

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF CAPTAIN MYLES STANDISH.

MYLES STANDISH—for so he spelled the name, and so his lineal descendant of the same name spells it to-day—was one of the most picturesque figures of the Plymouth Colony. The soldier is always an interesting figure. But this soldier had traits which made him doubly interesting, especially in the circumstances of his position in Plymouth Colony.

The story of his courtship rests upon tradition, and the few historical references narrated in Longfellow's poem are given with substantial accuracy. John Standish was one of the king's servants, and was one of the first who wounded Wat Tyler after he had been felled by the Lord Mayor of London. For this he, along with others, was knighted.

The family estate was in Lancashire. There were two branches of the family, one at Standish Hall, and the other at Duxbury Hall, near by. Myles is supposed to have sprung from the

Duxbury branch, the chief reason for this being that he gave the name of Duxbury to the town which he founded. The parish church for both estates was at Chorley.

The armorial bearings of the family are thus given: Azure, three Standishes argent. The crest: On a wreath, a cock argent, combed and wattled gules.

In this blazonry the three Standishes mentioned seem to be simply three dishes (standishes, or stand-dishes?), and are represented by three circles. It may here be said that the baronetcy of Standish was created in 1676, and became extinct in 1812.

The only positive evidence as to the precise date of his birth is found in Queen Elizabeth's commission, which gives it as 1584. His birth was undoubtedly recorded in the parish register at Chorley. But although the records of this register are otherwise complete from 1549 to 1652, the leaf for 1584-85 has been pumiced so carefully as to leave no trace of the writing. The conclusion is inevitable that "legal proof of Standish's birth and descent has been destroyed to secure a fraudulent transfer of his inheritance."

According to Morton, he was "heir-apparent

unto a great estate of lands and livings surreptitiously kept from him, his great-grandfather being a second or younger brother from the house of Standish." He was thus compelled to seek his own fortune, and, from various motives which can be easily divined, he chose the profession of arms, which in those days represented an animus widely different from that of to-day.

He was sent by Her Majesty to serve in the Netherlands, in aid of the Dutch and Flemish against Philip II. of Spain. He was quartered at Leyden at the time Pastor John Robinson, with his Pilgrim Church, settled there. He was not a member of that Church—the Standish family had always been Roman Catholic—but he formed warm friendships among the members. When, therefore, the Pilgrims emigrated, he came with them. His first wife, Rose, accompanied him. There had been one death during the voyage, but hers was the first death after the landing. The date was Jan. 29, 1621, or less than six weeks after reaching Plymouth.

The condition of the colony was more serious than the imagination will readily grasp. There were but thirty-four adult male colonists out of which Captain Standish was free to choose, so that "my great, invincible army, twelve

men," is a tolerably accurate description. The first winter at Plymouth was unspeakably hard. About one half of the little band of colonists died, and most of the survivors were much of the time prostrated with sickness. They were surrounded by savages, many of whom were hostile and treacherous. Standish, being the recognized military leader, developed qualities which have deservedly placed him high in the temple of fame.

But he was not only a military leader, for he came to have influence as a man of affairs and a counsellor in civil matters. For many years he was one of the governors of the Council. In 1626 he was sent by the colonists to England as their representative, to adjust business matters with the merchant adventurers.

In 1823, the Indians had plotted to annihilate the settlement at Weymouth. This plot was revealed by a friendly Indian, Massasoit. Standish and his "army" of eight soldiers went to the rescue, and he, by his wonderfully good sense and his nerve, accomplished his purpose as narrated by Longfellow. Pecksuot had said: "Though you are a great captain, yet you are but a little man; and though I be no sachem, yet I am a man of great strength and courage."

The following day, in a hand-to-hand conflict, four of the Colonists killed three Indians and captured a fourth, who was subsequently hung. It was of this conflict that Hobomok, Standish's Indian friend and interpreter, said: "Yesterday Pecksuot bragged of his own strength and stature, and told you that though you were a great captain, yet you were a little man; but to-day I see that you are big enough to lay him on the ground."

This one adventure illustrates the fact that Captain Standish's courage and prompt decision of action inspired in the savages a wholesome awe of the little colony, and saved the latter from much harassing.

The story of his courtship, as has already been stated, is founded on tradition; it is nevertheless accurate in its leading points. It was according to the custom of those days that Captain Standish sent his friend to make an offer of marriage. John Alden first consulted the father of Priscilla Mullins, who approved. The offer was then formally made to Priscilla—who did not approve.

But there were others, and the captain persuaded Barbara to come to this country and become his second wife.

In 1631, he moved across the bay and settled in a locality which he called Duxbury. He built his house on the top of a hill, which to this day is known as the Captain's Hill. The house was long ago destroyed by fire, but the spring which he curbed still flows with excellent water, and the curbing which was laid by the captain's own hands is said to be in perfect condition.

John Alden settled with him in Duxbury, and the friendship of these two remarkable men lasted until death. They were neighbors, companions, fellow counsellors, and Justin Winsor says that they were communicants in the same church. Their descendants intermarried.

Captain Standish died in 1756, being seventy-two years of age. He was buried in Duxbury, but the exact location of his grave is unknown. He left what was for those days a considerable fortune, amounting to 358 pounds and seven shillings. One clause of his will is of special interest: "My will is, that out of my whole estate my funeral charges to be taken out, and my body to be buried in a decent manner, and if I die in Duxburrow, my body to be laid as neare as conveniently may be to my two deare daughters, Lora Standish my daughter, and Mary Standish, my daughter-in-law."

It is true that he had an irascible temper. That was in those days expected of a professional soldier. At the same time he had great self-control and much practical wisdom. His various qualities were more evenly balanced than is commonly found in men, great or small.

Says Goodwin: "For Standish, no work was too difficult or dangerous, none too humble or disagreeable. As captain and magistrate, as engineer and explorer, as interpreter and merchant, as a tender nurse in pestilence, a physician at all times, and as the Cincinnatus of his colony, he showed a wonderful versatility of talent and the highest nobility of character. Great as a ruler over others, he was far greater as a ruler over himself. His services merit our warmest gratitude and challenge our admiration. He was the man of men whom the Pilgrims most needed to come to them, and nothing was more improbable than that such a one would do so, or, if he did, that he would long remain loyal, steadfast, and submissive to the voice of the people. No man ever more decidedly had a mission, and none ever more nobly fulfilled it."

These words are none too strong. It is not possible to believe that Plymouth Colony could

have escaped destruction had it not been for the aid of Captain Standish.

The Captain's Hill of Duxbury is to-day crowned with a fitting monument. It consists of a tower surmounted by a statue of the redoubtable soldier. Many relics, including the Damascus blade, with its Arabic inscription, are preserved by the Massachusetts Historical Society.

HENRY KETCHAM.

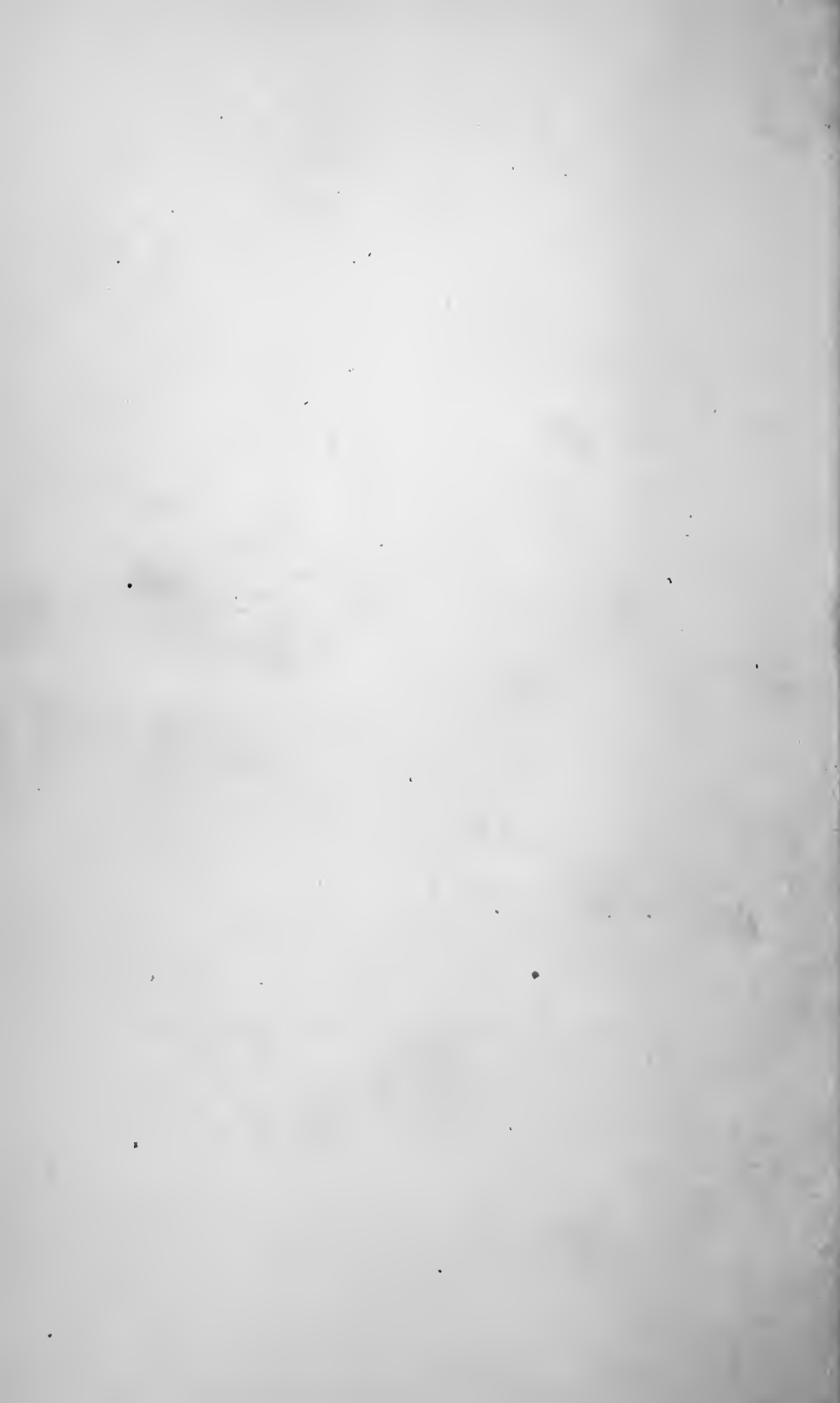
[NOTE.—The Psalm book of Ainsworth is mentioned in Part III. of the poem. This was the book of praise used in New England for many years. The volume is now rare, but some copies may be found in the larger libraries. In the Lenox Library of New York City there is a copy "Imprinted in the yere 1619." The musical notes are, to modern eyes, very quaint, and unintelligible. They fully justify Longfellow's spirited description. The book should be seen to be appreciated, and the curious reader will find it worth his while to examine an original copy. Following is a copy of the Twenty-third psalm, reproduced as accurately as can be done with modern type and paper.]

PSALME 23.

Sing this as the 8, Psalme.

- 1 Jehovah feed-
eth me, I shall not lack.
- 2 In grassy folds,
he down doth make me lye :
he gently—leads
me, quiet waters by.

- 3 He doth return
my soule ; for his names sake,
in paths of jus-
tice leads—me—quietly.
- 4 Yea, though I walk,
in dale of deadly shade,
Ile fear none yll ;
for with me thou *wilt bee* :
thy rod thy staffe
eke, they shall comfort me.
- 5 Fore me, a ta-
ble thou hast ready-made ;
in their presence
that my distressers be :
Thou makest fat
mine head with oincting-oil ;
my cup abounds.
- 6 Doubtless, good and mercie
shall all the dayes
of my life folow me :
also within
Jehovahs house, I shall
to length of dayes,
repose—me—quietlie.



THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

I.

MILES STANDISH.

IN the Old Colony days, in Plymouth the land
of the Pilgrims,
To and fro in a room of his simple and primi-
tive dwelling,
Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cordo-
van leather,
Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish the
Puritan ¹ Captain.
Buried in thought he seemed, with his hands
behind him, and pausing
Ever and anon to behold his glittering weapons
of warfare,
Hanging in shining array along the walls of
the chamber,—

¹ Captain Standish was one of the band of Pilgrims, not Puritans. The two are often confused.

Cutlass and corslet of steel, (and his trusty
sword of Damascus,

Curved at the point and inscribed with its
mystical Arabic sentence,)

While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-
piece, musket, and matchlock.

Short of stature he was, but strongly built and
athletic,

Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with
muscles and sinews of iron ;

Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet
beard was already

Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges some-
times in November.

Near him was seated John Alden, his friend,
and household companion,¹

Writing with diligent speed at a table of pine
by the window ;

Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon
complexion,

Having the dew of his youth, and the beauty
thereof, as the captives²

¹ John Alden boarded with Captain Standish.

² These captives were brought by the army to Rome

Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed,
“Not Angles but Angels.”

Youngest of all was he of the men who came
in the May Flower.

Suddenly breaking the silence, the diligent
scribe interrupting,
Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles Stan-
dish the Captain of Plymouth.

“Look at these arms,” he said, “the warlike
weapons that hang here

Burnished and bright and clean, as if for pa-
rade or inspection !

This is the sword of Damascus I fought with
in Flanders ; this breastplate,

Well I remember the day ! once saved my life
in a skirmish ;

Here in front you can see the very dint of the
bullet

Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish
arcabucero.¹

from England. Pope Gregory, in the year 596, ap-
pointed Augustin as missionary to carry the gospel to
their countrymen.

¹ A harquebusier, or one who uses a harquebus or
matchlock.

Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgotten
bones of Miles Standish
Would at this moment be mould, in their grave
in the Flemish morasses.”

Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked
not up from his writing :

“ Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened
the speed of the bullet ;

He in his mercy preserved you, to be our shield
and our weapon ! ”

Still the Captain continued, unheeding the
words of the stripling :

“ See, how bright they are burnished, as if in
an arsenal hanging ;

That is because I have done it myself, and not
left it to others.

Serve yourself, would you be well served, is an
excellent adage ;

So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens¹
and your inkhorn.

¹ The pens were of goose-quill and it was a matter of necessity that each writer should make and mend his own pens. The inkhorns were, like powder-horns, made of horns of cattle.

Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great, in-
vincible army,

Twelve men,¹ all equipped, having each his rest
and his matchlock,

Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet
and pillage,

And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each of
my soldiers !”

This he said with a smile, that danced in his
eyes, as the sunbeams

Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish again
in a moment.

Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the Cap-
tain continued :

“Look! you can see from this window my
brazen howitzer planted

High on the roof of the church, a preacher who
speaks to the purpose,

Steady, straight-forward, and strong, with irre-
sistible logic,

Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the
hearts of the heathen.

¹ This was about the number of men in Captain Standish's “army.”

Now we are ready, I think, for any assault of
the Indians ;

Let them come, if they like, and the sooner
they try it the better,—

Let them come if they like, be it sagamore,¹
sachem, or pow-wow,

Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or To-
kamahamon !”

Long at the window he stood, and wistfully
gazed on the landscape,
Washed with a cold gray mist, the vapory
breath of the east-wind,
Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-blue
rim of the ocean,
Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shadows
and sunshine.
Over his countenance flitted a shadow like
those on the landscape,
Gloom intermingled with light ; and his voice
was subdued with emotion,

¹ Sagamore, sachem,—two grades of chiefs. The
pow-wow was the medicine man or conjuror.

Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he
proceeded :

“Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies
buried Rose Standish ;

Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by
the wayside !

She was the first to die¹ of all who came in the
May Flower !

Green above her is growing the field of wheat
we have sown there,

Better to hide from the Indian scouts the
graves of our people,

Lest they should count them and see how many
already have perished !”

Sadly his face he averted, and strode up and
down, and was thoughtful.

Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of
books, and among them
Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk
and for binding ;
Bariffe’s Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries
of Cæsar,

¹ She died about six weeks after landing.

Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Gold-
inge of London,

And, as if guarded by these, between them was
standing the Bible.

Musing a moment before them, Miles Standish
paused, as if doubtful

Which of the three he should choose for his
consolation and comfort,

Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the famous
campaigns of the Romans,

Or the Artillery practice, designed for bellige-
rent Christians.

Finally down from its shelf he dragged the
ponderous Roman,

Seated himself at the window, and opened the
book, and in silence

Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where thumb-
marks thick on the margin,

Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the battle
was hottest.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurry-
ing pen of the stripling,

Busily writing epistles important, to go by the
May Flower,

Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at
latest, God willing !

Homeward bound with the tidings of all that
terrible winter,

Letters written by Alden, and full of the name
of Priscilla,¹

Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan²
maiden Priscilla !

¹ Her surname, variously spelled, was Molines, Mullins, or Mullins.

² Historically this should be Pilgrim, not Puritan. So throughout the poem.

II.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling,
Or an occasional sigh from the laboring heart of the Captain,
Reading the marvellous words and achievements of Julius Cæsar.
After a while he exclaimed, as he smote with his hand, palm downwards,
Heavily on the page: "A wonderful man was this Cæsar!
You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but here is a fellow
Who could both write and fight, and in both was equally skilful!"
Straightway answered and spake John Alden, the comely, the youthful:

“Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with
his pen and his weapons.

Somewhere have I read, but where I forget, he
could dictate

Seven letters at once, at the same time writing
his memoirs.”

“Truly,” continued the Captain, not heeding
or hearing the other,

“Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius
Cæsar!

Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian,
village,

Than be second in Rome, and I think he was
right when he said it.

Twice was he married before he was twenty,
and many times after ;

Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand
cities he conquered ;

He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has
recorded ;

Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator
Brutus!

Now, do you know what he did on a certain
occasion in Flanders,

When the rear-guard of his army retreated,
 the front giving way too,
And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded
 so closely together
There was no room for their swords? Why,
 he seized a shield from a soldier,
Put himself straight at the head of his troops,
 and commanded the captains,
Calling on each by his name, to order forward
 the ensigns ;
Then to widen the ranks, and give more room
 for their weapons ;
So he won the day, the battle of something-or-
 other.

That's what I always say ; if you wish a thing
 to be well done,
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it
 to others !”

All was silent again ; the Captain continued
 his reading.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying
 pen of the stripling

Writing epistles important to go next day by
the May Flower,

Filled with the name and the fame of the Pu-
ritan maiden Priscilla;

Every sentence began or closed with the name
of Priscilla,

Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided
the secret,

Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the
name of Priscilla!

Finally closing his book, with a bang of the
ponderous cover,

Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier
grounding his musket,

Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish
the Captain of Plymouth:

“When you have finished your work, I have
something important to tell you.

Be not however in haste; I can wait; I shall
not be impatient!”

Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the
last of his letters,

Pushing his papers aside, and giving respectful
attention;

“ Speak ; for whenever you speak, I am always
ready to listen,
Always ready to hear whatever pertains to
Miles Standish.”

Thereupon answered the Captain, embarrassed,
and culling his phrases :

“ ’Tis not good for a man to be alone, say the
Scriptures.

This I have said before, and again and again
I repeat it ;

Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it,
and say it.

Since Rose Standish died, my life has been
weary and dreary ;

Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing
of friendship.

Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the
maiden Priscilla.

She is alone in the world ; her father and
mother and brother

Died in the winter together ; I saw her going
and coming,

Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the
bed of the dying,

Patient, courageous, and strong, and said to
myself, that if ever

There were angels on earth, as there are angels
in heaven,

Two have I seen and known ; and the angel
whose name is Priscilla

Holds in my desolate life the place which the
other abandoned.

Long have I cherished the thought, but never
have dared to reveal it,

Being a coward in this, though valiant enough
for the most part.

Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden
of Plymouth,

Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of
words but of actions,

Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and
heart of a soldier.

Not in these words, you know, but this in short
is my meaning ;

I am a maker of war, and not a maker of
phrases.

You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in
elegant language,

Such as you read in your books of the plead-
ings and wooings of lovers,
Such as you think best adapted to win the
heart of a maiden."

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-
haired, taciturn stripling,
All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed,
bewildered,
Trying to mask his dismay by treating the
subject with lightness,
Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart stand
still in his bosom,
Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is
stricken by lightning,
Thus made answer and spake, or rather stam-
mered than answered :
"Such a message as that, I am sure I should
mangle and mar it ;
If you would have it well done,—I am only
repeating your maxim,—
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it
to others !"

But with the air of a man whom nothing can
turn from his purpose,
Gravely shaking his head, made answer the
Captain of Plymouth :

“Truly the maxim is good, and I do not mean
to gainsay it ;

But we must use it discreetly, and not waste
powder for nothing.

Now, as I said before, I was never a maker of
phrases.

I can march up to a fortress and summon the
place to surrender,

But march up to a woman with such a propo-
sal, I dare not.

I'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the
mouth of a cannon,

But of a thundering “No !” point-blank from
the mouth of a woman,

That I confess I'm afraid of, nor am I ashamed
to confess it !

So you must grant my request, for you are an
elegant scholar,

Having the graces of speech, and skill in the
turning of phrases.”

Taking the hand of his friend, who still was
reluctant and doubtful,

Holding it long in his own, and pressing it
kindly, he added :

“ Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet deep
is the feeling that prompts me ;

Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the
name of our friendship ! ”

Then made answer John Alden : “ The name
of friendship is sacred ;

What you demand in that name, I have not the
power to deny you ! ”

So the strong will prevailed, subduing and
moulding the gentler,

Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden went
on his errand.

III.

THE LOVER'S ERRAND.

So the strong will prevailed, and Alden went
on his errand,

Out of the street of the village, and into the
paths of the forest,

Into the tranquil woods, where blue-birds and
robins were building

Towns in the populous trees, with hanging
gardens of verdure,

Peaceful, aerial cities of joy and affection and
freedom.

All around him was calm, but within him com-
motion and conflict,

Love contending with friendship, and self with
each generous impulse.

To and fro in his breast his thoughts were
heaving and dashing,

As in a foundering ship, with every roll of the
vessel,

Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge of
the ocean !

“ Must I relinquish it all,” he cried with a wild
lamentation,

“ Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the
illusion ?

Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and
worshipped in silence ?

Was it for this I have followed the flying feet
and the shadow

Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of
New England ?

Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its
depths of corruption

Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms
of passion ;

Angels of light they seem, but are only delu-
sions of Satan.¹

All is clear to me now ; I feel it, I see it dis-
tinctly !

¹The reference is to 2 Cor. xi : 14.

This is the hand of the Lord ; it is laid upon
me in anger,

For I have followed too much the heart's de-
sires and devices,

Worshipping Astaroth¹ blindly, and impious
idols of Baal.¹

This is the cross I must bear ; the sin and the
swift retribution."

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden
went on his errand ;
Crossing the brook at the ford, where it brawled
over pebble and shallow,
Gathering still, as he went, the May-flowers²
blooming around him,
Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and
wonderful sweetness,
Children lost in the woods, and covered with
leaves³ in their slumber.

¹ Baal and Ashtaroth, the supreme male and female
divinities of the Phœnicians and Canaanites.

² The English Mayflower, for which the vessel was
named is the hawthorn blossom. The New England
Mayflower is the trailing arbutus.

³ The trailing arbutus blooms underneath the dead
leaves. The reference is to the nursery story of the
Babes in the Wood.

“Puritan flowers,” he said, “and the type of
Puritan maidens,
Modest and simple and sweet, the very type
of Priscilla!

So I will take them to her; to Priscilla the
May-flower of Plymouth,

Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting gift
will I take them;

Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade
and wither and perish,

Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of the
giver.”

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden
went on his errand;

Came to an open space, and saw the disk of
the ocean,

Sailless, sombre and cold with the comfortless
breath of the east-wind;

Saw the new-built house, and people at work
in a meadow;

Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical
voice of Priscilla

Singing the hundredth Psalm, the grand old
Puritan anthem,

Music that Luther sang to the sacred words of
the Psalmist,
Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling and
comforting many.

Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the
form of the maiden

Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool
like a snow-drift

Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the
ravenous spindle,

While with her foot on the treadle she guided
the wheel in its motion.

Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn psalm-
book of Ainsworth,

Printed in Amsterdam, the words and the
music together,

Rough-hewn, angular notes,¹ like stones in the
wall of a churchyard,

Darkened and overhung by the running vine of
the verses.

Such was the book from whose pages she sang
the old Puritan anthem,

¹ A spirited description of the musical notation of that day. For specimen of the words, see appendix to introduction.

She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the
forest,

Making the humble house and the modest ap-
parel of home-spun

Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the
wealth of her being !

Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and
cold and relentless,

Thoughts of what might have been, and the
weight and woe of his errand ;

All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes
that had vanished,

All his life henceforth a dreary and tenantless
mansion,

Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrowful
faces.

Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he
said it,

“ Let not him that putteth his hand to the
plough look backwards ;¹

Though the ploughshare cut through the
flowers of life to its fountains,

¹ Luke ix. 62. “ No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Though it pass o'er the graves of the dead and
the hearths of the living,
It is the will of the Lord; and his mercy en-
dureth for ever!"

So he entered the house: and the hum of the
wheel and the singing
Suddenly ceased; for Priscilla, aroused by his
step on the threshold,
Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand, in
signal of welcome,
Saying, "I knew it was you, when I heard
your step in the passage;
For I was thinking of you, as I sat there sing-
ing and spinning."
Awkward and dumb with delight, that a
thought of him had been mingled
Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from the
heart of the maiden,
Silent before her he stood, and gave her the
flowers for an answer,
Finding no words for his thought. He remem-
bered that day in the winter,

After the first great snow, when he broke a
 path from the village,
Reeling and plunging along through the drifts
 that encumbered the doorway.
Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered
 the house, and Priscilla
Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a
 seat by the fireside,
Grateful and pleased to know he had thought
 of her in the snow-storm.
Had he but spoken then! perhaps not in vain
 had he spoken;
Now it was all too late; the golden moment
 had vanished!
So he stood there abashed, and gave her the
 flowers for an answer.

Then they sat down and talked of the birds
 and the beautiful Spring-time,
Talked of their friends at home, and the May
 Flower that sailed on the morrow.
“I have been thinking all day,” said gently
 the Puritan maiden,

“ Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of
the hedge-rows of England,—

They are in blossom now, and the country is
all like a garden ;

Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of
the lark¹ and the linnet,

Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of
neighbors

Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip
together,

And, at the end of the street, the village church,
with the ivy

Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet
graves in the churchyard.

Kind are the people I live with, and dear to
me my religion ;

Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself
back in Old England.

You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help it :
I almost

Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so
lonely and wretched.”

¹These birds are practically identified with England.

Thereupon answered the youth:—"Indeed
I do not condemn you ;
Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed in
this terrible winter.
Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a
stronger to lean on ;
So I have come to you now, with an offer and
proffer of marriage
Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish
the Captain of Plymouth !"

Thus he delivered his message, the dexterous
writer of letters,—
Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in
beautiful phrases,
But came straight to the point, and blurted it
out like a schoolboy ;
Even the Captain himself could hardly have
said it more bluntly.
Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla
the Puritan maiden
Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated with
wonder,

Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned
her and rendered her speechless ;

Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the
ominous silence :

“ If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very
eager to wed me,

Why does he not come himself, and take the
trouble to woo me ?

If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not
worth the winning ! ”

Then John Alden began explaining and smooth-
ing the matter,

Making it worse as he went, by saying the
Captain was busy,—

Had no time for such things ;—such things !
the words grating harshly

Fell on the ear of Priscilla ; and swift as a
flash she made answer :

“ Has he no time for such things, as you call it,
before he is married,

Would he be likely to find it, or make it, after
the wedding ?

That is the way with you men ; you don't un-
derstand us, you cannot.

When you have made up your minds, after
thinking of this one and that one,
Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one
with another,
Then you make known your desire, with ab-
rupt and sudden avowal,
And are offended and hurt, and indignant per-
haps, that a woman
Does not respond at once to a love that she
never suspected,
Does not attain at a bound the height to which
you have been climbing.
This is not right nor just : for surely a wo-
man's affection
Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for only
the asking.
When one is truly in love, one not only says it,
but shows it.
Had he but waited awhile, had he only showed
that he loved me,
Even this Captain of yours—who knows?—at
last might have won me,
Old and rough as he is ; but now it never can
happen.”

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the
words of Priscilla,
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, per-
suading, expanding ;
Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his
battles in Flanders,
How with the people of God he had chosen to
suffer affliction,
How, in return for his zeal, they had made him
Captain of Plymouth ;
He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedi-
gree plainly
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in
Lancashire, England,
Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson
of Thurston de Standish ;
Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely
defrauded,
Still bore the family arms, and had for his
crest¹ a cock argent
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of
the blazon.

¹ Crest, argent, gules, and blazon, are terms of her-
aldry.

He was a man of honor, of noble and generous
nature ;

Though he was rough, he was kindly ; she knew
how during the winter

He had attended the sick, with a hand as
gentle as woman's ;

Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny
it, and headstrong,

Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and
placable always,

Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he
was little of stature ;

For he was great of heart, magnanimous,
courtly, courageous ;

Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in
England,

Might be happy and proud to be called the
wife of Miles Standish !

But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple
and eloquent language,
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of
his rival,

Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes over-
running with laughter,

Said, in a tremulous voice, "Why don't you
speak for yourself, John?"

IV.

JOHN ALDEN.

INTO the open air John Alden, perplexed and
bewildered,
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered alone
by the sea-side ;
Paced up and down the sands, and bared his
head to the east-wind,
Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and
fever within him.
Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalypti-
cal splendors,
Sank the City of God,¹ in the vision of John
the Apostle,
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper,
and sapphire,

¹ Rev. xxi. 2,10, ff.

Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets
 uplifted
Glimmered the golden reed of the angel who
 measured the city.

“ Welcome, O wind of the East ! ” he ex-
 claimed in his wild exultation,
“ Welcome, O wind of the East, from the caves
 of the misty Atlantic !
Blowing o'er fields of dulse,¹ and measureless
 meadows of sea-grass,
Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottos and
 gardens of ocean !
Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning fore-
 head, and wrap me
Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the
 fever within me ! ”

Like an awakened conscience, the sea was
 moaning and tossing,
Beating remorseful and loud the mutable sands
 of the sea-shore.
Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult
 of passions contending ;

¹ Dulse, a sea weed.

Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship
wounded and bleeding,
Passionate cries of desire, and importunate
pleadings of duty!

“Is it my fault,” he said, “that the maiden
has chosen between us?”

Is it my fault that he failed,—my fault that I
am the victor?”

Then within him there thundered a voice, like
the voice of the Prophet:

“It hath displeased the Lord!”—and he
thought of David’s transgression,¹

Bathsheba’s beautiful face, and his friend in
the front of the battle!

Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement
and self-condemnation,

Overwhelmed him at once; and he cried in the
deepest contrition:

“It hath displeased the Lord! It is the temp-
tation of Satan!”

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the
sea, and beheld there

¹ Sam. xi.

Dimly the shadowy form of the May Flower
riding at anchor,

Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on
the morrow ;

Heard the voices of men through the mist, the
rattle of cordage

Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate,
and the sailors' "Ay, ay, Sir!"

Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping
air of the twilight.

Still for a moment he stood, and listened, and
stared at the vessel,

Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing a
phantom,

Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the
beckoning shadow.

"Yes, it is plain to me now," he murmured ;
"the hand of the Lord is

Leading me out of the land of darkness, the
bondage of error,

Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of its
waters around me,

Hiding me, cutting me off, from the cruel
thoughts that pursue me.

Back will I go o'er the ocean, this dreary land
will abandon,

Her whom I may not love, and him whom my
heart has offended.

Better to be in my grave in the green old
churchyard in England,

Close by my mother's side, and among the dust
of my kindred ;

Better be dead and forgotten, than living in
shame and dishonor !

Sacred and safe and unseen, in the dark of the
narrow chamber

With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel
that glimmers

Bright on the hand that is dust, in the cham-
bers of silence and darkness,—

Yes, as the marriage ring of the great espousal
hereafter !”

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength
of his strong resolution,
Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried
along in the twilight,

Through the congenial gloom of the forest
silent and sombre,

Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of
Plymouth,

Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist
of the evening.

Soon he entered his door, and found the re-
doubtable Captain

Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial
pages of Cæsar,

Fighting some great campaign in Hainault or
Brabant or Flanders.

“Long have you been on your errand,” he said
with a cheery demeanor,

Even as one who is waiting an answer, and
fears not the issue.

“Not far off is the house, although the woods
are between us ;

But you have lingered so long, that while you
were going and coming

I have fought ten battles and sacked and de-
molished a city.

Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all
that has happened.”

Then John Alden spake, and related the
wondrous adventure,
From beginning to end, minutely, just as it
happened ;
How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had
sped in his courtship,
Only smoothing a little, and softening down
her refusal.
But when he came at length to the words Priscilla
had spoken,
Words so tender and cruel : “ Why don’t you
speak for yourself, John ? ”
Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and
stamped on the floor, till his armor
Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a
sound of sinister omen.
All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden
explosion,
Even as a hand-grenade, that scatters destruc-
tion around it.
Wildly he shouted, and loud : “ John Alden !
you have betrayed me !
Me. Miles Standish, your friend ! have sup-
planted, defrauded, betrayed me !

One of my ancestors ran his sword through
the heart of Wat Tyler;¹

Who shall prevent me from running my own
through the heart of a traitor?

Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a trea-
son to friendship!

You, who lived under my roof, whom I cher-
ished and loved as a brother;

You, who have fed at my board, and drunk at
my cup, to whose keeping

I have intrusted my honor, my thoughts the
most sacred and secret,—

You too, Brutus!² ah woe to the name of
friendship hereafter!

Brutus was Cæsar's friend, and you were mine,
but henceforward

Let there be nothing between us save war, and
implacable hatred!"

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and
strode about in the chamber,

¹ See biographical sketch.

² Dying words of Cæsar, quoted by Shakspeare, "Et tu, Brute." Julius Cæsar, III. 1.

Chafing and choking with rage; like cords
were the veins on his temples.

But in the midst of his anger a man appeared
at the doorway,

Bringing in uttermost haste a message of ur-
gent importance,

Rumors of danger and war and hostile incur-
sions of Indians!

Straightway the Captain paused, and, without
further question or parley,

Took from the nail on the wall his sword with
its scabbard of iron,

Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frown-
ing fiercely, departed.

Alden was left alone. He heard the clank of
the scabbard

Growing fainter and fainter, and dying away
in the distance.

Then he arose from his seat, and looked forth
into the darkness,

Felt the cool air blow on his cheek, that was
hot with the insult,

Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding his
hands as in childhood,

Prayed in the silence of night to the Father
who seeth in secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode wrath-
ful away to the council,
Found it already assembled, impatiently wait-
ing his coming ;
Men in the middle of life, austere and grave in
deportment,
Only one of them old, the hill that was nearest
to heaven,
Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent
Elder¹ of Plymouth.
God had sifted three kingdoms to find the
wheat for this planting,
Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed
of a nation ;
So say the chronicles old, and such is the faith
of the people !
Near them was standing an Indian, in attitude
stern and defiant,
Naked down to the waist, and grim and fero-
cious in aspect ;

¹ William Brewster.

While on the table before them was lying un-
opened a Bible,
Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded,
printed in Holland,
And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattle-
snake glittered,
Filled, like a quiver, with arrows ; a signal and
challenge of warfare,
Brought by the Indian, and speaking with
arrowy tongues of defiance.
This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered, and
heard them debating
What were an answer befitting the hostile mes-
sage and menace,
Talking of this and of that, contriving, suggest-
ing, objecting ;
One voice only for peace, and that the voice of
the Elder,
Judging it wise and well that some at least
were converted,
Rather than any were slain, for this was but
Christian behavior !¹

¹ This was the remark of John Robinson, who wrote them from Leyden.

Then outspake Miles Standish, the stalwart
Captain of Plymouth,

Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice was
husky with anger,

“What! do you mean to make war with milk
and the water of roses?

Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your how-
itzer planted

There on the roof of the church, or is it to
shoot red devils?

Truly the only tongue that is understood by a
savage

Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the
mouth of the cannon!”

Thereupon answered and said the excellent
Elder of Plymouth,

Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this irrev-
erent language:

“Not so thought Saint Paul, nor yet the other
Apostles;

Not from the cannon’s mouth were the tongues
of fire¹ they spake with!”

¹ See Acts ii. 1-4,

But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the
 Captain,

Who had advanced to the table, and thus con-
 tinued discoursing :

“ Leave this matter to me, for to me by right
 it pertaineth.

War is a terrible trade ; but in the cause that
 is righteous,

Sweet is the smell of powder ; and thus I an-
 swer the challenge ! ”

Then from the rattlesnake’s skin, with a sud-
 den, contemptuous gesture,
 Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with
 powder and bullets
 Full to the very jaws,¹ and handed it back to
 the savage,
 Saying, in thundering tones : “ Here, take it !
 this is your answer ! ”
 Silently out of the room then glided the glis-
 tening savage,

¹ This act is usually attributed to Governor Bradford.

Bearing the serpent's skin, and seeming him-
self like a serpent,
Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the
depths of the forest.

V.

THE SAILING OF THE MAY FLOWER.

Just in the gray of the dawn, as the mists up-
rose from the meadows,
There was a stir and a sound in the slumber-
ing village of Plymouth ;
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order
imperative, " Forward !"
Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet, and
then silence.
Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out
of the village.
Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of his
valorous army,
Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok, friend
of the white men,
Northward marching to quell the sudden re-
volt of the savage.

Giants they seemed in the mist, or the mighty
men of King David ;¹

Giants in heart they were, who believed in God
and the Bible,—

Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midianites
and Philistines.

Over them gleamed far off the crimson banners
of morning ;

Under them loud on the sands, the serried bil-
lows, advancing,

Fired along the line, and in regular order re-
treated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at
length the village of Plymouth

Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on its
manifold labors.

Sweet was the air and soft ; and slowly the
smoke from the chimneys

Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed steadily
eastward ;

Men came forth from the doors, and paused
and talked of the weather,

¹ See 2 Samuel xxiii. 8 ff.

Said that the wind had changed, and was blowing fair for the May Flower ;

Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the dangers that menaced,

He being gone, the town, and what should be done in his absence.

Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices of women

Consecrated with hymns the common cares of the household.

Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows rejoiced at his coming ;

Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the mountains ;

Beautiful on the sails of the May Flower riding at anchor,

Battered and blackened and worn by all the storms of the winter.

Loosely against her masts was hanging and flapping her canvas,

Rent by so many gales, and patched by the hands of the sailors.

Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over the ocean,

Darted a puff of smoke, and floated seaward ;
anon rang

Loud over field and forest the cannon's roar,
and the echoes

Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-gun
of departure !

Ah ! but with louder echoes replied the hearts
of the people !

Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was
read from the Bible,

Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in
fervent entreaty !

Then from their houses in haste came forth
the Pilgrims of Plymouth,

Men and women and children, all hurrying
down to the sea-shore,

Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to the
May Flower,

Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving
them here in the desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All night
he had lain without slumber,

Turning and tossing about in the heat and
unrest of his fever.

He had beheld Miles Standish, who came back
late from the council,

Stalking into the room, and heard him mutter
and murmur,

Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and sometimes
it sounded like swearing.

Once he had come to the bed, and stood there
a moment in silence ;

Then he had turned away, and said : “ I will
not awake him ;

Let him sleep on, it is best ; for what is the
use of more talking ! ”

Then he extinguished the light, and threw
himself down on his pallet,

Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the
break of the morning,—

Covered himself with the cloak he had worn
in his campaigns in Flanders,—

Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac, ready
for action.

But with the dawn he arose ; in the twilight
Alden beheld him

Put on his corslet of steel, and all the rest of
his armor,

Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of
Damascus,

Take from the corner his musket, and so stride
out of the chamber.

Often the heart of the youth had burned and
yearned to embrace him,

Often his lips had essayed to speak, imploring
for pardon ;

All the old friendship came back, with its ten-
der and grateful emotions ;

But his pride overmastered the nobler nature
within him,—

Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the
burning fire of the insult.

So he beheld his friend departing in anger, but
spake not,

Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to death,
and he spake not !

Then he arose from his bed, and heard what
the people were saying,

Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen
and Richard and Gilbert,

Joined in the morning prayer, and in the reading of Scripture,
And, with the others, in haste went hurrying
down to the sea-shore,
Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been
to their feet as a door-step
Into a world unknown,—the corner-stone of
a nation!

There with his boat was the Master, already
a little impatient
Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind might
shift to the eastward,
Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an odor
of ocean about him,
Speaking with this one and that, and cram-
ming letters and parcels
Into his pockets capacious, and messages min-
gled together
Into his narrow brain, till at last he was
wholly bewildered.
Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot
placed on the gunwale,

One still firm on the rock, and talking at times
with the sailors,
Seated erect on the thwarts,¹ all ready and
eager for starting.
He too was eager to go, and thus put an end
to his anguish,
Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter than
keel is or canvas,
Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost that
would rise and pursue him.
But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld the
form of Priscilla
Standing dejected among them, unconscious
of all that was passing.
Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she divined
his intention,
Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, im-
ploring, and patient,
That with a sudden revulsion his heart recoiled
from its purpose,
As from the verge of a crag, where one step
more is destruction.

¹ Thwarts, seats for the oarsmen.

Strange is the heart of man, with its quick,
mysterious instincts !

Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated
are moments,

Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the
wall adamantine !

“Here I remain !” he exclaimed, as he looked
at the heavens above him,

Thanking the Lord whose breath had scattered
the mist and the madness,

Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was stag-
gering headlong.

“Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the
ether above me,

Seems like a hand that is pointing and beckon-
ing over the ocean.

There is another hand, that is not so spectral
and ghost-like,

Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping
mine for protection.

Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in
the ether !

Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and
daunt me ; I heed not

Either your warning or menace, or any omen
of evil!

There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and
so wholesome,

As is the air she breathes, and the soil that is
pressed by her footsteps.

Here for her sake will I stay, and like an invis-
ible presence

Hover around her for ever, protecting, support-
ing her weakness;

Yes! as my foot was the first that stepped on
this rock at the landing,

So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the
last at the leaving!"

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dig-
nified air and important,

Scanning with watchful eye the tide and the
wind and the weather,

Walked about on the sands; and the people
crowded around him

Saying a few last words, and enforcing his
careful remembrance.

Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were
grasping a tiller,

Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved
 off to his vessel,
 Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry
 and flurry,
 Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sick-
 ness and sorrow,
 Short allowance of victual, and plenty of noth-
 ing but Gospel!
 Lost in the sound of the oars was the last fare-
 well of the Pilgrims.
 O strong hearts and true! not one went back
 in the May Flower!
 No, not one looked back, who had set his hand
 to this ploughing!¹

Soon were heard on board the shouts and
 songs of the sailors
 Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting the
 ponderous anchor.
 Then the yards were braced, and all sails set
 to the west-wind,
 Blowing steady and strong; and the *May*
 Flower sailed from the harbor,

¹ See note, p. 34.

Rounded the point of the Gurnet,¹ and leaving
far to the southward
Island and cape of sand, and the Field of the
First Encounter,
Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for
the open Atlantic,
Borne on the send ² of the sea, and the swell-
ing hearts of the Pilgrims.

Long in silence they watched the receding
sail of the vessel,
Much endeared to them all, as something liv-
ing and human ;
Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapt in
a vision prophetic,
Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder
of Plymouth
Said, "Let us pray!" and they prayed, and
thanked the Lord and took courage.
Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of
the rock, and above them

¹ At the north side of the entrance to Plymouth Harbor. There are now two lighthouses there.

² The pushing motion of the wave.

Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill of
death, and their kindred

Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join
in the prayer that they uttered.

Sun-illumined and white, on the eastern verge
of the ocean

Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab
in a graveyard ;

Buried beneath it lay for ever all hope of
escaping.

Lo ! as they turned to depart, they saw the
form of an Indian,

Watching them from the hill ; but while they
spake with each other,

Pointing with outstretched hands, and saying,
“ Look ! ” he had vanished.

