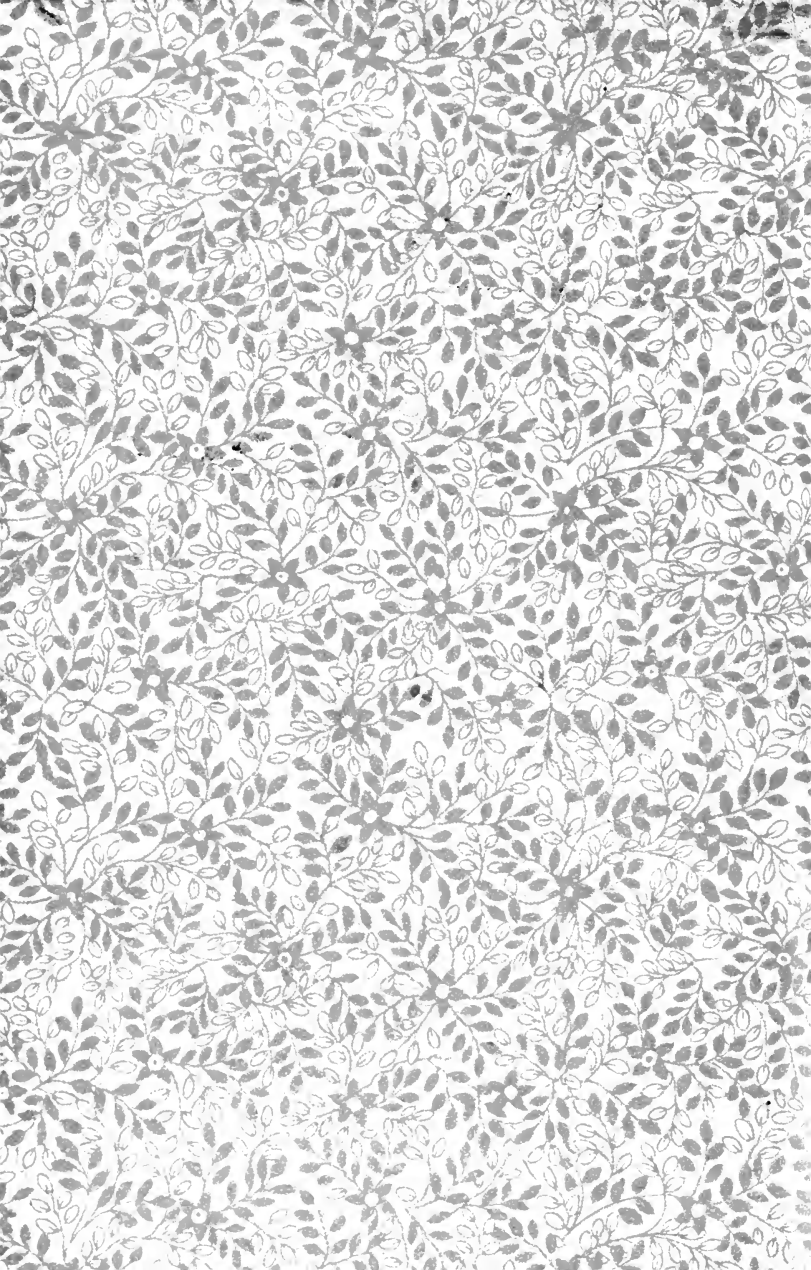


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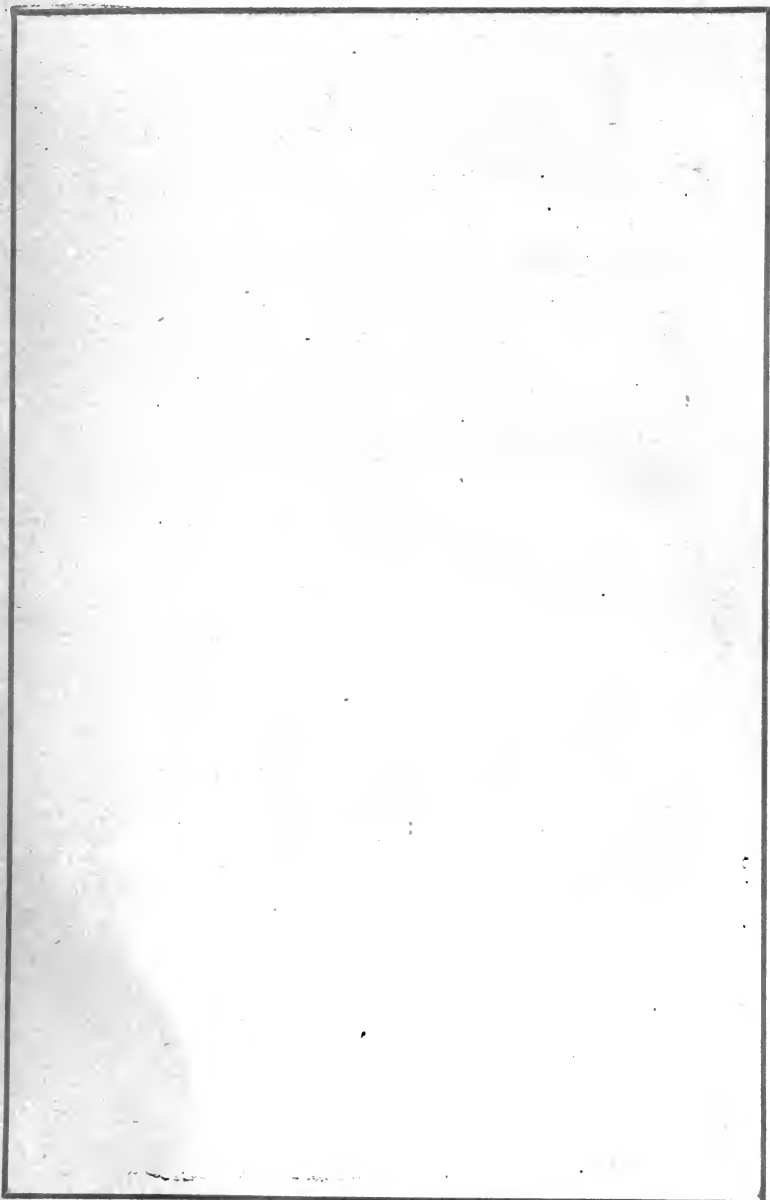




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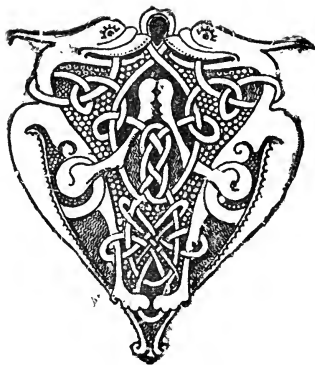
OWEN MEREDITH

(ROBERT, LORD LYTTON).

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

HOUSEHOLD EDITION.

NEW YORK:
R. WORTHINGTON



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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 familiarised 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 companionship, 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,

So long since you may have forgotten
it now,
(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 to
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 Serchon 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,—“on-
 ly 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, ad-
 dressed
 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 sombre
 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 flir-
 tation,
 Are all a man finds for his day's occu-
 pation,
 The whole case, believe me, is totally
 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 Bigorre;
 (pray remember
 These facts, gentle reader, because I
 intend
 To fling all the unities by at the end.)
 He walked to the window. The morn-
 ing 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 gaz-
ing 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 here 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 Alfred,
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 contrive
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 legiti-
mate 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."

Humph! . . . 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 grimace.
I wish you had my place!

(*Reads.*)

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

Bless me! "Lucile"?

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. Be-
fore

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. Hu-
bert 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 Serchon ?

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 shad-
owy light
Hope whispered her first fairy tales,
to excite
The last spark, till it rise, and fade
far in the 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 grave-
stone 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 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 luxu-
rious 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 possibilities;—
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, be sure, to the
other.

Regret is a spiteful old maid; but her
brother,
Remorse, though a widower certainly,
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 Madam de Nevers ?

ALFRED.

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

JOHN.

She's pretty ?

ALFRED.

Decidedly so.

At least, so she was, some ten sum-
mers ago.

As soft and as sallow 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 deli-
cate weed

Which requires to be trampled on,
boldly indeed,

Ere it give 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*

Was at Baden the rage,—held an ab-
solute court

Of devoted adorers, and really made
sport

Of her subjects.

ALFRED.

Indeed!

* 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

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 in-
dites,

Whom necessity, not inclination, unites.

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, 't was 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 soft-
ened. I hardened.

At noon I was banished. At eve I
was pardoned.

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

By whom to that crisis the matter was
brought.

She released me. I lingered. I lin-
gered, 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 rup-
ture 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,—ob-
tained 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 con-
trite 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 por-
trait . . . a ring . . .

With a pledge to return them when-
ever 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.

What is it you wish me to do? Well,

ALFRED.

Matilda, I meant to have called—to
leave word—
To explain—but the time was so press-
ing—

JOHN.

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

ALFRED.

You wish to break off my marriage?

JOHN.

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. Be-
lief 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 presume
when you made

Up your mind to propose to Miss Dar-
cy, you weighed

All the drawbacks against the equiva-
lent 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 a coquette to the end of her
 fingers,
 I will stake my last farthing. Per-
 haps the wish lingers
 To recall the once reckless, indifferent
 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 ex-
 aggerate, Jack.
 You mistake. In three days, at the
 most, I am back.

JOHN.

Ay, how? . . . discontented, unset-
 tled, 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 contest,
 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 cou-
 sin 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 window
 he turned,
 Ere he locked up and quitted his
 chamber, discerned
 Matilda ride by, with her cheek beam-
 ing bright
 In what Virgil has called "Youth's
 purpleal 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,
 As airy and blithe as a blithe bird in
 air,
 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 exquisite
 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, it would
 look, I dare say,
 Not more fresh than Matilda was look-
 ing 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 VARGRAVE
 to the COMTESSE DE NEVERS.*

"BIGORRE, Tuesday.

"Your note, Madame, reached me to-
 day, at Bigorre,
 And commands (need I add?) my obe-
 dience. Before
 The night I shall be at Serchon,—
 where a line,
 If sent to Duval's, where I dine,
 Will find me, awaiting your orders. Re-
 ceive
 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 moun-
 tain 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 precau-
 tion, 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 should-
 ers sees more
 Than the 'live giant's eyesight availed
 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, Aris-
 totle,
 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 crowds 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,
 descendant
 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,
 And whatever he did he was sure to
 regret.
 That target, discussed by the trav-
 ellers of old,
 Which to one appeared argent, to one
 appeared gold,
 To him, ever lingering on Doubt's
 dizzy margin,
 Appeared in one moment both golden
 and argent.
 The man who seeks one thing in life,
 and but one,
 May hope to achieve it before life be
 done;
 But he who seeks all things, wherever
 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 def-
 inite 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 bold
 and unstable,
 Indecisive yet keen, Alfred Vargrave
 seemed able
 To dazzle, but not to illumine man-
 kind.
 A vigorous, various, versatile mind;
 A character wavering, fitful, un-
 certain,
 As the shadow that shakes o'er a lu-
 minous curtain
 Vague, fitting, but 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
 Great outlines of strenuous truth in
 the man:
 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 moment,
 there was
 When this earnestness might, with
 the life-sap of youth,
 Lusty fruitage have borne in his man-
 hood'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
restitut,
Or the frost of the world's wintry wis-
dom.

He missed
That occasion, too rathe in its advent.
Since then,
He had made it a law, in his commerce
with men,
That intensity in him, which only left
sore
The heart it disturbed, to repel and
ignore.
And thus, as some Prince by his sub-
jects 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-com-
fort 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 outrage
his soul
Is controlled by the words he disdains
to control.
And, therefore, he seemed in the deeds
of each day,
The light code proclaimed on his lips
lips to obey;
And, the slave of each whim, followed
wilfully aught
That perchance 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 ruined
and hurled
Under clefts of the hills, which, con-
vulsing the world,
Heaved, in earthquake, their heads
the rent caverns above,

To trouble at times in the light court
of Jove
All its frivolous gods, with an unde-
fined awe,
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
firstborn, 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 expe-
rience exiled
Should have seized on his being, com-
bined with his nature,
And formed, as by fusion, a new hu-
man creature:
As when those airy elements viewless
to sight
(The amalgam of which, if our science
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-fash-
ioned 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 fall 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 lull

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 marble
stairs of their courts,

And gracefully fashion a thousand
sweet sports.

Lord Alfred (by this on his journeying
far)

Was pensively puffing his Lopez cigar,
And brokenly humming an old opera
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
Hurled 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 unbent (as Apollo his
bow did

Now and then) his erectness; and
looking, not ruder,

Than such inroad would warrant, sur-
veyed 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 courte-
ously made

Some excuse in such well-cadenced
French as betrayed,

At the first word he spoke, the Pari-
sian.

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 stumple 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
chère.*

When, together, we bent o'er your
nosegay for hours,

You explained 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 pea-
cocks; 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 descend-
ed from Odin.

German gives me a cold in the head,
sets me wheezing

And coughing; and Russian is noth-
ing 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 question
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 stranger,
appeased

By a something, an accent, a cadence,
which pleased

His ear with that pledge of good
breeding which tells

At once of the world in whose fellow-
ship 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 Serchon?

ALFRED.

Yes; and you?

STRANGER.

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

Somewhat closer than is our acquaint-
ance. You see

How narrow the path is. I'm tempted
to ask

Your permission to finish (no difficult
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 pub-
licists 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 pretentious. 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 Serchon?

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, what'er the sensation, The name we men give to an hour's admiration, A night's passing passion, an actress'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 con-
sole this regret
(If regret be the word I should use), or
fulfil
This desire (if desire be the 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 irri-
tation:

"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 sub-
lime
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 Bontay. Still, I . . . ad-
mit,
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 lillies' 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 hearts-
ease 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 a tragedy in their re-
gard:
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 lan-
guor, 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 impo-
tence.

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 Serchon.

ALFRED.

You know the road well ?

STHANGER.

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
Of the different feelings that haunted
his brain ;
As each, as though roused from a
deep revery,
Almost shouted, descending the moun-
tain, 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 wandered
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 P-
HERISSON,
(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 mur-
mured at last,
“And yet not a coxcomb.” Some
ghost of the past
Vexed him still.
“If he loves 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,
Blessed 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 lucki-
est 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, remorseless,
his best ease,
As the Furies once troubled the sleep
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 without
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 coming,
a note
From Lucile.
"Your last letter has reached me,"
she wrote.
"This evening, alas! I must go to the
ball,
And shall not be at home till to 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 sincerely,
milord,
For the honor with which you adhere
to your word.
Yes, I thank you, Lord Alfred! To-
morrow, then.

XXI.

I find myself terribly puzzled to tell
The feelings with which Alfred Var-
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 sweetest
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 dispute
is disposed, I say . . . "*Allium*
edat cicutis Nocentius!"
Over the fruit and the wine
Undisturbed the wasp settled. The
evening was fine.
Lord Alfred his chair by the window
had set,
And languidly lighted his small cigar-
ette,
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 and by twos,
The idlers of Serchon 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 implied
 . . . "I feel flattered!"

XXIV.

His form was soon lost in the distance
 and gloom.

XXV.

Lord Alfred still sat by himself in his
 room.
 He had finished, one after the other
 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 future,
 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 far 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 matters
 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, although
 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 before, 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.
 "Mai 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 inexhaustible health!
 He that hath shall have more; and this truth, I surmise,
 Is the cause why, to-night, by the beautiful eyes
 Of *la charmanté Lucile* more distinguished than all,
 He so gaily goes off with the belle of the ball."
 "Is it true," asked a lady, aggressively fat,
 Who, fierce as a female Leviathan, sat
 By another that looked like a needle, all steel
 And tenuity,—"*Luvois* will marry *Lucille*?"
 The needle seemed jerked by a virulent 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 wandering the spirits of love.
 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 opened down to the lawn;
 The casements were open; the curtains were drawn;
 Lights streamed from the inside; and with them the sound
 Of music and song. In the garden, around
 A table with fruits, wine, tea, ices, there set,
 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 forgotten 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 merchandise :
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, sublimely
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 a 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 has 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 the 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 car-
go 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 ;
The Paradise Bird, never known
to alight !

“The bird which the mariner’s
blessed, when each lip
Had a song for each omen that glad-
dened 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 nears 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 Pegasus 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 deserted ('t is 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. [seen

For truth is appalling and eldritch, as By this world's artificial lamp-lights,

and we screen

From our sight the strange vision that troubles our life.

Alas! why is Genius forever at strife With the world, which, despite the world's self, it nobles?

Why is it that Genius perplexes and troubles

And offends the effete life it comes to renew?

'T is the terror of truth! 't is that Genius is true!

II.

Lucile de Nevers (if her riddle I read)
Was a woman of genius: whose genius, indeed,

With her life was at war. Once, but once, in her 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 earnestly 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-windows: 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,

Embraced the idea of self-immolation.

The strong spirit in her, had her life but been blended

With some man 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 inspired; 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, disregards
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 feeling
its sting.

III.

One lodges but simply at Serchon;
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 wails 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 Comtesse
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; 't was
a peaceful abode.

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

Which the monks wear, were built 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 cocoanut 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 atep, in the blithe
days of yore,

To pass unannounced her young mis-
tress'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 shipwrecked
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 flat-
tered and fed
By monarchs, to-morrow in search of
mere bread.
The offspring of times trouble-haunt-
ed, he came
Of a family ruined, yet noble in name.
He lost sight of his fortune at twenty,
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 controlled
for a while,
And whose council he prompted and
governed by stealth);
Scarce, indeed, had he wedded an In-
dian 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 orphan,
perchance,
Had secured her a home with his sis-
ter 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 sullen-
ly died,
With no claim on her tears,—she had
wept as a bride.
Said Lord Alfred, "Your mistress ex-
pects me."

The crone
Oped 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. BRACE
In the white curtains wavered the
delicate shade
Of the heaving acacias, through which
the breeze played.
O'er the smooth wooden floor, polished
dark as a glass,
Fragrant white Indian 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, reposed;
 The deep belladonna its vermeil disclosed;
 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 chamois 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 vestige nor trace
 Of a young woman's coquetry troubled 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, undiscerned
 By Lord Alfred, whose face to the window was turned,
 In a strange revelry.
 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 woman'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 unknown agitation,
 An invincible trouble, a strange palpitation,
 Confused his ingenious and frivolous wit:
 Overtook, and entangled, and paralyzed it.
 That wit so complacent and docile, that ever
 Lightly came at the call of the lightest endeavor,
 Ready coined, and avaiably current as gold,
 Which, secured of its value, so fluently 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 acquainted 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 before!
 Alas! poor Lucile, in those weak days of yore,
 Had neglected herself, never heeding, 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
 women 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 revived
 everywhere
 The luxurious proportions of youth;
 and her hair—
 Once shorn as an offering to passion-
 ate 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 gar-
 ment 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.

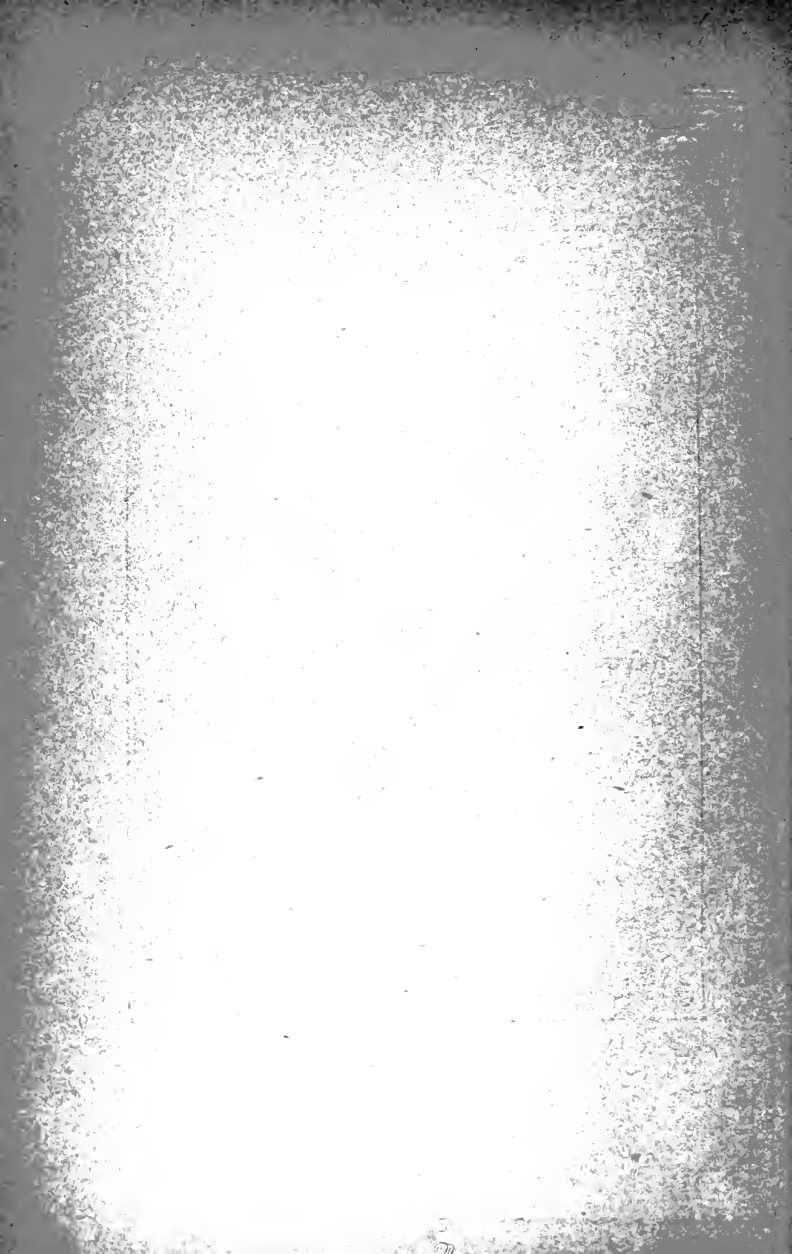
X.

Lord Alfred, who never conceived
 that Lucile
 Could have looked so enchanting, felt
 tempted to kneel
 At her feet, and her pardon with pas-
 sion implore;
 But the calm smile that met him suf-
 ficed 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,—presuming
 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 sad-
 ness?” he sighed.
 “’T is an ancient tradition,” she an-
 swered, “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 re-
 cords 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 common to youth,
 Because what we feel in our bosoms,
 in truth,
 Is novel to us—that 't is novel to earth,
 And will prove the exception, in duration 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 survive it? ah, no;
 'T was the youth of our youth, my lord, is it not so?"

XII.

Lord Alfred was mute. He remembered 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 tremulous 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, unflinching, the pall
 From the bier of the dead Past,—that woman so fair,
 And so young, yet her own self-survivor; who there
 Traced her life's epitaph with a finger so cold!
 'T was a picture that pained his self-love to behold.
 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 continued, "or what
 I would say is, you yet recollect (do you not,
 Lord Alfred?) enough of my nature to know
 That these pledges of what was perhaps 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 reproach 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 connoisseurship,—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 de-
sires,
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 art
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 indul-
gence 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 list-
ened, the more

He discovered perfectious 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,—paus-
ing to trace
The advantage derived from a hymen
so fit.
Of herself she recounted with humor
and wit
Her journeys, her daily employments,
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,
A justice, a sweetness, a meekness of
mind,
Gave a luminous beauty, as tender
and faint
And serene as the halo encircling a
saint.

XVI.

Unobserved by Lord Alfred the time
fleeted by.

To each novel sensation spontaneously
 He abandoned himself with that ardor
 so strange
 Which belongs to a mind grown accustomed 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 footstep there stirred.
 At the door knocked the negress, and thrust in her head,
 "The Duke de Luvois had just entered," 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 evening. Explain,"
 As she glanced at Lord Alfred, she added again,
 "I have business of private importance." 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
 On 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 stirred from the spot.
 The last look of Lucile still bewildered, 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 that
 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 . . .

LUVUOIS.

Ah, forgive! . . . I desired
 So deeply to see you to-day, You re-
 tired
 So early last night from the ball . . .
 this whole week
 I have seen you pale, silent, preoccu-
 pied . . . 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.

'T is not *my* life, Lucile, that I plead
for alone:

If your nature I know, 't is 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 respect
both. The name

And position you offer, and all that
you claim

In behalf of their nobler employment
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

And clammy as death, all too cruelly
told

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, Lu-
cile! 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 un-
 able to trust
 His own powers of restraint, in his
 bosom he thrust
 The packet she gave, with a short an-
 gry 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! De-
 jected, her head
 On her bosom was bowed. Her gaze
 vainly 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
 escape 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,
 'T was a phantom he grasped.

III.

Having sent for his guide.

He ordered his horse, and determined
to ride
Back forwith to Bigorre."
Then, the guide, who well knew
Every haunt of those hills, said the
wild lake of Oo
Lay a league from Serchon; and sug-
gested a track
By the lake to Bigorre, which, trans-
versing the back
Of the mountain, avoided a circuit be-
tween
Two long valleys: and thinking, "per-
chance change of scene
May create change of thought," Alfred
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 wood;
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 red-
dens at morn;
Where the source of the waters is fine
as a thread;
How the storm on the wild Maladetta
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 hamlets,
the vales
Have whispered to him all their thou-
sand 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 gayly
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 profound
revery
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 scarped
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 purple
abysses,
And wound through a region of green
wildernesses;
The waters went wirbling 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 village
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 alchem-
ic sun,
Fused their splendors of crimson and
crystal in one;

And deep in the moss gleamed the delicate shells,
 And the dew lingered fresh in the heavy harebells;
 The large violet burned; the campanula blue;
 And Autumn's own flower, the saffron, peered through
 The red-berried brambles and thick sassafras;
 And fragrant with thyme was the delicate grass;
 And high up, and higher, and highest 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 baffles the sight.
 Only reached by the vast rosy ripple of light,
 And the cool star of eve, the Imperial 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, unfathomed, untrod,
 Save by Even and Morn, and the angels of God.

VII.

Meanwhile, as they journeyed, that serpentine road,
 Now abruptly reversed, unexpectedly 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 beside 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 together. 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 quitted 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 added 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,
 Then 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 halted, and there

Unbuckled the cloaks from the saddle.
 The white
 Aspens rustled, and turned up their
 frail leaves in fright.
 All announced the approach of the
 tempest.

Erelong,
 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 dark-
 ness behind.

XI.

And the Storm is abroad in the moun-
 tains!

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 de-
 struction and terror.
 Up the desolate heights, 'mid an in-
 tricate error
 Of mountain and mist.

XII.

There is war in the skies!
 Lo! the black-winged legions of tem-
 pest arise
 O'er those 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!

XIII.

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; fawning
 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 bastion,
 Of the siege-circled mountains, there
 Of the tumbling 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 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

To 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 dark-
 ness 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.

'T were 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, sup-
 pressing 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 exist-
 ence 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 un-
quiet man,
The wild star of whose course its pale
orbit outran,
Whom the formless indefinite future
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, for-
ever 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 passion-
ate 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.
One tinge
Of faint inward fire flushed transpar-
ently 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 re-
treat
Drew off slowly, receding in silence,
to meet
The powers of the night, which, now
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 Duc de Luvois down the rough
mountain course
Approached them as fast as the road,
and the horse,
Which was limping, would suffer. The
beast had just now
Lost his footing, and over the peril-
ous 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 in-
stinct 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 moun-
tains alone,
Have you felt your identity shrink
and contract
At the sound of the distant and dim
cataract,
In the presence of nature's immensi-
ties? Say,
Have you hung o'er the torrent, be-
dewed 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
As the vision revealed. On the over-
worked soil
On this planet, enjoyment is sharp-
ened by toil;
And one seems, by the pain of ascend-
ing 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 whitened
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 downthrow
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 pedestal
framed?
And later, when Power to Beauty
was wed,
Did some delicate fairy embroider thy
bed
With the fragile valerian and the
wild columbine?

XXI.

But thy secret thou keepest, and I
will keep mine;
For once gazing on thee, it flashed on
my soul.
All 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 art,
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 si-
lent 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
Admitted within it one image,—a
lonely
And tremulous phantom of flickering
light
That followed the mystical moon
through the night.

XXII.

It was late when o'er Serchon at last
they descended.
To her chalet, in silence, Lord Alfred
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! 't is the very same answer
you made
To the Duc de Luvois 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 cup and the lip!"
How blest should we be, have I often
concieved,
Had we really achieved what we near-
ly 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 ex-
istence is one
Which, before we can frame it in lan-
guage, 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 questioned,
say, . . . "What
I would have remained, or become, I
am not"? [side
We are ever behind, or beyond, or be-
Our intrinsic existence. Forever at
hide
And seek with our souls. Not in
Hades alone
Doth Sisyphus roll, ever frustrate, the
stone,
Do the Danaids ply, ever vainly, the
sieve.
Tasks as futile does earth to its deni-
zens 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 min-
ute 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 fit-
 fully flaps,
 And behind it broods ever the mighty
 Perhaps.
 Yet! there's many a slip 'twixt the cup
 and the lip :
 But while o'er the brim of life's beak-
 er 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 possess-
 ed there alone!
 My days knew 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 sway-
 est 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,
 Is done to exalt and to worship thee
 too.
 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 darkness
 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 hopeless
 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 beak-
 er 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 confused
 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 "*his 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.
 'T were 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 vow-
 ed 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. 'T is best
 as it is!"

VI.

But in vain did he reason and argue.
 Alas!
 He yet felt unconvinced that 't was
 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 dis-
 tracted 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 trou-
 bled 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 spur-
 ious 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 break-
 ing 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-
 prise
 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 repentance! Not less,
 In now owning this fault, Alfred, let me own, too,
 I foresaw not the sorrow involved in it.
 "True,
 That meeting, which had 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 the firm and unshaken
 Conviction, at least, that our meeting 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 the 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, serene 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; and, released 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 Serchon when this letter you read.
 My course is decided; my path I discern:
 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 part-
ed 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, 't was 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 sol-
itude, passed
The long lime-trees of Serchon. His
footsteps at last
Reached a bare narrow heath 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 approval to him.

