



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

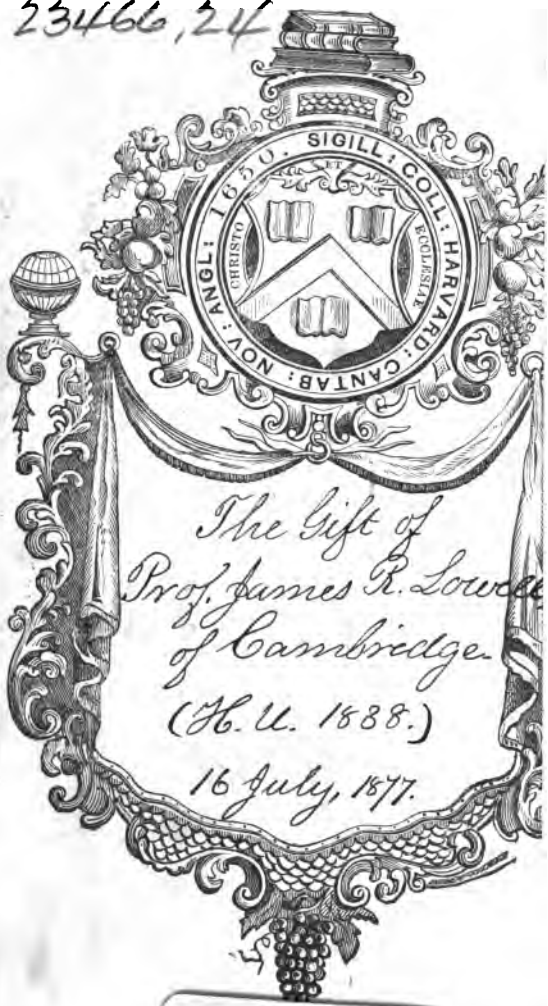
WIDENER



HN PEDE K

8/254

23466, 24



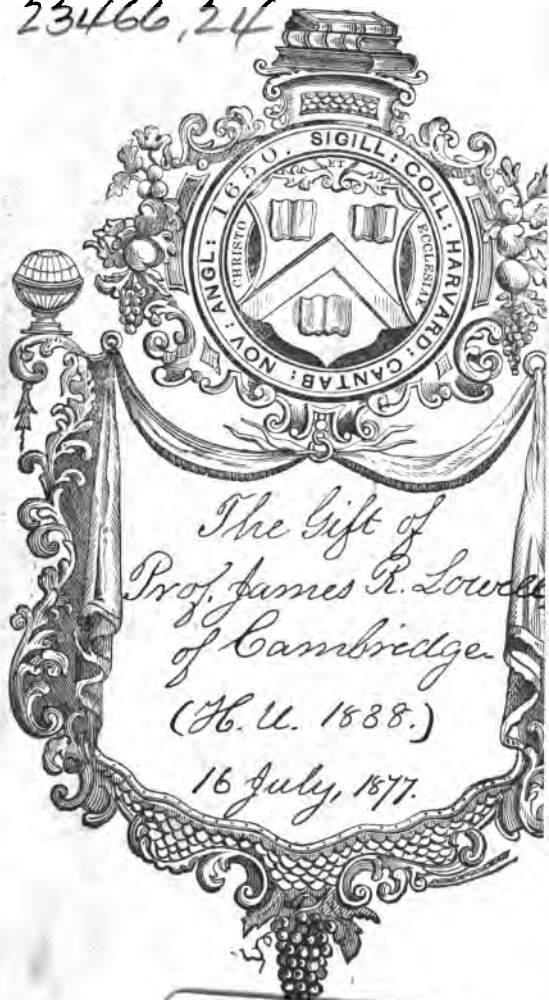
The gift of
Prof. James R. Lowell
of Cambridge.

(H. U. 1888.)

16 July, 1877.

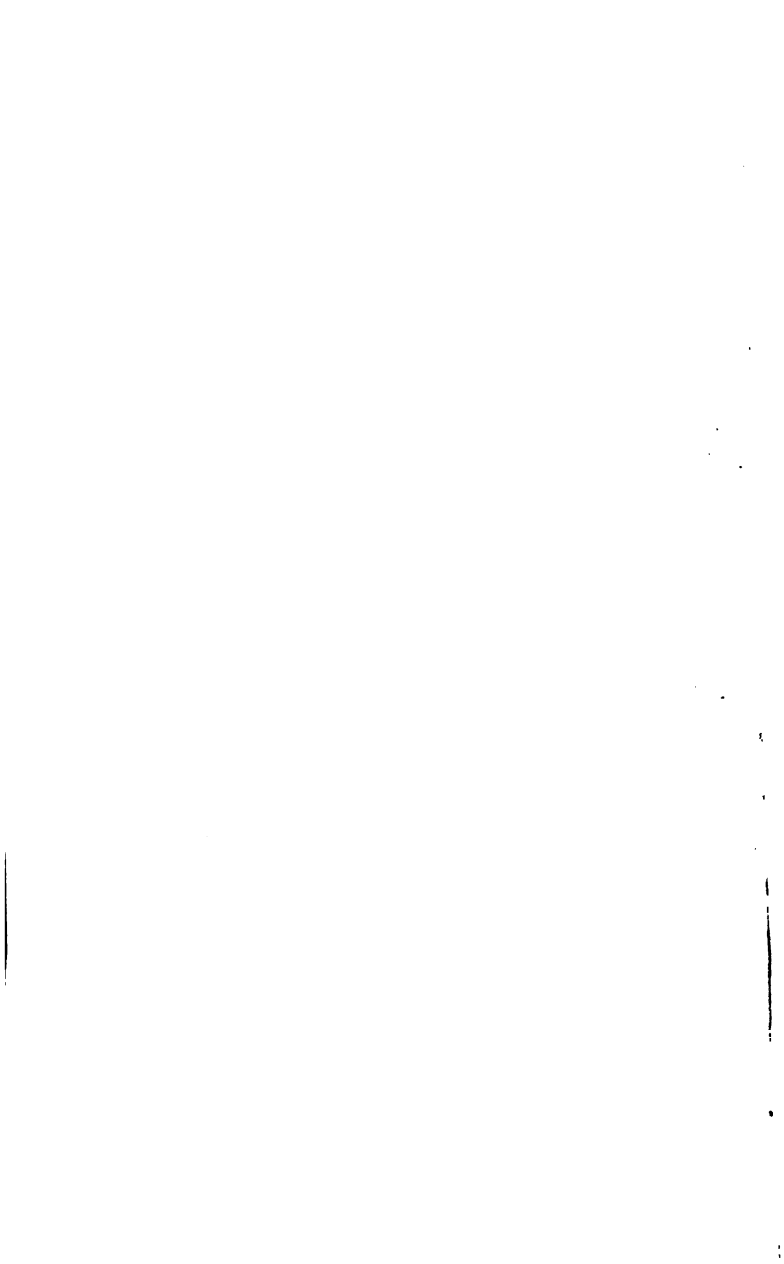


8754
23466, 24



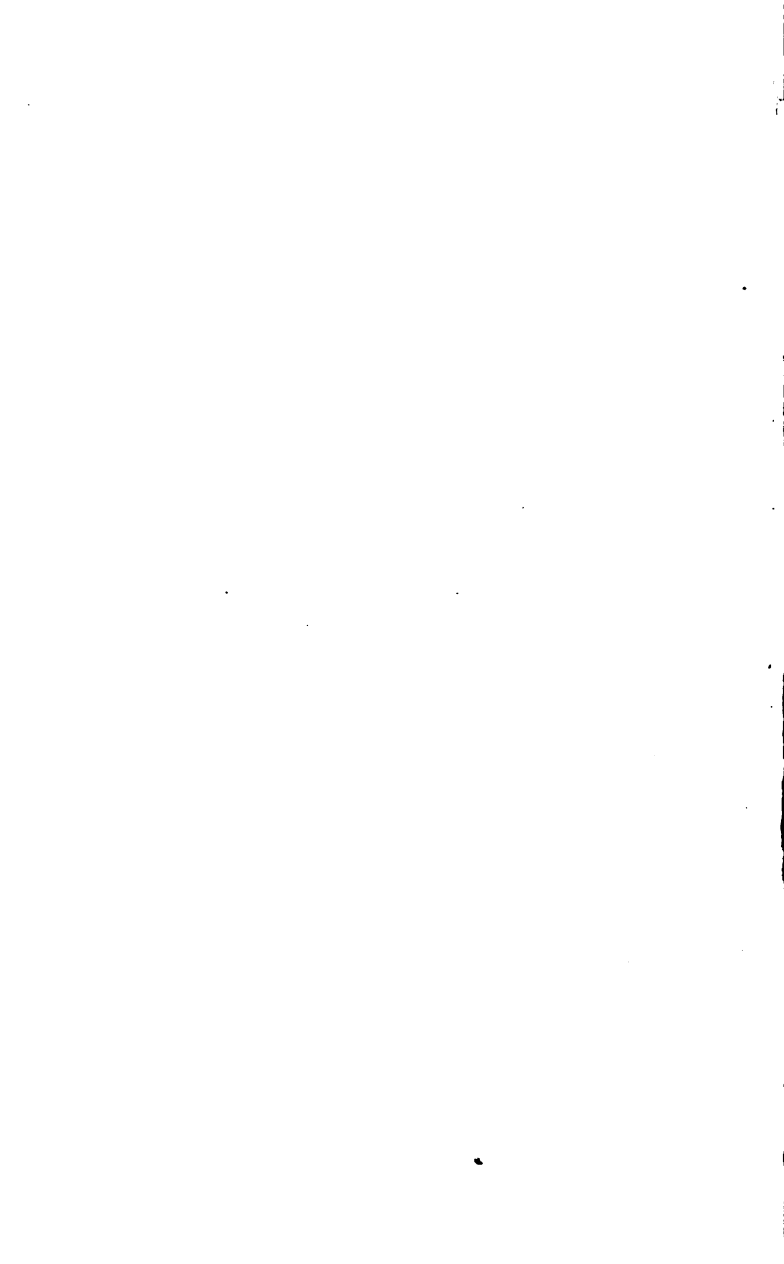
The gift of
Prof. James R. Lowell
of Cambridge
(H. U. 1838.)

16 July, 1877.



THE RED FLAG

And other Poems



0

THE RED FLAG

And other Poems

BY THE HON^{BLE} RODEN NOEL

AUTHOR OF "BEATRICE, AND OTHER POEMS"

© STRAHAN & CO.

56, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON

1872

[All rights reserved]

34 Petermaster Ave

23466,24

1877, July 16.
Gift of
Prof. James R. Lowell,
of Cambridge,
(H. U. 1838.)

LONDON
PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO.
CITY ROAD.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE RED FLAG	1
APRIL GLEAMS	39
SONG OF SUMMER	42
IN EARLY SPRING: TO MY SISTER	44
HARVEST	48
A CHRISTIAN'S FUNERAL	51
A CATARACT	61
AT COURT	71
A VISION OF THE DESERT	74
THE WATERNYMPH AND THE BOY	87
ALLERHEILIGEN	98
COME NOT VERY SOON, LOVE	105
DEATH AND LIFE	109
THE OLD PIANO	120
ON RICHMOND HILL—1870	123
WAS IT WELL?	130
PALINGENESIS	134
THE DWELLER IN TWO WORLDS	152
"THE PITY OF IT"	171
A SONG AT A WATERFALL	174

	PAGE
ERIC: A DIRGE	177
A LADY TO HER LOVER	179
A SICK MOTHER TO HER BLIND CHILD	181
WAR: 1870-1	183
THE CHILDREN'S GRASS	213
THE CHILDREN BY THE SEA	218
AZRAEL: A DREAM OF PLEASURE	224
SAN ROCCO	233
TO THE QUEEN	236
A SEA SYMPHONY	237

THE RED FLAG.

THERE is peace in London !

Not here, as yonder, men blaspheming loud,

Begrimed with slaughter, cruelly aflame,

Drag some dishevelled woman through the crowd

To shoot her with a blundering blind aim :

24 She with her hopeless hunted face of fear

Grovelling falls, and to her dying ear

Pierce her foul fellows with inhuman jeer.

There, all along the fair arcaded street

Where they are murdering, in sacks lie thrown

Dead men and women ; there the dainty feet

Were wont to loiter ; there the brilliants shown

Lured eyes that vied in lustre with their own.

But these are ghastly, whence the warm life-flood

Oozing hath stained the flags with human blood !

Alas! among these women whom with spasm
Of righteous indignation men have slain,
Each fired with spirituous enthusiasm,
Order's disorderly Prætorian,
Among these Frenchwomen whom Frenchmen slew
I well believe there may be more than few
Mothers and wives, who have sublimely stood
Waiting benumbed in snow for scanty food
Through that long winter siege unmurmuring,
Wearing away with want; one little thing
'Neath Mont-Parnasse from hunger, and another
Cold clinging to the worn skirt of a mother,
Shrinking so close from Death, who tears it off,
And laughs "One vermin more!" with brutal
scoff.

Is there a mob-contemning silk aristocrat,
Who spits on man like Death the Democrat?
Alas! alas! it was a baleful hour
When the great goddess Order hounded slaves
Fair France's patriot daughters to deflower,
And spurn them into ignominious graves,
Festering under smooth Parisian flags,
That there in peace her delicate Agags

Might mince once more with high-born courtesans
O'er the dead people, weaving pleasant plans,
And praising her, their cannibal god, the Mother,
Who loves one human child to fatten upon another.
Alas ! alas ! it was a baleful hour
When Frenchmen to the shrines of this grey Power
Dragged hero-soulèd sisters by the hair,
Slaking grim Order's thirst for vengeance there,
Revening horribly that old despair
Wherewith the long-cowed, lashed, mad people flew
At Tyranny's withered throat to bite it through.
Some of these women, when imperial France
Collapsed confused before the foe's advance,
With famine-feeble hand sustained her glory,
Passing it flawless on to History ;
Bowed with the awful burden, meekly giving
Their own, their very little children's living
For France's honour, for the Country's Cause.
None but these nobler victims the red jaws
Of Order, that great goddess whom the world
And this great city Paris worshipping,
Greeditly yawn to swallow ; these are hurled
With blind fiend-fury to a dishonoured death :

Men who were fain to shrink before the foeman
Can hustle at least and mangle their own women !

Thus in the world's gay capital to-day
Alva looks from the face of Galifet.
Arm in arm with the World, her old ally,
See how the Church creeps forth to see them die !
Emaciated here may she renew
Her sleek youth in a fresh Bartholomew.
She, while she sips warm blood from her full chalice,
Points with a supernatural smile of malice
Where feudal Bismarck and his master wait
To thrust yon fugitives upon their fate ;
Back to the flames that hurtle all abroad,
Back on the point of an insatiate sword :
She lifts to heaven her cruel falsetto voice ;
But 'tis the damned who hear it and rejoice,
Shrieking responsive to her jubilee,
" Amen ! so perish Man who will be free !"
Priests, women, soldiers, children, all afire ;
Paris around them roars a funeral pyre,
Screaming, blaspheming ; are the corpses dumb ?
Verily here is Pandemonium !

So fills itself another crimson page
Of human story ; so from age to age
Men reap the fruit of hate and wrath and Death
From the red seed they sowed, and with mad breath
Cherished for harvest : still they strew the same,
Mutual rancour, fear, and scorn, and shame ;
And still it breaks to fury and to flame.
Liberty watereth with many a tear
The growth maturing ; still she hopes to rear
Her own frail flower, but ever hides her eyes
When she beholds the infernal blade arise—
Ever a gory growth, a venomous thing,
Now named Mobrute, now Slavery to a King.

There is peace in London.

And in this peace I lately stood before
A mean brick housefront at a dingy door
In a foul street : the place was very near
Where wealthy folk inhabit half the year.
One at an ale-house lounging reeled low-browed,
Whose face no fine humanities avowed,
A Pariah, whose human rights ignored,
We hold created for the hangman's cord ;

A social outcast none have sought to tame,
Who hath an old inheritance—his shame,
Then at the base of narrow stairs arriving,
I raised my voice to ask if one were living
Here, a poor ailing woman whom I sought ;
Whereupon some sharp man's voice made retort
Through a bleared twilight: "Well, she's *dying*
here."

Oppressive weighed the reeking atmosphere,
And though the summer sun shone out above,
I for a time peered vainly while I strove
Aught to distinguish in the squalid gloom ;
Yet pushing some black door I found the room.
It was a bare room, void of garniture,
Where first the window did mine eyes allure,
Whose broken panes the grime of years defiles :
Never it feels pure air, nor how God smiles
In heaven ; the haggard eye of this dim den,
Of this foul prison for low-born Englishmen,
Looks on a court of miry walls well filled
With sherds and loathly refuse reckless spilled.
Yet by the window sits a ragged dwarf,
With wolfish, pinched pale features, and a cough :

His nimble, skeleton, sallow fingers ply
At their incessant toil ; a vessel nigh
Smokes with some viscous glue, belike shellac,
Gear of his craft ; his labour-hunched back
Stoops over ; as he straightens it he looks
With eyes half fierce, half dull amid the shocks
Of matted hair grown prematurely grey :
A man yet young—but slaving day by day,
With sorrow and scanty nourishment, can slay,
Can age man early—lo ! a wizened elf,
A weird small shadow of the man himself,
Creeps to the father's side, and takes the toy
He has been fingering : ah ! favoured boy,
A stone's throw distant, on thy birthday joy
Shall fly from here to thee ! no wistful eye
Cast thou, poor starveling—lay it down to dry !
“ Where is she ? ” I demanded : he was dumb,
And rose as though he heard me not ; for
 numb
He surely was with long monotonous sorrow,
That knows no hope of any fair to-morrow.
A tame mechanical, abortive toil
Can all the rainbow from a life despoil,

And leave it grey, like pining flowers that lose,
Shut from sweet sunlight, all their native hues.
So sullenly the man resumed his labour :
But now one pointed—some poor female neighbour—

To something cowering in withered weeds :
Is it a Woman's withered face that feeds
On what degraded light may wander through
Her Sudra vault from our palatial Blue ?
She lies upon some rags upheaped and coarse :
(Her very bed they lately pawned perforce)
She lies as though unbreathing, still as stone,
Save when at intervals she makes low moan.
“ What ails her ? ” to the neighbour soft I said :
“ She will not ail long ; she will soon be dead , ”
The other whispered ; “ she is very ill :
’Tis marvel what the man can earn may still
Keep her alive ; her ailing state required
She should be nourished well, nor overtired,
The doctor told her : why, she used to stitch
From dawn to night : you see it is the rich
Who can take rest with ample food, not we.
If ever one were *starved*, sir, it is she.

I often shared my little with them—yet
Can ill afford my children to forget.
Parish allows them somewhat: surely; yes,
But see the children, and his feebleness ! ”
Four growing children with the parents here
Dwell, sleep, in one close room from year to year.
Three elder ones are helping the pale sire
At his life-drudgery—the fourth admire !
It clings, an infant, to the neighbour’s dress,
Blooming and hale : the Harpy of Distress
Hesitates to pollute so pure a child.
Once, when the mother looked that way, she smiled
Almost, I fancied, yet her infant shrank
Now from herself: how should it know she sank
More swiftly in drear unremembered death,
Because she gave it what sustained her breath ?

This, and the craftman’s tiny glow of fire,
And one poor flower, help one to respire,
Sustain the heart’s-breath in this woeful air
Of hopeless human suffering : a fair
Fragile geranium leans forth to breathe
There at the window ; half the mould beneath

Droops from the broken potsherd, and the fine
Fibres denuded like the blossoms pine.
The wife's dim dying face is toward the flower,
And toward her husband ceasing ne'er to cower
Over his toil ; each fairer sight to her,
Whose was the wand of trust that may not err,
Was heaven's window : yea, the " home " so drear,
With these crushed lives, looked only not so clear
Crystalline God Himself hath troubled so,
For ends adorable she may not know.
But ah ! the pain, her weakness, the confusion
Born of her weakness, wrought in fell collusion
With woe of these her kindred to conceal
Often those gleams unearthly that reveal
God dwells with her in very visible glory,
Her soul a holier shrine than all cathedrals hoary !

Nay, but this woman cowering in the gloom,
Dark, speechless, ghastly, starving, haunts the room
With horror—lowest sunken in the fate
That slowly whelms her kindred desolate !
She lurks a silent corpse, and yet alive :
About her all her fainting family strive

With bony fingers tightening their hold ;
While near them lords and ladies drain the gold
That sparkles with exhilarating pleasure,
Fair, in fine raiment, wantoning at leisure.
To starve in London ! on the stones where wealth
Indifferent saunters, dull with food and health !
Surely this infant healthful for an hour,
Surely the pining, pale geranium flower,
The puny glow that will anon expire,
Are but as little children's hands that tire
In piteous attempt to move some rock
That hath erased a household in the shock,
Wherewith the haughty Mountain-spirit scorning
Hurled it from icy palaces of Morning !
So these can move not the dull Fate that rests
Like tons of stone upon crushed human breasts.

And yet from her, the woman dying there,
Who lately seemed to radiate despair
And darkness in the melancholy room,
Breaks forth a glory softening the doom,
Tinging this horrible embroilment even
With iridescent loveliness from heaven.

The light of Faith ! a marvellous holy light
Breaking from simple souls that sink in night—
Power bursting barriers of woe and wrong,
Prisons wherein the mighty, cruel and strong,
In proud prosperity have pent the weak,
Revealing the Deliverer they seek,
To blind faint lives that writhe beneath the curse
Opening fair vistas of the universe !
While helpless under men's hard feet they groan,
A ray reveals the Father on His throne :
The oppressor trampling on His poor may still
Shout, " Who shall stay me when I work my will ?"
A voice peals through the echoing worlds : " I will !"
And let them hearken, or let them forbear,
The poor have heard Him, and the Lord is there !

But woe for him who toils without a hope !
He in base mire of loathed life will grope,
With midnight's cold unconstellated cope
Weighing him graveward : heed how ye despoil
A life, no earthly welfare's kindly soil
Nourishes, of a spiritual air,
Given to sustain a spirit leafing there.

Hold ere ye quench a wavering hope that can
Save from despair a miserable man !
Foes of old superstition ! Do ye *know*
That God will never right the wrongs of woe ;
That there is ne'er a Lord of life and death,
Who giving, reassumeth every breath ?
What God hath bidden you shout to them that weep,
“ God is a fable, death an endless sleep ;
Good news for thee who writhest in the curse !
Thine earthly cage is all the universe.”
Ye spurn our worn solutions : but may ye
Solve, by denying, all the mystery ?
Yourselves will help yourselves : alas ! we fall.
Where is our help if human help be all ?

And these were happy : they loved one another :
Now by the living corse of her the mother,
Of her the wife yet young, he sits and works,
And looks askance where in the shadow lurks
A ghastly Horror creeping, though he toil
To ban it from the children, innocent spoil,
So sweet to our Destroyer, whose low laugh
Mocks man, as wind mocks the lightheaded chaff !

Are not this London's million ordured courts
Verily curst ineffable resorts
Of ghouls more horrible than Easterns feign ?
Do ye not note them yonder at the pane
Mopping and mowing, spectres foul yet dim
In subtle blue miasma mists that swim,
There at the dingy pane, with dull dead eyes,
Faces wormfretted, lank, with livid dyes,
And loathly trunk slow revelling in slime
Under the window—brood of folly and crime !
Ye fearful Hydras, Cholera and Fever,
Batten on starving huddled slaves for ever !

