But go thou by : thou art not poor :
 Nor defrauded of thy lot :
 Bless thyself : but enter not ! "

APPEARANCES.

WELL, you have learned to smile.
 And no one looks for traces
 Of tears about your eyes.
 Your face is like most faces.
 And who will ask, meanwhile,
 If your face your heart belies ?

Are you happy? You look so.
Well, I wish you what you seem.
Happy persons sleep so light!
In your sleep you never dream?
But who would care to know
What dreams you dreamed last
night?

HOW THE SONG WAS MADE.

I SAT low down, at midnight, in a
vale
Mysterious with the silence of blue
pines:

White-cloven by a snaky river-tail,
Uncoiled from tangled wefts of sil-
ver twines.

Out of a crumbling castle, on a spike
Of splintered rock, a mile of
changeless shade

Gorged half the landscape. Down a
dismal dike
Of black hills the sluiced moon-
beams streamed, and stayed.

The world lay like a poet in a swoon,
When God is on him, filled with
Heaven, all through,—

A dim face full of dreams turned to
the moon,
With mild lips moist in melan-
choly dew.

I plucked blue mugwort, livid man-
drakes, balls
Of blossomed nightshade, heads of
hemlock, long

White grasses, grown in oozy inter-
vals
Of marsh, to make ingredients for
a song:

A song of mourning to embalm the
Past,—

The corpse-cold Past,—that it
should not decay;

But in dark vaults of memory, to the
last,

Endure unchanged: for in some
future day

I will bring my new love to look at
it

(Laying aside her gay robes for a
moment)

That, seeing what love came to, she
may sit

Silent awhile, and muse, but make
no comment.

RETROSPECTIONS.

TO-NIGHT she will dance at the
palace,

With the diamonds in her hair:
And the Prince will praise her
beauty—

The loveliest lady there!

But tones, at times, in the music
Will bring back forgotten things:
And her heart will fail her some-
times,

When her beauty is praised at the
King's.

There sits in his silent chamber
A stern and sorrowful man:
But a strange sweet dream comes to
him,

While the lamp is burning wan,

Of a sunset among the vineyards
In a lone and lovely land,
And a maiden standing near him,
With fresh wild-flowers in her
hand.

THY VOICE ACROSS MY SPIRIT FALLS.

Thy voice across my spirit falls
Like some spent sea-wind through
dim halls

Of ocean-king's, left bare and wide
(Green floors o'er which the sea-
weed crawls!)

Where once, long since, in festal
pride

Some Chief, who roved and ruled the
tide,

Among his brethren reigned and
died.

I dare not meet thine eyes ; for so,
In gazing there, I seem once more
To lapse away through days of yore
To homes where laugh and song is
o'er,
Whose inmates each went long ago—

Like some lost soul, that keeps the
semblance

On its brow of ancient grace
Not all faded, wandering back
To silent chambers, in the track
Of the twilight, from the Place
Of retributive Remembrance.
Ah, turn aside those eyes again !
Their light has less of joy than pain.
We are not now what we were then.

THE RUINED PALACE.

BROKEN are the Palace windows :
Rotting is the Palace floor.
The damp wind lifts the arras,
And swings the creaking door ;
But it only startles the white owl
From his perch on a monarch's
throne,
And the rat that was gnawing the
harp-strings
A Queen once played upon.

Dare you linger here at midnight.
Alone, when the wind is about,
And the bat, and the newt, and the
viper,
And the creeping things come out?
Beware of these ghostly chambers !
Search not what my heart hath
been,
Lest you find a phantom sitting
Where once there sat a Queen.

A VISION OF VIRGINS.

I HAD a vision of the night.

It seemed
There was a long red tract of barren
land,
Blockt in by black hills, where a
half-moon dreamed

Of morn, and whitened.

Drifts of dry brown sand,
This way and that, were heapt be-
low : and flats
Of water :—glaring shallows, where
strange bats
Came and went, and moths flick-
ered.

To the right
A dusty road that crept along the
waste

Like a white snake : and, farther up,
I traced

The shadow of a great house, far in
sight :

A hundred casements all ablaze
with light :

And forms that flit athwart them as
in haste :

And a slow music, such as some-
times kings

Command at mighty revels, softly
sent

From viol, and flute, and tabor, and
the strings

Of many a sweet and slumbrous in-
strument

That wound into the mute heart of
the night

Out of that distance.

Then I could perceive
A glory pouring through an open
door,

And in the light five women. I be-
lieve

They wore white vestments, all of
them. They were

Quite calm ; and each still face un-
earthly fair,

Unearthly quiet. So like statues
all,

Waiting they stood without that
lighted hall ;

And in their hands, like a blue star,
they held

Each one a silver lamp.

Then I beheld
A shadow in the doorway. And One
came

Crowned for a feast. I could not
see the Face.

The Form was not all human. As
 the flame
 Streamed over it, a presence took
 the place
 With awe.
 He, turning, took them by the
 hand,
 And led them each up the white
 stairway, and
 The door closed.

At that moment the moon dipped
 Behind a rag of purple vapor, ript
 Off a great cloud, some dead wind,
 ere it spent
 Its last breath, had blown open, and
 so rent
 You saw behind blue pools of light,
 and there
 A wild star swimming in the lurid
 air.
 The dream was darkened. And a
 sense of loss
 Fell like a nightmare on the land :
 because
 The moon yet lingered in her cloud-
 eclipse.
 Then, in the dark, swelled sullenly
 across
 The waste a wail of women.

Her blue lips
 The moon drew up out of the cloud.
 Again
 I had a vision on that midnight
 plain.

Five women : and the beauty of
 despair
 Upon their faces : locks of wild wet
 hair,
 Clammy with anguish, wandered low
 and loose
 O'er their bare breasts, that seemed
 too filled with trouble
 To feel the damp crawl of the mid-
 night dews
 That trickled down them. One was
 bent half double,
 A dismayed heap, that hung o'er
 the last spark

Of a lamp slowly dying. As she
 blew
 The dull light redder, and the dry
 wick flew
 In crumbling sparkles all about the
 dark,
 I saw a light of horror in her eyes ;
 A wild light on her flushed cheek ; a
 wild white
 On her dry lips ; an agony of surprise
 Fearfully fair.

The lamp dropped. From my sight
 She fell into the dark.

Beside her, sat
 One without motion : and her stern
 face flat
 Against the dark sky.

One, as still as death,
 Hollowed her hands about her lamp.
 for fear
 Some motion of the midnight, or her
 breath,
 Should fan out the last flicker. Rosy-
 clear
 The light oozed, through her fingers,
 o'er her face.
 There was a ruined beauty hovering
 there
 Over deep pain, and, dashed with
 lurid grace
 A waning bloom.

The light grew dim and blear :
 And she, too, slowly darkened in her
 place.

Another, with her white hands hotly
 locked
 About her damp knees, muttering
 madness, rocked
 Forward and backward. But at last
 she stopped,
 And her dark head upon her bosom
 dropped
 Motionless.

Then one rose up with a cry
 To the great moon ; and stretched a
 wrathful arm
 Of wild expostulation to the sky,
 Murmuring, " These earth-lamps fall
 us ! and what harm ?
 Does not the moon shine ? Let us
 rise and haste

To meet the Bridegroom yonder o'er
the waste !

For now I seem to catch once more
the tone

Of viols on the night. 'Twere better
done,

At worst, to perish near the golden
gate,

And fall in sight of glory one by one,
Than here all night upon the wild,
to wait

Uncertain ills. Away ! the hour is
late !”

