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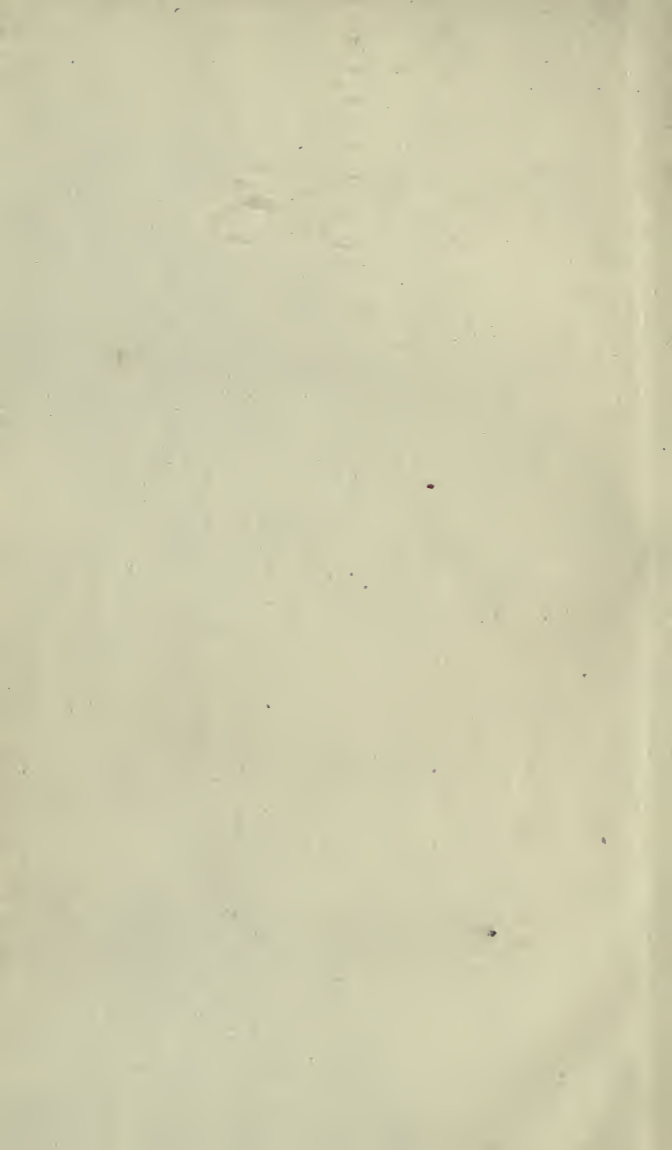
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SONNETS
AND OTHER POEMS.



SONNETS

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

ELIZABETH HORSLEY WHITEMAN.



SECOND ISSUE.

LONDON:

WALTON AND MABERLY


137, GOWER STREET, AND 27, IVY LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW.

—
1865.

LOAN STACK

To all
whose Love
has cheered my Captivity,
I dedicate this Book.

“ I was sick, and ye visited me.”



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SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS.

THE LESSON OF LIFE.

Νῆ τὰ ἄγνωτα παθήματα.—*Litany of the Greek Church.*

I.



WORK unavailing! Could the world contain
The books that should be written to record
Thy Life by suffering perfected, and stored
With such deep lore might be the heart and brain,
Nor after years of weary toil attain
The Wisdom that endurance can afford,
Through hours of anguish unexpressed by word ;
Those hours that make life long in the fierce strain
Sustained by flesh and spirit. Secret things
In fellowship of sorrow we behold,
More than all angel-guided pens have told,
Out of its solemn, silent influence springs ;
As day by day its revelation brings,
Th' unwritten story slowly to unfold.

THE LESSON OF LIFE.

II.

SO through the paths of suffering lead us on,
Till Thou art known, for we are known to Thee ;
Nor from the fiery furnace set us free,
Ere we have found Thy presence there, O Son
Of God and man ! Let sorrows one by one
Cry out unto our spirits, "Come and see !"
For earth hath its Apocalypse, to be
Revealed to tearful eyes. Teach us that none
Need count his life shaped to no end, and vain,
Outspent in learning Thine. Help us to win
True fellowship with Thee, through toil and pain ;
Weeping as Thou hast wept, until Thy voice
Calls us through "gates of praise" to enter in,
And in Thy joy for evermore rejoice.

SUBMISSION.

HE suffered, with twelve legions at His call
Of angels bright, and powerful to save
From ignominy, anguish, and the grave ;
But He bowed down His will, accepting all ;
Released thenceforth from fear's oppressive thrall,
Knowing a Father's hand His portion gave.
O thou, whose soul in agony would crave
Deliverance when approaching woes appal,
Be thou content to suffer, so shalt thou
Behold His presence in the gloomy night ;—
Saviour not only, but the Comforter !
“ Father, Thy will be done,” that thrice-made vow
Held back the armèd hosts, but winged his flight
Who waited heavenly solace to confer.

LONELINESS.

O MOURNING one, if God appoint for thee
Some heavy cloud upon thy soul to rest,
Whose haunting presence words leave unexpressed
Unto thy friends, though chosen ones they be,
A dimly apprehended mystery,
Even to one of all beloved the best ;
Remember, he who leaned on Jesu's breast,
Who watched beside His cross unweariedly,
Slept all unheeding, when the blood-drops shed
Gave token of a sorrowing spirit poured
Out unto death in anguish unsurmised ;
And when by light of his Evangel led,
We trace the footsteps of his suffering Lord,
That awful hour remains unrecognised.

WARNINGS.

AND thou who seest with onward-looking eyes
The cross, for one thou lovest well, prepared,
And whose wild cry leaps up, thou must be spared !
Bow down thy rebel will, that in disguise
Of love, the love supreme of God denies.
Behold the Saviour's agony unshared ;
He keeps no watch, who, when his Lord declared
His coming woe, opposed rebellious cries :
"That be far from Thee, that be far from Thee !"
And vainly now upon his heavy ear
The sad sweet voice appealingly doth fall,
"Sleepest thou, too ? Could'st thou not watch with me
One hour ?" Ah well, God's angel tarries near
Him who in vain on man's frail love doth call !

WATCHING.

I.

WATCH we and pray for those who dwell afar,—
Friends that erewhile were walking at our side,
Friends we had deemed that Death alone could hide
From our fond sight ; and living yet they are
Held from our yearning hearts by some strong bar
That Life hath placed between, till not so wide
The void seems, 'twixt our souls and friends who died
In by-gone years ; for on the furthest star
Our eye may rest, and with one glance o'erleap
Measureless space, but vainly on the sea
May seek the vessel's light, which but to-day
Hath left the shore ; and though the wild winds sleep
For us, their path 'mid fiercest storm may be.
Oh for the loved and absent watch and pray !

WATCHING.

II.

SO far apart we dwell, and yet so near ;
We who around one hearth, one table, meet
Day after day, and taking counsel sweet,
Together walk. Yet love, for those held dear,
Must need keep watch with heedful eye and ear,
Lest all unheard some pleading voice entreat
For help, in words that still leave incomplete
The utterance of the spirit's woe or fear ;
Lest day by day some long familiar face
Reveal to our accustomed gaze in vain,
Its speechless burden of incessant pain.—
So near, and yet so far ! A little space,
A stone's throw only, 'twixt the sleeping three
And Jesu's anguish in Gethsemané.

COMMUNION.

I.

WITH angels and archangels we may hold
Communion, echoing their joyous psalm,
“Gloria in excelsis!” through the calm
Of heavenly ages ever onward rolled,
While the Great Shepherd watcheth o’er His fold ;
Though ours the bitter herbs, and theirs the balm—
Though ours the pilgrim’s staff, and theirs the palm,
The snowy raiment and the crowns of gold.
Then if our spirit’s wing such heights may reach,
Nor angel raptures waver on our lip
As half-learnt language of an unknown land,
Can they, who speak our own familiar speech
Of daily life, dwell less in fellowship
Of close communion, clasping hand in hand ?

COMMUNION.

II.

THE full communion of life's suffering
We all may taste, none excommunicate.
To all in turn, the lowly and the great,
That cup a hand invisible doth bring ;
So none shall say, "Woe is an alien thing
Unto my well-defencèd heart ; my fate
Hath placed me in so high and sure estate,
While the world weeps I may but laugh and sing !"
Never in this world is the great gulf fixed,
Which none may traverse, for the bridge of sighs
The palace and the prison doth unite ;
Spanning the widest chasm laid betwixt
Him that in abject need and bondage lies,
And him that is with gold and purple dight.

COMMUNION.

III.

“**I** KNOW thee not,” a widowed Queen might say,
In royalty’s most utter loneliness,
Whom no stray hand outstretched in quick caress,
No unexpected eager footstep, may
Bring uncommanded comfort in the day
Of womanhood’s bereavement, “Not the less
Art thou well known who, in a like distress,
Weep as I weep :—lone woman, far away
Out on a desolate heath, upon whose ear
Thine own wild sobbing breath rings strange and loud,
The fellowship of sorrow draws us near ;
Down to one level are our spirits bowed.
Methinks my hand forth-reaching from my throne
Clasps thy hand in the darkness, widowed one !”

