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# CHILDREN OF THE SUN

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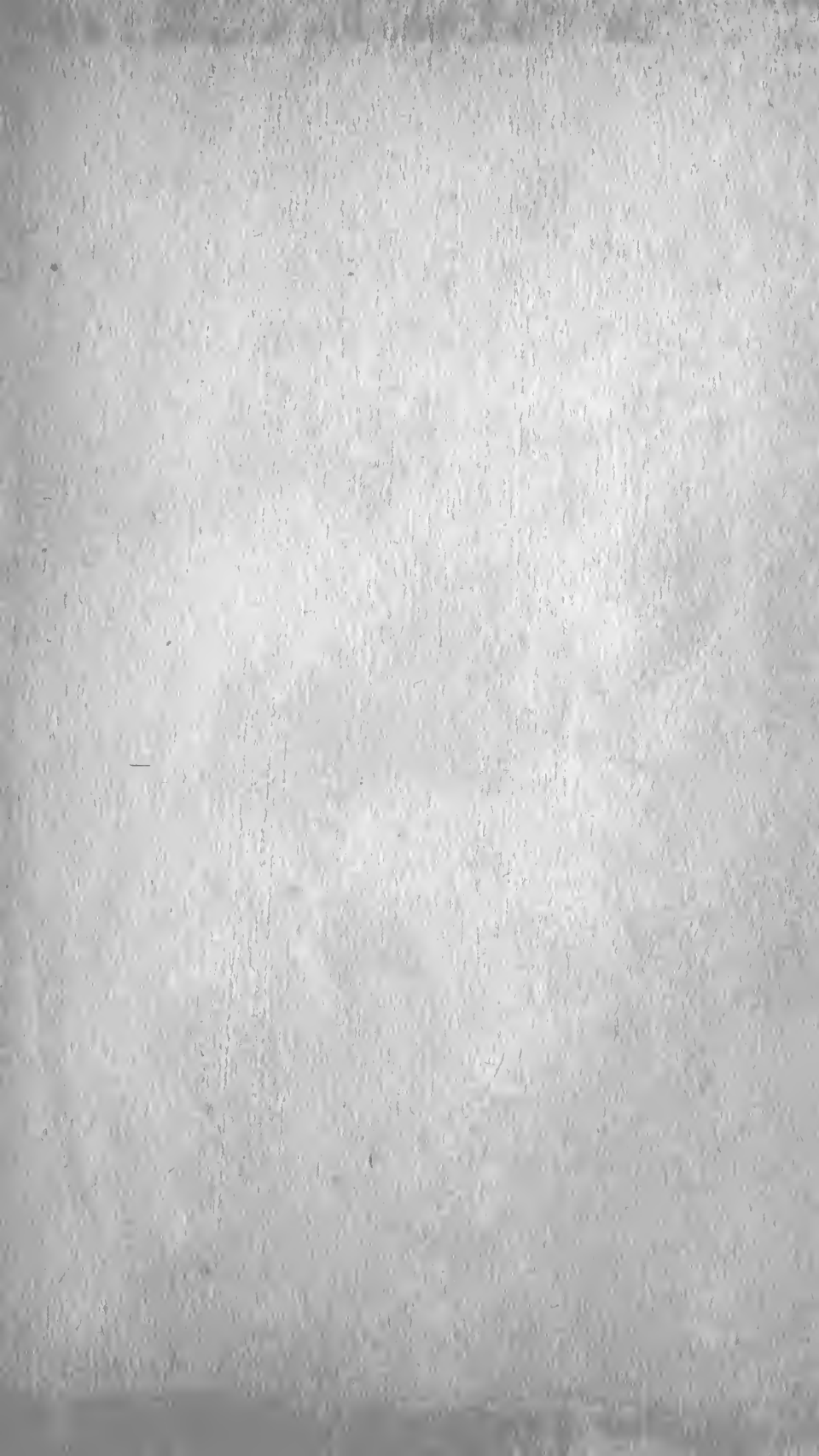


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# CHILDREN OF THE SUN POEMS

BY

JOHN WILLIAM SCHOLL

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ARTS AND LETTERS  
917 FOREST AVE., ANN ARBOR, MICH.

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THE ANN ARBOR PRESS  
PRINTERS

\$1.25  
DEC 22 1916

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Of This Book Two Hundred and Fifty Copies have been printed. The first One Hundred, with Frontispiece Portrait, are numbered and autographed by the author. This Volume is No.....

University of Michigan, 1916.

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*When Dawn is afire the Day-god waits  
On the rim of the east for the opening gates  
    To give his champing steeds the reins  
    And chase up the steep cerulean plains,  
Spilling his chariot's golden freights.*

*To hold his image each dew-drop strains  
And dies of the glory its heart contains,  
    Burst with a splendor that devastates  
        When Dawn is afire.*

*Bird-throats are shaken in woodsey lanes,  
Rose-buds are swelling with keen birth pains,  
    Stirred at his nod to blood red fates.  
    I too must sing till his spell abates,  
For his golden wine is in my veins  
        When Dawn is afire.*



## A HYMN TO THE SUN.

O great Lord Sun,  
That bringest in this hour  
From out thy dun  
Nocturnal bower  
The sibyl gift,  
A fresh new day  
With winged chance freighted  
For souls to take or cast away,  
And sternly fated  
To be withdrawn as swift  
As it is given,  
Lord of the riven  
Eastern sky,  
With unaverted eye  
Let me adore  
Thee evermore!

O glorious God,  
Far-darting All-Seer,  
Smite with thy rod,  
With thy golden spear,  
Land and sea,  
Forest and lea,  
And wake young Pan  
From night's drowsy ban  
To love and its making—  
A glorious awaking!  
Smite the darkling stream,  
Whose clear pools steam,  
Till they glint and gleam  
And the shadow slips  
And slinks away  
Before the full-orbed day!  
Smite bosky glen  
And checkered grove,  
And prick again  
The nested choirs  
To new desires  
And shake their throats  
With happy notes  
Of jubilant love!  
And smite my lips  
To outsing the birds,  
That fair fit words  
In wedded throngs  
Rush into songs  
In life's high honor,  
To life's great Donor,  
To thee, the Immortal,  
At thy golden portal  
In the cloudy rocks,  
To thee and the nod  
Of thy roseate locks,  
O glorious God!



Thou great All-Giver,  
All-Holder and Sustainer,  
Prayer and gift disdainer,  
Who givest and withholdest,  
And with equal eye beholdest  
All glories pass—  
Blade of grass  
And cassocked priest,  
Greatest and least—  
O radiant Archer,  
From out thy quiver  
Thou takest the bolts of living light  
And hurlest them into the night  
And infinite void,  
Where worlds o'erjoyed  
Lay bare their hearts  
To catch the impregning darts  
In a golden shower  
Of mystic power  
To stir them to mirth  
And riotous laughter  
Of a wondrous birth  
To be hereafter,  
To glad thee, Prodigal God,  
With multitudinous avatars,  
Thee, Bounteous Marcher  
On ways untrod  
Among the stars.

Bathed in thy flood  
The lush fields lie.  
Purple as blood  
Is the glory-barred sky.  
And the swell of jubilant life,  
And the roar of mighty strife,  
Sweeps like a tide  
Onrushing, wide,  
Resistless, round  
Earth's dawnlit bound,  
As thou peerest over  
Her dewy brim  
And chasest featly  
Night's fugitive rim  
That dodges fleetly  
In frightened grace  
And runs to cover  
Behind the girdling hills,  
Afraid of thy face  
And thy dispersing rod,  
O radiant God.

Thy bounty hurled  
Upon our world  
So fills and spills  
The cup of our feast  
From thy ambrosial East  
At thy immortal nod,  
O Prodigal God,  
We quite forget—  
Our lips with thy abundance wet—  
With thy wine and bread  
A myriad hungering  
Worlds might be fed,  
And thou art no mongering  
Niggard Lord  
That spares his hoard,  
But hurlest from thy treasure  
Without measure  
Gifts that beggar  
The wildest fancy of seer or poet,  
Hoards that stagger  
The soul that would show it,  
But thou art o'erjoyed,  
Abounder, to bestow it,  
Hurlest it broadcast into the void  
Of thy ambient sphere  
Incessant,  
Afar, anear,  
Ever crescent,  
Without return,  
To quicken or burn  
Where they chance to fall  
Prodigal,  
Abounding alike to all.  
Forgive if thy pensioners  
Ephemeral

Sometimes forget,  
The feast that's set  
Is but one crumb of thy royal feast  
Dropped down at the gates of thy purple East  
For the waiting lazar, Earth,  
That our riotous mirth  
Is but one note in the vast concourse  
Of hallelujahs flung  
To thee, the Ever Young,  
The Birth-Bringer  
And Mirth-Bringer,  
Ambrosial Singer,  
Choragus of the morning-stars  
Whose song no discord mars.