So they returned to their homes ; but Alden
lingered a little,

Musing alone on the shore, and watching the
wash of the billows

Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle
and flash of the sunshine,

Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over
the waters.

VI.

PRISCILLA.

THUS for a while he stood, and mused by the
shore of the ocean,
Thinking of many things, and most of all of
Priscilla ;
And as if thought had the power¹ to draw to
itself, like the loadstone,
Whatsoever it touches, by subtile laws of its
nature,
Lo! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was
standing beside him.

“ Are you so much offended, you will not
speak to me ? ” said she.

“ Am I so much to blame, that yesterday, when
you were pleading

¹ This phenomenon is to-day recognized under the
name of telepathy.

Warmly the cause of another, my heart, impulsive and wayward,
Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful perhaps of decorum ?
Certainly you can forgive me for speaking so frankly, for saying
What I ought not to have said, yet now I can never unsay it ;
For there are moments in life, when the heart is so full of emotion,
That if by chance it be shaken, or into its depths like a pebble
Drops some careless word, it overflows, and its secret,
Spilt on the ground like water, can never be gathered together.
Yesterday I was shocked, when I heard you speak of Miles Standish,
Praising his virtues, transforming his very defects into virtues,
Praising his courage and strength, and even his fighting in Flanders,
As if by fighting alone you could win the heart of a woman,

Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in
exalting your hero.

Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible
impulse.

You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of
the friendship between us,
Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily
broken !”

Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar,
the friend of Miles Standish :

“ I was not angry with you, with myself alone
I was angry,
Seeing how badly I managed the matter I had
in my keeping.”

“ No !” interrupted the maiden, with answer
prompt and decisive ;

“ No ; you were angry with me, for speaking
so frankly and freely.

It was wrong, I acknowledge ; for it is the fate
of a woman

Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a
ghost that is speechless,

Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell
of its silence.

Hence is the inner life of so many suffering
women

Sunless and silent and deep, like subterranean
rivers

Running through caverns of darkness, unheard,
unseen, and unfruitful,

Chafing their channels of stone, with endless
and profitless murmurs."

Thereupon answered John Alden, the young
man, the lover of women :

"Heaven forbid it, Priscilla ; and truly they
seem to me always

More like the beautiful rivers that watered the
garden of Eden,

More like the river Euphrates, through deserts
of Havilah ¹ flowing,

Filling the land with delight, and memories
sweet of the garden !"

"Ah, by these words, I can see," again inter-
rupted the maiden,

"How very little you prize me, or care for
what I am saying.

¹ See Gen ii. 11, 12. "The land of Havilah where there is gold ; and the gold of that land is good : there is bdellium and the onyx-stone."

When from the depths of my heart, in pain
and with secret misgiving,

Frankly I speak to you, asking for sympathy
only and kindness,

Straightway you take up my words, that are
plain and direct and in earnest,

Turn them away from their meaning, and an-
swer with flattering phrases.

This is not right, is not just, is not true to the
best that is in you ;

For I know and esteem you, and feel that your
nature is noble,

Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal
level.

Therefore I value your friendship, and feel it
perhaps the more keenly

If you say aught that implies I am only as
one among many,

If you make use of those common and compli-
mentary phrases

Most men think so fine, in dealing and speak-
ing with women,

But which women reject as insipid, if not as
insulting."

Mute and amazed was Alden; and listened
and looked at Priscilla,
Thinking he never had seen her more fair,
more divine in her beauty.
He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the
cause of another,
Stood there embarrassed and silent, and seek-
ing in vain for an answer.
So the maiden went on, and little divined or
imagined
What was at work in his heart, that made him
so awkward and speechless.
“Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what
we think, and in all things
Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred
professions of friendship.
It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed to
declare it :
I have liked to be with you, to see you, to
speak with you always.
So I was hurt at your words, and a little af-
fronted to hear you
Urge me to marry your friend, though he
were the Captain Miles Standish.

For I must tell you she truth: much more to
me is your friendship

Than all the love he could give, were he twice
the hero you think him."

Then she extended her hand, and Alden, who
eagerly grasped it,

Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were ach-
ing and bleeding so sorely,

Healed by the touch of that hand, and he said,
with a voice full of feeling:

"Yes, we must ever be friends; and of all who
offer your friendship

Let me be ever the first, the truest, the nearest
and dearest!"

Casting a farewell look at the glimmering
sail of the May Flower,

Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below
the horizon,

Homeward together they walked, with a
strange, indefinite feeling,

That all the rest had departed and left them
alone in the desert.

But, as they went through the fields in the
blessing and smile of the sunshine,
Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla said
very archly :

“Now that our terrible Captain has gone in
pursuit of the Indians,
Where he is happier far than he would be com-
manding a household,
You may speak boldly, and tell me of all that
happened between you,
When you returned last night, and said how
ungrateful you found me.”

Thereupon answered John Alden, and told her
the whole of the story,—
Told her his own despair, and the direful wrath
of Miles Standish.

Whereat the maiden smiled, and said between
laughing and earnest,
“He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a
moment !”

But as he gently rebuked her, and told her how
much he had suffered,—
How he had even determined to sail that day
in the May Flower,

And had remained for her sake, on hearing the
dangers that threatened,—

All her manner was changed, and she said with
a faltering accent,

“ Truly I thank you for this : how good you
have been to me always ! ”

Thus, as a pilgrim devout, who toward Jeru-
salem journeys,
Taking three steps in advance, and one reluc-
tantly backward,
Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by
pangs of contrition ;
Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet ever
advancing,
Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy
Land of his longings,
Urged by the fervor of love, and withheld by
remorseful misgivings.

VII.

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH.

MEANWHILE the stalwart Miles Standish was
marching steadily northward,
Winding through forest and swamp, and along
the trend of the seashore,
All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of
his anger
Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous odor of powder
Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all
the scents of the forest.
Silent and moody he went, and much he revolved his discomfort ;
He who was used to success, and to easy victories always,
Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed to scorn by a maiden,

Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the friend
whom most he had trusted!

Ah! 'twas too much to be borne, and he fret-
ted and chafed in his armor!

“I alone am to blame,” he muttered, “for
mine was the folly.

What has a rough old soldier, grown grim and
gray in the harness,

Used to the camp and its ways, to do with the
wooing of maidens?

'Twas but a dream,—let it pass,—let it vanish
like so many others!

What I thought was a flower, is only a weed,
and is worthless;

Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it
away, and henceforward

Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer
of dangers!”

Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat
and discomfort,

While he was marching by day or lying at
night in the forest,

Looking up at the trees, and the constellations
beyond them.

After a three days' march he came to an In-
dian encampment
Pitched on the edge of a meadow, between the
sea and the forest ;
Women at work by the tents, and the warriors,
horrid with war-paint,
Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking
together ;
Who, when they saw from afar the sudden ap-
proach of the white men,
Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate and
sabre and musket,
Straightway leaped to their feet, and two, from
among them advancing,
Came to parley with Standish, and offer him
furs as a present ;
Friendship was in their looks, but in their
hearts there was hatred.
Braves of the tribe were these, and brothers
gigantic in stature,

Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible Og,
king of Bashan ;

One was Pecksuot named and the other was
called Wattawamat.

Round their necks were suspended their knives
in scabbards of wampum,

Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as
sharp as a needle.

Other arms had they none, for they were cun-
ning and crafty.

“Welcome, English!” they said,—these words
they had learned from the traders

Touching at times on the coast, to barter and
chaffer for peltries.

Then in their native tongue they began to par-
ley with Standish,

Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok,
friend of the white man,

Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly
for muskets and powder,

Kept by the white man, they said, concealed,
with the plague, in his cellars,

Ready to be let loose, and destroy his brother
the red man !

But when Standish refused, and said he would
give them the Bible,
Suddenly changing their tone, they began to
boast and to bluster.

Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride in
front of the other,
And, with a lofty demeanor, thus vauntingly
spake to the Captain :

“ Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery eyes
of the Captain,
Angry is he in his heart ; but the heart of
the brave Wattawamat
Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born
of a woman,

But on a mountain, at night, from an oak-tree
riven by lightning,
Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his weap-
ons about him,
Shouting, ‘ Who is there here to fight with the
brave Wattawamat ? ’ ”

Then he unsheathed his knife, and, whetting
the blade on his left hand,
Held it aloft and displayed a woman’s face on
the handle,

Saying, with bitter expression and look of sinister meaning :

“ I have another at home, with the face of a man on the handle ;
By and by they shall marry ; and there will be plenty of children ! ”

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting, insulting Miles Standish :

While with his fingers he patted the knife that hung at his bosom,

Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it back, as he muttered,

“ By and by it shall see ; it shall eat ; ah, ha !
but shall speak not !

This is the mighty Captain the white men have sent to destroy us !

He is a little man ; let him go and work with the women ! ”

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces and figures of Indians

Peeping and creeping about from bush to tree in the forest,

Feigning to look for game, with arrows set on
their bow-strings,

Drawing about him still closer and closer the
net of their ambush.

But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and
treated them smoothly ;

So the old chronicles say, that were writ in the
days of the fathers.

But when he heard their defiance, the boast,
the taunt, and the insult,

All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and
of Thurston de Standish,

Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in
the veins of his temples.

Headlong he leaped on the boaster, and,
snatching his knife from its scabbard,

Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling back-
ward, the savage

Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike
fierceness upon it.

Straight there arose from the forest the awful
sound of the war-whoop,

And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling
wind of December,

Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of
feathery arrows.

Then came a cloud of smoke, and out of the
cloud came the lightning,

Out of the lightning thunder ; and death un-
seen ran before it.

Frightened, the savages fled for shelter in
swamp and in thicket,

Hotly pursued and beset ; but their sachem,
the brave Wattawamat,

Fled not ; he was dead. Unswerving and swift
had a bullet

Passed through his brain, and he fell with both
hands clutching the greensward,

Seeming in death to hold back from his foe the
land of his fathers.

There on the flowers of the meadow the war-
riors lay, and above them,

Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok,
friend of the white man.

Smiling at length he exclaimed to the stalwart
Captain of Plymouth ;

“Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage,
his strength, and his stature,—
Mocked the great Captain, and called him a
little man ; but I see now
Big enough have you been to lay him speech-
less before you !”

Thus the first battle was fought and won by
the stalwart Miles Standish.
When the tidings thereof were brought to the
village of Plymouth,
And as a trophy of war the head of the brave
Wattawamat
Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at once
was a church and a fortress,¹
All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the Lord
and took courage.
Only Priscilla averted her face from this spectre
of terror,
Thanking God in her heart that she had not
married Miles Standish ;

¹ In Plymouth colony the house of worship was fortified and men habitually carried their muskets as they attended church on Lord's Day.

Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home
from his battles,
He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize
and reward of his valor.

VIII.

THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

MONTH after month passed away, and in Autumn the ships of the merchants
Came with kindred and friends, with cattle and
corn for the Pilgrims.

All in the village was peace ; the men were
intent on their labors,

Busy with hewing and building, with garden-
plot and with merestead,¹

Busy with breaking the glebe,² and mowing the
grass in the meadows,

Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting the
deer in the forest.

All in the village was peace ; but at times the
rumor of warfare

¹ Farmstead.

² The word here means simply the turf.

Filled the air with alarm, and the apprehension
of danger.

Bravely the stalwart Miles Standish was scour-
ing the land with his forces,

Waxing valiant in fight and defeating the alien
armies,

Till his name had become a sound of fear to
the nations.

Anger was still in his heart, but at times the
remorse and contrition

Which in all noble natures succeed the pas-
sionate outbreak,

Came like a rising tide, that encounters the rush
of a river,

Staying its current awhile, but making it bitter
and brackish.

Meanwhile Alden at home had built him a
new habitation,

Solid, substantial, of timber rough-hewn from
the firs of the forest.

Wooden-barred was the door, and the roof was
covered with rushes ;

Latticed the windows were, and the window-
panes were of paper,
Oiled to admit the light, while wind and rain
were excluded.

There too he dug a well, and around it planted
an orchard :

Still may be seen to this day some trace of the
well and the orchard.

Close to the house was the stall, where, safe
and secure from annoyance,

Raghorn, the snow-white steer, that had fallen
to Alden's allotment

In the division of cattle, might ruminant in the
night-time

Over the pastures he cropped, made fragrant
by sweet pennyroyal.

Oft when his labor was finished, with eager
feet would the dreamer

Follow the pathway that ran through the woods
to the house of Priscilla,

Led by illusions romantic and subtle decep-
tions of fancy,

Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the
semblance of friendship.

Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned
the walls of his dwelling ;

Ever of her he thought, when he delved in
the soil of his garden ;

Ever of her he thought, when he read in his
Bible on Sunday

Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is de-
scribed in the Proverbs,¹—

How the heart of her husband doth safely trust
in her always,

How all the days of her life she will do him
good, and not evil,

How she seeketh the wool and the flax and
worketh with gladness,

How she layeth her hand to the spindle and
holdeth the distaff,

How she is not afraid of the snow for herself
or her household,

Knowing her household are clothed with the
scarlet cloth of her weaving !

¹ Prov. xxxi. 10-31.

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon in
the Autumn,
Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching her
dexterous fingers,
As if the thread she was spinning were that
of his life and his fortune,
After a pause in their talk, thus spake to the
sound of the spindle.
“Truly, Priscilla,” he said, “when I see you
spinning and spinning,
Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thought-
ful of others,
Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly
changed in a moment ;
You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha¹ the
Beautiful Spinner.”
Here the light foot on the treadle grew swifter
and swifter ; the spindle
Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread snapped
short in her fingers ;

¹ Bertha, mother of Charlemagne, and known as Bertha of the Great Feet. She died in 783, and during the middle Ages many poems and legends were written of her. Longfellow refers to her in his volume entitled *Driftwood*.

While the impetuous speaker, not heeding the
mischief, continued :

“ You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner,
the queen of Helvetia ;

She whose story I read at a stall in the streets
of Southampton,

Who, as she rode on her palfrey, o'er valley
and meadow and mountain,

Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff
fixed to her saddle.

She was so thrifty and good, that her name
passed into a proverb.

So shall it be with your own, when the spin-
ning-wheel shall no longer

Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill its
chambers with music.

Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate how
it was in their childhood,

Praising the good old times, and the days of
Priscilla the spinner ! ”

Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful
Puritan maiden,

Pleased with the praise of her thrift from him
whose praise was the sweetest,

Drew from the reel on the table a snowy skein
of her spinning,

Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the flattering
phrases of Alden :

“Come, you must not be idle ; if I am a pattern
for housewives,

Show yourself equally worthy of being the
model of husbands.

Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind
it, ready for knitting ;

Then who knows but hereafter, when fashions
have changed and the manners,

Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old
times of John Alden !”

Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on his
hands she adjusted,

He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms extended
before him,

She standing graceful, erect, and winding the
thread from his fingers,

Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner
of holding,

Sometimes touching his hands, as she disentangled
expertly

Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares—for how
could she help it?—

Sending electrical thrills through every nerve
in his body.

Lo! in the midst of this scene, a breathless
messenger entered,
Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news
from the village.

Yes; Miles Standish was dead!—an Indian
had brought them the tidings,—

Slain by a poisoned arrow, shot down in the
front of the battle,

Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the
whole of his forces;

All the town would be burned, and all the peo-
ple be murdered!

Such were the tidings of evil that burst on the
hearts of the hearers.

Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her face
looking backward

Still at the face of the speaker, her arms up-
lifted in horror;

But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb of
the arrow

Piercing the heart of his friend had struck his
own, and had sundered

Once and for ever the bonds that held him
bound as a captive,

Wild with excess of sensation, the awful delight
of his freedom,

Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious of
what he was doing,

Clasped, almost with a groan, the motionless
form of Priscilla,

Pressing her close to his heart, as for ever his
own, and exclaiming :

“Those whom the Lord hath united, let no
man put them asunder !”

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and
separate sources,

Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the
rocks, and pursuing

Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer
and nearer,

Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in
the forest;

So these lives that had run thus far in separate
channels,

Coming in sight of each other, then swerving
and flowing asunder,

Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer
and nearer,

Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the
other.

L. of C.

IX.

THE WEDDING-DAY.

FORTH from the curtain of clouds, from the
tent of purple and scarlet,
Issued the sun, the great High-Priest¹ in his
garments resplendent,
Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light, on
his forehead,
Round the hem of his robe the golden bells and
pomegranates.
Blessing the world he came, and the bars of
vapor beneath him
Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea at
his feet was a laver!

This was the wedding morn of Priscilla the
Puritan maiden.

¹ The dress of the High-Priest is fully described in Exodus xxxix. 1-31.

Friends were assembled together ; the Elder
and Magistrate also
Graced the scene with their presence, and stood
like the Law and the Gospel,
One with the sanction of earth and one with
the blessing of heaven.
Simple and brief was the wedding, as that of
Ruth and of Boaz.
Softly the youth and the maiden repeated the
words of betrothal,
Taking each other for husband and wife in the
Magistrate's presence,
After the Puritan way, and the laudable cus-
tom of Holland.
Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent El-
der of Plymouth
Prayed for the hearth and the home, that were
founded that day in affection,
Speaking of life and of death, and imploring
divine benedictions.

Lo ! when the service was ended, a form ap-
peared on the threshold,

Clad in armor of steel, a sombre and sorrowful
figure!

Why does the bridegroom start and stare at
the strange apparition?

Why does the bride turn pale, and hide her
face on his shoulder?

Is it a phantom of air,—a bodiless, spectral
illusion?

Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come to
forbid the betrothal?

Long had it stood there unseen, a guest unin-
vited, unwelcomed;

Over its clouded eyes there had passed at times
an expression

Softening the gloom and revealing the warm
heart hidden beneath them,

As when across the sky the driving rack of the
rain-cloud

Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the sun
by its brightness.

Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its lips,
but was silent,

As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting
intention

But when were ended the troth and the prayer
and the last benediction,

Into the room it strode, and the people beheld
with amazement

Bodily there in his armor Miles Standish, the
Captain of Plymouth!

Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with
emotion, "Forgive me!

I have been angry and hurt,—too long have I
cherished the feeling;

I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank
God! it is ended.

Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in the
veins of Hugh Standish,

Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in aton-
ing for error.

Never so much as now was Miles Standish the
friend of John Alden."

Thereupon answered the bridegroom: "Let
all be forgotten between us,—

All save the dear, old friendship, and that shall
grow older and dearer!"

Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing, sa-
luted Priscilla,

Gravely, and after the manner of old-fashioned
gentry in England,
Something of camp and of court, of town and
of country, commingled,
Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly
lauding her husband.
Then he said with a smile: "I should have
remembered the adage,—
If you would be well served, you must serve
yourself; and moreover,
No man can gather cherries in Kent at the sea-
son of Christmas!"

Great was the people's amazement, and
greater yet their rejoicing,
Thus to behold once more the sunburnt face
of their Captain,
Whom they had mourned as dead; and they
gathered and crowded about him,
Eager to see him and hear him, forgetful of
bride and of bridegroom,
Questioning, answering, laughing, and each
interrupting the other,

Till the good Captain declared, being quite
overpowered and bewildered,
He had rather by far break into an Indian en-
campment,
Than come again to a wedding to which he
had not been invited.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth and
stood with the bride at the doorway,
Breathing the perfumed air of that warm and
beautiful morning.

Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely and
sad in the sunshine,

Lay extended before them the land of toil and
privation ;

There were the graves of the dead, and the
barren waste of the sea-shore,

There the familiar fields, the groves of pine,
and the meadows ;

But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as the
Garden of Eden,

Filled with the presence of God, whose voice
was the sound of the ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the noise
and stir of departure,
Friends coming forth from the house, and im-
patient of longer delaying,
Each with his plan for the day, and the work
that was left uncompleted.
Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclama-
tions of wonder,
Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy,
so proud of Priscilla,
Brought out his snow-white steer, obeying the
hand of its master,
Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring
in its nostrils,
Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion
placed for a saddle.
She should not walk, he said, through the dust
and heat of the noonday ;
Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod
along like a peasant.
Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured by
the others,
Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot in
the hand of her husband,

Gayly, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted
her palfrey.

“Nothing is wanting now,” he said with a
smile, “but the distaff ;

Then you would be in truth my queen, my
beautiful Bertha !”

Onward the bridal procession now moved to
their new habitation,

Happy husband and wife, and friends convers-
ing together.

Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they crossed
the ford in the forest,

Pleased with the image that passed, like a
dream of love through its bosom,

Tremulous, floating in air, o'er the depths of
the azure abysses.

Down through the golden leaves the sun was
pouring his splendors,

Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from branches
above them suspended,

Mingled their odorous breath with the balm
of the pine and the fir-tree,

Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in
the valley of Eshcol.¹

Like a picture it seemed of the primitive, pas-
toral ages,

Fresh with the youth of the world, and recall-
ing Rebecca and Isaac,

Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful
always,

Love immortal and young in the endless suc-
cession of lovers.

So through the Plymouth woods passed onward
the bridal procession.

¹ See Num. xiii. 23. "And they came unto the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it upon a staff between two."

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

. . come i gru van cantando lor lai,
Facendo in aer di sè lunga riga.

DANTE.



PROMETHEUS,

OR THE POET'S FORETHOUGHT.

OF Prometheus, how undaunted
On Olympus' shining bastions
His audacious foot he planted,
Myths are told and songs are chaunted,
Full of promptings and suggestions.

Beautiful is the tradition
Of that flight through heavenly portals,
The old classic superstition
Of the theft and the transmission
Of the fire of the Immortals!

First the deed of noble daring,
Born of heavenward aspiration,
Then the fire with mortals sharing,
Then the vulture,—the despairing
Cry of pain on crags Caucasian.

All is but a symbol painted
Of the Poet, Prophet, Seer ;
Only those are crowned and sainted
Who with grief have been acquainted,
Making nations nobler, freer.

In their feverish exultations,
In their triumph and their yearning,
In their passionate pulsations,
In their words among the nations,
The Promethean fire is burning.

Shall it, then, be unavailing,
All this toil for human culture ?
Through the cloud-rack, dark and trailing,
Must they see above them sailing
O'er life's barren crags the vulture ?