She herself, careless child! was her love for him aught

Save the first joyous fancy succeeding 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 release, 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,

Lucile, to implore

That great blessing on life you alone can confer,

'T were dishonor in him, 't would be insult to her.

Thus still with the letter outspread on his knee

He followed so fondly his own revery, 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. Milord 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 Frenchman was bent

Upon picking a quarrel! and doubtless 't was 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 Matilda'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 resolved to display,

Rose, and turned, with a stern salutation, 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 moment 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 sudden-
 ly changed.
 You step in between us: her heart is
 estranged.
 You! who are now 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 cannot
 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 earnest-
 ness 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

“T was 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 impatient
 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 condi-
 tions with me.

I refuse to reply.”

XVIII.

As diviners may see

Fates they cannot avert in some fig-
 ure occult,

He saw 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 capote;
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 delivered
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 request
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 this 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 Serchon: 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 east
 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 fem-
 inine wonder!
 For all those, 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 generations ?
 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 eldritch, 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 ob-
 solete 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 Prin-
 cess 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 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 mystery ?
 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, reckless
 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 recap-
 ture 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 puzzled
 my own.

II.

Eugene 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, whatever
 the quarry,
 Pursued it, too hotly impatient to
 tarry
 Or turn, till he took it. His trophies
 were trifles :
 But trifler he was not. When rose-
 leaves it rifles,

No less than when oak trees it ruins,
the wind mind,

Its pleasure pursues with impetuous
Both Eugene de Luvois and Lord Al-
fred had been

Men of pleasure: but men's pleasant
vices, which, seen

Floating faint, in the sunshine of Al-
fred'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 watched 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
Of 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 carriages!
Still

'T was 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 desti-
nation,
Which in her hand had its mystical
representation.

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 wide silent land may be sudden-
ly seen,

Darkening over the sands, where it
startles and scares

Some traveller strayed in the waste
unawares,

So that thought more than once dark-
ened 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 quar-
relling 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 as-
cent

Of the mountain! Behind him a mur-
mur 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 aboard and conversed with
each other. The trees

Were in sound and in motion, and
muttered like seas

In Elfland. The road through the for-
est 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 vol-
 uminous
 Rock-chaos,—the Hecate of that Tar-
 tarus!
 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 creaking
 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 let-
 ter . . .

I know

*Why now you refuse me; 't is (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
 last 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 sanc-
 tities
 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. Mad-
 am, yours was the right,
 When you saw that I hoped, to ex-
 tinguish hope quite,
 But you should from the first have
 done this, for I feel
 That you knew from the first that I
 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 up-
 braidings, 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
 Overthrow a whole nature, and 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 matter?
 The sea
 Is the sea still, forever. Its deep
 heart will be
 Self-sufficing, unconscious 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 mein,
 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
 I 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!"

LUVOIS.

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?"

LUVOIS.

O Lucile!

"Say again,"
 She resumed, gazing down, and with faltering tone,
 "Do you blame me that, when I at last had to own. [ished was o'er
 To my heart that the hope it had cherished
 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!"
 'T is 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 exclaimed, "Am I right?
 You reject me! accept him!"

"I have not done so,"
 She said firmly. He hoarsely resumed
 "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 na-
ture, 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 si-
lence! no sound

Reached that room, through the dark
evening air, save the drear

Drip and roar of the cataract cease-
less 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 thun-
dered down all

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

His own senses. His spirit was driv-
en on the wind

Of a reckless emotion beyond his con-
trol;

A torrent seemed loosened within him.
His soul

Surged up from that caldron of pas-
sion 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 him-
self, 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 morn-
ing. 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 mur-
mured—

"Farewell!

We, alas! have mistaken each other.
Once more

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

Due de Luvois, adieu!"

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

He felt she was gone,—gone forever!

IX.

No word,

The sharpest that ever was edged
like 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 cool from the whirlpools of
water below;

The frail wooden balcony shook in
the sound

Of the torrent. The mountains gloom-
ed sullenly round.

A candle one ray from a closed case-
ment flung.

O'er the dim balustrade all bewildered
he hung,

Vaguely watching the broken and
shimmering blink.

Of the stars on the veering and vit-
reous brink

Of that snake-like prone column of
water: and listing

Aloof o'er the langors 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

Of 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;

Before him a Future devoid of en-
deavor

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 better
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 't were 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 ancestors
 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 position ;
 A thing to retain and say nothing
 about,
 Lest, if used, it should draw degradation
 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 endless
 distraction !
 Not even a desert, not even the cell
 Of a hermit to flee to, wherein he
 might quell
 The wild devil-instincts which not un-
 repress,
 Ran 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 sol-
 itudes,
 Were in commune all around 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 invis-
 ible hands
 Dismantled and rent ; and revealed,
 through a loop
 In the breached 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, discomforted, con-
 scious of loss,
 Darkened around him. One object
 alone—that gray cross—
 Glimmered faint on the dark. Gazing
 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 glar-
 ed on the spent

Wearied 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

Toward Serchon.

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. Eu-
 gène 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 sad inquiry fixed keenly
 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 announce-
 ment which said,

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

Comes too late, Alfred Vargrave!"

And so he rode by,

And rode on, and rode gayly, and rode
 out of sight,

Leaving that look behind him to
 rankle 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 eve-
 ning in which

With the Duke he had parted; stray-
 ed 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 [recall

The wild scenery around him avail to
 To his senses their normal percep-

tions, until.

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, pre-
 force, to get back

To Serchon; 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 king was approach-
 ing to-day.

He resolved to proceed to Saint Sa-
 viour. The morn

Which, at last, through the forest
 broke chill and forlorn,

Revealed to him, riding toward Ser-
 chon, 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, re-
luctant 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 here 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 de-
manded 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 eve-
ning before
He re-entered Serchon, with a heart
sick and sore.
In the midst of a light crowd of bab-
blers, his look,
By their voices attracted, distin-
guished the Duke,
Gay, insolent, noisy, with eyes spark-
ling bright,
With laughter, shrill, airy continuous.
Right
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 which he
could not control.

Does he hear in a dream through the
buzz of the crowd,

The Duke's blithe associates, bab-
bling aloud

Some comment upon his gay humor
that day ? [so gay ?

He never was gayer: what makes him
'Tis, no doubt, say the flatterers, flat-
tering in tune,

Some vestal whose virtue no tongue
can 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 en-
shrined, 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 loveliest 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. 'T is best

As it is. I will write to her,—write, O my heart!

And accept her farewell. *Our* farewell! must we part,—

Part thus, then,—forever, Lucile? Is it so?

Yes! I feel it. We could not be happy, I know.

'T was a dream! we must waken!"

XX.

With head bowed, as though By the weight of the heart's resignation, and slow

Moody footsteps, he turned to his inn.

Drawn apart

From the gate, in the court-yard, and ready to start,

Postboys mounted, portmanteaus 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 entered 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 printed 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 't was that of his own future uncle-in-law,

Mrs. Darcy's rich brother, the banker, 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 him the most of

This world and the next; having largely invested

Not only where treasure is never molested

By thieves, moths, 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 door-
 way protruded;
 "Sir Ridley McNab 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. Inclin-
 ing 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 Serchon,—
 distributing tracts,
 Sowing seed by the way, and collect-
 new facts
 For Exter 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 rest-
 less, 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 an-
 swered,—“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, in-
 deed, to this spot),
 Before I accept your kind offer.”
 “Why not?”
 Said Sir Ridley, and smiled. Alfred
 Vargrave, before
 Sir Ridley 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-
 low.
 What passed through his mind then is
 more than I know.
 But before one half-hour into dark-
 ness had fled,
 In the courtyard 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 ensconced,
 the two men
 Began to converse, somewhat drowsi-
 ly, 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? 't
would 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 Pilate
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 sceptical Roman

Than Ridley. Hear some street
astronomer 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! [he,

Not afraid of La Place, nor of Arago,
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,

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

Their science in plain A B C to accord
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

Is proportioned forever with painful
exactness

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 summed
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 escape
from our sight.

XXIII.

And meanwhile a world had been
changed in its pace,

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 benign-
ly 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 dimpled
before

The small house where their carriage
now stopped, at Bigorre.

And more fair than the flowers, more
 fresh than the dew,
 With her white morning robe fitting
 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 de-
 light,
 That his whole heart upbraided itself
 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, 't is 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.
 Wooed 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,
 Hear 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 serene
 as of old,
 When, as children, we gathered the
 moonbeams for gold?
 Do you yet recollect me, my friend?
 Do you still
 Remember the free games we play-
 ed 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 solemn experience
upcast
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 glad 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, wild-
ly 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
Have I 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 wan-
dering sea;
I know not what rainbow may yet,
from far hills,
Lift the promise of hope, the cessation
of ills:
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 green-
ness 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 image?
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 regather
and send
To our old home, my life's scattered
links. But 't is vain!
Each attempt seems to shatter the
chaplet again;
Only fit for fingers like mine to run
o'er,
Who return, a recluse, to those clois-
ters 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 [me
Is not to the forest more lost than to
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,

<p>Seem like voices of spirits that whisper me home!</p> <p>I come, O you whispering voices, I come!</p> <p>My friend, ask me nothing.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"Receive me alone</p> <p>As a Santon receives to his dwelling of stone</p> <p>In silence some pilgrim the midnight may bring:</p> <p>It may be an angel that, weary of wing Hath paused in his flight from some city of doom, [gloom.</p> <p>Or only a wayfarer strayed in the This only I know: that in Europe at least</p> <p>Lives the craft or the power that must master our East.</p> <p>Wherefore strive where the gods must themselves yield at last?</p>	<p>Both they and their altars pass by with the Past.</p> <p>The gods of the household Time thrusts from the shelf;</p> <p>And I seem as unreal and weird to myself</p> <p>As those idols of old.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"Other times, other men,</p> <p>Other men, other passions!</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"So be it! yet again</p> <p>I turn to my birthplace, the birthplace of morn.</p> <p>And the light of those lands where the great sun is born!</p> <p>Spread your arms, O my friend! on your breast let me feel</p> <p>The repose which hath fled from my own.</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;">"Your LUCILE."</p>
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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! preside o'er his way,

And to 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, churlish, refuse

Thy great accents to lend to the lips 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,

In 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)

To dine at the usual-priced table d'hôte.

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 make up
 their mind
 To ascend to the top of these moun-
 tains, 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 re-
 mark, as he passes,
 Here, as elsewhere, 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
 By a similar sickness, there came to
 the baths
 Four sufferers,—each stricken deep
 through the heart.
 Or the head, by the self-same invis-
 ible dart [the noon,
 Of the arrow that flieth unheard in
 From the sickness that walketh un-
 seen in the moon. [wherein each
 Through this great lazaretto of life
 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,
 Thy voice in its accent is joyous and
 bold;
 Thy forests are green as of yore; and
 thine oceans
 Yet move in the might of their an-
 cient 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 ripples
 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 fig-
 ure 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) [contain
 That not all the oysters in Britain
 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 loveliness
 melt—
 Lord Alfred missed something he
 sought for: indeed,
 The more that he missed it the great-
 er 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 ill-
 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 advant-
 ages 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 art thou to him
 that from ocean
 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!
 This accursed æsthetical, 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 strange
 in his face
 When we see it at last. 'Tis the
 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 whatever
 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 nov-
 els they read;
 Perchance 'twas a fault in themselves;
 *I am bound not
 To say: this I know—that these two
 creatures found not
 In each other some sign they expected
 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, 't is 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 mo-
 ment, she listened,
 The young cheek still bloomed, and
 the soft eye still glistened;
 And her lord, when, like one of those
 light vivid things
 That glide down the gauzes of sum-
 mer with wings
 Of rapturous radiance, unconscious
 she moved
 Through that buzz of inferior crea-
 tures, 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! 't is 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, for ever and ever, away
 To find in to-morrow what flies with
 to-day.
 'T was this same little fatal and mys-
 tical word
 That now, like a miràge, led my lady
 and lord
 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 pil-
 grims 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 mark-
 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 paven
 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 time 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 disease
 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 Grassot and Arnal,
 My eye fell on the face of a man at my side:
 Every time that he laughed I observed 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 dissatisfaction.
 "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 occupied 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-a-tête* with a friend
 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 *me voici!*
 The piece is a new one: and Grassot 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
inherit,
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 bo-
soms 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 ! . . .
't is in vain ;

The great blessing of Heaven de-
scends not in rain.

XII.

It was night ; and the lamps were be-
ginning to gleam

Through the long linden-trees, folded
each in his dream,

From that building which looks like a
temple . . . and is

The temple of—Health? Nay, but
enter! I wis

That never the rosy-hued deity knew
One votary out of that sallow-cheeked
crew

Of Courlanders, Wallacs, Greeks,
affable Russians,

Explosive Parisians, potato-faced
Prussians ;

Jews—Hamburghers chiefly ;—pure
patriots,—Suabians ;—

“Cappadocians and Elamites, Cretes
Arabians,

And the dwellers in Pontus” . . . My
muse will not weary

More lines with the list of them . . .
cur fremeur ?

What is it they murmur, and mutter,
and hum ?

Into what Pandemonium is Pentecost
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.

Here passes, 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 squeak-
ing in tune ;

And an indistinct music forever is
rolled,

That mixes and chimes with the
chink 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 wick-
ed slumber

Of some witch when she seeks,
through a nightmare, to grab at

The hot hoof of the fiend, on her way
to the Sabbat.

XIV.

The Duc de Luvois and Lord Alfred
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 aught to betray
 One discourteous remembrance of things passed away.
 'T was a sight that was pleasant, indeed, to be seen,
 These friends exchange greetings;—the men who had been
 Foes so nearly in days that were past.
 Is why, on the night I am speaking about,
 My Lord Alfred sat down by himself at roulette,
 without one suspicion his bosom to fret,
 Although he had left, with his pleasant French friend,
 Matilda, half vexed, at the room's farthest end.

XV.

Lord Alfred his combat with Fortune 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 sensibly worse.
 One needs not a Bacon to find a cause for it;
 'T is an old law in physics—*Natura abhorret vacuum*—and my lord, as he watched his last crown
 Tumble into the bank, turned away with a frown
 Which the brows of Napoleon himself might have decked
 On that day of all days when an empire was wrecked
 On thy plain, Waterloo, and he witnessed 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 fatally known,—
 Those eyes, whose deep gaze answered 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!

XVI.

Ah, well that pale woman a phantom 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 unrelieved.
 The brief noon of beauty was passing away,
 And the chill of the twilight fell, silent and gray,
 O'er that deep, self-perceived isolation of soul.
 And now, as all round her the dim evening stole,
 With its weird desolations, she inwardly grieved
 For the want of that tender assurance 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:—

“Ever open this gulf shall endure, till at last

That which Rome hath most precious within it be cast.”

The Romans threw in it their corn and their stuff,

But their 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:

“O Quirites! to this Heaven's question is come:

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.

Through many a heart runs the rent in the fable;

But who to discover a Curtius is able?

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 fitted

Through the salons and clubs, to the great satisfaction
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:

'T was the woman's free genius it vexed and attacked

With a sneer at her freedom of action and speech.

But its light careless cavils, 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.

'T was no longer this earth's idle inmates she sought

The wit of the woman sufficed to enter 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 center, includes heart and mind.

And therefore it was that Lucile sighed to find
 Men of genius appear, one and all in her ken,
 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: in 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 descried,
 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-stified pain,
 A remembered resentment, half checked by a wild

And reluctant 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, seared, 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 imperfectly 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, reckes 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 juggle 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.

You know

There are moments when silence, pro-
longed 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 tremu-
lous 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 shatter
the spell
Of a silence which suited his purpose
so well.
She was plucking the leaves from a
pale blush rose blossom
Which had fallen from the nosegay
she wore in her bosom.
"This poor flower," she said, "seems
it not out of place
In this hot lamplit air, with its fresh,
fragile 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 silence.
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 show-
ed 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 unrivalled.

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 't is
 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 dif-
 ference 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
 moment 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,
 't is 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:—

“T is 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.

Yet if in his looks or his acts I should
see—

See, or fancy—some moment’s obliv-
ion 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 ev-
ening 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 hus-
band’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 singu-
lar 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

Of a blissful security thus hath re-
posed

Undisturbed with mild eyelids on
happiness closed,

Were it not to expose to a peril un-
just,

And most cruel, that happy repose
you so trust

To meet, to receive, and, indeed, it
may be, [see

For how long I know not, continue to
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 re-
garded 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,

In despite of your noble displeasure, to say

‘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 grow 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 continue 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

I 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 creature, 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 belong,
I admit, to those chartered redressers
of wrong:

But I seek to console, where I can.

'T is 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 Matilda'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

Without a regret, I have known turn
aside

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 twinge
in her breast

Of a conscience disturbed, and her
smile not less warm,

Though she saw the Comtesse de
Nevers on his arm.

The Duke turned and adjusted his
collar.

Thought he,

"Good! 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, with
the grace

Of that kindness which seeks to win
kindness, her place

She assumed by Matilda, unconscious,
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 thrall

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,
smiling.

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, without
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 signifi-
cant 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 an-
swered, "I too."

And he thought, as with that word
she left him, she sighed.

The next moment her place she re-
sumed by the side

Of Matilda; and soon they shook
hands at the gate

Of the selfsame 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 quotes!*) *crede Roberto.*

In silence, awhile, they walked on-
ward.

At last
The Duke's thoughts to language half
consciously passed.

LUVUOIS.

Once more! yet once more!

ALFRED.

What?

LUVUOIS.

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?

LUVUOIS.

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 per-
chance I now may

Presume, Duke, to ask you what,
ever until

Such a moment, I waited . . .

LUVUOIS.

Oh! ask what you will.

Franc jeu! on the table my cards I
spread out.

Ask

ALFRED.

Duke, you were called to a meet-
ing (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!"

LUVUOIS.

Well?

ALFRED.

How then, after that,
Can you and she meet as acquaintan-
ces?

LUVUOIS.

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 asked 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 pas-
sion 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 gen-
tlemen owe

Respect to the name that is ours:
and, if so,

To the woman that bears it a twofold
respect.

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 relinquish
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 ac-
quaintance, and I

And Matilda leave Ems on the mor-
row.

XXXI.

Hesitated and paused. The Duke
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 rais-
on; 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, 't is

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!

A Dian in marble that scorns any troth
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, meanwhile,
They had reached.

XXXIII.

Alfred Vargrave strode on (overthrown

Heart and mind!) in the darkness
 bewildered, alone:
 "And so," to himself did he mutter,
 "and so
 'T was to rescue my life, gentle spir-
 it! and, oh,
 For this did I doubt her? . . . a light
 word—a look—
 The mistake of a moment! . . . for
 this I forsook— [Lucile!
 For this? Pardon, pardon, Lucile! O
 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 Rochefou-
 cauld 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
 There ever is somebody ready to profit:
 No affliction without its stock-job-
 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 purpose
 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 biuned, to a flavor
 sublime
 It retains the same acrid, incongruous
 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 lap-dog, the overfed
 darling
 Of a hypocondriacal fancy appears,
 To my thinking, at least, in a man of
 your years,

At the midnight of manhood with
 plenty to do,
 And every incentive for doing it too,—
 With the duties of life just sufficient-
 ly 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 [again.
 Of my last fall, albeit I may stumble
 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 doing it.
 "Here,
 My next neighbor's a man with twelve
 thousand a year,
 Who deems that life has not a pastime
 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
 weary debate,
 As though he were getting each
 speaker by heart,
 Though amongst them he never pre-
 sumes to take part.
 One asks himself why, without mur-
 mur or question,
 He foregoes all his tastes, and de-
 stroys 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 Prem-
 ier, 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 min-
 utes 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, 't is plain;
 And the drudgery drearily gone
 through in town
 Is more than repaid by provincial re-
 nown.
 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 the shire to the other, as the old-
est; and therefore

He despises fine lords and fine ladies.
He care for

A peerage? no, truly! *Secondo*; 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 abso-
lute sense

Of heartfelt admiration I feel for
this man,

As I see him beside me; — there,
wearing the wan

London daylight away, on his hum-
drum 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 apprehen-
sion to this,

He would ask, with a stare, what sub-
limity is!

His work is the duty to which he was

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
all other lands, even

The type's self is wanting. Perchance,
't is 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 und 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.

Geology opens the mind. So you know
Something also of strata and fossils;

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 (forgive
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 ascend-
 ing so high;
 Things slight in themselves,—long-
 tailed toys, and no more.
 What is it that makes the kite steady-
 ly 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 lesson 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 sil-
 ent fire,

With the sense of a sometimes recurr-
 ing 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 leg-
 itimate spouse,

This thought has consoled me: “At
 least I have given.

For my own good behavior no hostage
 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
 rams,

Of all the old wolves overtaken for
 lambs,

The wolf best received by the flock he
 devours

Is that uncle-in-law, dear Alfred, of
 yours.

At least, this has long been my settled
 conviction,

And I almost would venture at once
 the prediction

That before very long—but no matter!
 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, [grab

I say, lose no time! get it out of the
 Of her trustee and uncle, Sir Ridley

MacNab.

I trust those deposits, at least, are
 drawn out,

And safe at this moment from danger
 or doubt.

Awink is as good as a nod to the wise.
Verbum sap. I admit nothing yet
 justifies
 My distrust: 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 nothing
 to tell
 Worth your bearing. 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 preparing
 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 cous-
 in, which, Heaven

Be praised, I am not. But it reached
 him indeed
 In an unlucky hour, and received
 little heed.
 A half-languid glance was the most
 that he lent at
 That time to these homilies. *Primum
 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, [Nevers.
 The more did it beam to Lucile de
 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. Moreover,
 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
over-run,
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 shad-
ows uncurl'd
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. *ὦ Ἐσπερε, πάντα
φέρεις!*
Such an evening it was, while Matilda
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 cig-
arette,
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 passing
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 unkindness.

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 eyes,
Too pure and too honest in aught to
disguise

The sweet soul shining through them.

ALFRED.

Lucille! (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 around 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 ’t was 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 unkindness 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. Lucille;

I 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, perchance, 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. Departed, 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 ennobled 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, sitting 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—"

Lucille 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 replied,
 "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 replied.
 "Can you doubt
 That a woman, young, fair, and neglected—"

"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,

Bear with me awhile, if I frankly endeavor
 To invade for one moment your innermost 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 terrified 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 spotless
 as snow.

But I know not how far your continued
 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 vaporous
 fleece

Which surrounded and hid the celestials
 in Greece

From the glances of men, would disperse
 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 criminal
 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,
Reach 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 rarely
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 eyebrow
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, where-

ever we go,
And fight our own shadows forever?

O think!

The trial from which you, the strong-
er 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 yourselves
you abuse!

Where the contract exists, it involves
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 re-
proach 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 forseen, 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 wherever 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-construed, Renowned Bishop Berkeley has fully, for one, strewed

With arguments page upon page to teach folks [hoax.

That the world they inhabit is only a 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 fulfills,

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 sunlight assembled,

'Mid those walks over which the laburnum bough trembled,

And the deep-bosomed lilac, emparadising

The haunts 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,
 Began on a sudden to whisper and
 talk.
 And, as each little sprightly and gar-
 gulous 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
 women, looked down
 O'er the dim world whose sole tender
 light was their own,
 When Matilda, alone, from her cham-
 ber descended,
 And entered the garden, unseen, un-
 attended.
 Her forehead was aching and parched,
 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 isolation
 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 recent
 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 look of solicitous fondness? . . .
 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 in-
 nocent blindness
 The sport of transparent illusion? ah,
 folly!
 And that feeling, so tranquil, so happy,
 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,
 With faint meteoric, miraculous
 light,
 The swift-shooting stars through the
 infinite burned,
 And into the infinite ever returned.
 And silently o'er the obscure and un-
 known
 In the heart of Matilda there darted
 and shone
 Thoughts, unkindling like meteors
 the deeps, to expire,
 Leaving traces behind them of trem-
 ulous fire.

IV.

She entered the arbor of lilacs in
 which
 The dark air with odors hung heavy
 and rich,

Like a soul that grows faint with desire.

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 remembrance 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 themselves,

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 returned to, again,

As though by some secret indefinite law,—

The vigilant Frenchman,—Eugène de Luvois!

VI.

A light sound behind her. She trembled. By some

Night-witchcraft her vision a fact had become.

On a sudden she felt, without turning 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 meetings 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 star-lighted lawn;—

By an instinct resistless, I felt myself drawn

To revisit the memories left in the place

Where so lately this evening I looked 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 moment 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 murmured, “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 woman
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 shrunk 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 [be

Of a young and beautiful woman is to
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 hid-
den, 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 answered,
... 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 be-
lieved

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 bring-
ing you peace,

Had forbidden you hope. But he signs
your release

By the hand of another. One moment!
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 presence,
 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 receives
 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 . . .

"T is, 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 fol-
 lowed them not.

But not yet the house had they reach-
 ed 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 midheaven,
 with one pale,

Minute, scintillescent, and tremulous
 star

Swinging under her globe like a wiz-
 ard-lit ear,

Thus to each of those women reveal-
 ing the face

Of the other. Each bore on her feat-
 ures the trace

Of a vivid emotion. A deep inward
 shame

The cheek of Matilda had flooded with
 flame.

With her enthusiastic emotion, Lucile
 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 re-
 plied.
 "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 igno-
 rance 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 hush-
 ed, tearful speech,

Like the showery whispers of flowers,
 each to each

Linked, and leaning together, so lov-
 ing, so fair,

So united, yet diverse, the two women
 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 follow
 the dew?

A night full of stars! O'er the silence,
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 't is
new, all deery 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 posterity
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
declaim!
The soldier's! Three lines on the cold
Abbey pavement!
Were this all the life of the wise and
brave meant,
All it ends in, thrice better, Næara,
it were
Unregarded to sport with thine odor-
ous 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 gra-
ciously 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 labor-
ious 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 utterèd, 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 unquiet heart in his own
 troubled breast.
 He endeavored to think,—an un-
 wonted 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
 Of an incomplete purpose, he crept
 quietly
 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 impalp-
 able 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
 Of the spirit within him, æolian, forth
 leapt
 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 disappointed cab-driver
 Mingled with it, demanding some ultimate stiver:
 Then, the heavy and hurried approach of a boot
 Which revealed by its sound no diminutive foot:
 And the door was flung suddenly open, and on
 The threshold Lord Alfred by bachelor John
 Was seized with that sort of affectionate rage or
 Frenzy of hugs which some stout Ursa Major
 On some lean Ursa Minor would doubtless bestow
 With a warmth for which only starvation and snow
 Could render one grateful. As soon as he could,
 Lord Alfred contrived to escape, nor be food
 Any more for those somewhat voracious embraces.
 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 heaven'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.

Arun 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

* 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 calcined by electrical fire;

Ere a cable went under the hoary Atlantic,
Or the word Telegram drove grammarians
frantic.

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 bear 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.

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 considering
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, inexcus-
ably 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 after
one.

John felt no desire to find instant re-
lief

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, compassion-
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 him-
self 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 in-
dications.

So again there was silence.
A timepiece at last

Struck the twelve strokes of midnight.
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. Up-
lifted, 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 name of
his wife,

Lay in ruins the brilliant unrealized
life

Which, though yet unfulfilled, seemed
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.
 In despite of a wanton behavior, in
 spite
 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 affliction
 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 ex-
 terior,
 Your heart has divined in me some-
 thing superior
 To that which I seem; from my inner-
 most 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 mission
 of sorrow;
 If she sleeps, I will not mar her
 dreams of to-morrow.

He opened the door, and passed out.
 Watched 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 radiance
 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 angelic
 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, [hair;
 And over them rippled her soft golden
 Her simple and slender white bodice
 unlaced
 Confined not one curve of her delicate
 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
 Lapse and pulse of a million emotions.
 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: suf-
 fused with the blush
 Which came o'er her soft pallid cheek
 with a gush
 Where the tears sparkled yet.
 As a young fawn uncouches,
 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 relax-
 ed, 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 tu-
 multuous 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 re-
 proaches 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 is of sore,
 Although in his pride he might per-
 ish, 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 hal-
 lows 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 con-
 fessor!"
 "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 an-
 other, O say,
 The loss of what life, sparing this,
 takes away ?
 Will she feel (feeling this), when ca-
 lamities 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, "in-
 deed were thrice blest!"
 "Then courage, true wife of my
 heart!" to his breast
 As he folded and gathered her close-
 ly, 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
 A calamity, sudden, and heavy to
 bear.
 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 ad-
 mits here alone
 A heart which calamity leaves all
 your own!"
 She started . . . "Calamity, Alfred!
 to you ?"
 "To both, my poor child, but 't will
 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 flies,
 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 incense
streamed to us,

And its myriad voices of joy seemed
to woo us,

We strayed from each other, too far,
it may be,

Nor, wantonly wandering, then did I
see

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
woman 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
oblivious she was

Of all save the sense of her own love!
Anon,

However, his words rushed back to
her. “All gone,

The fortunes 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, [deed

To sober this rapture, so selfish in-
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 na-
ture'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,

The heart I have learned as a woman
to feel!

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 un-
to heaven,
There I see you, and know you, and
bless the light given
To lead me to life's late achievement;
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, uphung,
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, dip-
ped cool in the dim
Lustrous gloom of the shadowy
laurels. They heard
Aloof the invisible, rapturous 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 drop-
ped 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, un-
seen,
Her old, quiet toil in the heart of the
green
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 has hal-
lowed device
Hung forth, and proclaimed his se-
rene 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 feigning;
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 garden.
The air,
With the chill of the dawn yet unrisen,
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,
And the crickets that sing all the
night!

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 trou-
bled in her.

Ah, pale woman! what, with that
heart-broken look
Didst thou read then in nature's weird
heart-breaking book? [And who
Have the wild rains of heaven a father
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, supernat-
ural powers,
Whose sudden and solemn suggestions
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 inherited
wings.
When the soul, on the impulse of an-
guish, hath passed
Beyond anguish, and risen into rapture
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 wild-
 erness.