O is it blindness  
From too long gazing  
On thy blazing  
Orient state?  
Or overweening pride,  
Thou glory-eyed  
Far-darting All-Seer,  
When mortals raise  
Sweet hymns to praise  
Thy partial kindness  
And thee, that goest  
Thy lofty way  
And scarcely knowest  
That they live?  
Dost even hear  
Faintly our exultant cry  
In thy purple-flooded sky?  
And yet forgive  
Our erring clay,  
If, wrapped in thy perfect day,  
Our little seems so great,  
Our penury so Croesus-like,  
We cannot fear  
Thy hand will strike  
Our lips with hunger  
Or our flesh with cold—  
If our lips grow bold  
With the riddles of Fate,  
And we call thee younger  
Brother of man,  
Sumpter and slave  
In eternal ban,  
That bringeth seed-time and harvest unending  
To glad us wending  
From the womb to the grave!

Thou stirrest the daughters of Ocean to blow  
Their breath to the sky  
And build the clouds that go  
Like galleons drifting by  
With bellying sails,  
Freighted with Neptunean gifts.  
Thou smitest the hills  
Till they quiver and burn,  
And out of their rifts,  
From hidden caverns and nestling dales,  
The wind-wraiths yearn  
And rush and leap  
To the lazy floating argosies  
Of the skyey deep,  
And clutch and hurl them wide  
With scudding keels  
And wrecked and helpless pilot wheels  
In the mad tumultuous dance  
Of the Stormwind's bride,  
Till the far-off mountain peaks  
Gore hulk and sail  
And the far-fetched cargo spills  
In torrents of rain  
Through the driving gale,  
And the brown-parched plain  
With the spoil of plundered seas  
Sweetly reeks  
And is green again.  
Thou whilest  
And smilest,  
Bright God of Day,  
On thy lofty way  
Among the stars,  
And deep in the earth  
Glad things conceive

And swell and heave  
And yearn to burst their icy bars,  
And leap to birth  
And thy welcoming kiss  
Of ethereal fire,  
Empyrean Sire.  
The warm mould stirs  
With a secret bliss,  
And brambles and burs,  
Grasses and flowers,  
Teasel and roses,  
All equal children of thy wanton hours  
With lavish Flora,  
Peep from the sod  
And turn to their radiant God  
With eager faces,  
As if to adore a  
Danae glory,  
And climb and clamber  
And jostle and riot  
In garden closes  
And meadows quiet,  
In highways  
And byways,  
And wild waste places,  
Eager to catch the amber  
Light of thy smile,  
Eager to sip  
With redolent lip  
The honeyed nectar  
Thou spillest the while  
From thy lavish beaker,  
Far-coursing Beauty-Seeker,  
Form-Perfecter,  
Lover, Reveler, prodigal  
God of earth's gay carnival.

The oak swells his girth  
And spreads his crown,  
The beech feels the stirth  
In his bosom brown  
And laughs and claps his hands,  
The chestnut tugs at the rocks and sands  
For tighter anchorage  
To wrestle with storms that rage  
On his rugged slopes,  
The pine broods lone  
In his lofty zone  
And moans a dirge  
Through his beard of snow  
To the vales below,  
The wild vine gropes  
On oak and elm  
To sun her clusters on the topmost bough  
And bask in the heat  
Of thy cloudless realm,  
And hoard the sweet  
Inspiring wine  
Thou only thou,  
The Giver Divine,  
Givest for meat to bird and bee,  
Thy tireless choirsmen in forest and lea.  
Down by the stream  
In the valley broad  
The willows dream,  
And to worship awed  
The sycamores bend to the mirrored gleam  
Of thy image insufferable.  
On shelf and knoll  
The orchards blow  
And toss their roseate snow  
In lusty handfuls to the wind,



And the golden bees  
In tireless gleanings  
From bowl to bowl,  
Drone prophecies  
But half divined  
Of pippin and greening  
For Autumn's table.  
On rolling plains  
The golden grains  
Flung wide by Ceres' happy hand  
Feel the lure of the summer sky  
And climb to watch thee loitering by  
At noontide over the quivering land  
And stretch their palms  
For a precious alms  
Of thy lavish gold  
To clasp and enfold  
And cherish and mould  
And dream of and love  
'Neath the azure dome  
Till they yield it again a hundredfold  
In Autumn's harvest-home.

Ah, what are we,  
Bright God, to thee  
On thy trackless way  
Amid the stars,  
That these, thy myriad avatars,  
With the fresh new day  
Are laid at our feet  
To pick and choose,  
Scorn or abuse,  
As seemeth meet  
To our proud will?

Or hath pride betrayed us,  
And thou hast made us  
To perfect these?  
As plundering bees  
Perfect the orchid's flower,  
Perfect the garden's dower,  
Setting fair fruit on vine and tree  
For the song-birds' summer hostelry?  
They too may dream  
The good supreme  
Is a nectar cup  
For them to sup,  
Blundering, honey-drunken,  
Overswonken  
Dreamers sunken  
And glorified  
In their futile pride.  
They too may deem  
In their mad dream  
This maze of life beneath the moon  
A dull old riddle till they have guessed it,  
Sucked its meaning and expressed it,  
Boomed it and hummed it  
In a summer noon,  
And divinely summed it  
In a drowsy tune.

Ah well!  
Let them swell  
In their bright brief hour!  
The end is still  
Dust—that may live again  
In rose or pippin or golden grain  
At thy quickening power.  
And if, perchance, we seem to thee  
But some less perfect flower,  
Or less melodious bee,  
Some vagrant unanchored tree,  
Or unburnished tuneless bird,—  
Wait  
At thy purple gate,  
For soon or late  
Some subtle change  
May lift us to the nobler range!  
Or hast thou a rod to measure all,  
Both great and small,  
And knowest the soul's tyrannic call,  
The proud imperial dream,  
The godlike word  
Our lips have hurled  
Around the world?  
These too thy gifts  
That break through rifts  
Of cloud and clod,  
These too the deathless gleam  
Of thy ambrosial light,  
Disperser of Night?  
And we the nearest  
Latest and dearest  
Children of thy nod,  
Most glorious God?

The little pools  
That lie in schools  
On plashy fallows  
And drenched meads  
When a shower recedes,  
And seem as deep  
As the vaulted sky  
With the cloud-wrack scudding by--  
Shall these thy secret keep,  
And dream they comprehend  
Thy far beginning and thy dreaded end,  
Because they hold thy image bright  
In their murky shallows?  
Or hath thy more ethereal light  
To our more perfect inner sight  
Unveiled a loftier vision,  
And wrought a grander dream  
Of thy life elysian?  
O Light Supreme,  
Truth Revealer,  
Heart and lip Unsealer,  
Touch my presuming lips  
With thy inspiring wine  
To sing without eclipse  
Thy life divine,  
In very truth,  
From thy far radiant youth!

Behold,  
Thou art old,  
From everlasting!  
Whence thou comest, whither goest,  
Thou alone, Immortal, knowest,  
But when thou wert young  
And lone among  
Far radiant neighbors,  
Thy arduous play  
Was catching comets by the mane  
And tethering them in the starry plain  
Of thy domain,  
Thy sterner labors  
The shaping and casting  
Of virgin spheres  
To girdle thee with tendance.  
On a golden day,  
When thy hand had skill  
To work thy will,  
And Luck, the oldest of gods, was merry,  
A fair new world  
Was deftly hurled  
And tossed and twirled  
With a mighty sweep  
In a lucky curve  
Round and round thee in the vasty deep,  
Never to tarry  
And never to swerve  
From her glad dependence  
On thee, Ambrosial Sire,  
And thy sustaining fire—  
Earth, thy favorite child,  
On whom thou hast smiled  
Well pleased to see  
Her beauty and her revelry.

But a giant demon,  
Enamored of her beauty,  
Pursued her as a wanton booty  
With bold voluptuous eyes,  
Entranced, enraptured,  
And swore to make her his leman  
And lawful prize,  
Lurked in her path unseen  
Till she came like an orient queen  
Clad in a veil of mist  
That glowed like amethyst  
About her chaste  
New innocence,  
Then leaped and captured  
Between his outstretched palms  
The hapless fugitive.  
And so embraced  
And bore her hence,  
Shuddering, withering, shrinking,  
Weeping and ever thinking  
Of radiance lost,  
But helpless in the mighty clutch  
Of the demon Frost.  
And she had died  
As the demon's bride,  
At his icy touch,  
Hadst thou not pitied the qualms  
Of her mortal grief  
And brought relief  
And bade her live,  
Engirdling her with a magic zone  
Of frost-defying light  
To shield her in her lone  
Immortal struggle with the giant's might.