Such a fate as this was Dante's,
By defeat and exile maddened ;
Thus were Milton and Cervantes,
Nature's priests and Corybantes,
By affliction touched and saddened.

But the glories so transcendent
That around their memories cluster,
And, on all their steps attendant,
Make their darkened lives resplendent
With such gleams of inward lustre !

All the melodies mysterious,
Through the dreary darkness chaunted ;
Thoughts in attitudes imperious,
Voices soft, and deep, and serious,
Words that whispered, songs that haunted !

All the soul in rapt suspension,
All the quivering, palpitating
Chords of life in utmost tension,
With the fervor of invention,
With the rapture of creating !

Ah, Prometheus ! heaven-scaling !
In such hours of exultation
Even the faintest heart, unquailing,
Might behold the vulture sailing
Round the cloudy crags Caucasian !

Though to all there is not given
 Strength for such sublime endeavor,
 Thus to scale the walls of heaven,
 And to leaven with fiery leaven
 All the hearts of men for ever ;

Yet all bards, whose hearts unblighted
 Honor and believe 'the presage,
 Hold aloft their torches lighted,
 Gleaming through the realms benighted,
 As they onward bear the message!

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

SAINT AUGUSTINE! well hast thou said,
 That of our vices we can frame
 A ladder,¹ if we will but tread
 Beneath our feet each deed of shame !

All common things, each day's events,
 That with the hour begin and end,
 Our pleasures and our discontents,
 Are rounds by which we may ascend.

¹ The words of St. Augustine are, "De vitiis nostris scalam nobis facimus, si vitia ipsa calcamus."

The low desire, the base design,
That makes another's virtues less ;
The revel of the ruddy wine,
And all occasions of excess ;

The longing for ignoble things ;
The strife for triumph more than truth ;
The hardening of the heart, that brings
Irreverence for the dreams of youth ;

All thoughts of ill ; all evil deeds,
That have their root in thoughts of ill ;
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will ;—

All these must first be trampled down
Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we cannot soar ;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
 That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
 Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear
 Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
 As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept
 Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
 Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
 With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
 A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past,
 As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
 To something nobler we attain.

THE PHANTOM SHIP.¹

IN Mather's Magnalia Christi,
Of the old colonial time,
May be found in prose the legend
That is here set down in rhyme.

A ship sailed from New Haven,
And the keen and frosty airs,
That filled her sails at parting,
Were heavy with good men's prayers.

“O Lord! if it be thy pleasure”—
Thus prayed the old divine—
“To bury our friends in the ocean,
Take them, for they are thine!”

¹ A detailed account of this “apparition of a Ship in the Air” is given by Cotton Mather in his *Magnalia Christi*, Book I. Ch. VI. It is contained in a letter from the Rev. James Pierpont, Pastor of New Haven. To this account Mather adds these words:—

“Reader, there being yet living so many credible gentlemen, that were eyewitnesses of this wonderful thing, I venture to publish it for a thing as undoubted as 't is wonderful.”

But Master Lamberton muttered,
And under his breath said he,
“ This ship is so crank and walty
I fear our grave she will be ! ”

And the ships that came from England,
When the winter months were gone,
Brought no tidings of this vessel
Nor of Master Lamberton.

This put the people to praying
That the Lord would let them hear
What in his greater wisdom
He had done with friends so dear.

And at last their prayers were answered :—
It was in the month of June,
An hour before the sunset
Of a windy afternoon,

When, steadily steering landward,
A ship was seen below,
And they knew it was Lamberton, Master,
Who sailed so long ago.

On she came, with a cloud of canvas,
Right against the wind that blew,
Until the eye could distinguish
The faces of the crew.

Then fell her straining topmasts,
Hanging tangled in the shrouds,
And her sails were loosened and lifted,
And blown away like clouds.

And the masts, with all their rigging,
Fell slowly, one by one,
And the hulk dilated and vanished,
As a sea-mist in the sun!

And the people who saw this marvel
Each said unto his friend,
That this was the mould of their vessel,
And thus her tragic end.

And the pastor of the village
Gave thanks to God in prayer,
That, to quiet their troubled spirits,
He had sent this Ship of Air.

THE WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS.

A MIST was driving down the British Channel,
The day was just begun,
And through the window-panes, on floor and
panel,
Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling pennon.
And the white sails of ships ;
And, from the frowning rampart, the black
cannon
Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hithe, and
Dover
Were all alert that day,
To see the French war-steamers speeding over,
When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,
Their cannon, through the night,

Holding their breath, had watched, in grim
defiance,
The sea-coast opposite.

And now they roared at drum-beat from their
stations
On every citadel ;
Each answering each, with morning saluta-
tions,
That all was well.

And down the coast, all taking up the burden,
Replied the distant forts,
As if to summon from his sleep the Warden
And Lord of the Cinque Ports.

Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,
No drum-beat from the wall,
No morning gun from the black fort's embra-
sure,
Awaken with its call !

No more, surveying with an eye impartial
The long line of the coast,

Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field Marshal
Be seen upon his post !

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,
In sombre harness mailed,
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,
The rampart wall has scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,
The dark and silent room,
And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,
The silence and the gloom.

He did not pause to parley or dissemble,
But smote the Warden hoar ;
Ah ! what a blow ! that made all England
tremble
And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,
The sun rose bright o'erhead ;
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated
That a great man was dead.

HAUNTED HOUSES.

ALL houses wherein men have lived and died
Are haunted houses. Through the open
doors

The harmless phantoms on their errands glide,
With feet that make no sound upon the
floors.

We meet them at the doorway, on the stair,
Along the passages they come and go,
Impalpable impressions on the air,
A sense of something moving to and fro.

There are more guests at table, than the hosts
Invited ; the illuminated hall
Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,
As silent as the pictures on the wall.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear ;

He but perceives what is ; while unto me
All that has been is visible and clear.

We have no title-deeds to house or lands ;
Owners and occupants of earlier dates
From graves forgotten stretch their dusty
hands,
And hold in mortmain still their old es-
tates.

The spirit-world around this world of sense
Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere
Wafts through these earthly mists and vapors
dense.

A vital breath of more ethereal air.

Our little lives are kept in equipoise
By opposite attractions and desires ;
The struggle of the instinct that enjoys,
And the more noble instinct that aspires.

These perturbations, this perpetual jar
Of earthly wants and aspirations high,
Come from the influence of an unseen star,
An undiscovered planet in our sky.

And as the moon from some dark gate of cloud
Throws o'er the sea a floating bridge of light,
Across whose trembling planks our fancies
crowd

Into the realm of mystery and night,—

So from the world of spirits there descends
A bridge of light, connecting it with this,
O'er whose unsteady floor, that sways and
bends,
Wander our thoughts above the dark abyss.

IN THE CHURCHYARD AT
CAMBRIDGE.

IN the village churchyard she lies,
Dust is in her beautiful eyes,
No more she breathes, nor feels, nor stirs ;
At her feet and at her head
Lies a slave to attend the dead,
But their dust is white as hers.

Was she a lady of high degree,
So much in love with the vanity
And foolish pomp of this world of ours ?

Or was it Christian charity,
And lowliness and humility,
The richest and rarest of all dowers?

Who shall tell us? No one speaks;
No color shoots into those cheeks,
Either of anger or of pride,
At the rude question we have asked;
Nor will the mystery be unmasked
By those who are sleeping at her side.

Hereafter?—And do you think to look
On the terrible pages of that Book
To find her failings, faults, and errors?
Ah, you will then have other cares,
In your own short-comings and despairs,
In your own secret sins and terrors!

THE EMPEROR'S BIRD'S-NEST.

ONCE the Emperor Charles of Spain,
With his swarthy, grave commanders,
I forget in what campaign,
Long besieged, in mud and rain,
Some old frontier town of Flanders.

Up and down the dreary camp,
In great boots of Spanish leather,
Striding with a measured tramp,
These Hidalgos, dull and damp,
Cursed the Frenchmen, cursed the weather.

Thus as to and fro they went,
Over upland and through hollow,
Giving their impatience vent,
Perched upon the Emperor's tent,
In her nest, they spied a swallow.

Yes, it was a swallow's nest,
Built of clay and hair of horses,
Mane, or tail, or dragoon's crest,
Found on hedge-rows east and west,
After skirmish of the forces.

Then an old Hidalgo said,
As he twirled his gray mustachio,
"Sure this swallow overhead
Thinks the Emperor's tent a shed,
And the Emperor but a Macho!"¹

¹ *Macho*, in Spanish, signifies a mule. *Golondrina* is the feminine form of *Golondrino*, a swallow, and also a cant name for a deserter.

Hearing his imperial name
Coupled with those words of malice,
Half in anger, half in shame,
Forth the great campaigner came
Slowly from his canvas palace.

“ Let no hand the bird molest,”
Said he solemnly, “ nor hurt her ! ”
Adding then, by way of jest,
“ Golondrina is my guest,
'T is the wife of some deserter ! ”

Swift as bowstring speeds a shaft,
Through the camp was spread the rumor,
And the soldiers, as they quaffed
Flemish beer at dinner, laughed
At the Emperor's pleasant humor.

So unharmed and unafraid
Sat the swallow still and brooded,
Till the constant cannonade
Through the walls a breach had made,
And the siege was thus concluded.

Then the army, elsewhere bent,
Struck its tents as if disbanding,

Only not the Emperor's tent,
For he ordered, ere he went,
Very curtly, "Leave it standing!"

So it stood there all alone,
Loosely flapping, torn and tattered,
Till the brood was fledged and flown,
Singing o'er those walls of stone
Which the cannon-shot had shattered.

THE TWO ANGELS.

Two angels, one of Life and one of Death,
Passed o'er our village as the morning broke;
The dawn was on their faces, and beneath,
The sombre houses hearsed with plumes of
smoke.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,
Alike their features and their robes of white;
But one was crowned with amaranth, as with
flame,
And one with asphodels, like flakes of light.

I saw them pause on their celestial way ;
Then said I, with deep fear and doubt oppressed,
“ Beat not so loud, my heart, lest thou betray
The place where thy beloved are at rest !”

And he who wore the crown of asphodels,
Descending, at my door began to knock,
And my soul sank within me, as in wells
The waters sink before an earthquake's shock.

I recognized the nameless agony,
The terror and the tremor and the pain,
That oft before had filled or haunted me,
And now returned with threefold strength
again.

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,
And listened, for I thought I heard God's,
voice ;
And, knowing whatsoever he sent was best,
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.

Then with a smile, that filled the house with
light,

“My errand is not Death, but Life,” he said ;
And ere I answered, passing out of sight,
On his celestial embassy he sped.

'T was at thy door, O friend ! and not at mine
The angel with the amaranthine wreath,
Pausing, descended, and with voice divine,
Whispered a word that had a sound like
Death.

Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features fair and thin ;
And softly, from that hushed and darkened
room,
Two angels issued, where but one went in.

All is of God ! If he but wave his hand,
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and
loud,
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo ! he looks back from the departing cloud.

Angels of Life and Death alike are his ;

Without his leave they pass no threshold
o'er ;

Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,
Against his messengers to shut the door ?

DAYLIGHT AND MOONLIGHT.

IN broad daylight, and at noon,
Yesterday I saw the moon
Sailing high, but faint and white,
As a school-boy's paper kite.

In broad daylight, yesterday,
I read a poet's mystic lay ;
And it seemed to me at most
As a phantom, or a ghost.

But at length the feverish day
Like a passion died away,
And the night, serene and still,
Fell on village, vale, and hill.

Then the moon, in all her pride,
Like a spirit glorified,

Filled and overflowed the night
With revelations of her light.

And the Poet's song again
Passed like music through my brain ;
Night interpreted to me
All its grace and mystery.

THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT.

How strange it seems ! These Hebrews in
their graves,

Close by the street of this fair seaport town,
Silent beside the never-silent waves,
At rest in all this moving up and down !

The trees are white with dust, that o'er their
sleep

Wave their broad curtains in the south-
wind's breath,

While underneath such leafy tents they keep
The long, mysterious Exodus of Death.

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,
That pave with level flags their burial-place,

Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down
 And broken by Moses at the mountain's
 base.

The very names recorded here are strange,
 Of foreign accent, and of different climes ;
 Alvares and Rivera interchange
 With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

“Blessed be God ! for he created Death !”
 The mourners said, “and Death is rest and
 peace” ;
 Then added, in the certainty of faith,
 “And giveth Life that never more shall
 cease.”

Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,
 No Psalms of David now the silence break,
 No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
 In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

Gone are the living, but the dead remain,
 And not neglected ; for a hand unseen,
 Scattering its bounty, like a summer rain,
 Still keeps their graves and their remem-
 brance green.

How came they here ? What burst of Christian hate,
 titan hate,

 What persecution, merciless and blind,
Drove o'er the sea—that desert desolate—
 These Ishmaels and Hagers of mankind ?

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
 secre,

 Ghetto and Judenstrass, in mirk and mire ;
Taught in the school of patience to endure
 The life of anguish and the death of fire.

All their lives long, with the unleavened bread
 And bitter herbs of exile and its fears,
The wasting famine of the heart they fed,
 And slaked its thirst with marah of their tears.

Anathema maranatha ! was the cry
 That rang from town to town, from street to
 street ;

At every gate the accursed Mordecai
 Was mocked and jeered, and spurned by
 Christian feet.

Pride and humiliation hand in hand

Walked with them through the world wher-
e'er they went ;

Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,
And yet unshaken as the continent.

For in the background figures vague and vast
Of patriarchs and of prophets rose sublime,
And all the great traditions of the Past
They saw reflected in the coming time.

And thus for ever with reverted look

The mystic volume of the world they read,
Spelling it backward, like a Hebrew book,
Till life became a Legend of the Dead.

But ah ! what once has been shall be no more !

The groaning earth in travail and in pain
Brings forth its races, but does not restore,
And the dead nations never rise again.

OLIVER BASSELIN.¹

IN the Valley of the Vire
Still is seen an ancient mill,
With its gables quaint and queer,
And beneath the window-sill,
On the stone,
These words alone :
“ Oliver Basselin lived here.”

Far above it, on the steep,
Ruined stands the old Château ;
Nothing but the donjon-keep
Left for shelter or for show.
Its vacant eyes
Stare at the skies,
Stare at the valley green and deep.

¹ Oliver Basselin, the “ *Père joyeux du Vaudeville*,” flourished in the fifteenth century, and gave to his convivial songs the name of his native valleys, in which he sang them, Vaux-de-Vire. This name was afterwards corrupted into the modern *Vaudeville*.

Once a convent, old and brown,
Looked, but ah ! it looks no more,
From the neighboring hillside down
On the rushing and the roar
Of the stream
Whose sunny gleam
Cheers the little Norman town.

In that darksome mill of stone,
To the water's dash and din,
Careless, humble, and unknown,
Sang the poet Basselin
Songs that fill
That ancient mill
With a splendor of its own.

Never feeling of unrest
Broke the pleasant dream he dreamed ;
Only made to be his nest,
All the lovely valley seemed ;
No desire
Of soaring higher
Stirred or fluttered in his breast.

True, his songs were not divine ;
 Were not songs of that high art,
Which, as winds do in the pine,
 Find an answer in each heart ;
 But the mirth
 Of this green earth
Laughed and revelled in his line.

From the alehouse and the inn,
 Opening on the narrow street,
Came the loud, convivial din,
 Singing and applause of feet,
 The laughing lays
 That in those days
Sang the poet Basselin.

In the castle, cased in steel,
 Knights, who fought at Agincourt,
Watched and waited, spur on heel ;
 But the poet sang for sport
 Songs that rang
 Another clang,
Songs that lowlier hearts could feel.

In the convent, clad in gray,
Sat the monks in lonely cells,
Paced the cloisters, knelt to pray,
And the poet heard their bells ;
But his rhymes
Found other chimes,
Nearer to the earth than they.

Gone are all the barons bold,
Gone are all the knights and squires,
Gone the abbot stern and cold,
And the brotherhood of friars ;
Not a name
Remains to fame,
From those mouldering days of old !

But the poet's memory here
Of the landscape makes a part ;
Like the river, swift and clear,
Flows his song through many a heart ;
Haunting still
That ancient mill,
In the Valley of the Vire.

VICTOR GALBRAITH.¹

UNDER the walls of Monterey
At daybreak the bugles began to play,
Victor Galbraith !

In the mist of the morning damp and gray,
These were the words they seemed to say :
“ Come forth to thy death,
Victor Galbraith ! ”

Forth he came, with a martial tread ;
Firm was his step, erect his head ;
Victor Galbraith,
He who so well the bugle played,
Could not mistake the words it said :
“ Come forth to thy death,
Victor Galbraith ! ”

¹ This poem is founded on fact. Victor Galbraith was a bugler in a company of volunteer cavalry ; and was shot in Mexico for some breach of discipline. It is a common superstition among soldiers, that no balls will kill them unless their names are written on them. The old proverb says, “ Every bullet has its billet.”

He looked at the earth, he looked at the sky,
He looked at the files of musketry,

Victor Galbraith !

And he said, with a steady voice and eye,
“Take good aim ; I am ready to die !”

Thus challenges death

Victor Galbraith.

Twelve fiery tongues flashed straight and red,
Six leaden balls on their errand sped ;

Victor Galbraith

Falls to the ground, but he is not dead ;
His name was not stamped on those balls of
lead,

And they only scath

Victor Galbraith.

Three balls are in his breast and brain,
But he rises out of the dust again,

Victor Galbraith !

The water he drinks has a bloody stain ;
“ O kill me, and put me out of my pain !”

In his agony prayeth

Victor Galbraith.

Forth dart once more those tongues of flame,
And the bugler has died a death of shame,

Victor Galbraith !

His soul has gone back to whence it came,
And no one answers to the name,

When the Sergeant saith,

“ Victor Galbraith ! ”

Under the walls of Monterey

By night a bugle is heard to play,

Victor Galbraith !

Through the mist of the valley damp and gray

The sentinels hear the sound, and say,

“ That is the wraith

Of Victor Galbraith ” !

MY LOST YOUTH.

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town

That is seated by the sea ;

Often in thought go up and down

The pleasant streets of that dear old town,

And my youth comes back to me.

And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
“A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.

And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
“A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.

And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still :

“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill ;
The sun-rise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o’er and o’er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.

And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still :

“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

I remember the sea-fight far away,¹
How it thundered o’er the tide !
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o’erlooking the tranquil bay,
Where they in battle died.

¹ This was the engagement between the *Enterprise* and *Boxer*, off the harbor of Portland, in which both captains were slain. They were buried side by side, in the cemetery on Mountjoy.

And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill :
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering’s Woods ;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still :
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the schoolboy’s brain ;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.

And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still :

“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

There are things of which I may not speak ;
There are dreams that cannot die ;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart
weak,

And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.

And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill :

“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

Strange to me now are the forms I meet

When I visit the dear old town ;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o’ershadow each well
known street,
As they balance up and down,

Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still :

“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

And Deering’s Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.

And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still :
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.”

THE ROPEWALK.

IN that building, long and low,
With its windows all a-row,
Like the port-holes of a hulk,
Human spiders spin and spin,
Backward down their threads so thin
Dropping, each a hempen bulk.

At the end, an open door ;
Squares of sunshine on the floor
 Light the long and dusky lane ;
And the whirring of a wheel,
Dull and drowsy, makes me feel
 All its spokes are in my brain.

As the spinners to the end
Downward go and reascend,
 Gleam the long threads in the sun ;
While within this brain of mine
Cobwebs brighter and more fine
 By the busy wheel are spun.

Two fair maidens in a swing,
Like white doves upon the wing,
 First before my vision pass ;
Laughing, as their gentle hands
Closely clasp the twisted strands,
 At their shadow on the grass.

Then a booth of mountebanks,
With its smell of tan and planks,
 And a girl poised high in air

On a cord, in spangled dress,
With a faded loveliness,
And a weary look of care.

Then a homestead among farms,
And a woman with bare arms
Drawing water from a well ;
As the bucket mounts apace,
With it mounts her own fair face,
As at some magician's spell.

Then an old man in a tower,
Ringing loud the noontide hour,
While the rope coils round and round
Like a serpent at his feet,
And again, in swift retreat,
Nearly lifts him from the ground.

Then within a prison-yard,
Faces fixed, and stern, and hard,
Laughter and indecent mirth ;
Ah ! it is the gallows-tree !
Breath of Christian charity,
Blow, and sweep it from the earth !

Then a school-boy, with his kite
Gleaming in a sky of light,
 And an eager, upward look ;
Steeds pursued through lane and field ;
Fowlers with their snares concealed ;
 And an angler by a brook.

Ships rejoicing in the breeze,
Wrecks that float o'er unknown seas,
 Anchors dragged through faithless sand ;
Sea-fog drifting overhead,
And, with lessening line and lead,
 Sailors feeling for the land.

All these scenes do I behold,
These, and many left untold,
 In that building long and low ;
While the wheel goes round and round,
With a drowsy, dreamy sound,
 And the spinners backward go.

THE GOLDEN MILE-STONE.

LEAFLESS are the trees ; their purple branches
Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral,
Rising silent
In the Red Sea of the Winter sunset.

From the hundred chimneys of the village,
Like the Afreet in the Arabian story,
Smoky columns
Tower aloft into the air of amber.

At the window winks the flickering fire-light ;
Here and there the lamps of evening glimmer,
Social watch-fires
Answering one another through the darkness.

On the hearth the lighted logs are glowing,
And like Ariel in the cloven pine-tree
For its freedom
Groans and sighs the air imprisoned in them.

By the fireside there are old men seated,
Seeing ruined cities in the ashes,

Asking sadly

Of the Past what it can ne'er restore them.

By the fireside there are youthful dreamers,
Building castles fair, with stately stairways,

Asking blindly

Of the Future what it cannot give them.

By the fireside tragedies are acted

In whose scenes appear two actors only,

Wife and husband,

And above them God the sole spectator.

By the fireside there are peace and comfort,

Wives and children, with fair, thoughtful faces,

Waiting, watching

For a well-known footstep in the passage.

Each man's chimney is his Golden Mile-stone;

Is the central point, from which he measures

Every distance

Through the gateways of the world around

him.