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 hori-
 zons. 'T is 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-
 hanging the night,
 Never listened, I swear, more unques-
 tioningly,
 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 con-
 tinued 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 up-
 on 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 wick-
 ed 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 Life
 hope not, and then
 To Despair you say 'Act not!'"

V.

He watched her awhile
 With a chill sort of restless and suffer-
 ing 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 visitants!
 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 feverish change,
 He continued his monologue, fitful and strange.
 "Woe to him, in whose nature, once kindled, the torch
 Of Passion burns downward to blacken and scorch!
 But shame, shame and sorrow, O woman to thee
 Whose hand sowed the seed of destruction in me!
 Whose lip taught the lesson of falsehood 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, 't is 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 exhausted its joys;
 What is broken? one only of youth's pleasant toys!
 Shall I be the less welcome, wherever 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 cancelled 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
 Why 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 languors of heaven,
 I could trace nothing more, not a ng 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 darkness
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 just-
ly 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, [less power,
Al! the pale, cruel, beautiful, passion-
Shot up in that cold face of yours!
Was this well?
But enough! not on you would I vent
the wild hell
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
To forget every word I have heard,
every sight
That has grieved and appalled me
in this wretched night
Which must witness our final farewell.
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 wronged
you, Lucile?
I . . . have I . . . forgive me, forgive
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
innocent days,
Would come back upon me, and this
scorching heart [not depart
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
That 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
 First love, though it perish from life,
 only goes
 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 ob-
 jects! But I?
 All such loves from my life through
 its whole destiny
 Face 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 so-
 cial condition.
 Fame? But fame in itself presup-
 poses 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
 'Twixt 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

Of a fate I can neither control nor
 dispute,
 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 wo-
 man, 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 mo-
 ments it stretch
 To shrill tension some one wailing
 nerve, means to fetch
 Its response the truest, most string-
 ent, and smart,
 Its pathos 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 har-
 mony 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 despondency die with
the night!"

He was moved by her words. As
some poor wretch confined
In cells loud with meaningless laugh-
ter, whose mind
Wanders trackless amidst its own
ruins, may hear
A voice heard long since, silenced
many a year,
And now, 'mid mad ravings recap-
tured 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 pass-
ing, 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
havo'c 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 hence-
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

In 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
dayspring 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 cast: 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,
 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 confused,
 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 wreck of that orgy, the
 face of a saint,
 Seen through some broken frame, ap-
 pears 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
 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:
 "O soul to its sources departing
 away!
 Pray for mine, if one soul for another
 may pray.
 I 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! 't will pass. All be-
 tween us is o'er.
 Forget the wild words of to-night.
 'T was the pain

For long years hoarded up, that
 rushed 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. I
 suppose
 'Tis to meet nevermore. Is it 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, soothingly
 fell
 "Our two paths must part us, Eugène;
 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 nev-
 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 yourself,
 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 con-
 trol;
 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 rolled
 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 them-
selves seemed to be
Brilliant fragments of that golden
world, wherein he
Had 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 expan-
sion, he felt
With a thrill, sweet and strange, and
intense,—awed, amazed,—
Something soar and ascend in his
soul, as he gazed.

CANTO VI.

I.

MAN is born on a battlefield. 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 herself,
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,
 And the first thing he worships is
 Terror.

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 its path see the dead
 lion roll!

On toward Heaven the son of Alemena
 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 Ara-
 bian; at peace,

A mere wandering shepherd that fol-
 lows the fleece;

But, warring his way through a world's
 destinies,

Lo, from Delhi, from Bagdad, from
 Cordova, rise

Domes of empire, dowered with sci-
 ence 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 arméd
 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, sonorously breathe, o'er the
 spirit in me

One strain, sad and stern, of that deep
 Epopee

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 Briton
 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 encir-
 cling the sun,

This planet of ours on its pathway
 hath gone,

And the fates that I sing of have
 flowed with the fates

Of a world, in the red wake of war,
 round the gates
 Of that doomed and heroic city, in
 which
 (Fire crowning the rampart, blood
 bathing the ditch!)
 At bay, fights the Russian as some
 hunted bear,
 Whom the huntsman have hemmed
 round at last in his lair.

IV.

A fanged, arid plain, sapped with un-
 derground fire,
 Soaked with snow, torn^t with shot,
 mashed to one gory mire!
 There Fate's iron scale hangs in torrid
 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 sep-
 arate ways
 Winding, serpent-wise, nearer; the
 other, each day's
 Sullen toil adding size to,—concent-
 rated, solid,
 Indefatigable,—the brass-fronted, em-
 bodied,
 And audible *avros* gone sombrely
 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 con-
 ceals.

'T was the breath

War, yet drowsily yawning, began to
 suspire;
 Where through, here and there, flashed
 an eye of red fire,
 And closed, from some rampart be-
 ginning to bellow
 Hoarse challenge; replied to anon,
 through the yellow

And sulphurous twilight: till day
 reeled and rocked,
 And roared into dark. Then the mid-
 night was mocked
 With fierce apparitions. Ringed round
 by a rain
 Of red fire, and of iron, the murder-
 ous plain
 Flared with fitful combustion; where
 fitfully fell
 Afar off the fatal, disgorged *scharpen-
 elle*,
 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 No-
 vember 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 bram-
 ble 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
high spent:
And, wounded and lone, in a desolate
tent
Lies a young British soldier whose
sword . . .

In this place,
However, my Muso is compelled to
retrace
Her precipitous steps and revert to
the past.
The shock which had suddenly shat-
tered at last
Alfred Vargrave's fantastical holiday
nature,
And 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 sum-
moned forth by a blow.
And thus loss of fortune gave value
to life.

The wife gained a husband, the hus-
band a wife,
In that home which, though humbled
and narrowed by fate,
Was enlarged and ennobled by love.
Love 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, guar-
dian, and friend
Of the home he both shared and as-
sured, 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 com-
rades, 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 deep
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 token
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, pierced,
bleeding, and torn.
Where for long days and nights, with
the wound in his side,
He lay, dark.

IX.

But a wound deeper far, undescried.
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 change-
less 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-
owly glimmer,
The sufferer sees that still form float-
ing on,
And feels faintly aware that he is not
alone.
She is flitting before him. She
pauses. She stands
By his bedside all silent. She lays
her white hands;
On the brow of the boy. A light fin-
ger is pressing
Softly, softly the sore wounds: the
hot blood-stained dressing
Slips from them. A comforting quiet-
ude 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 benignant,
he blessed
In silence the sense of salvation.
And rest
Having loosened the mind's tangled
meshes, he faintly
Sighed . . . "Say what thou art,
blesséd 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. 'T is more brave
To live, than to die. Sleep!"
He sleeps: he is sleeping.

XII.

He wakened again, when the dawn
was just steeping
The skies with chill splendor. And
there, never fitting,
Never fitting, 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
Of that balmy voice; if it may be, re-
vealing
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
Of this ministration; to them, and to
thee,
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 fath-
er, 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-
issuing, drove
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
langour.

And there,
Day by day, night by night, unremit-
ting 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
 Quiet 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 loneliness
 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 past
 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 wind
 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 in 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 suf-
 fering.

"What?
 Lies my heart, then, so bare?" he
 moaned bitterly.

"Nay,"
 With compassionate accents she has-
 tened 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 two-
 fold?
 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 afflic-
 tion, 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
 Enough of its sorrow, enough of its
 trial,
 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 com-
 mon 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! Oh, 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, 't is 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 moth-
er had smiled. [supplied,

One uncle their place in her life had
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 hill

Which is colder and stiller than sun-
light elsewhere.

Grass grew in the courtyard: the
chambers were bare

In that ancient mansion; when first
the stern tread

Of its owner awakened their echoes
long dead:

Bringing with him this infant (the
child of a brother),

Whom, dying, the hands of a desolate
mother

Had placed on his bosom. 'T was
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 sor-
rowful 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

Alone, 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 moody
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 an-
swer it not.

But few years had pass'd o'er that
childhood before

A change came among them. A let-
ter which bore

Sudden consequence with it, one morn-
ing was placed

In the hands of the lord of the château.
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 old lonely 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 renounced
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.

'Twi'x 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 innocent
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. 'T was there their ac-
quaintance began,

There it closed. That old miracle—
Love-at-first-sight—

Needs no explanations. The heart
reads aright

Its destiny sometimes. His love
neither 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
 Fair titles to favor. His love, nothing loath,
 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 moving
 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 answer
 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 woman
 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 Con-
 stance (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 dy-
 ing away,
 It was then he sought death.

XVII.

Thus the tale ends. 'T was 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, unheeded;
 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 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? Have 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
 brokenly 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 retribu-
 tive 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 Sœur Seraphine
 . . . "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; dar-
 ing 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 ambush, 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,—in-
 trepidly 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, combining,
 comparing,
 Constructing, within moves the brain
 of one man,
 Moving 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 de-
 clares

To be known through the camp as a
 seraph of grace:
 He has seen, all have seen her indeed,
 in each place
 Where suffering is seen, silent, act-
 ive,—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, something
 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.
Où, 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?"

"T is 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 Gen-
 eral 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, lift-
ing 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?"

The nun

Paused silent. The General eyed her
anon
More keenly. His aspect grew trou-
bled. 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 wait
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 [track

The sleep that forever returns in the
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 her-
self; 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 toward her; one
heavy hand laid

On her shoulder in silence; bent o'er
her his head,

Searched 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
 e'vn 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 thy
 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 before
 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 twi-
 light 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 pres-
 ence of joy!

The unproved desire,—the unaimed
 aspiration,—

The deep conscious life that forestalls
 consummation;

With ever a flitting 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 sig-
 nal 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 sup-
 port from the branch?
 Spreads the leaf broad and fair? holds
 the bough strong and stanch?
 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, arise Bab-
 ylon!
 From ruins like these the fanes 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 wom-
 an 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, bap-
 tized
 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 below
 a dim star,
 Calling to her forlornly; and (sadden-
 ing the psalms
 Of the angels, and piercing the Para-
 dise palms!)
 The name borne 'mid earthly beloveds
 on earth
 Sighed above some lone grave in the
 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, retrace
 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 crown-
 ing 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 hu-
 man 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,

By 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 picture she drew
 Of the poor, proud, sad spirit, rejecting 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 marring 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 herself: 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 in 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 strenuous truth
 Accomplished in act, had it taught him 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 generous 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?"
 "'T is 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 the life of this man. Will you save it?"

"What man?
 How? . . . where? . . . can you ask?"
 She went rapidly on
 To her object in brief vivid words . . .
 The young son
 Of Matilda and Alfred—the boy lying 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;
 Sought to nurse back his life; found
 her efforts still fail;
 Beaten back by a love that was strong-
 er 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, destroying
 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?
 She went on to tell how the boy had
 clung still
 To life, for the sake of life's uses, until
 From his weak hands the strong effort
 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 . . .
 "T is to him, then," he cried, . . .
 Checking suddenly short the tumultu-
 ous 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
 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!
 Yet this was the meaning of all,—this
 the end!
 Be it so! There's a sort of slow jus-
 tice (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 yourself,
 and one other,
 For that gentle child without father
 or mother.
 To whom you are both. I plead, sol-
 dier of France,
 For your own nobler nature,—and
 plead for Constance!"
 At the sound of that name he averted
 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 was muttering low to himself as
he went.

"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 rapture life cools
down with tears!

Henceforth shall the tread of a Var-
grave alone

Rouse your echoes?"

"O, think not," she said, "of the
son

Of the man whom unjustly you hate;
only think

Of this young human creature who
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 has 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.

Still 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 Sœur Seraphine.

The low tent,

In her sudden uprising seemed
dwarfed by the height

From which those imperial eyes
poured the light

Of their deep silent sadness upon
him.

No wonder

He felt, as it were, his own stature
shrink under

The compulsion of that grave regard!
For between

The Duc de Luvois and the Sœur Ser-
aphine

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 reproaches.
That's best

Which God sends. 'T was 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 repara-
tions. 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 *valeté 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 sick
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 balk-
ed! else, how bear
This intense and intolerable solitude,
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 regard!
. . . 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, "Behold!"
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
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
Into infinite lives of atonement, no end
Would seem too remote for my grief (could that be!)
To include it! Not too late, however, for me
To entreat: is it too late for you to forgive?

THE DUKE.

You wrong—my forgiveness—explain

THE BOY.

Could I live!

Such a very few hours left to life, yet I shrink,
I falter! . . . Yes, Duke, your forgiveness 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 (heeded 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.
Due 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 any one whispered . . . "Depart!"
To the hope the whole world seemed in league then to nurse!
Had any one 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 great 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 lone-
ly thought

That honors you not. In all this there
is nought

'T is 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, where-
ever we turn,

Some grief irremediable we discern ;
And yet—there sits God, calm in
Heaven above !

Do we trust one whit less in His just-
ice 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

'T will at least comprehend how in-
tense was the strife

Which is closed in this act of atone-
ment, whereby

I seek in the son of my youth's enemy
The friend of my age. Let the pres-
ent release

Here acquitted the past ! In the name
of my niece,

Whom for my life in yours as a host-
age I give,

Are you great enough, boy, to forgive
me,—and live ?

Whilst he spoke thus, a doubtful tu-
multuous 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 faint cry of rapturous won-
der, he sank

On the breast of the nun, who stood
near.

"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
fuse by his flame,
And changed by his influence!) change-
less, as when,
Ere he lit down to death generations
of men,
O'er that crude and ungainly creation,
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 alternations, 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 de-
faced and concealed;
Lucile left the tent and stood by him.
Her tread
Aroused him; and, turning towards
her, he said:
"O Scour 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 murmured.
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, sunlike
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 tu-
mult 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 welcoming hand:
 When, heeding no longer the sea's baffled roar,
 The mariner turns to his rest evermore;
 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 overtook us at last;
 That day went the bowsprit, the next day the mast;
 The mermen came round us, and there we saw bask [ask
 A siren? The Captain of Port will he Any one of such questions? I cannot 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, admitspace 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 't is your part
 To aid towards achievement, to save from reverse:
 Mine, 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 muttered.
 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, accomplished, is o'er.
 The mission of genius on earth! To uplift,
 Purify, and confirm by its own gracious gift,
 The world, in despite of the world's dull endeavor
 To degrade, and drag down, and oppose it forever.
 The mission of genius: to watch, and to wait,
 To renew, to redeem, and to regenerate.
 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 native 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
 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 somewhere. Who knows
 What earth needs from earth's lowest creature? No life
 Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife
 And all life not be purer and stronger 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,
 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.

XLI.

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.

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 withhold:
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 sons of the land that 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, spreading 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 hid '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,
 What 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 't was 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 pro-
 long ?

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 bed.

When the hand saith '*I did,*' not '*I will do,*' the heart saith '*It was,*' not
 "*It will 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 hid 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.
And from hall on to hall, in the doors, mute magnificent slaves, watchful-eyed,
Bowed to earth as King Solomon passed them. And, passing, King Solomon
sighed.

And, from hall on to hall pacing feebly, the king mused . . . O fair Shulamite !
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 entered 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 evan-
ished 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 are 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 't were 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, eying 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 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? Live 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.
 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 hauds, 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 beneficence
 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 pursued,
 That far from the herd on the hill-top bounds swiftly 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.
 That 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 fullness to-
 night.

And to-morrow . . . Well, time to consider" (he felt at the fruit). "What del-
 light

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 sallow 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-unfolding for kisses; and sank, as they fell, 'twixt his knees, with a
 laugh, [half

On the floor, in a flood of deep hair flung behind her full throat; held him
 Aloof with one large, languid arm, while the other uppropped, where she lay,
 Limbs flowing in fullness 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 murmured, "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 idle-
 ness' 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, [stain!
 "It is all sour fruit, this! But those I fling from me,—see here by the 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. [my purse Nay, witch! 't is worth more than the shekels of gold thou hast charmed from Take it. Eat, and thank me for the meal, witch! for Eve, thy sly mother, fared worse, [and try.
 O thou white-toothed taster of apples?" "Thou liest, fool!" "Taste, then,

For the truth of the fruit's in the eating. 'T is thou art the serpent, not I." And the strong man laughed loud as he pushed at her lip the life-apple. She caught [naught.
 And held it away from her, and musing; and muttered . . . "Go to! It is 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 lists 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 't is yet all un-sweet." [rest!

Her tears fell: they fell on the apple. She sighed . . . "Sour fruit, like the 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? Aye, 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?
 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 clefts 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, unawares 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 seal 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 judgement 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 forced 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 mankind;
But full of noble sympathies
For what is genuinely wise,
And beautiful, and kind,

And thou wilt pardon all the much
Of weakness which doth here abound,
Till music, little prized as such,
With thee find worth with 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
To charm the midnight moon, and bind
All spirits of the sweet south-wind,
And steal from every shower

That sweeps from 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 bequeathed
Its silence to that name;

Which yet an age remote shall hear,
Borne on the fourfold wind sublime
By Fame, 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
Chides gently back the thoughts that chase
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;
Then onward, through the gradual night,
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 together,

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 Appennine, and there hath strung
A harp of Anakim;

Than whom a mightier master never
Touched the deep chords of hidden things;
Nor error did from truth dis sever
With keener glance; nor made endeavor
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 stime
Through the dim sunset, and the whole
Of heaven begins to draw

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.

FLORENCE, September 24, 1857.

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, tho' 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 vio-
let.

Else why, through days which never
come again,

Roams Hope with that strange long-
ing, 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?

Thy name hath been a silence in my
life [now.

So long, it falters upon language
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 re-
gret.

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 memory 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 is it 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 brows 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 reiterance of those pangs of yore.

Peace, peace! My wild song will go wandering
 Too wantonly down paths a private pain
 Hath trodden bare. What was it jarred the strain?
 Some crusht illusion, left with crumpled wing
 Tangled in Music's web of twinéd 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 reproachfully,
 The mistress of my moods, and looks bereft
 (Cruel to the last!) as though 't were 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 departed time;
 O, for one brief strong pulse of ancient 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! [thee,
Land of my love, though I be far from
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 [night
Let my heart bathe, as on that fated
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 an-
emones;
One stream of her soft hair strayed un-
confined
Down her ripe cheek, and shadowed
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 fairies
stand.
Under the blessed darkness unreproved
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, [eyes,
And gazed up from her feet into her
Her face was bowed: we breathed
each other's sighs:
We did not speak: nor 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? Some-
where in a dream,
Drifting, slow drifting, down a wiz-
ard stream;
Whither? Together: then what mat-
ter 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 shoul-
der 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 wingéd 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 trust-
ed then.

The foolish Faun pursues the unwill-
ing Nymph
That culls her flowers besides 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
Gains some new fountain : or the
lilied lawn
A rarer sort of rose : but, ah, poor
Faun !
To thee she shall be changed forever-
more.

Chase not too close the fading rapture.
Leave
To Love his long auroras, slowly seen.
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
In outer air, and what by fits made
bright
Hot oleanders in a rosy vale
Searched by the lamping fly, whose
little spark
Went in and out, like passion's bash-
ful 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 those dark heavens paused
Destiny,
With her last star descending in the
gleam
Of the cold morrow, from the emp-
tied sky.
The hour, the distance from her old
self, all
The novelty and liveness 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, murmur-
ing there
A woman's inarticulate, passionate
words.
O moment of all moments upon earth!
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 centers 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 perplexing
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 [plete
Assumes the full-lived woman, to com-
The end of life, since human life
began !

When in the perfect bliss of union,
Body and soul triumphal rapture
claim,

When there's a spirit in blood, a
spirit a flame,
And earth's lone hemispheres glow,
fused in one !

Rare moment of rare peril ! . . . The
bard's song,
The mystic's musing fancy. Did
there ever

Two perfect souls in perfect forms be-
long
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 overflow,
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 reluct-
ant 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 fare-
wells 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, [above,

Down that abyss which Memory droops
And, gazing out of hopelessness
down there,

I see the shadow creep through
Youth's gold hair

And white Death watching over red-
dipped 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 morial 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,

Till the new life divulge it. Lord,
imbue 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 : nor
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 occurrences
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, re-
strain,

And hold my spirit pure above my
pain.

No star that looks through life's dark
lattices,

But what gives token of a world else-
where.

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
live-long 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 cymbals
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 un-
wandered 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

A 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

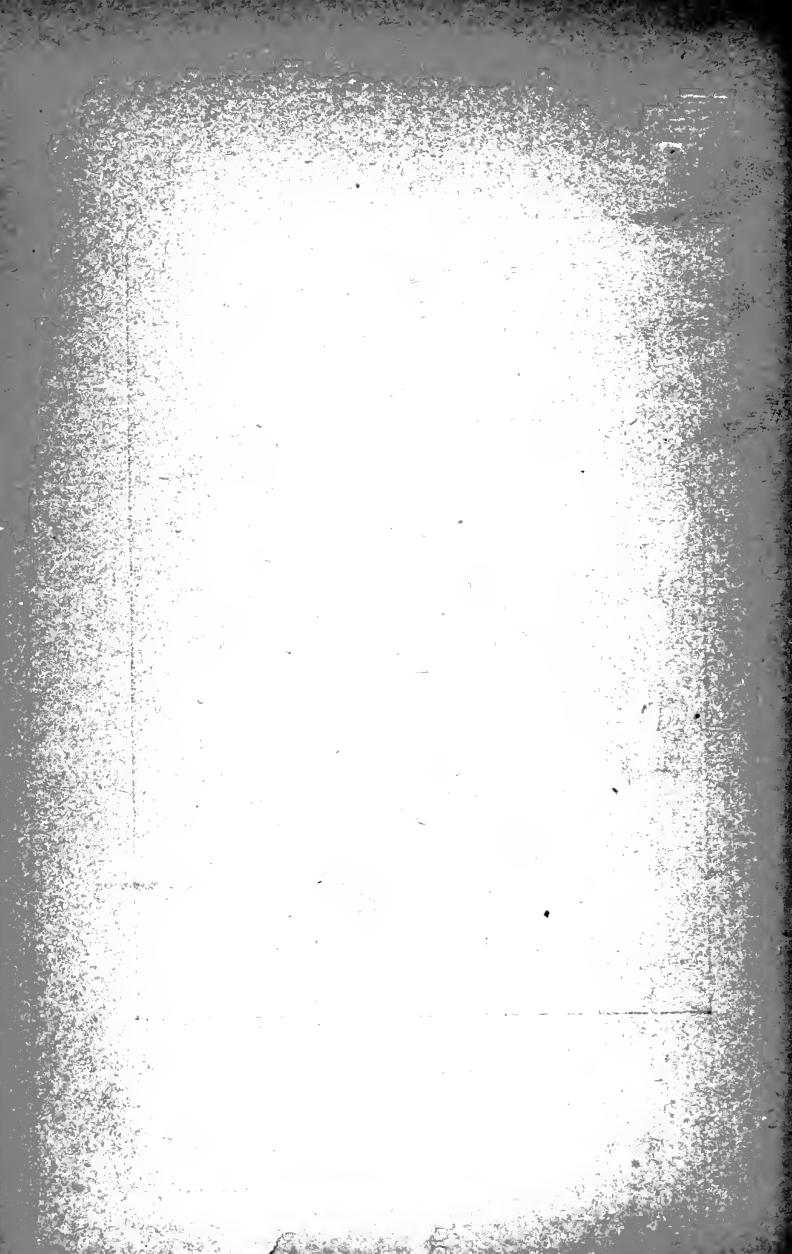
Without a sound the polar star to
light,

Not idly did the Chaldee shepherds
boast [to read.

By thy stern lights man's life aright
All day he hides himself from his

own heart,
Swaggers and struts, and plays his
foolish part:





Thou only scest him as he is indeed—
 For who could feign false worth, or
 give the nod
 Among his fellows, or this dust dis-
 own,
 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 most 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 mem-
 ory
 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 look 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 house-
 hold strife
 On marriage pillows, with a good-night
 kiss.
 Thou bringest to the wretched and for-
 lorn
 Woman, that down the glimmering
 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 around her;—
 Her little bed; the mean clothes she
 had on:
 Her mother's picture—the sole saint
 she 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 flusht
 Beauty stands,
 Musing beside her costly couch alone:
 But while she loosens, faint, with
 jeweled 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 coil-
 ed 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 lifes a squandered heap of
 plundered treasures,
 While listless loitering by, the mo-
 ment 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 promist land I watcht
 them shine,
 And all along their cryptic serpentine
 Went climbing Hope, new planets to
 explore.

Not for the flesh that fades—although
 decay
 This thronged metropolis of sense
 o'erspread:
 Not 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 you
 black hills?
 It is the full moon in the mystic east,
 Whose coming half the unravisht
 darkness fills
 Till all among the ribbed light cloud-
 lets pale,
 From shore to shore of sapphrine
 deeps divine,
 The orb's splendor seems to slide
 and shine
 Aslope the rolling 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 Desire;
 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 reach-
 less heights,
 Or whether all the purpose of his pain
 Be shut in his wild heart and fever-
 ish will,
 He knows no more than this:—that
 you are still,
 But he is moved: he goes, but you re-
 main.

Fooled was the human vanity that
 wrote
 Strange names in astral fire on yon-
 der pole.
 Who and what were they—in what
 age remote—
 That scrawled weak boasts on yon
 sidereal scroll?
 Orion shines. Now seek for Nimrod.
 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 herself? 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 glimmering 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,

An endless, homeless pining after home,

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 midnight 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.

<p>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;</p>	<p>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!</p>
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BOOK I. — IN ITALY.

THE MAGIC LAND.

By woodland belt, by ocean bar,
The full south breeze our foreheads
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'er-
head.

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 murmuring
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.
The glimmering isles and rocks
among,
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
Warm from his bath comes up, i'
the rosy air,
And you may tell which way the Day-
light went,
Only by his last footsteps shining
there:

For now he dwells
Sea-deep o' the other shore of the
world,
And winds himself in the pink-
mouthéd 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 spicry
trees,
The cream-white nautilus on sapphirine
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 lattice
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 hill-side 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 seaside:
 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 yon
 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,

* "How oft, unwearied, have we spent the
 nights.
 Till the Ledaean stars, so famed for love,
 Wondered at us from above."...COWLEY.

The spirit my spirit dreameth ?
 With the passionate eyes, so deep, so
 dear,
 Where a secret sweetness beameth ?
 O sleepeth she, with her soft gold hair
 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 tumbling
 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-usurped 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-streaming,
 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 dreaming ?
 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 des-
 pair—
 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 below
 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. [fine;
 I am filled with a rapture, vague and
 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 both, whatever
 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 white wild 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 bend-
 ed 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, pen-
 sively?
 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,
 As though it were a little toucht with
 awe
 (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; hyacinths
 Flooding faint fragrance, richly curl-
 ed all round,
 Corinthian, cool columnar flowers on
 plinths;

Waxen camelias, white and crimson ones;
 And amber lillies, and the regal rose,
 Which for the breast of queens full-scorful 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 bewilder'd looks,
 Madonna's picture,—the old smile grown wan.
 From blooméd thickets, firefly-lamp-
 ed, beneath
 The terrace, fluted cool the nightingale.
 In at the open window came the breath
 Of many a balmy, dim blue, dreaming 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, lisping, 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 bessems
 Hesperian growth. Why not, on nights like this,
 Should Daphne out from yon green laurel slip?
 A Dryad from the ilex, with white lip
 Quivered and thonged to hunt with Artemis?
 To-night, what wonder were it, while such shadows

Are taking up such shape 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 planetary 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 neglectedfully
 Poured round her snowy 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 eternity.
 It could not ever have been otherwise,
 Gazing into those eyes.

And if, before I gazed on them, my soul,
 Oblivious of her destiny had followed,
 In days forever silent, the control
 Of any beauty less divinely hallowed
 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 wildernesses,
 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 where 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 delight,
 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 scents, 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 si-
 lently.

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
 (As fades a happy moment in the
 past)

Out of the changing east, when,
 yet aglow

With dreams her looks mademagical,
 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 crys-
 tal air

From the high convent-church upon
 the hill.

The folk were loitering by to matin
 prayer.

The church-bell call'd me out, and
 seemed to fill

The air with little hopes. I reached
the door
Before the chanted hymn began to
rise,
And float its liquid Latin melodies
O'er pious groups about the marble
floor.

Breathless, I slid among the kneeling
folk.

A little bell went tinkling through
the pause
Of inward prayer. Then forth the
low chant broke
Among the gloomy 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 bend-
ing solemn

Out of the red gleam of a granite
column)

Irene with claspt hands and cold lips
sealed.

As one who, pausing on some moun-
tain height,

Above the breeze that breaks o'er
vineyard walls.

Leans to the impulse of a wild delight,
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 clond comes down from wander-
ing 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 west, 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 despite

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 hea-
ven,

Whose leaves have murmured of our
vows

To many a balmy even, [green,
The branch that wears the liveliest
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,
Seek 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 sere."
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,
Ever 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 norward,
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!

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 that 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 casement:

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 peep-
ing

In clear sunlight, and so still,
All the nuns, you'd say, were sleep-
ing.

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 wan-
ders,

Poets reverently bound,
O'er whose pages rapture ponders.

Canvas, brushes, hues, to catch
Fleeting forms in vale or mountain:
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 longing of our hearts.

Bind thy golden hair from falling,
O my love, my own, my own!
'T is 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
Vanish'd, 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 unreach'd 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 un-
told,
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 the 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 sight,
And fronts her chamber's loneliness,)

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;
And, woman, each may catch his
death
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.

For 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.

The nightingales sing—ah, too joy-
ously
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
From all that 's said, what both
must feel, 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 it-
self;—

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, widowed,
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 at-
 mosphere
 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 restrain-
 ed 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
 I' 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 worth-
 ily love.
 I will not say . . . "Forget the past.
 Be gay.
 And let the all ill-judging world ap-
 prove

"Light in your eyes, and laughter on
 your lip."
 I will not say . . . "Dissolve in
 thought forever
 Our sorrowful, but sacred fellowship."
 For that would be, to bid you, dear,
 dis sever

Your nature from its nobler heritage
 In consolations registered in heav-
 en,
 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 be-
 fore,
 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 humanity;
 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 a 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 censure 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 who 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 liest. 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
 Upon the forehead of the dawn hath
 died,
 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
 Awhile 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 itself,
 no room.
 Man cannot make, but may ennoble,
 fate,

By nobly bearing it. So let us
 trust,
 Not to ourselves, but God, and calmly
 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.