COMMUNION.

IV.

AS one who breathes his voice now high, now low,
Over an instrument's attuned strings,
May hear each sound repeated as he sings
By notes in turn responsive ; even so
To us, who breathe our cries of joy or woe
Upon the air, a certain echo rings
Back from our fellow-men ; and he who flings
His soul out in a passionate overflow,
Deeming himself alone, doth swiftly taste
The sweetness of communion. Never sigh
Breaks as a billow on a silent waste ;
Nor any song is sung upon a height
Too far withdrawn to meet its own reply,
From hearts that throb with anguish or delight.

COMMUNION.

v.

x **C**OUNT every joy wherewith God makes thee blest,
A heavenly messenger sent forth to tell
How it doth fare with kindred souls that dwell,
Holding invulnerable life and rest
And joy ; which, like a festal day is guessed
By sweet stray notes just caught upon the swell
Of mountain wind, voice, instrument and bell
Heard for a moment. Never tremble, lest
Joy so revered with heavy chain should bind
The soul to earth ; the music on the wind
Allures the pilgrim o'er the rocky steep,
And bids him drink, as from an angel hand
Outstretched to him, Communion pure and deep
With those rejoicing in the unseen land.

UNSEEN SORROW.

I.

MUST wounded hands assure our faithless sight,
Or piercèd feet, or thorn imprinted brow?
Its omnipresence thus must grief avow,
Revealed before our eyes in open light,
Ere we can read the hidden tale aright,
And render it due reverence? Oh thou,
Whose sympathising soul hath traced the flow
Of tears from eyes that now are shining bright
Above a tranquil smile,—hath guessed the cry
That rent erewhile those quiet lips apart;
Though winds be silent and no billows heave,
Hath learnt the fury of the storm gone by
From the succeeding calm,—blessèd thou art,
As they are blessed who see not, yet believe

UNSEEN SORROW.

II.

X
WHEN in thy wearied ear sad voices mourn,
Oh measure not the burden of their woe
Only by that thou see'st ; thou canst not know
What unfulfilled desires within them burn,
What prayers unto their longing hearts return,
Like hungry birds across the barren snow.
Much they may hold, perchance, and yet forego
More than thine eye hath wisdom to discern,
Or tears can e'er reveal. None are so blest
But something fails them. In the garden gay
We miss the wayside flowers that men love best ;
And they who round their brow the jasmine wreath,
And pluck the orange bloom, may sigh to breathe
The scent of dewy cowslips far away.

OMNISCIENCE.

“**L**OVEST thou me?” should any earthly friend
So ask with doubting voice, in sad surprise,
Impassioned answers to our lips would rise,
And fervent words our beating hearts expend,
Yet leave assurance feeble at the end.
Oh heavenly Friend ! with calm tho’ sad replies
Thy servant answered Thee, for Thou art wise,
The heart’s deep mysteries Thou dost comprehend
Better than we ourselves ; Thine eye discerns
The pearl reposing in the darkest deep
Of a most troubled ocean, and the word,
“Thou knowest all !” to Thee alone returns :
All the past sin, the tears that now we weep,
The speechless love — “Thou knowest all things,
Lord !”

DISAPPOINTMENT

I.

BLESSING and loss ! too often hand in hand
Ye come ; yet 'tis a boon to know our hold
Once clasped the prize, fled ere its worth was told.
But thy dim presence who can understand,
Thou Being with no attribute ? Not grand,
As Sorrow in bereavement, nor yet bold,
As Anguish in endurance ; only cold
As the white ocean mist hiding a land
Our feet have never trod, whose hills arose
Beauteous between the glowing tranquil line
Of dawning light and the tumultuous sea.
Oh Disappointment, in the cup of woes,
Wert thou too mingled for the lips divine
Of Him who tasted all man's misery ?

DISAPPOINTMENT.

II.

HIS eye in sorrow on the rich man fell,
Whose youthful soul a land of promise lay
One moment 'neath His gaze, lit by a ray
Of sudden light, till back with double spell
The shadow of the world returned to quell
Its glorifying influence. Who shall say
How high a seat was forfeited that day
In heavenly places? Sadder than a knell
Heard on the summer air, his passing feet,
Passing from life to death, smote on the heart,
Whose love divine no answering love had found ;
So when our brightest hopes have known defeat,
Our choicest gifts have met rejection's dart,
We have learnt somewhat of His keenest wound

LOSS.

I.

OH saddest word of all sad words we know !
Oh bitter cry that ringeth lost, lost, lost !
Heavy despair wherein it dwelleth most,
Rocked on a sighing utterance to and fro,
As a torn sail upon the ebb and flow
Of never-resting waters ; for the cost
Is counted then, whether a goodly host
In a lost battle slain, or deeper woe,
The hope, the energy, the life out-spent
Upon some long-loved aim, that star-bright drew
Our feet unheeding o'er a toilsome road,
Unheeding ! till the guiding influence went
Out into night, and suddenly and new
We felt the desert stones whereon we trod.

LOSS.

II.

CAN there be loss, when round the earth is spread
A glorious Heaven of Infinity?

Nay, for the happy souls that lean on Thee
There is no loss, O God! The blessings fled
Are but the passage-birds that onward sped,
Leaving us slowly sailing o'er the sea,
Yet looking ever to the land where we
Shall find a brighter clime. So onward led,
Not backward drawn by any seeming loss—
Onward allured by memories that lend
Fair outlines to our hopes, not dark before,
Shall lie the expanse of ocean we must cross,
Ere with the murmur of its breakers blend
Voices well known, upon an unknown shore.

CAPTIVITY.

I.

WHEN yellow leaves are flickering on a bough,
We have not strength to reach, to be debarred
From such poor prize we mourn not ; but 'tis hard
To see the joyous wreaths of roses blow
Swinging upon the breeze, and we laid low
In weakness, only look with sad regard
At the ungathered, long desired reward
Of patient hours, watching the spring tide grow
To perfect summer ;—so we estimate,
Not by its hours of weariness and pain,
Not by the galling pressure of its chain,
The mournful weight of sickness, but by all
The joys from which it holds us separate,
So near, and yet beyond our grasp, our call.

CAPTIVITY.

II.

O LOOK abroad upon the meadow land,
Where once your feet in careless pastime strayed
Ye, who in irksome idleness are laid
Apart from the world's work by God's command,
And say, when once your eager, wasteful hand
Among its hedge-row blooms and garlands played,
Was then the tenderness of light and shade
Sweeping across its breadth, as sweet as grand,
Unto your eyes, that through a mist of tears
Behold it now, fair region far away?
For joy in sorrow seemeth brightest aye,
And with the sense of loss the soul reveres
Beauties once lightly held, that scarcely won
Thankful response for their kind benison.

CAPTIVITY.

III.

IN darkness—when around his life the gloom
Of sickness gathered secretly and slow,
As twilight in the spring, mysterious, low
Yet clear as music in a silent room—
A voice came unto him, “O thou to whom
God hath appointed rest, when thou would’st go
So gladly forth to work, yet may’st not know
Ease in that seeming rest ; life’s opening bloom,
Exchanging for a life that seems to lie
Within Death’s shadow ; hearken, while I tell
Things all unheard save in the hush of night,
The earth being held apart, invisible ;
And when the morning breaks upon the sky,
That thou hast heard in darkness, speak in light.”

CAPTIVITY.

IV.

GOD'S work goes onward ever, though our hands
Lie powerless to serve Him, save in prayer :
No place on earth so desolate, but there
The messengers that wait on His commands,
Swift breezes flying out of fruitful lands,
Th' unwearied pilgrim-waves of ocean bear,
Both soil and seed ; and, lo, a forest fair
Upon the nameless coral island stands,
Where man hath never laboured. — Rest content,
Thou who art in a narrow circle pent ;
The work that once thou hadst, and called it thine
Another now doth hold as worthily,
And thou to keep the harmony divine
A place some prisoner left, whom God set free. .

THE PRISONER OF PATMOS.

THE tyrant bound thee in a narrow cell,
But none might stay thy trancèd spirit's flight ;
Noonday was dark to thee, and out of sight
The earth lay hid from thee inaudible,
Save in the rolling of the ocean swell ;
But thou wert compassed by the primal light
Of One, whose single utterance did unite
The voice of many waters ; thou didst dwell
In loneliness upon that Sabbath day,
Yet with glad music and with bright array
Before thine eyes gathered triumphant throngs.—
Would we might share captivity like thine !
With thee behold the living jewels shine,
And hearken to those crescent, choral songs !

REFLECTED LIGHTS.

THE sunlight, streaming from the crimson West,
Lit suddenly the tranquil Eastern sky,
Till every sombre cloud that floated by
Shone with an answering glory, once possest
As her own treasure, when the morning blest
The East with her bright presence ; so may I,
When, seemingly, from me all sunbeams fly,
Behold on my grey life a brightness rest,
Reflected from the joy by others worn—
Joy that erewhile was mine ; and if regret
Awake for that fair past, O stronger yet
The faith created in the coming morn,
When we have slept our sleep, and endless Day
Calls us to joy that shall not pass away.