In his farthest wanderings still he sees it ;
Hears the talking flame, the answering
night wind,

As he heard them

When he sat with those who were, but are not.

Happy he whom neither wealth nor fashion,
Nor the march of the encroaching city,

Drives an exile

From the hearth of his ancestral homestead.

We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculp-
tures,

But we cannot

Buy with gold the old associations!

CATAWBA WINE.

THIS song of mine
Is a Song of the Vine,
To be sung by the glowing embers
Of wayside inns,
When the rain begins
To darken the drear Novembers.

It is not a song
Of the Scuppernong,
From warm Carolinian valleys,
Nor the Isabel
And the Muscade
That bask in our garden alleys.

Nor the red Mustang,
Whose clusters hang
O'er the waves of the Colorado,
And the fiery flood
Of whose purple blood
Has a dash of Spanish bravado.

For richest and best
Is the wine of the West,
That grows by the Beautiful River ;
Whose sweet perfume
Fills all the room
With a benison on the giver.

And as hollow trees
Are the haunts of bees,

For ever going and coming ;
So this crystal hive
Is all alive
With a swarming and buzzing and humming.

Very good in its way
Is the Verzenay,
Or the Sillery soft and creamy ;
But Catawba wine
Has a taste more divine,
More dulcet, delicious, and dreamy.

There grows no vine.
By the haunted Rhine,
By Danube or Guadalquivir,
Nor on island or cape,
That bears such a grape
As grows by the Beautiful River.

Drugged is their juice
For foreign use,
When shipped o'er the reeling Atlantic,
To rack our brains
With the fever pains,
That have driven the Old World frantic.

To the sewers and sinks
With all such drinks,
And after them tumble the mixer ;
For a poison malign
Is such Borgia wine,
Or at best but a Devil's Elixir.

While pure as a spring
Is the wine I sing,
And to praise it, one needs but name it ;
For Catawba wine
Has need of no sign,
No tavern-bush to proclaim it.

And this Song of the Vine,
This greeting of mine,
The winds and the birds shall deliver
To the Queen of the West,
In her garlands dressed,
On the banks of the beautiful River.

SANTA FILOMENA.¹

WHENE'ER a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.

Honor to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs;
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low!

¹ At Pisa the church of San Francisco contains a chapel dedicated lately to Santa Filomena; over the altar is a picture, by Sabatelli, representing the Saint as a beautiful, nymph-like figure, floating down from heaven, attended by two angels bearing the lily, palm, and javelin, and beneath, in the foreground, the sick and maimed, who are healed by her intercession."—MRS. JAMESON, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, II. 298.

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
 The trenches cold and damp,
 The starved and frozen camp,—

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
 The cheerless corridors,
 The cold and stony floors.

Lo! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see
 Pass through the glimmering gloom,
 And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
 Her shadow, as it falls
 Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened and then closed suddenly,
 The vision came and went,
 The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
From portals of the past.

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here
The palm, the lily, and the spear,
The symbols that of yore
Saint Filomena bore.

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE.

A LEAF FROM KING ALFRED'S OROSIUS.

OTHER, the old sea-captain,
Who dwelt in Helgoland,
To King Alfred, the Lover of Truth,
Brought a snow-white walrus-tooth,
Which he held in his brown right hand.

His figure was tall and stately,
Like a boy's his eye appeared ;
His hair was yellow as hay,
But threads of a silvery gray
Gleamed in his tawny beard.

Hearty and hale was Othere,
His cheek had the color of oak ;
With a kind of laugh in his speech,
Like the sea-tide on a beach,
As unto the King he spoke.

And Alfred, King of the Saxons,
Had a book upon his knees,
And wrote down the wondrous tale
Of him who was first to sail
Into the Arctic seas.

“ So far I live to the northward,
No man lives north of me ;
To the east are wild mountain-chains,
And beyond them meres and plains ;
To the westward all is sea.

“ So far I live to the northward,
From the harbor of Skeringes-hale,

If you only sailed by day,
With a fair wind all the way,
More than a month would you sail.

“I own six hundred reindeer,
With sheep and swine beside;
I have tribute from the Finns,
Whalebone and reindeer-skins,
And ropes of walrus-hide.

“I ploughed the land with horses,
But my heart was ill at ease,
For the old seafaring men
Came to me now and then,
With their sagas of the seas ;—

“Of Iceland and of Greenland,
And the stormy Hebrides,
And the undiscovered deep ;—
I could not eat nor sleep
For thinking of those seas.

“To the northward stretched the desert,
How far I fain would know ;
So at last I sallied forth,
And three days sailed due north,
As far as the whale-ships go.

“To the west of me was the ocean,
To the right the desolate shore,
But I did not slacken sail
For the walrus or the whale,
Till after three days more.

“The days grew longer and longer,
Till they became as one,
And southward through the haze
I saw the sullen blaze
Of the red midnight sun.

“And then uprose before me,
Upon the water's edge,
The huge and haggard shape
Of that unknown North Cape,
Whose form is like a wedge.

“The sea was rough and stormy,
The tempest howled and wailed,
And the sea-fog, like a ghost,
Haunted that dreary coast,
But onward still I sailed.

“Four days I steered to eastward,
Four days without a night :

Round in a fiery ring
Went the great sun, O King,
With red and lurid light."

Here Alfred, King of the Saxons,
Ceased writing for a while ;
And raised his eyes from his book,
With a strange and puzzled look,
And an incredulous smile.

But Othere, the old sea-captain,
He neither paused nor stirred,
Till the King listened, and then
Once more took up his pen,
And wrote down every word.

"And now the land," said Othere,
"Bent southward suddenly,
And I followed the curving shore
And ever southward bore
Into a nameless sea.

"And there we hunted the walrus,
The narwhale, and the seal ;
Ha ! 't was a noble game !
And like the lightning's flame
Flew our harpoons of steel.

“ There were six of us all together,
Norsemen of Helgoland ;
In two days and no more
We killed of them threescore,
And dragged them to the strand ! ”

Here Alfred the Truth-Teller
Suddenly closed his book,
And lifted his blue eyes,
With doubt and strange surmise
Depicted in their look.

And Othere the old sea-captain
Stared at him wild and weird,
Then smiled, till his shining teeth
Gleamed white from underneath
His tawny, quivering beard.

And to the King of the Saxons,
In witness of the truth,
Raising his noble head,
He stretched his brown hand, and said,
“ Behold this walrus-tooth ! ”

DAYBREAK.

A WIND came up out of the sea,
And said, "O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, "Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, "Awake! it is the day."

It said unto the forest, "Shout!
Hang all your leafy banners out!"

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And said, "O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, "O chanticleer,
Your clarion blow; the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,
"Bow dawn, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry-tower,
"Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour."

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,
And said, "Not yet! in quiet lie."

THE FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY OF AGASSIZ.

MAY 28, 1857.

It was fifty years ago
In the pleasant month of May,
In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,
A child in its cradle lay.

And nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying : " Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee."

" Come, wander with me," she said,
" Into regions yet untrod ;
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him night and day
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvellous tale.

So she keeps him still a child,
And will not let him go,
Though at times his heart beats wild
For the beautiful Pays de Vaud ;
Though at times he hears in his dreams
The Ranz des Vaches of old,
And the rush of mountain streams
From glaciers clear and cold ;
And the mother at home says, " Hark
For his voice I listen and yearn ;
It is growing late and dark,
And my boy does not return ! "

CHILDREN.

COME to me, O ye children !
For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplexed me
Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,
That look towards the sun,
Where thoughts are singing swallows
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow,
But in mine is the wind of Autumn
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah ! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more ?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,—

That to the world are children ;
Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and sunnier climate
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

SANDALPHON.

HAVE you read in the Talmud of old,
In the Legends the Rabbins have told
Of the limitless realms of the air,—
Have you read it,—the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the City Celestial he waits,
 With his feet on the ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered,
 Alone in the desert at night?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire
Chaunt only one hymn, and expire
 With the song's irresistible stress;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harp-strings are broken asunder
 By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song,
 With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, the deathless
Sandalphon stands listening breathless
 To sounds that ascend from below;—

From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
 In the fervor and passion of prayer;

From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
Into garlands of purple and red ;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the City Immortal
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—
A fable, a phantom, a show,
Of the ancient Rabbinical lore ;
Yet the old mediæval tradition,
The beautiful, strange superstition,
But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above is all white,
All throbbing and panting with stars,
Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon the angel, expanding
His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,
The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
To quiet its fever and pain.

EPIMETHEUS,

OR THE POET'S AFTERTHOUGHT.

HAVE I dreamed ? or was it real,
What I saw as in a vision,
When to marches hymeneal
In the land of the Ideal
Moved my thought o'er Fields Elysian ?
What ! are these the guests whose glances
Seemed like sunshine gleaming round me ?
These the wild, bewildering fancies,
That with dithyrambic dances
As with magic circles bound me ?
Ah ! how cold are their caresses !
Pallid cheeks, and haggard bosoms !

Spectral gleam their snow-white dresses,
And from loose, dishevelled tresses

Fall the hyacinthine blossoms!

O my songs! whose winsome measures

Filled my heart with secret rapture!

Children of my golden leisures!

Must even your delights and pleasures

Fade and perish with the capture?

Fair they seemed, those songs sonorous,

When they came to me unbidden;

Voices single, and in chorus,

Like the wild birds singing o'er us

In the dark of branches hidden.

Disenchantment! Disillusion!

Must each noble aspiration

Come at last to this conclusion,

Jarring discord, wild confusion,

Lassitude, renunciation?

Not with steeper fall nor faster,

From the sun's serene dominions,

Not through brighter realms nor vaster,

In swift ruin and disaster,

Icarus fell with shattered pinions!

Sweet Pandora! dear Pandora!

Why did mighty Jove create thee
Coy as Thetis, fair as Flora,
Beautiful as young Aurora,
If to win thee is to hate thee?

No, not hate thee! for this feeling
Of unrest and long resistance
Is but passionate appealing,
A prophetic whisper stealing
O'er the chords of our existence.

Him whom thou dost once enamor,
Thou, beloved, never leavest;
In life's discord, strife, and clamor,
Still he feels thy spell of glamour;
Him of Hope thou ne'er bereavest.

Weary hearts by thee are lifted,
Struggling souls by thee are strengthened,
Clouds of fear asunder rifted,
Truth from falsehood cleansed and sifted,
Lives, like days in summer, lengthened!

Therefore art thou ever dearer,
O my Sibyl, my deceiver!

For thou makest each mystery clearer,
And the unattained seems nearer,
When thou fillest my heart with fever!

Muse of all the Gifts and Graces!

Though the fields around us wither,
There are ampler realms and spaces,
Where no foot has left its traces :
Let us turn and wander thither!

VOICES OF THE NIGHT.

1839.

PRELUDE.

PLEASANT it was, when woods were green,
And winds were soft and low,
To lie amid some sylvan scene,
Where, the long drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternate come and go;

Or where the denser grove receives
No sunlight from above,
But the dark foliage interweaves
In one unbroken roof of leaves,
Underneath whose sloping eaves
The shadows hardly move.

Beneath some patriarchal tree
I lay upon the ground;
His hoary arms uplifted he,
And all the broad leaves over me
Clapped their little hands in glee,
With one continuous sound;—

A slumberous sound,—a sound that brings
The feelings of a dream,—
As of innumerable wings,
As, when a bell no longer swings,
Faint the hollow murmur rings
O'er meadow, lake, and stream.

And dreams of that which cannot die,
Bright visions, came to me,
As lapped in thought I used to lie,
And gaze into the summer sky,
Where the sailing clouds went by,
Like ships upon the sea;

Dreams that the soul of youth engage
Ere Fancy has been quelled;
Old legends of the monkish page,
Traditions of the saint and sage,
Tales that have the rime of age,
And chronicles of Eld.

And, loving still these quaint old themes,
Even in the city's throng
I feel the freshness of the streams,
That, crossed by shades and sunny gleams,
Water the green land of dreams,
The holy land of song.

Therefore, at Pentecost, which brings
The Spring, clothed like a bride,
When nestling buds unfold their wings,
And bishop's-caps have golden rings,
Musing upon many things,
I sought the woodlands wide.

The green trees whispered low and mild;
It was a sound of joy!
They were my playmates when a child,
And rocked me in their arms so wild!
Still they looked at me and smiled,
As if I were a boy;

And ever whispered, mild and low,
"Come, be a child once more!"
And waved their long arms to and fro,
And beckoned solemnly and slow;
O, I could not choose but go
Into the woodlands hoar;

Into the blithe and breathing air,
Into the solemn wood,
Solemn and silent everywhere!
Nature with folded hands seemed there,
Kneeling at her evening prayer!
Like one in prayer I stood.

Before me rose an avenue
Of tall and sombrous pines;
Abroad their fan-like branches grew,
And, where the sunshine darted through,
Spread a vapor soft and blue,
In long and sloping lines.

And, falling on my weary brain,
Like a fast-falling shower,
The dreams of youth came back again;
Low lispings of the summer rain,
Dropping on the ripened grain,
As once upon the flower.

Visions of childhood! Stay, O stay!
Ye were so sweet and wild!
And distant voices seemed to say:—
“It cannot be! They pass away!
Other themes demand thy lay;
Thou art no more a child!

“The land of Song within thee lies,
Watered by living springs;
The lids of Fancy’s sleepless eyes
Are gates unto that Paradise,
Holy thoughts, like stars, arise,
Its clouds are angels’ wings.

“Learn, that henceforth thy song shall be,
Not mountains capped with snow,
Nor forests sounding like the sea,
Nor rivers flowing ceaselessly,
Where the woodlands bend to see
The bending heavens below.

“There is a forest where the din
Of iron branches sounds!
A mighty river roars between,
And whosoever looks therein,
Sees the heavens all black with sin,—
Sees not its depths, nor bounds.

“Athwart the swinging branches cast,
Soft rays of sunshine pour;
Then comes the fearful wintry blast;
Our hopes, like withered leaves, fall fast;
Pallid lips say, ‘It is past!
We can return no more!’

“Look, then, into thine heart, and write!

Yes, into Life's deep stream!

All forms of sorrow and delight,

All solemn Voices of the Night,

That can soothe thee, or affright,—

Be these henceforth thy theme.”

HYMN TO THE NIGHT.

Ἄσπασίη, τριλλιστος.

I HEARD the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!

I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night!

A PSALM OF LIFE.

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO
THE PSALMIST.

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
 “Life is but an empty dream!”
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
 And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
 And the grave is not its goal;
“Dust thou art, to dust returnest,”
 Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
 Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
 Finds us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
 And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
 Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
 In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
 Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
 Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
 Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS.

THERE is a Reaper, whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

“ Shall I have nought that is fair ? ” saith he
“ Have nought but the bearded grain ?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them all back again. ”

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves ;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

“ My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,”
The Reaper said, and smiled;
“ Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where he was once a child.

“ They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear.”

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
’T was an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

THE LIGHT OF STARS.

THE night is come, but not too soon;
And sinking silently,
All silently, the little moon
Drops down behind the sky.

There is no light in earth or heaven,
But the cold light of stars;
And the first watch of night is given
To the red planet Mars.

Is it the tender star of love?
The star of love and dreams?
O no! from that blue tent above,
A hero's armor gleams.

And earnest thoughts within me rise,
When I behold afar,
Suspended in the evening skies,
The shield of that red star.

O star of strength! I see thee stand
And smile upon my pain;
Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand,
And I am strong again.

Within my breast there is no light,
But the cold light of stars;
I give the first watch of the night
To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will,
He rises in my breast,
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou, too, whosoe'er thou art,
That readest this brief psalm,
As one by one thy hopes depart,
Be resolute and calm.

O fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.

FOOTSTEPS OF ANGELS.

WHEN the hours of Day are numbered,
And the voices of the Night
Wake the better soul, that slumbered,
To a holy, calm delight;

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,
And, like phantoms grim and tall;
Shadows from the fitful fire-light
Dance upon the parlor wall;

Then the forms of the departed
Enter at the open door;
The beloved, the true-hearted,
Come to visit me once more;

He, the young and strong, who cherished
Noble longings for the strife,
By the roadside fell and perished,
Weary with the march of life!

They, the holy ones and weakly,
Who the cross of suffering bore,
Folded their pale hands so meekly,
Spake with us on earth no more!

And with them the Being Beauteous,
Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me,
And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from her lips of air.

O, though oft depressed and lonely,
All my fears are laid aside,
If I but remember only
Such as these have lived and died!

FLOWERS.

SPAKE full well, in language quaint and olden,
One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,
When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine.

Stars they are, wherein we read our history,
As astrologers and seers of eld;
Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery,
Like the burning stars, which they beheld.

Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
God hath written in those stars above;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us
Stands the revelation of his love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation,
Written all over this great world of ours;
Making evident our own creation,
In these stars of earth,—these golden flowers.

And the Poet, faithful and far-seeing,
Sees, alike in stars and flowers, a part
Of the self-same, universal being,
Which is throbbing in his brain and heart.

Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining,
Blossoms flaunting in the eye of day,
Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining,
Buds that open only to decay;

Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues,
Flaunting gayly in the golden light;
Large desires, with most uncertain issues,
Tender wishes, blossoming at night!

These in flowers and men are more than seeming;
Workings are they of the self-same powers,
Which the Poet, in no idle dreaming,
Seeth in himself and in the flowers.

Everywhere about us are they glowing,
Some like stars, to tell us Spring is born;
Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,
Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn;

Not alone in Spring's armorial bearing,
And in Summer's green-emblazoned field,
But in arms of brave old Autumn's wearing,
In the centre of his brazen shield;

Not alone in meadows and green alleys,
On the mountain-top, and by the brink
Of sequestered pools in woodland valleys,
Where the slaves of Nature stoop to drink;

Not alone in her vast dome of glory,
Not on graves of bird and beast alone,
But in old cathedrals, high and hoary,
On the tombs of heroes, carved in stone;

In the cottage of the rudest peasant,
In ancestral homes, whose crumbling towers,
Speaking of the Past unto the Present,
Tell us of the ancient Games of Flowers;

In all places, then, and in all seasons,
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,
How akin they are to human things.

And with childlike, credulous affection
We behold their tender buds expand;
Emblems of our own great resurrection,
Emblems of the bright and better land.

THE BELEAGUERED CITY.

I HAVE read, in some old marvellous tale
Some legend strange and vague,
That a midnight host of spectres pale
Beleaguered the walls of Prague.

Beside the Moldau's rushing stream,
With the wan moon overhead,
There stood, as in an awful dream,
The army of the dead.

White as a sea-fog, landward bound,
The spectral camp was seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
The river flowed between.

No other voice nor sound was there,
No drum, nor sentry's pace;
The mist-like banners clasped the air,
As clouds with clouds embrace.

But, when the old cathedral bell
Proclaimed the morning prayer,
The white pavilions rose and fell
On the alarmed air.

Down the broad valley fast and far
The troubled army fled;
Up rose the glorious morning star,
The ghastly host was dead.

I have read, in the marvellous heart of man,
That strange and mystic scroll,
That an army of phantoms vast and wan
Beleaguer the human soul.

Encamped beside Life's rushing stream,
In Fancy's misty light,
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam
Portentous through the night.

Upon its midnight battle-ground
The spectral camp is seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
Flows the River of Life between.

No other voice, nor sound is there,
In the army of the grave;
No other challenge breaks the air,
But the rushing of Life's wave.

And, when the solemn and deep church-bell
Entreats the soul to pray,
The midnight phantoms feel the spell
The shadows sweep away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar
The spectral camp is fled;
Faith shineth as a morning star,
Our ghastly fears are dead.

**MIDNIGHT MASS FOR THE DYING
YEAR.**

YES, the Year is growing old,
And his eye is pale and bleared!
Death, with frosty hand and cold,
Plucks the old man by the beard,
Sorely,—sorely!

The leaves are falling, falling,
Solemnly and slow;
Caw! caw! the rooks are calling,
It is a sound of woe,
A sound of woe!

Through woods and mountain passes
The winds, like anthems, roll;
They are chanting solemn masses,
Singing; “Pray for this poor soul,
Pray,—pray!”

And the hooded clouds, like friars,
Tell their beads in drops of rain,
And patter their doleful prayers;—
But their prayers are all in vain,
All in vain!

There he stands in the foul weather,
The foolish, fond Old Year,
Crowned with wild flowers and with heather,
Like weak, despised Lear,
A king,—a king!

Then comes the summer-like day,
 Bids the old man rejoice!
 His joy! his last! O, the old man gray,
 Loveth that ever-soft voice,
 Gentle and low.

To the crimson woods he saith,—
 To the voice gentle and low
 Of the soft air, like a daughter's breath,—
 “ Pray do not mock me so!
 Do not laugh at me!”

And now the sweet day is dead;
 Cold in his arms it lies;
 No stain from its breath is spread
 Over the glassy skies,
 No mist or stain!

Then, too, the Old Year dieth,
 And the forests utter a moan,
 Like the voice of one who crieth
 In the wilderness alone,
 “ Vex not his ghost!”

Then comes, with an awful roar,
 Gathering and sounding on,
 The storm-wind from Labrador,
 The wind Euroclydon,
 The storm-wind!

Howl! howl! and from the forest
 Sweep the red leaves away!
 Would the sins that thou thus abhorrest,
 O Soul! could thus decay
 And be swept away!

MIDNIGHT MASS FOR THE DYING YEAR. 195

For there shall come a mightier blast,
There shall be a darker day;
And the stars from heaven down-cast,
Like red leaves be swept away!
Kyrie, eleyson!
Christe, eleyson!

EARLIER POEMS.

[These poems were written for the most part during my college life, and all of them before the age of nineteen. Some have found their way into schools, and seem to be successful. Others lead a vagabond and precarious existence in the corners of newspapers; or have changed their names and run away to seek their fortunes beyond the sea. I say, with the Bishop of Avranches, on a similar occasion: "I cannot be displeased to see these children of mine, which I have neglected, and almost exposed, brought from their wanderings in lanes and alleys, and safely lodged, in order to go forth into the world together in a more decorous garb."]