Stormcloud-Render,  
God of the lambent skies,  
Arbiter and moulder  
Of destinies,  
Lord of stout hearts  
And winged feet  
That fly to meet  
The imbattled host,  
Upon thy shoulder  
Girt with light  
Hangs the quiver  
Filled with darts  
To conquer and deliver,  
Great Agonist,  
In the unequal list  
Against the mailed pretender  
To the vacant throne  
Of ancient Cold,  
The eldest horn of Primal Night  
That reigned on Chaos' frozen coast.  
Gird on thy armor,  
Stand forth to save  
The beautiful slave,  
And none shall harm her!  
Her heart still beats,  
And sometimes a shudder  
Startles the children on her breast,  
And topples their tiny magnificence,—  
Their royal seats  
And domes of pleasure,  
Temple and palace,  
Mart and spence,  
In ruin utter.  
Sometimes a mutter  
Alarms their leisure



And dooms their jest  
When the ruddy chalice  
Is at their lips  
And their soul nepenthe sips.  
But for the rest,  
In the giant's icy arms she lies  
And slowly dies,  
A pallid queen  
With anguish mien,  
While the slow cold creeps  
Through her fair frail form  
And seeks the life-blood her  
Heart keeps warm  
In its deeps.

Fierce Lord of Light,  
Be swift to smite,  
For the crafty demon dies not  
And 'fore thy onset flies not,  
But loth to yield  
The foughten field,  
A cunning Parthian, departs  
The widening zone  
Of flashing gold  
Till, having lured thee in his hold  
Of boreal cold,  
With sudden charge  
He hurls thick blinding mists  
Before thy face  
And hews thy lessening targe  
And splinters thy crashing darts  
And drives thee pace by pace  
Across the gleaming lists  
Back to the round  
Of thy uttermost bound.

Losing, winning,  
Winning, losing,  
In the never ending strife--  
We who know not thy beginning,  
Watching, wondering,  
Idly musing,  
Deeply pondering  
On thy bright ambrosial life,  
Question what shall be the end?  
Whither doth the conflict tend?  
Shalt thou wither, shalt thou flourish,  
Conquer in the fight, or perish,  
Victor or the victim be?  
We know not, is it toil or play  
To hold dull Death and Doom at bay,  
We know not, is it choice or need  
That lends thy flying foot its speed,  
Or hast thou reasons  
For thy caprice,  
Good Shepherd of Seasons?  
No answer cometh out of thy East,  
No oracle from bird or beast,  
To set at peace  
Our loftiest doubts and questionings.  
We feel and see,  
All cometh from thee  
In a haunting mystery,  
And a low voice sings  
From the heart of things:  
"Be of good cheer,  
Ye are dear  
Children of the Living Light,  
Well-pleasing in his sight.  
The glad All-Giver  
Shall deliver  
You from death

Though all else perisheth!"  
And we plant our foot  
On the lush green sod,  
And without shame  
In thy great name,  
Ambrosial God,  
Possess the earth  
And her garnered fruit  
By right of birth  
From thee, divine  
Founder of our royal line,—  
And all the while  
In thy lofty way,  
Our strength and stay,  
Thou smilest thy inscrutable smile.

Or dost thou hear  
From some far sphere  
A nobler hymn  
And sweeter praise  
Than seraphim  
Ecstatic raise,  
And our glad songs  
In vibrant throngs  
Are wholly drowned  
In that sweet sound?  
Or seest thou the adoring face  
Of prophets of ethereal race  
On belted Mars?  
Or tired of futile wars,  
Disheartened by the losing battle,  
Counting when the conflict's done  
The little spoil thy hand has won—  
Three handbreadths deep beneath the sod,  
A few brief fathoms in the sea,  
As much of thy ethereal air  
As an eagle's pinions will upbear—  
A little crust and scurf of life  
Kept only by unending strife,  
Too paltry kingdom for a god  
Like thee—  
Thou yearnest for some newborn world  
Unformed and void,  
To start some new æonic year  
And perfect in its long career  
Life unalloyed,  
Pleasure uncloyed,  
Beauty fresh as the pearled  
Shy-hearted rose?  
And when thy yearning eyes  
Behold that paradise  
Elect of thy desire

Swinging through starry skies,  
Waiting the seed of thy fire  
And the godlike race,  
Wilt thou turn away thy face  
And thy benign  
Bright effluence?  
Thy smile divine?  
And with stern look  
And pitiless nod,  
Slowly close  
The golden book  
Of our finished years?  
And despite our tears  
And blank despair,  
Despite wild prayer  
And witless prattle,  
Go calmly hence  
And leave us to our barren doom,  
The cold and gloom  
Of a splendid tomb  
Of dead magnificence,  
Inscrutable God?

Ineffable Glory  
Flooding the portal  
Of the voiceless East,  
Hadst thou some far  
And bright beginning,  
Ambrosial star,  
With never a throe  
And never a wail,  
But perfect among  
Coequals young,  
Full summed in power  
From that glad hour,  
Flashing a sudden dawn  
The darkling worlds upon,  
And luring and winning  
Life from the clod,  
Far-darting God?  
Or art thou mortal?  
Dost thou mutation know?  
Wilt thou grow pale?  
Wilt thou, too, shorn of light  
And reft of manhood's might,  
Like us, grow hoary,  
And with palsy shaking  
And thy great heart breaking  
To be released,  
Go tottering on thy way  
In deepening gloom  
Among the wailing stars,  
Thy radiant mates  
Whose hand unbars  
The unreluctant gates  
Of ancient Doom  
For thee, Bright God of Day,  
Thy course half run,  
Thy task half done,  
And orphaned worlds forsaken  
By pitying death o'ertaken?

Whence comes the golden shower  
Of mystic power  
That swells the bud  
And stirs the blood  
And sets the June day simmering,  
And night's sown fireflies glimmering,  
And gay birds winging  
And madly singing  
Their happy loves  
In the checkered groves?  
O is it some golden legacy  
Of far Chronidean dynasty  
Upward 'neath some dreadful spell  
When the old gods fell  
And yielded their throne  
To thee alone,  
Lord of treasures unending  
That wax with spending?  
Forgive if our unfaith  
Forefeel some sudden scathe,  
And measure thy career  
With the rod of mortal fear,  
And hearken our despair  
And anguished prayer!



O Spendthrift God,  
With feet unshod  
We come before thee  
And implore thee,  
Heed our warning!  
Restrain thy lavish giving,  
Thy reckless, riotous living,  
Improvident Lord!  
Surely thy hoard  
Is well-night spent!  
Or art thou coining thy heart of gold  
To fling it broadcast into the cold,  
Our wisdom scorning?  
Canst thou not see  
The end of all thy revelry—  
Bankrupt, disgraced  
Pariah chased  
From gate to gate  
By every starry mate  
Unmindful of thy fallen state?  
And we thy helpless progeny  
Must share thy wandering beggary,  
And hungering die  
Beneath a sunless sky!

Or art thou sent  
On ways untrod  
By some high god  
Whose will is Doom?  
And though thou care  
To heed our prayer,  
Thou art not free,  
No more a god than we?  
Thy path lies through the gloom,  
And why thou goest  
Thou scarcely knowest?  
Nor yet for whom?  
And whither thy journey tends  
Athwart black spaces  
Of ancient night,  
Thou knowest less?  
Or to what races  
Thy welcome light  
The Doom-God sends?  
And all thy fabled wisdom ends  
Like ours in a troubled guess?

Thou kissest the tears  
From the eyes of flowers  
That open their hearts  
To thy golden darts  
In the matin hours,  
O God of light  
And of happy wings.  
Lord of all bright  
Instinctive things  
That pluck the day  
When it's ripe for play,  
Blot out our fears,  
That we may see  
Naught else but thee.  
With thy dispersing rod,  
Resplendent God,  
Dispel the mists that creep  
Over the soul's calm deep.  
With thy ambrosial light  
Shame thou our mortal night.  
Transpierce our wayward dreams  
With thy far-darting beams.  
Smite our close-lidded eyes to see  
Thy golden gift's sole sovranity.  
Illumine our hearts  
With thy fierce darts  
And chase the shadow of death  
And doubt's cold wraith,  
Confirm our faith  
To know and see  
In very truth that we,  
Adoring thee,  
Or ere the day is done,  
Before our course is run,  
Shall have fulfilled  
The end the Doom-Gods willed.

O great Lord Sun,  
That bringest in this hour  
From out thy dun  
Nocturnal bower  
This fresh new day  
With winged chance freighted,  
Though sternly fated  
To pass away  
Irrevocably swift,  
We take thy spacious gift  
As it is given.  
Lord of the riven  
Eastern sky,  
Unseemly pride  
Chastened and purified  
By thy baptism of fire,  
And all forbidden questionings,  
Like homing birds with weary wings,  
Sinking to rest,  
In tune  
With June  
And transient things  
In life's high quest,  
Great God of our Desire,  
With unaverted eye  
Let us adore  
Thee evermore!