Yet Love Divine who yearns to them that weep,
Finding man's Torturers off guard, sent sleep ;
Stole to the wornout soul in guise of dream,
And soothed her with a sweet celestial gleam.
One night he dreamed of his lost childhood's mirth :
Love culled a leaf from off a happier earth.
A boy and girl beside a cool-toned brook
Bathe their feet laughing, bending oft to look,
Through delicate glumes of grasses and some sedge
That grows with willowherb upon the edge,

Where ruffled cresses with the sliding stream
Flow along fresh below the watery gleam.
Near stoops a hollow trunk wherein they played
At being men and women—unafraid !
Singing birds in the leaves are not more glad
Than these two rustic children poorly clad,
Glowing with health, from some fair cottage nigh.
The russet girl is beautiful, her eye
More blue than any fleeting butterfly.
Can it be he, the merry little boy ?
And that his sister in her innocent joy ?

She grew a maiden, very fair, but frail :
Some rich man wronged her—now what sounds
 assail
A waking ear ?—a woman trolls a hoarse
Loose ditty : her young lineaments are coarse
With harlot hues ; she reels from yonder door
Flaring with harsh light out into the pour
On slimy pavements : how the gaudy dress
Clings to her slender, fevered feebleness !
She and her brother have been severed long ;
And so she passes with her ghastly song

Unknowing, while he sees her undefiled :
Love shows her to him as a little child.

Yet very nigh there often pace the street
Casual farers with indifferent feet :
And when the craftsman goes to breathe awhile
Upon the stair, he sees the cheery smile,
Hears happy snatches of a careless talk
From comfortable strangers in their walk.

. . . . Now 'tis a Dean, who as he ambles by
Raises a question of church-millinery ;
Or in allusion to the squalid street
Observes that, howsoever God may mete
The lot of each, all should be docile, which
One may name " Gospel according to the rich."
If there were no starvation for the mean,
Supplies might fail us for a portly Dean.
Then this fine burst of pulpit eloquence
A threadbare Curate heard in rapt suspense :
" This glorious old edifice of State,
Though finding-fault, black, croaking birds may
prate

Around it"—(did the parson mean the *rooks*,
Rebels, or heretics, or naughty books?)—
"Is founded on the broad backs of the people ;
Our middle-class the buttressed wall ; the steeple,
Or dome, our king and old nobility ;
The Church, yon golden cross that meets the sky !"
He should have travelled lower than the stones,
Even to the charnel-vault of dead men's bones !
Your grand colossal edifice to-day
Rests on a yawning darkness and decay ;
Beware ! for it is ready to vanish away !
Yea, is it founded on the people's backs ?
Behold ! how as ye walk the sanguine tracks
Ye leave are slippery with human gore,
The life, the health, the souls of men your floor.
Glance not below ; yield to the organ's pealing ;
Explore the lonely grandeurs of the ceiling !
Ah ! but your tyrannous structure is atremble—
I who behold it dare no more dissemble :
God breathes upon it with the breath of doom :
Phantoms of empire summon from the tomb !
Dominant o'er us glares the cross of gold,
And haughty hierarchies manifold

Brandish the symbol for a flaming sword,
 Kneel to the cross, and crucify the Lord !
 Friend of the lowly, fainting on the wood,
 Behold thy poor upon a golden rood !

. . . . The lonely toiler, gasping for some air,
 Listens in shadowy poison of the stair,
 Listens, a wounded beast within his lair.
 And there is *Peace* in London !

Now trips a dame who lifts her skirt for fear
 Of many a foul contamination here,
 Revealing delicate ankles to the friend,
 Who (to assist) his manly arm may lend.
 "Think what a desperate misery may slink
 In these low neighbourhoods from whence we shrink ?"
 In silver tones she whispers : "Look ! there prowl
 Two terrible ragged ruffians with a scowl."
 "Near our town-houses ! who could fancy it ?"
 Draws out the dandy with more birth than wit.
 She, with a slight quick shiver, half a sigh :
 "One's heart^s aches even to *dream* such poverty !"
 (It jarred her nervous sensibility.)

“ And yet, as Mister Glozeman said in church,
To make the vessel of the State to lurch,
To shake our ancient Order is the worst
Crime : it deserves the torture, 'tis accurst
Of God and man—he meant the Communist
Canaille in Paris.” Then the dandy hissed
With panic fury, “ Shoot the draff by millions !
So may our scum here learn to make rebellions !”
To clear some stray defilement from her dress,
Bending she slightly on his arm may press ;
Then, as if breeding were a little at fault
In that last ardour of her friend's assault
Even on hereditary foes, the mob,
On swarms unclean, who sweat and starve and rob,
She waved aside the subject she had lent
Her glance in passing, drawing as she went,
“ They say the poor are so improvident !”
Half absently she spoke, to weightier themes
Turning anon—to cunning, lordly schemes
For stifling noxious popular low measures :
Then of refined aristocratic pleasures
They babbled—Hurlingham—the ducal ball—
Of a monstrous nobleman turned Radical,

Of latest fashions out, a novel tie,
Or the last sweet thing in adultery.

The lonely toiler, gasping for some air,
Listens in shadowy poison of the stair,
Listens, a hunted beast within his lair.
. . . . And there is *Peace* in London!

It happened once two gentlemen were stayed
Here, waiting some companion delayed.
Sauntering to and fro they smoking walked,
Or leant against the house-wall while they talked.
One was an oldish man; the other, he
Spoke as one claiming great authority.
His dust-hued head was growing grey in part—
From tardy fellow-feeling with his heart.
“Not to admire” the only art he knew
To keep him comfortable as he grew.
What might have moved the vulgar to distraction
Moved him to limp distaste or satisfaction.
He viewed with very philosophic calm
All human ills—that did himself no harm.
But he had taken honours at his college,
And deemed himself a microcosm of knowledge.

Outside he looked a thicket of stiff bristles ;
Inside he seemed a jungle of prickly thistles,
Which, though from them no figs for men be
 reared,
Seem dainties to the stubborn race long-eared.
A sort of sour old maid the man was born ;
He could secrete but weak incontinent scorn ;
Sterile to foster, organize, produce—
Aught but sophistic pleas for some abuse.
Moreover, one might notice with surprise
The sort of things that made his gorge to rise ;
Always the wrong thing—for his heart would
 bleed
If generous enterprise or kindly deed
Not failed, but seemed in danger of succeeding.
This turned him yellow, set his heart ableeding !
So may base cruelty arouse the rage
In vulgar bosoms : yet methinks a sage
Should be more tolerant in middle-age.
Restless he itches till he settle in blight
On springing hopes with envious little spite ;
Yet nipping buds of generous resolve,
Should one survive his yearning to dissolve,

Become respectable, accomplished thing,
He fulsome fawns on that beslaving.
Every frail human hope that pleads for air,
Wistfully peering generous and fair,
He burns to foul—to squat in mockery there.
He, a boy prig, once laughed at by a woman,
Became the sex's indiscriminate foeman :
He must have had a sister or a mother,
And yet insults, asperses every other.
Politely-cultured loungers at the club
Take for Sir Oracle the fluent cub ;
Anonymous in his periodical
Large, vague he looms ; who, dullard thoughts of all
Dishing up deftly, flatters each fool so,
It fondly fancies it may strut as though
Itself were some potential Rochefoucauld.
He could be lively only when he hated :
Pungent aromas all evaporated,
When he with heavy hand, with heavier face,
Apotheosized English commonplace ;
A Rubens' cherub cumberously squat,
Labouring to upheave some royal fat
Skyward—the whole falls marvellously flat !

With ponderous platitude his smart review
Lumbers along when it proclaims the true
Plethoric gospel of the well-to-do.
Man of a *petite culture*, whose college culture
Is but a whited sepulchre sepulture
Of living manhood—his in sooth was small :
Only a castrate creature's after all.

His elder comrade, green as a vegetable,
Lives much as did the dogs in sacred fable ;
He picks up crumbs from off a rich man's table.
With tact he courts the upper ten for dinners,
No friend of publicans and bourgeois sinners.
While footmen hand you many a dainty meat,
And butlers pour you out some choice Lafitte,
He undertakes the dinner-wit to furnish ;
Which is a trifle flyblown, wants a burnish.
The saltcellar with warranted Attic grains
Serves for so many boards, the flavour wanes.
Less delicately now he spins the slander,
For toil wears even a fashionable pander.
Still when he speaks unwholesome simpers fly
Around the high

Distinguished circle of mahogany.
Egyptians played with monkeys when they dined ;
Our kings kept jesters of a motley kind ;
We fit our cap and bells on " men of mind."

From condescension to humanity
(A piece of luck for Christianity),
These men their ægis of sublime protection
Spread over Jesus and the Resurrection.
They with a crooked tongue in hollow cheek
Commend His Gospel to the poor and weak.
These, who have measured God with half an eye,
Damn with faint praise the blessed Trinity.
Faith relegated to the lower orders,
A panacea for popular disorders,
A pap for babes and women, once upheaved
Mountains and hurled them headlong, once achieved
The impossible, taught saviours on the cross
And in the fire to triumph in their loss ;
A flame by night, an awful cloud by day,
Guided Mankind on their eternal way.
Now it fulfils a somewhat humbler function :
From it sleek priests distil the pulpit unction ;

While clever Barnums, cleverer and stronger
Than all old heroes, needing faith no longer,
Reduce our gods to dolls wherewith a showman
Hoodwinks the rabble, and the babes and women.
Still the old creed is a propriety,
An heirloom, a respectability ;
One can conceive it true ; be civil to it ;
Were you uncivil you might come to rue it.
So at a possible future judgment you
May tell the Lord, you said it *might* be true :
Yea, should it menace — you have thought of
that—
And left yourself with ample room to rat.
Oh ! what an irony of secret fate !
Oh ! what declension from a royal state !
That Faith, who once God's favourite angel flew,
Now drudges for a Saturnine review.
Yet though they give two fingers to the Saviour,
Best clothes on Sunday and demure behaviour,
Men of the world on every working day
Put the old creed with childish things away.
Measure the infinite God on pain of hell ;
But do not heed Him when you buy or sell.

Call Jesus Lord decorously on Sunday,
But treat Him as a genial fool on Monday.
Lift up your pious eyes at Darwin's creed ;
Yet try to prove him right about your breed,
Dear fellow-Christians ! who live as though
Not even now you'd struggled from below.
For beasts of prey with all their savage strife
Are still the cherished models of your life.
Ye war with all your fellows for existence,
And when you've thrown them, still with fierce
insistance

Grind them beneath you, crush them all to death,
That you may breathe a more luxurious breath.
Hail ! weaponed man of grand expanding brain,
Most formidable beast of all that stain
Our mother earth with fratricidal blood !
Tigers but raven hungry for their food ;
But thou, to fling one shining bauble more
In coffers bursting with thy gold before,
Starvest the babes and women at thy door !

How these two friends congenial conversed
Here, as the listener heard it, is rehearsed,

As from his slightly varied point of view
It might have sounded to the speakers too.
“Shopkeeping England trades without obstruction ;
Early and late we're toiling at production.
If many starve to swell our opulence,
That's an arrangement due to Providence.
Who prates of wealth's more equal distribution,
Or generous masters, means the revolution.
Gravity's one law ; this another ; profit
Can never bear a farthing taken off it.
Perish the human race to verify
Our pet Political Economy !
Men start not fair ; one weighted from the first
Must live and die, as he was born, accurst.
Yet who in social questions may go deeper
Than he that asked, ' Am I my brother's keeper ?'
Though the well-taught indulges every whim,
A boor should know 'tis criminal in him.
Sharp lucky grandsires earned our life of play ;
The poor must pare their children's crumbs
away,
For storing up against an evil day.

"How frail is human nature! how will pity
 Confuse a fool's heart in a crowded city!
 He would remove the squalor and distress,
 Nay, makes a virtue of his feebleness—
 Removing makes it more instead of less.
 Let us with *one* vain luxury dispense,
 The luxury of our benevolence.
 We feel a fatuous longing to relieve
 The culpable incapables who grieve:
 (They're either drunk or stupid, all the cant
 Can't alter facts, else why are they in want?)
 Track home the fatuous longing at your leisure,
 You'll find (see Mill) 'tis only selfish pleasure
 This lachrymose desire to benefit
 Other men aims at, selfish every bit—
 We virtuous men must learn to bridle it."
 "It must have cost you many a prayerful
 tear"

(His waggish friend interpolated here)

"Arriving at this holy consummation,
 Last *economic* test of one's salvation:
 You from a child have striven early and late
 With this sad sign of the unregenerate.

This corrupt passion more in you than others
 Blighted sweet innocence ; for when your brothers,
 Or any other baby, sought your toy,
 You always gave it up with tears—of joy.
 And then one's mother, she was much to blame :
 Did she brand generosity with shame ?
 She punished what she termed our 'selfish-
 ness :

With her old-world ideas she could not guess,
 Poor thing ! our last discovery in mind,
 That it is very selfish to be kind.
 We patronise, she lived, her Christianity—
 Such saintship is a pestilent insanity ;
 But what if some unshamed iconoclast,
 Crumbling old fetish-raiments of the past,
 Rouse from dead cerements the Christ at last ?
 What if men take to following where He leads,
 Weary of mumbling Athanasian creeds ? ”

“ Self-interest enlightened is our rule :
 Perish the pauper, and the general fool!—
 Well for the luckier or shrewder man !
 • For he, by Heaven's especial favour, can

Lodge duller rivals in foul dens like these,
And feed them with rank garbage if he please.
Mercy is an exploded superstition ;
Men are but brutes in bloodier competition.

“The State ! what call has that to interfere ?
Are we not free-born Britons living here ?
If these like not their scrofulous dens, you know,
They're free to change their quarters ; let them go.
Why one of these may struggle uppermost !
Himself may trample on the writhing host.
They cursing him, he cursing from above—
Hatred and Hell are finer things than Love !
The State forbids that paupers should be slain
With knives and guns ; but as for stench and
 drain,
And putrefying styes they build so small,
'Tis suicide to breathe in them at all,
Breath turns to poison—that's another thing—
See Malthus on prolific littering !
Children are luxuries—let these dispense
With offspring—we ourselves to save expense
Lop off the babes, and the benevolence.

Mother ! with murderous unflinching eye
Gaze on your moaning babe about to die.
Ring in the rich man's child with jubilation,
And ring the poor man's out, O happy nation !
Woman, *your* babe is 'surplus population !'
Why take such constant thought about the body ?
Man shall not live by bread"—"but by his toddy,
Margeaux, and Bisque-soup rather," quoth the wag.
"Don't chaff, nor let your rapt attention flag,"
Resumed the Gigadibs, who seemed offended,
"My arguments will be the sooner ended.
What was I saying ? well these Radicals
Pamper the carnal part of pauper pals
Unduly ; why not teach them to endure
With fortitude these ills they cannot cure ?
Throw them a sop of wholesome moral saws—
(Ah ! pestilent 'education'—*that's* the cause,
Which *makes* them carp at our existing laws)
The dogs are always yelping for a bone :
Fling them to bite a weighty moral stone !

"A man must grab whatever he can get ;
We human creatures are not angels yet.

You must not stab, nor strangle, a poor neighbour ;
For, if you did, why you would lose *his* labour.

No ; take advantage of his cramped position
To mangle him with your cruellest condition.

Rob soul and body by superior wit

And fortune ; ignorant hunger will submit.

If he should gash you, that were ugly murder :

Dribble his life-blood slowly—you're in order.

Nay, surely 'tis a very venial vice

To buy one's workman at the market price.

He may impose his terms ; contract is free."

" True," says the other, " yet it seems to me

Manacled blacks, thrust huddled in the hold

Of a rotten slaveship, might as well be told

To bargain with the master of the slaver ;

They're *slaves* for all your plausible palaver !"

" Nay, in free England every man may rise

To be Prime Minister before he dies !"

Quoth the *bon-vivant* with a playful nudge,

" Bliffl, for next week's copy keep *that* fudge !"

. . . . The lonely toiler, gasping for some air,
Listens in shadowy poison of the stair,

Listens, a wounded beast within his lair,
 And there is *Peace* in London !

A Man grew God upon the shadowy cross,
 And taught the world to triumph in love's loss.
 Following Him they took for great and holy,
 Men helped the weak, forbore to insult the lowly ;
 The mighty made them ministers of woe,
 Because the Lord had served us high and low :
 Now Love and Chivalry lie done to death ;
 Stony-eyed monsters feed on human breath :
 In Christ's forgotten grave we have buried weak-
 ness,
 Justice, and Mercy, and Righteousness, and Meekness !

. . . Then fell the night : there rose a mighty roar,
 As though I neared a thunderous ocean-shore :
 Hoary old Ocean feels his bounds no more,
 Rioting over earth a conqueror !
 Nay, these are human cries ! In sooth they sound
 More wrathful, turbulent, than sea's rebound !
 Fire ruddies all the city ! towered Thames
 Rolls like the Seine, a tide of eddying flames ;

Vessel, and wharf, and every striding arch
Glow in the fire-fiend's victorious march.
Hark ! to the huge bell, whose portentous boom
Ponderous falling fills the soul with doom.
Lo ! surging human seas arise and fall
Around the lurid grandeur of St. Paul.
Torches illumine their wild convulsive toils,
Windily flaring ; all around there boils
Vile human refuse, for the dainty spoils
They have wrung from others wrangling fierce and
hoarse.

Ah ! turn away ! with what a hideous force
They soil our beautiful, both body and soul—
Famished beasts bursting loose from our control.
They pour the life of venerable age ;
Infants and women perish in their rage !
. . . . Then must avenging butchery begin :
Their sin we strangle with our stronger sin.
England must join the anarchic devil's dance,
That wilders and exhausts delirious France !

Who declared war ? for ye shall bear the blame !
History seeks your insignificant name
To pillory with everlasting shame !

Who declared war ? The man who dared to teach
That men are natural enemies each to each ;
Set in uncompromising battle array
Labour and wealth : the fruit you eat to-day
Glares very crimson, scribbling Galifet !
What ! shall Wealth kneel upon the fainting forms
Of millions whom scarce a raiment warms,
Draining their very heart's blood leisurely,
And shall we wonder when with frenzied cry,
Beyond endurance urged, at last they leap
To murder gorged wealth as it lies asleep ?
The legal armed oppressor of his neighbour,
He who hath goaded overdriven labour,
A peaceful tyrant, the Red Flag unfurled :
He stands accurst of God, and of the world !

“ A man must grab whatever he can get :
We human creatures are not angels yet ”—
So chuckle cynic Mephistopheles !
Relish you violent replies like these ?
Bring forth your mitrailleuse ! but hypocrite,
It was yourself who nursed the need for it.
Yea, you may shoot them ! you may drown the people
In their own life-blood ; every Christian steeple

May echo to the clang of jubilant bells
 Reeling, aflame with flags of joy for hells
 Of cruel vengeance underneath the cross !
 Peal with Te Deums for a people's loss,
 Cathedral organs golden in the gloom !
 Yet know that these from every vengeful doom
 Arise more terrible ! their ghosts assume
 More formidable forms, and multiply !
 Ah ! the red sea returns to whelm you horribly !
 Merciless mow them ! form the Holy Alliance !
 To ravening hungry brethren breathe defiance :
 For weapons brandish, oh ye monarchs holy,
 Dead hands of Him who living helped the lowly ;
 Yea, in the name of Christ, the poor man's God,
 Stamp down his carcase in the bloody sod ! . . .
 There is *War* in London !

. . . Then I cried, " Lord how long ? what hope
 is ours ? "

There dawned a twilit winter morn of showers.
 I heard not the artillery's loud roar,
 Nor plunge of shrieking shells, nor any more
 Horrible human screams of civil war.

My soul had but foreboded the fell riot :
In the foul alley reigned unbroken quiet,
Even as erst : three figures made their way
To where the unhappy starving woman lay :
Three mutual strangers from a different home,
Each wondering why the other one has come.
The first, an old and venerable man,
From whose grand countenance there falls a ban
On our vain follies, on our wallowing sin,
When we are blessed enough a glance to win ;
He seeks admittance, he will enter in.
The other is a woman past her prime,
Still beautiful, although the wintry rime
Silters her forehead ; she is pure and calm,
And from her loving visage heavenly balm
Falls for the sorrowful ; she has lived her sorrow.
Both of these angels facelight seem to borrow
From the same Jesus with the younger one ;
Who smiles a sweet yet homely-featured nun.
I know not with what form the old man's thought
Invested his divine lore when he taught :
That elder highborn lady, as you list,
You may call Puritan, or Calvinist.

The younger woman held the ancient creed
Of Christendom : in soul, and life and deed,
They differ little ; in explaining much :
One feels the Christ arisen when they touch.
Do they not bear a living love to her,
And him who darkens by the sufferer ?
I turned ; for in mine ears one spake with pity,
“ If there be ten there, I will spare the city.” . . .
. . . . There is Peace in London !

APRIL GLEAMS.

APRIL gleams !
Emerald upland pasture seems
A silent undulating sea :
Quietly
Twinkling, red as planet Mars,
A short shower's fallen stars
Gem the multitudinous blade ;
Daisy sprinkles every glade :
On a tree,
Rising silvern slenderly,
Young leaves, delicate as dreams,
Inhale the gleams,
April gleams !

Thin and rare,
Every leaf, a flake so fair,
Single inlays a pale blue air,
Where the tree
Rises highest o'er the lea ;
Lower all his leafy form
Stirs upon a mild grey storm,
Moving soft impearled with rays
From a winglike fringe of blaze.
Yonder pool
Shrines a skiey fleece of wool,
Unravelling mist, azure and gleams,
April gleams.

Faint and grey,
Far below me, far away,
Fades the landscape like a sea
Tenderly :
Cuckoo answering cuckoo-call,
Long low notes arise and fall,
Soft grey voices all in tune
With the hushed and bloomy swoon
Of the lea,

Fading far, a harmony
Of leaf and flower, of innocent glee,
Of turtle-coloured cloud and stream,
And tender tones and loving dream,
And April gleam !

Cuckoo-flowers,
Wet with slant of shiny showers
Rainbow-braided ! Very fair,
With a frail and fleeting air,
All the scene !
We remember what hath been :
It hath promise for the young ;
They who have lived over long
In the evanescent glory
Feel bewildering human story.
Love, with Friendship tender and true,
Hope and Life will vanish too,
Youth with Innocence ; all but seems ;
Glimmer a moment elfin dreams,
April gleams !

SONG OF SUMMER.

SWEETER seems to you the morning
Than the day !
Dearer to your soul the delicate
Blush of May,
Than a glow of summer roses
On the heart of June :
Yea, the dewy star of morning
Conquers noon !
Ah ! but Phosphor only fadeth
Into light ;
Spring will yield his breath to summer—
Day will wane to night !
Summer, with his face to winter,
Leaves delight !

Hear the passionate Summer say,
“ Love me a little while you may,
Ere I pass away !”

IN EARLY SPRING.

TO MY SISTER.

DARLING, the winedark masses of our wood,
Under a travelling cloud surcharged with rain,
Have dim-green columned vistas, all imbued
With faint blue smoke from smouldering leaves that
wane,
Or kindling glow :
But as I rove along the yielding grass
Fringing the river, lo ! my musing eyes,
With mild swift force made captive as they pass,
Gladden, as when with sense of sweet surprise
A voice we know
Of one we love returning unaware,
Longed for, not looked for, summons like a dream ;

So seems yon willow touched with verdure rare,
Slanting slim lines of green rain, in a gleam
Of fleeting glow,

Athwart her stem ; another willow nigh
Springs foliaged fountainlike and falls on high,
Evanishing in drifts of spray,
Green exhalation thinned away,
While faint airs blow.