CONDEMNED 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 famil-
iar 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 repress,
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 heaven,
That hope to help us was not given!

THE STORM.

BOTH hollow and hill were as dumb
as death,

While the skies were silently chang-
ing form:

And the dread forecast of the thun-
der-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 anger-
ed 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 par-
don 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
hoard 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 stif-
fling 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 revealed
in its glare,

And the tempest had clothed her
with terror; it clung

To the folds of her vaporous gar-
ments, and hung

In 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.
For my comment
She was gone when I turned. Who
can tell

How I got to my home on the moun-
tain? 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 sorrowful-
eyed,

With the rain on her hair, and the
rain on her cheek;

She knelt down, with her fair fore-
head 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 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 VAMPYRE.

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 hath 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,

This corpse—ere I looked upon her,
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-vest 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 ;
Of 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 be-
hold 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, whate'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 nurslings 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 guitars
Once, and lights from lamps of am-
ber;

Both went up among the stars
From many a perfumed palace-
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 won-
derful 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 sup-
pose:

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; washing,
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 Palaeae 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 singing

In the mellow and moon-lighted air ;
And the minstrels their viols are stringing ;

And the dancers for dancing prepare.

"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 unmanned.
But I love you, Irene, Irene,

With such love as the wretched 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 terrace,

And the ladies they laughed with, are fled :

And the music is husht in the viols :
And the minstrels, and dancers, are gone ;

And the nightingales now in the garden,
From singing have ceased, one by one :

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 stylet
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 temple 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 re-
treats

Of this city of wonder, where dwell
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,
[dreamed ;

Wrapt in the dream it
One grave more to the many !

One grave as silent as any ;

Sculptured about with art,—
[seemed.

For a palace this tomb once
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 reckon,

Though the mast be snapped 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'ercastr :

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 Christian
hymn.

With the cross on his gallant crest.

Eastward, aye, from the waning west,
Toward the land where the bones of
the Saviour rest,

Wrong do

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.
"Perished 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 outspread,
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."

'T is toil must help us to forget.
In strife, they say, grief finds repose.
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, 't will 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:
Or is it only that the king
Admired his wife last night?

We talk of nations by the way.

And praise the Nuncio's manners,
And end with something fine to say
About the "allied banners."

'T is 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 hurdy-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 streaming.
Upon the world's wide thoroughfares
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 husht 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?

À L'ENTRESOL.

ONE circle of all its golden hours
The fitting 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 sinking light.
What is it?

Faces I shall never look at again,
In places you never will visit,

Revealed themselves in each faltering
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 un-
der 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—the Caracci
here—

Flutter warmly the ruddy and wa-
vering hues;
And Saint Anthony over his book has
a leer [Greuze.

At the little French beauty by

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 Kock'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 ab-
sorbs,

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 Boulevart 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
 At the dropping of the day :
 Grave or gay.
 As a maiden sometimes locks
 With old letters, whose contents
 Tears have faded,
 In an old worm-eaten box,
 Some sweet packet of faint scents,
 Silken-braided ;
 And forgets it :

Careless, so I hide
 In my life her love—
 Fancies on each side,
 Memories heaped above :—
 There it lies, unspied :
 Nothing frets it.
 On a sudden, when
 Deed, or word, or glance,
 Brings me back again
 To the old romance,
 With what rapture then,—
 When, in its completeness,
 Once my heart hath found it,
 By each sense detected,
 Steals on me the sweetness
 Of the air around it,
 Where it lies neglected !
 Shall I break the charm of this
 In a single minute ?
 For some chance with fuller bliss
 Proffered in it ?
 Secrets unsealed by a kiss,
 Could I win it !
 'Tis so sweet to linger near her,
 Idly so !
 Never reckoning, while I hear her
 Whispering low,
 If each whisper will make clearer
 Bliss or woe ;
 Never roused to hope or fear her
 Yes or No !
 What if, seeking something more
 Than before,
 All that's given I displace—
 Calm and grace—
 Nothing ever can restore,
 As of yore,
 That old quiet face !
 Quiet skies in quiet lakes,
 No wind wakes,

All their beauty double :
 But a single pebble breaks
 Lake and sky to trouble ;
 Then dissolves the foam it makes
 In a bubble,
 With the pebble in my hand,
 Here, upon the brink, I stand ;
 Meanwhile, standing on the brink,
 Let me think !
 Not for her sake, but for mine,
 Let those eyes unquestioned shine,
 Half divine :
 Let no hand disturb the rare
 Smoothness of that lustrous hair
 Anywhere :
 Let that white breast never break
 Its calm motion—sleep or wake—
 For my sake.
 Not for her sake, but for mine,
 All I might have, I resign.
 Should I glow
 To the hue—the fragrance fine—
 The mere first sight of the wine,
 If I drained the goblet low ?
 Who can know ?
 With her beauty like the snow,
 Let her go ! Shall I repine
 That no idle breath of mine
 Melts it ? No ! 'T is better so.
 All the same, as she came,
 With her beauty like the snow.
 Cold, unspotted, let her go !

A REMEMBRANCE.

'T was eve and May when last, through
 tears,
 Thine eyes sought mine, thy hand
 my hand.
 The night came down her silent
 spheres,
 And up the silent land,
 In silence, too, my thoughts were
 furled,
 Like ring-doves in the dreaming
 grove.
 Who would not lightly lose the world
 To keep such love ?
 But many Mays, with all their flowers,
 Are faded since that blissful time—
 The last of all my happy hours
 I' the golden clime !
 By hands not thine these wreaths
 were curled
 That hide the care my brows above :
 And I have almost gained the world,
 But lost that love.

As though for some serene dead brow,
These wreaths for me I let them
twine.

I hear the voice of praise, and know
It is not thine.

How many long and lonely days
I strove with life thy love to gain!
I know my work was worth thy praise;
But all was vain.

Vain Passion's fire, vain Music's art!
For who from thorns grape-bunches
gathers?

What depth is in the shallow heart?
What weight in feathers?

As drops the blossom, ere the growth
Of fruit, on some autumnal tree,
I drop from my changed life, its youth
And joy in thee:

And look beyond, and o'er thee,—right
To some sublimer end than lies
Within the compass of the sight
Of thy cold eyes.

With thine my soul hath ceased its
strife.

Thy part is filled; thy work is done;
Thy falsehood buried in my life,
And known to none.

Yet still will golden memories frame
Thy broken image in my heart.

And love for what thou wast shut
blame

From what thou art.

In Life's long galleries, haunting-eyed,
Thy pictured face no change shall
show;

Like some dead Queen's who lived and
died

An age ago!

MADAME LA MARQUISE.

THE folds of her wine-dark violet dress
Glow over the sofa, fall on fall,
As she sits in the air of her loveliness
With a smile for each and for all.

Half of her exquisite face in the shade
Which o'er it the screen in her soft
hand flings:

Through the gloom glows her hair in
its odorous braid:

In the firelight are sparkling her
rings.

As she leans,—the slow smile half
shut up in her eyes

Beams the sleepy, long, silk-soft
lashes beneath;

Through her crimson lips, stirred by
her faint replies,

Breaks one gleam of her pearl-white
teeth.

As she leans,—where your eye, by her
beauty subdued,

Droops—from under warm fringes
of broidery white

The slightest of feet—silken-slipper-
ed, protrude,

For one moment, then slip out of
sight.

As I bend o'er her bosom, to tell her
the news,

The faint scent of her hair, the ap-
proach of her cheek,

The vague warmth of her breath, all
my senses suffuse

With HERSELF: and I tremble to
speak.

So she sits in the curtained, luxurious
light

Of that room, with its porcelain, and
pictures, and flowers,

When the dark day's half done, and
the snow flutters white,

Past the windows in feathery
showers.

All without is so cold,—'neath the low
leadan sky!

Down the bald, empty street, like a
ghost, the gendarme

Stalks surly: a distant carriage hums
by;

All within is so bright and so warm!

Here we talk of the schemes and the
scandals of court,

How the courtesan pushes: the
charlatan thrives:

We put horns on the heads of our
friends, just for sport:

Put intrigues in the heads of their
wives.

Her warm hand, at parting, so
strangely thrilled mine,

That at dinner I scarcely remark
what they say,—

Drop the ice in my soup, spill the salt
in my wine,

Then go yawn at my favorite play.

But she drives afternoon:—then's the
time to behold her,
With her fair face half hid, like a
ripe peeping rose,
'Neath that veil,—o'er the velvets and
furs which unfold her,
Leaning back with a queenly re-
pose,—

As she glides up the sunlight! . . .
You'd say she was made
To loll back in a carriage, all day,
with a smile,
And at dusk, on a sofa, to lean in the
shade
Of soft lamps, and be wooed for a
while.

Could we find out her heart through
that velvet and lace!
Can it beat without ruffling her
sumptuous dress?
She will show us her shoulder, her
bosom, her face;
But what the heart's like, we must
guess.

With live women and men to be found
in the world—
(—Live with sorrow and sin,—live
with pain and with passion,—)
Who could live with a doll, though its
locks should be eurled,
And its petticoats trimmed in the
fashion?

'T is so fair! . . . would my bite, if I
bit it, draw blood?
Will it cry if I hurt it? or scold if I
kiss?

Is it made, with its beauty, of wax or
of wood?
. . . Is it worth while to guess at all
this?

THE NOVEL.

“HERE, I have a book at last—
Sure,” I thought, “to make you
weep!”

But a careless glance you cast
O'er its pages, half asleep.

'T is a novel,—a romance,
(What you will) of youth, of home,
And of brilliant days in France,
And long moonlit nights in Rome.

'T is a tale of tears and sins,
Of love's glory and its gloom;

In a ball-room it begins,
And it ends beside a tomb;

There's a little heroine too,
Whom each chapter leaves more
pale;
And her eyes are dark and blue
Like the violet of the vale;

And her hand is frail and fair;
Could you but have seen it lie
O'er the convent death-bed, where
Wept the nuns to watch her die,

You, I think, had wept as well;
For the patience in her face
(Where the dying sunbeam fell)
Had such strange heart-breaking
grace.

There's a lover, eager, bold,
Knocking at the convent gate;
But that little hand grows cold,
And the lover knocks too late.

There's a high-born lady stands
At a golden mirror, pale;
Something makes her jewelled hands
Tremble, as she hears the tale

Which her maid (while weaving roses
For the ball, through her dark hair)
Mixed with other news, discloses.
O, to-night she will look fair!

There's an old man, feeble-handed,
Counting gold . . . “My son shall
wed

With the Princess, as I planned it,
Now that little girl is dead.”

There's a young man, sullen, husht,
By remorse and grief unmanned,
With a withered primrose crusht
In his hot and feverish hand.

There's a broken-hearted woman,
Haggard, desolate, and wild,
Says . . . “The world hath grown in-
human!
Bury me beside my child.”

And the little god of this world
Hears them, laughing in his sleeve.
He is master still in his world,
There's another, we believe.

Of this history every part
You have seen, yet did not heed it;
For 't is written in my heart,
And you have not learned to read it,

AUX ITALIENS.

At Paris it was, at the Opera there ;—
 And she looked like a queen in a
 book, that night,
 With the wreath of pearl in her raven
 hair,
 And the brooch on her breast, so
 bright.

Of all the operas that Verdi wrote,
 The best, to my taste, is the *Trova-*
tore :

And Mario can soothe with a tenor
 note
 The souls in Purgatory.

The moon on the tower slept soft as
 snow ;

And who was not thrilled in the
 strangest way,
 As we heard him sing, while the gas
 burned low,
 “ *Non ti scordar di me* ” ?

The Emperor there, in his box of state,
 Looked grave, as if he had just then
 seen

The red flag wave from the city-gate,
 Where his eagles in bronze had
 been.

The Empress, too, had a tear in her
 eye.

You'd have said that her fancy had
 gone back again,
 For one moment, under the old blue
 sky,
 To the old glad life in Spain.

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 she wore last
 time,

When we stood, 'neath the cypress-
 trees, together,

In 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 jasmin-flower in her fair
 young breast :

(O the faint, sweet smell of that
 jasmin-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 jasmin-
 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 jasmin in her breast!

I was here: 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 down-cast,
 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 exprest,
 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 is n't loved every day.
 And I think, in the lives of most women 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's tromp in vain,
 And the world, drowsing, turns upon its side
 To drowse again;
 O Man, whose course hath called itself sublime
 Since it began,
 Why 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 Lan-
 guage 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,
 Who confessed her when she died.

The good young Priest is of gentle
 nerve,
 And my grief had moved him be-
 yond control;
 For his lips 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 portrait
 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
 from 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.

'T was 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 drew 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 shad-
ow 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

Seen about me, all the day long, in
the room:

And her face, with its bewildering
old endearments
Comes at night, between the cur-
tains, 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 its speechless, pale, perpetual
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 dew 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-up-
lifted 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 departed
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 Heavenlies 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 unmeasurable
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 lan-
guage 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 un-
availing

'Mid the spirits that are passed be-
yond the sun.

AT HOME DURING THE BALL.

'T is 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, yet
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
willow
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
Once more, I do not know

If I should find it where it was,
That house upon the river;
But the light that lit the casement-
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, supprest
'Mid satins of broideder amber,
Where she stands, half undrest:

Her bosom all unlaced:
Her cheeks with a bright red spot:
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 flushed!
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 morrow
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 Grange!
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! 'T is 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 sedately
Invests him: unthawed by Clarisse,
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 Champagne and Bordeaux:

And their wit, and their laughter, suffices to leaven

With mirth their mute guest's imitation 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 liqueurs 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 Lyeus with jealous groan

Next door, while fair Chloris responds to the call,

Too fair to be supping with Lyeus 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 imperial complexion,

One tinge that young Evian himself might 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 lids 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 drole 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 lansquenet 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;

* "Audeat inivias
Dementem strepitum Lycus
Et vicina seni non habilis Lyco."

HORACE.

"*Ah bah ! ne me fais pas poser, mon amie,*"

Laughs her lover, and lifts to his lips—the Champagne.

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 Juliette resounds!

Strike, strike the piano! beat loud at the wall!

Let wealthy old Lyeus with jealousy groan

Next door, while fair Chloris responds to the call,

Too fair to be supping with Lyeus alone.

There is Celestine singing, and Eugène 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 prolongs.

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 automaton rises, —

Some 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 fixed 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 stones in some eddy torment 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 appeal to "*La vierge*."

All the light-hearted friends from the chamber are fled:
 And the café itself has grown silent 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 shimmers 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 scunter, that meet on thy brow.
 Ah, faithless! and dost thou remember 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 . . . O 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."

"'T is so cold, my beloved one, down there, and so drear."

"Ah, thy sweet voice, Irene, sounds hollow and strange!"

"'T is 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 flusht 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, converse. 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 below 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 't is sheathed in the grave?"

"Here's to Love . . . the prime passion . . . 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 re-
 vels 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 ci-
 gars 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
 cockerow 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 triv-
 ial to sever
 Each man in the crowd from the
 others he meets.

Each walks with a spy or a jailer be-
 hind him
 (Some word he has spoken, some
 deed he has done);
 And the step, now and then, quickens,
 just to remind him,

In the crowd, in the sun, that he is
not alone.

But 't is hard, when by lamplight,
'mid laughter and songs too,
Those return, . . . we have buried,
and mourned for, and prayed for,
And done with . . . and, free of the
grave it belongs to,
Some ghost 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—'t is the Past;
In thy heart lurks a weird Necro-
mancer—'t is Thought.

THE CHESS-BOARD.

My little love, do you remember,
Ere we were grown so sadly wise,
Those evenings in the bleak Decem-
ber,
Curtaining 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 sideling 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.
And 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,
Play chess, as then we played, together!

SONG.

If Sorrow have taught me anything,
She hath taught me to weep for you;
And if Falsehood have left me a tear
For Truth, these tears are true.
If the one star left by the morning.
Be dear to the dying night,
If the late 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 forget,
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 sor-
row?
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 day's 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
She hath taught me to weep for
you;
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 dethronéd
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 wouldst belovely, 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 recommence
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 keee?

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 thy 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 holier
 Love hath spread
 His simpler feast.

Change would be death. Could sever-
 ance 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 't is different: and thou
 wouldst 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 Delhi
 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.

'T is 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 't is 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 wander,
 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 a 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!

Ah, 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 morning, from the sunlight
I shall 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 stupidly all the day,—
Red, 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 starry night above?

"God is great . . . the soul's immort-
al . . .

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 break-
ing

Every day, but not for you,
Little wanton, ever making
Chains of rose, to break them
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
 Of 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 nevermore 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 't is 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 suppose
 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 't was 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 . . . "Remem-
 ber!"

TRANSLATIONS FROM PETER RONSARD.

"VOICI LE BOIS QUE MA SAINTE ANGELETTE."

HERE is the wood that freshened to
 her song;
 See here, the flowers that keep her
 footprints yet;
 Where, all alone, my saintly Angel-
 ette
 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 she did 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 NUIT."

HIDE, for a night, thy horn, good Moon! Fair Fortune
 For this shall keep Endymion ever prest
 Deep-dreaming, amorous, on thine argent breast, [tune.
 Nor ever shall enchanter thee importunate
 Hateful 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; [blue,
 And you, sidereal Signs in yonder
 Favor the fire to which my heart is moved. [of you
 Forget not Signs, the greater part Was only set in heaven for having loved!

"PAGE SUI 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 nurtured 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 [endure.
 And ponder on the pain which I

"LES ESPICES SONT À CERES."

CERES hath her harvest sweet:
 Chloris is the young green grass:
 Woods for Fauns with cloven feet:
 His green laurel Phœbus 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
 You sweet women, my lost loves, and
 Each dead passion! . . . The end creepeth nigher. [pace

Not one pastime of youth hath kept
 With my age. Nought remains in their place
 fire.

But the bed, and the cup, and the
 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 buz and mutter yet
Old gods, with hundred heads and
hands,

On jeweled 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 retrieve!
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 light-
ened :

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 forsook:
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 approving.

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 generation,
With something novel, strange and splendid,

Deserving admiration:

For all the while there grew, and grew
A germ,—a bud, within my bosom:
No flower, fair Eve! for, thanks to you,
It never came to blossom.

“MEDIO DE FONTE LEPORUM
SURGIT AMARI ALIQUID.”

LUCRETIVS.

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, and 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 Vingolf,
“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 Yngvon, and summons from fight
A man who must perish in battle,
And sup where the gods sup to-night.

Leaning over her brazen spear, Gondula

Thus bespake her companions, “The feast

Of the gods shall, in Vingolf, this evening,

O ye Daughters of War, be increast.

“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—
And fashioned their soleinn design.

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 coming
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 Hacon,
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 approaches,
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 moon 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 Walhalla 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,—not
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,
Howe'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 seemed 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 in 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 Para-
dise
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 its tears, and Grief her
smile;

And still both tears and smiles
deceive;

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 repose
Started the Portress pale:

In pity, or in scorn . . . “Forbear,
Madman,” 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 fea-
tures scan:

If magic lore be thine, look here,
Behold the Talisman!”

I crossed the court. The bloodhound
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 wierd 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 dear
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.

'T is a sweet little species that lives
but one hour,

And the eldest was born half an
hour ago.

One impulsive young midge I hear ar-
dently pouring

In the ears of a shy little wanton in
gauze,

His eternal devotion; his ceaseless
adoring;

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 ex-
istence 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 begin-
ning 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 wild-
ly 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, say they, the strife thou
now wastest

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 progress
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 ac-
quiring æsthetics
I have squandered in learning this
language of midges,
There might, for my friend in her pe-
ripatetics,
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 un-
derstand.

O help me, my God, to trust in thee!
But I never shall forget her soft white
hand,
And her eyes 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 betrayed.

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 re-
lation,

My dove-like young cousin, so soft
in the eyes,

You are entering on life's settled dis-
simulation,

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 fail-
ings afford

To the wife of his heart, such good
cause for emotion,

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 car-
riage, 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, lest 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,
'T is 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 harlot, 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 hos-
pital,

Both day and night my tears did fall;
They fell so fast that, to dry their

grief,

I borrowed my neighbor's handkerchief.

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 Government.

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. Bellew.

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 shall 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 parliamentary jobbers,
With their hands, bless them all, in the popular purse!

BABYLONIA.

ENOUGH of simpering and grimace!
Enough of damming one's soul for nothing!
Enough of Vacuity trimmed with lace!
And Poverty proud of her purple clothing!
In Babylon, whene'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
crossed

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
allusive:

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?

Yes, I am a part of the things I
despise,

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 with-
out 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 : because
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

What the men that have hewn at
the block may have been ?

Their passion is merged in its passion-
lessness ;

Their strife in its stillness closed
forever :

Their change upon change in its
changelessness ;

In its final achievement, their fever-
ish 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

That grand, indifferent, godlike brow,
How vainly his own may have ached,
who knows,

'Twi'x the laurel above and the
wrinkle below ?

So again to Babylon I come back,
Where this fettered giant of Human
Nature

Cramped in limb, and constrained
in stature,

In the torture-chamber of Vanity
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 ravage 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, are,
 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 be-
 ing 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 ; [ing,

With all things here but ill agree-
 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, homeward
 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
 grass,

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 scarce 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 unthinkingsphere
Of mere material Force without,
Rebuke so vehement and severe
To the least doubt? [night,

And robed the world and hung the
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;

Ah, 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, up-
thrust

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,
Too 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,— hair,

That soft white hand, that soft dark
And that soft voice of yours!

So, while you stand, a fragile form,
With that close shawl around you
drawn,

And eve's last ardors fading warm
Adown the mountain lawn,

'Tis sweet, although we part to-
morrow,

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.

NÆNIAE.

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 perislt 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 ter-
rible 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 sor-
row, its sinning,

Its friends that are foes too.

O, fair was thy life in its lovely be-
ginning,

And fair in its close too!

But if . . . 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,

O, the one nightingale singing a mile
hence!

The oped window—one star in it!
Sole witness of stolen sweet mo-
ments, unguest of

By the world in its primness;—

Just one smile to adore by the star-
light: the rest of

Thy soul in the dimness!
 If I 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 chair,—in the curtain:
 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 de-
 grees.
 Hark! 't is the wind in yon red re-
 gion 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, pinch-
 ed, 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 sparsely, 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
 Red-breast
 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 't is well that the month of the
roses is o'er!
The last, which I plucked for Neræa
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, Neræa! But now . . .
never mind,
'T is 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 sounding
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 Ves-
uvius 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, 't is because
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 HAINAULT.*

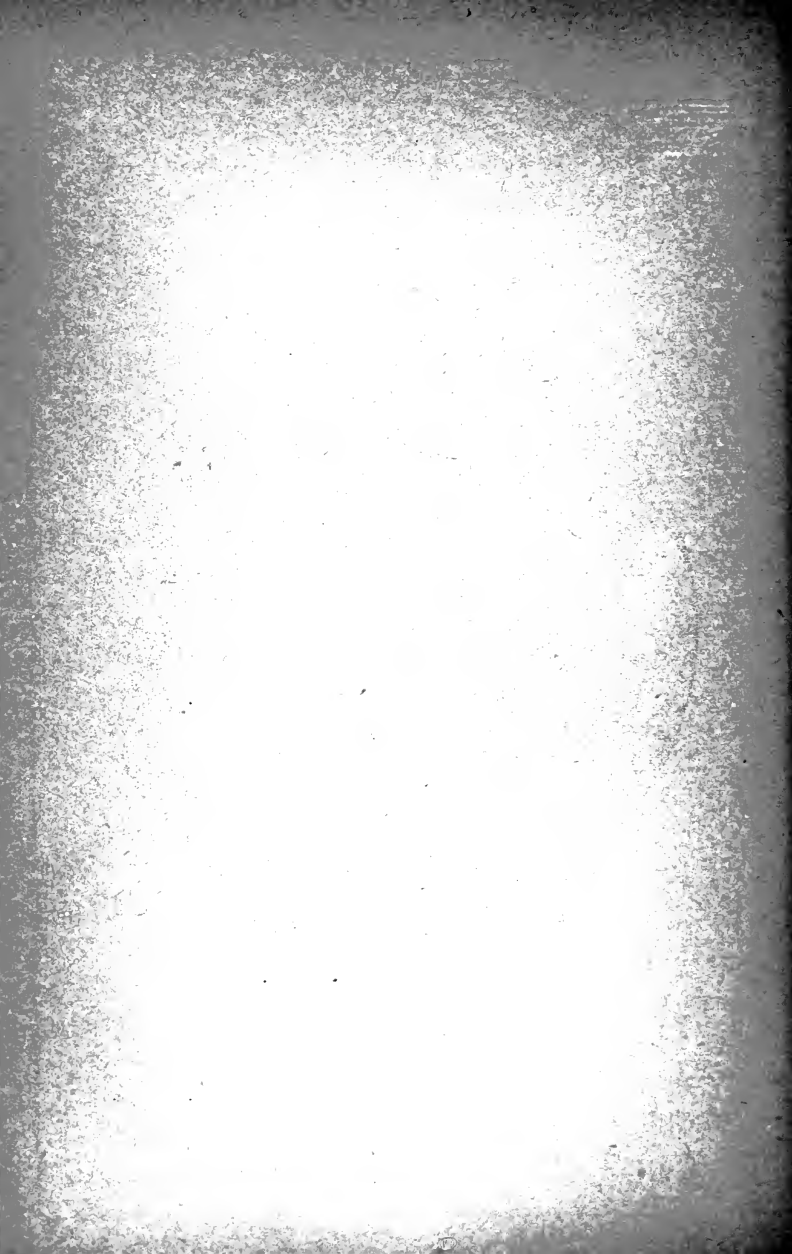
Is it the twilight, or my fading sight,
Makes all so dim around me? No,
the night
Is come already. See! through yon-
der pane,
Alone in the gray air, that star again—
Which shines so wan, I used to call it
mine
For its pale face: like Countess Jac-
queline
Who reigned in Brabant once . . .
that's years 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)
Is all they have not taken from me.
Then

* Who was married to the impotent and worthless John of Brabant, affianced to "good Duke Humphry," of Gloucester, and finally wedded to Frank von Borselen, 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.

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 purple
 fray:—
 What then? Yon star saw kingdoms
 rolled away
 Ere mine was taken from me. It sur-
 vives.
 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,
 Mystar,—God's star,—for being God's
 't is mine:
 Had it been man's . . . no matter . . .
 see it shine—
 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 coronet
 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! 'T was 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,
 Lest 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 belong
 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 upon
 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 Heaven
 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 traveler 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
 In the poor frame. Wrongs, insults,
 treacheries,
 Hopes 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, crusht 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 sink-
 ing light,
 Smites all the empty windows. As
 there sprout
 Daisies and dimpling tufts of violets,
 out
 Among the grass where some corpse
 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. [soul
 O, promise me, my own, before my

Is houseless,—let the great world turn
and roll
Upon its way unvext . . . Its pompe,
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, [dim,
If he could see, in yonder distance
The silent eye of God that watches
him?
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 weal is
not our weal.
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 infold
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
i' 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
Norsickness, 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 unbaffled 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 broider, broider by night and day
The brede of thy blazing broidery!
Till thy beauty be wholly woven 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, 't is 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. [a power

I am caught in the eddy and whirl of
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 ghastly eyes,
And is changing me more and more.

I am not mourning for thee, although
I love thee, and thou art lost :

Nor yet for myself, albeit I know
That my life is flawed and crost :

But for that lightless, sorrowing Soul
That is feeling, blind with immortal
pain,

All round, for what it can never
attain ; [soul,

That prisoned, pining, and passionate

So vast, and yet so small ;

That seems, now nothing, now all,
That moves me to pity beyond control,
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 [Fays ;

Till we came at last to the Isle of
And, all the while, from the magic isle,
Came that music of other days!

The lamps in the garden gleamed.
Tho 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

mid,
"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 : 't will 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?"

"'T is the fountain that sighs," . . .
she said, "not I;
And the statue, whose hand thou
dost hold."

"By yonder fount, that flows forever,
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 hersong
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 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;
'T was 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 ;

'T was the fashion there, I know not
why,
But fashions are changing constantly.
From the crescented naphtha lamps
each ray

Beamed into a still enchanted blaze ;—
And forth from the deep-toned orches-
tra

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 embraced ;
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 fra-
grant 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 flight 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 hour
that dies.

"What aileth thee? for I see float
A shade into thine eyes."

"Naught aileth me," . . . low mur-
mured 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:
 Through 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:
 I call to thee clear, till the boat ap-
 pear,
 And we sail together through dark
 and dream.
 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!
 And sweeter it is, in the winding ways

Of the waltz, while the music falls
 in showers,
 While the minstrel plays, and the mo-
 ment stays,
 And the sweet brief rapture of love
 is ours!

“But the night is far spent; and be-
 fore 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, through 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,
 Over brook, and bramble, and stone;
 And each dame of the house has a lit-
 tle 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 cup.”
 When he drains down his golden
 “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 woke,
Waked by the smart of a sounding
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 shatter-
ed 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 hearth's half-burned out
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, [time;

And talks to my soul of the flight of
With a face like a face at a funeral,
Telling a tale too sad for rhyme:

And still I hear, with as little cheer,
In the yet more horrible silence in-
side,

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 everything,
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, [golden lute;

Singing softly a song to a deep
The polestar, the seven little planets,
and I, [mute,

To the song that he sung listened
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 husht
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 elsewhere.

For, when I was last in the nethermost
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 weighed
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

(Unroused 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 of 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 marveled 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 traveler 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 ear 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 cocked 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 Serpent
Queen

To others not yet curst by kissing thee,
As I have been.

But come not nigh me till my end be
near,

And I have turned a dying face to-
ward 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 part-
ing 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 scimitar.

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 she 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 despair,
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-color-
 ed 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 MACBETH.

THIS is the castle of King Macbeth.

And here he feasts—when the day-
 light wanes, [heath—

And the moon goes softly over the
 His Earls and Thanés.