NAPOLEON AT AIX

Wait here, my Marshalls,—follow not within  
 The august precincts of his Chapel Tomb.  
 This hour is mine.

\* \* \* \* \*

They are my tools, no more,  
 Wherewith I build my empire or contrive  
 A scandal at the Court. What need they know  
 In this vast business of our Phoenix France  
 More than the pawn when he is deftly moved  
 To take a queen or mate a king? They do  
 My errands, and their destinies grow big  
 With honors. Save for me their heads had ne'er  
 Emerged above the seething bloody scum  
 Of sightless anarchy.

This Charles the Great  
 Communes but with his peers. No fitting Third  
 Can share this hour, unless that mighty Spirit  
 Whose star yet blazes in mid heaven descend  
 And flash the glory of Imperial Rome  
 About us. What a consulship this world  
 Had bent to, had Fate dared in one sole age  
 Engender such Triumvirate. Old Earth  
 Is cramped, and fragile is the race of men:  
 Fate cast a thousand years between our cradles  
 To keep her course unhindered.

I am France,  
 And here lies France entombed. O Brother Prince,  
 Be not the awful dust thou art to such  
 As deem thee dead, but come in panoply  
 Of burnished steel that clanks about thy shoulders  
 That bear untamed the whole embattled world,

And make the pavement ring with lusty tread  
 And dangling blade, and look with those dread eyes  
 From under brows that rise sheer like a castle  
 Upon a cliff's edge, Genius of Olden France,  
 And bring the glory back that filled the world  
 And rang through ten far centuries, and I  
 Will greet thee, bringing our regenerate France,  
 And beg a royal boon.

Thou hast a crown,  
 And I am crownless!

Lo, I go a journey,  
 A long one, full of dread, for he who goes  
 From doubt to resolution travels far,  
 From nadir to full zenith.

\* \* \* \* \*

How it gleams  
 And flashes radiance, blinding, luring, mocking!  
 Caesar refused it—thrice!—when proffered him  
 Upon the feast of Lupercal!—He feared  
 The people!—Craven moment dearly paid  
 At foot of Pompey's statue!—

Well I know  
 That fear's temptation. Should I ride the streets  
 Of Paris on the morrow, down the lanes  
 Of loyal citizens whose joyous shouts  
 Stun the far welkin, and should part my vestment  
 And show one purple line, the sullen mob  
 Could count the horses' footfalls on the pavement  
 In the dead silence; not a cap would fly  
 Into the stagnant air. I know these Frenchmen.

First Consul—by decree!—They deem me naught  
 But their own Hand, their Eye, their Heart and Will,  
 And by that fiction hangs their fealty.  
 A name can break it.

How it gleams and glows,  
 The Beautiful, the Fatal! How it sits  
 Upon his brow! Its rays play round his head,  
 Illuming ruddy cheek and snow-white beard.  
 He speaks not—Yet his eyes play with dread Doom.  
 Do they foresee, foreread in Time's Arcana  
 Impending incarnations? What if he  
 Should speak—and say: Adopted Son, kneel down,  
 Receive my crown and wear it worthily!  
 Should I refuse, as Caesar?

There it gleams,  
 Weaving divinity about his brows,  
 Compelling mute submission. 'Twere a meed  
 To dare damnation for!—Yet not dishonor!—  
 A great King takes his crown—no gift, but rapine—  
 Erect, not kneeling, worlds in awe consenting  
 To conscious empery. O I am weary  
 Of truckling to a mob of pigmies!—Faugh!

How tall! Full head and shoulders overtopping  
 The commons. I was once the Little Corporal.  
 A scurvy trick of Fate—my soul as lofty  
 Looks him full level in the eye—to clip  
 My stature so. Were he to toss his robe  
 About my shoulders, it would sweep the pavement  
 Like a queen's train, and round the Courts of Europe  
 An universal gibe would run, and then  
 Buffoons might win the Garter for a jest,  
 Ladies would titter from behind their fans,  
 And waiting-maids forget love-rendezvous,  
 Or break Court etiquette, unchid, for very laughter,—  
 As if some half a cubit more of worms'-meat  
 Beneath the ermine made him more a king!  
 The Will, the Might and Skill to make a realm  
 And reign—these make a King. And I have made  
 My realm and reigned, as well as mighty Charles.

First Consul!—gift or sufferance—a stigma,  
 Save that with infinite finesse and craft  
 I drew all rights and powers to myself  
 And set my heel upon the Senate. Fools!  
 To bear a yoke, yet tremble at its name:  
 For I am France.

Most sad, inscrutable,  
 Yet godlike! Such a countenance of pain  
 And glory, lit by thousand tongues of light  
 That leap and play about his moveless brow  
 As if to start him into life and tell  
 By moved lip and flushing cheek and lit  
 Deep liquid eye some secret of the world  
 That lies beneath. I too at need can be  
 Inscrutable as Death and Doom. No faction  
 Can read my will and so misuse it. Prince  
 Most enviable, thou hadst no need to make  
 Thy face a mask to cover secret dreams,  
 As I in this new age of licence named  
 The Dawn of Freedom.

Subtle must he be  
 Who rules these French. Some old Republican  
 Must fall to win the Bourbon, and the last  
 Fair scion of the old régime must sigh  
 His soul out in a prison yard at dawn  
 Mid sullen crash of musketry to appease  
 The incensed Republican, and I across them  
 Move two steps nearer an Imperial Throne.  
 The art of governing is simple else:  
 Corrupt this one with office, that with gold,  
 Buy this one with an Order, flatter that  
 With public praise, imprison this bold wretch  
 And pardon that, inspire the poet's song  
 With gold and laurels, loose the orators'  
 Sweet adulation, censor stage and press,



And fool the mad fanatic with pretense,  
 And if the madder factions still must rage,  
 Hatch out some heinous plot in London town  
 To breed assassins 'gainst the Glory of France,  
 Or scent some mighty league of crowns and mitres  
 To turn her dial back—send out the news  
 Concoct of truth and lies—the *Moniteur*  
 Will print it—Scold a British Lord at Court—  
 'Twill please the chauvinist! O I am weary  
 Of all this despicable meanness!

Where

Is that divinity doth hedge a King?  
 I have no crown. There lies the subtle charm,  
 The Talisman that sets him far aloof  
 In that fine air where factions hush their clamor  
 And baseness stands abashed, all hearts are tuned  
 To perfect loyalty and unbought service.  
 All arts and crafts there band together like  
 A mighty orchestra, each plays his part  
 In grand symphonic order, loving more  
 The perfect music than his own small part.

I too would lead my people, and so smite  
 The startled ears of Europe with the wild  
 Sweet symphony of France—a perfect piece—  
 All discords melting into harmony  
 And closing with a flourish of sweet sound  
 Deathlessly memorable.

But the Courts  
 Of Europe fear it, lest the noble strain  
 Stir echoes far beyond the Rhine and Channel.  
 Consul! A decade—ay, perchance for life!—  
 Dictator, if the Senate choose—What boots?  
 They bide their time, and wait for fickle Fate  
 To plunge me from this pinnacle, or Death,  
 The unconquered Agonist. There shines my Star  
 Ascendant. Let them wait!

Seductive Marvel  
 That so transfigurest Imperial Charles  
 And so begodst him in the eyes of mortals,  
 Art thou that mystic power, or but a symbol  
 Of that which subtler is and mightier—  
 Legitimacy?

That must make me pause.  
 My father was a Tuscan gentleman,  
 My mother a mean Corsican, and all  
 My vasty will, my vision, my ambition,  
 The kingliest in me come alone from her,  
 Her unspoiled blood, her undegenerate soul.  
 I come from the Primeval, the Primordial—  
 A shaft sent random, or a bolt of Doom  
 Shot to its mark?—and better far the first  
 Of virile dynasty than sapless last  
 Of senile race decadent, dead, a corpse  
 Embalmed in odorous Legitimacy.

Then let them gibe and sneer, write epigrams,  
 And play at shuttle-cock with 'parvenu',  
 'Usurper', till they split. There shines my Star  
 Ascendant. Let them sneer.

Great Charles could count  
 His noble forebears—royal, ducal—on  
 The fingers of his sword-hand.

I will found  
 My dynasty, though Europe hurl her legions  
 Upon my sword. I will repel her hordes  
 As Charles hurled back the Saracen, and make  
 My dreaded name a rampart round my realm,  
 And dictate peace, and reign, acclaimed of all  
 Keeper of Europe's peace.

\* \* \* \* \*

How mad a dream  
 To haunt the pillow of a sterile bed!—  
 \* \* \* Josephine!