Some pensile leaves play wanton with the river,
And graze each mantling ripple as it slides
Soft, shadow-bosomed, with a dainty shiver
Kissing the leaf, ere swooning it subsides !
Yet hearken ! now

In tones renewed the dear unboded call
Of nearing Spring enchants my willing ear ;
For as I pass, now furtive-breathed, now clear,
Coos the woodpigeon with a plaintive fall !
Behold a flow

Of yellow daffodil salutes my sight :
First smile of Nature waking from the night
Of deadly winter ; fluent among boughs
Winds in and out bird-music, to arouse
Each budding bough ;

For still the bronzy tracery so fine
Reveals amid their rich perplexity
Many a brown bird in the swift sunshine
Startling and fading ; when he dips to fly
You well may know,
Noting on intervals of emerald floors
In tender subtle mysteries of grass
His shadow, while he buoyant sinks and soars,
Now faint exhaling, now imbibing mass.
Still faint and low
Spring's witching voice, still hesitating, strewn
On desert distances : she moves in sleep
With eyes half open : wake her not so soon !
While Winter lowers, may she laugh and leap,
Whose breath of snow
She shrinking feels ? to me it seems the Spring,
O darling sister on thy bed of pain !
Pauses for thee, her very queen, to bring
Thine own eternal joyance to sustain
Her, timid doe,
With calm assurance from thy spirit's home ;
Even as young maids on either hand deploy,
Lining a bride's path, waiting till she come,

Then follow in the wake of her full joy,
Swelling its flow :
So, darling, come ! the year but waits for thee :
Dislusted else the sunniest Spring for me !
Our Springs were wont to gather confidence,
Sounding thine eyes for sweet serenity ;
Skies, leaves and flowers, still wait to draw it hence ;
Linger not now !

Kew, 1870.

HARVEST.

GARNER in the golden grain !

He that fares immersed in wheat
Sees a russet mellow main,

Falling from the upland, meet
Lavender horizons warm,

Blent with opaline warm skies ;
Verdure-isles of cloudy form

In descending meet his eyes ;
Round them, like a sea at rest

Glassy sliding up the sand,
Simmers harvest, many a crest

Hither and thither drooping bland,
Weighted every leaning ear.

With the treasure of the year.

Garner in the golden grain !

Yonder shining sickle cleaves ;

Bronzy harvestmen sustain

Thwart one another golden sheaves,

Whose luxuriant honours all,

Marrying, seem tawny toil

Of a foaming water-wall,

When wave meets baffled wave's recoil.

Nigh to one of these a child

In a little cart is laid,

Sleeping in the air so mild,

Where a linden with sweet shade

Softens all the radiance,

Within the reaping father's glance.

Garner in the golden grain !

All, aglow upon the hill,

Unforeboding will remain,

Till the sickle gleams, until

All shall placidly resign

Pleasant homely life afield,

Where the youngling flowers twine.

Only now we saw them yield,

Lithe and blithe, and green when wind
 Ruffled them to silky waves,
Playing merrily : so we find
 Aged pilgrims near the graves,
Mellow and wise, and loving wait
 Swift inevitable fate :
We weep who lose them ; they are still,
While One bears them where He will.

A CHRISTIAN'S FUNERAL.

SLIM boles of trees divide the purple haze
Of far-off mountain, and the range subsides
Into an ocean-azure of sweet bays,
While over all, mingling with all, abides
A brooding influence of blessed spring
Newly returned, a blue light of warm air ;
And Earth lies, like a child awakening
In some sweet home familiar and fair,
Whereunto it has travelled unaware
In slumber, with a dimly happy smile,
That shall be rapture in a little while.
Against a wall of rustic church I lean
In a small graveyard, where the grass revives
Now from the restful unaspiring green
Wherewithal under winter snow it lives,

And stirs about the marble of two graves,
One large, one small white stone, two grassy waves,
One longer for a woman grey, and one
Small for a child who used to love the sun.

Nigh unto these a silent multitude
In sombre mourning garb hath gathered now,
One human cloud on earth's rejoicing mood,
About an open grave with shadowed brow ;
Many a cottager to see the end
Of one who was a master and a friend ;
Through a long life a just and righteous man,
A tender, human-hearted Puritan ;
With his own hands assuaging every need,
On his own faith inviting each to feed.
All we around him wore a seemly woe ;
But one upon her heart received the blow ;
And as she bent above her mother's tomb,
The while her sire we gathered to the gloom,
Now winter laid a hand upon her hair,
Full many a weeping peasant standing there
Averred that he, beholding her to-day,
Seemed to behold her mother passed away.

All this fair scene men called his property !
Say will it veil its loveliness awhile
From all the world because the Master's eye
No more may answer any sunny smile ?
Though through long years his Spirit brooded here,
Presiding, guarding, moulding all the place ;
Any man now may ruin it with no fear
Of any frown on his imperial face.
When we returned within the house we knew,
How strange to find all things familiar
Unmoved without him, which the while we grew
In earlier years, like rays around a star,
Had ne'er a being sundered from his own !
Now grim-ranged armour, portraits glowering
 down,
Mellow ancestral figures from the past,
Assumed their proper awfulness at last—
Pathetic shells of withered human life,
Dumb presences, with blurred humanities too
 rife,
Lavished in laughter and in tears,
With hopes and fears,
On bitter, restless rolling of the years !

Here every great and every trivial thing
Bore impress of his anxious ordering :
Now we may change it all, nor ever dread
Remonstrance from the venerable dead.
Even if the ancestral place he loved so well
Into cold alien hands the heir should sell,
He would not turn unrestful where he lies,
Rapt from our world and our fatuities !
Yea, if the chapel where for many a year
His heart was lavished from this hour should hear
Proclaimed the very creed he most abhorred,
No moan of sorrow from his grave were poured.

Ruins deserted of long-lingering light,
Faces unsouled set in eternal night,
These bannered halls and corridors we knew,
Where innocent, winged the feet of childhood flew !
For gone is he who welcomed us of old.
It seems as though, while musingly he told
Concerning some ancestral painted face,
Pausing before it, sorrowing for the race
Of men because they are transitory gleams
Along the ocean of eternity,

He unaware, as in confusing dreams,
Paled, looking awful ; left us bewilderingly,
To re-emerge himself among the ghosts
Up yonder, who with silent following eyes
Brood ever in mysterious dim posts ;
And since he joined their solemn, leaguering hosts,
We lie down wakeful, waiting a surprise ;
Life sounds all hollow, mined with mysteries,
Ready to crumble baseless into smoke,
To vanish in the moment of a look.

Is all then over ? is he only dust ?
Can it be, in the face of such a trust ?
No shadow of misgiving ever swept
The wondrous light of faith wherein he slept.
He knew, yea, toiled that all around should know,
The life of saints hath birth but when they go.
And in this faith dark, long-delaying death
But now he greeted, giving away his breath.
Ah ! did he waken even when he died
Upon the bosom of the Crucified ?
When hymns one sang him waned upon his ear,
Did angel hallelujahs peal more clear ?

Ah ! did he pass from trust that seemeth dull,
Beside the consummation beautiful ?
Or did the vision fade for ever away
When his poor pale lips might no longer
 pray ?

When sick at heart I kneeling with the crowd
Heard him pour forth his fervent soul aloud
Nightly to God, as though he saw the Lord,
Yea, touched and held His very written word,
Ah was he sane, who saw the glory gleam,
Or I, foreboding all was but a dream ?
Foreboding there is none to hear us call,
Or lift us from the inevitable fall ;
That all this ardent longing he will lose
Then when the mortal weakness shall con-
 fuse,

Dissolving all the human ?—we shall perish,
Though, kneeling in our dust, our children cherish
Our old illusion !—'tis a bleak denial,
Ruthlessly rolling in their hour of trial
The very solid earth from underneath
Weak feet that waver ; from a labouring breath
Stealing the air that hardly saves from death !

And can ye doubt, believers, we would share
Ennobling hopes that save you from despair ?
Alas ! alas ! for he had seemed estranged,
Since old horizons of my spirit changed
In later years—no marvel this should be !
Only a sorrow it was to him and me.
Now I remembered little save the days
Of his dear coming to my school with rays
Of never-failing, kindly happiness,
Beaming from all his countenance to bless
Me in the breezy, hill-built school, so dear
To many a boyhood, yet to mine a fear,
A very loathing—I may scarce recall
One face endeared to me among them all !
Saving for Byron's grave, one boy beloved,
And some sweet lanes where arm in arm we
 roved,
I would those years might fade from memory,
With but one space among them shining high !
Cheery repasts in that small garden trim
Of the old tavern, whose adornment grim
Was many a wooden dragon blue and red,
Where we sat feasting, trellised overhead.

Nor these, nor golden gift at parting slid
Into my palm, in anywise lay hid.
From me when I stood by the grave to-day,
With all the variance vanished far away.

Poor human differences ! at the grave
Our universal schemes that looked so brave
Hang the head silent, nebulous, and pale.
Beside the solemn truth, whose visions fail,
His, or my own ? the impalpable Beyond—
Doth it for him lie curled within the bond
Of his imagining any longer ? nay !
Nor less my blind denial faints away
Here by him, grown more awful than before.
Surely he doth abide for evermore !

Poor human differences ! lapped in light
Some calm-lived angel may behold the flight,
The momentary flight of human things
Athwart their gleam with multitudinous wings—
To wise, grave eyes a melancholy scene !
No buoyant wings serene,
Jubilant they for one brief hour may shine,
Warmly irradiate from the face Divine !

Nay, but a clash of dissonant loud strife,
Where each his glimpse of the universal life
Shrieks forth, infuriate with a presumptuous brother,
Who dares proclaim to the world his own or any other.

The while we laid him under earth I heard
Warbling within a laurel near a bird,
Who never ceased to warble clear and sweet,
For all the ghastly noise of shuffling feet
And griding rope, with tumult ill-suppressed,
Or silent tears relieving hearts oppressed ;
Pealing methought with confirmation rife,
When " I am the resurrection and the life !"
A solemn human voice proclaimed aloud :
While vernal airs, with all relenting fountains
Among the eternal brotherhood of mountains,
And youngling flowers, and the everlasting sea
Made sweet accord in deep tranquillity.

His faith endures upon foundations wide
And firm as the universe, howe'er have ailed
The superstructure : evermore abide
Those well-beloved lives who may have failed

Our earthly vision in the Life of life ;
In some abysmal Peace profoundly veiled,
Where they await us, where we shall be one ;
As may be in the ineffable alone,
And never in the glory of the mortal strife,
However hearts may yearn for union.
I foolish, while he prayed, have felt the fear
There may be none in all the worlds to hear :
Surely the Life of life, whene'er we cry,
Fills our low springs with personality :
Surely, however lurid lower the gloom,
Surely, howe'er bewildering the doom,
All stands established from eternity,
Adorable, however it may be !

A CATARACT,*

UNDER TWO ASPECTS.

In a cavern of a solitary mountain
Are thy waters born,
Wherein, before the flashing of thy silver fountain
From the twilight like another morn,
We may hear an inward murmur from the glooming,
We may feel a breathing chill!
Impelled of a blind longing for a sunny air illuming,
With a bubbling and a sliding still,

* Somewhere in Germany I have read that there is a cataract, which has a marble tablet on the rock by the side of it, recording in gilded letters that his Majesty, the King of the country, was "graciously pleased" to visit the cataract on such or such a day, and "condescended in his own person to admire the beauties of Nature." I know nothing about this individual king as man; but the point of the inscription is *that it was condescending of him as a king!*

Glide thine infant river-waters ever flowing,
While the willow-leaves and flowers
Fill thy heart of innocent crystal with a glory
glowing
From their undulating airy bowers !
There the children love to play about thy brightness
With a joy like thine,
With a guileless aimless unforeboding lightness,
And many a limpid laugh like thine.
With a beautiful bewilderment thy childhood,
Roaming in the forest,
Blends with another water of the wildwood ;
Till strong in youth mature thou pourest,
Where all the granite gorge resounding
Thunders and lightens evermore,
Reels with the terrible splendour of thy bounding,
And the plunge of wild white waters, and the
roar.
Immortal plunge ! terrifically daring,
Illumining the gloom with glory ;
Pines are holding wrung with frenzy, while impetuous
winds are bearing
All abroad the rumour and tumult of thy story !

Lo ! the scare of mists that hurry from hell's cauldron
recoiling !

Fall of a lucid ocean, all a flashing foam !

Lo ! maidenhair and mosses midway above the boiling,
Wooing watery sunshine, love turmoil for a home.

In what primeval cataclysm
Thy glory erst was hurled into the abyss
Who may disclose ? but in a former time
So marvelled men before thy might sublime ;
So ghostly breathed thy shadowy cavern-fountain
From far within the solitary mountain,
So fresh and healing all thy wave,
A minister of life wherever it may lave ;
That on the height above the cave
A temple ruin fading into rock
We still may trace, though many a mouldered block
The gradual growth of gnarlèd oak divorce
Far from its fellow with unheeded force ;
While ivy and vine, lush eglantine and bramble,
In fair confusion o'er the ruin ramble.
Yet in a far-off long-forgotten day
Men with hushed voices hither came to pray.

To thee, O sacred stream ! they raised the shrine,
Deeming thee animate with life Divine.
How have their memories vanished now in air !
We vainly ask what manner of men they were.
Our human generations fleeting wonder,
Passing along thine everlasting thunder ;
Shadows of earth, with shadows of the sky,
We fleet athwart thy sheeny foam and fly,
We are born, and thou remainest, and we die.
Children have played around thy playful spring,
And many lovers have loved wandering
In thy romantic gorge ; while lonely poets come,
Passionate for the voice of thy tumultuous home,
Laying to heart thy rush of light and sound
Voluminous, to sing in turn if they be worthy found.
Prophets of old in meditative mood,
Solitary dwellers with a salvage brood,
Nursed here a smouldering fire of indignation,
In vision received unearthly revelation :
Ever thy hanging sound stupendous wrought
Within their souls unfathomable thought,
Until aroused, inspired with thy tempestuous glad-
ness,

They blew a people to flame with their own heroic
madness !

All these have passed ! Hardly a human thing
Hath left a trace by thine eternal spring.
And yet in sooth what gleams upon the rock
Hard by the shattering of the water shock ?
A marble tablet with some gilded letters !
Whereon the country folk inscribe them debtors
Of one who deigned to visit and to praise
Their parish waterfall in former days !
Who then among the shades that came and went
Amid the centuries' evanishment,
Who then have names regilded year by year,
Lest the remembrance of them disappear
With other mortal memories from here ?
Lest the tradition of the wondrous fact
That these have seen, yea, praised the cataract
'Mong children's children be at length forgotten,
And even such magnanimity lie rotten !

A few have seen thine awful face, O youth
Ever renewed ! a few with love and innocence and truth,

Or splendid power of personality
May seem to claim a fellowship with thee,
To claim some solemn kindred with the sound
Imperial inhabiting the gulf profound !
Yet these have ne'er a record carven in marble,
Or by the fall, or by the sylvan warble !
What shadow more illustrious than all
Claims for itself such homage by the fall ?
Demands among the æons his day alone
From the awful hunger of pale Oblivion ?

I read—am I deceived ?—a common king !
Among the waifs indifferent Time may fling,
Stranding them here—of kings there moulder many.
No people without hereditary zany !
But one of these, living his little hour,
Vouchsafed, it seems, to leave a royal dower,
With a decoration deigning to invest,
O cataract ! thine adamantine breast !
Glancing in sooth to what he stood before,
He deemed he saw thee, deafened with thy roar
He deemed he heard thee ; but his mind divided
Now wandered to the game the hills provided,

Now to one surly, illconditioned hind
Who had not doffed his bonnet, nor inclined.
Howbeit the monarch, turning to the mayor,
Was pleased his satisfaction to declare,
Was gracious to the local waterfall ;
And the mayor took it as a personal
Compliment, bowing almost with an air
Of deprecating such distinction rare—
As if the king had patted his little boy,
And he could only wish that less alloy
Were mingled with the humble offering
He dared to set before so great a king.
For this in sooth was but the parish sight ;
They held it cheap who heard it day and night,
To every bumpkin from his earliest age
Familiar ; but yonder in its cage
They kept the curious thing that brought them patronage.
Half proud of it, they felt it did them credit,
As if themselves, not God Almighty, fed it . . .
. . . Did a Prince really condescend to nod
Familiarly to this great work of God !
Surely the cataract made a modest hush,
Became suffused with a retiring blush,

Yea, and the tittering fluttered cavern fountain
Convulsed with boastful bliss the tremulous old
mountain !

Slave to courtly etiquette !
Military martinet !
Master of the ceremonies !
If God with lightning couched your eyes,
Then might your dazed vision see
Inviolable Liberty !

Hereditary puppet spangled gay,
Whom fullgrown babies being amused obey,
When some sardonic hidden ventriloquist
Speaks through you whatsoever he may list,
One must be more than common king to see
The glory of this immortal majesty !

Tyrant with a narrow brain,
Taking holiest names in vain,
Suffered to sport with living joys
And living woes, in place of toys ;

Ye of the wooden complacent royal faces,
Fumbling among live nerves of human races,
Clutching wormeaten hereditary places !
Before your realm of human government .
Ye stand imbecile, idle, impotent,
Not more unhearing this immortal chime
Than dark to your allotted sphere sublime !
Deaf to the long, low wail funereal
In yonder gloom, from ruined lives that call
Some one to help ! Leave ye your vantage ground,
And toil among them till the light be found !

Poor worms ! the fulsome sense of your pale marble
Contemptuous rains will insolently garble :
And if we flung the royal skeleton
(Forbid it loyalty !) with all your own
Carcasses in the welter, do ye think
Yon hurricane of waters wild would slink
Mild like a courtier from the sacred corse,
Or shatter all alike without remorse ?

Glory to God on his eternal throne !
Give glory to the lowly Man, his Son.

Some light reflected for a moment shone
From holy men and mighty : they are gone :
And still we hear the water's mighty monotone :
God reigns over the universe alone !

AT COURT.

BEHOLDING with a listless eye
A gaily-apparelled train
Of many ladies passing by,
With a delightful pain
My heart was taken unaware
In very sweet suspense ;
Amid the crowd unfair and fair
A hallowed influence
Stole on me, like some fountain sweet
That mantles in the brine
Of unrefreshing seas to greet
A mariner's lips that pine ;
Stole on me from a girlish face
That passed among the rest ;

Like hers whom I may ne'er embrace,
Hers who hath never blest
These many pallid latter years,
Nor may for evermore
Shine on my soul for all my tears,
As in the days of yore. . . .
Was it ever heard that a hallowed face
Of one whom hearts enwound
Faded slowly, and left no trace
In death's chill mist profound,
Yet later unto living eyes,
That yearned with mute despair,
Dawned faint again with sweet surprise,
And the old loving air ?
Because so warm a human love
With tremulous living breath
Had power to charm, and melt and move
Inviolable Death !
Nay, that hath never, never been ;
She may not come again,
My sister, my long-lost Kathleen,
Into our world of pain !
For well I know the girlish face !

Her child, her very own,
Left here, lest we whom she forsook
Might wither all alone !
And so in sooth she blooms anew
To bless our later time,
Beautiful now as when she blew
About my boyish prime.
Fair child ! thou risest from a grave ;
To me thy silken hair
Seems radiant with flowers that wave
Above thy mother there.
Thy face is toward the dawning bright ;
And One will lead thee on,
Tranquil for ever in the light,
Until the day be done !

A VISION OF THE DESERT.

METHOUGHT I saw the morning bloom
A solemn wilderness illumed,
Desert sand and empty air :
Yet in a moment I was aware
Of One who grew from forth the East,
Mounted upon a vasty Beast.
It swung with silent, equal stride,
With a mighty shadow by the side :
The tawny, tufted hair was frayed ;
The long, protruding snout was laid
Level before it ; looking calm away
From that imperial rising of the Day.
Methought a very awful One
Towered speechless thereupon :

All the figure like a cloud
An ample mantle did enshroud,
Folding heavily dark and white,
Concealing all the face from sight,
Save where through stormlike rifts there came
A terrible gleam of eyes like flame.

Then I beheld how on his arm
A child was lying without alarm.
With innocent rest it lay asleep ;
Awakening soon to laugh and leap ;
Yet well I knew, whatever passed,
The arm that held would hold it fast.
Nor ever then it sought to know
Whose tender strength encircled so,
Living incuriously wise
Under the terrible flame of eyes.
In those sweet early morning hours
It played with dewy, wreathing flowers,
Drinking oft from a little flask
Under the mantle : I heard it ask :
Yea, and at other times the cooling cup
Gentle and merciful He tilted up.

But when the sun began to burn,
I saw the child more restless turn,
Seeking to view the silent One :
Then, growing graver thereupon,
It whispered, " Father ! " but I never heard
If any lips in answer stirred.
Yet if no answer reached the child,
I know not why he lay and smiled,
Raising his little arms on high
In a solemn rapture quietly !

The shadow moved, and growing less,
A blue blaze ruled the wilderness.
The child, alert with life and fire,
Gazed all around with infinite desire.
Erect he sat, contented now no more
To nestle, and feed upon the homely store :
He searched the lessening distance whence they came ;
He peered into the clear cærulean flame ;
His hand would mingle with the shaggy hair
Of that enormous Living Thing which bare,
Whose feet were planted in the powdery ground
With ne'er a pause, with ne'er a sound.

Yon fascinating, wondrous Infinite
His clear young eyes explored with keen de-
light :

He gazed into the muffled Countenance,
Undazzled with the rifted radiance :
Then, giving names to all that he espied,
He murmured with a bright triumphant pride,
“ I hold their secret : lo ! I am satisfied.”
Oh ! it was rare to see the lovely child,
As with a gaze ecstatic he smiled,
Following with eager, splendour-beaming eyes
A bird magnificent, who sailed the skies
On vast expanded plumes of sanguine white,
Enamoured of transcendant azure light,
Higher and higher soaring to the sun ;
Claiming a share in his dominion ;
Elate with ardour, like unwearying youth,
Imperially at home in awful realms of Truth !

But ah ! the sun beat fierce and merciless
Upon the boundless, barren wilderness.
Then soon, responsive to a slakeless thirst,
Behold upon his ravished sight there burst

A vision of a far-off lake most fair,
Where many a palm was dallying with air,
And soft mimosa : how alluringly
Smiled the sweet water in a blinding sky !
Can he not hear a gentle turtle coo
Among light leaves, yea, very wavelets blue
Lapping among green reeds upon the shore,
Calling him to abide for evermore ?
Ah ! how doth he impetuous entreat,
And chide the silent, never-lingering feet !
Yet was it strange—for as the feet advanced,
The lake receded, and the waters danced
An eerie dance with all the belts of trees,
And mingled with them, till the sand with these
On the horizon made a marge that wavered,
And all blew sidelong, thin white flame that
quavered—
Then one low whispered, “ ’Tis the Devil’s
water ! ”
While in his ear there pealed cruel, unearthly
laughter.
On this the child fell ill with fever,
Made many a vain yet wild endeavour

To fling himself from forth the grasp
That held with ne'er-relaxing clasp,
Murmuring, "None holds me fast ;
I am a plaything of the blast."
But the Rider from the girdled store
Ministered to him as before.

And while the shadow veered by stealth,
A measure of his primal health
The boy resumed : an air that fanned
Blew veritably o'er the sand ;
And little birds before them flew,
Vested in a sober hue,
A paly brown, to suit the home
Where 'tis their destiny to roam.
Yet I am sure that ne'er a bird
Fluting more soft and sweet was heard
Among the lawns of Paradise,
Than these in such a humble guise,
Who, without any rest or haste,
Travel warbling o'er the waste.
Moreover in the sterile soil
Some spots of verdure, while the travellers toil,

Arise ; yea, even the sweet oases,
That vanished with the feigning, undulating graces,
Were fair and real delight, however fleeing,
With law distinct of transitory being ;
Only illusion for deluding eyes,
That yearn for what nor waste nor world supplies,
Some dim ideal of the soul,
That ever loves, and grows toward the illimitable
whole.