Again the moon dipped.

I could see no more.

Not the least gleam of light did
heaven afford.

At last, I heard a knocking on a door,
And some one crying, “Open to us,
Lord !”

There was an awful pause.

I heard my heart

Beat.

Then a Voice—“I know you not.
Depart.”

I caught, within, a glimpse of glory.
And

The door closed.

Still in darkness dreamed the land.
I could not see those women. Not
a breath !

Darkness, and awe : a darkness more
than death.

The darkness took them. * * * * *

LEOLINE.

In the molten-golden moonlight,
In the deep grass warm and dry,
We watched the fire-fly rise and
swim

In floating sparkles by.
All night the hearts of nightingales,
Song-steeping, slumbrous leaves,
Flowed to us in the shadow there
Below the cottage-eaves.

We sang our songs together
Till the stars shook in the skies.

We spoke — we spoke of common
things.

Yet the tears were in our eyes.
And my hand.—I know it trembled
To each light warm touch of thine.
But we were friends, and only
friends,

My sweet friend, Leoline !

How large the white moon looked,
Dear !

There has not ever been
Since those old nights the same great
light

In the moons which I have seen.
I often wonder, when I think,
If you have thought so too,
And the moonlight has grown dim-
mer, Dear,
Than it used to be to you.

And sometimes, when the warm
west-wind

Comes faint across the sea,
It seems that you have breathed on
it,

So sweet it comes to me :
And sometimes, when the long light
wanes

In one deep crimson line,
I muse, “and does she watch it too,
Far off, sweet Leoline ?”

And often, leaning all day long

My head upon my hands,
My heart aches for the vanished time
In the far fair foreign lands :
Thinking sadly—“Is she happy ?
Has she tears for those old hours ?
And the cottage in the starlight ?
And the songs among the flow-
ers ?”

One night we sat below the porch,
And out in that warm air,
A fire-fly, like a dying star,
Fell tangled in her hair ;
But I kissed him lightly off again,
And he glittered up the vine,
And died into the darkness
For the love of Leoline !

Between two songs of Petrarch
 I've a purple rose-leaf prest,
 More sweet than common rose-
 leaves,
 For it once lay in her breast.
 When she gave me that her eyes
 were wet,
 The rose was full of dew.
 The rose is withered long ago ;
 The page is blistered too.

There's a blue flower in my garden,
 The bee loves more than all :
 The bee and I, we love it both,
 Though it is frail and small.
 She loved it too — long, long ago :
 Her love was less than mine.
 Still we are friends, but only
 friends,
 My lost love, Leoline !

SPRING AND WINTER.

THE world buds every year :
 But the heart just once, and when
 The blossom falls off sere
 No new blossom comes again.
 Ah, the rose goes with the wind :
 But the thorns remain behind.

Was it well in him, if he
 Felt not love, to speak of love so ?
 If he still unmoved must be,
 Was it nobly sought to move so ?
 — Pluck the flower, and yet not wear
 it—
 Spurn, despise it, yet not spare it ?

Need he say that I was fair,
 With such meaning in his tone,
 Just to speak of one whose hair
 Had the same tinge as my own ?
 Pluck my life up, root and bloom,
 Just to plant it on her tomb ?

And she'd scarce so fair a face
 (So he used to say) as mine :
 And her form had far less grace :
 And her brow was far less fine :
 But 'twas just that he loved then
 More than he can love again.

Why, if Beauty could not bind him,
 Need he praise me, speaking low :
 Use my face just to remind him
 How no face could please him
 now ?

Why, if loving could not move him
 Did he teach me still to love him ?

And he said my eyes were bright,
 But his own, he said, were dim :
 And my hand, he said, was white,
 But what was that to him ?
 "For," he said, "in gazing at you
 I seem gazing at a statue."

"Yes," he said, "he had grown
 wise now :

He had suffered much of yore :
 But, a fair face to his eyes now,
 Was a fair face, and no more.
 Yet the anguish and the bliss,
 And the dream too, had been his."

Then, why talk of "lost romances"
 Being "sick of sentiment !"
 And what meant those tones and
 glances

If real love was never neant ?
 Why, if his own youth were with-
 ered,
 Must mine also have been gathered ?

Why those words a thought too
 tender

For the commonplaces spoken ?
 Looks whose meaning seemed to
 render

Help to words when speech came
 broken ?

Why so late in July moonlight
 Just to say what's said by noon-
 light ?

And why praise my youth for glad-
 ness,

Keeping something in his smile
 Which turned all my youth to sad-
 ness,

He still smiling all the while ?
 Since, when so my youth was over
 He said — "Seek some younger
 lover !"

“ For the world buds once a year,
But the heart just once,” he said.
True ! . . . so now that Spring is
here
All my flowers, like his, are dead.
And the rose drops in the wind.
But the thorns remain behind.

KING HERMANDIAZ.

THEN, standing by the shore, I saw
the moon
Change hue, and dwindle in the
west, as when
Warm looks fade inward out of dying
eyes,
And the dim sea began to moan.
I knew
My hour had come, and to the bark
I went.
Still were the stately decks, and hung
with silk
Of stoled erimson : at the mast-head
burned
A steadfast fire with influence like a
star,
And underneath a couch of gold. I
loosed
The dripping chain. There was not
any wind :
But all at once the magic sails began
To belly and heave, and like a bat
that wakes
And flits by night, beneath her
swarthy wings
The black ship rooked and moved.
I heard anon
A humming in the cordage and a
sound
Like bees in summer, and the bark
went on,
And on, and on, until at last the
world
Was rolled away and folded out of
sight,
And I was all alone on the great sea.
There a deep awe fell on my spirit.
My wound
Began to bite. I, gazing round, be-
held
A lady sitting silent at the helm,

A woman white as death, and fair as
dreams.
I would have asked her “ Whither
do we sail ? ”
And “ how ? ” but that my fear
clung at my heart,
And held me still. She, answering
my doubt,
Said slowly, “ To the Isle of Ava-
lon.”

And straightway we were nigh a
strand all gold,
That glittered in the moon between
the dusk
Of hanging bowers made rich with
blooms and balms,
From which faint gusts came to me ;
and I heard
A sound of lutes among the vales,
and songs
And voices faint like voices through
a dream
That said or seemed to say, “ Hail,
Hermandiaz ! ”

SONG.

In the warm, black mill-pool wink-
ing,
The first doubtful star shines blue :
And alone here I lie thinking
O such happy thoughts of you !
Up the porch the roses clamber,
And the flowers we sowed last
June ;
And the casement of your chamber
Shines between them to the moon.
Look out, Love ! fling wide the lat-
tice :
Wind the red rose in your hair,
And the little white elematis
Which I plucked for you to wear :
Or come down, and let me hear you
Singing in the scented grass,
Through tall cowslips nodding near
you,
Just to touch you as you pass

For, where you pass, the air
With warm hints of love grows
wise :

You—the dew on your dim hair,
And the smile in your soft eyes !

From the hayfield comes your
brother :

There your sisters stand together,
Singing clear to one another
Through the dark blue summer
weather,

And the maid the latch is clinking
As she lets her lover through :
But alone, Love, I lie thinking
O such tender thoughts of you !

THE SWALLOW.

O SWALLOW chirping in the spark-
ling eyes,
Why hast thou left far south thy
fairy homes,
To build between these drenchéd
April leaves,
And sing me songs of Spring be-
fore it comes ?

Too soon thou singest ! Yon black
stubborn thorn
Bursts not a bud : the sneaping
wind drifts on.