AN APRIL DAY.

WHEN the warm sun, that brings
Seed-time and harvest, has returned again,
'T is sweet to visit the still wood, where springs
The first flower of the plain.

I love the season well,
When forest glades are teeming with bright forms,
Nor dark and many-folded clouds foretell
The coming-on of storms.

From the earth's loosened mould
The sapling draws its sustenance, and thrives;
Though stricken to the heart with winter's cold,
The drooping tree revives.

The softly-warbled song
Comes from the pleasant woods, and colored wings
Glance quick in the bright sun, that moves along
The forest openings.

When the bright sunset fills
The silver woods with light, the green slope throws
Its shadows in the hollows of the hills,
And wide the upland glows.

And, when the eve is born,
In the blue lake the sky, o'er-reaching far,
Is hollowed out, and the moon dips her horn,
And twinkles many a star.

Inverted in the tide,
Stand the gray rocks, and trembling shadows throw,
And the fair trees look over, side by side,
And see themselves below.

Sweet April!—many a thought
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed ;
Nor shall they fail, till, to its autumn brought,
Life's golden fruit is shed.

AUTUMN.

WITH what glory comes and goes the year !
The buds of spring, those beautiful harbingers
Of sunny skies and cloudless times, enjoy
Life's newness, and earth's garniture spread out ;
And when the silver habit of the clouds
Comes down upon the autumn sun, and with
A sober gladness the old year takes up
His bright inheritance of golden fruits,
A pomp and pageant fill the splendid scene,

There is a beautiful spirit breathing now
Its mellow richness on the clustered trees,
And, from a beaker full of richest dyes,
Pouring new glory on the autumn woods,
And dipping in warm light the pillared clouds.
Morn on the mountain, like a summer bird,
Lifts up her purple wing, and in the vales
The gentle wind, a sweet and passionate wooer,
Kisses the blushing leaf, and stirs up life
Within the solemn woods of ash deep-crimsoned,
And silver beech, and maple yellow-leaved,
Where autumn, like a faint old man, sits down
By the wayside a-weary. Through the trees
The golden robin moves. The purple finch,
That on wild cherry and red cedar feeds,
A winter bird, comes with its plaintive whistle,
And pecks by the witch-hazel, whilst aloud
From cottage roofs the warbling bluebird sings,
And merrily, with oft-repeated stroke,
Sounds from the threshing-floor the busy flail.

O what a glory doth this world put on
From him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
On duties well performed, and days well spent!
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings;
He shall so hear the solemn hymn, that Death
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go
To his long resting-place without a tear.

WOODS IN WINTER.

WHEN winter winds are piercing chill,
And through the hawthorn blows the gale,
With solemn feet I tread the hill,
That overbrows the lonely vale.

O'er the bare upland, and away
Through the long reach of desert woods,
The embracing sunbeams chastely play,
And gladden these deep solitudes.

Where, twisted round the barren oak,
The summer vine in beauty clung,
And summer winds the stillness broke,
The crystal icicle is hung.

Where, from their frozen urns, mute springs
Pour out the river's gradual tide,
Shrilly the skater's iron rings,
And voices fill the woodland side.

Alas! how changed from the fair scene,
When birds sang out their mellow lay,
And winds were soft, and woods were green,
And the song ceased not with the day.

But still wild music is abroad,
Pale, desert woods! within your crowd;
And gathering winds, in hoarse accord,
Amid the vocal reeds pipe loud.

Chill airs and wintry winds! my ear
 Has grown familiar with your song;
 I hear it in the opening year,—
 I listen and it cheers me long.

HYMN OF THE MORAVIAN NUNS OF BETHLEHEM,

AT THE CONSECRATION OF PULASKI'S BANNER.

WHEN the dying flame of day
 Through the chancel shot its ray,
 Far the glimmering tapers shed
 Faint light on the cowled head;
 And the censer burning swung,
 Where, before the altar, hung
 The blood-red banner, that with prayer
 Had been consecrated there.

And the nun's sweet hymn was heard the while,
 Sung low in the dim, mysterious aisle.

“Take thy banner! May it wave
 Proudly o'er the good and brave;
 When the battle's distant wail
 Breaks the sabbath of our vale,
 When the clarion's music thrills
 To the hearts of these lone hills,
 When the spear in conflict shakes,
 And the strong lance shivering breaks.

“Take thy banner! and, beneath
 The battle-cloud's encircling wreath,

Guard it!—till our homes are free!
Guard it!—God will prosper thee!
In the dark and trying hour,
In the breaking forth of power,
In the rush of steeds and men,
His right hand will shield thee then.

“Take thy banner! But, when night
Closes round the ghastly fight,
If the vanquished warrior bow,
Spare him!—By our holy vow,
By our prayers and many tears,
By the mercy that endears,
Spare him!—he our love hath shared!
Spare him!—as thou wouldst be spared!

“Take thy banner!—and if e'er
Thou shouldst press the soldier's bier,
And the muffled drum should beat
To the tread of mournful feet,
Then this crimson flag shall be
Martial cloak and shroud for thee.”

The warrior took that banner proud,
And it was his martial cloak and shroud!

SUNRISE ON THE HILLS.

I STOOD upon the hills, when heaven's wide arch
Was glorious with the sun's returning march,
And woods were brightened, and soft gales
Went forth to kiss the sun-clad vales.

The clouds were far beneath me;—bathed in light,
They gathered mid-way round the wooded height,
And, in their fading glory, shone
Like hosts in battle overthrown,
As many a pinnacle, with shifting glance,
Through the gray mist thrust up its shattered lance,
And rocking on the cliff was left
The dark pine blasted, bare, and cleft.
The veil of cloud was lifted, and below
Glowed the rich valley, and the river's flow
Was darkened by the forest's shade,
Or glistened in the white cascade;
Where upward, in the mellow blush of day,
The noisy bittern wheeled his spiral way.

I heard the distant waters dash,
I saw the current whirl and flash,—
And richly, by the blue lake's silver beach,
The woods were bending with a silent reach.
Then o'er the vale, with gentle swell,
The music of the village bell
Came sweetly to the echo-giving hills;
And the wild horn, whose voice the woodland fills,
Was ringing to the merry shout,
That faint and far the glen sent out,
Where, answering to the sudden shot, thin smoke,
Through thick-leaved branches, from the dingle
broke.

If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows, that thou wouldst forget,
If thou wouldst read a lesson, that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills!—No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.

THE SPIRIT OF POETRY.

THERE is a quiet spirit in these woods,
That dwells where'er the gentle south wind blows;
Where, underneath the white-thorn, in the glade,
The wild flowers bloom, or, kissing the soft air,
The leaves above their sunny palms outspread.
With what a tender and impassioned voice
It fills the nice and delicate ear of thought,
When the fast-usher of morning comes
O'er-riding the gray hills with golden scarf;
Or when the cowed and dusky-sandaled Eve,
In mourning weeds, from out the western gate,
Departs with silent pace! That spirit moves
In the green valley, where the silver brook,
From its full laver, pours the white cascade;
And, babbling low amid the tangled woods,
Slips down through moss-grown stones with end-
less laughter.

And frequent, on the everlasting hills,
Its feet go forth, when it doth wrap itself
In all the dark embroidery of the storm,
And shouts the stern, strong wind. And here, amid
The silent majesty of these deep woods,
Its presence shall uplift thy thoughts from earth,
As to the sunshine and the pure, bright air
Their tops the green trees lift. Hence gifted bards
Have ever loved the calm and quiet shades.
For them there was an eloquent voice in all
The sylvan pomp of woods, the golden sun,
The flowers, the leaves, the river on its way,
Blue skies, and silver clouds, and gentle winds,—

The swelling upland, where the sidelong sun
 Aslant the wooded slope, at evening, goes,—
 Groves, through whose broken roof the sky looks in,
 Mountain, and shattered cliff, and sunny vale,
 The distant lake, fountains,—and mighty trees,
 In many a lazy syllable, repeating
 Their old poetic legends to the wind.

And this is the sweet spirit, that doth fill
 The world; and, in these wayward days of youth,
 My busy fancy oft embodies it,
 As a bright image of the light and beauty
 That dwell in nature,—of the heavenly forms
 We worship in our dreams, and the soft hues
 That stain the wild bird's wing, and flush the
 clouds

When the sun sets. Within her eye
 The heaven of April, with its changing light,
 And when it wears the blue of May, is hung,
 And on her lip the rich, red rose. Her hair
 Is like the summer tresses of the trees,
 When twilight makes them brown, and on her
 cheek

Blushes the richness of an autumn sky,
 With ever-shifting beauty. Then her breath,
 It is so like the gentle air of Spring,
 As, from the morning's dewy flowers, it comes
 Full of their fragrance, that it is a joy
 To have it round us,—and her silver voice
 Is the rich music of a summer bird,
 Heard in the still night, with its passionate ca-
 dence.

BURIAL OF THE MINNISINK.

ON sunny slope and beechen swell,
The shadowed light of evening fell;
And, where the maple's leaf was brown,
With soft and silent lapse came down
The glory, that the wood receives,
At sunset, in its brazen leaves.

Far upward in the mellow light
Rose the blue hills. One cloud of white,
Around a far uplifted cone,
In the warm blush of evening shone;
An image of the silver lakes,
By which the Indian's soul awakes.

But soon a funeral hymn was heard
Where the soft breath of evening stirred
The tall, gray forest; and a band
Of stern in heart, and strong in hand,
Came winding down beside the wave,
To lay the red chief in his grave.

They sang, that by his native bowers
He stood, in the last moon of flowers,
And thirty snows had not yet shed
Their glory on the warrior's head;
But, as the summer fruit decays,
So died he in those naked days.

A dark cloak of the roebuck's skin
Covered the warrior, and within

Its heavy folds the weapons, made
For the hard toils of war, were laid;
The cuirass, woven of plaited reeds,
And the broad belt of shells and beads.

Before, a dark-haired virgin train
Chanted the death dirge of the slain;
Behind, the long procession came
Of hoary men and chiefs of fame,
With heavy hearts, and eyes of grief,
Leading the war-horse of their chief.

Stripped of his proud and martial dress,
Uncurbed, unreined, and riderless,
With darting eye, and nostril spread,
And heavy and impatient tread,
He came; and oft that eye so proud
Asked for his rider in the crowd.

They buried the dark chief, they freed
Beside the grave his battle steed;
And swift an arrow cleaved its way
To his stern heart! One piercing neigh
Arose,—and, on the dead man's plain,
The rider grasps his steed again.

TRANSLATIONS.

[Don Jorge Manrique, the author of the following poem, flourished in the last half of the fifteenth century. He followed the profession of arms, and died on the field of battle. Mariana, in his History of Spain, makes honorable mention of him, as being present at the siege of Uclés; and speaks of him as "a youth of estimable qualities, who in this war gave brilliant proofs of his valor. He died young; and was thus cut off from long exercising his great virtues, and exhibiting to the world the light of his genius, which was already known to fame." He was mortally wounded in a skirmish near Cañavete, in the year 1479.

The name of Rodrigo Manrique, the father of the poet, Conde de Paredes and Maestre de Santiago, is well known in Spanish history and song. He died in 1476; according to Mariana, in the town of Uclés; but, according to the poem of his son, in Ocaña. It was his death that called forth the poem upon which rests the literary reputation of the younger Manrique. In the language of his historian, "Don Jorge Manrique, in an elegant Ode, full of poetic beauties, rich embellishments of genius, and high moral reflections, mourned the death of his father as with a funeral hymn." This praise is not exaggerated. The poem is a model in its kind. Its conception is solemn and beautiful; and, in accordance with it, the style moves on—calm, dignified, and majestic.]

COPLAS DE MANRIQUE.

FROM THE SPANISH.

O LET the soul her slumbers break,
Let thought be quickened, and awake ;
Awake to see
How soon this life is past and gone,
And death comes softly stealing on,
How silently!

Swiftly our pleasures glide away,
Our hearts recall the distant day
With many sighs;
The moments that are speeding fast
We heed not, but the past,—the past,—
More highly prize.

Onward its course the present keeps,
Onward the constant current sweeps,
Till life is done;
And, did we judge of time aright,
The past and future in their flight
Would be as one.

Let no one fondly dream again,
That Hope and all her shadowy train
Will not decay;
Fleeting as were the dreams of old,
Remembered like a tale that's told,
They pass away.

Our lives are rivers, gliding free
To that unfathomed, boundless sea,
The silent grave!
Thither all earthly pomp and boast
Roll, to be swallowed up and lost
In one dark wave.

Thither the mighty torrents stray,
Thither the brook pursues its way,
And tinkling rill
There all are equal. Side by side
The poor man and the son of pride
Lie calm and still.

I will not here invoke the throng
Of orators and sons of song,
The deathless few;
Fiction entices and deceives,
And, sprinkled o'er her fragrant leaves,
Lies poisonous dew.

To One alone my thoughts arise,
The Eternal Truth,—the Good and Wise,—
To Him I cry,
Who shared on earth our common lot,
But the world comprehended not
His deity.

This world is but the rugged road
Which leads us to the bright abode
Of peace above;
So let us choose that narrow way,
Which leads no traveller's foot astray
From realms of love.

Our cradle is the starting-place,
In life we run the onward race,
And reach the goal;
When, in the mansions of the blest,
Death leaves to its eternal rest
The weary soul.

Did we but use it as we ought,
This world would school each wandering
thought
To its high state.
Faith wings the soul beyond the sky,
Up to that better world on high,
For which we wait.

Yes,—the glad messenger of love,
To guide us to our home above,
The Saviour came;
Born amid mortal cares and fears,
He suffered in this vale of tears
A death of shame.

Behold of what delusive worth
The bubbles we pursue on earth,
The shapes we chase,
Amid a world of treachery!
They vanish ere death shuts the eye,
And leave no trace.

Time steals them from us,—chances strange,
Disastrous accidents, and change,
That come to all;
Even in the most exalted state,
Relentless sweeps the stroke of fate;
The strongest fall.

Tell me,—the charms that lovers seek
In the clear eye and blushing cheek,
The hues that play
O'er rosy lip and brow of snow,
When hoary age approaches slow,
Ah, where are they?

The cunning skill, the curious arts,
The glorious strength that youth imparts
In life's first stage;
These shall become a heavy weight,
When Time swings wide his outward gate
To weary age.

The noble blood of Gothic name,
 Heroes emblazoned high to fame,
 In long array;
 How, in the onward course of time,
 The landmarks of that race sublime
 Were swept away!

Some, the degraded slaves of lust,
 Prostrate and trampled in the dust,
 Shall rise no more;
 Others, by guilt and crime, maintain
 The scutcheon, that, without a stain,
 Their fathers bore.

Wealth and the high estate of pride,
 With what untimely speed they glide,
 How soon depart!
 Bid not the shadowy phantoms stay,
 The vassals of a mistress they,
 Of fickle heart.

These gifts in Fortune's hands are found;
 Her swift revolving wheel turns round,
 And they are gone!
 No rest the inconstant goddess knows,
 But changing, and without repose,
 Still hurries on.

Even could the hand of avarice save
 Its gilded baubles, till the grave
 Reclaimed its pray,
 Let none on such poor hopes rely;
 Life, like an empty dream, flits by,
 And where are they?

Earthly desires and sensual lust
Are passions springing from the dust,—
They fade and die;
But, in the life beyond the tomb,
They seal the immortal spirit's doom
Eternally!

The pleasures and delights, which mask
In treacherous smiles life's serious task,
What are they, all,
But the fleet coursers of the chase,
And death an ambush in the race,
Wherein we fall?

No foe, no dangerous pass, we heed,
Brook no delay,—but onward speed
With loosened rein;
And, when the fatal snare is near,
We strive to check our mad career,
But strive in vain.

Could we new charms to age impart
And fashion with a cunning art
The human face,
As we can clothe the soul with light,
And make the glorious spirit bright
With heavenly grace,—

How busily each passing hour
Should we exert that magic power!
What ardor show,
To deck the sensual slave of sin,
Yet leave the freeborn soul within,
In weeds of woe!

Monarchs, the powerful and the strong,
Famous in history and in song
Of olden time,
Saw, by the stern decrees of fate,
Their kingdoms lost, and desolate
Their race sublime.

Who is the champion? who the strong?
Pontiff and priest, and sceptred throng?
On these shall fall
As heavily the hand of Death,
As when it stays the shepherd's breath
Beside his stall.

I speak not of the Trojan name,
Neither its glory nor its shame
Has met our eyes;
Nor of Rome's great and glorious dead,
Though we have heard so oft, and read,
Their histories.

Little avails it now to know
Of ages passed so long ago,
Nor how they rolled;
Our theme shall be of yesterday,
Which to oblivion sweeps away,
Like days of old.

Where is the King, Don Juan? Where
Each royal prince and noble heir
Of Aragon?
Where are the courtly gallantries?
The deeds of love and high emprise,
In battle done?

Tourney and joust, that charmed the eye,
And scarf, and gorgeous panoply,
And nodding plume,—
What were they but a pageant scene?
What but the garlands, gay and green.
That deck the tomb?

Where are the high-born dames, and where
Their gay attire and jewelled hair,
And odors sweet?
Where are the gentle knights, that came
To kneel, and breathe love's ardent flame,
Low at their feet?

Where is the song of Troubadour?
Where are the lute and gay tambour
They loved of yore?
Where is the mazy dance of old,
The flowing robes, inwrought with gold,
The dancers wore?

And he who next the sceptre swayed,
Henry, whose royal court displayed
Such power and pride;
O, in what winning smiles arrayed,
The world its various pleasures laid
His throne beside!

But O! how false and full of guile
That world, which wore so soft a smile
But to betray!
She, that had been his friend before,
Now from the fated monarch tore
Her charms away.

The countless gifts,—the stately walls,
The royal palaces, and halls
All filled with gold;
Plate with armorial bearings wrought,
Chambers with ample treasures fraught
Of wealth untold;

The noble steeds, and harness bright,
And gallant lord, and stalwart knight,
In rich array,—
Where shall we seek them now? Alas!
Like the bright dewdrops on the grass,
They passed away.

His brother, too, whose factious zeal
Usurped the sceptre of Castile,
Unskilled to reign;
What a gay, brilliant court had he,
When all the flower of chivalry
Was in his train!

But he was mortal; and the breath,
That flamed from the hot forge of Death,
Blasted his years;
Judgment of God! that flame by thee,
When raging fierce and fearfully,
Was quenched in tears!

Spain's haughty Constable,—the true
And gallant Master, whom we knew
Most loved of all.
Breathe not a whisper of his pride,—
He on the gloomy scaffold died,
Ignoble fall!

The countless treasures of his care,
His hamlets green, and cities fair,
His mighty power,—
What were they all but grief and shame,
Tears and a broken heart, when came
The parting hour?

His other brothers, proud and high,
Masters, who, in prosperity,
Might rival kings;
Who made the bravest and the best
The bondsmen of their high behest,
Their underlings;

What was their prosperous estate,
When high exalted and elate
With power and pride?
What, but a transient gleam of light,
A flame, which, glaring at its height,
Grew dim and died?

So many a duke of royal name,
Marquis and count of spotless fame,
And baron brave,
That might the sword of empire wield,
All these, O Death, hast thou concealed
In the dark grave!

Their deeds of mercy and of arms,
In peaceful days, or war's alarms,
When thou dost show,
O Death, thy stern and angry face,
One stroke of thy all-powerful mace
Can overthrow.

Unnumbered hosts, that threaten nigh,
 Pennon and standard flaunting high,
 And flag displayed;
 High battlements intrenched around,
 Bastion, and moated wall, and mound,
 And palisade,

And covered trench, secure and deep,—
 All these cannot one victim keep,
 O Death, from thee,
 When thou dost battle in thy wrath,
 And thy strong shafts pursue their path
 Unerringly.

O World! so few the years we live,
 Would that the life which thou dost give
 Were life indeed!
 Alas! thy sorrows fall so fast,
 Our happiest hour is when at last
 The soul is freed.

Our days are covered o'er with grief,
 And sorrows neither few nor brief
 Veil all in gloom;
 Left desolate of real good,
 Within this cheerless solitude
 No pleasures bloom.

Thy pilgrimage begins in tears.
 And ends in bitter doubts and fears,
 Or dark despair;
 Midway so many toils appear,
 That he who lingers longest here
 Knows most of care.

Thy goods are bought with many a groan,
 By the hot sweat of toil alone,
 And weary hearts;
 Fleet-footed is the approach of woe,
 But with a lingering step and slow
 Its form departs.

And he, the good man's shield and shade,
 To whom all hearts their homage paid,
 As Virtue's son,—
 Roderic Manrique,—he whose name
 Is written on the scroll of Fame,
 Spain's champion;

His signal deeds and prowess high
 Demand no pompous eulogy,—
 Ye saw his deeds!
 Why should their praise in verse be sung?
 The name, that dwells on every tongue,
 No minstrel needs.

To friends a friend;—how kind to all
 The vassals of this ancient hall
 And feudal fief!
 To foes how stern a foe was he!
 And to the valiant and the free
 How brave a chief!

What prudence with the old and wise:
 What grace in youthful gayeties;
 In all how sage!
 Benignant to the serf and slave,
 He showed the base and falsely brave
 A lion's rage.

His was Octavian's prosperous star,
 The rush of Cæsar's conquering car
 At battle's call;
 His, Scipio's virtue; his, the skill
 And the indomitable will
 Of Hannibal.

His was a Trajan's goodness,—his
 A Titus' noble charities
 And righteous laws;
 The arm of Hector, and the might
 Of Tully, to maintain the right
 In truth's just cause;

The clemency of Antonine,
 Aurelius' countenance divine.
 Firm, gentle, still;
 The eloquence of Adrian,
 And Theodosius' love to man,
 And generous will;

In tented field and bloody fray,
 An Alexander's vigorous sway
 And stern command;
 The faith of Constantine; ay, more,
 The fervent love Camillus bore
 His native land.