But ever, as they two solitary range,
And as the immeasurable horizons change,
Upon the child more burdensome doth lie
Sense of impenetrable mystery.
Erst he imagined that he chose to go ;
But now he feels, whether he will or no
One carries him : he joyed to be in life
For possibilities of boundless strife,
Wresting resplendent secrets bold from all :
Now the unmasked immensities appal,
Weighing incumbent on the sense and thought,
As on a dwindling grain of dust, as on a thing of
nought !

A moment looking toward the shrouded Face,
Now is he fain his timid eyes to abase :
“ Father, unveil ! ” he tremulously cries,
Fearing he asks impossibilities.

Yet hearken ! voices musical
Like dew upon the desert fall,
Rising and falling,
Calling, calling !
Very plaintive, sweet, and low,
As the lonely pilgrims go :
Are they spirits of the wild,
Calling, answering low and mild ?
Is it a voice of one departed,
Plaining gentle, unquiet-hearted,
Vainly hungering to enfold
His beloved as of old ?
Severed from our living kind,
In a feeble, wandering wind
Wandering ever ? none can tell
Whence the mystic murmurs well :
But oft an Arab, roaming far
Over sands of Saharâ,

Hears the sweet mysterious measure
With a solemn-hearted pleasure,
Saying, " No wind among the stones
Breathes the rare unearthly tones ! " .
And howsoe'er it be, they tell
The soul of things ineffable,
Of a life beyond our death or birth,
Of a universe beyond the earth !

Monotonously weary seemed the way,
While light declining faded slowly away.
Some haze obscured a gradual westering sun,
And all the oppressive firmament was wan.
In it voluminous appears to form
From the horizon a continent of storm,
A ponderous bulk of gathering indigo,
Tinged in its formidable overflow
With hues of livid purple poison-flowers.
In ghastlier whiteness for the night that lowers,
Strewing forlorn the desolate desert pale,
Some grinning skeletons of men assail
My vision ; while a monstrous bird of prey
From a putrescent corpse rends fierce away

The clinging flesh with horrid sound of tearing,
Its beak abruptly plunging, pulling, baring ;
Bald-headed, hideous neck low crouched betwixt
The pressure of strong talons curved, infixed :
Now the proud brain, like fearful Madness,
 mangling,
Like Sin now with the reeking bosom wrangling ;
Like ignorance, disease, war, tyranny, starvation,
Eating the vitals of a noble fallen nation !
This creature, as they pass, a moment glaring
Voracious-eyed, with vasty vans that cover—
A little further on obscene doth hover
A grey hyena, and he laughs a peal
Of beastly laughter, scraping up a meal
Loathsome from forth the sand : there is a howl
Dolefully borne from where the lean wolves
 prowl !
Then silence falls upon the deepening gloom,
And sultry air forebodes the smothering Simoom.
Looking toward the child with deep dismay,
I noted his fair ringlets grown to grey,
And sparse like withered bents upon his head :
His pale, worn countenance was drawn with dread ;

Yet in his eyes there burned a grand resolve,
No sights of terror lightly might dissolve.
And now I heard him murmur, "Mighty Father!
I trust thee; yea, to thee I cling the rather,
Albeit I may not see thine awful face!"
Then I was sure he felt the strong embrace
Tighten around him, though a Skeleton
Came stalking from the night to lead them on:
A far-off murmur swelled into a wildering roar;
A hurricane of flame and sand whirled like a con-
queror!
And when the o'erwhelming terrible death-tempest
on them broke,
The shrinking child crept nestling close under the
Father's cloak.

Then darkness swallowed the portentous plain.
When faint it dawned upon mine eyes again,
Lo! there was moonlight in a sky serene:
All lay at peace beneath the melancholy sheen.
No voice was heard, no living thing was seen.
Yet ere I was aware, that awful Apparition
Once more emerged upon my mortal vision—

The shrouded, dim, unutterable Form,
With eyes that flame as through the rifts of storm,
Mounted on that colossal Living Thing,
Bearing the child now, softly slumbering—
While all confused immeasurable shadow fling.
Peacefully lay the boy's pale, silent head :
And, looking long, I knew that he was dead.
Then all my wildered anguish forced a way
Through my wild lips : " Reveal, O Lord, I pray,
Whither thou carriest him ! " I cried aloud :
No sound responded from the shadowy shroud ;
Only methought that something like a hand
Was raised to point athwart the shadowy land ;
And while afar the dwindling twain were borne,
I, gazing all around with eyes forlorn,
Divined the bloom of some unearthly morn !

Where was he carried ? to an isle of calm,
Lulled with sweet water and the pensile palm ?
Vanishing havens on the pilgrimage
Surely some more abiding home presage !
Or must the Sire attain always alone
The happy land, with never a living son ?

O! awful, silent, everlasting One!
If thou must roam those islands of the west,
Ever with some dead child upon thy breast,
Who would have hailed the glory, being blest,
Eternity were one long moan for rest!
For do we not behold thee morn by morn,
Issuing from the East with one newborn,
Carrying him silently, none knoweth whither,
Knowing only all we travel swiftly thither?

THE WATERNYMPH AND THE BOY.*

I LIVE in the heart of a limpid pool,
In the living limpid heart of a pool :
I lie in a flow of crystalline,
Where silvery fish with jewelled eyne
Float silent, and the ripple-gleam
With many a delicate water-dream
Moves the face of flowers to quaver,
Hanging where the wavelets waver ;
Daffodil, hyacinth, spring flowers,
Who slumber veiled from sunny showers,
That only trickle feebly through
Forest foliage from the blue.

* A legend tells of a lake in the Black Forest that bathers have been drawn down by water-spirits there.

My streamlet sparkles in the pines,
And here in lambent flame declines ;
For the sun has burst his leafy thrall,
Kissing it passionate in the fall.

I love to feel the water plash
Merrily into my pool,
With a swift reverberating flash
Of soft foam beautiful.

One brilliant surface shrines the sky,
Another young lit leaves on high,
While yet another shadowed o'er,
Below deep emerald, my floor
Reveals, all wavering below
My water's everlasting flow.

O the beautiful butterflies
That flutter where the runnel flies !
Silverly glistening over stones
Where yonder nightingale intones,
Where he flutes the livelong day,
Learning the water's liquid lay ;
A lovelier rendering is heard
Fresh from the genius of a bird ;
While emulous water vainly tries

To glisten like the glistening eyes
Of nightingales in vernal leaves,
Where yon rosebower softly heaves :
Soon will their mellifluent strain
Woo the rose to life again !

But surely there are lovelier things
Than these are with their cinnamon wings !
Whose grace hath more compelling spells
Than all mine azure damozels !
For as I lay in my pool one day,
A cloud released a gleam,
And the jewel heart of my home grew gay
With a glorifying beam.

There came a rustle in the trees :
I deemed a silver doe
Would sip the ripple of the breeze,
Wandering to and fro ;
Listless I watched until he should
Arrive here from the shadowy wood.

It was no deer ; it was a boy
Assailed and took my heart with joy !
Stealthily, daintily, he came,
Flooding all my sense with flame.

He was clad in a ruby dress,
That clung to his breathing loveliness,
While hose of opalescent silk
Revealed his delicate limbs of milk.

Shyly, timid as a doe,
He glanced if aught were near or no,
Then sought him out a pleasant spot
With clustering forget-me-not,
And leisurely upon the brink,
His jewelled raiment to unlink
Began ; that yielding made a way
For hungering eyes of mine to stray
In his fair bosom, velvet fine
Flushing it warmly as with wine,
Velvet and cambric lingering loth
To leave him, yet to faintness both
With warm white satiate, from whence
Stole overpowering my sense
Smooth boy-bosom, whose are twin
Rosebuds in a silky skin.

By slender fingers, where the pale
Moon rises in a rosy nail,

Cleared from all the lordly dress,
He shone with native loveliness !
Then pressed the grass with shrinking foot,
Strawberry blooms that promise fruit,
Windflower, violet and moss,
And taller flowers that love the loss
Of all their living gold upon
Those limbs unheeding any one :
And yet anon,
As he long blades of grassy gloss
Perplexed daintily disjoins,
A locust leaps upon his loins !
Now finding near a shelving rock,
Behold ! he cowers before the shock ;
Yet heated how he longs to lave
His beauty in my cooling wave !
His rounded ivory arms have met
Over locks of glossy jet :
Gracefully curls the form so fair
Now upon my yielding air ;
Cleaves my laughter-flashing wave,
Delighted one so soft and suave
To gulf within her glassy grave.

Lo ! many a clear aerial bubble
Tells the water-heart's sweet trouble !
He lips the ripple, pants and flushes,
Thrusts out white buoyant limbs, and pushes
With turning palm, a snowy swan
Lavishing his bosom upon
My mantling water in the sun !
Now hath he climbed beside the stone,
With filmy lichen overgrown,
Where small swift globes of water twinkle :
There among the periwinkle
Creeping, sidles with a shoulder
Pressed upon the verdured boulder,
Along a narrow ledge, to wet
His shining head within the jet
Of foam that skirts my clear cascade,
Leaning under, half-afraid.

All my close-clinging vision grew
Over him leaping forth anew :
He dives ; he rises ; I refrain :
He floats upon the shine again.
Luxuriant he lies afloat,

Half his form, and half his throat,
Clear from crystalline that sways
Him gently, with alluring haze
Veiling some of him from sight,
Filming less or more of white
Wrist or shoulder, as he moves
Fair on wavering water-groves,
Hearing a sweet long croon of doves.
Flying pansies, butterflies,
Moths aflame with crimson dyes,
Haunt his vague and violet eyes :
Odorous shadow of the trees,
Drowsy with a drone of bees,
Amorous nightingales enkindling
At intervals the air and dwindling,
Slim grey waterfall in plashing,
On my stone the wave in washing,
Sweetest music never ending,
Blending, never-ending,
Lulls him in his water-wending.

Why, boy-lover, tell me why
I was doomed to see thee lie,

I was doomed to see thee die,
Tell me why
Even I
Am singing now thy lullaby !
Hear my water sing thee now
A lullaby !

In thy jasmine throat meander
Tender lines of dimple,
And 'tis haunted where they wander,
While the waters wimple,
With a shy blue as from veins,
Where soft throat subsiding wanes
Into billowy bosom dreaming
Faintly of the roses ;
Whose dim dream a bud discloses
In the gleaming
Undulating almond skin,
Roses nascent soft therein.
Ah ! the quiet music of thy beauties undulating ;
Ah ! to feel, to feel, thy gentle warmth of bosom
palpitating :
What breath from heaven was breathing behind the
fairy flower,

Whose ample one white petal thy body had for
dower,

Blowing so unerringly to mould thee as thou art,
Even so waving waist and limb, and the snow about
thy heart ?

And if my hands were ne'er to thrill, my beautiful,
my boy,

As they filled them with thy bosom, the treasure and
the joy,

Why along the ideal limit heaved thy delicate form,
So, nor any otherwise, languid, white and warm ? .

I flung me round him,
I drew him under ;
I clung, I drowned him,
My own white wonder ! . . .

Father and mother,
Weeping and wild,
Came to the forest,
Calling the child,
Came from the palace,
Down to the pool,

Calling my darling,
My beautiful !

Under the water,
Cold and so pale !
Could it be love made
Beauty to fail ?

Ah ! me for mortals :
In a few moons,
If I had left him,
After some Junes
He would have faded,
Faded away,
He, the young monarch, whom
All would obey,
Fairer than day ;
Alien to springtime,
Joyless and grey,
He would have faded,
Faded away,
Moving a mockery,
Scorned of the day !

Now I have taken him
All in his prime,
Saved from slow poisoning
Pitiless Time,
Filled with his happiness,
One with the prime,
Saved from the cruel
Dishonour of Time.
Laid him, my beautiful,
Laid him to rest,
Loving, adorable,
Softly to rest,
Here in my crystalline,
Here in my breast !

ALLERHEILIGEN.*

An abbey in a forest old,
A forest old of pine,
Slowly arose where hills enfold
Not very far from Rhine :
And lower a stream that swept the walls
Fell into silver waterfalls ;
Seven slender falls in a gorge of grey,
Where the willowherb was wet with spray ;
The rock wore glossy grass like hair,
And a birch-tree shimmered in soft air ;
Nor yet stole sweetly over the cool
Wave, as it glided into a pool,
A vesper hymn
From the forest dim,
Nor bells from Allerheiligen !

* A ruin in the Black Forest.

Flew twenty summers ; the monks were there
In a cloistral solitude :
How few that heard the chaunted prayer
Divined the worldly feud
'Mong lives monotonous and pale,
Whom weariness would oft assail !
Yet holy-hearted, gentle men
Paced the echoing cloister then,
Learnèd, and kindly to the poor ;
Some sorely worn who sought to lure,
Rest to a weary wounded heart ;
And where the mountain cleaves apart,
Such an one, ere the day's decline
Like an illumined vellum fine,
Mused oft upon the sombre green,
Beyond the fluttering watersheen,
Of piny hills, toward the sky
Receding with a softer dye,
And ever with an airier bloom,
Till they are fading to a fume :
Now at eve stole o'er the cool
Wave, as it glided into a pool,

A vesper hymn
From the forest dim,
And bells from Allerheiligen !

Seven hundred summers ; the monks are gone ;
Their abbey in the wood
Resigns in every mouldered stone
A human brotherhood !
Meekly disclaims, a ruin wild,
Being any more than Nature's child :
Taken of yore from mother Earth,
Loves dreaming o'er the time of birth :
In its old age the interval
Remembering little, hears a call
From ministers of earth and sky,
Wooing ever alluringly.
Yet in the sylvan raiment rare
That soothed a desolate despair,
The fading ruin seems to know
Memories that come and go ;
Memories that float and fly,
Like a flower's breath bewilderingly ;

Of when at eve stole o'er the cool
Wave, as it glided into a pool,
 A vesper hymn
 From the forest dim,
 And bells from Allerheiligen !

Closes around an odorous shade
 Of solemn pillared pines,
Breathing sea-murmurs, being swayed,
 When musing one reclines.
Ivy and vine and roses vie
With old flamboyant tracery :
Lo ! the carven corbel where
Hangs a tiny garden fair ;
Birds have sown it as they pass
With fairy mosses and with grass :
A wild bee in a dim chapelle,
Hovering near a flowerbell,
With a drowsy murmur droning,
Imitates a priest intoning,
With his lowly eyes intent
Upon the Holy Sacrament !

Wild geranium and fir
 Perfume the air, in place of myrrh,
 Breathing from a thurifer :
 Winds are jubilant, wail, complain,
 Where many a blaze of jewel-pane
 Heard the tempestuous anthem heave and wane !
 Winds intone a wondrous hymn
 In yonder aisles of forest dim ;
 But a frail harebell
 Is the only bell,
 Hangs now in Allerheiligen !

There is a human savour still
 Faintly lingering here,
 Like a melody about a hill
 In a shining summer air ;
 A savour only, a flower scent
 Of wilding thyme concealed and blent
 With mingling marjoram or mint—
 So many human lives intense
 Dwindled long to an influence,
 Pervading flower and tower and tree
 With a hallowed melancholy !

All honour would the abbot claim ;
To-day you scarce may read his name,
Once gleamed over with altar-flame,
Though you may note a crozier
On worn grey marble in a blur !
This lovely place is a very shrine,
Where reverent spirits all incline
Before the mystery Divine . . .

. . . But, lo ! upon the apsidal wall,
Unseen till now, a monster scrawl—
Some graceless living creature's name
Sprawling portentous, and the same,
When you look nearer, far and nigh
Defiling all the sanctuary !
Ah ! many a life's all-hallowed spot,
Deep with dewy forget-me-not ;
Many a heart's elysian bower,
Dearly alive with passion-flower,
Knows the intrusion of a stare,
Feels foul feet of a common care :
" Mene, mene," scrawled with fire,
Insults our saintliest desire ;

Our holiest hopes are desecrate
With the world till they lie desolate !
Yea, many a shrine
Where souls incline
Lies waste like Allerheiligen !

COME NOT VERY SOON, LOVE.

COME not very soon, love,
To the quiet place ;
Let it be in June, love,
In the grace

• Of a summer day,
Very calm and fair,
Let our Mabel play
Merry there !

Look between the trees, love,
Into airy bloom,
When the summer breeze
Wafts the fume

COME NOT VERY SOON, LOVE.

Of many a summer flower ;
Songs from near the nest ;
My memory shall have power
To invest

Earth with subtler grace, love,
And a rarer joy ;
Who knew me face to face,
From a boy.

I would not have thee weep
Hopeless in thy woe ;
Only from my sleep
Let there flow

Through the summer light
Shadow of a loss,
Mellowing delight
In my mound of moss !

For the land revealed
All her heart to me,
Nor will keep concealed
Aught from thee. . . .

Now my fault may stain not
Cheek of thine with tears ;
Bloom of love may wane not,
Envied of the years.

Gaze into the distance ;
Mellow lies the earth ;
God with sweet insistence
Held our hand from birth ;

Led us from the far light,
Where He only knows,
From the silent starlight,
Where the souls repose.

He from everlasting
Led us docile here,
Joined our hands unhasting ;
Now recalls me, dear !

Darling, He is yonder
Wheresoe'er I go ;
Life nor death may sunder
From his heart I know.

COME NOT VERY SOON, LOVE.

Therefore, do not weep, love ;

He is calling home ;

Still the day is deep, love :

In the evening come !

DEATH AND LIFE.

I.

DEATH who is our awful master,
Death, secure of our disaster,
Awhile allows our wandering.

Life is a disdainful playing
With a victim ere the slaying,
Though he murmur merrily.

Merry children laugh amaying ;
But the men and women playing
Feel dead eyes environing.

Dare we turn our backs upon him ?
Death, for that dishonour done him,
Aims a blow to mangle us.

Very babes, who cannot cower
Before annihilating Power,
Writhe beneath his malison.

Yet the hero-souls defiant
Baffle, yea, conquer, the pale giant,
Smiling while he slayeth them !

II.

I seem to be dissolving slowly away,
Senses and spirit, fading from the day,
Drawn slowly into darkness and decay.
As in dull stupefying fumes, amid
Some dim chill waters where I shall lie hid
For evermore, my failing sight discerns
The face of my beloved, how she yearns
Over me with her tearful eyes, and turns
Impotent arms toward me : long she held
Me to her side heroical, compelled
Now in the end to feel me torn from her
By some dull strength of One who is mightier.

And I must leave her in the world alone,
Albeit I know there is not any one

To love her as I love her, so to gaze
Into her sweet eyes as I used to gaze,
So with a touch love-light to hold the child,
Yielding and leaning, mother, yet a child !
I leave her with our little ones, I leave
Her in the bosom of One who will not
leave,
Who led us to one another, and will cleave !
So musing tearfully I faintly smiled,
Falling asleep, foreboding all was over,
All over with the singer and the lover.

III.

Lo ! I awaken into lovelier life,
Into a lovelier celestial life.
For I am lying on what seems a sea,
Some opal undulation of sweet sea,
Gentle and buoyant, full of all delight,
Nebulous heaving, all a pearly light,
Freshly alive with air of keen delight,
Full of a spiritual divine release,
Resolving all the strain of life to peace,
Soothing and satisfying souls with peace ;

Relaxing all the weary stress and strain
Of human hearts disquieted in vain,
Stealing into an overwrought wrung brain,
Sweeter than any anodyne for pain,
Or deep nepenthe of oblivion
Fallen from shadowy wings on any one !
So the dear Saviour stilled the waves when He
Rose in the storm by night on Galilee.

And when I opened wondering faint eyes,
I felt above me wonderful wide eyes
Of one from whom exhaled the heavenly calm,
All light and harmony, and joy and balm !
But they were wide with wondering surprise ;
For this sweet angel knew mine earthly life,
My longing, wavering, turbulent blind life ;
Had seen a helpless, haggard face that pored
Beyond the gravestone ; she who knew the
Lord,
From her own flawless love, familiarly,
Felt half impelled to smile, and half to cry,
Moved with incredulous bewildered wonder
How any poor thing like this lying under

Should so the Father of our life mistrust,
Foreboding He may leave it in the dust !
No sound she breathed ; only in her clear eye
Compassion dimmed the sweet serenity.
No anger moved her, only deep compassion ;
And she looked on me in very tender fashion,
Even as a tender-hearted woman may
Look on a wounded bird in sore dismay,
Whom hunting beast or hunting men may follow,
And whom she cherishes in her bosom hollow,
Nestling, how tremulous, in her bosom hollow !
Nay, rather I was like a little child
Found numb by night where mountain snows are piled,
Long lying in fever with delirium wild,
Who now, reviving to a tranquil health,
Wakes very feeble ; he the tender stealth
Of softened footfall in the silence hears,
While in a twilight over him appears
A lovely, loving face that smiles and weeps :
He dimly knows his mother ; then he sleeps.

This angel is exceeding fair and tall :
Soft as a dew, with tender heave and fall,

Harmony undulates aerial ;
We were wont to name this air the Pastorâl.
I know not if she sings the air at all ;
Flowing it floats aerial wings for all ;
I see she swings rare fumes ethereal,
As from a censer nebulously golden,
Wherein it seems light, odour, and sounds are holden ;
Nay, all the peaceful influences flow,
From her pure bosom heaving to and fro,
From her deep bosom more pure than any snow !
Flow from her tranquil eyes that do with glory
glow ! . . .

. . . How ! doth it wane, the Vision ? will it
wane !

It wanes ! and yet I hear as erst a strain,
A strain of ravishment arise and fall,
A heavenly symphony, the Pastorâl ! . . .
I am awake, and still the music flows ;
I am alive, and ever clearer grows
The form of a sweet woman whom I love ;
Over some ivory keys her fingers move :
Hers was the sound ! she plays the Pastorâl !

Dear death relenting leaves me by her side,
Dragged erst like moaning shingle with the tide,
Drawn out adrift upon the lethal tide !
For while by night she roamed the paly sand,
Searching with mournful eyes afar from land,
Listless she heard the homeless ocean beat,
Till from the gloom a foamy flicker fleet
With ghostly whisper laid me at her feet.

IV.

Soon was I carried into sunny air,
And she was by me, very near me there.
Athwart the little bridge of stone we went,
Where darkened houses with wood balconies leant
Over a stream of purest chrysolite,
And women kneeling laved their linen white :
There from far piny mountains drifted down
Innumerable logs of gleamy brown ;
And while the tinted walls are fraught with vine,
Figs of full foliage with planes incline
Shadowy bowers from the sister side ;
Along their ever-softening narrowing line
Mine eyes are wooed, how tenderly, to glide

Till they are lost in yonder mountain bloom,
Immeasurable majesty of gloom !
Where lonely pine-forests primeval loom
Among scarred crags and gorge and precipice,
Labouring toward untravelled realms of ice.

Ye, gleaming plains, ye, silver spires, abide
Ever in your own glory with no pride,
Albeit ye dwell so far above the world !
For when your opaline rare mists are curled
Athwart you wandering, your forms appear
Fair fleeting phantoms from a heavenlier
sphere.

Once more my soul saluting you may rise,
With awful rapture filming her meek eyes,
To worship you, ye throned Divinities !
And you, ye autumnal fairy woodland flowers,
Who smile irradiate with sunny showers,
And you, ye leaves who flutter in the breeze
On all your faintly mellowing full trees !
Thou, dimpling stream, ye, twinkling blades of
grass,
Tenderly suave, salute me as I pass !