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 raf-
 ters rock

In the Banquet Hall; and the shout
 is borne

To the courts outside, where the crow-
 ing 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.

They 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 warm 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, [rolls,

Nothing loath, in the wave as it

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 wants at the worst: so why should

[I spare

(Since just such a thing my wants
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: [ing:

Many a heart with passion bound-
But ah, my breast, when closest prest,
Creeps to a cold step near me sound-
ing.

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 treasure;
But hope grows less with each success,
And pain grows more with every
pleasure. [thirst

The draughts I drain to slake my
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 acurst stung I o 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 steps 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; 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 are 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 Outer 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 God's o' dark Scandinavia, morning and even;
Faint pale divinities, realmless and sorrowful, exiled from Heaven;
Burthened with memories of old theogenies; 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 Egir, 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 discrownéd 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 irretrievable 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 gleam of a single oasis?
Hidden it may be perchance, and I know it not . . . hidden yet inviolate,
Pushes the germ of an unconscious rapture in me, like the violet
Which, on the bosom of Mareh, the snows cover and keep till the coming

Of April, the first bee shall find, when he wanders, and welcome it humming.
Teach me, thou North where the winds lay in ambush; the rains and foul
weather

Are stored in the house of the storms; and the snow-flakes are garnered to-
gether;

Where man's stern, dominate, sovereign intelligence holds in allegiance
Whatever blue Sirius beholds on this Earth-ball,—all seas, and all regions;
The iron in the hills 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 FISHERMAN'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 more
wicked to say

To the toothless old crags it is hid-
ding there wholly.

I love well the darkness. I love well
the sound

Of the thunder-drift, howling this
way over ocean.

For 't is though as in nature my spirit
had found

A trouble akin to its own fierce
emotion.

The hoarse night may howl herself
silent for me.

When the silence comes, then comes
the howling within.

I 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 frail-
est 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 de-
spair

To their old listless work, in their
old helpless way.

Yonder's the light in the Fisherman'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 fire-light 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-light, 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, . . . 't is 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. [cask

Put on the kettle. And now for the

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-hand-
 ed thing!

There's my pipe. Stuff it with black
 negro-head.
 Soon I shall be in the cloud-land of
 glory.
 Faith, 't is 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, [sleep.
 And the cat recomposes herself into
 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 firelight
 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 ro-
 mance
 I heard of in Sweden, that snowy De-
 cember
 I passed there, about the wild Lord
 Rosencrantz.

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 villa-
 nous 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 ROSENCRANTZ.

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 Rosencrantz. -

Lord Rosencrantz 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. [glance.

And she gives it him with a tender
 And the hautboys sound, and the
 dancers stand,

And envy Lord Rosencrantz.

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 Rosencrantz.

The moon at the mullioned window
 shone;

There a face and a hand in the
 moon-light glance;

But that face and that hand were
 seen of none,

Save only Lord Rosencrantz.

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 Rosencrantz.

While the young Queen turned to
 whisper him, gone;

Lord Rosencrantz from the hall was
 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-hearth
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 Rosencrantz.

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 Ros-
encrantz;

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 chimneys
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
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 should pray
for me;

But I am a sinful man, and such
As ill should pray for thee."

Hist! . . . was it a face at the window
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 winding-
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 hied;
And she killed many a rat and mouse
Before the day she died.

And do you wish that I should de-
clare [erantz?

What was the end of Lord Rosen-
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 ro-
mance,

And my heart with the curse of the
Past hath been laden:

For still, where I wander or linger,
forever

Comes a skeleton hand that is beck-
oning 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, wherever
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, [gay?

Never ask questions, and always be
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! . . . 't is the gray
light of morning

That breaks o'er the desolate waters
. . . and hark!

'T is the first signal shot from my boat
gives me warning:

The dark moves away: and I follow
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 [mance:

Was but a deception, a silly ro-
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 di-
gestion . . . 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, [arts,
 Were idle aristocrats fond of the
 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 greater : and then
 An appeal to the people was formally 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 important 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 tempor 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 ;
 Wrapt 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 Pentegraph.
 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 chapiters
 Of the Sidonian artificers.
 And the King stood still as a carven
 king,
 The carven 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 un-
 aware,

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 over, in wonderment,
 For the King stood there always:
 And it was solemn and strange to be-
 hold

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. [came,

And the stream of life, as it went and
 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 Pen-
tegraph,

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.*

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,
Though my lip may be blanched to
declare

That I love thee, revere thee, adore
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 dis-
tance,

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! . . . Be-

lieve me,
How I hang on the tones of thy voice;

How the least sigh 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 sign thy spirit hath
made there

My heart reads, and writes in its
book!

And each day of my life my love
shapes me

*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.

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 be near thee,
Albeit so far from thy heart.

In my life's lonely galleries never
Will be silenced thy lightest footfall:

For it lingers, and echoes, forever
Unto Memory mourning o'er all.

All thy fair little footsteps are bright
O'er the dark troubled spirit in me,

As the tracks of some sweet water
sprite

O'er the heaving and desolate sea.
And though cold and unkind be thine
eyes

Yet, unchilled their unkindness below,
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;
 Where 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 fea-
 ture; [eyes]
 I shall mourn the lost light of thine
 And on earth there will yet be one
 nature
 That must yearn after thine till it
 dies.

"YE SEEK JESUS OF NAZARETH
 WHICH WAS CRUCIFIED: 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,
 To follow Him, unquestioning, mute,
 If 't were the Lord himself?
 How many a brow with care o'erworn,
 How many a heart with grief o'er-
 laden,
 How many a youth with love forlorn,
 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 mortal
 pain,—
 The dream of all my darkened years,—
 I should not cling to then.
 The pride that prompts the bitter
 jest—
 (Sharp styptic of a bleeding heart!)

Would fail, and humbly leave confess
 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 we
 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 'wixt 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, [slept
When in Thine arms, perchance, I
In some lost ante-natal clime,
My mortal frame hath kept:

And all is dark—before—behind. [art,
I cannot reach Thee, where Thou
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
Hath made so dark the path I tread,
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 stubborn
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, and 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 despair.

That which we are, we are. 'T were
vain [grow.
To plant with toil what will not
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.

'T is 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.

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 fill 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.

'T is hard, so young—so young as I
am still,

To feel forevermore from life depart
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 bitterest
grief

Upbraiding thee.

'T is somewhat to have known, albeit
in vain,

One woman in this sorrowful bad earth,
Whose very loss can yet bequeathe 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 midnight
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 [sighs]

Only to thee her April-rain, whose
Soothe flowers in Spring.

FAILURE.

I HAVE seen those that wore Heaven'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 as-
pirations

Are all no more,

Rest there, indeed, all Youth's glad
recreations,

—An untried store ?

Alas, what skills this heart of sad ex-
perience,

This frame o'erwrought,

This memory with life's motion all at
variance,

This aching thought ?

How shall I come, with these, to fol-
low pleasure

Where others find it ?

Will not their sad steps mar the mer-
riest measure,

Or lag behind it ?

Still must the man move sadder 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 efforts 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 severe
Last sentence !

MISANTHROPOS.

*Παντα κονις και παντα γελως και παντα
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.

Not a note of music flits [der
O'er the slackened harpstrings yon-

From the skeleton that sits
 By the broken harp, to ponder
 (While the spider knits
 Webs in each black socket-hole)
 Where 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!
 'T is the last lamp spits and stinks,
 Shuddering downward in the bowl
 Of the socket, from the brinks.
 What's a burned-out soul?

Let them all go unproved!
 For the source of tears is dried.
 What! . . . One rests! . . . hath noth-
 ing 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 lying?
 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 kneec.
 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!
 Plucked 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!
 Here's 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 . . . husht, [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 weed,
Defrauded of its incense sweet
From holy thoughts and loyal deeds,
The fane Thou gavest me to enshrine
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
est 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 [free
Silence, Thou knowest my hands were
From sin, when all things cried to me
To sin. Thou knowest that, had 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 [regain.
 I know not; nor the life which I
 Within the hollow of the hand of
 death [the breath
 I have lain so long, that now I draw
 Of life as unfamiliar, and with pain.
 Of life: but not the life which is no
 more:— [passionate thing;
 That tender, tearful, warm, and
 That wayward, restless, wistful life
 of yore; [clasp of Spring,
 Which now lies, cold, beneath the
 As last year's leaves: but such a life
 as seems [afraid.
 A strange new-comer, coy and all-
 No motion heaves the heart where
 it is laid, [dreams.
 Save when the past returns to me in
 In dreams, like memories of another
 world; [pain,
 The beauty, and the passion, and the
 The wizardry by which my youth was
 whirled [so vain!
 Round vain desires,—so violent, yet
 The love which desolated life, yet
 made [creeds
 So dear its desolation: and the
 Which, one by one, snapped in my
 hold like reeds, [laid!
 Beneath the weight of need upon them
 For each man deems his own sand-
 house secure [yet who can say,
 While life's wild waves are lulled;
 If yet his faith's foundations do endure,
 It is not that no wind hath blown
 that way?
 Must we, even for their beauty's sake,
 keep furled [sully them,
 Our fairest creeds, lest earth should
 And take what ruder help chance
 sends, to stem [ous world?
 The rubs and wrenches of this boister-
 Alas! 't is 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, [ferent need.
 Since each is burthened with a dif-
 Round each the bandit passions lurk:
 and, fast [grim bare;
 And furious, swarm to strip the pil-
 Then oft, in lonely places unaware,
 Fall on him, and do murder him at last.

And oft the light of truth, which
 through the dark [detect,
 We fetched such toilful compass to
 Glares through the broken cloud on
 the lost bark,
 And shows the rock—too late, when
 all is wrecked! [alone,
 Not from one watch-tower o'er the deep
 It streams, but lightens there and
 lightens here
 With lights so numberless (like hea-
 ven's eighth sphere) [but one.
 That all their myriad splendors seem
 Time was, when it seemed possible to
 be [felt the foam)
 (Then, when this shattered prow first
 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, [face
 Saved from the sea, forlornly face to
 With the gaunt ruin of a world, I stand.
 But two alone of all that perish race
 Survive to share with me my wander-
 ings; [steps attend,
 Doubt and Experience. These my
 Ever; and oft above my heart they
 bend, [strings.
 And, weeping with me, weep among its
 Yet,—saved, though in a land uncon-
 secrate
 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, [be near.
 To point me to my rest, which should
 Rude is the work, and simple is my
 skill; [will,
 Yet, if the hand could answer to the
 This pile should lack not incense.
 Father, hear
 My cry unto thee. Make tny covenant
 Fast with my spirit. Bind within
 Thy bow
 The whole horizon of my tears. I pant
 For Thy refreshing. Bid Thy foun-
 tains flow. [I see.
 In this dry desert, where no springs
 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 de-
scribed.
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, [all:
Reveal enough, in part, for hope in
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 't is the
property
Of Spirit to possess itself in all
It is possess by;—halved yet inte-
gral;

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 endeavor
Moving through Nature and the mind
of man.

If man,—the finite spirit,—in infinity
Alone can find the truth of his ideal,
Dare I not deem that infinite Divinity
Within the finite must assume the
real? [hurled

For what so feverish fancy, reckless
Through a ruined brain, did ever yet
desery

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; [trod,

But, in all paths by human nature
Infinity in Finity 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 de-
scribed,

A consciousness and a reality.
Whilst man in nature dwells, his God
is still [tervenes

In nature; thence, in time, there in-
The Law: he learns to fortify his will
Against his passions, by external
means:

And God becomes the Lawgiver: but
when [see,

Corruption in the natural state we
And in the legal hopeless tyranny,
We seem to need (if needed not till
then)

That which doth uplift nature, and
yet makes [law.

More light the heavy letter of the
Then for the Perfect the Imperfect
aches, [awe.

Till love is born upon the deeps of
Yet what of this, . . . that God in man
may be, [divine,

And man, though mortal, of a race
If no assurance lives which may in-
cline

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 sympathy

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?" this
alone
Concerns me now: since, if I know
this not, [of the sun,
Though I should know the sources
Or what within the hot heart of the
earth [though
Lull's the soft spirit of the fire, al-
The mandate of the thunder I should
know, [worth.
To me my knowledge would be nothing

What message, or what messenger to
man? [soul?

Whereby shall revelation reach the
For who, by searching, finds out God?
How can [goal

My utmost steps, unguided, gain the
Of necessary knowledge? It is clear
I cannot reach the gates of heaven,
and knock [rock

And enter: though I stood upon the
Like Moses, God must speak ere I can
hear,

And touch me ere I feel him. He must
come [cloud),

To me (I cannot join him in the
Stand at the dim doors of my mortal
home; [bowed

Lift the low latch of life; and enter,
Unto this earthly roof; and sit within
The circle of the senses; at the
hearth [earth,

Of the affections: be my guest on
Loving my love, and sorrowing in my
sin.

Since, though I stripped Divinity, in
thought,

From passion, which is personality,
My God would still be human: though
I sought [eye,

In the bird's wing or in the insect's
Rather than in this broken heart of
mine, [would be

His presence, human still: human
All human thought conceives. Hu-
manity,

Being less human, is not more divine.

The soul, then, cannot stipulate or re-
fuse [bassy.

The fashion of the heavenly em-
Since God is here the speaker, He
must choose

The words He wills. Already I descrie
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 [combine
Doth with his own immortal death
The spirit pining in this mortal
breath.

Who from himself himself did alienate
That he, returning to himself, might
pave [the grave,

A pathway hence, to heaven from
For man to follow—through the heav-
enly gate.

Wert thou, my Christ, not ignorant of
grief? [sake

A man of sorrows? Not for sorrow's
(Lord, I believe: help thou mine un-
belief!)

Beneath the thorns did thy pure
forehead ache:

But that in sorrow only, unto sorrow,
Can comfort come; in manhood
only, man [plan

Perceive man's destiny. In Nature's
Our path is over Midnight to To-
morrow.

And so the Prince of Life, in dying,
gave [stood

Undying life to mortals. Once he
Among his fellows, on this side the
grave, [blood:

A man, perceptible to flesh and
Now, taken from our sight, he dwells
no less [thought;

Within our mortal memory and
The mystery of all he was, and
wrought, [ness.

Is made a part of general conscious-
ness.

And in this consciousness I reach
repose. [desert sand

Spent with the howling main and
Almost too faint to pluck the unfad-
ing rose [hand.

Of peace, that bows its beauty to my
Here Reason fails, and leaves me; my
pale guide

Across the wilderness—by a stern
command, [ist Land.

Shut out, like Moses, from the Prom-
Touching its own achievement, it hath
died.

Ah yet! I have but wrung the victory
From Thought! Not passionless
will be my path.

Yet on my life's pale forehead I can see
The flush of squandered fires. Pas-
sion hath [place.

Yet, in the purpose of my days, its
But changed in aspect: turned unto
the East, [high, at least

Whence grows the dayspring from on
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 [the door:
With Life; and leave her shadow in
And all those future days, for which
we pant, [yore.

Do come in mourning for the days of
Still through the world gleams Memory
seeking Love, [bore,
Pale as the torch which grieving Ceres
Seeking Proserpina, on that dark
shore [light move.

Where only phantoms through the twi-
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. [Tears.

Wishes are pilgrims to the Vale of
Our brightest joys are but as airy
shapes [glimmering slope;

Of cloud, that fade on evening's
And disappointing hawks the
hovering hope

Forever pecking at the painted grapes.

Why can we not one moment pause,
and cherish [for hope's sake

Love, though love turn to tears? or
Bless hope, albeit the thing we hope
may perish? [take,

For happiness is not in what we
But what we give. What matter
though the thing [dust to dust,

We cling to most should fail us?
It is the *feeling* for the thing,—the
trust [should cling.

In beauty somewhere, to which souls
My youth has failed, if failure lies in
aught [working hand

The warmheart dreams, or which the
Is set to do. I have failed in aidless
thought, [command.

And steadfast purpose, and in self-
I have failed in hope, in health, in
love: failed in the word,

And in the deed too I have failed.
Ah yet, [ings wet,

Albeit with eyes from recent weep-
Sing thou, my Soul, thy psalm unto
the Lord!

The burthen of the desert and the sea!
The burthen of the vision in the vale!
My threshing-floor, my threshing-floor!
ah me, [spoiled the flail!

Thy wind hath strewn my corn, and
The burthen of Dumah and of Dedanim!
What of the night, O watchman, of
the night? [might

The glory of Kedar faileth: and the
Of mighty men is minished and dim.

The morning cometh, and the night,
he cries. [is nigher,

The watchman cries the morning, too,
And, if ye would inquire, lift up your
eyes,

Inquire of the Lord, return, inquire!
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? [song!

I sing against the darkness; hear my

The majesty of Kedar hath been spoiled: [bow.
 Bound are the arrows: broken is the I come before the Lord with garments soiled.
 The ashes of my life are on my brow. Take thou thy harp, and go about the city. [torn:
 O daughter of Desire, with garments Sing many songs, make melody, and mourn, [pity.
 That thou may'st be remembered unto 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; [and the thought.
 Thou knowest the pain, the passion, I bring thee my youth's failure. I have spent [here.
 My youth upon it. All I have is Were it worth all it is not, price more dear [ment.
 Could I have paid for its accomplish- Yet it is much. If I could say to thee, "Acquit me, Judge; for I am thus, and thus; [—should I be And have achieved—even so much," Thus wholly fearless and impetuous To rush into thy presence? I might weigh [much:
 The little done against the undone My merit with thy mercy: and, as such,
 Haggle with pardon for a price to pay. But now the fulness of its failure make My spirit fearless; and despair grows bold. [edge aches.
 My brow, beneath its sad self-knowl- Life's presence passes Thine a thou- sand-fold
 In contemplated terror. Can I lose Aught by that desperate temerity Which leaves no choice but to sur- render Thee [choose
 My life without condition? Could I A stipulated sentence, I might ask For ceded dalliance to some cherisht vice: [task:
 Or half-remission of some desperate Now, all I have is hateful. What is the price?
 Speak, Lord! I hear the Fiend's hand at the door. [it the choice?
 Hell's slavery or heaven's service is

How can I palter with the terms? O voice, [sin no more"! Whence do I hear thee . . . "Go: and No more, no more? But I have kist dead white [harlot hides
 The cheek of Vice. No more the Her loathsomeness of lineament from my sight.
 No more within my bosom there abides
 Her poisoned perfume. O, the witch's mice [per,
 Have eat her scarlet robe and dia- And she fares naked! Part from her—from her? [price?
 Is this the price, O Lord, is this the Yet, though her web be broken, bonds, I know, [forge of time,
 Slow custom frames in the strong Which outlast love, and will not wear with woe, [of crime.
 Nor break beneath the cognizance The witch goes bare. But he,—the father fiend, [my days,
 That roams the unthrifty furrows of Yet walks the field of life; and, where he strays, [gleaned.
 The husbandry of heaven for hell is Lulls are there in man's life which are not peace.
 Tumults which are not triumphs. Do I take [cease?
 The pause of passion for the fiend's de- This frost of grief hath numbered the drowsing snake;
 Which yet may wake, and sting me in the heat [the door
 Of new emotions. What shall bar Against the old familiar, that of yore [seat?
 Came without call, and sat within my When evening brings its dim grim hour again, [awhile,
 And hell lets loose its dusky brood Shall I not find him in the darkness then? [lent smile?
 The same subservient and yet inso- The same indifferent ignominious face? [horror, come
 The same old sense of household Like a tame creature, back into its home? [place,
 Meeting me, haply, in my wonted 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. [will,
Thus ancient habit will usurp young
And each new effort rivet the old
thrall. [count to fall,
No matter! those who climb must
But each new fall will prove them
climbing still. [death
O wretched man! the body of this
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 [I have killed
The cold corpse of the life which
But cannot bury? Must my heart
be filled [endeavor?
With the dry dust of every dead
For often, at the mid of the long
night, [clay
Some devil enters into the dead
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, [him fast.
Till troops of phantoms gather round

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 [breast
And infants that all died upon the
That suckled them. And these make
revelry [night through,
Mingled with wailing all the mid-
Till the sad day doth with stern
light renew [ing sea.
The toiling land, and the complain-
Full well I know that in this world of
ours [ceeds all change;
The dreadful Commonplace suc-
We catch at times a gleam of flying
powers [mountain range:
That pass in storm some windy
But, while we gaze, the cloud returns
o'er all. [vious height,
And each, to guide him up the de-

Must take, and bless, whatever
earthly light [fires, may fall.
From household hearths, or shepherd

This wave, that groans and writhes
upon the beach, [calm;
To-morrow will submit itself to
That wind that rushes, moaning, out
of reach, [less palm;
Will die beneath some breath-
These tears, these sighs, these mo-
tions of the soul, [mind,
This inexpressible pining of the
The stern indifferent laws of life
shall bind,
And fix forever in their old control.

Behold this half-tamed universe of
things! [its chain.
That cannot break, nor wholly bear,
Its heart by fits grows wild: it leaps,
it springs: [it again.
Then the chain galls, and kennels
If man were formed with all his fac-
ulties [him less.
For sorrow, I should sorrow for
Considering a life so brief, the
stress [despise:
Of its short passion I might well
But all man's faculties are for de-
light; [what seems
But all man's life is compassed with
Framed for enjoyment: but from all
that sight [streams
And sense reveal a magic murmur
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 mortal-
ity [pain:
Are but the lightest portion of his
Therefore, shut out from joy, inces-
santly [that's vain.
Death finds him toiling at a task
I weep the want of all he pines to have:
I weep the loss of all he leaves be-
hind:— [of mind,
Contentment, and repose, and peace
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 deplore
 I weep . . . but what are tears? What
 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 [ioned sea,
 That wanders o'er the uncompanioned
 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 [trace;
 The footsteps of a God I seemed to
 But everywhere steps of a God in pain.
 If, haply, he that made this heart of
 mine, [erewhile,
 Himself in sorrow walked the world
 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? [this,
 My heart inhabits other worlds than
 Therefore my search is here a vain
 endeavor.

Methought, . . . (it was the midnight
 of my soul, [vary:
 Dead midnight) that I stood on Cal-
 I found the cross, but not the Christ.
 The whole [bitterly
 Of heaven was dark: and I went
 Weeping, because I found him not.
 Methought, . . . [mist)
 (It was the twilight of the dawn and
 I stood before the sepulchre of
 Christ: [aught
 The sepulchre was vacant, void of
 Saving the cere-clothes of the grave,
 which were [terly
 Upfolden straight and empty: bit-
 Weeping I stood, because not even
 there [unto me,
 I found him. Then a voice spake
 "Whom seekest thou? Why is thy
 heart dismayed?
 Jesus of Nazareth, he is not here:

Behold, the Lord is risen. Be of
 cheer: [was laid".
 Approach, behold the place where he
 And while he spake, the sunrise smote
 the world. [spake the voice:
 "Go forth, and tell thy brethren,"
 "The Lord is risen." Suddenly un-
 furled, [joice
 The whole unclouded Orient did re-
 In glory. Wherefore should I mourn
 that here [needs?
 My heart feels vacant of what most it
 Christ is arisen! . . . the cere-clothes
 and the weeds [chre
 That wrapped him lying in this sepul-
 Of earth, he hath abandoned; being
 gone [turn
 Back into heaven, where we too must
 Our gaze to find him. Pour, O risen
 Sun [I yearn
 Of Righteousness, the light for which
 Upon the darkness of this mortal hour,
 This tract of night in which I walk
 forlorn: [The morn
 Behold the night is now far spent.
 Breaks, breaking from afar through a
 night shower.

REQUIESCAT.

I SOUGHT to build a deathless monu-
 ment [to place
 To my dead love. Therein I mean
 All precious things, and rare: as Na-
 ture blent [face.
 All single sweetness in one sweet
 I could not build it worthy her mute
 merit, [eyes,
 Nor worthy her white brows and holy
 Nor worthy of her perfect and pure
 spirit,
 Nor of my own immortal memories.
 But, as some rapt artificer of old,
 To enshrine the ashes of a virgin
 saint, [and fine gold,
 Might scheme to work with ivory,
 And carven gems, and legended and
 quaint [lands,
 Seraphic heraldries; searching far
 Orient and occident, for all things
 rare, [hands,
 To consecrate the toil of reverent
 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 [tered pile.
 Here are the fragments of my shat-
 I keep them, and the flowers that
 sprang between
 Their broken workmanship—the
 flowers and weeds! [Queen,—
 Sleep soft among the violets, O my
 Lie calm among my ruined thoughts
 and deeds.

EPILOGUE.

PART I.

CHANGE without term, and strife
 without result, [remain,
 Persons that pass, and shadows that
 One strange, impenetrable, and occult
 Suggestion of a hope, that's hoped
 in vain, [delight
 Behold the world man reigns in! His
 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, [mers on its boughs,
 Which propped three hundred sum-
 Which housed, of old, the merry bird,
 and drunk [carouse
 The divine dew of air, and gave
 To the free winds of heaven, lie over-
 thrown [age bore.
 Amidst the trees which its own fruit-
 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! [wild.
 Strong and superb it rises o'er the
 Vain energy of being! For the harsh
 And fetid ooze already hath defiled
 The roots whose sap it lives by.
 Heaven doth give [wind
 No blessing to its boughs. The humid
 Rots them. The vapors warp them.
 All declined, [to live,
 Its life hath ceased, ere it hath ceased

Child of the waste, and nursling of
 the pest! [wept thine own.
 A kindred fate hath watched and
 Thine epitaph is written in my breast.
 Years change. Day treads out day.
 For me alone

No change is nurst within the brood-
 ing 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, [rose.
 And too much redness satiates the
 O blissful season! blest and balmy air!
 Waves! moonlight! silence! years
 of lost repose! [tread
 Bowers and shades that echoed to the
 Of young Romance! birds that, from
 woodland bars, [stars!
 Sang, serenading forth the timid
 Youth! beauty! passion! whither are
 ye fled? [wait
 I wait, and long have waited, and yet
 The coming of the footsteps which
 ye told [is late,
 My heart to watch for. Yet the hour
 And ye have left me. Did they lie,
 of old, [bliss?
 Your thousand voices prophesying
 That troubled all the current of a
 fate [ful! I await
 Which else might have been peace-
 The thing I have not found, yet would
 not miss.

To face out childhood, and grow up to
 man, [sees,
 To make a noise, and question all one
 The astral orbit of a world to span,
 And, after a few days, to take one's
 ease [my friend,
 Under the graveyard grasses,—this,
 Appears to me a thing too strange
 but what [not
 I wish to know its meaning. I would
 Depart before I have perceived the
 end.

And I would know what, here below
 the sun, [ing which seems
 He is, and what his place, that be-
 The end of all means, yet the means
 of none; [and dreams;
 Who searches and combines, aspires
 Seeking new things with ever the same
 hope, [thing;
 Seeking new hopes in ever the same
 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 [before;
 The want of what he did not want
 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 life!
 Why is it, all deep emotion makes us sigh [thing than death
 To quit this world? What better Can follow after rapture? "Let us die!" [breath.
 This is the last wish on the lover's If thou wouldst live, content thee. To enjoy
 Is to begin to perish. What is bliss, But transit to some other state from this? [destroy.
 That which we live for must our life Hast thou not ever longed for death? If not, [tained.
 Not yet thy life's experience is at- But if thy days be favored, if thy lot Be easy, if hope's summit thou hast gained, [thee.
 Die! Death is the sole future left to The knowledge of this life is bound, for each, [tween our reach
 By his own powers. Death lies be- 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 awe attract [ract?
 Such strange desire? or in the cata- The sea? It is the sentiment of death.
 If life no more than a mere seeming be, Away with the imposture! If it tend [ingly
 To nothing, and to have lived seem- Prove to be vain and futile in the end,
 Then let us die, that we may really live, [possess
 Or cease to feign to live. Let us Lasting delight, or lasting quietness.
 What life desires, death, only death, can give.

Where are the violets of vanished years?
 The sunsets Rachel watched by La- ban's well? [tears?
 Where is Fidele's face? where Juliet's There comes no answer. There is none to tell [mouths are stopt
 What we go questioning, till our By a clod of earth. Ask of the plangent sea, [leafless tree,
 The wild wind wailing through the Ask of the meteor from the midnight dropt.
 Come, Death, and bring the beauty back to all! [shun.
 I do not seek thee, but I will not 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's bow- ers are lit,
 And Melancholy, all alone, doth sit By the wide marge of some neglected sea.

PART II.