He left no well-filled treasury,
 He heaped no pile of riches high,
 Nor massive plate;
 He fought the Moors, and, in their fall,
 City and tower and castled wall
 Were his estate.

Upon the hard-fought battle-ground,
Brave steeds and gallant riders found
A common grave;
And there the warrior's hand did gain
The rents, and the long vassal train,
That conquest gave.

And if, of old, his halls displayed
The honored and exalted grade
His worth had gained,
So, in the dark, disastrous hour,
Brothers and bondsmen of his power
His hand sustained.

After high deeds, not left untold,
In the stern warfare, which of old
'T was his to share,
Such noble leagues he made, that more
And fairer regions, than before,
His guerdon were.

These are the records, half effaced,
Which, with the hand of youth, he traced
On history's page;
But with fresh victories he drew
Each fading character anew
In his old age.

By his unrivalled skill, by great
And veteran service to the state,
By worth adored,
He stood, in his high dignity,
The proudest knight of chivalry,
Knight of the Sword.

He found his cities and domains
 Beneath a tyrant's galling chains
 And cruel power;
 But, by fierce battle and blockade,
 Soon his own banner was displayed
 From every tower.

By the tried valor of his hand,
 His monarch and his native land
 Were nobly served;—
 Let Portugal repeat the story,
 And proud Castile, who shared the glory
 His arms deserved.

And when so oft, for weal or woe,
 His life upon the fatal throw
 Had been cast down;
 When he had served, with patriot zeal,
 Beneath the banner of Castile,
 His sovereign's crown;

And done such deeds of valor strong,
 That neither history nor song
 Can count them all;
 Then, on Ocaña's castled rock,
 Death at his portal came to knock,
 With sudden call,—

Saying, "Good Cavalier, prepare
 To leave this world of toil and care
 With joyful mien;
 Let thy strong heart of steel this day
 Put on its armor for the fray,—
 The closing scene.

“ Since thou hast been, in battle-strife,
So prodigal of health and life,
For earthly fame,
Let virtue nerve thy heart again;
Loud on the last stern battle-plain
They call thy name.

“ Think not the struggle that draws near
Too terrible for man,—nor fear
To meet the foe;
Nor let thy noble spirit grieve,
Its life of glorious fame to leave
On earth below.

“ A life of honor and of worth
Has no eternity on earth,—
’T is but a name;
And yet its glory far exceeds
That base and sensual life, which leads
To want and shame.

“ The eternal life, beyond the sky,
Wealth cannot purchase, nor the high
And proud estate;
The soul in dalliance laid,—the spirit
Corrupt with sin,—shall not inherit
A joy so great.

“ But the good monk, in cloistered cell,
Shall gain it by his book and bell,
His prayers and tears;
And the brave knight, whose arm endures
Fierce battle, and against the Moors
His standard rears.

“And thou, brave knight, whose hand has
poured
The life-blood of the Pagan horde
O'er all the land,
In heaven shalt thou receive, at length,
The guerdon of thine earthly strength
And dauntless hand.

“Cheered onward by this promise sure,
Strong in the faith entire and pure
Thou dost profess,
Depart,—thy hope is certainty,—
The third—the better life on high
Shalt thou possess.”

“O Death, no more, no more delay:
My spirit longs to flee away,
And be at rest;
The will of Heaven my will shall be,—
I bow to the divine decree,
To God's behest.

“My soul is ready to depart,
No thought rebels, the obedient heart
Breathes forth no sigh;
The wish on earth to linger still
Were vain, when 't is God's sovereign will
That we shall die.

“O thou, that for our sins didst take
A human form, and humbly make
Thy home on earth;
Thou, that to thy divinity
A human nature didst ally
By mortal birth,

“ And in that form didst suffer here
 Torment, and agony, and fear,
 So patiently;
 By thy redeeming grace alone,
 And not for merits of my own,
 O, pardon me!”

As thus the dying warrior prayed,
 Without one gathering mist or shade
 Upon his mind;
 Encircled by his family,
 Watched by affection’s gentle eye
 So soft and kind;

His soul to Him, who gave it, rose;
 God lead it to its long repose,
 Its glorious rest!
 And, though the warrior’s sun has set,
 Its light shall linger round us yet,
 Bright, radiant, blest.¹

¹ This poem of Manrique is a great favorite in Spain. No less than four poetic Glosses, or running commentaries, upon it have been published, no one of which, however, possesses great poetic merit. That of the Carthusian monk, Rodrigo de Valdepeñas, is the best. It is known as the *Glosa del Cartujo*. There is also a prose Commentary by Luis de Aranda.

The following stanzas of the poem were found in the author’s pocket, after his death on the field of battle:—

“ O Wor.d! so few the years we live,
 Would that the life which thou dost give
 Were life indeed!
 Alas! thy sorrows fall so fast,
 Our happiest hour is when at last
 The soul is freed.

“ Our days are covered o’er with grief,
 And sorrows neither few nor brief
 Veil all in gloom;
 Left desolate of real good,
 Within this cheerless solitude
 No pleasures bloom.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

FROM THE SPANISH OF LOPE DE VEGA.

SHEPHERD! that with thine amorous, sylvan song
Hast broken the slumber which encompassed me,—
That mad'st thy crook from the accursed tree,
On which thy powerful arms were stretched so
long!

Lead me to mercy's ever-flowing fountains;
For thou my shepherd, guard, and guide shalt be;
I will obey thy voice, and wait to see
Thy feet all beautiful upon the mountains.
Hear, Shepherd!—thou who for thy flock art dying,
O, wash away these scarlet sins, for thou
Rejoicest at the contrite sinner's vow.
O, wait!—to thee my weary soul is crying,—
Wait for me!—Yet why ask it, when I see,
With feet nailed to the cross, thou 'rt waiting still
for me!

“Thy pilgrimage begins in tears,
And ends in bitter doubts and fears,
Or dark despair ;
Midway so many toils appear,
That he who lingers longest here
Knows most of care.

“Thy goods are bought with many a groan,
By the hot sweat of toil alone,
And weary hearts ;
Fleet-footed is the approach of woe,
But with a lingering step and slow
Its form departs.”

TO-MORROW.

FROM THE SPANISH OF LOPE DE VEGA.

LORD, what am I, that, with unceasing care,
Thou didst seek after me,—that thou didst wait,
Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,
And pass the gloomy nights of winter there?
O strange delusion!—that I did not greet
Thy blest approach, and O, to Heaven how lost,
If my ingratitude's unkindly frost
Has chilled the bleeding wounds upon thy feet.
How oft my guardian angel gently cried,
“Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt see
How he persists to knock and wait for thee!”
And, O! how often to that voice of sorrow,
“To-morrow we will open,” I replied,
And when the morrow came I answered still,
“To-morrow.”

THE NATIVE LAND.

FROM THE SPANISH OF FRANCISCO DE ALDANA.

CLEAR fount of light! my native land on high,
Bright with a glory that shall never fade!
Mansion of truth! without a veil or shade,
Thy holy quiet meets the spirit's eye.
There dwells the soul in its ethereal essence,
Gasping no longer for life's feeble breath;
But, sentinelled in heaven, its glorious presence
With pitying eye beholds, yet fears not, death.

Beloved country! banished from thy shore,
A stranger in this prison-house of clay,
The exiled spirit weeps and sighs for thee!
Heavenward the bright perfections I adore
Direct, and the sure promise cheers the way,
That, whither love aspires, there shall my dwell-
ing be.

THE IMAGE OF GOD.

FROM THE SPANISH OF FRANCISCO DE ALDANA.

O LORD! that seest, from yon starry height
Centred in one the future and the past,
Fashioned in thine own image, see how fast
The world obscures in me what once was bright!
Eternal Sun! the warmth which thou hast given,
To cheer life's flowery April, fast decays;
Yet, in the hoary winter of my days,
Forever green shall be my trust in Heaven.
Celestial King! O let thy presence pass
Before my spirit, and an image fair
Shall meet that look of mercy from on high,
As the reflected image in a glass
Doth meet the look of him who seeks it there,
And owes its being to the gazer's eye.

THE BROOK.

FROM THE SPANISH.

LAUGH of the mountain!—lyre of bird and tree!
Pomp of the meadow! mirror of the morn!
The soul of April, unto whom are born
The rose and jessamine, leaps wild in thee!

Although, where'er thy devious current strays,
 The lap of earth with gold and silver teems
 To me thy clear proceeding brighter seems
 Than golden sands, that charm each shepherd's
 gaze.

How without guile thy bosom, all transparent
 As the pure crystal, lets the curious eye
 Thy secrets scan, thy smooth, round pebbles count!
 How, without malice murmuring, glides thy cur-
 rent!

O sweet simplicity of days gone by!
 Thou shun'st the haunts of man, to dwell in lim-
 pid fount!

THE CELESTIAL PILOT.

FROM DANTE. PURGATORIO, II.

AND now, behold! as at the approach of morning,
 Through the gross vapors, Mars grows fiery red
 Down in the west upon the ocean floor,

Appeared to me,—may I again behold it!—
 A light along the sea, so swiftly coming.
 Its motion by no flight of wing is equalled.

And when therefrom I had withdrawn a little
 Mine eyes, that I might question my conductor,
 Again I saw it brighter grown and larger.

Thereafter, on all sides of it, appeared
 I knew not what of white, and underneath,
 Little by little, there came forth another.

My master yet had uttered not a word,
While the first brightness into wings unfolded;
But, when he clearly recognized the pilot,

He cried aloud: "Quick, quick, and bow the knee!
Behold the Angel of God! fold up thy hands!
Henceforward shalt thou see such officers!

"See, how he scorns all human arguments,
So that no oar he wants, nor other sail
Than his own wings, between so distant shores!

"See, how he holds them, pointed straight to
 heaven,
Fanning the air with the eternal pinions,
That do not moult themselves like mortal hair!"

And then, as nearer and more near us came
The Bird of Heaven, more glorious he appeared,
So that the eye could not sustain his presence,

But down I cast it; and he came to shore
With a small vessel, gliding swift and light,
So that the water swallowed naught thereof.

Upon the stern stood the Celestial Pilot!
Beatitude seemed written in his face!
And more than a hundred spirits sat within.

"*In exitu Israel* out of Egypt!"
Thus sang they all together in one voice,
With whatso in that Psalm is after written.

Then made he sign of holy rood upon them,
Whereat all cast themselves upon the shore,
And he departed swiftly as he came.

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE.

FROM DANTE. PURGATORIO, XXVIII.

LONGING already to search in and round
The heavenly forest, dense and living-green,
Which to the eyes tempered the new-born day,

Withouten more delay I left the bank,
Crossing the level country slowly, slowly,
Over the soil, that everywhere breathed fragrance.

A gently-breathing air, that no mutation
Had in itself, smote me upon the forehead,
No heavier blow, than of a pleasant breeze,

Whereat the tremulous branches readily
Did all of them bow downward towards that side
Where its first shadow casts the Holy Mountain;

Yet not from their upright direction bent
So that the little birds upon their tops
Should cease the practice of their tuneful art;

But, with full-throated joy, the hours of prime
Singing received they in the midst of foliage
That made monotonous burden to their rhymes,

Even as from branch to branch it gathering swells,
Through the pine forests on the shore of Chiassi,
When Æolus unlooses the Sirocco.

Already my slow steps had led me on
Into the ancient wood so far, that I
Could see no more the place where I had entered.

And lo! my farther course cut off a river,
Which, towards the left hand, with its little waves,
Bent down the grass, that on its margin sprang.

All waters that on earth most limpid are,
Would seem to have within themselves some mixture,
Compared with that, which nothing doth conceal,

Although it moves on with a brown, brown current,
Under the shade perpetual, that never
Ray of the sun lets in, nor of the moon.

BEATRICE.

FROM DANTE. PURGATORIO, XXX., XXXI.

EVEN as the Blessed, in the new covenant,
Shall rise up quickened, each one from his grave,
Wearing again the garments of the flesh,

So, upon that celestial chariot,
A hundred rose *ad vocem tanti senis*,
Ministers and messengers of life eternal.

They all were saying: "*Benedictus qui venis,*"
And scattering flowers above and round about,
"*Manibus o date lilia plenis.*"

I once beheld, at the approach of day
The orient sky all stained with roseate hues,
And the other heaven with light serene adorned,

And the sun's face uprising, overshadowed,
 So that, by temperate influence of vapors,
 The eye sustained his aspect for long while ;

Thus in the bosom of a cloud of flowers,
 Which from those hands angelic were thrown up,
 And down descended inside and without,

With crown of olive o'er a snow-white veil,
 Appeared a lady, under a green mantle,
 Vested in colors of the living flame.

.

Even as the snow, among the living rafters
 Upon the back of Italy, congeals,
 Blown on and beaten by Slavonian winds,

And then, dissolving, filters through itself,
 When'er the land, that loses shadow, breathes,
 Like as a taper melts before a fire,

Even such I was, without a sigh or tear,
 Before the song of those who chime forever
 After the chiming of the eternal spheres ;

But, when I heard in those sweet melodies
 Compassion for me, more than had they said,
 " O wherefore, lady, dost thou thus consume him ? "

The ice, that was about my heart congealed,
 To air and water changed, and, in my anguish,
 Through lips and eyes came gushing from my
 breast.

.

Confusion and dismay, together mingled,
 Forced such a feeble "Yes!" out of my mouth,
 To understand it one had need of sight.

Even as a cross-bow breaks, when 't is discharged,
 Too tensely drawn the bow-string and the bow,
 And with less force the arrow hits the mark;

So I gave way under this heavy burden,
 Gushing forth into bitter tears and sighs,
 And the voice, fainting, flagged upon its passage.

SPRING.

FROM THE FRENCH OF CHARLES D'ORLÉANS.

XV. CENTURY.

GENTLE Spring!—in sunshine clad,
 Well dost thou thy power display!
 For Winter maketh the light heart sad,
 And thou,—thou makest the sad heart gay.
 He sees thee, and calls to his gloomy train,
 The sleet, and the snow, and the wind, and the
 rain;
 And they shrink away, and they flee in fear,
 When thy merry step draws near.

Winter giveth the fields and the trees, so old,
 Their beards of icicles and snow;
 And the rain, it raineth so fast and cold,
 We must cower over the embers low;

And, snugly housed from the wind and weather,
 Mope like birds that are changing feather.
 But the storm retires, and the sky grows clear,
 When thy merry step draws near.

Winter maketh the sun in the gloomy sky
 Wrap him round with a mantle of cloud;
 But, Heaven be praised, thy step is nigh;
 Thou tearest away the mournful shroud,
 And the earth looks bright, and Winter surly,
 Who has toiled for naught both late and early,
 Is banished afar by the new-born year,
 When thy merry step draws near.

THE CHILD ASLEEP.

FROM THE FRENCH.

SWEET babe! true portrait of thy father's face,
 Sleep on the bosom, that thy lips have pressed!
 Sleep, little one; and closely, gently place
 Thy drowsy eyelid on thy mother's breast.

Upon that tender eye, my little friend,
 Soft sleep shall come, that cometh not to me!
 I watch to see thee, nourish thee, defend;—
 'T is sweet to watch for thee,—alone for thee!

His arms fall down; sleep sits upon his brow;
 His eye is closed; he sleeps, nor dreams of harm.
 Wore not his cheek the apple's ruddy glow,
 Would you not say he slept on Death's cold arm?

Awake, my boy!—I tremble with affright!

Awake, and chase this fatal thought!—Unclose
Thine eye but for one moment on the light!

Even at the price of thine, give me repose!

Sweet error!—he but slept,—I breathe again;—

Come, gentle dreams, the hour of sleep beguile!

O! when shall he, for whom I sigh in vain,
Beside me watch to see thy waking smile?

THE GRAVE.

FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON.

FOR thee was a house built
Ere thou wast born,
For thee was a mould meant
Ere thou of mother camest.
But it is not made ready,
Nor its depth measured,
Nor is it seen
How long it shall be.
Now I bring thee
Where thou shalt be;
Now I shall measure thee,
And the mould afterwards.

Thy house is not
Highly timbered,
It is unhigh and low;
When thou art therein
The heel-ways are low,

The side-ways unhigh.
The roof is built
Thy breast full nigh,
So thou shalt in mould
Dwell full cold,
Dimly and dark.

Doorless is that house,
And dark it is within ;
There thou art fast detained
And Death hath the key.
Loathsome is that earth-house,
And grim within to dwell.
There thou shalt dwell,
And worms shall divide thee.

Thus thou art laid,
And leavest thy friends ;
Thou hast no friend,
Who will come to thee,
Who will ever see
How that house pleaseth thee ;
Who will ever open
The door for thee,
And descend after thee,
For soon thou art loathsome
And hateful to see.

KING CHRISTIAN.

A NATIONAL SONG OF DENMARK.

FROM THE DANISH OF JOHANNES EVALD.

KING CHRISTIAN stood by the lofty mast
In mist and smoke;
His sword was hammering so fast,
Through Gothic helm and brain it past;
Then sank each hostile hulk and mast,
In mist and smoke.
“Fly!” shouted they, “fly, he who can!
Who braves of Denmark’s Christian
The stroke?”

Nils Juel gave heed to the tempest’s roar,
Now is the hour!
He hoisted his blood-red flag once more,
And smote upon the foe full sore,
And shouted loud, through the tempest’s roar,
“Now is the hour!”
“Fly!” shouted they, “for shelter fly!
Of Denmark’s Juel who can defy
The power?”

North Sea! a glimpse of Wessel rent
Thy murky sky!
Then champions to thine arms were sent;
Terror and Death glared where he went;
From the waves was heard a wail, that rent
Thy murky sky!
From Denmark, thunders Tordenskiol’,
Let each to Heaven commend his soul,
And fly!

Path of the Dane to fame and might!
 Dark-rolling wave!
 Receive thy friend, who, scorning flight,
 Goes to meet danger with despite,
 Proudly as thou the tempest's might,
 Dark-rolling wave!
 And amid pleasures and alarms,
 And war and victory, be thine arms
 My grave!¹

THE HAPPIEST LAND.

FRAGMENT OF A MODERN BALLAD.

FROM THE GERMAN.

THERE sat one day in quiet,
 By an alehouse on the Rhine,
 Four hale and hearty fellows,
 And drank the precious wine.

The landlord's daughter filled their cups,
 Around the rustic board;
 Then sat they all so calm and still,
 And spake not one rude word.

But, when the maid departed,
 A Swabian raised his hand,
 And cried, all hot and flushed with wine,
 " Long live the Swabian land!

¹ Nils Juel was a celebrated Danish Admiral, and Peder Wessel a Vice-Admiral, who for his great prowess received the popular title of Tordenskiold, or *Thunder shield*. In childhood he was a tailor's apprentice, and rose to his high rank before the age of twenty-eight, when he was killed in a duel.

“The greatest kingdom upon earth
Cannot with that compare;
With all the stout and hardy men
And the nut-brown maidens there.”

“Ha!” cried a Saxon, laughing,—
And dashed his beard with wine;
“I had rather live in Lapland,
Than that Swabian land of thine!

“The goodliest land on all this earth,
It is the Saxon land!
There have I as many maidens
As fingers on this hand!”

“Hold your tongues! both Swabian and Saxon!”
A bold Bohemian cries;
“If there ’s a heaven upon this earth,
In Bohemia it lies.

“There the tailor blows the lute,
And the cobbler blows the horn,
And the miner blows the bugle,
Over mountain gorge and bourn.”

And then the landlord’s daughter
Up to heaven raised her hand,
And said, “Ye may no more contend,—
There lies the happiest land!”

THE WAVE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF TIEDGE.

“WHITHER, thou turbid wave?
Whither, with so much haste,
As if a thief wert thou?”

“I am the Wave of Life,
Stained with my margin's dust;
From the struggle and the strife
Of the narrow stream I fly
To the Sea's immensity,
To wash from me the slime
Of the muddy banks of Time.”

THE DEAD.

FROM THE GERMAN OF KLOPSTOCK.

How they so softly rest,
All, all the holy dead,
Unto whose dwelling-place
Now doth my soul draw near!
How they so softly rest,
All in their silent graves,
Deep to corruption
Slowly down-sinking!

And they no longer weep,
Here, where complaint is still!
And they no longer feel,
Here, where all gladness flies?

And, by the cypresses
Softly o'ershadowed,
Until the Angel
Calls them, they slumber!

THE BIRD AND THE SHIP.

FROM THE GERMAN OF MÜLLER.

“THE rivers rush into the sea,
By castle and town they go;
The winds behind them merrily
Their noisy trumpets blow.

“The clouds are passing far and high,
We little birds in them play;
And everything, that can sing and fly,
Goes with us, and far away.

“I greet thee, bonny boat! Whither, or whence,
With thy fluttering golden band?”—

“I greet thee, little bird! To the wide sea
I haste from the narrow land.

“Full and swollen is every sail;
I see no longer a hill,
I have trusted all to the sounding gale,
And it will not let me stand still.

“And wilt thou, little bird, go with us?
Thou mayest stand on the mainmast tall,
For full to sinking is my house
With merry companions all”—

“ I need not and seek not company,
 Bonny boat, I can sing all alone;
 For the mainmast tall too heavy am I,
 Bonny boat, I have wings of my own.

“ High over the sails, high over the mast,
 Who shall gainsay these joys?
 When thy merry companions are still, at last,
 Thou shalt hear the sound of my voice.

“ Who neither may rest, nor listen may,
 God bless them every one!
 I dart away, in the bright blue day,
 And the golden fields of the sun.

“ Thus do I sing my weary song,
 Wherever the four winds blow;
 And this same song, my whole life long,
 Neither Poet nor Printer may know.”

WHITHER?

FROM THE GERMAN OF MÜLLER.

I HEARD a brooklet gushing
 From its rocky fountain near,
 Down into the valley rushing,
 So fresh and wondrous clear.

I know not what came o'er me,
 Nor who the counsel gave;
 But I must hasten downward,
 All with my pilgrim-stave;

Downward, and ever farther,
And ever the brook beside;
And ever fresher murmured,
And ever clearer, the tide.