RETROSPECT.

THE traveller, looking from some crowning height,
Sees all the perils of th' accomplished way
Sternly disclosed in the calm light of day—
Perils but dimly known, while through the night
He journeyed upward ; measured now aright
The chasm he beholds, that yawning lay
Close where he fearless trod, his torch's ray
Just step by step revealing to his sight.
So when upon the heights of Heaven we stand,
And all the trodden path of life review,
We first shall learn how far beyond our prayer,
“Deliver us from evil,” God's own hand
Hath led us past each precipice and snare ;
How many ills we missed—blessings how few !

THE REVEILLÉ.

ONWARD! a voice was calling; I was loth
To follow then so fast, when the warm air
Was rich with jasmine scent, and yet more rare
Sweet blossoms opened. O the beauteous growth
Of those green, whispering branches! Still that mouth
Gave out its trumpet-note, and steep and bare
The pathway lay before me, and the glare
Of cloudless sunbeams smote me from the South.
Again that voice, more low, because more near;
Not now a cry to snatch me from delay—
A Friend's voice calling that a friend may hear;
Soon shall the well-known watchword die away,
And we shall meet in some safe resting-place,
Standing in heavenly silence face to face.

TIME AND ETERNITY.

THE soul is like a watch-tower by the sea :
One while the sunbeams glide, the breezes blow
Over the downs where corn and clover grow,
The restless cattle-bells sound from the lea,
And children whimper, or cry out for glee,
Where through the gorze the winding pathways go
Down to the village street.—Anon the flow
Of the great waters swells in majesty,
Stirred by the landward blast ; the evening light
Flashes across their depth, the hush of night
Falls on the earth, and to the ocean song
The soul gives ear, striving to comprehend,
And answer, with a yearning wild and strong,
Where wistful hopes with cherished memories blend.

P O E M S.

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS!



GOD, we praise thee with our joyous singing,
When in communion of one faith we meet,
The harmony of thousand voices winging
One song of triumph to Thy mercy-seat.

And when our life is rich in fullest measure
With hope, and health, and aspiration high,
When day by day unfolds Thy wisdom's treasure
By voices of the earth, and sea, and sky,—
Those mighty messengers of revelation ;
Then pure as dew from Eden's blooming sod,
Our spirits upward borne in adoration,
In our rejoicing, we praise Thee, O God !

We praise Thee when the breezes of the morning
Ring with the trumpet's call, the sounds of strife ;
And we who roamed thro' flowery fields at dawning,
Tread suddenly the battle-plain of life,

And striving there, with dauntless arm and spirit,
For unknown issues by Thy counsels planned—
For unseen good that others shall inherit,
After our names have vanished from the land.
Tho' Heaven be dumb, and earthly ears unheeding,
And Error wield on high her magic rod,
Striving, by hope and faith and loving pleading,
In daily conflict, we praise Thee, O God !

We praise Thee when a change is round us sweeping,
When the wild freshness of the earth is fled ;
And we, who sowed in laughing joy, are reaping
With tears of those who mourn the early dead.
When bowing down beneath the voiceless anguish
Of good foregone, of fair hopes unfulfilled,
Our rebel hearts, who dared all foes to vanquish,
Slowly beneath Thy will are "all unwilled,"
And made content to follow Him in meekness
Who walked our thorny path with foot unshod ;
Thy strength made perfect in our utter weakness,
In our affliction, we praise Thee, O God !

And Thou dost hear us, singing, striving, sighing,
Thou, in whose courts the angels cry aloud,

With cherubim and seraphim replying,
While countless multitudes in worship bowed—
Apostles, prophets, martyrs, who before us,
In life and death, bore witness to Thy name,
With voice of ocean in eternal chorus,
The Lord of Hosts, thrice holy, Thee proclaim !
Hear us, and lead us onward to that dwelling,
Where, looking back o'er all the path we trod,
Our earthly tale in heavenly language telling,
At rest for ever, we praise Thee, O God !

THE PASSING SOUL.



EVER again on the sweet breath of Spring
 Shall primroses to me their kisses blow,
 Or the white hawthorn round my pathway
 fling
 Its fitful fragrance, and its mimic snow,
 Never again !

Never again the wild notes shall I greet,
 The wingèd notes that fill the summer air ;
 Or hear the brooks that do one strain repeat,
 Like wandering minstrels, singing everywhere,
 Never again !

Never again for me the winds shall blow
 Over half-ripened corn fields, gold and green,
 Whose rustling ranks one moment parting show
 The radiance of the poppies hid between.
 Never again !

O agony of Death ! on either side
The dark swift river, which no prayer can stem,
All scenes of life and beauty backward glide ;
Nay, mine the flight, I shall return to them,
Never again !

For I am like a bird that landward strives
On eager wing, while still the tyrant gale
Over the homeless sea the victim drives :
Ah, fare thee well, sweet Life, my pinions fail !—
“Never again !”

Echo of my lament ! yet clear and calm,
It soothes my troubled spirit to repose,
As if inwoven with an angel's psalm,
Attuning all the discord of my woes :—
“Never again !

Never again to reach the summer flowers,
Thy foot shall tread on withered flowers of spring ;
Or thy hand clasp with tears the sweetest hours,
Knowing they are so swift upon the wing.
Never again !

Never again 'neath Music's mystic might,
Thy soul shall pant against her prison bar ;
Nor Joy and Rest, like comrades out of sight,
Call thee with voices sweet, yet faint and far,
Never again !

Still murmurest thou, that earth is very fair,
In spite of all defilement and decay ?
Beauty of holiness awaits thee, where
Thou shalt behold her fail and fade away,
Never again !

Is life so sweet, in spite of pain and loss,
And fear, swift herald of approaching woe ?
Life shall be thine whose garden-path shall cross
Wild thorn, or withered leaf, or winter snow,
Never again !”

O fare thee well, kind Death ! No more I hear
The throbbing cadence of the passing bell.
Earth is the far-off land, and Heaven so near—
So near, that I may breathe the word, Farewell,
Never again !

SONG.



HERE is a dead leaf on the spray,
 Dead flowers on the river,
 Yet these shall come again one day ;
 But, oh, thou comest never !

There are hushed voices of the wind,
 And echoes fainter ever,
 Yet time their silence shall unbind ;
 But, oh, thou speakest never !

There is a rush upon the air,
 Bright wings around me quiver,
 And angels' songs my spirit bear ;
 "Come thou to me for ever !"

DREAMS.



MOTHER, listen to my dream,
 That is both fair and strange :
 I have been sailing in my sleep,
 Over the ocean blue and deep,
 With winds that ne'er did change.
 We never thought to look for land,
 Nor knew the flight of time,
 If summer days were come or gone,
 If winter frost was creeping on ;
 We only heard the chime
 Of waves that bounded in merry flight,
 But never a singing bird ;
 They lifted tow'rds me seaweed bright,
 But when the gale upstirred,
 It brought no breath of opening flowers,
 Or scent of summer rain.
 O life was blowing wild and free ;
 But to thy love's captivity
 I wept to come again. "

“ Full many are the eyes that weep
To see their dreams depart.
Ah, child, 'tis rare to wake from sleep
As joyous as thou art.”

“ O Mother, throw the casement wide
To cool my throbbing brow,
And let a soft transparent beam
Dispel the shadow of the dream
That lingers with me now.
I knew that I was far away,
And it was endless night ;
And yet no darkness anywhere,
The moon was smiling full and fair
In most majestic might.
And warbling birds their pinions spread,
Each like a wingèd gem,
And fire-flies wove above my head
A starry diadem.
The sea half kissed a grassy shore,
In languid silence calm ;
I longed to hear a billow break
In vain.—The air would scarcely wake
To waft the roses' balm ;

And yet it was no sense of rest
That did my soul enchain ;
A heaviness, that quenched its fire,
I wept with unfulfilled desire
To be with thee again."

"Beautiful are the dreams that fleet
From hearts all cold and lone ;
Few wakings, child, like thine are sweet,
When dreams are past and gone."

Through many a night, in wordless prayer,
The mother watched till morn.
Without the flowers in silence died,
And leafless trees above them sighed
With outstretched arms forlorn.
No dream of earth, no irksome thrall
Troubles the placid brow ;
Shadows of angel wings are all,
That rest upon her now.
The crimson glow upon her cheek
Is from the dawn of Heaven ;
And from her deeply radiant eyes,
Shines forth her soul—pure from disguise,
Or stain of earthly leaven.

She whispers low, as fain to keep
 The echoes clear and bright
 Of strains, that floated through her sleep,
 Golden as summer light :—

“I dreamt of Heaven, the vast unknown,
 And yet not strange to me,
 And found a perfect rest at length—
 Rest without languor, full of strength,
 Joy and activity.

I thought of earth, so far away,
 Without a tear or care ;
 I thought of thee, in grief alone,
 But my heart cried, ‘Thy will be done !’
 And lost in praise the prayer.”