ONE hour of English twilight once again!
 Lo! in the rosy regions of the dew The confines of the world begin to wane, [renew.
 And Hesper doth his trembling lamp Now is the inauguration of the night!
 Nature's release to wearied earth and skies [armistice!
 Sweet truce of Care! Labor's brief Best, loveliest interlude of dark and light!
 The rookery, babbling in the sunken wood; [tant farm,
 The watchdog, barking from the dis- The dim light fading from the hornéd flood,
 That winds the woodland in its sil- ver arm; [whose leaves
 The massed and immemorial oaks, And hushed in yonder heathy dells below;
 The fragrance of the meadows that I know [weaves
 The bat, that now his wavering circle Around these antique towers and case- ments deep

That glimmer through the ivy and the
 rose.
 To the faint moon which doth begin to
 creep [ens' repose,
 Out of the inmost heart o' the heav-
 To wander 'all night long without a
 sound, [ered once;
 Above the fields my feet oft wand-
 The larches tall and dark, which do
 ensconce [lowed ground
 The little churchyard in whose hal-
 Sleep half the simple friends my child-
 hood knew; [blest hour,
 All, all the sounds and sights of this
 Sinking within my heart of hearts,
 like dew, [flower
 Revive that so long parcht and drooping
 Of youth, the world's hot breath for
 many years [more, once more,
 Hath burned and withered; till once
 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, [to roam
 I, and the infant guide that used
 With me, the meads and meadow-
 banks among, [little feet
 At dusk and dawn. How light those
 Danced through the dancing grass
 and waving wheat [song!
 Where'er far off, we heard the cuckoo's
 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 [pink snail
 Spake to you, only; and the poor,
 Feared less your steps than those of the
 May-shower. [loved you so,
 It was not strange these creatures
 And told you all. 'T was not so long
 ago [a flower.
 You were, yourself, a bird, or else
 And, little Ella, you were pale, because
 So soon you were to die. I know
 that now. [gauze
 And why there ever seemed a sort of
 Over your deep blue eyes and sad
 young brow. [you,
 You were too good to grow up, Ella,

And be a woman such as I have
 known! [stone,
 And so upon your heart they put a
 And left you, dear, amongst the flowers
 and dew.
 God's will is good, He knew what
 would be best. [more;
 I will not weep thee, darling, any
 I have not wept thee: though my
 heart oppress [sore.
 With many memories, for thy sake is
 God's will is good, and great His wis-
 dom is. [shine
 Thou wast a little star, and thou didst
 Upon my cradle; but thou wast not
 mine, [art His.
 Thou wast not mine, my darling; thou
 My morning star! twin sister of my
 soul!
 My little elfin friend from Fairy-Land!
 Whose memory is yet innocent of the
 whole [thy hand,
 Of that which makes me doubly need
 Thy little guiding hand so soon with-
 drawn! [thee.
 Here where I find so little like to
 For thou wert as the breath of
 dawn to me, [dawn.
 Starry and pure, and brief as is the
 Thy knight was I, and thou my Fairy
 Queen. [alry!)
 ('T was in the days of love and chiv-
 And thou didst hide thee in a bower of
 green. [that I
 But thou so well hast hidden thee,
 Have never found thee since. And
 thou didst set [emprise,
 Many a task, and quest, and high
 Ere I should win my guerdon from
 thine eyes,
 So many, and so many, that not yet
 My tasks are ended or my wanderings
 o'er [the main
 But some day thou wilt send across
 A magic bark, and I shall quit this
 shore [again;
 Of care, and find thee, in thy bower
 And thou wilt say, "My brother, hast
 thou found [answer, Sweet,
 Our home, at last?" . . . Whilst I, in
 Shall heap my life's last booty at thy
 feet, [ing wound.
 And bare my breast with many a bleed-

The spoils of time! the trophies of the world!
[captived kings;

The keys of conquered towns and
And many a broken sword, and banner
furled;
[dan's rings;

The heads of giants, and swart Sol;
And many a maiden's scarf; and
many a wand

Of baffled wizard; many an amulet;
And many a shield, with mine own
heart's blood wet;
[land!

And jewels, dear, from many a distant

God's will is good. He knew what
would be best. life.

I thought last year to pass away from
I thought my toils were ended, and my
quest
[world's strife

Completed, and my part in this
Accomplisht, And, behold! About
me now
[the awe

There rest the gloom, the glory, and
Of a new martyrdom, no dreams
foresaw;
[on my brow.

And the thorn-crown hath blossomed

A martyrdom, but with a martyr's joy!

A hope I never hoped for! and a sense
That nothing henceforth ever can de-
stroy:—
[dence

Within my breast the serene confi-
Of mercy in the misery of things;

Of meaning in the mystery of all;
Of blessing in whatever may befall;
Of rest predestined to all wanderings.

How sweet, with thee, my sister, to
renew,
[bright birds

In lands of light, the search for those
Of plumage so ethereal in its hue,

And music sweeter than all mortal
words,
[hood sent

Which some good angel to our child-
With messages from Paradisal flow-
ers,
[bowers

So lately left, the scent of Eden
Yet lingered in our hair, where'er we
went!

Now, they are all fled by, this many a
year,
[wind,

Adorn the viewless valleys of the
And never more will cross this hemi-
sphere,
[I find,

Those birds of passage! Never shall
Dropt from the flight, you followed,
dear, so far
[know,

That you will never come again, I
One plumelet on the paths by which
I go,
[ing star!

Missing thy light there, O my morn-

Soft, over all, doth ancient twilight cast
Her dim gray robe, vague as futurity,
And sad and hoary as the ghostly past,
Till earth assumes invisibility.

I hear the night-bird's note, wherewith
she starts

The bee within the blossom from his
dream.

A light, like hope, from yonder pane
doth beam,
[parts.

And now, like hope it silently de-

Hush! from the clock within yon dark
church spire,

Another hour, broke, clanging, out of
time,

And passed me, throbbing like my
own desire,

Into the seven-fold heavens. And
now, the chime

Over the vale, the woodland, and the
river
[strays

More faint, more far, a quivering echo
From that small twelve-houred cir-
cle 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

Into this silent chamber, where I

meet
[race;

From wall to wall the fathers of my
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,
[men,

After much wandering in the ways of
Weary, but not outworn. Here, with
her urn
[zen.

Shall Memory come and be my deni-
And blue-eyed Hope shall through the
window look,

And lean her fair child's face into the
room,

What time the hawthorn buds anew,
 and bloom [brook.
 The bright forget-me-nots beside the
 Father of all which is, or yet may be,
 Ere to the pillow which my child-
 hood prest [by Thee
 This night restores my troubled brows
 May this, the last prayer I have
 learned, be blest! [life
 Grant me to live that I may need from
 No more than life hath given me,
 and to die [than I
 That I may give to death no more.
 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! [agree,
 That so my work may with my will
 And strength be mine to calmly fill
 my part [the end
 In Nature's purpose, questioning not
 For, love is more than raiment or
 than food. [good?
 Shall I not take the evil with the
 Blessed to me be all which thou dost
 send!

Nor blest the least, recalling what hath
 been, [known
 The knowledge of the evil I have
 Without me, and within me. Since,
 to lean [own
 Upon a strength far mightier than my
 Such knowledge brought me. In
 whose strength I stand
 Firmly upheld, even though, in ruin
 hurled,
 The fixed foundations of this rolling
 world [hand.
 Should topple at the waving of Thy

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 [dued
 Of this laborious star. Muse, unsub-
 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, [praised!

In days degenerate, first named and
 Now the high airy kingdoms of the
 day [seas
 Hyperion holds not. The disloyal
 Have broken from Poseidon's purple
 sway. [en palaces
 Through Heaven's harmonious gold-
 No more the silver-sandalled messen-
 gers [brow
 Slide to sweet airs. Upon Olympus'
 The gods' great citadel is vacant now.
 And not a lute to Love in Lesbos stirs.

But thou wert born not on the Forkéd
 Hill, [bees,
 Nor fed from Hybla's hives by Attic
 Nor on the honey Cretan oaks distil,
 Or once distilled, when gods had
 homes in trees, [thou
 And young Apollo knew thee not. Yet
 With Ceres wast, when the pale
 mother trod [god,
 The gloomy pathway to the nether
 And spake with that dim Power which
 dwells below

The surface of whatever, where he
 wends, [thou
 The circling sun illumineth. And
 Wast aye a friend to man. Of all his
 Perchance the friend most needed:
 needed now
 Yet more than ever; in a complex age
 friends,
 Which changes while we gaze at it;
 from heaven [given,
 Seeking a sign, and finding no sign
 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 [life began,
 Thy deep and searching eyes. Since
 Meek at thy mighty knees, though oft
 reproved,
 I have sat, spelling out slow time
 with tears,
 Where down the riddling alphabet
 of years [moved.
 Thy guiding finger o'er the horn-book
 And I have put together many names:
 Sorrow, and Joy, and Hope, and
 Memory, [frames
 And Love, and Anger; as an infant

The initials of a language wherein he
In manhood must with men communi-
cate. [derstand,

And oft, the words were hard to un-
Harder to utter: still the solemn
hand [move, and wait;
Would pause, and point, and wait, and

Till words grew into language. Lan-
guage grew [passed.

To utterance. Utterance into music
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, [of him,

And dreams she sees, albeit unseen
Some radiant listener lured from other
spheres.

Such songs have been my solace many
a while [none,

And oft, when other solace I had
From grief, which lay heart-broken on
a smile, [sun,

And joy that glittered like a winter
And froze, and fevered: from the great
man's scorn, [unfriendliness;

The mean man's envy; friend's
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 [dreams,

A refuge through the ivory gate of
Wherein my spirit grew familiar

With spirits that glide by spiritual
streams; [sleeping;

Song hath, for me, unsealed the genii
Under mid seas, and lured out of
their lair [wondrous hair,

Beings with wondering eyes, and
Tame to my feet at twilight softly
creeping.

And song hath been my cymbal in
the hours [away.

Of triumph; when behind me, far
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 Promise!
trod [of God

By giants, where the chosen race

Shall find, at last, its long predes-
tined goal.

The breath which stirred these songs
a little while [too

Has fled by; and, with it, fled
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, adored, sacrificed—
its heart,

To gods for forever fallen.
Now, we part,

My songs and I. We part, and what
remains?

Perchance an echo, and perchance no
more, [music dwells

Harp of my heart, from thy brief
In hearts, unknown, afar: as the wide
shore [shells

Retains within its hundred hollow
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 inland
home.

Within these cells of song, how frail
soe'r [human life

The vast and wandering tides of
Have murmured once; and left, in
passing, there, [strife

Faint echoes of the tumult and the
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 lin-
gered by.

I sung of life, as life would have me
sing. [wrong;

Of falsehood, and of evil, and of
For many a false, and many an evil
thing, [song

I found in life; and by my life my
Was shaped within me while I sung:

I sung [tined end;

Of Good, for good is life's predes-
Of Sorrow, for I knew her as my
friend; [was strung

Of Love, for by his hand my harp

I have not scrawled above the tomb
of Youth [resent
Those lying epitaphs, which rep-
All virtues, and all excellence, save
truth.

'T were 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 find its praises blotting every
page.

And yet, the Poet and the Age are
one. [minute,

And if the age be flawed, how'er
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 vapor
furl'd;

And cry—Behold the progress of the
time! [land,

Yet are we tending in an unknown
Whither, we neither ask nor un-
derstand, [prime!

Far from the peace of our unvalued

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 raving 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, [race

Thou giant sufferer! groaning for a
Thou canst not save, for all thy bleed-
ing heart!

Thy wail my harp hath wakened;
and my place

Shall be beside thee; and my bless-
ing be [share

On all that makes me worthy yet to
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 society,
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 strangers to each other's
woe; [from each.

And each hath language different
The simplest songs sound sweetest and
most good. [ing ones.

The simplest loves are the most lov-
Happier were song's forefathers than
their sons.

And Homer sung as Byron never could.

But Homer cannot come again: nor
ever [sung.

The quiet of the age in which he
This age is one of tumult and endeavor,
And by a fevered hand its harps are
strung, [time;

And yet, I do not quarrel with the
Nor quarrel with the tumult of my
heart, [part;

Which of the tumult of the age is
Because its very weakness is sublime.

The passions are as winds on the wide
sea [the sails

Of human life; which do impel

That star, poor babe, which o'er thy
 cradle shakes,
 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:—

That 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, [pale,
 Some woman, melancholy-eyed and

Whose heart, like mine, hath suf-
 fered, may this tale
 Read by the soft light of her own
 romance.

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 [wrong

The cryptic forms of error and of

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.

THIS is the Land, the happy valleys these,	And sweet acclivities; and, all be- yond,
Broad breadths of plain, blue-veined by many a stream,	The open flats lie fruitful to the sun
Umbrageous hills, sweet glades, and forests fair,	Full many a league; till, dark against the sky,
O'er which our good liege, Landgrave Herman, rules.	Bounding the limits of our lord's do- main,
This is Thuringia: yonder, on the heights,	The Hill of Hörsel rears his horrid front.
Is Wartburg, seat of our dear lord's abode,	Woe to the man who wanders in the vast
Famous through Christendom for many a feat	Of those unhallowed solitudes, if Sin,
Of deffest knights, chief stars of chivalry,	Quickening the lust of carnal appe- tite,
At tourney in its courts; nor more re- nowned	Lurk secret in his heart: for all their caves
For deeds of Prowess than exploits of Art,	Echo weird strains of magic, direful- sweet,
Achieved when, vocal in its Muses' hall,	That lap the wanton sense in blissful ease;
The minstrel-knights their glorious jousts renew,	While through the ear a reptile music creeps,
And for the laurel wage harmonious war.	And, blandly-busy, round about the soul
On this side spreads the Chase in wooded slopes	Weaves its fell web of sounds. The unhappy wight

* The reader is solicited to adopt the German pronunciation of TANNHÄUSER, by sounding it as if it were written, in English, "Tannhoiser."

<p>Thus captive made in soft and silken bands Of tangled harmony, is led away — Away adown the ever-darkening caves, 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, Incensed with perfumes, tended on by fays, The lustful Queen, waiting damnation, 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 humani- ty. 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 tremendous 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</p>	<p>Let in effulgence of untainted light. As when, laid bare beneath the delver's toil On some huge bulk of buried ma- sonry In hoar Assyria, suddenly revealed A chamber, gay with sculpture and the pomp Of pictured tracery on its glowing walls, No sooner breathes the wholesome heavenly air Than fast its colored bravery fades, 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 smit Blind by the splendors of the Bethle- hem 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-baptized earth; ex- iled, Bearing the curse, yet suffered for a space, By Heaven's clear sapience and inscru- table ken,</p>
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To range the wide world, and assay their powers	Of their libidinous goddess. But, ere- long,
To unregenerate redeemed man- kind:	Comes loathing of the sensual air they breathe,
If haply they by shadows and by shows,	Loathing of light unhallowed, sicken- ing sense
Phantasmagoria, and illusions wrought	Of surfeited enjoyment; and their lips,
Of sight or sound by sorcery, may draw	Spurning the reeky pasture, yearn for draughts
Unwary men, or weak, into the nets	Of rock-rebounding rills, their eyes for sight
Of Satan, their great Captain. She re- nowned	Of Heaven, their limbs for lengths of dewy grass:
"The fairest," fleeing from her Cyprian isle,	What time sharp Conscience pricks them, and awake
Swept to the northwards many a league, and lodged	Starts the requickened soul with all her powers,
At length on Hørsel, into whose dark womb	And breaks, if so she will, the murder- ous spell,
She crept confounded. Thither soon she drew	Calling on God. God to her rescue sends
Lewd Spirits to herself, and there abides,	Voiced seraphims that lead the sinner forth
Holding her devilish orgies; and has power	From darkness unto day, from foul em- brace
With siren voices crafty to com- pel	Of that bloat Queen into the mother- lap
Into her wanton home unhappy men	Of earth, and the caressent airs of Heaven;
Whose souls to sin are prone. The pure at heart	Where he, by strong persistency of prayer,
Nathless may roam about her pestilent hill	By painful pilgrimage, by lengths of fast
Untainted, proof against perfidious sounds	That tame the rebel flesh, by many a night
Within whose ears an angel ever sings	Of vigil, days of deep repentant tears,
Good tidings of great joy. Nor even they,	May cleanse his soul of her adulterate stains,
Whose hearts are gross, and who in- flamed with lust	May from his sin-incrusted spirit shake
Enter entrapped by sorceries, to her cave,	The leprous scales,—and, purely at the feet
Are damned beyond redemption. For a while,	Of his Redemption falling, may arise
Slaves of their bodies, in the sloughs of Sin,	Of Christ accepted. Whoso doubts the truth,
They roll contented, wallowing in the arms	Doubting how deep divine Compassion 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 Landgrave's head
 Have showered their snowy honors, since he days
 When in his court no nobler knight was known,
 And in his halls no happier bard was heard,
 Then bright Tannhäuser. Warrior, minstrel, he
 Throve for a while within the general eye,
 As some king-cedar, in Crusader tales,
 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 chimes
 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 into 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,
 That so august a Spirit, sphered so fair,
 Should 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 lap-wing loves
 Beyond all others, that o'ertops the pines,
 And from his one white, wistful window stares
 Into the sullen heart o' the land,—ere-while
 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 sent sweet peace!" Heaven heard,
 and now she lies
 Under the marble 'mid the silent tombs,
 Calm with her kindred; as her soul 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 fair Elizabeth;
 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 surface,
 lurked
 A vice of nature, breeding death, not life;
 Such as where some rich Roman, to delight

Luxurious days with labyrinthian
walks
Of rose and lily, marble fountains,
forms
Wanton of Grace or Nymph, and wind-
ing frieze
With sculpture rough, hath decked the
summer haunts
Of his voluptuous villa, — there, fes-
toon'd
With flowers, among the Graces and
the Gods,
The lurking fever glides.

A dangerous skill,
Caught from the custom of those trou-
badours

That roam the wanton South, too near
the homes

Of the lost gods, had crept in careless
use

Among our northern bards; to play the
thief

Upon the poets of a pagan time,
And steal to purfle their embroidered
lays,

Voluptuous trappings of lascivious
lore.

Hence had Tannhäuser, from of old,
indulged

In song too lavish license to mis-
lead

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
fiend,

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

Meek 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, when-
e'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 prayer-
less 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 him-
self

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 mysterious
 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, sleep-
 ing 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
 With mystic music drew him to his
 doom.
 So rapt, with idle and with errant
 foot

He wandered on to Hørsel, and those
 glades
 Of melancholy fame, whose poisonous
 glooms,
 Decked with the gleaming hemlock,
 darkly fringe
 The Mount of Venus. There, a 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 some-
 time 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. Behold-
 ing 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-lit
 lake
 Swims 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 sumptu-
 ous face
 Leaned 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 astonishment,
And vex 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 incanta-
tions 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 heart

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 Wartburgh 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 neighboring 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, astonied, 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 Elizabeth 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 fatherland;
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 Tannhäuser 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 neigh-
 ing 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
 minister-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. Shrill clinked
 the corridors
 Through all the courts with clashing
 heels, or moved
 With silken murmurs, and elastic
 sounds
 Of lady laughters light; as in they
 flowed
 Lord, Liegeman, Peer, and Prince, and
 Paladin,
 And dame and damsel, clad in dim-
 pling silk
 And gleaming pearl; who, while the
 groaning roofs
 Re-echoed royal music, swept adown
 The spacious hall, with due obeisance
 made
 To the high dais, and on glittering
 seats
 Dropped one by one, like flocks of bur-
 nished birds
 That settle down with sunset-painted
 plums
 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-fil-
 leted,
 That entered now the hall: Sir Mandev-
 ville,
 The Swan, of Eisnach; Wilfrid of the
 Hills;
 Wolfram, surnamed of Willow-brook;
 and next

Tannhäuser, christened of the golden
 harp;
 With Walter of the Heron-chase; and
 Max,
 The seer; Sir Rudolph, of the Raven-
 crest;
 And Franz, the falconer. They enter-
 ed, 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,
 Perusing with fixed eyes, that all be-
 lied
 Her throbbing heart, the carven archi-
 trave,
 Whereon the intricate much-vexed de-
 sign
 Of leaf and stem disinterwined 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 bewilderment,
 and all
 That frets her in the flesh. But when,
 ere while,
 The minstrels entered, and Tannhäuser
 bowed
 Before the dais, 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, where it
 can,
 At any means to make itself approved,
 And since the singer may to song con-
 fide
 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-belovéd 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 hush-
ed to hear.

"O well-belovéd 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 yon roof,
As waves of surging music lapped
against
Its resonant rafters. Often have your
strains
Ennobled souls of true nobility,
Rapt by your perfect pleadings in the
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 him who hears congenial echoes
waking,
Remultiplies the praise of what is
good.
Song cheers the emulous spirit to the
top
Of Virtue's rugged steep, from whence,
all heights
Of human worth attained, the mortal
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 righteous
hand

Burns the great sword of flaming For-
titude,
And have stirred up to deeds of high
emprize
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 wont 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
respheres,
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 divine.
Up! up! loved singer, smite into the
chords,
The lists are opened, set your lays in
rest,
And who of Love best chants the per-
fect praise,
Him shall Elizabeth as conqueror hail
And round his royal temples bind the
bays."

He said, and sat. And from the mid-
dle-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 descending
 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 devinely,
 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
 creation,
 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 intricate
 throng
 Of thoughts that flowed beneath his
 touch to find
 Harmonious resolution. As he closed,
 Tannhäuser rising, fretted with delay,
 Sent flying fingers o'er the strings, and
 sang:—

"Love be my theme! Sing her 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 long 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
The kiss-crease on his ruffled lip;

“And lily-white 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 delight,
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 Desire,
’T would 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 plaintive
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 dazed 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 lavish Power I sing,
Dispenser of all good,
Whose pleasure-fountain is the
spring
Of sole beatitude.

“Sing ye of Love ye ne'er possessed
In wretched tropes—a vain employ-
ment!

I sing the passion in my breast,
And know Love only in Enjoyment.”

To whom, while all the rustling hall
was moved

With stormy indignation, stern uprose,
Sharp 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, sloughed
in sin,

Approval of pure Love to win!

Rather from thee I'll wring applause
For Love, the Avenger of his cause;
Great Love, the chivalrous and
strong,

To whose wide grasp all arms belong,
The lance, the battle-axe, and
thong,—

And eke the mastery in song.

“Love in my heart in all the pride
Of kinghood 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 venge 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
Has sought to do all Honor wrong,
Pass on,—I will not stoop my crest
To smite thee, nor lay lance 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 praise
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 dim,
Thou starveling-soul, lean heart and
grim,
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 becroak the
moon!

What canst thou prate of Love? I
trow

She never graced thy open brow,
Nor flushed thy cheek, nor blos-
somed 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 abjured 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 un-
spilt."

Out flushed Sir Wilfred's weapon, and
outleapt

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 liege lord roared "Peace!" and
midst the clang

Of those who parted the incenséd
bards,

Sounded the harp of Wolfram. Caim
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 look
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 Satan's
snares,

Shine out, sweet Star, around,
above,

Till we have scaled the mighty stairs,
And reached thy mansions, Heaven-
ly Love!"

Then while great shouts went up of
"Give the prize

To Wolfram," leapt Tannhäuser from
his seat,

Fierce passion flaming from his lus-
trous 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 dis-
grace

Incurred by such song in such com-
pany,

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 flit 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

'Gan dart indignant lightnings. One alone

Of 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 i' the windy north.

But now, from farthest end to end of all

The sullen movement swarming underneath,

Uprolled 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;

Rapt in remembrance, or by fancy fooled

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 scattered 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 support

That, from the centre, propped the ponderous roof,

There, based against the pillar, fronting full

His sudden foes, he rested resolute,
Waiting 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 righteous
brows,
Would seem to have forecast the dubi-
ous doom
Awaiting our decision; ye have heard,
Not wrung by torture from reluctant
lips,
Nor yet breathed forth with penitential
pain
In prayer for pardon, nay, but rather
fledged
And barbed with boastful 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 unhappy
man
The covenanted courtesies of knights,
The loyalties of lives by faith knit fast
In spiritual communion. What be-
hoves,
After deliberation, to award
In sentence, I to your high council
leave,
Undoubting. What may mitigate in
ought
The weight of this acknowledged in-
famy
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 wrecker's beacon from
the reefs,
Lure many to destruction: nor indeed
Unmindful of the doom by fire or steel
This realm's supreme tribunals have
reserved
For those that, dealing in damnation,
hold
Dark commerce with the common foe
of man.
Weigh you in all its circumstance this
crime:
And, worthily judging, though your
judgement 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 heft
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 together; 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 piteous
 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!
 Christains I will not call you! who de-
 fraud
 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 mock-
 ery
 Of the fair face of Mercy. You dull
 hearts,
 And hard! have ye no pity for your-
 selves?
 For man no pity? and 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
 The stateliest soul among you, to set
 forth
 And fix him in the foremost ranks of
 men?
 Content that he, your best, should bear
 the brunt,

And head the van against the scornful
 fiend
 That will not waste his weapons on the
 herd,
 But saves them for the noblest. And
 shall Hell
 Triumph through you, that triumphin
 the shame
 Of this eclipse that blots your bright-
 est out,
 And leaves you dark in his extinguish-
 ed 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 fare-
 well!
 And sends us monitors and ministers—
 Old age, that steals the fulness from
 the veins;
 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
 On such a sudden summons to the
 grave?
 Against high Heaven hath this man sin-
 ned, or you?
 O, if it be against high Heaven, to
 Heaven
 Remit the compt! less, 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 wretch-
 edness,
 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 lay,
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 Princess, for your-
selves;

For all that in your nobler nature stirs
To vindicate Forgiveness and enlarge
The lovely laws of Pity! Which of
you,

Herein 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

To send the soul, asleep in all her sins,
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
nigh cloud,

Sets 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 ap-
prove,

To gentle to prevent, what passed: and
still

Divided in 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 Elizabeth
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

Up to the lofty levels where it ceased,
Stood forth, and from the dubious
silence caught

And carried up the purpose of her
prayer;

And drew it out, and drove it to the
heart,

And clenched it with conviction in the
mind,

And fixed it firm in judgement.
From deep muse

The Landgrave started, toward Tann-
häuser 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 hence-
forth 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
 Together pace these halls, nor ever
 hear
 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 moving
 makes
 A shadow, and a silence in our talk.
 Get thee from hence, O all that now re-
 mains
 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 glimmered
 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
 Senorus, 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 moved,
 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 make 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 beyond;
 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-wingéd 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,
 Lay lost among the ruins of that day.
 As when the buffeting gusts, that ad-
 verse blow
 Over the Caribbean Sea, conspire
 Conflicting breaths, and, savagely be-
 got,
 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 reck, with a sudden
 plunge
 Confound her,—stunned and strained,
 upon the peak
 Poising one moment, ere she forward
 fall
 To float, dishelmed, a wreck upon the
 waves:
 So rose, 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 forlorn.
 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 burthened
 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 shattered
 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 gaveshe 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 consolati-
 on 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 be-
 sought
 To touch the leprous soul and make
 it clean;
 And sued the heavenly pastor to recall
 The lost sheep, wandered 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—

<p>Thrill through her, herald of the dawn of Hope.</p> <p>Then most she loved from forth her leafy tower</p> <p>Listless to watch the irrevocable clouds Roll on, and daylight waste itself away Along those dreamy woods, whence evermore</p> <p>She mused, "He will return;" and fondly wove</p> <p>Her webs of wistful fantasy till the moon</p> <p>Was high in heaven, and in its light she kneeled,</p> <p>A faded watcher through the weary night,</p> <p>A meek, sweet statue at the silver shrines,</p> <p>In deep, perpetual prayer for him she loved.</p> <p>And from the pitying Sisterhood of Saints</p> <p>Haply that prayer shall win an angel down</p> <p>To be his unseen minister, and draw A drowning conscience from the deeps of Hell.</p> <p>Time put his sickle in among the days. Blithe Summer came, and into dimples danced</p> <p>The fair and fructifying Earth, anon Showering the gathered guerdon of her play</p> <p>Into the lap of Autumn; Autumn stored</p> <p>The gift, piled ready to the palsied hand</p> <p>Of blind and begging Winter; and when he</p> <p>Closed his well-provendered days, Spring lightly came</p> <p>And scattered sweets upon his sullen grave.</p> <p>And twice the seasons passed, the sisters three</p> <p>Doing glad service for their hoary brother,</p> <p>And twice twelve moons had waxed and waned, and twice</p> <p>The weary world had pilgrimed round the sun,</p> <p>When from the outskirts of the land there came</p> <p>Rumor of footsore penitents from Rome</p>	<p>Returning, jubilant of remitted sin.</p> <p>So chanced it, on a silent April eve The westering sun along the Wartburg vale</p> <p>Shot level beams, and into glory touched</p> <p>The image of Madonna,—where it stands</p> <p>Hard by the common way that climbs the steep,—</p> <p>The image of Madonna, and the face Of meek Elizabeth turned towards the Queen</p> <p>Of Sorrows, sorrowful in patient prayer;</p> <p>When, through the silence and the sleepy leaves,</p> <p>A breeze blew up the vale, and on the breeze</p> <p>Floated a plaintive music. She that heard,</p> <p>Trembled; the prayer upon her parted lips</p> <p>Suspended hung, and one swift hand she pressed</p> <p>Against the palpitating heart whose throbs</p> <p>Confused the cunning of her ears. Ah God!</p> <p>Was this the voice of her returning joy? The psalm of Shrivens pilgrims to their homes</p> <p>Returning? Ay! it swells upon the breeze</p> <p>Thy "<i>Nunc Dimittis</i>" of glad souls that sue</p> <p>After salvation seen to part in peace.</p> <p>Then up she sprung, and to a neighbor- ing copse</p> <p>Swift as a startled hind, when the ghostly moon</p> <p>Draws sudden o'er the silvered heather- bells</p> <p>The monstrous shadow of a cloud, she sped;</p> <p>Pausing, low-crouched, within a maze of shrubs,</p> <p>Whose emerald slivers fringed the rugged way</p> <p>So broad, the pilgrim's garments as they passed</p> <p>Would brush the leaves that hid her. And anon</p> <p>They came in double rank, and two by two,</p>
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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
 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 wrapt 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 horror
 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
 Of all the pilgrims stood within the
 ken
 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, returning 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 stab-
 bed to the heart,
 Sprung forward, clutched him yet once
 more, and cried,
 "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 shall re-
 turn;
 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 reach-
 ed his ears
 That, from their quest of saving grace
 returned,
 The pilgrims: ll 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
 clasped
 Full many a lean hand clutching at his
 own,
 Of those who, stretched upon the grass,
 or propped
 Against the boulder-stones, were press-
 ed about
 By weeping women, clamorous to un-
 bind
 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 harbor-
 ing hope,
 He passed perplexed beside the castle
 gates.
 There, at his side, the youngest of the
 train,
 A blue-eyed pilgrim tarried, and to
 him
 Turned Wolfram questioning of Tann-
 häuser's fate,
 And learnt in few words how, his sin
 pronounced
 Deadly and irremediable, the knight
 Had faded from before the awful face
 Of Christ's incensed Vicar; and none
 knew
 Whither he wandered, to what desolate
 lands,
 Hiding his anguish from the eyes of
 men.