She that once flung thee crumbs,
and in the morn
Sang from the lattice where thou
sing'st, is gone.

Here is no Spring. Thy flight yet
further follow.
Fly off, vain swallow !

Thou com'st to mock me with re-
membered things.

I love thee not, O bird for me too
gay.

That which I want thou hast,—the
gift of wings :

Grief—which I have—thou hast
not. Fly away !

What hath my roof for thee ? My
cold dark roof,

Beneath whose weeping thatch
thine eggs will freeze !
Summer will halt not here, so keep
aloof.

Others are gone; go thou. In those
wet trees
I see no Spring, though thou still
singest of it.

Fare hence, false prophet !

CONTRABAND.

A HEAP of low, dark, rocky coast,
Where the blue-black sea sleeps
smooth and even :

And the sun, just over the reefs at
most.

In the amber part of a pale blue
heaven :

A village asleep below the pines,
Hid up the gray shore from the
low slow sun :

And a maiden that lingers among
the vines,

With her feet in the dews, and her
locks undone :

The half-moon melting out of the
sky :

And, just to be seen still, a star
here, a star there.

Faint, high up in the heart of the
heaven ; so high

And so faint, you can scarcely be
sure that they are there.

And one of that small, black, raking
craft ;

Two swivel guns on a round deck
handy :

And a great sloop sail with the wind
abaft :

And four brown thieves round a
cask of brandy.

That's my life, as I left it last.

And what it may be henceforth I
know not.

But all that I keep of the merry
Past

Are trifles like these, which I care
to show not :—

A leathern flask, and a necklace of
 pearl ;
 These rusty pistols, this tattered
 chart, Friend,
 And the soft dark half of a raven
 curl ;
 And, at evening, the thought of a
 true, true heart, Friend.

EVENING.

ALREADY evening ! In the duskiest
 nook
 Of yon dusk corner, under the
 Death's-head,
 Between the alembecs, thrust this
 legended,
 And iron-bound, and melancholy
 book,
 For I will read no longer. The loud
 brook
 Shelves his sharp light up shallow
 banks thin-spread ;
 The slumbrous west grows slowly
 red, and red :
 Up from the ripened corn her silver
 hook
 The moon is lifting : and deli-
 ciously
 Along the warm blue hills the day
 declines :
 The first star brightens while she
 waits for me,
 And round her swelling heart the
 zone grows tight :
 Musing, half-sad, in her soft hair
 she twines
 The white rose, whispering, "he
 will come to-night !"

ADON.

I WILL not weep for Adon !
 I will not waste my breath to draw
 thick sighs
 For Spring's dead greenness. All
 the orient skies
 Are husht, and breathing out a
 bright surprise
 Round morning's marshalling star :
 Rise, Eos, rise !

Day's dazzling spears are up : the
 faint stars fade on
 The white hills,—cold, like Adon !

O'er crag, and spar, and splinter
 Break down, and roll the amber mist,
 stern light.
 The black pines dream of dawn.
 The skirts of night
 Are ravelled in the East. And
 planted bright
 In heaven, the roots of ice shine,
 sharp and white,
 In frozen ray, and spar, and spike,
 and splinter.
 Within me and without, all's Win-
 ter.

Why should I weep for Adon ?
 Am I, because the sweet Past is no
 more,
 Dead, as the leaves upon the graves
 of yore ?
 I will breathe boldly, though the air
 be froze
 With freezing fire. Life still beats
 at the core
 Of the world's heart, though Death
 his awe hath laid on
 This dumb white corpse of Adon.

THE PROPHET.

WHEN the East lightens with strange
 hints of morn,
 The first tinge of the growing glory
 takes
 The cold crown of some husht high
 alp forlorn,
 While yet o'er vales below the dark
 is spread.
 Even so the dawning Age, in silence,
 breaks,
 O solitary soul, on thy still head :
 And we, that watch below with rev-
 erent fear,
 Seeing thee crowned, do know that
 day is near.

WEALTH.

Was it not enough to dream the day
to death
Grandly? and finely feed on faint
perfumes?

Between the heavy lilacs draw thick
breath,
While the noon hummed from
glowing citron-glooms?

Or walk with Morning in these
dewy bowers,
'Mid sheavéd lilies, and the moth-
loved lips
Of purple asters, bearded flat sun-
flowers,
And milk-white crumpled pinks
with blood i' the tips?

But I must also, gazing upon thee,
Pine with delicious pain, and
subtle smart,
Till I felt heavy immortality,
Laden with looks of thine, weigh
on my heart!

WANT.

You swore you loved me all last
June:
And now December's come and
gone.
The Summer went with you—too
soon.
The Winter goes—alone.

Next Spring the leaves will all be
be green:
But love like ours, once turned to
pain,
Can be no more what it hath been,
Though roses bloom again.

Return, return the unvalued wealth
I gave! which scarcely profits
you—
The heart's lost youth—the soul's
lost health—
In vain! . . . false friend, adieu!

I keep one faded violet
Of all once ours,—you left no
more.

What I have lost I may forget,
But you cannot restore.

A BIRD AT SUNSET.

WILD bird, that wingest wide the
glimmering moors,
Whither, by belts of yellowing
woods away?

With pausing sunset thy wild heart
allures
Deep into dying day?

Would that my heart, on wings like
thine, could pass
Where stars their light in rosy re-
gions lose,—

A happy shadow o'er the warm
brown grass,
Falling with falliug dew!

Hast thou, like me, some true-love
of thine own,
In fairy lands beyond the utmost
sea;

Who there, unsoled, yearns for
thee alone,
And sings to silent trees?

O tell that woodbird that the Sum-
mer grieves,
And the suns darken and the days
grow cold;
And, tell her, love will fade with fad-
ing leaves,
And cease in common mould.

Fly from the winter of the world to
her!
Fly, happy bird! I follow in thy
flight,
Till thou art lost o'er yonder fringe
of fir
In baths of crimson light.

My love is dying far away from me.
She sits and saddens in the fading
west.

For her I mourn all day, and pine
to be
At night upon her breast.

IN TRAVEL.

Now our white sail flutters down :
Now it broadly takes the breeze :
Now the wharves upon the town,
Lessening, leave us by degrees.
Blithely blows the morning, shaking
On your cheek the loosened curls :
Round our prow the cleft wave,
breaking,

Tumbles off in heap'd pearls,
Which in forks of foam unite,
And run seething out to sea,
Where o'er gleams of briny light,
Dip the dancing gulls in glee.
Now the mountain serpentine
Slips out many a snaky line
Down the dark blue ocean-spine.
From the boatside, while we pass,
I can see, as in a glass,
Pirates on the flat sea-sand,
Carousing ere they put from land ;
And the purple-pointed crests
Of hills whereon the morning rests
Whose ethereal vivid peaks
Glimmer in the lucid creeks.
Now these wind away ; and now
Hamlets up the mountain-brow
Peep and peer from roof to roof ;
And gray castle-walls aloof
O'er wide vineyards just in grape,
From whose serfs old Barons held
Tax and toll in feudal eld,
Creep out of the uncoiling cape.
Now the long low layer of mist
A slow trouble rolls and lifts,
With a broken billowy motion,
From the rocks and from the rifts,
Laying bare, just here and there,
Black stone-pines, at morn dew-kist
By salt winds from bound to bound
Of the great sea freshening round ;
Wattled folds on bleak brown downs
Sloping high o'er sleepy towns ;
Lengths of shore and breadths of
ocean.