“Many the happy sleeping mind
 That wakes to doubt and fear ;
 Thrice blest ! to wake from dreams, and find
 Reality so near !”

That night the mother’s voice again
 Is hushed, and every tread ;
 And shaded still the taper’s beam ;
 But light nor sound shall mar *her* dream,
 The quiet, happy dead !

THE LAST STEP.

“**H**AST thou travelled far ?
 Mine was a short and sunny way ;
 I journeyed only at break of day,
 With the morning star.

“ In the forest path,
 Little of other ways I knew ;
 The shadows hid not heaven from view,
 But they hid the earth.”

“ Alas, poor child !
 Thy wanderings have ended soon,
 Ere yet the hot bright rays of noon
 On thy forehead smiled.

“ We have met at last,
 Though I have travelled far, they say ;
 To me it seems but one short day,
 Now all is past.

“Dost thou not mourn ?
Thou art leaving all things bright and fair ;
Leaving—to go thou know’st not where.
Thou canst not return.”

He never replied.
With firm sure step that child walked on,
Looking above ; but the agèd one
Looked back and sighed.

IT COMES TO PASS.

“Ask the words which we use to give an account of themselves, to say whence they are, and whither they tend. Then shall we often rub off the dust and rust from what seemed but a common token, which we had taken and given a thousand times, esteeming it no better, but which now we shall perceive to be a precious coin. Then shall we often stand in surprise, while we behold the great spiritual realities which underlie our common speech, and the marvellous truths which we have been witnessing for in our words.”—TRENCH *on the Study of Words*.



IT comes to pass—the hawthorn blooms are
 falling,
 When the wild roses cluster on the tree,
 Waking to hear the June winds softly calling,
 And all the woodland answer whisperingly.
 But when the broad, bright autumn fields are swinging
 Their golden billows all the sunny day,
 Where are the roses? Where the lark's sweet singing?
 Beauty and music come—to pass away.

It comes to pass—the joy that lights the dwelling,
 The young hopes born in faithlessness of ill;
 Ambition proud, when all our sails are swelling,
 Till the wind lulls, and we perforce lie still.

The strength of hands tight link'd for firm endeavour ;
The love that blends two voices in one lay,
Whose echoes ring for ever and for ever,
Yea, all may come to pass—to pass away.

Again, it comes to pass—sad hearts are hushing
Their bitter weeping, as they list that sound
That rises o'er the wrath of whirlwind rushing,
When seemeth the long midnight without bound.
“ Erewhile,” they say, “ before our joys departed,
We heard that voice, and sighed, ‘ Alas ! alas ! ’
But now we answer sad and weary-hearted,
‘ Thank God it comes to pass—it comes to pass.

Not always shall the wings of night be casting
Their heavy shadows where our footsteps tend ;
The light of God alone is everlasting,
And we must surely find it at the end.’ ”
It came to pass—O solemn knell, still clearer
Ring out the life of each departing day,
And so proclaim us ever drawing nearer
The land where nought shall come—to pass away.

THE RECALL.

I.



CALL me not back with prayer !

The swallow flies away,

On the last summer day,

To regions far and fair.

Ye would not that wild flight detain,

And wherefore call me back again ?

Call me not back with song !

Its cadences would float

Into one sighing note,

The angel hymns among.

O would ye mar that peaceful strain,

Or wherefore call me back again ?

Call me not back with hope !

It is too late to sow

Sweet flowers that only blow

Upon Life's sunward slope.

Was that hard lesson learnt in vain,
Or wherefore call me back again ?

Call me not back with love !

Who love me best will say,

Belovèd, speed thy way

To surer bliss above.

And say ye so ? Then burst thy chain,
Freed soul ! none calls thee back again.

THE RECALL.

II.



THANK thee for thy prayer,
 That held my panting soul
 Back from the shining goal
 Which seemed so near, to share
 Earth's memories and joys again,
 And its great privilege of pain.

I thank thee for thy voice,
 That taught me by its charm,
 How, leaning on God's arm,
 Men suffer and rejoice.
 Could I for angel-anthems yearn,
 Leaving on earth so much to learn !

I thank thee yet again,
 For hope that I may bear
 Unto some heavy ear
 Notes of that holy strain ;

And win some voices to combine
Yet sweeter, higher notes with mine.

I thank ye, gentle friends,
 For love surmounting death,
 Whose strong recalling breath,
God's voice in you, so bends
My will, that I no more complain;
For He hath called me back again.

A WOMAN'S PETITION.



LOVE me not ! I tell thee nay,
 Thou canst not follow. Far away
 Pointeth a hand thou must obey ;
 O love me not !

No jewels blaze upon my brow,
 No brightness but of love ; and thou
 Before a richer shrine must bow ;
 O love me not !

I know how loving hearts can ache,
 Long, long ere they bow down and break ;
 And this I say for thy loved sake—
 O love me not !

True, all my seed is cast on earth,
 And yet no flowers for me have birth ;
 My given love shall call none forth,
 Yet love me not !

Too pure my love to bring thee woe ;
My heart's one joy shall be to know
I on thy path no shade can throw—

O love me not !

Yea, until Love's dominion be
Of infinite supremacy,
Embracing one, and all, and me,

O love me not !

x
THOUGHTS WITHOUT WORDS.



HEREFORE can I never utter
Thoughts that in my bosom rise?
Break, O break the eagle's fetter,
Let it mount toward the skies!

Take thy hand from off the bowstring!
Why the wingèd shaft retain?
Let it cleave the very heavens,
Though it be to fall again!

When the sun looks forth in glory,
Hailing summer at her birth,
And like footsteps of an angel,
Fall his rays upon the earth—

When the golden moon is shining,
And the earth is still and pale,
Save the rustling leaves that answer
Mystic whispers of the gale;

And in long procession sweeping,
Snowy clouds move on awhile,
Like choristers in silence passing
Down some vast cathedral aisle—

Then my heart swells high within me —
Words !—I seek in vain for them—
What are words ? The floating seaweeds,
Tell not of the hidden gem.

O the spirits dumbly striving
With the weight of thought unsaid ;
O the blind words vainly diving,
In that sea unfathomèd.

Where is He the great Deliverer ?
Prayerful eye and earth-ward knee
Supplicate His lips to utter
Epphatha ! and set us free.

* * *

* * *

Cease, O troubled soul, thy mourning,
That no speech a mirror brings,
Rendering in faithful beauty
All thy deep imaginings—

Weep not when thy sweetest fancies
Pass like silent clouds away,
Unremembered, unreturning,
While no spell doth bid them stay.

They are of a source immortal,
Nor in earthly homes abide ;
But with thine own resurrection
Thou shalt find them glorified.

All the yearnings of thy spirit,
That have found no place or name ;
All unuttered inspirations
Perfected, and still the same.

Then the burst of radiant voices,
Where no thought is born to die,
Where the fulness of the spirit
Echoes through Eternity.

THE WINTER OF THE HEART.



THEY met together silently,
 They parted silent still,
 No faltering thought gleamed in the eye,
 With steadfast gaze and still,
 So they passed slowly on.

But when the gloom of absence hid
 Each from the other's ken,
 One moment's agony undid
 Their bondage ; knowing then
 All hope in love was gone.

O coward hearts ! that failed, before
 Your pleading voice was heard ;
 O cruel lips ! that barred the door
 Against each captive word ;
 Words that avail not now !

O heartless eyes ! that quenched the glance
Of power omnipotent ;

O frigid forms ! that as by chance
In courteous coldness bent—
Nay rather heartless thou,

O world ! for thine the deed and shame,
Thou stood'st spectator by,
Blighting young hearts' upsoaring flame
With cold, keen, curious eye :
Thy work doth honour thee !

Two answering spirits silence bound,
That once held commune sweet ;
Now only listening for the sound
Of the Deliverer's feet,
Through Life's captivity.

LONGEST AND SHORTEST.



HE sweet west wind is flying
 Over the purple sea,
 And the amber daylight dying
 On roadway, hill, and tree ;
 The cattle-bells are ringing
 Among the slanting downs,
 And children's voices flinging
 Glad echoes through the towns.
 "O summer day ! so soon away !"
 The happy-hearted sigh and say—
 "Sweet is thy light, and sad thy flight,
 And sad the words, Good night ! Good nig

The wan white clouds are trailing
 Low o'er the level plain ;
 And the wind brings, with its wailing,
 The chill of the coming rain.

Fringed by the faded heather,

Wide pools of water lie ;

And birds and leaves together

Whirl thro' the evening sky.

“Haste thee away, O winter day !”

The weary hearted weep and say—

“Sad is thy light and slow thy flight

Sweet were the words, Good night ! Good night !”

LIFE IN DEATH.



HE North wind shrieked against the door,
 And shook the snow-drift from the eaves,
 And hissed among the brown oak-leaves,
 Like breakers on a shingly shore ;

And swept a pang to the heart's core
 Of one who long in sickness pined—
 Who wept, "O whisper warm and kind,
 O summer voice of Western wind ;
 And shall I hear thee nevermore ?"