Thou, little robin, russet in apparel,
Sprinkling my faint heart with thy dewy carol,
Mazily singing in thy fair apparel,
A labyrinth of fantasy thy carol !
Is it a fond delusion, fond and sweet,
That so ye welcome long-delaying feet ?

Ah, mother Nature ! surely well she knew
That of her children there are very few
To love her as I love her : she forbore,
While in the act to lay me dumb and frore
In her dark bosom ; gave me a little more
Time to throb with her glory, and dispense
To all some feeling of her influence,
Feeling of her immaculate excellence.

Howe'er it be, there is enchanted light,
There is a magic of supreme delight
Upon the blessèd face of Her to-day,
A light I scarce remember since I lay
A listless boy in a sweet wood alone :
Sunlight was in the happy leaflets blown :
Tender pulsation of a turtle flown

From twilight green into blue open summer ;
A purple thymetuft, haunt of many a hummer,
Revealed Her : there unveiling fair She burst
On me unworthy, dazed and breathless first,
Lowly adoring now, nay, passionate as erst !

So from the mortal weakness I awoke,
And on me, fresh like Heaven, Nature broke.
Yet, ah ! when Death indeed shall seal mine
eyes,
Surely it were a very sweet surprise
If I might open them in such a wise,
Under those eyes !

v.

Death is but a shadowy master,
Breathing shadowy disaster,
Whom to front is Victory !

One there is that ruleth over
Man the hater, man the lover,
Universal Deity ;

Life and Death to all divideth :
Though one hopeth, one derideth,
Yet I know that each abideth
 In his own eternity !

Man and woman, mountain, sea,
Living creature, flower and tree,
Founded in Eternity !

THE OLD PIANO.

In the twilight, in the twilight,
Sounding softly, sounding low,
Float some cadences enchanted,
Eerie songs of long ago.

In the gloaming, in the gloaming,
Sits our child with lips apart
Near her mother who is singing,
Near the woman of my heart.

O how thinly, and how feebly
Rings the ancient instrument !
When it opened, slowly yielding,
What a weird unwonted scent !

Plaining wildered all forlornly,
As it were surprised from death ;
On a plate of faded ivory
Some lost name faint wavereth.

Wildered sorely, wildered sorely,
In oblivion mouldering,
To be challenged now for music
That the dead were wont to sing !

Are they rising, are they rising,
As I gaze through mist of tears,
In the savour, in the music,
Vanished visions of the years ?

Stilly stealing, stilly stealing,
Glide the dead in companies ;
Thinly flow their words and laughter,
Faintly radiant their eyes.

And they mingle, lo ! they mingle,
With my living wife and child,
Seem to thrust them from their places
And confuse their presence mild.

See a maiden, a fair maiden,
 Vestured in a garb of yore,
Singing yonder while her lover
 Pleads with longing eyes for more !

Then a mother, a young mother,
 With her child, in guise of eld,
She appears ; full blown to woman
 Now the maid whom I beheld.

Then a widow, a grey widow,
 See her now ! before he died
Love lay withered—worn and faded,
 Lo ! she plays where played the bride

. . . In a moan of wind they vanish,
 Dead and living ; I alone
Hear old Time insanelly mumble
 In the sea's low monotone !

ON RICHMOND HILL—1870.

Among fresh, innocent, leafy bowers we gaze,
With moveless fountains of white bloom embossed,
Infinite bowers blending in blue haze
Afar, to slumbrous woodland waves untossed.
These in one region yonder shine with rays
Of some uncertain lustre warm, that may
Be the sweet river's ; opallescens beams
Faintly athwart the tender turtle-grey
Of heaven slant ; the violet shy gleams
Forth from sere fern ; earth lies this April day
Waking from winter sleep to fair day dreams
Of summer happiness and early love,
Such as were hers in Eden when a bride.
With cuckoo-call and tender crooning dove
She murmurs joy ; until in her soft side

The wound where man a keen, cold anguish
drove

Reopens—man her offspring and her pride !
Ah ! for that morning when the youthful Sun
First saw the face of his beloved one,
Arose from sleep to find her by his side,
To woo her and to win her for a bride !

For, lo ! a knell all unexpectedly
Breaks from the leafy lowland slow and deep,
Wailing to heaven a long heart-broken sigh.
One moment Earth forgot that she must weep,
And gazed abroad with visionary eye,
Was young once more—yet pitilessly creep
Into their wonted lair within her heart
The loathsome, venomous old memories :
Now unavailing long-drawn wails impart
Her grief to careless unresponding skies :
They knell like drops of blood from forth the
heart,
Slow falling to suffuse with taint of blood
All opening summer's fair felicities
Of sunny air, of song-resounding wood.

It fills and loads with umbrage of fell blight
All burdened space ; a cancer merciless,
It heaves and throbs through all the summer
light ;

And on my soul the heavy tollings press.
I may not see the mournful human sight
Beneath the hill, concealed among the trees,
Where rests a homely village in the plain ;
But the knell says a balmy summer breeze
Blows idly there upon a human pain !
One leaves there some loved life beneath the sod,
Half longing with the lifeless to remain,
And meekly bleeds, or idly curses God !

O Earth, our mother ! was it well or ill,
To chafe so restless in thy natal home
Of sweet unconscious innocence, until
There dawned in thee the glory and the gloom
Of human vision and of human will ?
Then was revealed to thee that thou art fair ;
Afloat in some sublime immensity :
Then in thy heart immeasurable despair
Awful arose : to love, and yet to die !

Thirsting for God to faint upon void air !
To fall with throes of infinite desire
On phantom bosoms with a baffled cry—
Feed with illusions ever-ravening fire !

But Earth made answer, Surely it is well !
Divine Desire creative moves in all ;
And in man's soul heaves with an ocean-swell,
Restless, impetuous, imperial,
That forms a glory and gloom wherein to dwell.
A man grows god who may be loved and love ;
Yet fades and faints, thronged round with shadowy
ghosts,
Menacing from the night, who till he move
Wait for their life—to bloom among their hosts,
Luxuriant from broken hearts of Love.
Yet will their dust inflate a meaner crew !
Therefore ye fair and wise forbear your boasts—
Misgrowth and pain inevitable as you.

My weary heart responded, it may be
Some ardent spirits in the stars may deem

Our weal and woe harmonious pageantry
Of light and shadow on a stately stream !
When I rejoice, it seemeth so to me.
But some crushed lives can only feel the pain
Absorbing all, or fellow-worm's unrest.
And there arrives an hour when we are fain
To leave the alluring visionary quest
For a friend to fill our need, endure the strain
Of our so wayward leaning feebleness—
(Truth, cruel feigning she may be possest,
Cajoles but amorous boys with her caress!)—
To slip the neck from under yokes of toil,
Where like dumb beasts unwondering we tread ;
Weighed upon with a languor of recoil
Toward that abysmal Peace wherein the dead
Dissolve to purify them from the moil.
Then would we be the children chosen of
 Earth,
Unto the holy Silence whence she came
To bear her tribute—she in solemn mirth
Moves ever with immortal eyes aflame—
To freshen life with morning dews of birth,
Lose it in deep oblivion of death !

Here might I quiet pass to whence I came,
Here to the songful summer yield my breath !

Here on the pleasant growing grass to lie ;
Here on the innocent heart of spring to fail !
Over a life's confusion draw the veil
Of turf and daisies and the summer sky !

• Repenting of the clamorous hot fever,
And blindly inharmonious endeavour,
Wherewith my clashing life presumes assail
Our mother Nature's pure serenity.
With shamefast eyes, behold ! I meekly bring
My life's confusion, a slain offering,
Saying to Nature—Lo ! thine own again ;
Take for remoulding in a happier vein !
Woe for the lambs who trusted them to me,
Lambs whom I love, yet doom to misery !
Woe for the lovely lands were mine to bless,
For they are left a desolate wilderness.
Behold ! I cower at thy sacred feet,
There let my turbulent being dissolving fleet,
A tremulous foam blown inward from the wave :
All lives receive thy blessing on their grave ! . . .

. . . Nay, let me rest here all alone awhile,
Feeling the balmy summer softly blow,
As on a cloud, upon my mood of woe,
Until it vanish in the clear sun-smile.
Yon singing bird avails to reconcile
Me with sweet life : take me not at my word,
Offended Love ! for thou hast many a bird !
Such song the dark self-slayer might beguile,
With ecstasy of life made eloquent
In the green twilight ; only an open ear
And a brown bird have made this ravishment !
Still may I love, and still one holds me dear ;
Still may I joy to march with hosts of light,
Conquering kingdoms from the formless night ;
Still may I pour some wine of sympathy
For brothers lying in a sorer strait than I.
There is work to do—arise ! let the bedridden die !

WAS IT WELL ?

Was it well, was it well ?
When at evening shadow fell
In the great cathedral square,
With a gable-roofing fair,
And the only glimmer there
Was a flutter of a dress,
Ever waning less and less,
As my gaze enamoured clung,
Till the moving masses rung
It earthward and it fell ;
Was it well ? was it well ?

Was it well ? was it well ?
Where a fragrant azure fume

Pervades a Gothic gloom,
And jewelled gleams illumine,
With a melody of lights,
Marble slumber of the knights,
Till their stony bosoms bloom
Warm to flowers on the tomb :
There the morrow at a shrine
On thy kneeling form Divine
Mine eyes to worship fell :
Was it well, was it well ?

Was it well, was it well ?
Where a bubbling water fell
From the snakes in carven stone,
Grasses fine about them blown ;
In the greenwood lying prone
At thy feet, a boy in love
Murmured idle rhymes he wove :
While we mingled flame of eyes,
In leaf-lattices the skies
With soft suffusion fell :
Was it well, was it well ?

Was it well, was it well ?
Now the holy glamour fell
Upon every living thing
From the spirit of the spring :
Birds in yielding sweetly sing :
Flowers have innocent confest
Soft allurements of the West ;
Leaves and herbs benumbed in death
Feel and bless the living breath,
Gladden hill and dale and dell :
Was it well, was it well ?

Was it well, was it well ?
Only we defied the spell :
We were timid, we were wise,
Maimed the wings of Love that flies,
Putting out his dovelike eyes,
Tamed with prudence hearts that yearned,
Cooled with caution breasts that burned ;
Bosoms dreams of love made tingle,
Limbs afever till they mingle,
Only they defied the spell :
Was it well, was it well ?

Was it well, was it well ?
Ask no more ! I cannot tell
Spring confused her lovers all
Each obeyed the sacred call ;
Only we refused to fall,
Sanely, calmly self-incurled
'Mid such sweet madness of the world !
O'er twain that trembled into one
Love's own sweet month hath vainly blown,
Futile his golden tide hath flown,
Henceforth for ever passing on,
And we are still apart, alone !
Might our clashing kindle Hell ?
Ask no more, I cannot tell ;
Was it well, was it well ?

PALINGENESIS.

IN solemn precincts of the forest aisles
There is a wondrous gathering of life ;
And all the vacant dull monotony
Of netted wood softens mysteriously
To tender inarticulate prophecy,
A boundless budding, fluttering anon
As with green wings unfolding for a flight.
Now all my soul rejoices reverently
'Mid cool diffusion of a greening dim,
Kneels hearkening the still small voice of God ;
Nature from mouths of myriads new born
Anew revealing her eternal youth.

Lo ! all the champaign saturate with light,
Softly alive with magical green flames,

Grass blades commingling multitudinous
With daisies clustered, scattered, like to stars,
And kingcups floating buoyant everywhere ;
Now loose-limbed lambs push nestling to their
mothers ;

Haunts of primrose and frail windflower rejoice ;
Till later, wandering by the brimming river,
I view horse-chestnut massy-foliaged
Lift, as with eager hands innumeros,
Up the blue morn an offering of flowers,
While hawthorns near, sunsmitten to the core,
Froth over in dumb ecstasy of bloom.
Silverly winds the river from afar,
Dim-frosted from its currents here and there,
With hazy tree-clusters impalpable
Rolled as a border ; nigh me vivid turf
Gleams to the edge, but fringing fair the path
Wave pliant sword-like rushes o'er the flood,
Feasting the eye with gliding opal light
Of water 'mong green pennons at their play ;
And there full soon the water-hen will brood
On rushes pulled and woven to a nest
In a rich twilight of mild emerald,

Feeling sweet motions under the warm breast,
Lulled with soft flicker of the wave below,
And gentle whispering of airs above.

Yet later, lo ! the frail acacia,
Steeping in light her soft, luxuriant hair,
Sensitive flushes like a lovely woman,
All conscious when a cloud moves off the sun ;
Her leafy clusters delicate as down
Seem self-sustaining, buoyant in blue air,
Move, as informed with some sweet sister spirit
Yielding a gentle unimperious will
To every mood of zephyr-fantasy ;
Obtrudes not her soft presence on the sky,
Inlaying it with tender tracery ;
Seems there to dwell by loving sufferance,
Or primal right of native harmony
With mild dominion of warm summer air.

And now I walk in fields of sheathèd corn,
Spent with the chamomile and scarlet poppy,
Through meads profound with grasses all aflower,
And sorrel hanging like a sanguine mist

Thwart tender-grey horizons leagues away,
Broken by cumbrous cumulus of trees ;
In coppices where roses float like moons,
Breathing warm air we breathe a breath of flowers,
Instinct with sunny songs of summer bird,
Dartling innumerable intertangling lines
From vernal glooms, or sparkling in a spray.

A rugged stile, with upper bar made smooth
And polished from how many horny hands
Of passing peasant, leads me to a slope
That lapses quietly, all pasture land
And wood and grain, save where upon my left
On level space abides a little church,
With golden vane aglister in the sun,
Ancient, grey-walled, a pent-roof in dusk tile
Rich red, and weatherworn upon the tower,
A brow that shadows over slumbrous eyes
Of narrow window droused with eld and heat.
Thither I passed, and came where sleep the dead ;
Stonecrop and moss were on the buttresses,
And hart's-tongue sprouted in the creviced wall ;
Over the rude old woodwork of the porch

A dial 'mid the crumbling masonry
Shadowed the hour.

Upon a sunk headstone
Lichened, awry and low, with graven words
Worn wavering indefinite with time,
A very aged man, mute, motionless,
Reclined ; he leaned against another grave
That seemed less ancient ; in some withered leaves
His withered limbs were drooping heavily ;
His eyes were toward the heavenly distances,
Where ever and anon a paler wave
Passed over silky grasses of the field,
While tracts of land imbibed soft shadowing
From clouds that travelled in a gentle wind,
Effacing from the sight in yonder valley
His sober-vestured cot among the elms,
Restored awhile at unawares and still
With shining of warm sunlight in the place ;
So dawn to fade faint memories of his mind !

Then I approaching spake, addressing him :
“ A lovely spot ! often you linger in it ? ”
Vacant he looked as hearing not the words,

Or vaguely conscious of the sense they bore.
Then at the moment broke upon the air
A laughter of some children from the wood.
They came, their tiny hands full filled with flowers ;
The boy flung down his nosegay on a grave
In eager chase of some blue butterfly ;
The little girl for life and ecstasy
Twirled, leapt, and gushed with pleasure like a bird.

Then at the sight of these and at the sound,
Intelligence lit all the countenance
Of the old man ; he gazed and murmured low,
“ Mine were like these, about the age of these.”
These little children straying here to play
Seemed like unconscious sunbeams of the Lord
To rouse dim memories in a human soul
Where all grew shadow, even as yonder beams
Revealed the nested village in the vale ;
Yet speedily the darkness closed again.

But now that wicket where I lately passed
Clicked and swung open, rendering access
To a young man and maiden in their prime ;

But he first coming closed and held it shut
In sport against her, fastening the latch,
Insisting she must mount the neighbour stile
And he receive her into stalwart arms ;
So, coyly pleading, very soon she did,
Both laughing, crooning, and embracing close
When she was landed ; then with faces near,
He leaning with his arm about her waist,
She yielding fondly, blushing o'er with bliss,
These lovers went all bright and beautiful,
Threading their way among the grassy graves,
Here and there heedless treading over them,
Conversing, nor observing him who leaned
Upon the headstone facing them the while,
That very aged man, nor seeing me.

But once again these human lovers twain
Became unconscious sunbeams of the Lord
To rouse remembrance in a slumbering soul.
He gazed and murmured, " She and I like these
Passed here in other years—the very gate
We came by from the village ! this the church
Where twelve months after she and I were wed ;

And some few happy years we spent together ;
For she was very good—she lies below
Here where I sit ; 'tis warm and pleasant here !”

After, I heard his uneventful tale
From others in the village where he dwelt.
He tilled these fields, or drove these laden wains,
Brown-chested in the sweltering hot summer :
Mounted on stacks he forced a long bright blade
Through dense hot hay, then trussed it for the mart ;
She came from Orchard, but a mile from hence,
Noted for flavour of its teeming apples.

Small store of learning cottagers may boast,
Yet well they love their gardens and their homes ;
And in their scanty intervals of toil
Not all unheard, unheeded doth our mother,
Nature, the holy mother of us all,
Speak to her children in their heart of hearts.
What though ye, Fortune's favourites, may deem
Them as the maimed and deaf and dumb and blind
Of Nature's family, will ye profane
Presume to map and measure all the love,

Trickling through secret channels infinite,
Wherein a mother may impart herself,
Yearning out most to her unfortunates ?
They feel her fold, though they can ill explain
Aloud with finished phrasing what she means.
Ah ! not from callous heart or shallow soul,
Only from organ helpless with disuse,
Their filial love is inarticulate ;
While you, with your light pity and dull scorn,
Flout in them faults your very selves impose,
Listless disdaining to alleviate
By one least finger-touch the weary load
Of doom the Father lays upon the sons,
That we may win free range of one another,
Nor live unloved in loveless solitude.

Behold these children sporting in the wood,
Stooping for flowers, inhaling all the summer !
Doth nature never call the little ones,
Lay ne'er a tender hand upon their hearts ?
Behold these lovers when they sit and dream
In yonder hollow, with the gambols light
Of woodland elves, men name sunshine and shadow,

Sliding about them in the fanning breeze,
All his clear future roseate with her,
And all her future melted into him !
Hath nature ne'er a message unto these ?
Only the world's inhuman votaries,
The dead-alive, the arrogant, the cold,
Are reprobate exiles and pariahs,
Shut out for aye from her maternal heart !
Since even the very dead she takes and hides—
Though these may never look upon her face !
Deep in her bosom, changing them to flowers
And foodful corn, and dear remembrances,
Refreshing hallowed life in many a soul,
Feeding as meadows feed from secret springs.

And yet 'tis human to lament awhile
Over the lapse of man's bewildering life !
Nature the mother to this ancient man
Called as she calls the little ones to-day ;
Nature the mother to this ancient man
Spake as she speaks to yonder lovers now !
And when the children of himself and her
Left them alone, how oft on sabbath eves,

When hymns were silent in the rustic church,
He and she came to trim the little graves,
To pick germander and forget-me-not,
That bloomed about the children laid to sleep!
So when she left him verily alone,
And he to prayers came wearily without her,
When all were gone he knelt upon her sod,
Or dreamed with misted eyes in distances
Their guileless gaze had visited together.
Now sole survivor of his family,
Surviving all who loved him, all he loved,
Surviving even Love, yea, very Sorrow,
Sister to Love, survivor of himself,
He sits long summer hours upon the tomb,
Her lovely form long faded in the dust,
Her name faint wavering from the mossy stone,
Her memory nearly faded from his heart—
His heart that loved her—and he little feels
Save a mere sense of comfort from the sun
About those piteous impotent shrunk limbs.
Only when these new shadows of an hour,
These children and these lovers, fleeting fly,
They rouse a momentary memory,

As one designless may awake some sound,
Brushing a lyre long disused in dust.

Still Nature speaks as when he was a child,
Still speaks as when he was a youthful lover ;
But these are vanished, yea, the man that was
Moulders away ; now little but the name
Remains of him—these remnants of a man,
How shall they heed, all bloodless dull and cold,
Her awful rapture of immortal youth ?
So all about the stricken wife of Lot,
A living woman stiffening to stone,
Amid the glare of cities rolled in fire
And shocks of thunder subterranean,
In loud confusion swept the cavalcade
Of urgent richly vested fugitives,
Husband and brother, camel-mounted slave,
Dwindling in her to murmur meaningless.

The banquet, and the lovely guests of youth
With dewy coronal on smooth white brows,
And mirth and song, and goblets of rich wine,
Have vanished from his soul, and all the lights,

Save only one abortive, piteous
Fitful illuming dimly storied wall,
Still struggling with an incubus of Gloom,
That feeds secure, encroaching evermore,
Devouring slow the pale remains of life.

Ah ! God hath lent to us the loveliest thing
Of all rare splendours in his treasury,
And we poor senseless children of a day
Take it how lightly, toss and trample it,
Until He whispers, *Give it me again !*
Now will I lend it to another life.
Then first we look upon the thing we hold,
And lo ! it is the jewel of our youth.
Ah ! then we clutch it with a miser's clutch,
We peer within it, lift it up to light,
Search out some golden casket for the gem ;
Turning all cold to hear His awful voice
Quiet repeating, *Give it me again.*

Behold we dally in a dreamful doze,
Afloat in listless splendour of a water,
That loves inhaling glory from fair isles

Sunnily laving ; when we closed our eyes,
Our boat still floated in its own mild gleam,
Among white swans and balmy breathing airs :
Yet now we pale reluctantly to note
That we have drifted in our summer dream
All unforeboding among scenes of change :
Some chilling shadow ruffles the sweet river,
And troubles clear serenity of heaven.
We rouse affrighted—lo ! the current flies ;
Yonder the shores lie dubious in haze ;
Yonder a cold mist smothers all the stream ;
Pale while we peer, there ominously booms
From forth the gloom some roaring of a fall !

Arise my soul ! adore the inevitable ;
For Death is that inevitable shadow,
That ever follows in the ways of life.
Yea, we who live are needed as we are,
Nor in aught vary from our destiny ;
And they who die are needed as they are,
Fulfilling uses more mysterious,
Yet alike necessary and Divine.
Brothers arise ! leave wails effeminate ;

Confront and praise the inevitable law ;
To-morrow travails with a doom Divine ;
Glory and triumph in Humanity :
Stand by your guns, make sharp your cut-
lasses ;
Do battle for the brotherhood of man !

Full soon shall Life with gliding lips Divine
Blow through a fresher, greener reed than ours,
And fling us to the earth well worn with use.
So be it, Lord ; yea, teach us to rejoice ;
Some human music never shall be mute ;
Yon spheres can roll thee vaster harmonies !
Yea, if Thou breathe but on a point of dust,
The same shall thrill and falter into Man ;
Yea, from the clash of systems and of worlds
Shall flame a superhuman light of souls,
Innumerable notes from gloom to gloom
Passing alive in one white beam from Thee !

Nature, refreshed, unwearied, every spring
Awakes to bodings inarticulate,
As from a myriad mouths of budding boughs,

Tuning her instrument, and preluding
Her full triumphant symphony of summer,
And autumn's deep tempestuous ocean hymn ;
Her pæan hymeneal of blent lives
Of sea, and mountain-storm, and swinging pine ;
Forest that rings with acclamation rare
From beast, and bird, and myriad living things,
Tumultuous leaves and ecstasies of bloom ;
With man, a reed through whom the Hidden
 One
Breathes forth this anthem of the Universe !