Love, leap here upon my shoo'det,
And look yonder, love, with me :
Now I think that I can see
In the merry market-places
Sudden warmths of surly faces :
Many a lovely laughing maiden
Bearing on her loose dark locks
Rich fruit-baskets heavy-laden,
In and out among the rocks,
Knowing not that we behold her,
Now, love, tell me, can you hear,
Growing nearer, and more near,
Sound of song, and splash of oar,
From wild bays, and inlets hoar,
While above yon isles afar
Ghostlike sinks last night's last star?

CHANGES.

WHOM first we love, you know, we
seldom wed.

Time rules us all. And Life, in-
deed, is not

The thing we planned it out ere hope
was dead.

And then, we women cannot
choose our lot.

Much must be borne which it is hard
to bear :

Much given away which it were
sweet to keep.

God help us all ! who need, indeed,
His care.

And yet, I know, the Shepherd
loves His sheep.

My little boy begins to babble now
Upon my knee his earliest infant
prayer.

He has his father's eager eyes, I
know.

And, they say too, his mother's
sunny hair.

But when he sleeps and smiles upon
my knee;

And I can feel his light breath
come and go.

I think of one (Heaven help and
pity me !)

Who loved me, and whom I loved,
long ago.

Who might have been . . . ah, what
I dare not think!

We all are changed. God judges
for us best.

God help us do our duty, and not
shrink,

And trust in heaven humbly for
the rest.

But blame us women not, if some
appear

Too cold at times; and some too
gay and light.

Some griefs gnaw deep. Some woes
are hard to bear.

Who knows the Past? and who
can judge us right?

Ah, were we judged by what we
might have been,

And not by what we are, too apt
to fall!

My little child—he sleeps and smiles
between

These thoughts and me. In
heaven we shall know all!

JUDICIUM PARIDIS.

I SAID, when young, "Beauty's the
supreme joy.

Her I will choose, and in all forms
will face her;

Eye to eye, lip to lip, and so em-
brace her

With my whole heart." I said this
being a boy.

"First, I will seek her,—naked, or
clad only

In her own godhead, as I know of
yore

Great bards beheld her." So by
sea and shore

I sought her, and among the moun-
tains lonely.

"There be great sunsets in the won-
drous West;

And marvel in the orbings of the
moon:

And glory in the jubilees of June;
And power in the deep ocean. For
the rest,

"Green-glaring glaciers; purple
clouds of pine

White walls of ever-roaring cata-
racts;

Blue thunder drifting over thirsty
tracts;

The homes of eagles; these, too, are
divine,

"And terror shall not daunt me—so
it be

Beautiful—or in storm or in
eclipse:

Rocking pink shells, or wrecking
freighted ships,

I shall not shrink to find her in the
sea.

"Next, I will seek her—in all shapes
of wood,

Or brass, or marble; or in colors
clad;

And sensuous lines, to make my
spirit glad.

And she shall change her dress with
every mood.

"Rose-latticed casements, lone in
summer lands—

Some witch's bower: pale sailors
on the marge

Of magic seas, in an enchanted
barge

Stranded, at sunset, upon jewelled
sands:

"White nymphs among the lilies:
shepherd kings:

And pink-hooved Fawns: and
mooned Endymions:

From every channel through which
Beauty runs

To fertilize the world with lovely
things.

"I will draw freely, and be satisfied.
Also, all legends of her apparition

- To men, in earliest times, in each condition,
I will inscribe on portraits of my bride.
- “Then, that no single sense of her be wanting,
Music; and all voluptuous combinations
Of sound, with their melodious palpitations
To charm the ear, the cells of fancy haunting.
- “And in her courts my life shall be outrolled
As one unfurls some gorgeous tapestry,
Wrought o’er with old Olympian heraldry,
All purple-woven stiff with blazing gold.
- “And I will choose no sight for tears to flow:
I will not look at sorrow: I will see
Nothing less fair and full of majesty
Than young Apollo leaning on his bow.
- “And I will let things come and go: nor range
For knowledge: but from moments pluck delight,
The while the great days ope and shut in light,
And wax and wane about me, rich with change.
- “Some cup of dim hills, where a white moon lies,
Dropt out of weary skies without a breath,
In a great pool: a slumbrous vale beneath.
And blue damps prickling into white fire-flies:
- “Some sunset vision of an Oread, less
Than half an hour ere moonrise caught asleep
With a flushed cheek, among crushed violets deep,—
A warm half-glimpse of milk-white nakedness,
- “On sumptuous summer eyes: shall wake for me
Rapture from all the various stops of life.
Making it like some charmed Arcadian life
Filled by a wood-god with his ecstasy.”
- These things I said while I was yet a boy,
And the world showed as between dream and waking
A man may see the face he loves.
So, breaking
Silence, I cried . . . “Thou art the supreme Joy!”
- My spirit, as a lark hid near the sun,
Carolled at morning. But ere she had dropt
Half down the rainbow-colored years that propped
Her gold cloud up, and broadly, one by one
- The world’s great harvest-lands broke on her eye,
She changed her tone, . . . “What is it I may keep?
For look here, how the merry reapers reap:
Even children glean: and each puts something by.
- “The pomps of morning pass: when evening comes,
What is retained of these which I may show?
If for the hills I leave the fields below
I fear to die an exile from men’s homes.

“Though here I see the orient
pageants pass,
I am not richer than the merest
hind
That toils below, all day, among
his kind,
And clinks at eve glad horns in the
dry grass.”

Then, pondering long, at length I
made confession.

“I have erred much, rejecting all
that man did :

For all my pains I shall go empty
handed .

And Beauty, of its nature foils pos-
session.”

Thereafter, I said . . . “Knowledge
is most fair.

Surely to know is better than to
see

To see is loss : to know is gain :
and we

Grow old. I will store thriftily, with
care.”

In which mood I endured for many
years,

Valuing all things for their further
uses :

And seeking knowledge at all
open sluices ;

Though oft the stream turned brack-
ish with my tears.

Yet not the less, for years in this
same mood

I rested : nor from any object
turned

That had its secret to be spelled
and learned,

Murmuring ever, “Knowledge is
most good.”

Unto which end I shunned the
revelling

And ignorant crowd, that eat the
fruits and die :

And called out Plato from his
century

To be my helpmate : and made
Homer sing.

Until the awful Past in gathered
heaps

Weighed on my brain, and sunk
into my soul,

And saddened through my nature,
till the whole

Of life was darkened downward to
the deeps.

And, wave on wave, the melancholy
ages

Crept o'er my spirit : and the
years displaced

The landmarks of the days : life
waned, effaced

From action by the sorrows of the
sages :

And my identity became at last

The record of those others : or, if
more,

A hollow shell the sea sung in : a
shore

Of footprints which the waves
washed from it fast.

And all was as a dream whence,
holding breath,

It seemed, at times, just possible to
break

By some wild nervous effort, with
a shriek,

Into the real world of life and death.

But that thought saved me. Through
the dark I screamed

Against the darkness, and the
darkness broke,

And broke that nightmare : back
to life I woke,

Though weary with the dream
which I had dreamed.

O life ! life ! life ! With laughter
and with tears

I tried myself : I knew that I had
need

Of pain to prove that this was life
indeed,

With its warm privilege of hopes and
fears.

O Love of man made Life of man,
that saves !

O man, that standest looking on
the light .

That standest on the forces of the
night .

That standest up between the stars
and graves !

O man ! by man's dread privilege of
pain,

Dare not to scorn thine own soul
nor thy brother's .

Though thou be more or less than
all the others.

Man's life is all too sad for man's dis-
dain.