I do remember well  
 The day she came to thank me for the sword  
 Of Beauharnais I gave her son. Such grace,  
 Such wondrous charm of manner, such fair speech,  
 Such beauty—all that Nature and high Art  
 Could make her—perfect woman. I knew not  
 Love's passion till that hour. I wooed—and won her  
 Like a great victory—And when she came  
 From Paris to Marengo, such a light  
 Filled all the camp that war grew instant glory,  
 Like olden tournaments, and France's marshalls  
 Grew knightly—marvels wrought they emulous  
 To win her smile, as from an empress' lips.  
 I find no spot in her—save one—she's barren.  
 Why must she bear a brace of Beauharnais  
 And not one Buonaparte?

Should I sue  
 To break the bonds—the Senate complaisant,  
 The Pope grown pliable—'twould raise a storm  
 Of such wide fury in Camp and Court, must sweep  
 My dream of empery to vasty ruin.

Speak, August Shade, if counsel may yet pass  
 Those calm sealed lips. The chrism of Death was poured  
 Upon thy brow, the sword fell from thy hand,  
 The scepter passed. Couldst thou unmoved behold  
 The mighty handiwork of glorious years—  
 Thine—parted, ravined, spent, smirched, and despoiled,  
 Quite blotted out, as if it ne'er had been?

Old Europe dreams—and waits.

I am still young.  
 My Star rides in a happy House. I go  
 To Notre Dame. My Josephine shall wear  
 An Empress' crown. What more can woman ask?  
 And when my throne is firm—she shall retire—  
 France clamors for an heir.

The proudest Court,  
 Our old inveterate enemy, shall lend  
 His royalest to scent our nascent line  
 With that old feudal musk, Legitimacy.  
 Then let them gibe and sneer.

Lo, how it gleams,  
 The Caesars' emblem, radiant, luring, speaking,  
 With mystic message pleading—Here I kneel,  
 O mighty Charles. Make me thy son and heir.  
 I take the crown of France from thy dead hands  
 And wear it—royally. No other power  
 Henceforth shall bend my knee.

I go a journey—  
 A dread one—rude and lone—For he who goes  
 From doubt to resolution treads the path  
 Of Doom and Glory.

Farewell, mighty Prince!  
 A new Age dawns. My will is Arbiter.  
 Tomorrow I am Emperor of the French.  
 My sword shall carve a name deathless forever.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH.

δεῖ πᾶσαν γυναῖκα, κ.τ.λ.

Herod. Bk. I, 199

i

Vashti-Hauna, dawn-cheeked princess,  
 Daughter of Asshur, King of Kings,  
 Feels Astarte's tropic sunshine  
 Burning at the heart of things,  
 Feels it in the passionate riot  
 Of her breast's imaginings.

Vashti-Hauna, dawned-cheeked princess,  
 Knows her woman's hour is come,  
 As a lotus bud at bursting  
 Half forefeels the perfect sum  
 Of her sun-dreams and moon-yearnings,  
 Half foreknows it—and is dumb.

Vashti-Hauna looks to eastward  
 From her tower in Nineveh,  
 Looks and sighs—she knows the custom  
 And the gifts that maidens lay  
 On the altars of Mylitta—  
 Knows the price her votaries pay—

Gazes eastward on the temple  
 Where the passionate throngs resort,  
 Then upon her swelling bosom  
 And her young limbs' queenly port,  
 Praying for Astarte's favor,  
 Triumph in her Temple Court.

## ii

Vashti-Hauna, dawn-cheeked princess,  
 Daughter of Asshur, King of Kings,  
 Doffs her scented silken bravery,  
 Veils and gems and golden rings,  
 Dons the meanest menial raiment  
 That her poorest bond-slave brings ;

Stains her limbs and neck and bosom  
 Like a sun-kissed shepherdess's,  
 With her deft hand draws the carven  
 Ivory that holds her tresses,  
 Slips unmarked amid the motley  
 Throng that down the highway presses.

## iii

Haughty Shemir, Aram's daughter,  
 Princess of the House of Shu,  
 Rolls in pompous covered carriage  
 Aisles of frightened pilgrims through,  
 Scorning even to share the sunshine  
 With that motley Syrian crew.

Khazakhan, the Prince of Shelar,  
 Rides beside her carriage door :  
 "Room! Make room for mighty Shemir  
 Whom the sun and stars adore!  
 Never hath such queenly beauty  
 Trod yon Temple Court before!"

Crack the eunuch drivers' lashes,  
 Rear the horses mad with pain,  
 Rear and plunge—The dusty pilgrims  
 Terror-stricken seek the plain—;  
 Vashti-Hauna sole undaunted  
 Turns with look of deep disdain,

Rises to her queenliest stature,  
Lifts to heaven her empty hands,  
Flinging Khazakhan defiance  
With her spirit's mute commands,  
Horse and rider quail before her—  
Mighty Shemir's carriage stands.

## iv

Vashti-Hauna, dawn-checked princess,  
Daughter of Asshur, King of Kings,  
Bows her royal head in silence,  
But her heart within her sings  
As she treads the Temple highway  
Light as if her feet had wings.

Khazakhan, the Prince of Shelar,  
Dumb with admiration stares  
At the mute Astarte vision  
As she toward the Temple fares:  
"Is it Beltis come to warn me  
Of the haughty Shemir's snares?"

## v

In the Temple Court the pilgrims  
Sit in long and braveried rows:  
Khazakhan, the Prince of Shelar,  
Down their aisles of beauty goes,  
Peering under veil and head-dress  
For the wondrous eye he knows.

Haughty Shemir leaves he sitting,  
Rank and wealth he passes by;  
Love that scorns all outward splendor,  
Worshiping it knows not why,  
Guides him to her place of biding.  
He with sudden joyous cry

Tosses in her lap the obol:  
"Follow in Mylitta's name!"  
Vashti-Hauna, dawn-cheeked princess,  
Rises, neck and cheek aflame,  
Stands triumphant: "Gracious Beltis,  
Take the gift thy altars claim!"



THE RINGEL DANCE.

Valley steaming,  
Hillside teeming,  
Summer skips and smiles askance at  
Hand-clasped Hours that ringel-dance it  
Through the fields in mazy transit,  
Wheeling and fleeting,  
Merrily greeting  
Brawling fall and reedy shallow,  
Tangled copse and weedy fallow.

And ever behind them a stridulous tune  
Sends a chill through the heart of June:—  
    I need not look for the grim gaunt Fiddler,  
    I know he is coming, the weird old Riddler,  
By his rune!

Roses blooming,  
Bumbles booming,  
Dipping, sipping in the swinging  
Sunlit cups, a moment clinging,  
Touch and away with reckless winging,  
Humming snatches  
Of drunken catches  
Overheard on the daisied hill,  
To the lily's nunnery white and still.

And ever behind them the self-same tune  
Startles the drowsy ear of noon:—  
    I know whose head o'er the viol is stooping,  
    For rose-leaves fall and the lily is drooping  
All too soon!

Sunny maiden  
 Flower laden  
 Trips the meads in summer fettle,  
 Plucking the daisy's wizard petal  
 Life's uncertain doom to settle:  
 "Loves me, not, loves me!  
 O what behooves me  
 Say to him, do for him, day-time or night,  
 My hero, my king, my joy, and my light!"

And ever behind her a maddening tune  
 Floats o'er the daisied meads of June:—  
     I need not look who swings the bow so,  
     For I know the grinning old Virtuoso  
 By his rune!

Coy lips cleaving,  
 Bosoms heaving,  
 Fancy plotting Love's devices  
 Fit for orient paradises  
 Hidden deep in an isle of spices,  
 Soft eyes yearning,  
 Passions burning,  
 Soul concentered in a kiss  
 Demons envy and angels miss.

And ever behind them a grisly rune—  
 A terror stalking in Love's full noon:—  
     For 'Carpe diem' is the Fiddler's motto  
     And a scythe-clang sounds in each sharp  
         staccato  
 Of his tune!

Sweet-tongued singer,  
Beauty bringer,  
Poet of the woodland's chatter,  
Ear attuned to the distant patter  
Of dancing feet of nymph and satyr,  
Eye enraptured,  
Senses captured  
By the pomp of Earth, the splendor  
Of the spirits that attend her.

And ever behind him the same weird tune  
So near—O the glory and gladness of June!—  
    His skull is crowned with the victor's laurel—  
    But not for the poet—I know the moral  
Of his rune!

## THE LONG ROAD.

There's a long long road lying white in memory's light  
And it's traveled but by phantoms of a wistful long  
ago.

I can see them trooping trooping, and I love the eerie  
sight,  
And I march keeping step with the kindly ghosts I  
know.

It comes from out the woodlands and it runs into the  
hills  
Straight and white o'er hill and hollow with the  
green on either hand,  
And I follow follow follow, till my heart with sunshine  
fills  
At the crunch of happy footsteps in that fair lost  
land.