Then Wolfram groaned, and clasped
 his hands, and cried,
 "Merciful God!" and fell upon his
 knees
 In purpose as of prayer,—but, sud-
 denly,
 About the gate the crowd moved, and
 a cry
 Went up for space, when, rising, he
 beheld
 Four maids who on a pallet bore the
 form
 Of wan Elizabeth. The whisper grew
 That she had met the pilgrims, and
 had learned
 Tannhäuser's fate, and fallen beside the
 way.
 And Wolfram, in the ghastly torch-
 light, saw
 The white face of the Princess turned
 to his,
 And for a space their eyes met; then
 she raised
 One hand towards Heaven, and smiled
 as who should say,
 "O friend, I journey unto God; fare-
 well!"
 But he could answer nothing; for his
 eyes
 Were blinded by his tears, and through
 his tears
 Dimly, as in a dream, he saw her
 borne
 Up the broad granite steps that wind
 within
 The palace; and his inner eye, en-
 tranced,
 Saw in a vision four great Angels
 stand,
 Expectant of her spirit, at the foot
 Of flights of blinding brilliancy of
 stairs
 Innumerable, that through the riven
 skies
 Scaled to the City of the Saints of God.
 Then, when thick night fell on his
 soul, and all
 The vision fled, he solitary stood
 A crazéd man within the castle-court;
 Whence issuing, with wild eyes and
 wandering gait
 He through the darkness, groaning,
 passed away.
 All that lone night, along the haunted
 hills,
 By dizzy brinks of mountain preci-
 pices,

He fled, aimless as an unused wind
 That wastes itself about a wilderness.
 Sometimes from low-browed caves, and
 hollow crofts,
 Under the hanging woods, there came
 and went
 A voice of wail upon the midnight air,
 As of a lost soul mourning; and the
 voice
 Was still the voice of his remembered
 friend.
 Sometimes (so fancy mocked the fears
 she bred!)
 He heard along the lone and eery land
 Low demon laughters; and a sullen
 strain
 Of horror swelled upon the breeze;
 and sounds
 Of wizard dance, with shawm and tim-
 brel, flew
 Ever betwixt waste air and wandering
 cloud
 O'er pathless peaks. Then, in the dis-
 tance tolled,
 Or seemed to toll, a knell: the breezes
 dropped:
 And, in the sudden pause, that pass-
 ing 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 uncared
 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 stran-
 ger 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 twilight
 fell,
 When, over scarred and weather-
 wounded walls,
 Sharp-jaggéd mountain cones, and tan-
 gled quicks,
 Eve's spirit, settling, laid the land to
 sleep
 In skyey 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
 human 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 blazing
 star
 That moves and mounts between the
 Lyre and Crown,

Tannhäuser shone; ere sin came, and
 with sin
 Sorrow. And now if yet Tannhäuser
 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 mystery
 Of life, and death, and love that will
 not die,
 He wandered forth, incurious of the
 way;
 Which took the wont of other days, and
 wound
 Along the valley. Now the nodding
 star
 Of even, and the deep, the dewy hour
 Held 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 lone-
 ly air;
 And, seeing, yet believed not that he
 saw,
 But, nearer moving, saw indeed hard
 by,
 Dark in the darkness of a neighboring
 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 pilgrimage
 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 gesture,
 "Hence!

Whate'er I am, it skills not. Thee I
 know

Full well, Sir Wolfram of the Willow-
 brook,

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 Wolfram,
 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 morselled
 crags,

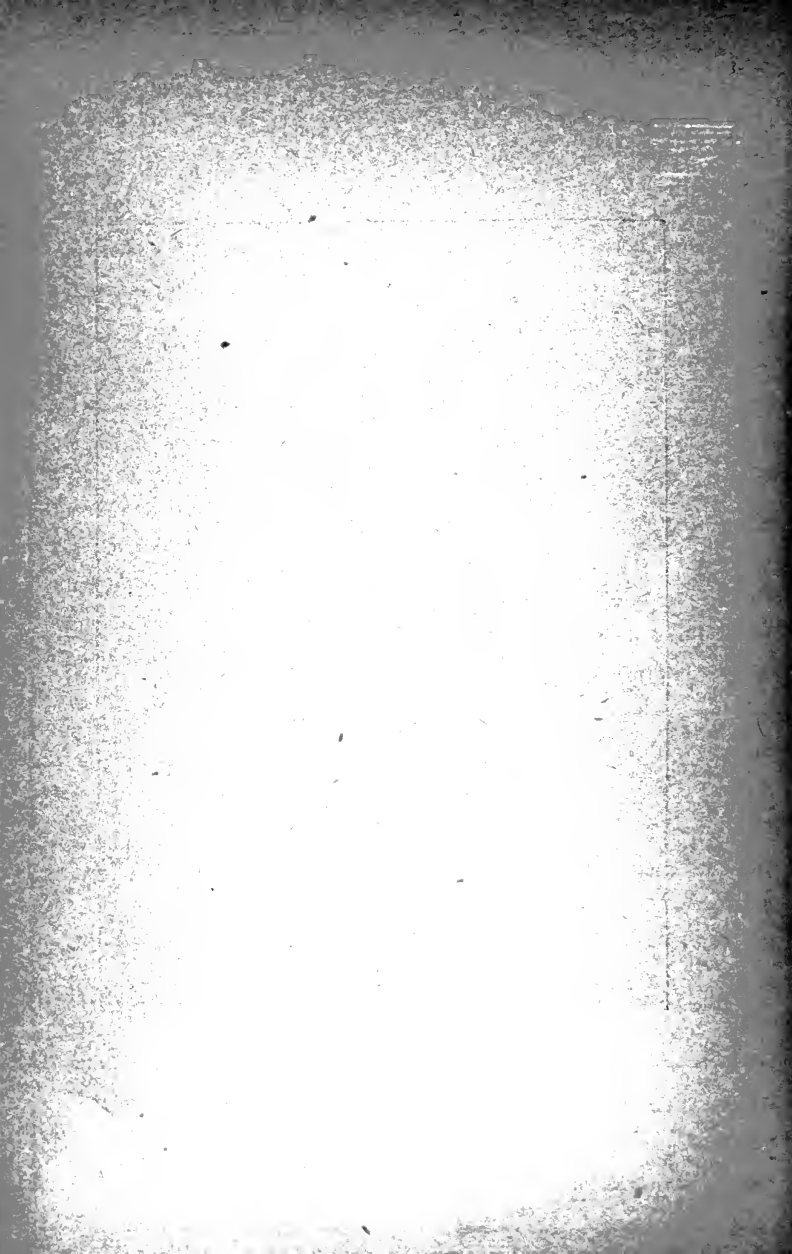
Like a dismantled ruin. And Wolfram
 said,

"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 spectro 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 anywhere?
Whose way of life is like the crumbled
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 sacred Hope back to finding a
resting-place

Even in the jaws of Death. I do ad-
jure 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 des-
olation,

Some light of purer purpose; since I
deem

Not void of purpose hast thou sought
these paths

That range among the places of the
past;

And I will make defeat of Grief with
such

True fellowship of tears as shall dis-
arm

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."

Whereat Tannhäuser, turning tearless
eyes

On Wolfram, murmured mournfully,
"If tears

Fiery as those from fallen seraphs dis-
tilled,

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 be-
hold —

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 value-
less,

To me has come, with knowledge of
my loss,

Fealty 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 traveled, is shivered and
diffused,

Sank, scattered into spray of wasteful
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 unde-
terred

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, Wol-
fram, "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 himself
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. Remember
this:

That when, in the 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 themselves
within,

And ate and drank, and slept their
sleep, all night,

I, 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 drooping 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, forlorn
I lay

Bruised, broken, bleeding, all my gar-
ments torn,

And all my spirit stricken with remorse,
Prostrate beneath the great cathedral
stairs.

So the dawn found me. From a hun-
dred 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 cardinals,
 In all his pomp the sovran Pontiff
 stood
 Before me in the centre of my hopes;
 Which trembled round him into glor-
 ious shapes,
 Golden, as clouds that ring the risen
 sun.
 And all the people, all the pilgrims,
 fell
 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
 Shrieveringly back; crying, 'O holy,
 and high,
 And terrible, that hast the keys of
 heaven!
 Thou that dost bind and dost unloose,
 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 smouldered 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 Enchantress
 lent,
 To drain damnation from her reeking
 cup?
 Then know that sooner from the
 withered staff
 That in my hand I hold green leaves
 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 within
 Darkness: and from that hour by moon
 or sun
 Darkness unutterable as of death
 Where'er I walk. But death himself is
 near!
 O, might I once more see her, unseen;
 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, a 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, tear-
 ful, stood
 Tannhäuser, whilst his melancholy
 thoughts,
 From following up far off a waning
 hope,
 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?

Seëst thou not the lovely floating
forms?

O fair, and fairer far than fancy fash-
ioned!

O sweet the sweetness of the songs
they sing!

*For thee, . . . they sing . . . the god-
dess 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 delayed:
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 madmam!" Wolfram
cried, "yet cram

Thy cheated ears, nor chase with credu-
lous 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 intercessory Saint while now
For thee she sues about the Throne of
Thrones,

Beyond the stars, our star, Elizabeth!

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 murdered
—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!

Yet make one sign thou dost repent
the past,

One word, but one! to say thou hast
 abhorred
 That false she-devil that, with her
 damnéd 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 then 'Peace!' and trust the
 hope I hold
 Against all desperate odds, and deem
 the 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 my-
 self.
 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 Au-
 rorean East
 The ruddy sun, uprising sharply smote
 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 whitethorn glistened from the
 wakening glen:
 O'er golden gravel danced the dawning
 rills:
 All the delighted leaves by copse and
 glade
 Gambolled; and breezy bleatings came
 from flocks
 Far off in pleasant pastures fed with
 dew.
 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 narrow
 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 of 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 Elizabeth,
 These, as the sad possession nearer
 wound,
 And nearer, trampling bare the feath-
 ery 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 crownéd 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

Flat on the bier of love—his bourn at last!

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 eld,

That sang to stun with sound the lark
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, “Behold
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 stark 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,

Tell the High Vicar of the Fold of Christ

How that lost sheep his rescuing hand
would reach,

Although by thee unfound, is found
indeed,

And in the Shepherd's bosom lies in
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
boughs 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, men
heard

A noise of rustling wings, and at the
dawn

They found the hermit parted to his
peace.

The place is yet. The youngest pilgrim
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 lingering 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 slumbersome shell,
Brimmed with divinist draughts of melody,
Nor silence under dreamful canopies,
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 thankful 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
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 forevermore
 at war,
 Vext not alone by hankering wild re-
 grets,
 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 warning
 urged
 Up all the hills — small time to pause
 and plan !
 Counsel is weak : and much remains
 to do,
 That Agamemnon, and, if else remain
 Of that enduring band who sailed for
 Troy
 Ten years ago (and some sailed Lethe-
 ward),
 Find us not unprepared for their re-
 turn.

But—hark! I hear the tread of
 nimble feet
 That sound 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 Report,
 Sounding, oblique, like Loxian oracles,
 Tells double-tongued (and with the
 self-same voice !)
 To some new gladness, new despair to
 some.

II. CHORUS AND CLYTEMNESTRA.

CHORUS.

O dearest Lady, daughter of Tyndarus !
 With purple flowers we come, and of-
 ferings —
 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 Iliion,
 Wheeled above the dusky circle

Of the hills from lighted Ida,
 For now (Troy lying extinguisht
 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 Herē,
 Or the great Lycæan 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 wan-
 dering gnat
 Sing through the silent chambers, while
 Alarm,
 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, be-
hold!

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 vigorous
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,

Who overlook the world's eternal walls,
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 armament,

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 armament !

As though Olympus in her womb

No longer did entomb

The greatness of a bygone world —

Gods and godlike men —

But cast 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 treacheries ;
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 forbid-

ings,
And oppress by unknown terrors
Lest, in the light of so much gladness,
Rise the shadow of ancient wrong.
O 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 ?
Wherefore comes this doubt to grieve
me ?

O, may no Divine Envy
Follow home the Argive army,
Being vext 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 certain
truth,
By this perchance through green
Saronic rocks
Those black ships glide . . . per-
chance . . . Well, what's to
fear ?

'T were 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 re-
turn
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 Palace
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 sepul-
chre !—
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 inno-
cent !
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 without
 pain!
 But I, that languish for repose, must
 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 Agamemnon, 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 falling
 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 tender-
 ness
 Quivered in these salt eyes, had one
 said then

"A 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 fol-
 low yet.
 How thou art hackt 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 in-
 most hide.
 He must have stood to it well! O, he
 was cast
 I' the mould of Titans; a magnificent
 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 Eumen-
 ides
 Do prompt our musing moods with
 wicked hints,
 And lash us for our crimes ere we com-
 mit 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 husband'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 prores 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 mouth: that some re-
vered old man,

Winning to this the eyes of our hot
youth,

Might say, "T was here, and here —
this dent, and that —

On such, and such a field (which we
remember)

That Agamemnon, in the great old
time,

Held up the battle."

Now lie there, and rust!

Thy uses all have end. Thy master's
home

Should harbor none but friends.

O triple brass,

Iron, and oak! the blows of blunder-
ing 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 cumbrous
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 Ca-
pacity

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 drip-
ping stars,

Hearing the hungry storm boom baf-
fled, by.

Ægisthus! . . . hark! . . . Ægisthus!
. . . there . . . Ægisthus!

I would to all the Gods I knew him
safe!

Who comes this way, guiding his rac-
ing 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
 Growing white with flocks of sails,
 and, toward the west
 The sloped horizon teems with rising
 beaks.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The people know this?

HERALD.

Heard you not the noise?
 For as 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! 't is not thy mas-
 ter—

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 brood-
 ing 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 years,—
 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 querul-
 ous 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 do, 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 hus-
 band's house.

Also, I pray you, summon to our side
 Our cousin, Ægisthus. We would

speak with him.

We would that our own lips should be
 the first

To break these tidings to him; so ob-
 taining

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 statutes of
the Gods
Are not so godlike. She has Herè'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. 'T is but a leap
in life.

There's fate in this. Why is he here
so soon?

The sight of whose adhorred eyes will
add

Whatever lacks of strength to this re-
solve.

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 absolve?

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

Throned 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 Ilion: 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 agony,
Frenzied shout, and frantic cry,
For Greek and Trojan storing.
When, the spear in the onset being
shivered,
The reeling ranks were rolled together
Like mad waves mingling in windy
weather,
Dasht 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 terrible
quivered.

O Love! Love! Love! How terrible
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 transfuse
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 garments
Are poisoned, like that robe of agonies
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 seasons'
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 retribution.
For my father, at last returning,
In great power, being greatly injured,
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 yourself.

ELECTRA.

Yet Justice oftimes 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 tem-
pest blows.
That face is pale, — those brows are
dark . . . ah!

VII. ÆGISTHUS. CLYTEMNES-
TRA.

ÆGISTHUS.

Agamemnon —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

My husband . . . well?

ÆGISTHUS.

(Whom may the great God 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 smil-
ing'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 lov-
ing 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-ber-
ries,
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 resolve?
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 must be done shall shut and
shrivel up
All quiet thoughts, and quiet preclude
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 innocent
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 waiting
world,
And turn to the 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?

EGISTHUS.

Moreover, though we triumph in the act

(And we may fail, and fall) we shall go down

Covered with this reproach into the tomb,

Haunted 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—is 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, than 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.

EGISTHUS.

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 pluckt together. We have proved both. Say,

Was it not worth the bleeding hands they left us

To have won such flowers? And if 't were 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?—'t is much,—'t is 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!")
 Oftimes I've mused,— "My life shall
 be my own,
 To make it what I will." It is their
 fault
 (I thought) who miss the true delights.
 I thought
 Men might have saved themselves :
 they flung away,
 Too easily abasht, 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 something
 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 un-
 drained goblet,
 Cursed before all the Gods his sudden
 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 exempt-
 ing
 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
 year
 We seek less and go further to obtain
 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 cher-
 isht 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 otherwise,
 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!

EGISTHUS.

But one course now is left.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And that is —

EGISTHUS.

Flight.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Coward!

EGISTHUS.

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.

EGISTHUS.

Nay, wiser than I was.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And you will leave me?

EGISTHUS.

Not if you will come.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This was the Atlas of the world I
built!

EGISTHUS.

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 neighboring
king

Will harbor Agamemnon's enemy.

Reflect on Troy; her ashes smoulder
yet.

EGISTHUS.

Her words compel me with their awful
truth.

For so would vengeance hound the
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?

EGISTHUS.

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 the 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 forestall
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.

Did 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 grap-
ple 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 demigod

There's but one difference men regard
—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 god-
like 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 careless
helpmate

In the old time! we shared its pleasant
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, a
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 inseparate.
 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.

But rather worship.

No,

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
 Tosway 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 demi-
 god?

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 crown-
 less schemer,
 Whose life my love makes royal,
 clothes in purple,
 Establishes in state, without me, an-
 swer 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 ourselves
 What shall avail us now? Without my
 love

What rests for you but universal hate,
 And Agamemnon's sword? Ah, no—
 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 Aphroditë's
 self
 Stept zoned and sandalled from the
 Olympian Feast
 Or first revealed among the pink sea-
 foam.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Whate'er I am, be sure that I am that

Which thou hast made me,—nothing
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 igo-
nant 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! no-
thing 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 price-
less 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;

Your large-eyes 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 con-
fer,

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.

ÆGISTHUS.

A time in travail with some great dis-
tress.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Nay, rather safety for the rest of time,
O love! O hate!

ELECTRA.

O vengeance!

ÆGISTHUS.

O wild chance
If favoring fate —

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Despair is more than fate.

CHORUS.

Io! Io! The King is on his march.

ÆGISTHUS.

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 ap-
pointed 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,
Lest the event, when it is due, fall
foul.
Of unpropitious natures.

ÆGISTHUS.

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 froward 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 — Ægis-
thus? . . . 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 clanging
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 master's
will,

And be a slave, though bred in palaces,
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 dews 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, filters

And falls: 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.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O casual argument! Who gave the
Greeks

Such bloody claim upon a virgin's
life?

Shall the pure bleed to purge im-
purity?

A hundred Helens were not worth
that death!

What! had the manhood of combined
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 leagued
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 anyone among you all,
If any be a mother, bear with me!

She was my earliest born, my best be-
loved.

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 neigh-
ing 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 taugth, from inarticulate
sounds,

The little, lisping 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, in-
fant 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,
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 town of
Dis!

Never to look upon the blessed sun—

CHORUS.

Ai! ai! alinon! 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 wel-
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 opprest.
Windless, cut off from the destined
way,—

Dark shrouds, distinct against the
lurid lull,—

Dark ropes hung useless, loose, from
mast to hull,—

The blackships lay abreast.
Not any cloud would cross the brood-
ing skies.

The distant sea boomed faintly. Noth-
ing more.

They walked about upon the yellow
shore;

Or, lying listless, huddled groups
supine,

With faces turned toward the flat sea-
pine,

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. Nothing
more.

The tall masts stood upright;

And not a sail above the burnished
prores;

The languid sea, like one outwearied
quite,

Shrank, dying inward to hollow shores,
And breathless harbors, under sandy
bars;

And, one by one, down tracts of quiv-
ering blue,

The singed and sultry stars
Looked from the inmost heaven, far,
faint, and few,

While, all below, the sick and steam-
ing brine

The spilled-out sunset did incarnadine.
 At last one broke the silence; 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 has 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, tenderly
 Lift her upon the lurid altar-stone.
 There was no hope in thy face; each eye
 Swam 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 crimson 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
 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 increased.
 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 queer 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 lillies 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-morrow
 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 pained, 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 Atridæ, famed in ancient song?

CHORUS.

Not without truth you name the neigh-
 borhood,
 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,

Who reigns o'er windy Ceta, 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 men in the crowd, I
think.

SEMI-CHORUS.

But who is this, that with such scorn-
ful brows,
And looks averted, walks among the
rest?

SEMI-CHORUS.
I know not, but some Phrygian woman,
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 over 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 bit-
ter moods.

SEMI-CHORUS.
Peace, here they come!

CHORUS.
Io! Io! The King!

XII. AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNE-
STRA, ÆGISTHUS, ELECTRA,
ORESTES, CASSANDRA, a Pho-
cian, Chorus, Semi-Chorus, and others
in the procession.

CLYTEMNESTRA.
O blazing sun, that in thy skyey tower
Pausest to see one kingly as thyself,
Lend all thy brightest beams to light
his head,

And gild our gladness! Friends, be-
hold the King!
Now 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 succeed
to waves,
When Northern blasts blow white the
Cretan main,—
Knowing that thou, far off, from toil
to toil
Climbedst, uncertain. Unto such an
one
His children, and young offspring of
the house
Are as a field, which he, the husband-
man,
Owing far off, does only look upon
At seedtime once, nor then till harvest
comes;
And his sad wife must wet with night-
ly 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 sepa-
rate sphere
The Gods allot. To me the sounding
camp,
Steeds, and the oaken spear; to you
the hearth,
Children, and household duties of the
loom.
'T is man's to win an honorable name;
Woman's to keep it honorable still.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

(O beast! O weakness of this woman-
hood!
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 pas-
sion — 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 in-
tend.
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 within? where all is ordered
fair
Befitting state: cool chambers, marble-
floored
Or piled with blazing carpets, scented
rare
With the sweet spirit of each odorous
gum
In dim, delicious, amorous mists about
The purple-paven, silver-sided bath,
Deep, flashing, pure.

AGAMEMNON.
Look to your 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. ÆGIS-
THUS.

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
Meeke, 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 beside
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.
God grant she win.

XIV. CHORUS. SEMI-CHORUS.
CASSANDRA.

CHORUS.
O thou that dost with globed 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 vexed 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 dia-
mond 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 hates 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 Gnosshian, 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 sadness
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 ap-
pears.

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 bird ! that mourns her per-
ished form,
And leans her breast against a thorn,
all night.

CASSANDRA.

The bull is in the shambles.

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 bewil-
derment ?

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 Acheron,
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, oracular
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 teem
With apprehension. O declare
What hidden thing doth Fate prepare,
What hidden, horrible thing doth Fate
prepare ?

For of some hidden grief my heart
seems half aware.

XV. CLYTEMNESTRA. CASSAN-
DRA. 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 comprehend not, men
abhor.

He has a wavering nature, easily
Unpoised ; and trembling ever on ex-
tremes.

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 receives,
Nor ever all exhausted one that gives.
I think I love him more, that I resem-
ble
So little aught that pleases me in him.
Perchance, if I dared question this
dark heart,
'T is 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,
swort, and crown.
For who would live, but to be loved by
some one?
Be fair, but to give beauty to another?
Or wise, but to instruct some sweet
desire?
Or strong, but that thereby love may
rejoice?
Or who for crime's sake would be crimi-
nal?
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,
Freighted 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 lose . . . 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.
'T were 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 re-
proach.

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.

Pah! 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 doomed House and race!
O toilsome, toilsome horsemanship
Of Pelops; that ill omen brought to us!
For since the drowned 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 Tantalus.
Not only upon sacred leaves of old,
Preserved in many a guarded, mystic
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, melancholy
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 be,
Ever since the world began!

O woman, woman, of what other 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 vext with angey 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:
Thy 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 arched 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. ÆGISTHUS.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Break off, break off! It seems I hear
a cry.

CHORUS.

Surely one called within the house.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Stand by.

CHORUS.

The Prophetress is troubled. Look,
her eye
Rolls fearfully.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Now all is husht 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! Argives!
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.
Too 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 contrived 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.

Heslipped, 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 the
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 shall 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 gar-
rulous

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 trag-
edy

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 de-
lay.

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 bet-
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 eves,
(Ah me!) and brooded on all serious
themes

Of sweet, and high, and beautiful, and
good,

That throng the ancient years. Alcme-
na'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 Iliion,
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 Isth-
mian plain,
Norsacred 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. ÆGIS-
THUS.

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,
And sits apart with grief. O, can it
be
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 of
Greece!
In whose strong bulwarks all men saw,

Garnered on the lap of law,
For dearth or danger, spears of war,
And harvest 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 defence!
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
Will 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 staggers,
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 re-
ply!

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, blaspheming
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,
It should not help thee to a hero's
heart.

CHORUS.

O peace, Electra, but for pity's sake!
Heap not his madness to such danger-
ous 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 Eccyclema the palace
is thrown open, and discovers CLYTEM-
NESTRA standing over the body of AGAMEM-
NON.]*

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 sacri-
ficed,
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 other-
where,
Pure in itself, as when, in light, it left
The bosom of Olympus, to its end.
In this cold heart the wrong of all
the 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 Fate's 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 es-
caped.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Sufficient for the future be that
thought.
What's done is well done. What's un-
done—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 wonder-
ing world.
If but you err not here—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thee pale-eyed groups!
See how they huddle shuddering, and
stand round;
As when some mighty beast, the brin-
dled lord
Of the rough woodside, sends his wild
death-roar
Up the shrill caves, the meaner den-
izens
Of ancient woods, shy deer, and timor-
ous 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 will we reign
sublime,
And set our foot upon the neck of For-
tune!
And, for the rest—O, much remains!
—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 results
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 AGAMEMNON.)

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 confi-
dence.
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,
But answer love with scorn, why
then—

ELECTRA.

—What then?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Safe silence. And permission to for-
get.

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 hooked car, and barbed spear;
And all war's adamantine 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,—
These are bright as his glories are,—
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, 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 leadest home
To the great Whither which has no
Again!
Impartially 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 tha' 'aven,
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 outweighs
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! 't was 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 horse 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! how'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.

'T is 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 't was 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!

A 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 't was 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!

A life's libation lifted up, from her proud lip she dashed untasted:
 There 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 within
 my head:

And drunken sunlights reeling through the leaves: above, the burnisht 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 crusht up: I could have tost
 The crumpled riddle from me, and laughèd 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 confident
 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, 't were 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! . . . 't was 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. 'T is 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 sparrows 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:
I see the end of all: I feel hope, awe, no language can reveal.

Forgive me, Lord, if over much 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 poor immortal lays! great pæans of perennial Truth!
A large 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 . . . Hot 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.

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:
 A reef of rock wedged the water in
 twain,
 And a stout stone tower stood square
 to the main.
 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 flow-
 ers that were

Pining and pale in their comfortless
 bowers,
 Dry-bushed with the sharp stubborn
 lavender,
 And paven with disks of the torn sun-
 flowers,
 Which, day by day, were strangled,
 and stripped
 Of their ravelling fringes and brazen
 bosses,
 And the har y mary-buds nipped and
 ripped
 Into shreds for the beetles that lurked
 in the mosses.
 Here she lived alone, and from year to
 year
 She saw the black belt of the ocean ap-
 pear
 At her casement each morn as she
 rose; and each morn
 Her eye fell first on the bare black
 thorn.
 This was all: nothing more: or some-
 times on the shore
 The fishermen sang when the fishing
 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,
 Staggered back from the fine line of
 white light again,
 And dropped down to another world
 silently.
 Then she breathed freer. With sick-
 ening 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 crawling
 back
 Hissing, as o'er the wet pebbles he
 dragged
 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;
 For 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 breezy 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, "cometh
 blithe and bold;
 And the crocus is lit for her wel-
 coming;
 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. Catharine 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 weather-
 worn Warden.
 Sometimes she sat 'twixt the mildewy
 beds
 Of the sea-singed flowers in the Pleas-
 ance 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 coiléd memory, numb and
 cold,
 That slept in her heart like a dreaming
 snake,
 Drowsily lift itself fold by fold,
 And gnaw and gnaw hungrily, half
 awake.
 Sometimes she looked from the win-
 dow 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 leprous 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 spiked, 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 breath-
 lessly
 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 sound, 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, crystal-
 line,
 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 lillies 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 lilly 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 be-
tween 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 jew-
elry,

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 go-
geous 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 heaped spots which a bright snake
hath left,

Or that dark house, the blind worm's
lair,

When the star-winged 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,
 Which the Arimathæan, so it was writ,
 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 ('t was avouched) from the
 dusk diadems
 And mighty rings of those Wise Kings
 That evermore sleep 'mid the marble
 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 afflic-
 tion
 As one that had looked on the Cruci-
 fixation.

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 smoul-
 dering 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
 sky rained,
 And the land was darkened by slow
 degrees.
 But oft, in the low West, the day
 Smouldering sent up a sudden flame
 Along the dreary waste of gray,
 As though in that red legion 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 cold —
From the halls below where the Min-
strel 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 undertone,
Like a strong man using mild language
to one
That is weaker, because he is sure of
his strength.

But once — and it was at the fall of the
day,
When she, if she closed her eyes, did
seem

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 plank-
ing

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
below,

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
growing after;

A lowing of cattle along the wet sands;
And a plashing of hoofs on the slip-
pery rafter,

As the long-tailed black-maned horses,
each

Went over the bridge from the gray
s: a-beach.

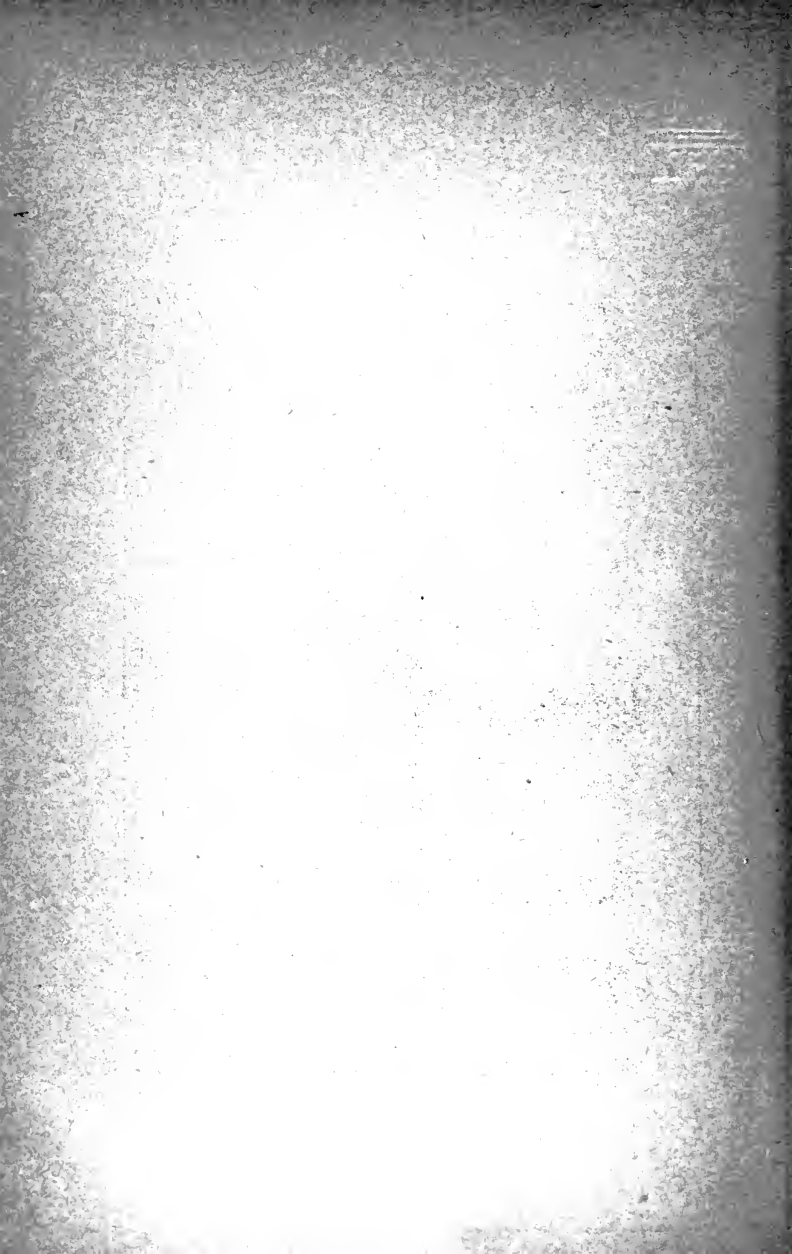
Then quoth the grim Earl, “fetch me
a stoop!”