The smiles of seraphs are less awful
far

Than are the tears of this human-
ity.

That sound, in dropping, through
Eternity,

Heard in God's ear beyond the
furthest star.

If that be true,—the hereditary hate
Of Love's lost Rebel, since the
worlds began,—

The very Fiend, in hating, honors
Man :

Flattering with Devil-homage Man's
estate.

If two Eternities, at strife for us,
Around each human soul wage
silent war,

Dare we disdain ourselves, though
fall'n we are,

With Hell and Heaven looking on
us thus ?

Whom God hath loved, whom Devils
dare not scorn,

Despise not thou, — the meanest
human creature.

Climb, if thou canst, the heights
of thine own nature,

And look toward Paradise where
each was born.

So I spread sackcloth on my former
pride :

And sat down, clothed and covered
up with shame :

And cried to God to take away my
blame

Among my brethren : and to these
I cried

To come between my crime and my
despair,

That they might help my heart up,
When God sent

Upon my soul its proper punish-
ment,

Lest that should be too great for me
to bear.

And so I made my choice : and
learned to live

Again, and worship, as my spirit
yearned :

So much had been admired—so
much been learned—

So much been given me—O, how
much to give !

Here is the choice, and now the
time, O chooser !

Endless the consequence though
brief the choice.

Echoes are waked down ages by
thy voice :

Speak : and be thou the gainer or
the loser.

And I bethought me long . . .

“ Though garners split,
If none but thou be fed art thou
more full ? ”

For surely Knowledge and the
Beautiful

Are human ; must have love, or die
for it !

To Give is better than to Know or
See :

And both are means : and neither
is the end :

Knowing and seeing, if none call
thee friend,

Beauty and knowledge have done
naught for thee.

Though I at Aphroditè all day long
Gaze until sunset with a thirsty
eye,
I shall not drain her boundless
beauty dry
By that wild gaze : nor do her fair
face wrong.

For who gives, giving, doth win back
his gift :
And knowledge by division grows
to more :
Who hides the Master's talent
shall die poor,
And starve at last of his own thank-
less thrift.

I did this for another : and, behold !
My work hath blood in it : but
thine hath none :
Done for thyself, it dies in being
done :
To what-thou buyest thou thyself
art sold.

Give thyself utterly away. Be lost.
Choose someone, some thing : not
thyself, thine own :
Thou canst not perish : but, thrice
greater grown,—
Thy gain the greatest where thy loss
was most,—

Thou in another shalt thyself new-
find.
The single globule, lost in the wide
sea,
Becomes an ocean. Each iden-
tity
Is greatest in the greatness of its
kind.

Who serves for gain, a slave, by
thankless self
Is paid ; who gives himself is
priceless, free.
I give myself, a man, to God : lo,
He
Renders me back a saint unto my-
self !

NIGHT.

COME to me, not as once thou
camest, Night !
With light and splendor up the
gorgeous West ;
Easing the heart's rich sense of
thee with sighs
Sobbed out of all emotion on
Love's breast ;
While the dark world waned wav-
ering into rest,
Half seen athwart the dim delicious
light
Of languid eyes :
But softly, soberly ; and dark—more
dark !
Till my life's shadow lose itself in
thine.
Athwart the light of slowly-
gathering tears,
That come between me and the
starlight, shine
From distant melancholy deeps
divine,
While day slips downward through a
rosy arc
To other spheres.

SONG.

FLOW, freshly flow,
Dark stream, below !
While stars grow light above :
By willowy banks, through lonely
downs,
Past terraced walls in silent towns,
And bear me to my love !
Still, as we go,
Blow, gently blow,
Warr wind, and blithely move
These dreamy sails, that slowly
glide,—
A shadow on the shining tide
That bears me to my love.
Fade, sweetly fade
In dewy shade
On lonely grange and grove,
O lingering day ! and bring the
night

Through all her milk-white mazes
 bright
 That tremble o'er my love.

The sunset wanes
 From twinkling panes.
 Dim, misty myriads move
 Down glistening streets. One light
 I see—
 One happy light, that shines for me,
 And lights me to my love!

FORBEARANCE.

CALL me not, Love, unthankful or
 unkind,
 That I have left my heart with
 thee, and fled.
 I were not worth that wealth which
 I resigned,
 Had I not chosen poverty instead.
 Grant me but solitude! I dare not
 swerve
 From my soul's law,—a slave,
 though serving thee.
 I but forbear more grandly to de-
 serve:
 The free gift only cometh of the
 free.

HELIOS HYPERIONIDES.

HELIOS all day long his allotted
 labor pursues;
 No rest to his passionate heart and
 his panting horses given,
 From the moment when roseate-fingered
 Eos kindles the dews
 And spurns the salt sea-floors,
 ascending silvery the heaven,
 Until from the hand of Eos Hesperos,
 trembling, receives
 His fragrant lamp, and faint in the
 twilight hangs it up.
 Then the over-wearied son of Hyper-
 ion lightly leaves
 His dusty chariot, and softly slips
 into his golden cup:
 And to holy Æthiopia, under the
 ocean-stream,

Back from the sunken retreats of
 the sweet Hesperides,
 Leaving his unloved labor, leaving
 his unyoked team,
 He sails to his much-loved wife;
 and stretches his limbs at ease
 In a laurelled lawn divine, on a bed
 of beaten gold.
 Where he pleasantly sleeps, forget-
 ting his travel by lands and seas,
 Till again the clear-eyed Eos comes
 with a finger cold,
 And again, from his white wife
 severed, Hyperionides
 Leaps into his flaming chariot,
 angrily gathers the reins,
 Headlong tings his course through
 Uranos, much in wrath,
 And over the seas and mountains,
 over the rivers and plains,
 Chafed at heart, tumultuous,
 pushes his burning path.

ELISABETTA SIRANI.

1665.

JUST to begin,—and end! so much,—
 no more!
 To touch upon the very point at
 last
 Where life should cling: to feel the
 solid shore
 Safe; where, the seething sea's
 strong toil o'erpast,
 Peace seemed appointed; then, with
 all the store
 Half-undivulged of the gleaned
 ocean east,
 Like a discouraged wave's on the
 bleak strand.
 Where what appeared some temple
 (whose glad Priest
 To gather ocean's sparkling gift
 should stand,
 Bidding the wearied wave, from
 toil releast,
 Sleep in the marble harbors bathed
 with bland
 And quiet sunshine, flowing from
 full east

Among the laurels) proves the dull
 blind rock's
 Fantastic front,—to die, a disa-
 lowed,
 Dasht purpose : which the scornful
 shore-cliff mocks,
 Even as it sinks ; and all its
 wealth bestowed
 in vain,—mere food to feed, per-
 chance, stray flocks
 Of the coarse sea-gull ! weaving its
 own shroud
 Of idle foam, swift ceasing to be
 seen !
 —Sad, sad, my father ! . . . yet it
 comes to this.
 For I am dying. All that might
 have been—
 That must have been ! . . . the
 days, so hard to miss,
 So sure to come ! . . . eyes, lips,
 that seemed to lean
 In on me at my work, and almost
 kiss
 The curls bowed o'er it, . . . lost !
 O, never doubt
 I should have lived to know them
 all again,
 And from the crowd of praisers
 single out
 For special love those forms be-
 held so plain
 Beforehand. When my pictures,
 borne about
 Bologna, to the church doors, led
 their train [go,
 Of kindling faces, turned, as by they
 Up to these windows,—standing at
 your side
 Unseen, to see them, I (be sure !)
 should know
 And welcome back those eyes and
 lips, descried
 Long since in fancy : for I loved
 them so,
 And so believed them ! Think !
 . . . Bologna's pride
 My paintings ! . . . Guido Reni's
 mantle mine . . .
 And I, the maiden artist, prized
 among