And I haste to overtake her in her jaunty cap and plaid  
Till she turns to meet my greeting with a frank and  
hearty smile  
And a flush of rosy welcome that makes the morning  
glad  
As we trudge the miles together to the school-house  
stile.

Now we reach the stately elm-tree with its lofty grape-  
vine swing  
Where we braved the teacher's ferule and the far-  
off warning bell  
Just to try the strange sensation of two birds upon the  
wing  
As they fly in mated cycles under love's strong spell.

There too lies the grassy clearing in the woodland where  
we played  
Drop the kerchief, and her red lips with a dawning  
passion swelled  
As another caught and kissed her, and my heart a tu-  
mult made  
That my own hard-won success and blushing guer-  
don hardly quelled.

Here the broad marsh fringed with blue-flags, cat-tails  
and sweet calamus  
Where we teased the nesting black-birds and the  
lily-striding frogs,  
And with pebbles shied among them with a cunning  
perilous  
Made the stolid Parsee turtles slide from off their  
sunny logs.

Now we pause beneath the bur-oak with its gnarled and  
spreading form  
That so kindly tented o'er us on one far ambrosial  
night  
When the singing-school was over and she clung so  
close and warm  
That we loved to linger sheltered from the full  
moon's light.

Hard before us lies the hollow where the rail-fence  
piled snow billows  
White and fluffy, and we dared the Storm-king's  
elemental powers—  
Like a pair of sleepy children flung ourselves on Win-  
ter's pillows,  
And with intertwined initials marked the virgin  
bed as ours.

Not a foot of that white road-way but is radiant with  
her presence,

Yet if I should clasp the phantom as Ixion's cloud-  
bride thin,

All the madness would o'erwhelm me of the end of  
earthly pleasance—

I whose acres lay in Cloud-land lacked the heart  
to woo and win.

O the long long road lying clear in memory's light

That is traveled but by phantoms of the long long  
ago!

I can see them trooping trooping, and I love the friend-  
ly sight,

So I march keeping step with the kindly ghosts I  
know.

*THE IDEAL.*

I had a dream.

The empty darkness burst to bloom  
Like a vast hushed lily-bud, all white and glorious,  
And smote my soul with ever-widening spheres of per-  
fume,  
And flooded her surprised sense with wave on wave of  
serene light.

The lily's heart disclosed a virgin form,  
All pure as snow, of loveliest mien,  
Such as the artist-lover's soul  
Dreams in supreme moments of creative power,  
As if the chisel had for once attained  
The master miracle, a perfect piece.

Her eyes beamed on me,  
With sweetest invitation, half concealed.  
Her lips grew red and full  
As if her spirit waited there  
To rush in rapturous kisses on the brow  
Of her elected lord.

The hot hunger of my soul o'erpowered me.  
With passionate arms, and heart loud-beating in exces-  
sive joy,  
As once Pygmalion when he gazed entranced  
On his own marble dream made flesh through love,  
I clasped her, held her, one ecstatic moment,  
And covered her white breasts with kisses.  
The glad tears burst from their unwonted springs  
All uncontrolled and fell upon her.  
A subtle tremor went through all her frame.  
And then with her white hand she caught the pearly  
drops  
And drank them, sighing.

She touched my brow and spake:  
"Lo! I have sealed thee mine, beloved!"

And when I looked into her eyes,  
They vanished like fair sister stars  
Withdrawn to inaccessible deeps of night,  
And stood fixed in imperishable beauty.  
Her white form slipped from my embrace  
And I awoke with choking sobs.

Since when all the world is grown less fair.  
I see her glide athwart all earthly forms,  
That straightway pale and wither,  
Their radiance by her splendor dimmed.  
And thus I wander through the vacant years  
A joyless soul, (and yet not asking joy,)  
Nor smile, nor weep,  
Until I find her, clasp her,  
Though I must pass the ninefold barred and mystic  
gates  
To win her.



THE SMITH'S SONG.

I hammer my Will into stubborn steel.

A god in me chooses the form.

When the white-hot metal's rebellion I feel

Hot passions into my right arm steal

And make the reverberant anvil peal

While sparks like crinkled lightnings reel

In a storm:

For whatever I fashion with might and skill,

Cling, clang,

Cling, clang,

Is ever my will, my will, my will!

I hammer my Will till the steel is cold.

Sometimes I call it a share.

The world that lay naked for eons untold,

My will shall deck it with wind-blown gold

Of harvests sixty and hundred fold.

Go! Furrows of brown through the virgin mould

Uptear!

Whatever I fashion with might and skill,

Cling, clang,

Cling, clang,

Is ever my will, my will, my will!

I hammer my Will from sun till sun.

Sometimes I call it a hook.

I send it abroad when the forging is done

To trim wild Edens whose vineyards run

Too rank for a world where perfection is spun,

For my will no Chaos from Order won

Can brook.

Whatever I fashion with might and skill,

Cling, clang,

Cling, clang,

Is ever my will, my will, my will!

I hammer my Will week in, week out.

Sometimes I call it a shoe.

My steed fares forth with his rider stout  
To carry God's message the world about :

"One Love, one Law, one Dream, one Doubt,  
And one Salvation for gentle and lout :

Be true!"

Whatever I fashion with might and skill,  
Cling, clang,

Cling, clang,

Is ever my will, my will, my will!

I hammer my Will from birth till death.

Sometimes I call it a sword.

Rest bright and keen in a ready sheath  
Till the maddened foeman's insolent breath  
Shall sully our world with a threat of scath,  
Then leap and flash like the awful wraith  
Of the Lord!

Whatever I fashion with might and skill,

Cling, clang,

Cling, clang,

Is ever my will, my will, my will!

I hammer my Will into stubborn steel.

A god in me chooses the form.

I forge on my stithy the commonweal.

My arm and my word are its sign and seal.

And whenever the metal's rebellion I feel

My sledge makes the verberant anvil peal

Like a storm!

For whatever I fashion with might and skill,

Cling, clang,

Cling, clang,

Is ever my will, my will, my will!

## LOST LOVE'S RETURN.

My hearth-fire burneth dim and low,  
    The fine air groweth chill,  
A darkness climbeth along the walls  
And thin shapes flit through the twilight halls  
    Incessant to and fro.  
I feel them sweep like an icy breath,  
They whisk my cheeks with a touch of death,  
    And my heart, it standeth still.

My heart, it standeth a moment still,  
    Then leapeth sudden and wild:  
"O is it my fair lost Love ye bear?  
O stay your flitting, ye shapes of air,  
    And yield her to my will,  
For I fain would win her to my desire,  
Though her lips were ice to my lips of fire,  
    And her star eyes coldly smiled!"

My heart, it leapeth and will not cease.  
    The shapes, they crowd around:  
"O we are the dreams that came to thee  
When June was abloom and the heart was free,  
    And the soul was well-at-ease,  
What time we were all too chaste and cold  
For a purple-blooded youth to hold  
    In love's embraces bound!"

My heart, it quaketh and will not rest,  
 My head, it bendeth low:  
 "O we flit and flit till dawn is alit,  
 And on cheeks where death's chaste lily-buds sit  
 We breathe our wooing hest.  
 For the hand she clasped was the hand of a boy  
 That crushed the blown lily in eager joy  
 To possess her fragrant snow."

My heart, it trembleth and can not hold,  
 My head, it sinketh still:  
 "O stay your flitting, ye shapes of air,  
 I know ye are fair, too white and fair,  
 For arms of mortal mould!—  
 But I fain would clasp you and hold you now,  
 Though your kisses were cold on my fevered brow  
 And your wan breasts icy chill!"

O stand, my heart, be forever still,  
 And leap no longer wild:  
 "O we are the spirits that tended of yore  
 Thy fair lost Love whom we now restore  
 And yield to thy chastened will.  
 No more we flit till dawn is alit,  
 But with folded wings a garland we'll knit  
 At the feet of the reconciled!"

IN THE DESERT.

Three vultures wheel in slant-winged flight  
Above the desert's tawny stretches  
And wind down narrowing stairs of light.

Beneath them like three guilty wretches  
Three shadows whisk across the sand,  
And each its lessening cycle etches.

The goal the ominous obscene band  
Still shuns, or seems to shun, while seeking,  
Lies helpless in that pitiless land.

Sand-choked beyond articulate speaking  
He follows mute with questioning eyes  
Those fearful gyres, those pinions reeking.

Panting in horror vain convulsive cries  
He raves a maniac prayer for succor—  
Wards off the loathesome bulk and dies—  
Such sepulture hath Sheik Ibn Becar!