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 cracking 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 arch-
 ways 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 grau-
 some 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 amain,
 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 fearful
 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's 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 Seneschal 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 towards 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 be-deviled.
 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 shock-haired Pages too
 Sung and swilled as they used to do.
 And the grooms and the squires gamed and swore
 And quarrelled again as they quarrelled 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 dikes and delves:
 And the bleared-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 singers,
 With lingering looks, and clasped
 fingers:
 And the day reluctantly turned to his
 rest,
 Like some untold life, that leaves ex-
 prest
 But the half of its hungering love ere
 it close:
 So he went sadly toward his repose
 Deep in the heart of the slumberous
 waves
 Kindled far off in the desolate West.
 And the breeze sprang up in the cool
 sea-caves,
 The castles stood with its courts in
 shade,
 And all its toothéd 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 raggedly,
 And over the gray stone cross forlorn,
 And on to that one man musing there
 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 mountain
and glen,
Wandering, wandering the wide world
over,
Sweetest of singers, yet saddest of men,
His soul's lost Lady in vain to discover.
Most fair and most frail of the
daughters of men,
O blest and O curst, the man that
should love her!
Who has not loved? and who has not
lost?
Wherever he wander, the wide world
over,
Singing 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 on
hand?
Have you seen some rose lie on the
snow?
Or a summer bird in a winter land?
Or a lilly 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 't will 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 mu-
sic 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.
There ripen the olive and the tulip
tree,
And in the sun broadens the green
prickly pear;
And the bright galingales 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 lizards
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
 Crost the bleak ocean. O, nevermore, 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 that 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 minstrel sung.

Flusht was each cheek, and each fixt eye glistened,

And husht 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 thunder?
 For a light is all round the lurid hall

That reddens and reddens the windows
 all,

And far away you may hear the fall
 As of rafter and boulder 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 yonder?

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 vanishing
 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 't was all
 blackness, and then
 The quick forkéd 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 beasts
 might give vent to
 When the lean dogs are on him, and
 forth with that roar
 Of desolate wrath, the life is sent 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 masts 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 disap-
 pear.

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 base-
 ment
 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 dis-
 tinguished,
 When a sound like the shriek of an ag-
 onized woman

Made him shudder, and lo, all the
 vision was gone!
 Ceiling and floor had fallen through,
 In a glut of vomited flame extin-
 guished;
 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 ex-
 pire
 By steel, in the front of victorious
 slaughter,
 The blithe battle about him, and com-
 rades 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 shuddering
 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,
 With the silver hair and the golden
 tongue,
 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:
 Going, and coming, and ever returning
 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 thickening
 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 was 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 merit!
 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 than scorn.
 Fingered moth, and bloomless peach!
 Gathered rose without a thorn,
 Set to flee in all men's reach!

I am clothed with her disgrace.
 O her shame is made my own!
 O I reel from my high place!
 All belief is overthrown.
 What! This whirligig of lace,
 This 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 her 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-morrow I shall see
How the leaves their green silk 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,
'T is scarce lonelier than 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 yon 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 palter with relief.
Grief is greater than them all!

They were pedants who could speak.

Grander souls have past unheard:

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 wretchedness

Which I suffer. Let it be.

Would that I could love the 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. Depart.

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 words 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 evening
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; whose 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 briar, reap the thorn.

Remember every man He made
 Is different: has some deed to do,
 Some work to work. Be undismayed,
 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 gouts:
 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 breathes 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 cinquoils and the
 poppies;
 We know not what they mean. We are
 Degenerate copyists of copies.

We go to Nature, not 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 recognize
 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 inform.

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 devo-
 tion,

By the mere act of being fair
Sets countless laws of life in motion;

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 Mid-
dle-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 silver-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
(By God withdrawn) is rolled away,
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,
Our knowledge ends where it began.

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 bares here,
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 latticé 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? . . . Dreaming? . . .
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 aching.
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 heaven:
And we spoke not:—pausing pensive
Till the thunder-cloud was riven,

And the black wood whitened under,
And the storm began to roll,
And the love layed up like thunder
Burst at once upon my soul.

There! . . . the moon is just in cres-
cent
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 weather
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 sorrow.

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 mean.

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 tell 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, will 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-blos-
som,
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."

'T was 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 vanished 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 powers;
 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.

In 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, 't is 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.
 'T is 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 feelings '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 't is 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 strength-
en!

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 claim more.

Strange! these crowds whose instincts
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 fight 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
('T is 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 foretell?

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 hers 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 Pleasure,
 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! Lifespeeds
 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.
 'T was 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 care 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 yon dull and dying ember
Glares against the whitewasht 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! 't was 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 't was his . . . Among the willows
How the water seems to glide!

Past the woods, the farms, the towers,
It seems gliding, gliding through.
*"Dearest, see, these young June-flowers,
I have plucked 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 drawing
Near me—

THE EARL.

God, thy punishment!

Dare I judge her?—

GERTRUDE.

O, believe me,
'T was a dream, a hideous dream,
And I wake now. Do not leave me.
I am dying. All things seem

Falling 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 lonely 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.

Look 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 look, 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, "forgive,"
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 all.

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 sin remembered 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

Something past me . . . Husband,
hark!

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
From my bosom. See, 't is 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
That those stars were twice as bright!

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!

I have sinned—and—nay, yet hear me,
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;

Anguishe, the King of Ireland; the
Haut Prince,

Sir Galahault; the King o' the Hun-
dred 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 Gala-
had

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 repent-
eth me.

For never hath been seen for seven
years,

No, not since Galahad, at Whitsun-
tide,

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 Asto-
lat

On this side Camelot.

Now men said the Queen
Tarried behind because of Launcelot,

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 languor-
ous 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 can-
not 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 whereof 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 a
proud grief,

Vexed to be vexed. With love and anger
moved.

Love touched with scorn, and anger
pierced with love.

About her, all unheeded, her long hair
Loosed its warm, yellow, waving love-
liness,

And o'er her bare and shining shoulder
cold

Fell floating free. Upon one full white
arm,

To which the amorous purple coverlet
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 clinging
bee,

Bowed down toward him all her glow-
ing face,

While in 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 amont 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
 The river, smitten with a waning light,
 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 himself
 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 overflow
 Upon weak language, "Now indeed,"
 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 Launcelot, 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
 The staff and burgonet of thy fair fame.
 Nor mind you, Madam, how in Surluse
 once,
 When all the estates were met, and no-
 ble judges,
 Armed clean with shields, set round to
 keep the right,
 Before you sitting throned with Gala-
 hault
 In great array, on fair green quilts of
 samite,
 Rich, ancient, fringed with gold, seven
 summer days,
 And all before the Earls of Northgalies,
 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 Lamorack,
 And 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 Guene-
 vere,
 And no true knight but Launcelot of
 the Lake!'"

Thus he, transported by the thought
 of days
 And deeds that, like the mournful mar-
 tial sounds

<p>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 super- bly still.</p> <p>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 rip- pling 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 distant drawn Came back, when first, a boy at Arthur's court, He paused abasht before the youthful Queen. And, feeling now her long imploring gaze Holding him in its sorrow, when he marked How changed her state, and all unlike to her, The most renownéd beauty of the time, And pearl of chivalry, for whom him- self 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 haughty neck to a quick kiss.</p>	<p>And there was silence. Silently the West Grew red and redder, and the day de- clined.</p> <p>As o'er the hungry heart of some deep sea, That swells against the planets and the moon With sad continual strife and vain un- rest, In silence rise and roll the laboring clouds That bind the thunder, o'er the heav- ing 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 showers: and love Rose through the broken storm: and with a cry 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, litting 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, Laun- celot! 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 for- lorn, 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.</p>
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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 brier 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,

The gardens and the places of our
love,

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 weep-
ing 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 unjust,
Yet must I love thee in despite of

pain,
Thou peerless Queen of perfect love!

Thou star
That draw'st all tides! Thou goddess
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,

Beloved. Forget me not when I am
far,

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 reconcilment, 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 be-
gan 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 en-
vious 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 amorous
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 distant
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.
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 cirlet trembling clear,

Grew large and bright, and in the silver
mounds,
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 built 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 gather-
ed
Are in the vase; the lute—the chair—
And all things—just as then they were!

Except the jasmins,—those are with-
ered.

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 hear her through the doors:
And then I know that I am dreaming.

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!
'T is 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,
As we have met we shall not meet
again;
Forever, child, forever!

AN EVENING IN TUSCANY.

Look! the sunsets. Now 's the rarest
Hour of all the blessed day.
(Just the hour, love, you look fair-
est!)
Even the snails are out to play.
Cool the breeze mounts, like this Chi-
anti

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!
Stir not—turn not! the warm pleas-
ure
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
Down the long streets, set one think-
ing
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; 't is 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, un beholden:

Some white, some crimson, others
Purple blackening to the heart.
From the deep wheat-sea, which smoth-
ers
Their bright globes up, how they
start!

And the small wild pinks from tender
Feather-grasses peep at us:
While above them burns, on slender
Stems, the red gladiolus:

And the grapes are green: this season
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 Poderé—
 With the balmy 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 mean-
 ing
 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 thinking?
 There! our nightingale begins—
 Now a rising note—now sinking
 Back in little broken rings

Of warm 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 bow-
 ers,
 And burns the blistering leaves.
 Ah, well-a-day!
 Blooms overblow:
 Suns sink away:
 Sweet things decay.

The drunken beetle, roused ere night,
 Breaks blundering from the rotting
 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 jasmin drops
 In mildewed mosses one by one:
 The hollyhocks fall off their tops:
 The lotus-blooms sail white i' the sun:
 The freckled foxglove faints and
 grieves:
 The smooth-paced slumbrous slug
 devours
 The gluey globes of gorgeous flowers,
 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 bowers:
 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 glow-
 ing 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 slum'rous 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
 Of 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
 star-light:

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 flowing,

Twinkles among the silver shells,
 From sluice to sluice of shallow wells;
 Or, down dark pools of purple glow-
 ing,

Sets some forlorn star trembling there
 In his own dim, dreamlike brilliancy.

And I feel the dark sails growing
 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 ringing:
 On the deck I see him stand!

II.

The day is down into his bower:
 In languid lights his feet he steps:
 The flusht sky darkens, low and lower,
 And closes on the glowing deeps.

In creeping 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 meet?
 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
tought with tears,
And all the unslaced 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 thar *gey* 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 unuttered
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 stagnant
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
broidered 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 Joyous-
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 behold
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
infolde thee:
And to-morrow night . . . ah, who can
tell?

As the spirit of some dark lake
Pines at nightfall, wild-awake,
For the approaching consummation
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 the 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 household
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 heroes:
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! farewell!"
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 rivulets:
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 sentinel
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'er-
hung
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 jeweled 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 tourna-
ments;

And rows of glittering eyes above the
Queen

(Like stars in galaxies around the
moon),

That sparkled recognition down below,
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 marish
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 bush-
less 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 surprise,
And took the inert landscape unawares.

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 searchéd 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 unmeasured
 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.
 Green was her kirtle as the emeralde
 is,
 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 warm-
 ly back
 The bounteous outlines of a glowing
 grace,
 For yet outflowed sweet laws of lovli-
 ness.

Then did I feel as one who, much per-
 plext,
 Led by strange legends and the light
 of stars
 Over long regions of the midnight sand
 Beyond the red tract of the Pyramids,
 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 Pere-
 grine;
 With all his feathers puffed for pride,
 and all
 His courage glittering outward in his
 eye;

For he had flown from far, athwart
 strange lands,
 And o'er the light of many a setting
 sun,
 Lured by his love (such sovereignty of
 old
 Had Beauty in all coasts of Christen-
 dom!)
 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, meanwhle,
 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 silver
 twines.

Out of a crumbling castle, on a spike
 Of splintered rock, a mile of change-
 less shade
 Gorged half the landscape. Down a
 dismal dike
 Of black hills the sluiced moonbeams
 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 melancholy
dew.

I plucked blue mugwort, livid man-
drakes, balls
Of blossomed nightshade, heads of
hemlock, long
White grasses, grown in oozy intervals
Of marsh, to make ingredients for a
song:

A song of mourning to embalm the
Past, —
The corpse-cold P. st, — 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 mo-
ment)
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 sometimes,
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 light 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-kings, 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 below:
and flats

Of water: — glaring shallows, where
strange bats

Came and went, and moths flickered.

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 sometimes
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 stair-
way, and
The door closed.

At that moment the moon dipped
Behind a rag of purple vapor, ript
Off a greet 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: be-
cause

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 de-
spair

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 flusht cheek; a
wild white

On her dry lips; an agony of surprisè
Fearfully fair.

The lamp dropped. From my sight

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 vanisht 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 flowers?"

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 't was 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 meant?
 Why, if his own youth were withered,
 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 noonlight?

And why praise my youth for gladness,
 Keeping something in his smile

Which turned all my youth to sadness,
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 crimson: 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 rocked 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, beheld
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 Avalon."

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 winking,
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 lattice:
Wind the red rose in your hair,
And the little white clematis
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 sparkling
eaves,
Why hast thou left far south thy
fairy homes,
To build between these drench'd
April-leaves,
And sing me songs of Spring before
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 fur-
ther follow.
Fly off, vain swallow!

Thou com'st to mock me with remem-
bered 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 deliciously
Along the warm blue hills the day de-
clines:
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 Winter.

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
frore
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 rever-
ent fear,
Seeing thee crowned, do know that
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 glow-
ing citron-glooms?
Or walk with Morning in these dewy
bowers,
'Mid sheav'd 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
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 glim-
mering 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 regions
lose,—
A happy shadow o'er the warm brown
grass,
Falling with falling dews!

Hast thou, like me, some true-love of
thine own,
In fairy lands beyond the utmost seas;
Who there, unsolaced, yearns for thee
alone,
And sings to silent trees?

O tell that woodbird that the Summer
grieves,
And the suns darken and the days
grow cold;
And, tell her, love will fade with fading
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, break-
ing,
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, lean here upon my shoulder,
And look yonder, love, with me:
Now I think that I can see
In the merry market-places
Sudden warmths of sunny 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 plash 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, indeed, 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!

JUDICUM 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 embrace 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 mountains lonely.

"There be great sunsets in the wondrous 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 cataracts;

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: shep-
herd 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 be want-
ing,
Music; and all voluptuous combina-
tions
Of sound, with their melodious pal-
pitations
To charm the ear, the cells of fancy
haunting.

"And in her courts my life shall be
outrolled
As one unfurls some gorgeous tapes-
try,
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 crusht
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 Arcad-
ian fife
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 su-
preme 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 reap-
ers 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 be-
low
I fear to die an exile from men's
homes.

"Though here I see the orient pa-
geants 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 posses-
sion."

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 blackish
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 revel-
ling

And ignorant crowd, that eat the
fruits and die:

And call 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, hold-
ing 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 dark-
ness 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 humanity,
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 hu-
man creature.
Climb, if thou canst, the heights of
thy 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 punishment,
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 Beau-
tiful
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 Aphroditë 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 thankless
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 some one, something: not
thyself, thy 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 identity
Is greatest in the greatness of its kind.

Who serves for gain, a slave, by thank-
less pelf

Is paid: who gives himself is price-
less, free.

I give myself, a man, to God: lo, He
Renders me back a saint unto myself!

NIGHT.

COME to me, not as once thou camest,
Night!

With light and splendor up the gor-
geous 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 waver-
ing 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-gather-
ing tears,

That come between me and the star-
light, shine

From distant melancholy deeps di-
vine,

While day slips downward through a
rosy arc

To other spheres.

SONG.

Flow, freshly flow,
Dark stream, below!

While stars grow light above:

By willow banks, through lonely
downs,

Past terraced walls in silent towns,
And bear me to my love!

Still, as we go,

Blow, gently blow,

Warm 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 trembles o'er my love.

The sunset wanes

From twinkling panes.

Dim, misty myriads move

Down glimmering 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 un-
kind,

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 deserve:
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-fin-
gered Eos kindles the dews

And spurns the salt sea-floors, as-
cending 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 Hyperion
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 sever-
 ed, Hyperionides
 Leaps into his flaming chariot, angrily
 gathers the reins,
 Headlong flings 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
 cast,
 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 disallowed,
 Dasht purpose: which the scornful
 shore-cliffs mocks,
 Even as it sinks; and all its wealth
 bestowed
 In vain, — mere food to feed, perchance,
 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 beheld
 so plain
 Beforehand. When my pictures, borne
 about
 Bologna, to the church doors, led
 their train
 Of kindling faces, turned, as by they go,
 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, desolate
 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 mem-
 ory!
 Besides,—I have done much : and what
 is done
 Is well done. All my heart conceived,
 my hand
 Made fast . . . mild martyr, saint, and
 weeping nun,
 And truncheoned prince, and warrior
 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 purple cloud
 His painted presence.

Flaring August's here,
 September's coming! Summer's broid-
 ered 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 unre-
 proved.
 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 for-
 lorn.
 There should be comfort in this dy-
 ing kiss.
 Let Barbara keep my colors for her-
 self.
 I'm sorry that Lucia went away
 In some unkindness. 'T was a cheer-
 ful 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 Elean-
 ore,
 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 fish-
 ing-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 ?

'T is 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,
't is vain !
Greet Giulio Banzi; greet Antonio;
greet Bartolomeo, kindly when
I'm gone,
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 as earth's gen-
eral 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 hummingsimmers in my
ears,
—Old Summer afternoons ! faint frag-
ments rise
Out of my broken life . . . at times
appears
Madonna-like a moon in mellow skies:
The three Fates with the spindle and
the shears:
The Grand Duke Cosmo with the
Destinies:
St. Margaret with her dragon: fitful
cheers
Along the Via Urbana come and go:
Belogna with her towers ! . . . Then
all grows dim,
And shapes itself anew, softly and
slow,
To cloistered glooms through which
the silver hymn
Eludes the sensitivesilence; whilst be-
low
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
Magnificence, to Guido Reni's tomb,
Which, set in steadfast splendor, I be-
hold.
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; beneath
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 looked 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 oped my eyes, and turned me round, and there, in the light forlorn,
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, look up, and saw hope glow on your face:
Therefore, fair weather be yours, Will, whether it shines or pours,
And, if I can slip 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! 't was the shadow that rested, 't was 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 not 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 the soul.

Something? . . . Ay, something comes back to me . . . Think! that I might
 have been . . . what?

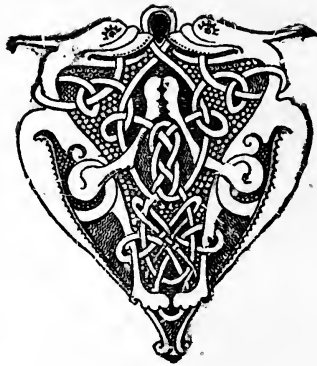
Almost, I fancy at times, what I meant to have been, and am not.
 Where was the fault? Was it strength fell short? And yet (I can speak of
 it now!)

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 banner
 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-complete!
 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 dolphin'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 storm, 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 crimson eve,
 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 breath-
 less 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 blowing 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: 't is life's brief candle burning down. Tears? tears, Will! Why,
This 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 't is 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 vine-yard wall.
Lord! if, in love, though fainting oft, I have tended thy gracious Vine,
O, quench the thirst on the e 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.

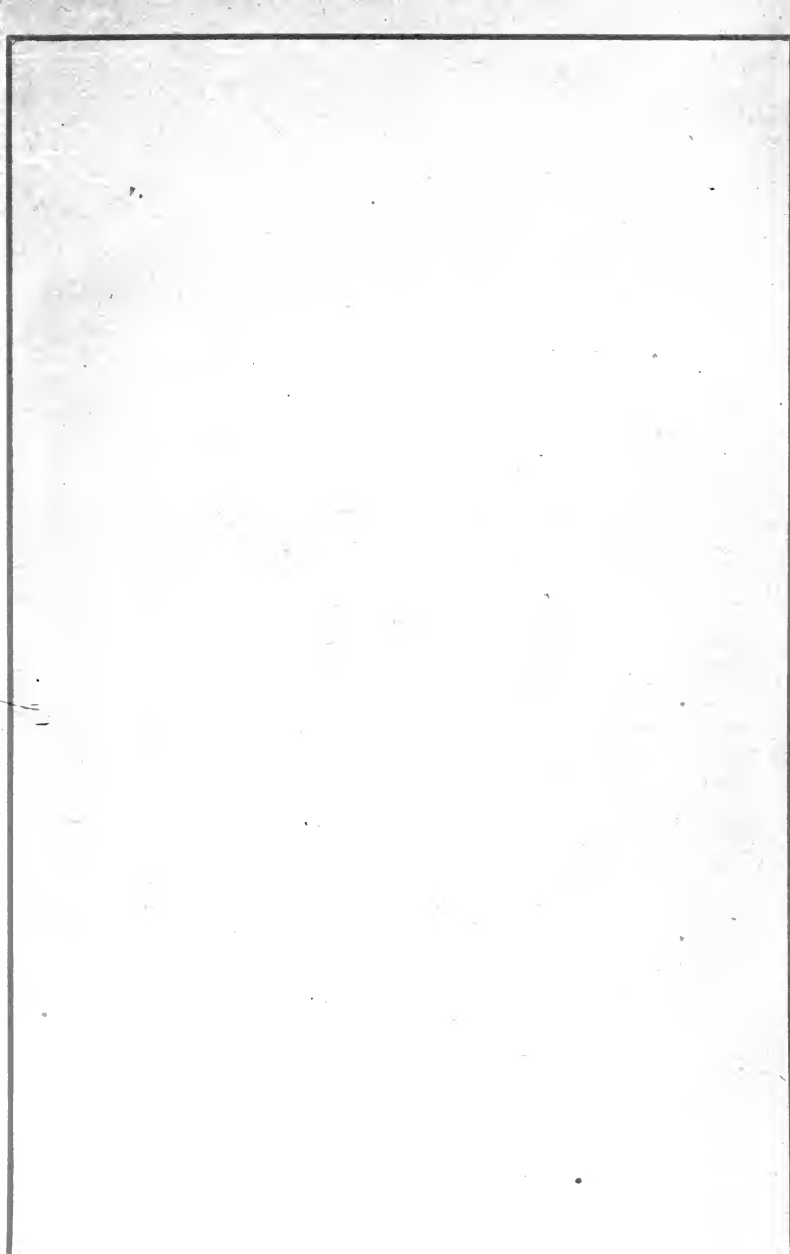


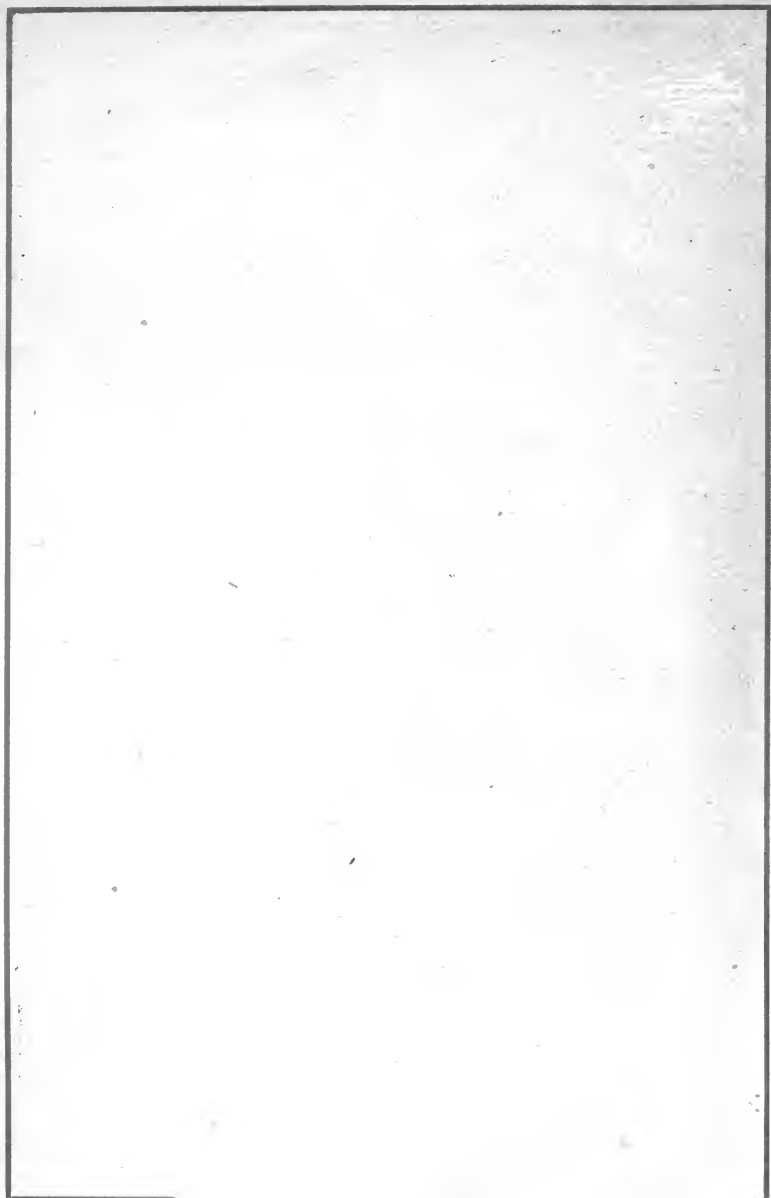
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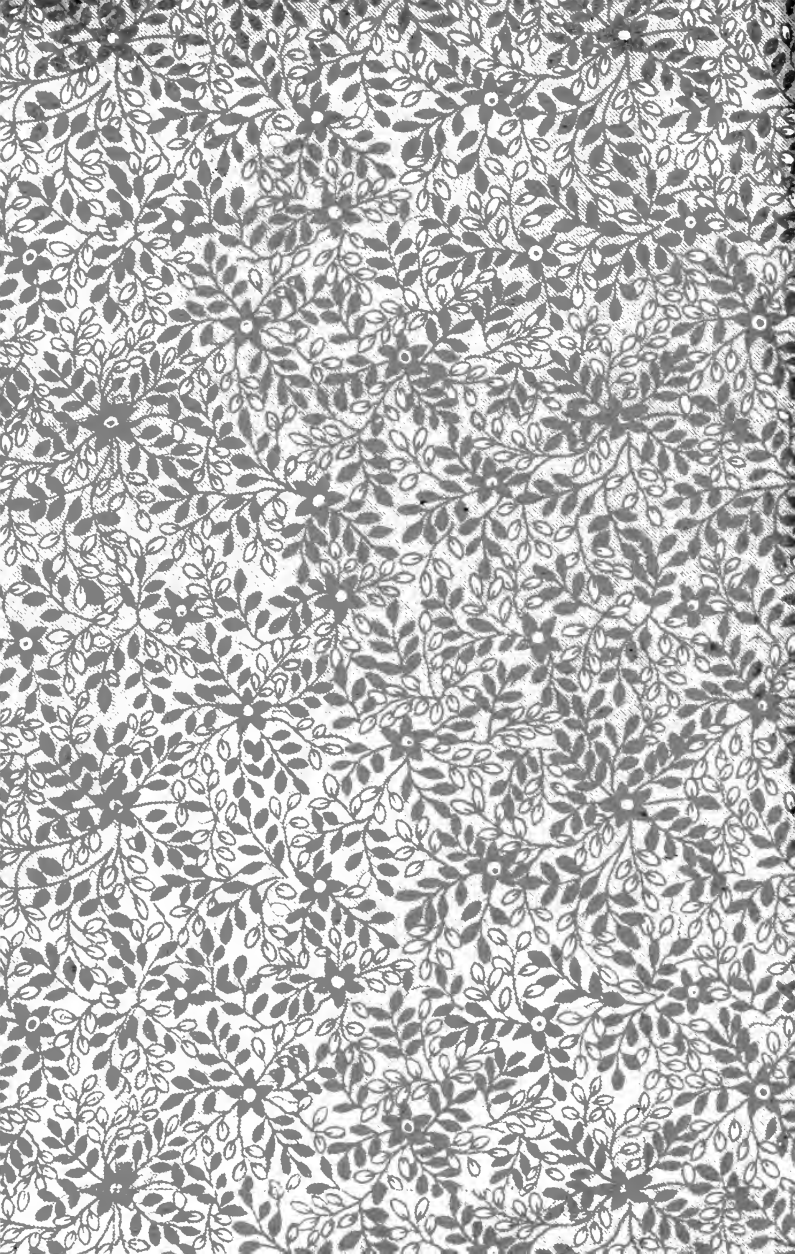
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Lytton, Edward Robert Bulwer
The poetical works of Owen
Meredith Household ed. --