The masters, . . . ah, that dream
 was too divine
 For earth to realize ! I die so
 young,
 All this escapes me ! God, the gift
 be Thine,
 Not man's then . . . better so !
 That throbbing throng
 Of human faces fades out fast. Even
 yours,
 Belovéd ones, the inexorable Fate
 (For all our vowed affections !) scarce
 endures
 About me. Must I go, then, deso-
 late
 Out from among you ? Nay, my
 work insures
 Fit guerdon somewhere,—though
 the gift must wait !
 Had I lived longer, life would sure
 have set
 Earth's gift of fame in safety. But
 I die.
 Death must make safe the heavenly
 guerdon yet.
 I trusted time for immortality,—
 There was my error ! Father, never
 let
 Doubt of reward confuse my
 memory !
 Besides,—I have done much : and
 what is done
 Is well done. All my heart con-
 ceived, my hand
 Made fast . . . mild martyr, saint,
 and weeping nun,
 And truncheoned prince, and war-
 rior with bold brand,
 Yet keep my life upon them ;—as
 the sun,
 Though fallen below the limits of
 the land,
 Still sees on every form of purp'le
 cloud
 His painted presence.
 Flaring August's here,
 September's coming ! Summer's
 broidered shroud
 Is borne away in triumph by the
 year :

Red Autumn drops, from all his
 branches bowed,
 His careless wealth upon the costly
 bier.
 We must be cheerful. Set the case-
 ment wide.
 One last look o'er the places I have
 loved,
 One last long look ! . . . Bologna, O
 my pride
 Among thy palaced streets ! The
 days have moved
 Pleasantly o'er us. What has been
 denied
 To our endeavor ? Life goes un-
 improved.
 To make the best of all things, is the
 best
 Of all means to be happy. This I
 know,
 But cannot phrase it finely. The
 night's rest
 The day's toil sweetens. Flowers
 are warmed by snow.
 All's well God wills. Work out this
 grief. Joy's zest
 Itself is salted with a touch of
 woe.
 There's nothing comes to us may
 not be borne,
 Except a too great happiness. But
 this
 Comes rarely. Though I know that
 you will mourn
 The little maiden helpmate you
 must miss,
 'Thanks be to God, I leave you not
 forlorn.
 There should be comfort in this
 dying kiss.
 Let Barbara keep my colors for her-
 self.
 I'm sorry that Lucia went away
 In some unkindness. 'Twas a
 cheerful elf !
 Send her my scarlet ribands,
 mother ; say
 I thought of her. My palette's on
 the shelf,
 Surprised, no doubt, at such long
 holiday.

In the south window, on the easel,
 stands
 My picture for the Empress Eleä-
 nore,
 Still wanting some few touches, these
 weak hands
 Must leave to others. Yet there's
 time before
 The year ends. And the Empress'
 own commands
 You'll find in writing. Barbara's
 brush is more
 Like mine than Anna's ; let her
 finish it.
 O, . . . and there's 'Maso, our
 poor fisherman !
 You'll find my work done for him :
 something fit
 To hang among his nets ; you
 liked the plan
 My fancy took to please our friend's
 dull wit,
 Scarce brighter than his old tin
 fishing-can. . . .
 St. Margaret, stately as a ship full
 sail,
 Leading a dragon by an azure
 band ;
 The ribbon flutters gayly in the gale ;
 The monster follows the Saint's
 guiding hand,
 Wrinkled to one grim smile from
 head to tail ;
 For in his horny hide his heart
 grows bland.
 —Where are you, dear ones ? . . .
 'Tis the dull, faint chill,
 Which soon will shrivel into burn-
 ing pain !
 Dear brother, sisters, father, mother,
 —still
 Stand near me ! While your faces
 fixt remain
 Within my sense, vague fears of un-
 known ill
 Are softly crowded out, . . . and
 yet, 'tis vain !
 Greet Giulio Banzi ; greet Antonio ;
 greet [gone,
 Bartolomeo, kindly. When I'm

And in the school-room, as of old,
you meet,

—Ah, yes! you'll miss a certain
merry tone.

A cheerful face, a smile that should
complete

The vague place in the household
picture grown

To an aspect so familiar, it seems
strange

That aught should alter there.

Mere life, at least,

Could not have brought the shadow
of a change

Across it. Safely the warm years
increast

Among us. I have never sought to
range

From our small table at earth's
general feast,

To higher places: never loved but
you,

Dear family of friends, except my
art :

Nor any form save those my pencil
drew

E'er quivered in the quiet of my
heart.

I die a maiden to Madonna true,
And would have so continued. . . .

There, the smart,

The pang, the faintness ! . . .

Ever, as I lie

Here, with the Autumn sunset on
my face,

And heavy in my curls (whilst it,
and I,

Together, slipping softly from the
place

We played in, pensively prepare to
die),

A low warm humming simmers in
my ears,

—Old Summer afternoons ! faint
fragments rise

Out of my broken life . . . at
times appears [skies :

Madonna-like a moon in mellow
The three Fates with the spindle
and the shears :

The Grand Duke Cosmo with the
Destinies :

St. Margaret with her dragon : fit-
ful cheers

Along the Via Urbana come and go:
Bologna with her towers ! . . .

Then all grows dim,

And shapes itself anew, softly and
slow,

To cloistered glooms through
which the silver hymn

Eludes the sensitive silence ; whilst
below

The southwest window, just one
single, slim,

And sleepy sunbeam, powders with
waved gold

A lane of gleamy mist along the
gloom,

Whereby to find its way, through
manifold [tomb,

Magnificence, to Guido Reni's
Which, set in steadfast splendor, I

behold.

And all the while, I scent the in-
cense fume,

Till dizzy grows the brain, and dark
the eye

Beneath the eyelid. When the
end is come,

There, by his tomb (our master's) let
me lie,

Somewhere, not too far off ; be-
neath the dome

Of our own Lady of the Rosary ;
Safe, where old friends will pass :

and still near home !

LAST WORDS.

WILL, are you sitting and watching there yet? And I know, by a certain skill

That grows out of utter wakefulness, the night must be far spent, Will :
For, lying awake so many a night, I have learned at last to catch
From the crowing cock, and the clanging clock, and the sound of the
beating watch,

A misty sense of the measureless march of Time, as he passes here,
Leaving my life behind him ; and I know that the dawn is near.
But you have been watching three nights, Will, and you look so wan to-
night,

I thought, as I saw you sitting there, in the sad monotonous light
Of the moody night-lamp near you, that I could not choose but close
My lids as fast, and lie as still, as though I lay in a doze :
For, I thought, "He will deem I am dreaming, and then he may steal
away,

And sleep a little : and this will be well." And truly, I dreamed, as I lay
Wide awake, but all as quiet, as though, the last office done,
They had streaked me out for the grave, Will, to which they will bear me
anon.

Dreamed ; for old things and places came dancing about my brain,
Like ghosts that dance in an empty house ; and my thoughts went slipping
again

By green back-ways forgotten to a stiller circle of time,
Where violets, faded forever, seemed blowing as once in their prime :
And I fancied that you and I, Will, were boys again as of old,
At dawn on the hill-top together, at eve in the field by the fold :
Till the thought of this was growing too wildly sweet to be borne,
And I opened my eyes, and turned me round, and there, in the light for-
lorn,

I find you sitting beside me. But the dawn is at hand, I know.
Sleep a little. I shall not die to-night. You may leave me. Go.
Eh ! is it time for the drink ? must you mix it ? it does me no good.
But thanks, old friend, true friend ! I would live for your sake, if I could.
Ay, there are some good things in life, that fall not away with the rest.
And, of all best things upon earth, I hold that a faithful friend is the
best.