The Western wind sang at the door,
 And rustled through the barley sheaves,
 And shook the bees, those highway thieves,
 From foxglove bells ; and scattered o'er
 That dying poet, thoughts of yore ;
 And calling his lament to mind,
 With quivering smile : "O voice unkind,"
 He said, "keen blast of Northern wind,
 Now shall I hear thee nevermore !"

Blank stands the chamber, closed the door ;
Within, unscared the spider weaves,
And through the beams the ivy cleaves
Its way, and runs from roof to floor.
The vine, whose fruit unplucked, is hoar
With white decay, hath closely twined
Round the barred window, and can find
No entrance ; nor the autumn wind,
Crying like wanderer old and poor.

So year by year.—At length the door
Re-opens ; sudden light relieves
The darkness ; the lone room receives
A throng, all eager to explore.
Saith one—“ Here died he : twenty-four
His sum of life ; and here reclined,
Wrote his last song, scarce interlined—
His last words—somewhat of the wind,
Which now should vex him nevermore.”

Another : “ his th' unwritten lore,
Learnt in the hush of summer eves ;
Such mystic teachings who perceives,
Skimming at noon his verses o'er ?

Critics with pencil quick to score
A dissonant word, although behind,
Lies some grand thought, like hills defined
By the red lightning's flash. O Blind,
Lead we the blind for evermore?"

So the dead poet they deplore :
But his true Life, which Death bereaves
The world not of, its end achieves,
And doth its fervent utterance pour
In lofty song, which, at the door
Of human hearts, doth ever find
Free entrance, and a welcome kind
And warm as breath of Western wind.—
Ah ! canst thou hear it nevermore,

Thou poet-soul ? yet at the door
Of death, the human life-tide heaves
So close, perchance thine ear retrieves
Something of sound—though heretofore,
Thy listening heart was wounded sore
With cold neglect, or scoff designed ;
Yet listen now ;—nor fear to find
The blast of that keen Northern wind
For thou shalt hear it nevermore.

A LAMENT.



WEEP beside the well, Alice,
 I weep beside the well,
 For there I heard your singing voice,
 Where the singing waters fell.

I heard your sweet voice far away,
 I heard your sweet words nigh,
 There was no other sound for me
 Between the earth and sky.
 But now I hear the bird, the breeze,
 The distant village bell,
 For thou art silent now, Alice,
 And I weep beside the well.

I weep among the flowers, Alice,
 The scented garden-flowers,
 Where once your bright eyes shone like stars,
 In the still twilight hours.

The shooting-stars fall down the heaven,
The bee hums past me now,
And I watch the blossoms fluttering
From the white cherry bough,
And the rippling of the aspen leaves,
With sound like summer showers ;
For thou art far away, Alice,
And I weep among the flowers.

But in my lonely home, Alice,
Most bitterly I weep ;
Though memories of you rise not there,
A hallowed place to keep.
Though you have never crossed the floor,
Nor sat beside my hearth,
The place where vanished hope hath been
Is the saddest place on earth.
The change where never change hath come,
Smites me with anguish deep,
So in my lonely home, Alice,
Most bitterly I weep.

TEACHERS.



KNOW that Thou dost teach, and we may
learn

By other teachers than by suffering,

Making our eager spirits in us burn

By the sweet whispers of the early spring,

By the full song of summer, by the cry

Of choral voices, when the year is crowned,

By the repose of deep tranquillity,

When winter brings a silence back like sound.

I know that Thou dost teach by gladness pure,

Whose token is a laughing, singing voice,

An upturned brow, a footstep fleet and sure,

A sunny eye, that wakens to rejoice.

Thou sendest joy a messenger on earth,

To tell us tales of heavenly happiness ;

As some strange minstrel, in the cold, dull North,

Sings of the flowers, that Southern climates dress.

And blessèd they, who look on gold and gems,
And green leaves waving by the water side ;
And mind them of the palms and diadems,
And the pure flowing of the crystal tide.
Who walk on festal days the city street,
And mid rejoicing homes of rich and poor,
Think of the royal City, made complete,
Where voice of weeping shall be heard no more.

And blessèd they, who clasp some loving hand,
After the severance of long years gone by ;
With bliss like theirs, who, safe from parting, stand
In the communion of Eternity.


And blessèd they, who, called from deathly bed
Back into life, from weakness and decay,
Foretaste that joy, when springing from the dead,
The flesh shall see its Resurrection-Day.

Yet we must be content to mourn—content
To blend our voices in that solemn dirge,
That rings throughout the night—the night far-spent,
Like myriad murmurs of the ocean surge—

Because His voice, whose utterance doth unite
The voice of many waters, led that strain,
Up through all notes, to desolation's height,
Down through all sobbing cadences of pain.

Content! Nay more, rejoicing that this Earth—
This little life—a jewel hath in hand,
Not numbered there when Christ shall lead us forth,
To take the treasures of the Golden Land.
Wisdom of joy! O beautiful thou art;
Nor shall Eternity exhaust thy lore;
But sorrow's lesson we must learn by heart,
Quick, ere the book be closed for evermore.

ANGELS.

“H messengers of God, are ye beside us,
 Fair loving angels, are ye tarrying nigh,
 With gentle hands ever outstretched to
 guide us ?”

We ask in childhood looking to the sky,

Drinking its dazzling depths with eyes unfailing,
 Unshadowed by the budding April trees,
 While a mysterious, sudden hush prevailing,
 Seems to hold back the voice of bird and breeze

In watchful awe, and willow blooms half broken
 Leap from our hands forgetful of their hold,
 Because our souls are listening for some token,
 Waiting for some bright presence to unfold

Its glory to our eyes,—in lily vesture,
 With silver wings and dimly-shining hair,
 Meeting our earnest gaze with loving gesture
 And eyes that long unseen have watched us there.

A moment's trance! then sound thro' silence piercing,
Companions shouting from the primrose dells,
The thrush, his half-learnt roundelay rehearsing,
Calls us to earth and all the dream dispels.

And on through life longing for hands to guide us,
Our hearts repeat again with yearning sigh:
"Oh messengers of God, are ye beside us?
Strong, loving angels, are ye tarrying nigh?"

And asking so, we learn the lesson slowly;
Each day's events may be an angel sent,
With message for the trustful heart and lowly,
That holds no idol of self-made intent.

Yea, and the daily things our senses greeting,
The green bud bursting in the dusky hedge,
The solemn clouds thro' evening silence fleeting,
Above some city housetop's blackened edge;

The wandering butterfly, whose pinions flutter
Adown some narrow street, in days of spring,
Have brought sweet thoughts which words may never
utter,
Unto the mourning and the suffering.

The fame of lofty deeds, whereat we wonder,
And hear in them a voice that calls us on ;
The sight of means, whereby good deeds we ponder,
Turn by occasion into good deeds done ;

A smile unasked, a wayside salutation,
The cloudless brightness of some household face,
By these how often God sends forth salvation
To souls that faint in their appointed place.

Nor always are they messengers, whose beauty
Is to our gaze revealed without disguise ;
They meet us too in form of sternest duty,
Whose guerdon far in the Hereafter lies.

All hours of sorrow, all distress and danger,
The coming of a thousand daily cares,
Aye, Death itself may enter as a stranger,
And prove an Angel honoured unawares.

THE SONG OF THE WIND.

x



VER the waters, I come, I come,
 And their murmuring song I bear,
 And I fling the flash of their diamond spray
 High in the sunlit air ;
 And the wanderer's lay I am bearing away,
 And to loving and listening hearts I say,
 His bark is homeward-bound to-day
 On the breath of the southern wind,
 Sighing low.

Over the woodlands, I come, I come,
 Where the blue-bells and primroses bloom,
 And, oh ! it is blessèd to waft their breath
 Into the shadowy room,
 Where hope is departed and pain is sore,
 And the death-angel stands by the open door ;
 The dying shall hear of spring once more,
 With the voice of the southern wind,
 Sighing low.

Over the gardens, I come, I come,
Where the roses are clustering fair ;
And the dewy scent of the blossoming fields
Into the city I bear ;
And the weary-hearted forget their tears,
And the old man forgetteth his numbered years
And of freedom the captive dreaming, hears
The song of the southern wind,
Sighing low.

Over the city, I come, I come,
Hear ye the death-knell toll ?
Louder and lower its echoing voice
Tells of a passing soul,
After its wanderings weary and long,
Passing for ever from pain and wrong,
Passing away with the angels' song,
And the song of the southern wind,
Sighing low.

CHRISTMAS ROSES.

DESOLATE is the land !
 Winter hath quenched the torch, whose flame
 The seasons, as they went and came,
 Passed on from hand to hand.

Desolate is the heart !
 With out-stretched hand and folded wings,
 Death, lover aye of fairest things,
 Standeth to claim his part.

Vain are the mournings wild,
 They can recall nor leaf nor flower ;
 But, lo ! triumphant o'er his power,
 One looked on Death and smiled.

Turn to the winter rose,
 Fair as the dead, yet life in death
 Is hers, like those whose deepening faith
 Is measured by their woes.

Who ask not summer days,
Nor balmy breeze, nor sunny nooks ;
But, "praising God with sweetest looks,"
Stand by our wintry ways.