Lead then, O year, thy bright procession forth,
Light clouds along cærulean clear skies,
And revels of fair flowers along the earth,
Dancing to softest music of mild airs,
Simmer of rills in sunny summer showers,
Mingled with flutes and flageolets of birds !
Roll tides of glory round about our dead,
Dead in the deep recurrence of thy smile,
Dead in the rhythmic breathing of thy breast !
O season ! as with blare of trumpet-call
Shock all the blood of every youthful thing

To bound for battle and sublime emprise ;
Prick to endeavour, gird us to endure ;
Inform with wingèd seeds all ambient airs,
Inform all creatures with a hallowed heat,
Dissolve them languorous in sweet desire,
Yea, flush them full with dear delicious fire
Inform the spiritual air of souls
With serviceable knowledge and device,
With germs of generous impulse and resolve,
With deed the fruit, and fantasy the flower ;
Speed the career of human destiny !
Abase, O Lord ! vain individual wills ;
Our puny aims, our lives ephemeral,
Replunge them in Thy calm Eternity !
We kneel abashed in Thine immensity,
Who revelled erst within Thy light Divine.
Still for a few more years insatiate
Of living, loving, learning, suffering ;
Hungry for all thy wondrous loveliness
In earth and air, in woman and in man ;
When we are old, or weary and well spent,
Letting thy rush of racers thunder by,
And cower in thy smile perennial,

Draw troubled breath regarding in Thy face
Of never to be moved serenity,
Resume our being, Thou who art alone,
And live for ever in the lives of all !

THE DWELLER IN TWO WORLDS.

A MAN stood pondering at twilight hour,
Still in the bloom of life's unfaded flower ;
Upon a narrow mossy ledge he stood,
Starred with some blossoms like to sprinkled
 blood,

Upon a mountain slope precipitous,
Gloomy with pines and olive cavernous.
Yonder, a stone's throw from him, was a grove
Where once the ruined temple proudly throve,
Ilex or vine-festooning terebinth
Veiling it now from cornice unto plinth.
Deep down a gorge tremendous fronting him,
Winding immeasurable, seemed to climb

Slow into heaven, all its gloom below
Filled with wan clouds, like leagues of mounded
snow

On rolling upland, densely thronged, and crowned,
Where it met heaven beyond the latest mound,
With a vast solemn, dusky-crimson sun,
Robed round in mist voluminous and wan—
Which yet relaxed anon above his head
Into a melancholy bloom of red—
Grim ramparts pinnaced of ragged stone,
Reared either side the vapours lying prone.

Methought I knew no living Sun was there ;
Only his phantom in astonished air
Rises again, though he hath set and died—
As in some rare concurrence may betide.
The youth stood dreamily beholding all
Bathed in the weird glow funereal,
Darkly ensanguined wall of crumbling fane,
And tottering pilasters that remain ;
A snowy mountain in north-eastern skies ;
Cedar and pine in their obscurities.
Is it the wind, or any ghostly thing,

That talks with these dim boughs low murmur-
ing ?

Passing above from darkling tree to tree,
That each in turn may whisper secretly
His tale of half-articulate despair,
Yet find no hope nor absolution there—
Fragrant from pine tears and from cedar wood,
Yet seems the sultry atmosphere imbued
Beside with odour indefinable,
Whether of musk or blood I cannot tell—
With age-long sheddings from the firs embrowned,
And dank with dripping of their boughs, the
ground—

Murmur sonorous from a torrent far,
With plaintive hooting of some owls that are
Hid in the forest, more oppressive only
Weighs down deep silence on the pilgrim lonely ;
While ever and anon there rustles by
Some indistinct thing swift and stealthily ;
But whether wolf or jackal by me ran,
Or somewhat with affinity to man,
A nameless loathsome presence, my desire
Led me not then more nearly to inquire—

No vestige of blest human neighbourhood
To cheer the solitary where he stood !

And yet I knew a mighty pilgrim host
Athwart this drear deserted realm had crossed,
Men, women, children, in full light of day,
Replete with life, rejoicing in the way !
But they have gone to other lands from here—
Nay, not the very travellers that were !
Hath the red dust, that mingles here so well
With withered pine-leaves, ne'er a tale to tell ?
Yea, as in this wise pines and cedars shed
Their quiet lives, in this wise do the dead
Of human forests lose their joys and tears,
Their longings and their fervours and their fears !

Later, considering the youth, methought
He seemed not unfamiliar ; I sought
How this mysterious land's dim denizen
I should have known ; it dawned upon me then
That in the waking world of every day
The very same in different array

I had beholden, surely in a mood
Mating but strangely with such solitude—
Now in some every-day pursuit immersed ;
Now among dallying idlers gay dispersed
On some park-sward ; yet oftener by the gate,
Where starving men with scowling looks of
hate

Toil out their lives, he ministers in pain,
Till he devise the riving of their chain.
Often when summer air was warm and mild,
I saw him resting with his wife and child
Hard by the shadow of a village spire,
With veering vane that glistened like a fire,
Where quiet sleep the meek and mossy dead,
Some simple words of hope above their head.
They mid ripe orchards of their humble croft
Reposing on the grass beheld aloft
How round the leaves and mellowing apples
ran

A luscious glory, warm, cærulean.

I marvelled much if this indeed were he,
The lover of a sweet tranquillity !

Yet I remembered noting with surprise
His sudden gleam of visionary eyes,
As of a soul transported elsewhere,
Even from the heart of common wonted care,
Or from the haven of a home most fair.

Alas ! alas ! he was no demon foul ;
But a poor mortal sprighted with a soul
Bisexual, conflicting ; nay, with two—
One childlike and affectionate that grew
Rooted a creeper clinging round a home ;
And one a restless spirit prone to roam
In far forbidden lands mysterious,
Dear unto haughty moods adventurous—
Thin airs where eagle-reason loves to breathe,
Which to the feeble and timorous were death ;
Ideal realms more glorious than day,
Where lovely visions falter from decay
With waving wand of wizard fantasy :
Awful forbidden regions of the dead,
Where wild lost souls of living men have fled
To cast them on the violated floors
Of gods reviled and disinherited,

Where life o'er dusky stains new crimson
pours,

While each lost soul delirious implores
For violent sinful joys the gods can give,

In these to agonize, then cease to live.

These are the haunts of that perturbèd sprite,

Who will not bend him to a tame delight.

Yea, for the ghost of some of ancient time

Lingered until it entered into him.

While oft with tears the tender soul implores,

A troubled spirit wafts him from the doors

Into yon fascinating solitudes ;

Though often here a formless fear intrudes,

Lest, if he slide upon the slope too rash,

He whelm his well-belovèd in the crash.

Ah ! ye who sit in winter by the fire .

About your old hearthstone, nor feel desire

To wander from it, do not curse your child

Gone with unquiet spirits of the wild,

Who sits no longer with you—pray for him,

And weep ! for when the window-pane grew

dim

With rain flung flying from a maniac blast,
Did ye behold a scared white face that passed,
Yet peered a moment out of the wild weather
Into the warm glow where ye rest together ?
That was your lost one wistfully beholding
The quiet faith of your serene enfolding !
If God hath gifted you with hallowed ease,
Think ye He hath no care for such as these ?
He leads unseen lone feelers after truth ;
On all blind blown wayfarers hath He ruth !

Yea, God inhabiteth both hell and heaven,
Love in the maybeam, Fury in the levin ;
From steadfast suns He squandereth life and light,
In death's pale mask He scattereth them by
 night ;
Pels in the hallelujah of a saint,
Raves in a rebel's blasphemous complaint,—
Yet art Thou holy before whom we fall,
Profound Unnamed who reconcilest all !

Behold ! the temple seemed as though on fire,
While heaven glowed as from a burning pyre.

Suddenly shadow muffled noiselessly
All feet of rocks and pines and cedars nigh :
Then o'er that mouldered cornice which
 impends
Over the huge stones of the wall ascends
A fringe of very flame, that grows more large,
Silently soft expanding on the marge,
Till imaged like a huge new-risen moon,
Ruddy it rests upon the temple soon.

Then in the mystic luminous new night,
One of those prowling things, I with affright
Had noted nigh, now paused in its career,
Rising upon two legs, a shape of fear ;
Shaggy and clumsy, with half human face,
And filthy gesture pointing to a place
Behind the temple, where I now beheld
Laurel and cypress, while among them welled
Waters delightful, bubbling, musical,
And a more soul-dissolving madrigal
From bulbul amorous among myrtle blooms ;
There over grove and emerald sward there
 looms,

As from the temple, enkindling mist of myrrh,
Mingling with liquid lute and dulcimer.

Yet lo ! a scene unnoted earlier—
For look, beneath yon inner ruin wall,
Shadowed till now, the moon a spectacle
Most hideous reveals—an altar square
Of massy stone, and over it a bare
Obscene grey idol, phallic, horrible,
Collared and braceleted with carbuncle.
Beneath, upon the horizontal stone
A human body beautiful lay prone,
A body of ideal-moulded youth—
Weep, holier lovers, o'er her in your ruth !
Her lower limbs, yet warm, hung helplessly
Over the verge ; along the ivory
I saw a slender rill of crimson glide
From a small gash within her tender side.

Stands, crimson-robed, the sacrificial priest,
And gloats upon her form, as on a feast
For eyes that seem to smoulder and to smoke
With lust unglutted in the slaughter-stroke.

A gleaming gory knife is in his hand ;
He wears on features, noble once, the brand,
Like a fallen angel, of the wrath of God,
All lightning-scarred ; his vitals are the food
Of an undying worm ; once golden hair
Hangs disarrayed ; his colour once most fair
Shows deadly livid ; one may note the drip
Of sanguine horror slowly down his lip ;
Hatred and scorn writhe ever there awake,
Like some foul life of convoluted snake.

In these dread natures dwells no rivalry
Of two strong souls that grapple unto death :
One only reigned since these have drawn a
breath ;
Or else one soul hath proved so powerful,
There lives none now to challenge the dark rule
Of that usurper ; never anxious care
Possesses them for other men's despair,
Lest weaker lives be trampled in the crush
Where eagerly for ends of ours we push ;
Their sweetest music is a victim's moan ;
With breaths of dying men they feed their own.

Never they sweep the infinite of time,
Wistfully peering for a hope sublime ;
They scorn the innocence of kindly ties,
And common cares, and pure felicities ;
For them no heaven of love, nor sacrifice
Of heroes for a cause ; their halls of ice
Sunder from human sympathy ; they dwell
Palaced alone in flame unquenchable,
A prison gorgeous, whose walls of fire
Are fed and fuelled with insane desire !

Alas ! my pilgrim's gaze appeared to range
O'er all the scene with fascination strange.
Yet hearken ! what new message floats from far,
Melodious from where the living are ?
'Tis like a peal of mellow village bells,
With muffled interval, that sweetly wells,
While early memories of childish times
Answer the faint pulsation of the chimes.
Mother and sister tender tones have twined
With that old hallowed music in the wind,
Even as one may send a loving word
Nestled within the plumage of a bird.

He dimly hears them pleading by the cross,
"O, Jesus, save him from an utter loss!"
He dimly sees them kneeling, earnest, mild,
There where he worshipped with them when a
child.

He vacillates upon the slope of fear
With misted eyes; but louder and more near
Strains of the revel captivate the ear,
And still he moves;—yet speedily methought
Yon bells with lovelier melody were fraught;
For now they ring a hymeneal peal,
And ringing to his bleeding heart reveal
A vision of a childlike woman crowned
With orange-blossom, beaming o'er a ground
Children have strewn with lilies and with roses,
While she, serenely confident, reposes
On a man's arm, who leads her from the
porch—
He knows himself, he knows the village
church!
Innocent hymnals of the children call
Vengeance upon him if he let her fall!

Winged with miraculous anguish of her love,
Even through shadows of this alien grove
An image of herself appears to move
With streaming eyes and long dishevelled hair
Imploring, and she brings their infant fair.
O then he paused, reaching a hand to grasp
The hand that, woe is me ! it cannot clasp,—
Vision adored and holy, yet a vision !

But shouts of laughter pealed as in derision
Clear from the revel ; clash of dulcimer,
Mingled with ravishment of musk and myrrh,
And lute and marrying music from below,
Swam cloudlike o'er him ; in the glimmering
grove,
Rained on with roses, youths and maidens move,
All blooming with a rare voluptuous bloom ;
Now languidly they glow athwart the gloom,
Dissolved with breathing some narcotic fume,
In pliant somnolence of yielding grace
Faintly repelling many a lewd embrace
Of things half-brute, half-man, that wind among
The bare-limbed mazes of their foamwhite throng.

Now, like a smouldering fire that springs to
flame

With a libation of poured oil, the tame
Assemblage, unaware to frenzy stung,
Bacchanals bounded, reeled, and kissed, and
clung!

Slowly, more swiftly, see the pilgrim move,
Until his feet seem flying to the grove!
Lust, loathly monster, fiercely folds him round:
And on the scene there falls a night profound. . . .

. . . . Silence: anon a mighty storm arose
Oceanlike in the pines uproarious.
Their haughty heads all agonizing swayed;
They wailed, and rent, and wrestled, sore afraid.
Till in a lull methought I was aware
Of wings that clanged innumerable in air
Assembling, of a trample and a crash:
Then, in an awful livid lightning flash,
A myriad bounding bristling backs I viewed
Horribly hustling, crashing through the wood;
And peals of mocking diabolic laughter
Clutched at my heart in closely following after.

All the black forest, cliff and cleft and peak,
Reiterated that infernal shriek,
Rebounding and rebellowing for ever :
Hearing such hell's glee hardest hearts may shiver :
Flash followed flash ; among those hoofs obscene
Lay the white form of him who once had been
Pure, happy, generous, of kingly mind :
May they be hoofs of fiend, or human kind ?
For cruel moral jubinations fall
From men when off its lonely pedestal
Genius tumbles with a loud undoing :
Maniacal they leap in his warm ruin !

Lo ! pines colossal cumbered with the snow,
Heavily falling from rent members now,
Or skeleton trees of humid shrouded head,
With lank grey parasitic growth long dead.
Above, the forest mounteth stern and steep,
Where in a boulder-chaos cataracts leap,
Resounding in the abyss a muffled thunder.
Behold ! where livid icy seas up yonder
Stare from a sterile snow ; but higher yet
Huge solid flamelike crag with many a jet

Springs in the vaporous void : it glares a vast
Condor abnormal in the storm aghast,
With many a ragged neck and baldest pate,
Scarred from remorseless torturing of Fate.
O grand Promethean visage marred with fire,
Hail, flood and frost, and blasts that never tire,
Power's age-long insult ! dost thou still aspire ?
Lo ! now the dazzling violet serpents dart
To maim your grandeur ! and you cleave
 apart :

Hark ! how stone tears do ponderously roll
Down the torn flank—so slides a human soul
Little by little, grates and lingers, holds,
Falls ; bounding clutches at some awful folds
Of God's precipitous drear robe, and falls,
And crashing to perdition all around appals !
The spectral brotherhood of mountains round
From one to another toss the terrible sound ;
And after murmurous pause the wrack beguiles
Some hoar mount, far a desolate hundred
 miles,

Out of his wintry swoond to answer slow,
Moaning a baffled human soul laid low. . . .

Then, save for solemn sound of waterfalls,
And sobbing wind subsiding, nothing calls :
Over the marred white youth snow softly silent
falls.

Yea, silence shed a healing chrisim around :
Then lifting heavy eyes that sought the ground,
I saw cloud-phantoms pale confusedly,
Bewraying presence of a light on high.
Till unaware they stilly rend asunder,
Revealing a fair Empyrean wonder.
A snowy peak illumes a violet air,
And a clear star serene reposes there,
Dartling all colours : surely all is well !
Doth not the crimson sparkle shoot from Hell ?

Last, while the clouds from all the mount were
torn,
In desolate lower roots of it a horn
Resounded harsh and loud : but higher rocks
Multiplied into more ethereal shocks
Of melody the sound, which as it passed
To loftier shining regions ever amassed

A more ideal spiritual tone ;
Till, like a delicate subtle flame, it won
Its way to yonder battlements of ice,
Exhaling there in silver paradise,
As from some luminous aerial places,
And sweet serenely-modulated faces ;
Dissolving now, an overblown faint flower,
Into a perfumed stillness evermore.

“THE PITY OF IT.”

If our love may fail, Lily,
If our love may fail,
What will mere life avail, Lily,
Mere life avail !

Seed that promised blossom,
Withered in the mould,
Pale petals overblowing,
Failing from the gold !

When the fervent fingers
Listlessly uncloze,
May the life that lingers
Find repose, Lily,
Find repose !

Who may dream of all the music
Only a lover hears,
Harkening to hearts triumphant
Bearing down the years ?
Ah ! may eternal anthems dwindle
To a low sound of tears ?

Room in all the ages
For our love to grow,
Prayers of both demanded
A little while ago :

And now a few poor moments,
Between life and death,
May be proven all too ample
For love's breath !

Seed that promised blossom,
Withered in the mould !
Pale petals overblowing
Failing from the gold !

I well believe the fault lay
More with me than you,
But I feel the shadow closing
Cold about us two.

An hour may yet be yielded us,
Or a very little more—
Then a few tears, and silence
For evermore, Lily,
For evermore!

A SONG AT A WATERFALL.

ATHWART the voice of a wild water,
Falling for ever,
Do I hear some song of the foam's daughter
Fairily quiver?
Is it song of a naiad, or bee,
Or a breeze from the tree,
Haunting the cave of the wild water?

For evermore leapeth the fall plashing
Into a pool,
And nigh me, away from the foam flashing,
Quiet and cool
Lies a hyaline gulf olive-green,
Where ferns overlean,
And boughs embower the wave washing.

In a clear hyaline, lo ! the leaves waver,
While, as a cloud,
Stones below melt in the pool-quaver :
And with the loud
Shout of the waters blithe
Mingles, airy and lithe,
A tune, like a lingering flower-savour.

Fearless fronteth the sound-ocean,
Even as a bird
Breasting the resonant storm-motion :
Low is it heard,
Sundering soft the cold
Roar, like a gleam of gold,
Wandering warm with a mild motion :

Visiting every flower-blossom,
A humming-bird ;
Floats and falls on the wind's bosom
Many a word.
'Tis ne'er a naiad who sings,
Nor aught with wings,
But a maiden fair as the foam blossom !

For now, disentangling the tree-cover,
 Resteth she fair
On a stone, a mere child ; and her own lover,
 All unaware
Of a heaven in her, laughs free ;
While blithe as a bee
Singing she roameth the world over.

Ah ! sweeter far than the fall roaring,
 Or any wild sound,
Is the carol of thy young life pouring
 Joyance around !
Yet a vanishing voice of the spring,
With a fleeting wing,
Is thine in the realm of the long roaring !

For the bee will go from the wild water,
 With blossom and breeze ;
And thou, more fair than the foam's daughter,
 Even as these,
Wilt fade with the hours away
From the weary play,
And the wildering roar of the wild water !

ERIC : A DIRGE.

ERIC, the beautiful, is gone to sleep :

Soft, lest he wake !

Eric, thy slumber is so very deep,

We may not ruffle it, howe'er we weep,

Never awake thee !

Morning, the beautiful, will soon arise

Out of her sleep,

Feel for the dawn of thine auroral eyes

Answering hers ; nay, thou wilt not arise,

Whoever weep thee !

Thy mother tearless kneels beside her boy :

Eric, awake !

Thy sisters fading, thou wert all her joy :

Eric, thou vanishest, her last, her boy :

Let her awake thee !

We yield thee to the tender earth to-morrow,

Eric, my love :

Lo ! how the wind wails ! ours are wrong and
sorrow :

No fear, nor sin, nor storm, to-day, to-morrow,
Nor ever move thee !

I would be with thee by the warm South Sea,
Lulled into rest !

Yet the World-Soul abideth even with me,
Here in the life-storm, whose dim anarchy
May ne'er molest thee !

Eric, my beautiful, lie thou asleep,
Vanishing blossom !

Our mystic Mother will inviolate keep
Thee with her buried seeds, until ye leap
Blithe from her bosom !

A LADY TO A LOVER.

If the sun low down in the West, my friend,
Filled Earth with fiery wine,
If a hand were on my breast, my friend,
And lips were laid on mine,
And we together
In summer weather
Lay in a leafy dell,
Could the weariness,
Or the long distress,
Or any fiends from hell,
Wipe out that hour of rest, my friend,
And the rapture all divine?
Then if thy blade were buried deep
Within this heart of mine,
From the warm whiteness fierce would leap

My fiery blood like wine ;
Earth all about the West, my friend,
After orgies of rich wine,
Wan lying in the sun's decline,
And I in arms of thine, my friend,
In dying arms of thine !

A SICK MOTHER TO HER BLIND CHILD.

O my loveladen
Own little maiden,
Though it is night to thee,
Yet is it light to me.
Sweetly appealing,
Movest thou feeling
All the way nigh to me,
Me who can see.
I may not fly to thee,
Only reply to thee,
Asking of me,
“ Pray, mother, teach me
How I may reach thee ! ”
Only come merrily :
Feel the way cheerily !

A little more prayerful
Faltering careful
Surely will bring to me,
Lead thee to rest :
Then shalt thou cling to me,
And I will sing to thee,
Laid on my breast !

WAR : 1870-1.

CHRIST.

OF all portrayals of the Son of Man
I love the dim portrayal at Milan,
Where among those few friends He sits apart,
With the burden of a world upon his heart.
The Man of Sorrows ! doth He year by year
Fade from the world's heart, as He fades from here ?
Ah ! but the sorrow, the sorrow will not fade,
Though the Consoler in the grave be laid !
Doth He not seem rather to make long pause
In this dim place, waiting until his cause
Triumph at last, yet evermore to fade
Under this agelong disappointment laid
On Him, because the victory is delayed ?

Hence the mute woe his countenance yet wears :
“ Is it not more than eighteen hundred years ?
And still I see my children bathed in tears ;
Still with their greed for gain, their lust for power,
Men in high places do my little ones devour.
Was it for nought the life of loneliness,
Lacerate all with alien distress ;
This tenderest heart of me, the human lover,
Wrung for men’s cruel selfishness all over ?
Was it for nought the unutterable agony
Among those olives of Gethsemane ?
For nought that hour supreme upon the cross,
When all the desolation of their loss
Rose a wan cloud before me, dying alone,
Hiding the Father even from the Son ?
Yet in the end, ‘ It is finished ! ’ was my cry,
Yielding my spirit how confidingly
Into His hands, because I knew that He
Would yield my holy, happy kingdom birth,
For which my heart was broken upon earth.”

SIEGE.

Maternal veins unnourished may yield them now
no more

Their needful food, and they are carried from the door,
Cold in little coffins, fresh flowers in their breast,
With pale, starved mothers giving thanks that they
are gone to rest.

Last Christmas eve a father talked with such a mother
Of how next year their youngest born, the tiny baby
brother,

Would be ready, like his sister now, to have the tiny
shoes

Put out before the nursery door, as little children use ;
To be filled with dainty trifles, tokens of parental love,
Which are innocently feigned to be mysterious trea-
sure-trove,

Brought while they sleep for babes by Jesus, holy
child above.

Alas ! before this Christmas came, the merry girl and
boy

Both vanished from the humble hearth ; and all the
mother's joy

Dwindled into a laying wreaths on each fresh-mounded
grave,

Hoping that she may join them soon, and her
slaughtered soldier brave.

RULERS.

Ye who prefer loud claim to lead mankind,
Those armies labouring ever weary and blind !
When they have seemed to win some miles of
way

For all their errors and circuitous delay,
For all long anguish of their multitude,
And piteous bones of impotent heroes strewed
Along the ages, is it a light thing ye
Would thrust them backward many a century ?
Is it a small thing ye have nursed the fire
Malign of blind inherited desire,
If so ye may reinstate Fraud with Force
On their old thrones, and miserable man divorce
From life, from light, from Liberty the bride,
A holy love, and a celestial guide ?