For woman, Will, is a thorny flower : it breaks, and we bleed and smart :
The blossom falls at the fairest, and the thorn runs into the heart.
And woman's love is a bitter fruit ; and, however he bite it, or sip,
There's many a man has lived to curse the taste of that fruit on his lip.
But never was any man yet, as I ween, be he whosoever he may,
That has known what a true friend is, Will, and wished that knowledge
away.

You were proud of my promise, faithful despite of my fall,
Sad when the world seemed over sweet, sweet when the world turned
gall :
When I cloaked myself in the pride of praise from what God grieved to see,

You saw through the glittering lie of it all, and silently mourned for me :
When the world took back what the world had given, and scorn with
praise changed place,

I, from my sackcloth and ashes, looked up, and saw hope glow on your
face :

Therefore, fair weather be yours, Will, whether it shines or pours,
And, if I can slip from out of my grave, my spirit will visit yours.

O woman eyes that have smiled and smiled, O woman lips that have kist
The life-blood out of my heart, why thus forever do you persist,
Pressing out of the dark all round, to bewilder my dying hours
With your ghostly sorceries brewed from the breath of your poison-
flowers ?

Still, though the idol be broken, I see at their ancient revels,
The riven altar around, come dancing the self-same devils.

Lente currite, lente currite, noctis equi !

Linger a little, O Time, and let me be saved ere I die.

How many a night 'neath her window have I walked in the wind and
rain,

Only to look at her shadow fleet over the lighted pane.

Alas ! 'twas the shadow that rested, 'twas herself that fled, you see,

And now I am dying, I know it :—dying, and where is she !

Dancing divinely, perchance, or, over her soft harp strings,
Using the past to give pathos to the little new song that she sings.

Bitter ? I dare not be bitter in the few last hours left to live.

Needing so much forgiveness, God grant me at least to forgive.

There can be no space for the ghost of her face down in the narrow
room,

And the mole is blind, and the worm is mute, and there must be rest in
the tomb.

And just one failure more or less to a life that seems to be

(Whilst I lie looking upon it, as a bird on the broken tree

She hovers about, ere making wing for a land of lovelier growth,

Brighter blossom, and purer air, somewhere far off in the south,)

Failure, crowning failure, failure from end to end,

Just one more or less, what matter, to the many no grief can mend ?

Not to know vice is virtue, not fate, however men rave :

And, next to this I hold that man to be but a coward and slave

Who bears the plague-spot about him, and, knowing it, shrinks or fears

To brand it out, though the burning knife should hiss in his heart's hot
tears.

But I have caught the contagion of a world that I never loved,

Pleased myself with approval of those that I never approved,

Paltered with pleasures that pleased not, and fame where no fame could
be,

And how shall I look, do you think, Will, when the angels are looking
on me ?

Yet oh ! the confident spirit once mine, to dare and to do !

Take the world into my hand, and shape it, and make it anew :

Gather all men in my purpose, men in their darkness and dearth,

Men in their meanness and misery, made of the dust of the earth,

Mould them afresh, and make out of them Man, with his spirit sublime,
 Man, the great heir of Eternity, dragging the conquests of Time !
 Therefore I mingled among them, deeming the poet should hold
 All natures saved in his own, as the world in the ark was of old ;
 All natures saved in his own to be types of a nobler race,
 When the old world passeth away, and the new world taketh his place.
 Triple fool in my folly ! purblind and impotent worm,
 Thinking to move the world, who could not myself stand firm !
 Cheat of a worn-out trick, as one that on shipboard roves
 Wherever the wind may blow, still deeming the continent moves !
 Blowing the frothy bubble of life's brittle purpose away ;
 Child, ever chasing the morrow, who now cannot ransom a day :
 Still I called Fame to lead onward, forgetting she follows behind
 Those who know whither they walk through the praise or dispraise of
 mankind.

All my life (looking back on it) shows like the broken stair
 That winds round a ruined tower, and never will lead anywhere.
 Friend, lay your hand in my own, and swear to me, when you have seen
 My body borne out from the door, ere the grass on my grave shall be
 green,

You will burn every book I have written. And so perish, one and all,
 Each trace of the struggle that failed with the life that I cannot recall.
 Dust and ashes, earth's dross, which the mattock may give to the mole !
 Something, though stained and defaced, survives, as I trust, with 'he
 soul.

Something? . . . Ay, something comes back to me . . . Think ! that I
 might have been . . . what ?

Almost, I fancy at times, what I meant to have been, and am not.
 Where was the fault ? Was it strength fell short ? And yet (I can speak
 of it now !)

How my spirit sung like the resonant nerve of a warrior's battle-bow
 When the shaft has leapt from the string, what time, her first bright ban-
 ner unfurled,

Song aimed her arrowy purpose in me sharp at the heart of the world.
 Was it the hand that faltered, unskilled ? or was it the eye that deceived ?
 However I reason it out, there remains a failure time has not retrieved.
 I said I would live in all lives that beat, and love in all loves that be :
 I would crown me lord of all passions ; and the passions were lords of
 me.

I would compass every circle, I would enter at every door,
 In the starry spiral of science, and the labyrinth of lore,
 Only to follow the flying foot of love to his last retreat.
 Fool ! that with man's all-imperfect would circumscribe God's all-com-
 plete !

Arrogant error ! whereby I starved like the fool in the fable of old,
 Whom the gods destroyed by the gift he craved, turning all things to gold.
 Be wise : know what to leave unknown. The flowers bloom on the brink,
 But black death lurks at the bottom. Help men to enjoy, not to think,
 O poet to whom I give place ! cull the latest effect, leave the cause.
 Few that dive for the pearl of the deep but are crushed in the kraken's jaws.