Linger, to light our gloom !
Brave souls, when bitter tempests blow,
For if ye grace our paths of snow
How bright must be the bloom

Of that rich garden land,
Where in repose and order pure,
And light that ever shall endure,
Flowers of all seasons stand.

The royal summer rose,
Here doomed to deck a thorny bough ;
The primrose sweet in shade ; and thou,
Fair blossom of the snows !

THE LAST GOOD BYE.



WE know it—we are parting, I and thou,
 Death hastens near; nearer thy young
 face bow,
 My soul's last breath I shed upon thy brow
 In prayer for thee.

When in thy heart, tears lie too deep to flow,
 In the dark hour of solitary woe,
 When in one moment years are passing slow,
 God be with thee!

Through the bright day when sunshine fills the air,
 And Love's best wealth becomes thy golden share,
 And all the world seems kind and very fair,
 God be with thee!

When earth's sweet visions far and farther roll,
 When thy life spreads behind thee, past and whole,
 While Death's dread pause encompasses thy soul,
 God be with thee!

In that great sudden dawn when all shall meet,
Body and soul, at their Creator's feet,
Living and dead around the judgment-seat,
God be with thee!

Oh for that Day of God! that Day of meeting!
That endless Day, all time foregone completing!
When I may clasp Thy hands in praiseful greeting,
Not prayer, for Thee!

WHITHER ?



Y soul longed for the dead, to seek for them,
 My soul cried, Whither ? whither ? and the
 prayer

Rose up before me with an angel's might,
 Bidding my spirit follow and behold.

On high, on high we soared, parting aside
 The clouds' entangled maze from height to height ;
 While stars that erewhile pale and quivering shone
 As wind-flowers in the forest, smote us now
 With golden arrowy rays, that overwhelmed
 Us strangers to their light, through which we fled
 Swift as men flee through darkness. Up and on
 Unsatisfied, till suddenly we passed
 To such a broad and hushed repose of light,
 That never earthly night, most dark and dumb
 Had such tranquillity, and rested there,
 I and my angel-guide, in wingless strength
 Sustained upon the ardent constant breath

Of aspiration, inarticulate
By words, but as it were the rendering back
Of God's own breath of Life again to God.
And by such aspiration felt, we knew,
(As waters that, in fountains springing, seek
The level whence was poured their downward stream,)
There lay some vaster height, some source of Life,
Of Glory not yet reached.

Who hath marked winds
Made visible by passing o'er calm seas,
And ruffling all the stillness of their light
Into swift sliding shadows, till at length
A sound breaks on the silence of the shore ?
So came a Presence from the dim afar
And stood beside us, manifest by words
That answered questions of unuttered thought.—
“Ye seek the Dead !” The sound was of the earth,
And shot a failing pang, as we had lost
Our hold on the divine ; but the next word
Recalled unwavering strength : “The light of God,
The love of God, which in calm unity,
Holds in its centre every separate ray
Of light and love, encompasseth them now ;
Oh yearning spirit, oh aspiring prayer,

Ye only reach the borders of that peace
Which ye call Heaven. Nor may I reveal :
For human words, like outworn vessels, fail
To hold the new wine of unearthly joy
How God hath made them happy. Trust in Him,
And live in cheerful patience out the life
He gives on earth. He drops rich handfuls there
From His best treasures, which the faithful glean,
And none rebuke them. Every answered prayer,
And every promise proved in fiery heat
As silver seven times tried, proved utterly,
And never failing ; all epiphanies
Of love, whether strewn round the path as flowers
In summer time, or flashing on the eye
A vein of gold after long hours of toil
In darkness of a mine ; each thrill of joy
For which with lifted hands ye can give thanks,
All scenes of beauty, every perfect form
From the frail insect to the beautiful
In man, and man's creations, be to you
As echoes from the perfect harmony,
As revelations from the unseen land
Whose entrance-gate is shut nor night nor day,—
The gate that ye call Death.”

Again that word
Brought back mortality. There came a sound,
Not of angelic utterance ; far below
The glory of the stars, and far below
Even the tangled clouds, now drawn to folds
That curtained half the sky, I caught the song,
Keen and most sweet, of the upsoaring lark.
Quick showers of sunbeams lightened all the earth,
And morn's first breeze was dancing. I beheld
With not less ardent soul, though looking through
The casement of her dwelling, giving thanks
To Him with whom abides the well of Life ;
Who by an ever-living Voice, that sounds
Amid the hush of nature's winter rest,
Over the empty mouth of new-made graves,
In the chill depths of ancient sepulchres,
And through the dumb void of a desolate heart,
For our rejoicing doth Himself proclaim
The God not of the dead but of the living

INLAND.



OH for the wind across the sea !
 To cool my burning brow ;
 The breeze that runs o'er meadow lands,
 And swings the willow bough,
 And the purple plumes of the loosestrife flowers,
 Is all too gentle now.

Oh for the wind across the sea !
 Joyous and fresh and keen,
 With sudden flight upon mighty wings .
 And sudden pause between,
 Through which the roll of the wave is heard
 In the caverns cool and green.

Better than clematis' tangled boughs
 With silver-tufted seed,
 Than heather bloom in the forest glade

Where the wild grey rabbits feed,
Were the silver foam and the garlands brown
Of the scattered ocean weed.

Oh for the wind across the sea!
I would stretch my hands to greet
Its coming, till it brought the tide
Foaming against my feet;
And the weird-like voice of the rising storm
Were better than singing sweet.

Better than holy bells that chime,
Than whisper of falling leaves,
Than hush of fields where no gleaner works,
No reaper among the sheaves,
Were the clang of the billows along the beach
In the gloaming of autumn eves.

Oh for the wind across the sea!
As one who lies on deck,
Watching the first low line of shore,
While the home-bound swallows peck
The crumbs of bread from his wasted hand,
And green as in woodland beck

The changeful waves leap toward the land,
Thrills with forgotten glee,
So my poor heart would bound and thrill
With the first sight of the sea ;
And life and hope, that have stood apart,
Perchance would come back to me.

THE PRISONER OF NAPLES.



HE lingered in the darkness of his cell,
 While overhead the glorious moon went by,
 Making the earth a shadow, and the sky
 A home of light where souls in freedom
 dwell ;

And when o'er purple hills the morning broke,
 And lit the golden sands and murmuring sea
 And earth, like Peter in captivity,
 Suddenly 'neath the angel-touch awoke,

No angel-light for him ; and when the glare
 Hushed every footfall in the city street,
 Save fountains dancing on their silver feet
 To their own singing in the sunny square,

Noonday was night for him ; and when the sun
 Crouched like a hunter 'neath the mountain's crest,
 And shot his last red arrow from the west,
 He knew not that another day was done.

“O God!” he cried, “my life is nothing worth,
Take me, I pray, from patience and from pain;
Death ever present, on my heart and brain
Hath laid his shadow; let him lead me forth!

I would have toiled on earth and wearied not,
I would have given life with ready hand
To Thee and to my sorrowing native land—
The fallen leaves that by the wayside rot

Are of more use than I to man or God,
They feed the unborn blossoms of the spring;
In all thine ordered world not anything
Useless remains encumbering the sod.

Why must I live, useless for toil or strife,
Like a long lingering firebrand in a room
Where lies a dead man cold and lonely, whom
That flame outlives, as I have outlived life?”

So he lamented, while the appointed day
Came on sure-footed, as it comes to all,
Though never may we hear the quick steps fall,
As the deaf hear not who comes by their way,

Until a hand grasps theirs, a welcome eye
Meets their own startled gaze. There came an hour
When tyranny was hurled from place and power,
And as an earthquake opens to the sky

The long sealed graves, the prison doors flew wide ;
Forth came a ghost-like throng, pale as the moon
Seen in the glow and glory of the noon,
Mid the victorious band's tumultuous pride.

With staggering feet that well-nigh seem to miss
The weight of fetters, quivering lips that lose
The outlines of the words they fain would choose
And fail to shape the music of a kiss.

Weeping for very weakness with such tears
As sick girls weep, to whom life comes again
New, overwhelming, near akin to pain ;
Their native language breaking on their ears

Like rain-fed mountain-torrent on the brow
Of sunburnt crags after the summer drought,
Down thundering on the silence of lone thought,
Sense lost in sound's impetuous overflow.

Even so the hour was come, they lived to tell
A tale of dark deeds that awoke a cry
Of horror from all lands. Up to the sky,
The verdict sounded forth : "Yea, this is well,

Well done, O Italy! God speed thee! make
Thy deed complete; no place is here for ruth,
None, though a queenly woman, fair in youth,
Must share a despot's fall for freedom's sake;

None, though swords flash like lightning through the
land;

None, though the best blood of thy children flows;
Set thou thy heel upon thine ancient foes;
Stoop not to raise them with relenting hand!"

Oh, prisoners of hope, not of despair!
Was it not well to linger till this day?
Were ye not walking surely in a way
The herald angels did for you prepare?

For life is never wasted! Who may know
How long beneath the waters of the brook,
Lay th' imprisoned stone, which David took
And wrought therewith a giant's overthrow?