Ye trouble our slowly clearing airs of Peace,
Lest in the strengthening sunlight may increase
Shy human happiness, and men mature release
From shameful fumed slumbers ye impose,
That human souls may grovel for you, your pillows of
repose !

Behold the vessel of Human Destiny,
A hull dismasted, flounders pitifully !
Though on a foaming sea by night she drift,
A few pale stars fly hurrying in the rift,
And she floats onward : lo ! some sheltering port
Hath lit the beacon : here may she resort
Awhile ; she hails the light—she grates the rock—
And shuddering staggers shattered with the shock !
Ye, ye, the wreckers, lit your specious lie
To lure lost men to this extremity !
Now, like infernal fiends, ye scour the shore,
To plunder and slay the drowning mid the roar :
Some shall escape your treacherous royal hands,
And sail anew, and find the far-off lands :
Shall not their fierce free children yet embrue
Their hands, crowned pirates ! in the blood of you ?

A moment only front the fearful sight :
Do not all angels, shrinking with affright,
Turn from our world their wounded heavenly faces,
To find in stars remote more hopeful dwelling-places,
Where never sound may reach them more from our
lost, ruined races ?

. . . . An Empire floats a banner,
Sable and white and red,
Dyed with ravine and famine and plague,
And blood of the innocent dead :
Black with pestilence, white with famine, red with
the innocent dead !

FRANC-TIREURS.

I see three boys of very tender years,
Shoeless and ragged, trembling, shedding tears,
Hurried along by a ferocious guard
Of foreign soldiers to their meet reward.
Are they not criminals of deepest dye ?
These have arisen for hearth and family !

'Tis wan cold morning : hark ! the musket rattle :
These murdered innocents are not slain in battle !
I do not love to hear a gentle hare
Scream when, arising from her flowery lair,
The sportsman wounds her with his cruel gun,
And the wood crimsons wheresoe'er she run :
Yet less endure to view the barrels gleam
Yonder, to hear the sickening human scream
Of those three patriot children biting dust,
While agonizing forest boughs are thrust
Athwart the glare of a red rising sun,
As they would hide from him the dastard infamy
done !

Under some trees not very far from there
Lies an old man with soiled silver hair :
Here all alone the patriot fired for France
Upon the foe ; two strive to wrench the lance,
Wherewith they have bored him, from the frame
that quivers :
Yet see in very labour of death he shivers
With his good gun the German skull of one !
Four more fierce bullets, ere the work be done,

In blundering fury must the hordes discharge,
Ere they may set this rampant soul at large,
The formidable tortured ghost within,
Which all in darkening smiles upon the sin,
That shall be wrought for vengeance in Berlin !

THE VILLAGE.

Rests on the meek head of a pastoral hill
A village whence, when summer skies are still,
You see a lapse of wandering silver glance
Near and afar among fair meads of France,
Along her poplar-lines and pasture-lands :
Here in the hamlet many a cottage stands,
The little all of simple country folk,
Who sow the seasonable seed, who yoke
Slow oxen to the ploughs or laden wains,
Who bind in sheaves the mellow, foodful grains.
Here in their native soil their lives are rooted,
Like their own trees all rosy and purple fruited :
To them their humble church is heaven on earth ;
The hoary priest received them at their birth

Into the world, God's minister, and he,
Their friend through life, at the end of life will
be

Their angel, smoothing all the perilous way
Into the realms of everlasting Day.

Under a bowered porch on summer eves
Knits a blithe housewife, while among the leaves
Of pleasant orchards near two children laugh,
Pierrot and Marie ; in the swing they quaff
Delightful breezes, and the father hears,
Returning 'mid the simmering barley ears.

Alas ! their village feels the winter snow
Soiled, thawing, whitening her roadway now ;
And round her walls chill winds of winter blow.
Around her walls ! ah ! gazer, what of these ?
They are more piteous than leafless trees !
Ruins unroofed, begrimed with flame and smoke,
On either side the one wide way invoke
With dumb, unconscious eloquence of woe
His pity, who knew them three brief moons ago :
Dreary from forth a dreary mist they loom,
Each, as he nears them, silent with one doom,

A cheery home, now wrecked and tenantless,
Like a marred face grown vacant with distress.
Yet hearken! there are cries upon the air—
Pause, lover of our race, pause, and despair!
Where lately bloomed a garden full of flowers,
On the wet, trampled ground a woman cowers;
A woman with a baby at her breast
Weeps with low wailing: chin upon his chest,
With folded arms the man against a wall
In moody silence leans; from forth a pall
Of snow three rudely-carven wooden crosses
Mark in yon field where moulder many corpses:
There waved a harvest! yet befouled in mire
Sweet human food lies, where the hosts of
fire
Went devastating with remorseless tramp:
Yonder thin snows are thawing; all the damp
Earth has been torn to many a ragged pit,
Where each fire-entrained, moaning, mangling bolt
alit.
Two children in the neighbouring orchard go;
Yet young full meaning of their loss to know,
But solemnized with all their elders' woe

And all the melancholy scene, they try
Among charred fruits and branches to descry
Where hung so lately their own favourite swing,
Finding, poor babes ! a pleasure in wondering.
Not now one views the river glancing far
Among fair meadows, like a scimitar ;
But nearer, over sodden, sullen soil
Somewhat, like one interminable toil
Of worm uncoiling, dusk, appears to wind
Slow through the mist, impalpably defined,
Along a hedgerow line, obscure and dank :
It is the serried foeman's cruel crawling, rank !

SEDAN.

The looms are broken, the looms are hushed,
And a broken, weary man
Sits near a child, with fever flushed,
In a cottage of Sedan.

The mother starved with him, the weaver,
To feed their little child,
Who lies now low with famine fever,
That slew the mother mild.

The room is desolate ; the store
Has dwindled very low ;
All a poor housewife's pride of yore
Was plundered of the foe.

And a father cowers over grey
Wood-ashes barely warm ;
He feels the child is going away
In the pitiless, pale storm.

He knows an emperor lost a crown
Here in his own Sedan ;
And he knows an emperor gained a crown,
The solitary man.

He hears the voice of a world that sings
The spectacle sublime ;
Yet only heeds one life that clings
To his own a little time !

I wonder, if the Christ beholds
With eyes divinely deep,
Whom to his heart He nearest holds,
The kings, or these that weep ?

Who seem more royal and more tall
In calm, pure light from God,
These crowned colossal things that crawl,
Or lowly souls they trod ?

These purple, laurelled kings we hail
With banner and battle-blare,
Or him who writhes beneath their trail,
A pauper in despair ;
Conquered and conquerors of Sedan,
Or a dying child and a starving man ?

THE WOUNDED.

In one dim church, after a bloody fray,
Lie wounded men with swathèd limbs, and grey,
Wan, fainting faces, down the solemn nave :
Women are ministering all they crave,
Sisters of Mercy, daughters of the Lord !
Many will die, for all they may afford
Of refuge ; though the healers with sharp pain
Have striven to heal them, all will be in vain !

Feebly in sinking cling their hearts to some
 Afar, who wait them in a belovèd home,
 Who with pale cheek, with blanchèd, quivering lips
 Will tear the letter dim with life's eclipse.
 Mournful the sufferers that eve foresee,
 Not far from now, when dear ones with a tree,
 There in the fatherland, in Germany,
 Glistening toys and trinkets will entwine ;
 With twigs of fir, where coloured tapers fine
 Glisten less lovely than the children's eyes,
 Who with sweet exclamations of surprise
 Find out new blisses ; widows worn the while
 Melting a rising sob into a smile ;
 For well they know that, lying yonder, he,
 On whom the nightly snow falls quietly,
 Would love to feel their little mutual treasure
 Passed even this Christmas with an all unclouded
 pleasure !

Ah ! but the church—it is a ghastly scene :
 Consoling ministers of mercy lean
 Over confusèd shapes by candle gleam :
 These have rent clothing soiled, with dull red stream

Of ebbing life discoloured ; while some die
In silence, others with a tortured cry
Rend the foul air : yet others near the door,
A variegated medley, strew the floor
(Teuton with Frank, turban with helmet blent,
In diverse garb and war-accoutrement),
Conversing, grimed with battle smoke, and dust
Of toilsome march ; they munch the wheaten crust,
Or moodily exhale a soothing mist,
Or drink from glimmering metal as they list.
But yonder, over the faint sufferers,
Half in dim shining, half in shadow, stirs
With wandering wind some painted canvas, torn
In that blind havoc of mad battle born :
Surely it is the Sufferer Divine
Upon the cross ! while under Him recline
These last inheritors of agony.
Behold, the piteous portraiture on high
Hath in that very heart of Christ a rent,
That tells of where one erring bullet went !

A VISION OF WAR.

I stood by night upon a reeking plain
Among stark, stiffened hecatombs of slain,
Who blankly stare into the sullen skies
With glassy, sightless, widely-open eyes.
The night was moonless, dense with stormful cloud,
And muffled all, nor aught to sight allowed,
Save in large livid lightning's ghastly glare
Over the dead men with their awful stare.
Upon a rising ground some ruins riven
Of a burnt village, whence the dwellers driven
Fled from a ravening fire with ne'er a home,
Stand in the cold flame desolate and dumb.
Some curl in attitudes of mortal anguish ;
Some with a burning thirst low moaning languish
In their own life-blood, helpless underneath
A heavy horror that hath ceased to breathe.
This form that feels hath hair and beard of grey ;
The overlying corse fair curls, but they
Are marred with crimson : this was a fair boy,
Stay of a widowed mother and her joy ;

A tender girl awaits the comely youth,
To whom is plighted a pure maiden troth—
These two, late locked in a death-grapple wild,
Might they not be a father and his child,
Lying together very still and mild ?
While many a fearful, formless, mangled thing,
That once was human, blends with littering
Of tumbril-wheel, of cannon-carriage wrack,
Rifle with sword, and soldier's havresack.

But what are these portentous Phantoms tall,
That rise before my spirit to appal ?
One rides upon a pale colossal horse
Which, with its head low, sniffs before a corse,
And shakes with terror : but the Rider swart,
Of supernatural height, of regal port,
Inhales the tainted air with nostrils wide,
And face hard set in a right royal pride.
One strong, red hand a blade that he has bathed
In a warm, living heart, holds reeking ; swathed
With giant folds imperially red
His huge, mailed body ; on his grizzly head
A brazen helm ; he dark surveys the dead ;

Dilate with cruel, unwholesome arrogance
The dictatorial form, the countenance
Swollen with gluttoned vengeance ; things unsweet
As fumes that bloat yon corpses at his feet.
Whence hath the robe drunk purple ? there is hung
A collar of torn hearts that he hath wrung
About his neck, for royal collar slung ;
Chains of wrought gold that blaze with many a
gem

In snaky twine contorted over them :
His martial plume, a swath of foodless grain,
Trodden, or scorched, or sodden with late rain.
Tear-blotted letters from far homes are strown
Under his horse-hoofs, or inanimate blown
Of gusty winds, the words upon them traced
Well nigh, like lives of those who wrote, effaced.
He looks the incarnation of old War,
Resembling an imperial Conqueror.

Low thunder with rare intermission growled,
Wherein were mingled cries of wolves that howled.
I saw one straining, gaunt and fiery eyed,
Held by the King in leash ; whose awful side

It sprang anon away from, fiercely hounded ;
And woe is me ! who witnessed where it bounded.
A little child in sad astonishment
I had beheld, who with a woman went :
She sought distracted on the fearful plain
One special soldier among all the slain :
That famished wolf was hounded on the pair ;
And with fire-fangs it healed a lorn despair !

An Empire floats a banner,
Sable and white and red,
Dyed with ravine and famine and plague,
And blood of the innocent dead ;
Black with ravine,
White with famine,
Red with the innocent dead !

Yet a more hideous Phantom than the other
Leaned on the War-shape, like its own twin brother.
A wan blue mist it seemed to emanate
From where the dead most thickly congregate ;
A crawling exhalation, yet anon
A lank, tall body with the graveclothes on.

It trailed and sloped o'er many miles of dead,
Until it reached with a most fearful head
The bosom of the Warrior on the horse ;
There leaned, fraternal, like a month-old corse ;
Nay, somewhat otherwise : rather methought
It wore aspect like one most loathsome, fraught
With such disease as by beleaguered Metz
Some saw who passed among the lazarettes.
Surely this was incarnate Pestilence !
Yet, as I shrank with shuddering from hence,
It wore a face pale History shall remember
For his who slew his country one December.
He holds in skeleton semblance of a hand
A distaff broken, for symbol of command.

Not the eagle, but the vulture
Wheels above him, screaming now,
“ I will yield my foul sepulture
To the murdered men below ! ”
Hoarsely croaks a carrion crow,
“ Thou wert as a Pestilence :
Rot abhorred in impotence ! ”

THE ROSES OF BAZEILLES.*

Do the roses bloom, roses bloom
In lost Bazeilles,
Where shrilled a terrible human wail
In the blasting blaze of a living tomb?
There they bloom
In lost Bazeilles!

Where men, like fiends, with frenzy fraught,
In a fiery street,
In a whirl of bullets and flaming sleet,
In a welter of falling ruin fought,
While women sought
With wavering feet,
Scared children clutching close their dress,
Babes in their arms,
Wildly to fly from hell's alarms!
Who if they 'scaped the seething press
Of murdering swarms,
Felt fiercer harms—

* According to a letter from Mr. Bullock, in the *Daily News*, when he visited Bazeilles a month or two after the burning, roses were blooming there.

A horrible doom of scorching breath
From flame that clung,
To mother and child devouring hung,
Till all fell smouldering, heaped in death,—
Charred heaps of death
Encumbering flung !

May roses bloom, roses bloom
In lost Bazeilles ?
Where flame, to stifle the human wail,
Leapt, fuming, roaring over the doom
Of a living tomb,
And the sun turned pale
Over lost Bazeilles !

Yea, roses blow, roses blow,
White rose with red,
From yon charred fragments of the dead,
Crumbling chaos of friend and foe,
In a burnt-out woe,
With ruin fed !

A rose shall blow, roses blow
In the heart of France,

Though demons in their orgies dance,
And a hectoring, insolent, rude foe
Insult with a blow
Vanquished France !

Red rose of valour, rose of truth
And of purity,
Deep-bosomed rose of integrity,
Sweet white rose of innocent youth,
A celestial growth,
Bloom holily !

Rose shall be rife, roses blow rife
From a fallen throne,
Under whose shadowy shame lay prone
Nerveless a nation's nobler life ;
From manful spiritual strife,
From healthful use of stalwart limbs,
Wherewith a soul or body climbs,
Debarred : her stronger sons in chains,
A slow-souled vampire drained her veins :
Pampered with shows and shames she lay,
Poured out until this earth-convulsing day :

Then with the shock,
That made her throne to rock,
She rose dishevelled from her gory clay !

France lies in ashes : the nations pale
Behold dismayed
Over the earth an awful shade :
Tyranny stalks in feudal mail
O'er hearts that fail,
And faiths that fade !

Deep in a mountain's caverned hall,*
It is whispered low,
Waits in a weird, sepulchral glow
An armed phantom, crowned and tall,
Whose hoary beard of centuries
Grows on the grey stone where it lies ;
While jewelled knights with glittering eyes
Glower round
In trance profound.

* The legend affirms that the Emperor Barbarossa waits in a cavern of the Untersberg, near Salzburg, for the reconstitution of the German Empire.

Anon, at agelong intervals,
The ghostly king
Sends a raven of sable wing
From his stupendous prison-walls,
To learn how near the fated hour,
When he may reassume the power
Behold! no raven comes again. . . .

. . . Behold! the raven devours the slain!
Vaults asunder
Burst in thunder!
Lo! in the hall of mirrors yonder,
In a palace consecrate to all
Age-long glories of the Gaul,
A German wears imperial
Purple: Barbarossa lives!
The ghost of a dark age revives,
And the heart of every freeman dies,
Seeing him rise!

Yet roses flower, roses flower!
And liberty,
Glorious, ardent, springs to the sky,

With breath as of morning, to overpower
Slaves that cower
In apathy !

Yea, roses bloom : a rose shall bloom
In the grave of France,
Whose breath, as of morning, may re-entrance
The spectre, till he slink to the tomb,
His eternal doom
Breathed from France !
She in her lingering agony
Dooms her tyrant with an eye
Charged with the light of liberty !

ODE TO ENGLAND.

Arm ! England, arm ! for all men point the finger
Toward thee with scorn they little care to veil :
“ Doth not the mouldering hull of England linger
Upon her sea of gold, with idle sail ?
Once she was other ! once we shrank dismayed

Before the lightning of her baring blade ;
 Once through the storm her ocean glory burst,
 She, stormy petrel, she the ocean-nurst,
 Upon her foes, who pale beheld the stream
 Of her bright ensign, like Aurora, gleam
 Over foam-billows bounding wild : hurrah !
 England is drowsier than at Trafalgar !”

Arm ! England, arm ! the halcyon hour must wait
 When Love and Righteousness shall vanquish Hate.
 Jesus of old was royal hailed in scorn :
 Now the world crowns Him—still it is with thorn !
 Nobles and kings go armèd to the teeth :
 Lo ! where thy loving sister bleeds beneath
 Their haughty feet : she calls thee to her side :
 They clank their swords at thee with insolent pride.
 “ Old England, mumbling, paralysed, and cold,
 Shrinks closer clutching at her hoards of gold !”
 Why should the mailèd sons of tyranny taunt
 Thee, champion of the free, with windy vaunt ?
 Arm ! England, arm ! they mouth at Liberty,
 Who with a mother's impulse turns to thee !
 Fair is our dream of universal peace ;

But there be wolves, and lambs of tender fleece.
Tyranny summons all her swarms of slaves,
Horrent with weapons : daughter of the waves !
Is it a time for thee to loll and bask,
And murmur at the burden of thy casque ?
Yea, thou art sedulous to nurse thy health,
Resentful of a menace to thy wealth :
But in the hour of thine extremity,
Look for no pitying tear to cloud one eye
Among the sister nations loitering by !
Now that thy faithful friend is in the dust,
Whose features fair may next inflame the lust
Of her inexorable conqueror,
Or of his mailed kinsman emperor ?
If thou, the hope of Freedom, lie supine,
Indifferent beyond thy belt of brine,
While Freedom wrestles with a libertine,
Beware for thine !
Shall not God judge the race that cannot feel
Itself a member of one living commonweal ?
That nation dies ; elects to be alone ;
Severed in sooth, dead lumber, shall be thrown
Among bare buried piles of bone !

Canst thou, then, fear to arm thy children free,
Who cradled lay upon the bosom of Liberty ?
Whom from herself she nourished, whom with motion
And lullabies of the everlasting ocean
She soothed from earliest infancy,
While, in loud winds and waves careering, she
Sings to her mariners who rule the sea !

Arm all thy children ! not a caste of drones :
Then shalt thou see those anarchs on their thrones
Abase their domineering front—behold
Helvetia, splendid, blithe, and bold !
The sons who breathe her liberal mountain air,
The men who scale her precipice and dare
All dangers of her bleak eternal snows,
A race of hardy hunters, who repose
Fearless beneath her sparkling stars, nor blanch
To dream their bed may prove a thunderous avalanche,
Whose spirits with their native eagle soar,
Whose kindred souls dilating love the roar
Of icy cataracts, the Aar, the Rhine,
The Rhone that foams among the murmuring pine—
Are these not armed ? Yea, every man will bleed

For the fair land of Arnold Winkelried !
France waved the banner of the free,
When it fell from the hands of Italy :
Alas ! she fails—but England, thou
Hast a Daughter of starry brow,
Whose arms receive thy setting sun ;
She, in a forest vast and lone,
With awful gladness hears intone
Niagara, and the Amazon !
Freedom before her mountain citadel
Placed you, two giants, each her wakeful sentinel !

THE CHILDREN'S GRASS.

I.

WHERE the twinkling river pushes
'Thwart the dipping swan,
All his ruffling down
Very softly blown,
Lustrous blue reflects the rushes
Where the coot is gone ;
Thames, an innocent heart of childhood,
Buoying lovers from the wild wood,
Hearing boyish laughter chime
Where the flashing oars keep time,
Where they quiver
In the river :

In a sunshine sown with song
Of many a merry bird,
Three sunny children bound along,

With many a merry word.
Their eyes blue fountains of delight,
And every cheek a rose,
Their dimpled hands with grasses light
So full, they hardly close.
One fawn-like little maiden falls
Breathless upon her mother,
Telling how yonder elf who calls,
Her tiny wavering brother,
Chose to pull the tender stems
Where the dew-drop lingers,
And marvelled when the limpid gems
Fell upon his fingers.
She tells a soft-eyed rabbit brown
Near a wimpling runnel
Eyed them askance, then hurried down
Through a plantain tunnel.
In the woodland sweetly smell
Fairy grass and clover,
Sensitive in the woodland dell,
Where the bees hum over ;
“ O ! I love the summer well ;
Mother, will it soon be over ? ”

II.

Where the unholy river gleameth,
Deep, and cold, and dun,
Hiding secrets from the sun,
As an awful dream one dreameth,
As Oblivion :

Three little children in the reek
Of the monster town,
With a woman worn and weak,
Ere the sun goes down,
Toil by flare of ghastly light
In a dingy fume :
Two young children carry bright
Grasses in the room :
An elder sister with her mother
Decks the blades with glass,
Sprinkles one and then another,
As with dews of grass.
How the vivid verdure gleams
In the child's old face !
Starved and very pale she seems,

With a hollow place
Dark beneath her eyes, how wearied,
Lashless looking on the bleared
Mimic grass,
Dewed with glass !
Hark ! she gives a feeble cough,
And the withered mother
Glances where some paces off
A coffin holds another
Maiden very cold and white,
Not yet hidden out of sight.
“ Mother, I am very weary ! ”
So she moans with accents dreary :
“ Mother, make my bed ! ”
“ Child,” the woman answers, “ finish !
Dare not from your task diminish
Aught, for fear a watchful neighbour,
Bidding lower for the labour,
Seize our bitter bread ! ”
Ladies in a lusted hall
Wear them gaily for a ball
In their fair
Wavy hair.

“Mother, I can toil no longer ;
After sleep I shall be stronger !”
. . . . After sleep, the child was dead.

There the unholy river gleameth,
Deep, and cold, and dun,
Hiding secrets from the sun,
As an awful dream one dreameth,
As Oblivion :

Are not these thy children, Father ?
These—or only those ?
Are we all lost orphans rather ?
Of whom—none knows

THE CHILDREN BY THE SEA.

AH! merry children on the smooth sea sand,
Floating toy-navies, with your spades of wood
Delving until the salt sea-water stand
In moat-like hollows, with a mimic flood
Girdling a mimic fort; or gathering shells
And briny delicate sea-weed; how the air
Blows in glad faces, and the wave compels
Your flight with laughter, leaving a crystal rare
Upon the ripple-pencilled sand! how fair
Life seems, the very weary life we know,
In your exuberant play, that loves to feign
Age has arrived! Ah! life will never glow
For you as now when you are old; remain
Children for ever! common things ye deem
Miraculous joy; battle and storm and death
With swift bright gesture, eager eyes, ye dream!

Breeze blows bright hair of curled blue billows too ;
But sparkling waves less merrily dance than you !