## THE DRAGON-FLY.

Fanning with iridescent wing  
 The dank airs of the reedy marsh,  
 Darting in disport, elfin thing,  
 Among the water-grasses harsh,  
 Now clinging to some sedge's stem,  
 Now floating double in the breeze,  
 Thou art at times a living gem,  
 At times a queen of sylphides.  
 Innocent, beauteous, luckless sprite,  
 Gorgeous daemon as brief as bright!

Had luckier fates thy birth-place set  
 With snow-drop or with violet,  
 With wild-rose or with fleur-de-lis,  
 How happy were such lot for thee!  
 Painters would try thy gauzy wing,  
 Poets essay thy grace to sing  
 And wonder with half despairing sigh  
 How lily and rose and world and sky  
 Are mirrored in thy wide-orbed eye,  
 And seers would dream of harmonies  
 Fixed at the birth of eternities  
 And babble of mighty wisdom still  
 That planned thy sphere with prescient skill.

What wondrous change a birth-place makes!  
 Each soul some fatal color takes  
 From what it touches at its source.  
 Thou sylphid beauty of the fen  
 Art shunned and spurned by bearded men,  
 And tender children deem thee worse—  
 Confederate of an old world-curse,  
 A feeder of loathesome slimy snakes.  
 With clubs and stones, imbruted crew,  
 Thy fragile grace they swift pursue,  
 Striving to quench in reedy slime  
 Too transient Beauty before its time.

## INVITATION.

I have no gold but the sunset's gold,  
No silver but storm-cloud's lining;  
I have no lands that are bought and sold,  
Nor castles of man's designing.

But I have estates sky-rimmed and broad  
Where the breath of song is blowing,  
Whose wealth by love's own guileless fraud  
Is doubled at each bestowing.

My wool is the fleece of vernal cloud,  
My silk the gossamer sailing,  
My purple the autumn twilight shroud  
When the happy day-light's failing.

What lieth in reach of ear and eye  
Or Argonaut fancy's tasking,  
From the heart of the earth to the dome of the sky,  
Is mine for the simple asking.

So come, my Friend, for an hour, for a day,  
For a life-time's happy straying,  
And arm in arm we'll wander away  
In love's perennial Maying.

## WHITE WASTE OF SNOW.

White waste of snow, gray waste of years,  
I said and sighed, thus sadly linking  
The winter's glory with foolish tears.

So much of beauty, to my thinking,  
And warmth lay buried under both,  
In death's white stupor mutely sinking.

Earth spring and life's spring, virgin growth,  
Snow-drop and innocence, love and the roses,  
To see them perish my soul is loth.

I know that under the snow reposes  
A death that is not wholly dead,  
But, couched and curtained, merely dozes

And dreams of waking all purple and red  
To play with sunbeam and warm rains plashing  
And laugh at the sky where the winds are fed:

But under the waste of years so ashen  
What dream is a-dreaming of dawns to be?  
Will the world-old rhythm in some new fashion  
Bring back the spring and the bud to me?



THE PERFECT ROSE.

Ah me! Who knows where the perfect rose  
From mortals hidden in beauty blows?  
    In far off gardens of Gulistan?  
    In Sharon's valley? Or neath the ban  
Of mage Laurin's Tyrolean close?

Or fresh as when the world began  
And modest creatures fled from Pan,  
    Just under my window it shyly glows?  
    Ah me! Who knows?

Or an airy nothing, a shadowy plan—  
A dream-flower burst from the heart of man  
    To seal with beauty life's thorny prose?  
    Then wherefore yearn for impalpable shows  
And scorn Reality's blushing clan?  
    Ah me! Who knows?

## MY CAT-BIRD.

My cat-bird sings—for June is here—  
From sweet syringa and spice-bush clear  
    Her notes are shaken out again  
    In showers of most melodious rain.  
I pause to bend a thirsty ear.

Sweet witchery born of joy, not pain,  
Whole orchestra packed in a single strain—  
    The oriole's gay, but without a peer  
    My cat-bird sings.

I peer through the spice-bush leaves in vain  
For a glimpse of her stage dress gray and plain,  
    And her throat a-quiver, but I can hear  
    Her soul expanding in a sphere  
Of ecstasy, when thus amain  
    My cat-bird sings.

ON MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS.

On mountain heights the air is keen,  
The sun shines cold, there is no screen  
    Of warm gray clouds that valleys know.  
The eye, forsaking fields below,  
Expatriates in a lordlier scene.

The heart beats bolder mid the snow,  
The breath comes fuller as we go,  
    The soul expands and grows serene  
        On mountain heights.

When wearied with the sordid woe  
Of bootless errands to and fro  
    Mid murk and men in valleys green,  
    Look up where eagles sit and preen  
Their wings for flashing in the glow  
    On mountain heights.

## ONE SOLE STAR FIXED.

One sole star fixed while thousands turn  
Like cherubim that gaze and burn  
    In heaven's mighty chariot wheel  
    Whose vasty spokes harmonic reel  
Down slopes that seers can scarce discern.

I too the cosmic cyclone feel—  
Pomp of mad dreams, storms that conceal,  
    Where'er I turn, howe'er I yearn,  
        One sole star fixed.

The days whirl by, and scorn appeal,  
As if to hint, or half reveal,  
    Some vast return of more concern  
    Than a World's ashes in Time's huge urn,  
But never a vision clear to heal—  
        One sole star fixed.

WHEN LUCIA CAME.

Was it a dream when Lucia's spirit came  
Breaking that blind transparency—whose name  
    Nor bard nor seer has skill to sing or say—  
    That walled me in from her who went her way  
And left me wondering at Love's futile claim?

Upon my couch in some deep trance I lay  
When burst upon me that candescent ray:  
    Could mortal tongue the idle question frame:  
    Was it a dream?

Too clear for sleep's remembering, clear as day  
The lips' touch, hands' clasp, eyes that love betray  
    In love's reproof: "Is oft-sworn faith so lame?  
    So *unexpected?* Farewell!" In my shame  
Love flowered to madness, yet she would not stay.  
    Was it a dream?

## LEAVES ARE WE.

Leaves are we that sit in the sun  
Where the wonder and glory of summer are spun.  
    Guests for a time of centennial trees  
    We dance with the gay young courtier breeze  
While the Merlin days pass one by one.

The days, O the days! What gifts are these!  
Purple and scarlet and gold! Who sees  
    Their subtle magic till sere and dun  
    Leaves are we?

Flown are the birds and numb are the bees,  
And we huddle in drifts round the gnarled knees  
    Of unpitying hosts. Our course is done;  
    But their girth is ampler, their branches run  
Nearer the sky, for our golden ease—  
    Ah, leaves are we!

FRA ELBERTUS' "ESSAY ON SILENCE:"

O gentle Book whose letter never dims  
The spirit's message! Wise old Fra and kindly  
To help the weary soul that gropes so blindly  
In mazy book-marts! Here his genius skims  
Wit's golden cream, his cunning deftly trims  
A flawless, fadeless garland, where combined lie  
All perfect meanings since the world designedly  
Made books—and critics damned them trunk and limbs.

Most perfect Book, rare bible of our age,  
Pocket companion, friend, adviser, host,  
My Little Journey on Bohemia's coast  
Is sweetened daily by thy sphinxlike page.  
'Silence is golden!' Yet who dreamed of old  
That she could turn white paper into gold?

## MY SHRINE.

Some fare to distant Mecca, some to Rome,  
    Yet others to some nearer lowlier shrine  
    More oft revisited nor less divine  
Than prophet's haunt or vicar's lofty dome.  
Each finds' a god there and his heart's true home;  
    But mine is lowliest of all—a line  
    Of tumbling rail-fence clambered o'er with vine  
Embowered in dog-rose. Thither oft I roam.

And still I find my goddess waiting there  
    As when long long ago one golden day  
    I met my first Love there at dawn of May.  
I plucked two roses for her raven hair  
    And crowned her May Queen. Still on cheeks of  
    snow  
I see that brace of lovelier roses blow.