RIZPAH.



WITH thy brow upon thy hand
 Thou sittest, mournful one !
 Hearest thou not the night-winds sweep
 Over the upland lone,
 Passing thee now with a sobbing breath,
 And again with a fitful moan ?

 Nor the wakened woods give back
 A sullen murmur deep
 Nor the rustling stalks of the ripened corn,
 Like whispers heard in sleep ?
 Hast thou no voice for thy lament ?
 Why dost thou silence keep ?

 Say, dost thou shrink with fear
 The shadows to behold,
 Now that the sunset light hath ebbed
 To a level line of gold,
 And the waning moon, low in the west,
 Looks on thee wan and cold ?

Fear! since the day that saw
Thy hope and joy depart,
Thy perfect love hath cast out fear,
Oh! woman, from thy heart!
Yon hungry lion is not now
As dauntless as thou art.

Sniffing the evening wind,
He has bounded from his lair;
But crouches now with muttered growl,
Dazed by the torches' glare,
And the living form, still as the dead
That are stretched unburied there.

Many a night hath heard
The vulture's haunting cry,
And the startled scream of the sleeping bird,
As that red light flashed on high,
And the stealthy feet and panting breath
Of wild beasts prowling nigh.

Many a sultry day
Gibeon's strong reapers swung
The sickle through the yellow wheat,

While chiming voices rung
From neighbouring fields of barley shorn
Where the gleaning maidens sung.

Sung, with a sudden pause,
Pointing below the hill,
And looks, half wonder, half of scorn ;
“ Behold, she watches still—
Rizpah—beside th’ accursèd dead,”
Then turned again to fill

The gaily woven scarfs
That bound their waist and hair,
Tossing their glittering ebon locks
Back proudly on the air,
And scattering laughter on the wind,
The happy, young, and fair !

The happy, young, and fair,
Oh, such were they who lie
Low at thy feet, dim outlines seen
’Neath their grey canopy,
Oh ! such were they whom vengeance doomed
On one dread day to die.

They withered not away
Like willows in the heat,
They fell not as the heroes fall,
When the clashing weapons meet
In deadly strife on the battle-plain,
Or the hard-worn city street.

Cursed in the sight of men,
They hung upon a tree,
Sons of the bloody house of Saul,
That the guilt of Saul might be
Wiped from the land,—unsepulchred
And mourned by none but thee!

Unmoved by shame or fear,
By weariness or pain,
Thou watchest while each long, bright day
Leads back the night again ;
Until a sound awakes thine ear—
The rush of the autumn rain.

A sound like angel-wings
Bearing new life from heaven
To famine-stricken Israel,

Token of guilt forgiven ;
Oh, Rizpah ! both with God and man,
Not vainly hast thou striven.

The Lord is for thy land
Entreated ; who shall say
What prayers went upward from thy heart's
Dark silence, night and day,
While the long looked-for messenger
Lingered upon the way ?

Not cursed, but blest, are they
Whose penance pardon won ;
And a king may give an honoured grave
Unto each kingly son.
Daughter of Aiah ! go thy way,
Thy work of love is done.

Thy work is done ! Oh love,
Thy work endureth still ;
Oh, woman's love, not only seen
Fearless on Gideon's hill,
Victorious by the silent force,
The might of a constant will !

Thou standest by the cross,
In the dread mid-day gloom ;
Thou seekest in the glimmering dawn
The soldier-guarded tomb ;
And thy voice is heard in midnight prayer,
While the prisoner waits his doom.

And onward, through all time,
Thy flaming torch is borne,
Wherever souls in darkness lie,
Of grace and honour shorn,
Souls that were meet for royalty,
Outcast, defiled, forlorn.

Where any heart lies cold,
Broken, like ocean-shell,
That never more may ride the wave
With the tide's returning swell,
And for whom life's song and laughter rings
With the sound of a passing bell.

Onward ! But none may know
What blessings thou hast sealed,
Till the day when all heart-mysteries

Rizpah.

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Shall be in light revealed ;
And angel-hands have reaped and gleaned
The world's ripe harvest field.

LEFT BEHIND.



HE whisper, "It is over now for thee,"
 Standing in presence of the holy dead ;
 Over the pain we long have wept to see,
 Over the struggle dread.

Over the wistful looking back to life,
 The daily haunting of the word, Farewell,
 The secret woe of flesh and soul at strife
 No utterance might tell.

Over the speechless heavenward appeal,
 When past and future urge their strange alarms,
 And the faint soul must lower sink to feel
 The Everlasting Arms.

Over for us, alas ! upon the stair
 No more we hear their footsteps come and go,
 No more their voices, when we meet in prayer,
 Accordant, sweet and low.

No more their beauty-loving eye discerns
The green wheat springing in the fields afar,
The haunt of purple briony, or ferns,
The first pale evening star.

No more their magic memory wakes to words,
Poems, and legends heard in bygone days,
And caught upon the wing like singing birds,
Or snatched like hedgerow sprays.

No more their eyes light up to meet our joy,
Nor their caressing hands allay our pain,
And chase the petty torments that annoy
Our busy heart and brain.

No more they make their life's experience ours,
To keep like jewels they have won and worn,
Saying, "Here grew the wheat and here the flowers,
Here lies a hidden thorn."

Over! No more! Oh, words, for us ye strike
The key-note of bereavement's funeral song
Which, high or low, all voices sing alike
In solemn choral song.

Over ! No more ! Oh, words, for them ye sound
The key-note of a calm triumphal hymn,
Where voices of the angels are not found
Nor heaven-born seraphim.

A song for those that, safe from sin and loss,
Beyond the sea are resting on the shore—
Who 'neath the crown look backward to the cross :
Over ! No more ! No more !

THE GOLDEN TREASURES.

THREE PICTURES.



H, swiftly o'er the earth, across the pathway,
 And through the many voices of the living,
 Comes Death, the silent angel!

A sick child

Lay in the spring-time, taking his last look
 Of all the wondrous things of earth, whereon
 His first wide, eager gaze had dwelt erewhile.
 Looking on boughs that round the casement clung,
 Tipped freshly with young leaves, redder than sprays
 Of coral; paler soon his cheek will be
 Than the white roses that will wreath those boughs
 In early summer—but too late for him.
 Looking on branches of the leafless elm,
 Ruddy with crimson bloom, where the loud thrush
 Sings full in sight—soon clustering leaves will hide
 All save his song from ken, but the child-voice

Will then be silent, and for aye! Yet he
Knew not that thus he bade farewell to life,
Or greeted death with smiles. "They will not fade,"
He saith, in trustful tone, "Oh, let them lie
Beside me while I sleep, my darling flowers!
And when I waken weave a crown for me,
A shining golden crown." Such treasures were
The meadow daffodils. "And let me go
To-morrow down through all the fields I call
My golden land, where they are all in bloom.
To-morrow is my birth-day—we shall learn
No lessons, and repeat none." A few hours
And his fair soul will pass beyond the clasp
Of the young mother's arms, his brow be crowned
With deathless glory, and his lips repeat
The one short page of earth's appointed task;
Thence to pass on from page to page of life,
Unfolding all the mystery of joy;
Learnt never more with tears, but as a song
Caught and retained for ever on the ear.

Oh, swiftly o'er the earth, across the pathway.
And through the many voices of the living,
Comes Death, the silent angel!

Look on him

Whose aged form bends not to sharpest pain,
Whose eye reflects the glitter of his wealth,
As ice the winter sunbeams, and whose lips
Mutter swift calculation—leaving still
His sum of years untold. The ringing cry
Of golden coins, smitten in turn, to prove
Their truth to him who long hath ceased to trust,
Such is the music of his loneliness !

Vainly for him the nightingale hath poured
His luscious melody through summer nights ;
And children's laughter, like a rippling brook
Beside a grave, has sought his ear in vain.
The poet's song, whose bugle-notes can wake
Answers from distant hills,—th' unwritten song
Of woman's love, from his unloving heart
Dropped suddenly, like sound in empty space,
Caught by no echo.

Now with trembling hands
He trims his flickering lamp in sudden fear,
And searches here and there for some lost piece,
Missed from his cherished wealth ; now seizes it
With smile of lustful triumph. Oh, lost soul,

Shall there be never "joy in heaven" for thee?
None in God's presence o'er the lost and found?

Oh, swiftly o'er the earth, across the pathway,
And through the many voices of the living,
Comes Death, the silent angel.

For awhile,
Within the twilight covering of those wings,
Gently outspreading, lingers a fair form,
Beholding life as one apart therefrom;
Even as she, within her shadowed room,
Beholds the glowing landscape back reclined
Against the eastern sky, while from the west
Sunbeams outpouring meet their reflex there,
And give to eyes, soon to be closed in death,
The promise of the dawning. Loving eyes
Are those that gaze thereon, tracing each line
Of that bright scene, well known in every change
Of cloud and sunlight. Loving eyes behold
A golden glory crown the leafless woods,
The stealthy shadows climbing up the slope
Of the broad fields, now resting undisturbed
By toiling hands, rich in their solemn hues

Brown, crimson, purple,—here and there a flash
From some far window shining like a star,
A fiery light upon an oaken bough
That waits for March winds ere it sheds its leaves,
And shows like some brown sail upon the sea
Against the tender blue of distant lands,
That seem to lie near heaven.