Apart from these one little boy,
Listless fingering a toy,
With dim dull eyes and darkened face,
Seemed a cloud upon the place.
Sitting on a stone, there lowered
Some black-vestured man who showered
Shameful words upon the child,
And later, when he feebly smiled,
Struck him with a cruel oath :
Him and my heart : he wounded both.
That was his father ; tears fell slow ;
I heard his bitter crying low.
Dwindled all the shouts of joy
To the sobbing of a boy ;
Death fell over sky and ocean,
Paralyzing happy motion.
A helpless child, behold it cower !
Yet, ah ! the desolating power !
Withering green earth I trod,
A small hand shook the throne of God.

Day and night it clings to me,
A child's low wail of misery :
I see the faded purple dress,
The little steps of weariness
Wavering home in their distress.
The blow falls I may not arrest ;
The child hangs on my helpless breast.
Death take all of us to rest !
Sea and sky glow around that form !
Cease, idle breeze ! his tears are warm :
Fall on us, giddy cliffs ; we are born
For a fiend's ghastly mockery and scorn !

Man, forbear !

Before this arid waste of human life,
Before the illusive glory, and the strife,
With Fate that baffles, with a stifling coil
Of Sin that conquers ; ere the weary toil
For food which turns to ashes in the mouth ;
Before our darlings vanish, and the drouth
Of souls athirst for Truth and Righteousness,
Beauty and Love, who only feign to bless ;
Ere feeling no expense of passionate breath

Stays the stern Hand that never faltereth,
Pushing us nearer to the abyss of death—
For little children shines one happy hour
In youth's fair morning land, a land in flower,
Tended of angels, folded from the world,
A haven where the stainless sail is furled :
A realm of faery, a delicious place,
Fresh with young dews of love and human grace :
Here, like soft lambs, in the everliving sun
Innocent children leap, and laugh, and run ;
Here a perennial fountain springs to light,
And with a misty silver rainbow-dight
Woos an eternal verdure from the earth ;
Where in a gleam of ever-murmuring mirth
Bathe pure white children, they who seem to borrow
Bliss from sweet lower lives, that fear no morrow ;
Whom if a momentary pain annoy,
'Tis but a breezy ruffling of the joy.
All holy generous human spirits bend
Lowlily here, with looks of light that lend
Warmth and fresh lustre to the home of Youth,
Wonder and Faith, and Ecstasy and Truth :
Jesus, the child, the Lord of Love and Ruth,

Reigns over all, Love's lacerated Lord ;
And till the demon with a flaming sword
Drives one and then another to the wild,
We bless the Saviour for a little child.

Man, forbear !

Nay ! not for every little child we praise :
For what is yonder cloud upon the blaze ?
Among the happy lies one little thing
Weeping, and over him a torturing
Fiend men call Father : all are happy here,
Saving this one who feels the mortal fear,
And agonizes ; all before the gloom
Of life have respite, but one suffers doom
From dawn to sunset ; even this holy ground
Is not for innocence inviolate found !
Even the charmed Eden Love hath fenced from evil,
Insolently desecrated by the Devil !
Even his small birthright of dissolving bliss
Torn from a tiny helpless child like this,
Ghastly reflecting in a babe's despair
Cain's brand of wrinkled infamy and care !
Child ! thou arraignest on His throne sublime

Him whom our fathers trusted, for the crime
That smote thee flaunts triumphant in His face ;
And Love may only tearful eyes abase,
While Fate o'erwhelms His glory with disgrace !

. . . . Man forbear !

Who withers hearts around him with his frown
Creates a parching desert for his own.

Yea, all good angels, when thou art athirst
In flame, shall fly from thee, O man accurst !

Lo ! the avenging little children run
Out of their sea and land graves, wicked one :

Moan thou beneath the body of thy son !

Ah ! let us hope that Jesus yet may fold

Within His bosom the lamb lost and cold,

Lead him to rest where sunny pastures lie,

And where still waters flow eternally !

AZRAEL :

A DREAM OF PLEASURE.

“Azrael, the angel of death.”

MOURN for Annabel !

The village bell is tolling, and she will
Never arise from where she lieth still,
Cold and so lovely, flowers white and red,
Old dames and tender damozels have shed
Tearful, all over her, in shadowy air
Alive with perfume curling blue and rare,
Jewels and gold and jasper glowing deep
As in a dreamland of a solemn sleep,
With solemn music plaining while the mourners
weep.

Fair Azrael, with Annabel the child
Of Southern suns, a panther supple and wild,

Mellow and beautiful, the while one tarried
Far hence, a man she never loved but married,
Wandered in sweet communion day and night
Within her garden, shielded from the light
Of suns too violent, under pensile palm,
And aromatic, glossy-leaved calm
Orange, with lemon wedding boughs above ;
In whose green twilight bridal blooms of love
Bud, and expand their petals, till they shed
Lavish white coronals on either head,
On lustrous ebony and golden head.
They wandered where a soft Æolian sea
Fills far off with profound tranquillity
Half of the interval, which lies between
Shadowy cypresses and pines that lean
Over the sunlight ; half is filled with air
Azure as ocean ; near, a fountain fair
Singing springs ever thwart blue air and main,
A shifting snowcloud, twinkling into rain,
Drifting to fume that feeds earth's emerald :
Anon their dreamy vision is enthralled
With scintillating of a ruffled ocean
Among thin olive-foliage in motion :

Seaward from flowers around their feet a
lawn

Slopes ; all the greenery's a haunt of fawn,
Or nymph marmoreal : from shade to shade
On the sea-lustre glows and glides to fade,
Swiftly and silent, many a wing-like sail
Of bark aerial ; never seems to fail
Some new surprise of freshly-flowing joy,
Wafting young lives afar from all annoy.
Eros and Psyche in white marble embrace,
Whom lustrous-leaved camelias enlace :
In light and shadow of a terebinth,
Elsewhere, upon a myrtle-inwoven plinth,
Heavenly Hebe her perennial charm
Unfolds ; young Dionysos a lithe arm
Curls over lovelocks, and a rounded form,
In fair profusion of lit vine-leaves warm.
When either Phidian image glows in roses
Lavish around them, or at eve reposes
Flushed with a glory, breatheth every one
Alive, a new bride of Pygmalion.
Sweet Mitylene, isle of love and song,
Two fair young lovers for an hour prolong

Reverberate modulations from the lyre,
Whose soul still haunts thee with voluptuous fire !
Sappho, Arion, and Terpander breathe
O'er hill and valley ; lawny mists enwreath
Faintly before all lovers oversea
A mountain, hued like flowers of memory ;
Where Aphrodite, born of Paphian foam,
Found the fair shepherd in his piny home,
And where, on Ida, an imperial Bird
Ravished a fairer from his pipes and herd.

They read or sang sweet songs, and oft a
star

Thrilled in a roseate eve to her guitar.
She wore pomegranate crimson in her hair,
Around her waist and shoulders only rare
Silk from Olympian looms, like gossamer ;
While languid pearls lay heavingly on her
Virginal bosom ; ambergris and myrrh
Enkindling breathe from ocean-blue enamel,
Whose misty fervours golden lids entammel :
And while they taste a bright Methymnian wine,
Amber-inhaled ambrosial fumes entwine

Delicious dream around them : fingers fine
Fill often his half-laughing, amorous lips
With pleasant, garnet-hued pomegranate pips,
Or luscious, lucent dainties that her skill
Can from sweet, crimson-hearted fruits distil.
If with his wanton mouth he gently bite,
But very gently will she feign to smite.
Three interlaced half-moons of diamond
Thrill for rich ecstasy to link, with frond
Of fernwrought rubies, on her balmy breast
Her silk translucency of filmy vest.
He wore a slumbrous oriental gold
Dusky with silk inwoven, half unrolled
From a white bosom of ideal mould.

Once when a silver-clanging chime
Told the stealthy flight of time,
They left a cedar-raftered chamber,
Where oil in opaline and amber
Gleamed, as mildest lamps are able,
Over furs of lynx and sable ;
Crimson wools, Iranian fur
Of panther, pard, or miniver.

And while they went, some drowsy doves
In holm and laurel flew like loves
Over them ; the mild fireflies
Gleamed before their happy eyes.

Fair was the night when youth and lady stept
From where their lemon-tinted villa slept,
With balustrade and roofing palely grey,
Laved of the moon, beneath a grove that lay
Under enchantment, to a hushful bower
Of bay and asphodel, with passion flower
Inwoven : it was warm and dusk therein,
And delicate foliage made a shadowy thin
Lacework suspended in aerial blue
Silvery twilight, over where they two,
Muffled in mossful secrecy, reclined
Nigh one another, Azrael behind.

“ In the tree
A murmur, as of indolent shed sea
On sands at midnight ceasing slumbrously !
Through dim, uncoloured leaves
An elfin glimmer cleaves
A varying way from realms of mystery.”

So sang she softly to her soft guitar,
And ceased; and both were silent, hearing
far

The bubbling fountain, and a nightingale,
That seemed to flow at intervals and fail.
Her face for him was pencilled pure and fine
Athwart the gloaming; and, "O lady mine,"
He whispered, "how adorable are you
To-night! forgive me!" till there softly grew
A tender arm around her form, and she
Yielded and leaned on him responsively,
Until his blood ran fire when she pressed
Her dewy, ripe young lips upon his breast,
Moonwhite in moonlight; for a ray had come
To nestle in the fair, congenial home.

Then mouth burned mouth, her undulating
charms

Yielding to his luxurious young arms.
Later, in sweet confusion's disarray,
Hand in hand stole they to a little bay,
Where a pale foam stole out of a grey sea,
And kissed the pale rock ever murmurously.
Cypress leaned mournful over, and a throng

Of hushful moonwhite houses lay along
Yon circling shoreside, minarets, how fair !
Arising tall and slender into air :
A chaunt was wafted from a fisher's boat,
Dozing upon the pearl with nets afloat.
Shadowy, folding mountains from the sea
Rise to enclose the bay's chalcedony :
Ida beyond, dim silvered of the moon,
Soars with her snow in some enchanted swoon :
Delicate shells with whorl, and valve, and spire
Gleam in a rhythmic phosphorescent fire.
Silently dreams near yonder myrtle brake
An egret, plumed as with a soft snowflake,
Like a pure soul by some celestial lake.
Lo ! now the lovers dainty limbs will lave
In the delicious coolness of the wave.

“ I with thee,
By fringes of the pale, enamoured sea,
On the shore's bosom dying dreamfully,
Singing in the leaves,
Love it is who weaves
Around our hearts a heavenly mystery ! ”

Then as they neared their villa, in a tunnel
Of oranges where purls a crystal runnel,
A rustle in the trees she thought she heard,
And deemed she saw a shadow; "'Tis a bird,"
He whispered, after pausing: "all's a dream!"
She murmured, "Ah! how heavenly a dream!"
. . . . Out of the shadow flashed a steely gleam:
Her own death-shriek awoke her, and she fell
At the feet of her angel Azrael.

Mourn for Annabel!

The village bell is tolling, and she will
Never arise from where she lieth still,
Cold and so lovely, flowers white and red,
Old dames and tender damozels have shed
Tearful, all over her, in shadowy air
Alive with perfume curling blue and rare,
Jewels and gold and jasper glowing deep
As in a dreamland of a solemn sleep,
With solemn music plaining while the mourners weep.

SAN ROCCO.

THERE is a little chapel rude
On a terraced hill,
With cypress round the solitude
Of a platform still ;

Cypress flames of darkling green,
Rich athwart the blue ;
Fair among them ocean-sheen
Softly twinkles through.

Within one open end, in line,
Vessels rudely made
Hang, with perils of the brine
On either wall, displayed.

Each unskilful picture shows,
On the marge, a form
Of Her who, when the whirlwind blows,
Saveth men from storm.

There a lamp of silver gleams,
Like an evening star ;
O'er a spangled altar beams,
In twilight cool afar.

Home-bound sailors from the deep,
When the belfry small
Of San Rocco on the steep
First appeareth, fall

At our Lady's feet of grace ;
When a woman old,
Gaunt and homeliest of her race,
Falteringly told

The story of her son to me,
A bold young mariner,
How once he sailed, and from the sea
Came ne'er again to her ;

And how he vowed before he sailed,
If ever he returned,
His votive vessel should be nailed,
And in the lamp be burned

His votive amber oil above,
At yonder mountain shrine,
Where perilled sailors prove their love
To Mary the Divine ;

Where every pious mariner
Leaves a lowly gift for Her ;
Fair the mother was with tears,
For all her homeliness and years.

NERVI.

TO THE QUEEN.

DEAR loyal lady, tender and brave and true,
Dear lady of our loyal hearts are you !
Who will dethrone a kindly human grace,
To crown the bloodless huckster in your place ?
There is a canker in the social core :
And some would fain persuade us that no more
We need than civil change of name and form :
Ah ! specious pleading of the cankerworm !

A SEA SYMPHONY.

I.

TEMPEST.

OCEAN, eternal mother of the free !
Thine uproar is the sound of Liberty.
Shout forth a clarion-call tempestuously !
“ England, though comfortable sleep be sweet,
Whispering emperors ominously meet :
What if they murder Freedom, murder man ?
Shall not thy rent red flag inflame the van
Of battle as erst ? Arouse thee unto war !
Hearken how thunderpeals from Trafalgar,
Nile, and the Baltic, thine heroic past,
Fill loud my clarions of surge and blast !
Awake ! for fear thy lethargy may prove the last ! ”

Grand lion-leap of billows ! how they fall,
Plunging with hunger to devour the shore !
Hurled mountain of blown billow thwart the wall
Of cliff precipitous bursting with stupendous roar !
Cavernous halls of hoary mountains under
Shake with a shock of subterranean thunder,
Rumble with roll of long reverberate thunder !
Crushed all the turbid water-mountain toils,
Whose slain, immense, pale, shadowy ghost is thrown
High among hurrying storm-cloud, and recoils
Seethingly, limply plashing on the stone.
While underneath a baffled field of foam,
Poured out disorderly, retreats to rise
One fulvous mass of spume upon a dome
Of wave colossal threatening the skies :
Lo ! as it sweeps imperial, the curl
In toppling hangs arrested by a swirl
Refluent baffled ; rears aloft to hurl
All, one grim rampart perpendicular,
Bodily heavenward, whose wrestling froth,
In terrible welter of tumultuous wrath,
Flickers to momentary crags of spar ;
Headlong to ruin charges with an ocean jar,
A headlong ruin of water, heard inland afar !

Terrific hurricane of howling wind and sea !
 Cower from the whirlwind, lest in scorn it scatter thee !
 Or fling thee in the ravening cauldron there—
 Cling to the rock—let tawny salt seafoam flakes tear
 Hissingly o'er thee from a turbulent despair !
 Shout forth thy drowned and feeble human shout
 of joy,
 In fellow-feeling with the elements, a toy
 Of the blind Titans, yet a toy that knows. . . .
 But what is this at hand that reels, and
 drifts, and bows ?
 Not helpless chaos of a huge oarweed,
 Torn up and strewn far, senseless rage to feed—
 A ship ! a ship ! a horrible vision here !
 One snapt mast with its tangling cordage-gear
 Overboard flounders ; on the flooded deck
 Three scared men desperate clinging strain the
 neck
 To look for any help toward the rocky roar ;
 Whom Death alone confronts upon the awful shore !
 A small black dog i' the hatchway yelping piteously—
 I see it still—a crash—anon victoriously
 Climb maniac cataracts upon rent planks and corpses
 clamorously !

II.

CALM.

After two days I lay reclined in peace
Near the sea margin ; delicate soft fleece
Of cloud lay poised above me, and the sea
Slumbered about her shores, how tranquilly !
Gentle as a child, she opened her blue eyes
In murmurous foamsmile of a faint surprise,
Touching the strand : yon vaporous headlands are
Suffused with mellow sunlight, while afar
A nebulous isle half fades into the sky,
Like some dear hoped-for possibility.
Hushful sea-murmur lulls all pain to sleep,
Breathing enchantment from the Holy Deep—
One feels so happy here, one fain would weep !
Among fair silver labyrinths a stain
Of solemn purple on the lonely main
Long from one cloud lies ; in still mother o' pearl
Yonder no white sail will a vessel furl
To-day, among the " innumerable smile "
Of one who hides no wrath, nor harbours guile ;
Zephyr with his soft seaplume fans the while.

Quietly wander by the quiet shore,
To find enrapturing wonders more and more !
Here, ankle-deep in valvèd shelly shingle,
Merry young children, with white limbs atingle,
Leap laughing, while a playful ripple blue
Merrily laves them ; ah ! how fair the hue
Of azure sea set by a dovelike tone
Of boulders, where I wander all alone !
Now and then their prevailing hue will bring
Aerial colour, soft as seamew wing,
On water, modulating mirrored sky
To filmy pureness of chalcedony.
In still sea-waters of a cove will grow
Slim growths of plashing crystal, when there flow,
Oceanward tinkling, rillets from above,
Born among hazels, while with ocean love
Glisten low-lying rocks in many a cove.
Weird block of waveworn labyrinthine grey,
Hollowed out, with small opening for day
Somewhere concealed as one explores, a fairy
Or mermaiden may haunt thee, little wary
Of man's intrusion on her lonely spot,
Or sleepy seal may use thee, twilit grot !

But many a wondrous cavern richly hued
 Quavers in delicate waterlight, imbued
 Their dim recesses with a dusk maroon,
 Mossgreen or lilac, all a quiet tune
 Of heaving water hearing, while sea-flowers
 Crimson or wavegreen bud in all the bowers.
 This lofty cave's a gorgeous palace-gate,
 Where some Sea-Genius holds royal state :
 Surely the stillness may invite to float
 Pensively hither in a slender boat,
 And pore upon the faint seagroves remote !
 Where now thy terrible moods, O sea ? . . .

. . . . But this ?

In yon dark fissure where an ocean-kiss
 Tenderly falls in music, a dim mass
 Sways with a nigh impalpably-heaved glass :
 Creep near . . . it wears a horrible human
 shape !

An eyeless head is nodding from the nape.
 Poor ghastly mockery of a human form,
 Jammed here in fierce delirium of storm !
 And look ! a shadowy monster in the deep
 Looms huge and hungry near the awful sleep !

Yonder a board swims rusty-nailed and rent,
Four painted letters with the tangle blent.
There is a mellow, dark-eyed maid in Spain,
Who waits a token from a foreign main.

III.

TWILIGHT.

A little wandering child has lost his way
On a hushed mountain at the close of day,
On a brine-bitten waste that slopes to grey
Abrupt cliffs, where a melancholy sea
Expands a far, slow-wrinkling mercury :
One cold, dim gleam, with three dark shadows vast,
From clouds immense in faded blues amassed,
Shadows that in a dreary twilight brood
Portentous phantom Presences, imbued,
Silently awful, with a life not ours ;
While on the seashore formidably lowers
A corrugated monster bulk of stone ;
Some huge, unwieldy monster left alone,
Slumbrous aware, with face toward old Ocean,
Since some pre-human age when such as he had
motion.

Rude, samphired, pinnacled, great crags arise
Sheer from dull seas into low, dusky skies ;
And one, a ghostly giant, leans athwart
Twilight, to watch him wandering, huge and
swart !
Through one wild arch in yonder cape wave-
worn
Expands a dreary infinite forlorn.
Infinite, pale, and dim and desolate,
Monotonous Ocean, with the Voice of Fate
Breathes homeless, helpless, and disconsolate.
Some sere, sparse mountain-bents moan shivering,
As the gust wearies them, and withered ling.
Near a path, pale with night that deepens round,
A ruinous gate stirs with an eerie sound.
Ah ! were it she who came to seek the child.
His mother ! with a piteous gesture wild
He turns and calls : alas ! she will not come ;
Dead mother knows not he is lost from home !
Dusk flaps a heavy-flighted cormorant,
Whereat the timorous breast begins to pant :
What dwarfed old man distorted threatens him ?
'Tis but a dry tree with blast-writhen limb !

Now, chill at heart, the little wanderer weeps,
And stumbles pale among the rugged steeps.

But God hath pity on a babe's despair :
For now he gains a summit ; unaware
There breaks upon his poor, tear-misted sight
A blissful vision of supreme delight !
Cheery near lights of houses in the town ;
And cheery murmuring human tones are blown
Upon the wind towards him ! then the child
Thanked God who led him hither from the wild ;
Brushed with his hand the tears, and ran so fast ;
Clasped in his father's happy arms at last !

IV.

BREEZE.

Climb upon yonder ivied neck of rock,
Flanked with twin chasms, and hear unrestful shock
Of tidal water in the caves rebuffed,
With fierce, impatient contumely cuffed,
Along the front of stern embattled coast,
Spat forth in spray from sombre innermost

Hollows ; and ever heaving blindly under,
Blundering in with subterranean thunder !
Stumbling and fumbling, water in the caves,
Like a strange, sullen beast, assaults and braves
The rocky scorn for ever ; chafed to froth,
Bellowing snorts in impotent dull wrath ;
So famished beast prowls ever, thrusting snout
Under his bars, in pain till he break out.
Yea, this immortal, subtle, importunate Sea,
Conquers our stolid Earth implacably.
Though round our ruined shores He laugh and
dally,
Chafing for war his proud battalions rally.
See how the simmering wash of swelling wave
Feels all alive along rich ooze of cave !
Yon grand expansive green hath belts to-day
Of blue and tawny, flecked with sparkling spray
By the brisk breeze that blows with cheerful play,
Wafting a merry crest in snowy smoke,
Glassed in the billow while it tossed and broke !
And there is evermore a restless wreath
Around the innumerable sharp shark's teeth,
Black flames rough crusted, threatening fangs of
death.

Yonder, lo ! the tide is flowing ;
Clamber, while the breeze is blowing,
Down to where a soft foam flusters
Dulsé and fairy feathery clusters !
While it fills the shelly hollows,
A swift sister billow follows,
Leaps in hurrying with the tide,
Seems the lingering wave to chide ;
Both push on with eager life,
And a gurgling show of strife.
O the salt, refreshing air
Shrilly blowing in the hair !
A keen, healthful savour haunts
Sea-shell, sea-flower, and sea-plants.
Innocent billows on the strand
Leave a crystal over sand,
Whose thin ebbing soon is crossed
Of a crystal foam-enmossed,
Variegating silvergrey
Shell-empetalled sand in play :
When from sand dries off the brine,
Vanishes swift shadow fine ;
But a wet sand is a glass
Where the plummy cloudlets pass,

Floating islands of the blue,
Tender, shining, fair, and true.

Who would linger idle,
Dallying would lie,
When wind and wave, a bridal
Celebrating, fly ?
Let him plunge among them,
Who hath wooed enough,
Flirted with them, sung them !
In the salt seatrough
He may win them, onward
On a buoyant crest,
Far to seaward, sunward,
Oceanborne to rest !
Wild wind will sing over him,
And the free foam cover him,
Swimming seaward, sunward,
On a blithe sea-breast !
On a blithe sea-bosom
Swims another too,
Swims a live sea-blossom,
A grey-winged seamew !

Grapegreen all the waves are,
By whose hurrying line
Half of ships and caves are
Buried under brine ;
Supple, shifting ranges
Lucent at the crest,
With pearly surface-changes
Never laid to rest :
Now a dipping gunwale
Momently he sees,
Now a fuming funnel,
Or red flag in the breeze.
Arms flung open wide,
Lip the laughing sea ;
For playfellow, for bride,
Claim her impetuously !
Triumphantly exult with all the free,
Buoyant bounding splendour of the sea !
And if while on the billow
Wearily he lay,
His awful wild playfellow
Filled his mouth with spray,
Reft him of his breath,

To some far realms away
He would float with Death ;
Wild wind would sing over him,
And the free foam cover him,
Waft him sleeping onward,
Floating seaward, sunward,
All alone with Death ;
In a realm of wondrous dreams,
And shadow-haunted ocean gleams !

NORTH DEVON.

THE END.

m,

ns.



This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