*ZEPHYR AND MYRTLE.*

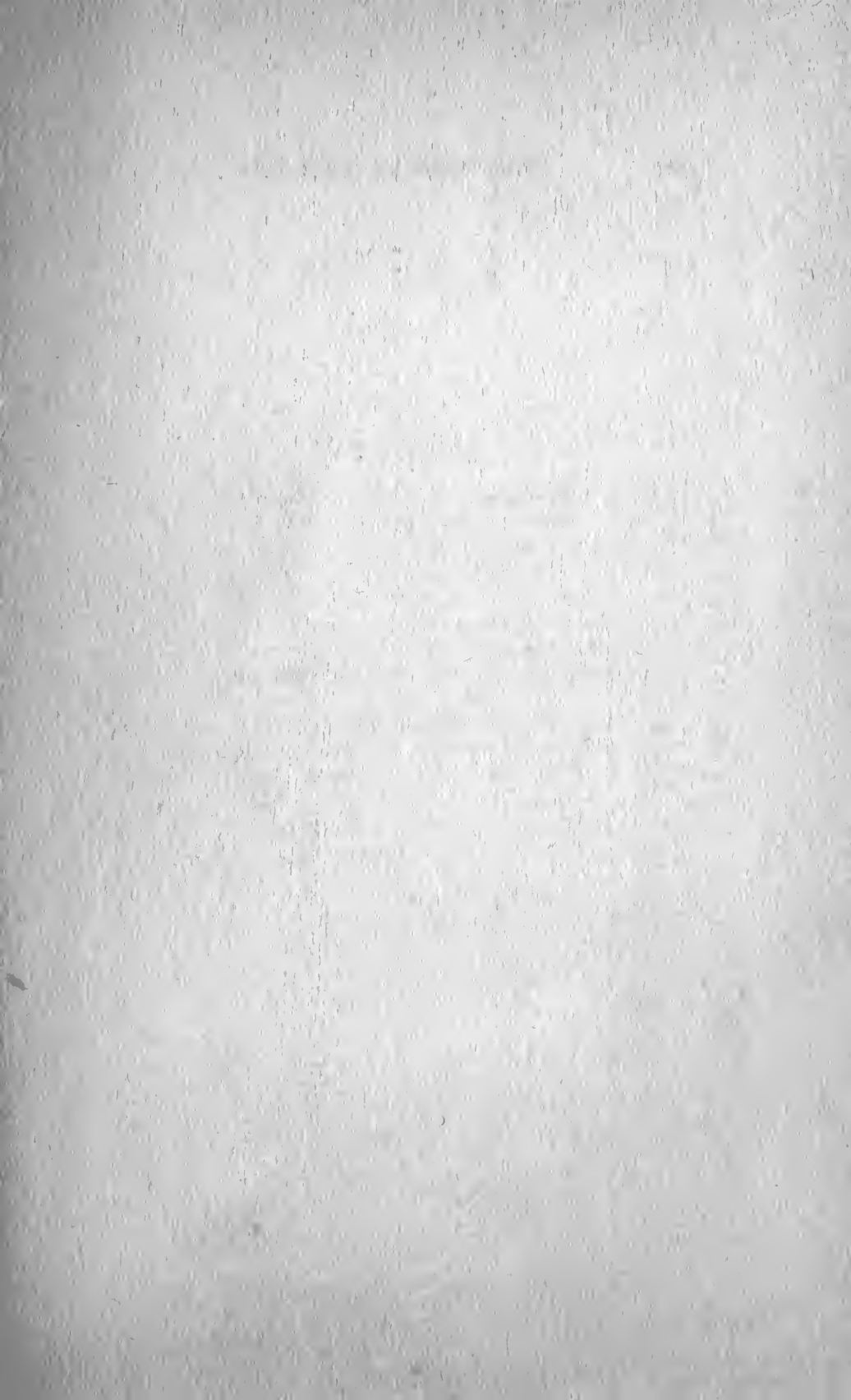
Young Zephyr tiptoed in the long grave-grass  
To whisper Lady Myrtle on the ground:  
"Why keep the vigil on this sunken mound?  
Come out and play where happy creatures pass!"  
But mild-eyed Myrtle answered soft: "Alas!  
Of loving footfalls I have heard no sound  
For endless summers. Swiftly round and round  
Days dance with days like jocund lad and lass.

And still, sweet Zephyr, you're my only guest.  
Come, part the grasses, sit a while and rest  
Here on this toppled head-stone green and rotten.  
Fickle as wind is man, as April brittle!  
Spell out the words—'twill sober you a little—  
That loving hands carved: 'Gone, but not forgotten'."

## A MEMORY.

A white house stands upon a way-side hill,  
Tall pine-trees guard it in a double row;  
Their branches droop beneath the weight of snow,  
And moon-cast shadows lurk there midnight-still.  
The envious winter wind blows crisp and chill  
And swings the yard-gate sharply to and fro:  
"Whose are the dainty foot-prints there?" I know—  
The old gate knows—and feels his dull wood thrill.

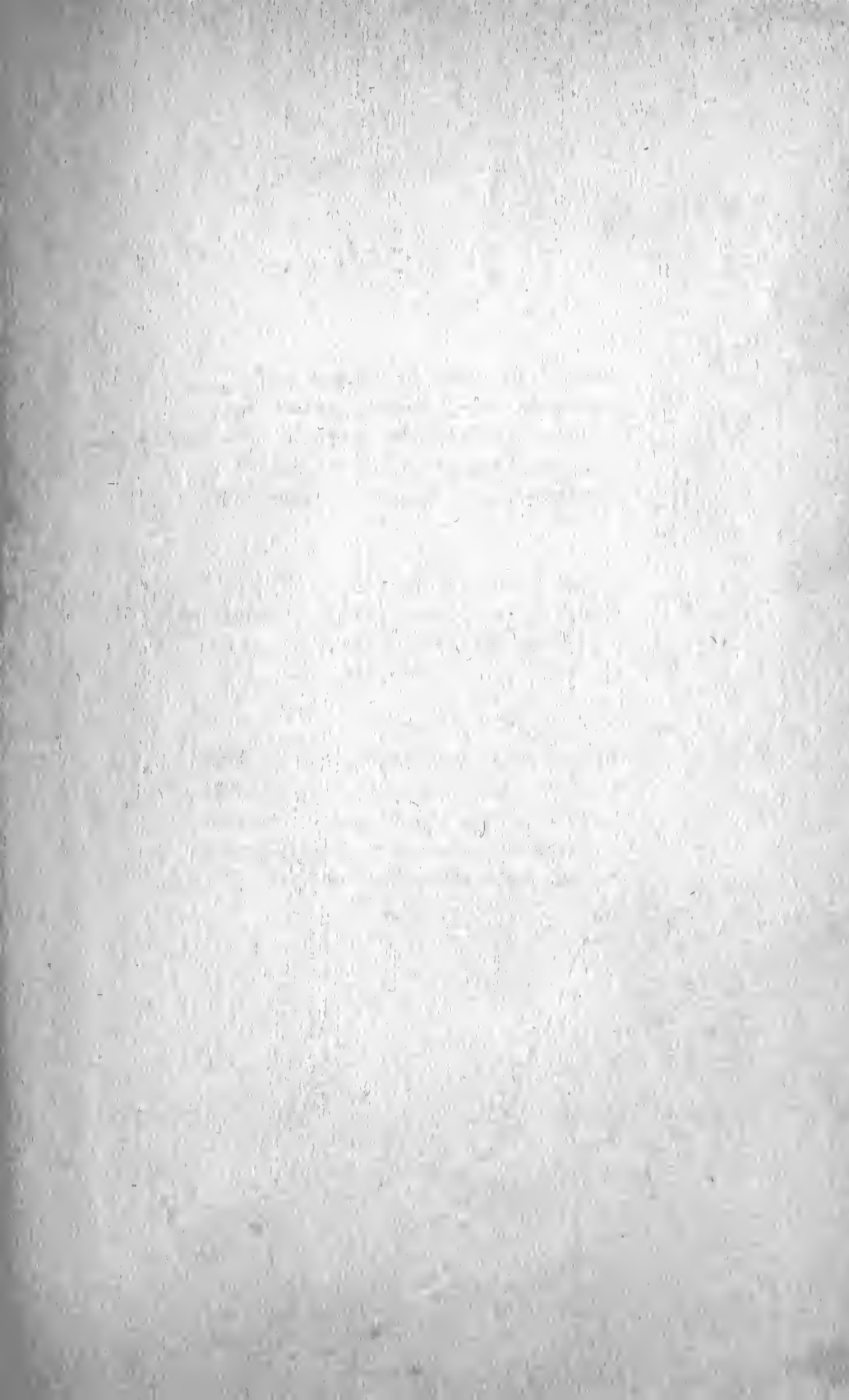
The winds of many winters blow and blow  
To drift those dainty tell-tales deftly over;  
The suns of many summers glow and glow  
To melt those runes of happy maid and lover;  
But mocking still the jealous seasons' spite  
They lie there glorified in endless light.



*Across the sea I send my freighted craft.  
Hope springs before her like a plumed shaft  
From Love's bow hurtled. On the wave-washed beach  
I watch the lovely hazard, and beseech  
Gray Ocean's daughters spare my winged raft.*

*Ye gods above, below, I vow to each  
Meet gifts, if through yon billows' threatening breach  
My love-spied, hope-led ship ye safely waft  
Across the sea.*

*What hecatombs, what temples roofed—O teach  
Me, Wind and Wave, to be your anger's leech!—  
Ye trumpeting west winds follow her abaft.  
Poseidon, spare her from your pronged haft!  
I hold my breath till she the haven reach  
Across the sea!*













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