“Thou art so fair,
Sweet earth,” the maiden whispers lovingly,
“In thy mid-winter stillness, and the hush
Of all things seems to chide my throbbing heart
And wistful yearnings. Oh! there was a time,
In thy glad budding, blooming, fruitful days,
When all thy beauties beckoned me to stay,
And called me with their voices back to life;
To die then was so sad and strange, but now
The bitterness is past, I am content!”

Are these thy farewell words? And so canst thou
Lay aside every treasure? Nay, not so!
Tell thou thy tale, thou lock of golden hair,
Pressed in those trembling fingers. Years have left
Thy radiance beautiful as in the hour
When thou wert severed from the youthful head

By hands that trembled then with girlhood's glee.
Severed thou wert in sport ; in after years
Kept as a treasure by a heart too true
To lack affiance in another's love,
And thou for her, sufficient token wert
Of that great wealth of love she deemed her own.
False, fleeting wealth ! Better a summer flower
Had been thy token, not outliving thee,
Than yon bright golden pledge, whose lustre mocks
The bitter memory of thy decay !
"Oh, earth !" she saith, "I would not linger here ;
I, who am ever bidden to forget,
I, who am told that woman's pride should scorn
To bind the Present captive to the Past.
The Past is still to me a conqueror ;
The Present, but a weeping, crownless thing
That follows at his glittering chariot wheels.
And tells how he has triumphed. Oh ! my life,
Art thou so wasted ? What if I have loved—
Have lent my love, receiving nought again—
Hath that no blessing ? None, this side the grave ?
That matters not, for I am standing now
Too near the grave itself that I should see
Aught but the other side." So, while her eyes

Look on the outer world, as the pale moon
Looks back, ere some white cloud encloseth her,
An hour before her setting, she doth hold
Her golden treasure fondly, nor will hours
Of pain and weariness unloose the clasp
Of her frail hand ; till, as a troubled wave
Breathes out its voice upon a quiet strand,
One sobbing sigh, one last, long sigh proclaims
Her patient soul at rest for evermore !

Oh, swiftly o'er the earth, across the pathway,
And through the many voices of the living,
Comes Death, the silent angel. May he lead
Our footsteps to the happy dwellings, where
No thieves can enter in, no rust corrupt ;
Where flowers never fade, and human love
Becomes like God's own love, unchangeable !

FORGET-ME-NOT.



O the Forget-me-not a mourner said,

“So fair, so blue!”

“To Heaven,” she answer’d, “I uplift my
head,

And take its hue.”

“Yet can I ne’er look up,” the mourner sighed,

“Grief weighs me down ;

The world goes by; and I must here abide,

Unseen, unknown!”

And the flower answered, “Is it hard to hear

Footsteps go by ?

To live forgotten, though to live so near,—

Alone to die ?

“Forgotten by the gentle-hearted, even ;

Is this thy lot ?

Oh, hear me ! not in vain I sigh to Heaven,

‘Forget me not !’”

PATIENCE.

Translated from the German of GEIBEL.



TILL in the wind, a helpless reed thou art,
 Caressed or trembling 'neath its tyrant will ;
 And could'st thou not, ere now, rebellious
 heart,
 Learn to be still ?

Thou, who would'st snatch at golden dreams afar,
 Forlorn and unenriched must pine and weep !
 Oh, patience, patience ! each eternal star
 Its path must keep.

And He who fixed their several ways, and sped
 Their onward motion with His breath divine,
 He numbers all the tears His people shed,
 And numbers thine.

He weigheth ages with unerring hand,
And nothing bring they forth but at His call;
No stone that falls but aids the work he planned,
And needs must fall.

Peacefully rest in Him, and still for thee,
While on its hurried march the world goes by,
In every day, whate'er its end may be,
Blessing shall lie.

Hope thou in Him ; bid thy heart's strife be o'er ;
Whatever fails, yet hope in Him anew,
Whose name is Mighty, Wonderful ; yea, more !
Faithful and True.

ONWARD.

Translated from the German of GEIBEL.



CEASE thy dreaming, cease thy fearing,
 Journey on in dauntless might;
 Though the way be long and wearing,
 Onward! be thy watchword bright.

Stay not, though the present hour
 Roses sweet around thee flings!
 Though from out her ocean bower
 The alluring syren sings.

Onward! onward! singing ever,
 Wrestle with life's gloom and woe,
 Till a morning sunbeam quiver
 On thy heated cheek and brow.

Till a garland's leafy cluster
 Weaves its shadow round thy head,
 And above thee shines the lustre
 By the Spirit's glory shed.

Onward ! through each hostile portal,
Onward ! through death's agony ;
Mortal, would'st thou be immortal ?
Peerless warrior thou must be.

COURAGE.

Translated from the German of GEIBEL.



POOR heart ! oh, quit thy fearing,
 And cast thy yoke aside ;
 After so long enduring,
 This too thou may'st abide.

Go forth with arms resplendent,
 My soul, in freedom's way !
 More is on thee dependent
 Than songs of Love and May.

Anguish thy breast is wringing,
 Yet onward ! and be strong !
 The wounded swan is singing
 The loudest, sweetest song.

NOTES.

Page 1.

Νῆ τὰ ἄγνωτα παθήματα.

These words, "By the unknown sufferings," are thus introduced in the Litany of the Greek Church :

"By Thine agony and bloody sweat ; By Thy cross and passion ; By the unknown sufferings ; By Thy precious Death," etc.

Page 2.

"Nor from the fiery furnace set us free
Till we have found Thy presence there."

Daniel iii. 25.—"I see four men walking in the midst of the fire ; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

"Come and see."—Rev. vi. verses 1, 3, 5, 7.

"Gates of praise."

Isaiah lx. 18.—"Thou shalt call thy walls, Salvation ; and thy gates, Praise."

Page 4.

"That awful hour remains unrecognized."

In the Gospel of St. John alone, there is no mention of Christ's agony in Gethsemane.

Page 9.

“The Bridge of Sighs

The palace and the prison doth unite.”

“I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs,
A palace and a prison on each hand.”

CHILDE HAROLD, Canto iv. st. 1.

Page 12.

The first two lines of this sonnet are borrowed from a sonnet
by AUBREY DE VERE:—“Count each affliction, whether light or grave,
God’s messenger, sent down to thee.”

Page 17.

“The shadow of the world.”

“Flee the shadow of this world.”—2 Esdras, ii. ver. 36.

Page 24.

“The voice of many waters.”

Rev. i. 15.—“And His voice, as the sound of many waters.”

Page 30.

“Slowly beneath Thy will are all unwilled.”

“Though your heart and brain were rash,
Now, your will is all unwilled,—now your pulses are all
stilled.”

The Rhyme of the Duchess May.—E. B. BROWNING.

Page 57.

“Life in Death.”

This poem appeared in FRASER’S MAGAZINE, July, 1863.

Page 67.

“The sight of means whereby good deeds we ponder
Turn by occasion into good deeds done.”

“How oft the sight of means to do *ill* deeds
Makes *ill* deeds done.”—KING JOHN, Act iv. sc. 2.

Page 71.

“Praising God with sweetest looks,”

“So she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks.”—HOOD’S “Ruth.”

Page 72.

“God be with thee.”

The word “Good bye” is said to be a corruption of the words, “God be with ye.”

Page 76.

“Which the faithful glean,
And none rebuke them.”

Ruth ii. 16.—“Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them; and rebuke her not.”

Psalm xii. 7.—“The words of the Lord are pure words: even as the silver, which from the earth is tried, and purified seven times in the fire.”

Page 76.

“Man’s creations.”

Of the Apollo Belvidere, Fanny Kemble writes, “What a witness to the glory of the human soul is such a conception as this! Oh, well may we thank God for being formed capable of

such things This divinity of the beauty-worshipping heathens, is to me a very messenger of my God, bidding me bless Him who hath permitted me to behold it"—The Year of Consolation.

Page 79.

“As one who lies on deck.”

These lines were suggested by Luard's picture, “Homeward Bound,” which was exhibited in the Royal Academy, 1858.

Page 85.

“Rizpah.” See 2 Samuel, xxi. 1—15.

Those who know Turner's treatment of this subject, in the “Liber Studiorum,” may recognize the picture in the poem. It may be doubtful to some whether the Gibeonites, dwellers among Israel, were exempt from the famine; but I have accepted Turner's representation of the scene, and crowned the “Hill of Gibeon” with ripe corn.

Page 97.

“Dropped suddenly, like sound in empty space,
Caught by no echo.”

“It is, however, one sound only; there is no reverberation or reflection,—and this is characteristic of all sounds in the balloon: one clear sound, continuing during its own vibrations, then gone in a moment. No sound ever reaches the ear a second time.”—GLAISHER, on “Aërial Navigation.”