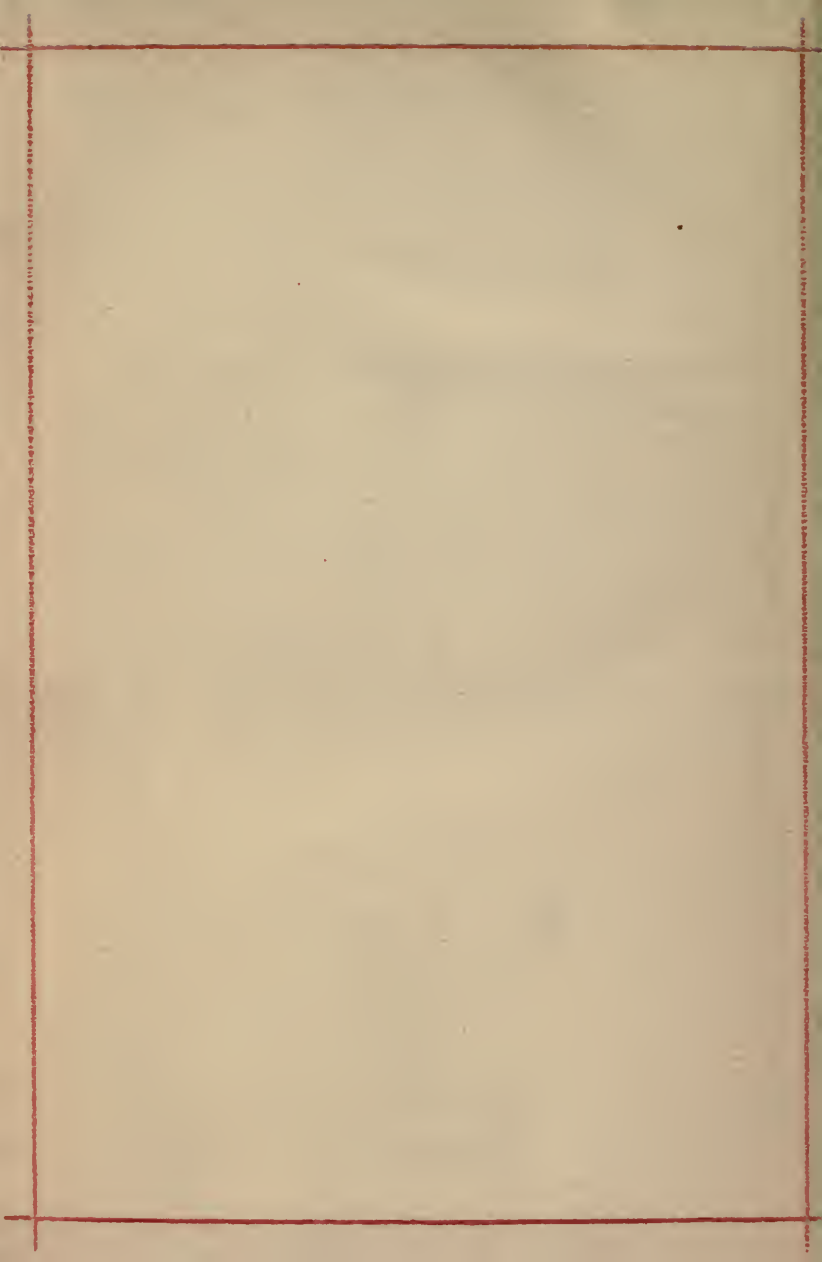
While the harp of Arion is heard at eve over the glimmering ocean :
 He floats in the foam, on the dauphin's back, gliding with gentle motion,
 Over the rolling water, under the light of the beaming star,
 And the nymphs, half asleep on the surface, sail moving his musical car.
 A little knowledge will turn youth gray. And I stood, chill in the sun,
 Naming you each of the roses ; blest by the beauty of none.
 My song had an after-savor of the salt of many tears,
 Or it burned with a bitter foretaste of the end as it now appears :
 And the world that had paused to listen awhile, because the first notes
 were gay.

Passed on its way with a sneer and a smile: "Has he nothing fresher to say ?
 This poet's mind was a weedy flower that presently comes to naught !"
 For the world was not so sad but what my song was sadder, it thought.
 Comfort me not. For if aught be worse than failure from over-stress
 Of a life's prime purpose, it is to sit down content with a little success.
 Talk not of genius baffled. Genius is master of man.

Genius does what it must, and talent does what it can.
 Blot out my name, that the spirits of Shakespeare and Milton and Burns
 Look not down on the praises of fools with a pity my soul yet spurns.
 And yet, had I only the trick of an aptitude shrewd of its kind,
 I should have lived longer, I think, more merry of heart and of mind.
 Surely I knew (who better ?) the innermost secret of each
 Bird, and beast, and flower. Failed I to give to them speech ?
 All the pale spirits of stern, that sail down streams of the wind,
 Cleaving the thunder-cloud, with wild hair blowing behind ;
 All the soft seraphs that float in the light of the erinson eye,
 When Hesper begins to glitter, and the heavy woodland to heave :
 All the white nymphs of the water that dwell 'mid the lilies alone :
 And the buskined maids for the love of whom the hoary oak-trees groan ;
 They came to my call in the forest ; they crept to my feet from the river :
 They softly looked out of the sky when I sung, and their wings beat with
 breathless endeavor

The blocks of the broken thunder piling their stormy lattices,
 Over the moaning mountain walls, and over the sobbing seas.
 So many more reproachful faces around my bed !
 Voices moaning about me : "Ah ! couldst thou not heed what we said ?"
 Peace to the past ! it skills not now : these thoughts that vex it in vain
 Are but the dust of a broken purpose blown about the brain
 Which presently will be tenantless, when the wanton worms carouse,
 And the mole builds over my bones his little windowless house.
 It is growing darker and stranger, Will, and colder.—dark and cold,
 Dark and cold ! Is the lamp gone out ? Give me thy hand to hold.
 No : 'tis life's brief candle burning down. Tears ? tears, Will ! Why,
 'Tis which we call dying is only ceasing to die.
 It is but the giving over a game all lose. Fear life, not death.
 The hard thing was to live, Will. To whatever bourn this breath
 Is going, the way is easy now. With flowers and music, life,
 Like a pagan sacrifice, leads us along to this dark High Priest with the
 knife
 I have been too peevish at mere mischance. For whether we build it,
 friend,

Of brick or jasper, life's large base dwindles into this point at the end,
A kind of nothing ! Who knows whether 'tis fittest to weep or laugh
At those thin curtains the spider spins o'er each dusty epitaph ?
I talk wildly. But this I know, that not even the best and first,
When all is done, can claim by desert what even to the last and worst
Of us weak workmen, God from the depth of his infinite mercy giveth.
These bones shall rest in peace, for I know that my Redeemer liveth.
Doubtful images come and go ; and I seem to be passing them by.
Bubbles these be of the mind, which show that the stream is hurrying nigh
To the home of waters. Already I feel, in a sort of still sweet awe,
The great main current of all that I am beginning to draw and draw
Into perfect peace. I attain at last ! life's a long, long reaching out
Of the soul to something beyond her. Now comes the end of all doubt,
The vanishing point in the picture ! I have uttered weak words to-night,
And foolish. A thousand failures, what are these in the sight
Of the One All-Perfect who, whether man fails in his work, or succeeds,
Builds surely, solemnly up from our broken days and deeds
The infinite purpose of time. We are but day-laborers all,
Early or late, or first or last at the gate in the vineyard wall.
Lord ! if, in love, though fainting oft, I have tended thy gracious Vine,
O, quench the thirst on these dying lips, Thou, who pourest the wine !
Hush ! I am in the way to study a long, long silence now.
I know at last what I cannot tell : I see what I may not show.
Pray awhile for my soul. Then sleep. There is nothing in this to fear.
I shall sleep into death. Night sleeps. The hoarse wolf howls not near,
No dull owl beats the casement, and no rough bearded star
Stares on my mild departure from yon dark window bar.
Nature takes no notice of those that are coming or going.
To-morrow make ready my grave, Will. To-morrow new flowers will be
blowing.



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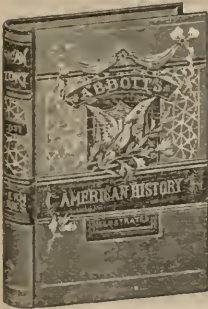
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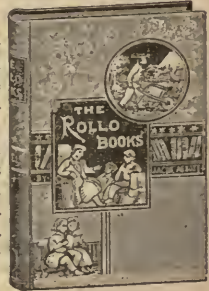
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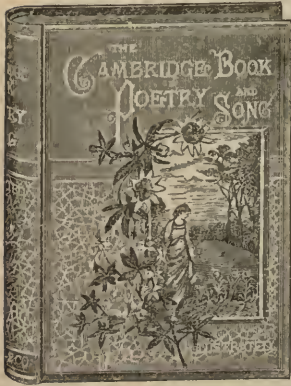
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