Is this the way I was going?
Whither, O brooklet, say!
Thou hast, with thy soft murmur,
Murmured my senses away.

What do I say of a murmur?
That can no murmur be;
'T is the water-nymphs, that are singing
Their roundelays under me.

Let them sing, my friend, let them murmur,
And wander merrily near;
The wheels of a mill are going
In every brooklet clear.

BEWARE!

FROM THE GERMAN.

I KNOW a maiden fair to see,
Take care!
She can both false and friendly be,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

She has two eyes, so soft and brown,
Take care!
She gives a side-glance and looks down,
Beware! Beware!

Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

And she has hair of a golden hue,
Take care!

And what she says, it is not true,
Beware! Beware!

Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

She has a bosom as white as snow,
Take care!

She knows how much it is best to show,
Beware! Beware!

Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

She gives thee a garland woven fair,
Take care!

It is a fool's-cap for thee to wear,
Beware! Beware!

Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

SONG OF THE BELL.

FROM THE GERMAN.

BELL! thou soundest merrily,
When the bridal party
To the church doth hie!
Bell! thou soundest solemnly,
When, on Sabbath morning,
Fields deserted lie!

Bell! thou soundest merrily;
Tellest thou at evening,
 Bed-time draweth nigh!
Bell! thou soundest mournfully
Tellest thou the bitter
 Parting hath gone by!

Say! how canst thou mourn?
How canst thou rejoice?
 Thou art but metal dull!
And yet all our sorrowings,
And all our rejoicings,
 Thou dost feel them all!

God hath wonders many,
Which we cannot fathom,
 Placed within thy form!
When the heart is sinking,
Thou alone canst raise it,
 Trembling in the storm!

THE CASTLE BY THE SEA.

FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.

“HAST thou seen that lordly castle,
That Castle by the Sea?
Golden and red above it
The clouds float gorgeously.

“And fain it would stoop downward
To the mirrored wave below;
And fain it would soar upward
In the evening’s crimson glow.”

“ Well have I seen that castle,
That Castle by the Sea,
And the moon above it standing,
And the mist rise solemnly.”

“ The winds and the waves of ocean,
Had they a merry chime?
Didst thou hear, from those lofty chambers,
The harp and the minstrel’s rhyme?”

“ The winds and the waves of ocean,
They rested quietly,
But I heard on the gale a sound of wail,
And tears came to mine eye.”

“ And sawest thou on the turrets
The King and his royal bride?
And the wave of their crimson mantles?
And the golden crown of pride?”

“ Led they not forth, in rapture,
A beauteous maiden there?
Resplendent as the morning sun,
Beaming with golden hair?”

“ Well saw I the ancient parents,
Without the crown of pride;
They were moving slow, in weeds of woe,
No maiden was by their side!”

THE BLACK KNIGHT.

FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.

'T WAS Pentecost, the Feast of Gladness,
When woods and fields put off all sadness.

Thus began the King and spake;
"So from the halls
Of ancient Hofburg's walls,
A luxuriant Spring shall break."

Drums and trumpets echo loudly,
Wave the crimson banners proudly.
From balcony the King looked on;
In the play of spears,
Fell all the cavaliers,
Before the monarch's stalwart son.

To the barrier of the fight
Rode at last a sable Knight.
"Sir Knight! your name and scutcheon, say!"
"Should I speak it here,
Ye would stand aghast with fear;
I am a Prince of mighty sway!"

When he rode into the lists,
The arch of heaven grew black with mists,
And the castle 'gan to rock.
At the first blow,
Fell the youth from saddle-bow,
Hardly rises from the shock.

Pipe and viol call the dances,
Torch-light through the high halls glances;

Waves a mighty shadow in;
 With manner bland
 Doth ask the maiden's hand,
 Doth with her the dance begin;

Danced in sable iron sark,
 Danced a measure weird and dark,
 Coldly clasped her limbs around.
 From breast and hair
 Down fall from her the fair
 Fowerets, faded, to the ground.

To the sumptuous banquet came
 Every Knight and every Dame.
 'Twixt son and daughter all distraught,
 With mournful mind
 The ancient King reclined,
 Gazed at them in silent thought.

Pale the children both did look,
 But the guest a beaker took;
 "Golden wine will make you whole!"
 The children drank,
 Gave many a courteous thank;
 "O that draught was very cool!"

Each the father's breast embraces,
 Son and daughter; and their faces
 Colorless grow utterly.
 Whichever way
 Looks the fear-struck father gray,
 He beholds his children die.

"Woe! the blessed children both
 Takest thou in the joy of youth;

Take me, too, the joyless father!"
 Spake the grim Guest,
 From his hollow, cavernous breast,
 "Roses in the spring I gather!"

SONG OF THE SILENT LAND.

FROM THE GERMAN OF SALIS.

INTO the Silent Land!
 Ah! who shall lead us thither?
 Clouds in the evening sky more darkly gather,
 And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the strand.
 Who leads us with a gentle hand
 Thither, O thither,
 Into the Silent Land?

Into the Silent Land!
 To you, ye boundless regions
 Of all perfection! Tender morning visions
 Of beauteous souls! The Future's pledge and band!
 Who in Life's battle firm doth stand,
 Shall bear Hope's tender blossoms
 Into the Silent Land!

O Land! O Land!
 For all the broken-hearted
 The mildest herald by our fate allotted,
 Beckons; and with inverted torch doth stand
 To lead us with a gentle hand
 Into the land of the great Departed,
 Into the Silent Land!

L' ENVOI.

YE voices, that arose,
After the Evening's close,
And whispered to my restless heart repose!

Go, breathe it in the ear
Of all who doubt and fear,
And say to them, "Be of good cheer!"

Ye sounds, so low and calm,
That in the groves of balm
Seemed to me like an angel's psalm!

Go, mingle yet once more
With the perpetual roar
Of the pine forest dark and hoar!

Tongues of the dead, not lost,
But speaking from death's frost,
Like fiery tongues at Pentecost!

Glimmer, as funeral lamps,
Amid the chills and damps
Of the vast plain where Death encamps.

BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS.

1841.

THE SKELETON IN ARMOR.

[THE following Ballad was suggested to me while riding on the seashore at Newport. A year or two previous a skeleton had been dug up at Fall River, clad in broken and corroded armor; and the idea occurred to me of connecting it with the Round Tower at Newport, generally known hitherto as the Old Wind-Mill, though now claimed by the Danes as a work of their early ancestors. Professor Rafn, in the *Mémoires de la Société Royale des Antiquaires du Nord* for 1838-1839, says:—

“There is no mistaking in this instance the style in which the more ancient stone edifices of the North were constructed, the style which belongs to the Roman or Ante-Gothic architecture, and which, especially after the time of Charlemagne, diffused itself from Italy over the whole of the West and North of Europe, where it continued to predominate until the close of the 12th century; that style, which some authors have, from one of its most striking characteristics, called the round-arch style, the same which in England is denominated Saxon and sometimes Norman architecture.

“On the ancient structure in Newport there are no ornaments remaining, which might possibly have served to guide us in assigning the probable date of its erection. That no vestige whatever is found of the pointed arch, nor any approximation to it, is indicative of an earlier rather than of a later period. From such characteristics as remain, however, we can scarcely form any other inference than one, in which I am persuaded that all, who are familiar with Old-Northern architecture, will concur, THAT THIS BUILDING WAS ERECTED AT A PERIOD DECIDEDLY NOT LATER THAN THE 12TH CENTURY. This remark applies, of course, to the original building only, and not to the alterations that it subsequently received; for

there are several such alterations in the upper part of the building which cannot be mistaken, and which were most likely occasioned by its being adapted in modern times to various uses, for example as the substructure of a wind-mill, and latterly as a hay magazine. To the same times may be referred the windows, the fireplace, and the apertures made above the columns. That this building could not have been erected for a wind-mill is what an architect will easily discern."

I will not enter into a discussion of the point. It is sufficiently well established for the purposes of a ballad; though doubtless many an honest citizen of Newport, who has passed his days within sight of the Round Tower, will be ready to exclaim with Sancho. "God bless me! did I not warn you to have a care of what you were doing, for that it was nothing but a wind-mill; and nobody could mistake it, but one who had the like in his head."]

“SPEAK! speak! thou fearful guest!
 Who, with thy hollow breast
 Still in rude armor drest,
 Comest to daunt me!
 Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
 But with thy fleshless palms
 Stretched, as if asking alms,
 Why dost thou haunt me?”

Then, from those cavernous eyes
 Pale flashes seemed to rise,
 As when the Northern skies
 Gleam in December;
 And, like the water's flow
 Under December's snow,
 Came a dull voice of woe
 From the heart's chamber

“I was a Viking old!
 My deeds, though manifold,
 No Skald in song has told,
 No Saga taught thee!

Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

“ Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

“ Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

“ But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

“ Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out;

Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
Filled to o'erflowing.

“Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

“I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frightened.

“Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chaunting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

“ While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed.
And as the wind gusts waft
 The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
 Blew the foam lightly.

“ She was a Prince’s child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
 I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew’s flight,
Why did they leave that night
 Her nest unguarded ?

“ Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,—
Fairest of all was she
 Among the Norsemen!—
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armèd hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
 With twenty horsemen.

“ Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
 When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
 Laugh as he hailed us.

“ And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
Death! was the helmsman’s hail,
 Death without quarter!
Mid-ships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
 Through the black water!

“ As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden,
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane
 Bore I the maiden.

“ Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o’er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
 Stretching to lee-ward;
There for my lady’s bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour
 Stands looking seaward.

“ There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden’s tears;
She had forgot her fears,
 She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes,
Under that tower she lies;
Ne’er shall the sun arise
 On such another!

“ Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
 The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
 O, death was grateful!

“ Thus, seamed with many scars
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
 My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior’s soul,
Skoal! to the Northland! *skoal!*”¹
—Thus the tale ended,

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS.

It was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughtèr,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds
That ope in the month of May.

¹ In Scand. *navia* this is the customary salutation when drinking a health. I have slightly changed the orthography of the word, in order to preserve the correct pronunciation.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailòr,
Had sailed the Spanish Main,
“I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

“Last night the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see!”
The skipper he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and colder blew the wind,
A gale from the North-east;
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain,
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

“Come hither! come hither! my little daughtèr,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale,
That ever wind did blow.”

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

“ O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
O say, what may it be ?”
“ ’T is a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast! ”—
And he steered for the open sea.

“ O father! I hear the sound of guns,
O say, what may it be ?”
“ Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea! ”

“ O father! I see a gleaming light,
O say, what may it be ?”
But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savèd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave,
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Towards the reef of Norman’s Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf,
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand,

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like *this*
On the reef of Norman's Woe!

BY THE SEASIDE

THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP.

“BUILD me straight, O worthy Master!
Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!”

The merchant's word
Delighted the Master heard;
For his heart was in his work, and the heart
Giveth grace unto every Art.
A quiet smile played round his lips,
As the eddies and dimples of the tide
Play round the bows of ships,
That steadily at anchor ride.
And with a voice that was full of glee,
He answered, “Ere long we will launch
A vessel as goodly, and strong, and staunch,
As ever weathered a wintry sea!”

And first with nicest skill and art,
Perfect and finished in every part,
A little model the Master wrought,
Which should be to the larger plan

What the child is to the man,
Its counterpart in miniature;
That with a hand more swift and sure
The greater labor might be brought
To answer to his inward thought.
And as he labored, his mind ran o'er
The various ships that were built of yore,
And above them all, and strangest of all
Towered the Great Harry, crank and tall,
Whose picture was hanging on the wall,
With bows and stern raised high in air,
And balconies hanging here and there,
And signal lanterns and flags afloat,
And eight round towers, like those that frown
From some old castle, looking down
Upon the drawbridge and the moat.
And he said with a smile, " Our ship, I wis,
Shall be of another form than this! "

It was of another form, indeed;
Built for freight, and yet for speed,
A beautiful and gallant craft;
Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast
Pressing down upon sail and mast,
Might not the sharp bows overwhelm;
Broad in the beam, but sloping aft
With graceful curve and slow degrees,
That she might be docile to the helm,
And that the currents of parted seas,
Closing behind, with mighty force,
Might aid and not impede her course.

In the shipyard stood the Master,
With the model of the vessel,

That should laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!

Covering many a rood of ground,
Lay the timber piled around;
Timber of chestnut and elm and oak,
And scattered here and there, with these,
The knarred and crooked cedar knees;
Brought from regions far away,
From Pascagoula's sunny bay,
And the banks of the roaring Roanoke!
Ah! what a wondrous thing it is
To note how many wheels of toil
One thought, one word, can set in motion!
There 's not a ship that sails the ocean,
But every climate, every soil,
Must bring its tribute, great or small,
And help to build the wooden wall!

The sun was rising o'er the sea,
And long the level shadows lay,
As if they, too, the beams would be
Of some great, airy argosy,
Framed and launched in a single day.
That silent architect, the sun,
Had hewn and laid them every one,
Ere the work of man was yet begun.
Beside the M^aster, when he spoke,
A youth, against an anchor leaning,
Listened, to catch his slightest meaning.
Only the long waves, as they broke
In ripples on the pebbly beach,
Interrupted the old man's speech.

Beautiful they were, in sooth,
The old man and the fiery youth!
The old man, in whose busy brain
Many a ship that sailed the main
Was modelled o'er and o'er again;—
The fiery youth, who was to be
The heir of his dexterity,
The heir of his house, and his daughter's hand,
When he had built and launched from land
What the elder head had planned.

“Thus,” said he, “will we build this ship!
Lay square the blocks upon the slip,
And follow well this plan of mine.
Choose the timbers with greatest care;
Of all that is unsound beware;
For only what is sound and strong
To this vessel shall belong.
Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine
Here together shall combine.
A goodly frame, and a goodly fame,
And the UNION be her name!
For the day that gives her to the sea
Shall give my daughter unto thee!”

The Master's word
Enraptured the young man heard;
And as he turned his face aside,
With a look of joy and a thrill of pride
Standing before
Her father's door,
He saw the form of his promised bride.
The sun shone on her golden hair,

And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair,
With the breath of morn and the soft sea air.
Like a beauteous barge was she,
Still at rest on the sandy beach,
Just beyond the billow's reach;
But he
Was the restless, seething, stormy sea!

Ah, how skilful grows the hand
That obeyeth Love's command!
It is the heart and not the brain,
That to the highest doth attain,
And he who followeth Love's behest
Far exceedeth all the rest!

Thus with the rising of the sun
Was the noble task begun,
And soon throughout the shipyard's bounds
Were heard the intermingled sounds
Of axes and of mallets, plied
With vigorous arms on every side;
Plied so deftly and so well,
That, ere the shadows of evening fell,
The keel of oak for a noble ship,
Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,
Was lying ready, and stretched along
The blocks, well placed upon the slip.
Happy, thrice happy, every one
Who sees his labor well begun,
And not perplexed and multiplied,
By idly waiting for time and tide!

And when the hot, long day was o'er,
The young man at the Master's door

Sat with the maiden calm and still.
And within the porch, a little more
Removed beyond the evening chill,
The father sat, and told them tales
Of wrecks in the great September gales,
Of pirates upon the Spanish Main,
And ships that never came back again,
The chance and change of a sailor's life,
Want and plenty, rest and strife,
His roving fancy, like the wind,
That nothing can stay and nothing can bind,
And the magic charm of foreign lands,
With shadows of palms, and shining sands,
Where the tumbling surf,
O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar,
Washes the feet of the swarthy Lascar,
As he lies alone and asleep on the turf.
And the trembling maiden held her breath
At the tales of that awful, pitiless sea,
With all its terror and mystery,
The dim, dark sea, so like unto Death,
That divides and yet unites mankind!
And whenever the old man paused, a gleam
From the bowl of his pipe would awhile illumine
The silent group in the twilight gloom,
And thoughtful faces, as in a dream;
And for a moment one might mark
What had been hidden by the dark,
That the head of the maiden lay at rest,
Tenderly, on the young man's breast!

Day by day the vessel grew,
With timbers fashioned strong and true,
Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,

Till, framed with perfect symmetry,
A skeleton ship rose up to view!
And around the bows and along the side
The heavy hammers and mallets plied,
Till, after many a week, at length,
Wonderful for form and strength,
Sublime in its enormous bulk,
Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk!
And around it columns of smoke, upwreathing,
Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething
Caldron, that glowed,
And overflowed
With the black tar, heated for the sheathing.
And amid the clamors
Of clattering hammers,
He who listened heard now and then
The song of the Master and his men:—

“Build me straight, O worthy Master,
Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!”

With oaken brace and copper band,
Lay the rudder on the sand,
That, like a thought, should have control
Over the movement of the whole;
And near it the anchor, whose giant hand
Would reach down and grapple with the land,
And immovable and fast
Hold the great ship against the bellowing blast!
And at the bows an image stood,
By a cunning artist carved in wood,

With robes of white, that far behind
 Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.
 It was not shaped in a classic mould,
 Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,
 Or Naiad rising from the water,
 But modelled from the Master's daughter!
 On many a dreary and misty night,
 'T will be seen by the rays of the signal light,
 Speeding along through the rain and the dark,
 Like a ghost in its snow-white sark,
 The pilot of some phantom bark,
 Guiding the vessel, in its flight,
 By a path none other knows aright!
 Behold, at last,¹
 Each tall and tapering mast
 Is swung into its place;
 Shrouds and stays
 Holding it firm and fast!

Long ago,
 In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,
 When upon mountain and plain

¹ *Behold, at last,
 Each tall and tapering mast
 Is swung into its place.*

I wish to anticipate a criticism on this passage by stating, that sometimes, though not usually, vessels are launched fully rigged and sparred. I have availed myself of the exception, as better suited to my purposes than the general rule; but the reader will see that it is neither a blunder nor a poetic license. On this subject a friend in Portland, Me., writes me thus:—

“In this State, and also, I am told, in New York, ships are sometimes rigged upon the stocks, in order to save time, or to make a show. There was a fine, large ship launched last summer at Ellsworth, fully rigged and sparred. Some years ago a ship was launched here, with her rigging, spars, sails, and cargo aboard. She sailed the next day and—was never heard of again! I hope this will not be the fate of your poem!”

Lay the snow,
They fell,—those lordly pines!
Those grand, majestic pines!
Mid shouts and cheers
The jaded steers,
Panting beneath the goad,
Dragged down the weary, winding road
Those captive kings so straight and tall.
To be shorn of their streaming hair,
And, naked and bare,
To feel the stress and the strain
Of the wind and the reeling main,
Whose roar
Would remind them for evermore
Of their native forests they should not see again.

And everywhere
The slender, graceful spars
Poise aloft in the air,
And at the mast head,
White, blue, and red,
A flag unrolls the stripes and stars.
Ah! when the wanderer, lonely, friendless,
In foreign harbors shall behold
That flag unrolled,
'T will be as a friendly hand
Stretched out from his native land,
Filling his heart with memories sweet and endless!

All is finished! and at length
Has come the bridal day
Of beauty and of strength.
To-day the vessel shall be launched!
With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,

And o'er the bay,
Slowly, in all his splendors dight,
The great sun rises to behold the sight.

The ocean old,
Centuries old,
Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,
Paces restless to and fro,
Up and down the sands of gold.
His beating heart is not at rest;
And far and wide,
With ceaseless flow,
His beard of snow
Heaves with the heaving of his breast.
He waits impatient for his bride.
'There she stands,
With her foot upon the sands,
Decked with flags and streamers' gay,
In honor of her marriage day,
Her snow-white signals fluttering, blending,
Round her like a veil descending,
Ready to be
The bride of the gray, old sea.

On the deck another bride
Is standing by her lover's side.
Shadows from the flags and shrouds,
Like the shadows cast by clouds,
Broken by many a sunny fleck,
Fall around them on the deck.

The prayer is said,
The service read,
'The joyous bridegroom bows his head.

And in tears the good old Master
Shakes the brown hand of his son,
Kisses his daughter's glowing cheek
In silence, for he cannot speak,
And ever faster
Down his own the tears begin to run.
The worthy pastor—
The shepherd of that wandering flock,
That has the ocean for its wold,
That has the vessel for its fold,
Leaping ever from rock to rock—
Spake, with accents mild and clear,
Words of warning, words of cheer,
But tedious to the bridegroom's ear.
He knew the chart
Of the sailor's heart,
All its pleasures and its griefs,
All its shallows and rocky reefs,
All those secret currents, that flow
With such resistless undertow,
And lift and drift, with terrible force,
The will from its moorings and its course.
Therefore he spake, and thus said he:—

“Like unto ships far off at sea,
Outward or homeward bound, are we.
Before, behind, and all around,
Floats and swings the horizon's bound,
Seems at its distant rim to rise
And climb the crystal wall of the skies,
And then again to turn and sink,
As if we could slide from its outer brink.
Ah! it is not the sea,
It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,

But ourselves
That rock and rise
With endless and uneasy motion,
Now touching the very skies,
Now sinking into the depths of ocean.
Ah! if our souls but poise and swing
Like the compass in its brazen ring,
Ever level and ever true
To the toil and the task we have to do,
We shall sail securely, and safely reach
The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach
The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,
Will be those of joy and not of fear!"

Then the Master,
With a gesture of command,
Waved his hand;
And at the word,
Loud and sudden there was heard,
All around them and below,
The sound of hammers, blow on blow,
Knocking away the shores and spurs.
And see! she stirs!
She starts,—she moves,—she seems to feel
The thrill of life along her keel,
And, spurning with her foot the ground,
With one exulting, joyous bound,
She leaps into the ocean's arms!

And lo! from the assembled crowd
There rose a shout, prolonged and loud,
That to the ocean seemed to say,—
"Take her, O bridegroom, old and gray,
Take her to thy protecting arms,
With all her youth and all her charms!"

How beautiful she is! How fair
She lies within those arms, that press
Her form with many a soft caress
Of tenderness and watchful care!
Sail forth into the sea, O ship!
Through wind and wave, right onward steer!
The moistened eye, the trembling lip,
Are not the signs of doubt or fear.
Sail forth into the sea of life,
O gentle, loving, trusting wife,
And safe from all adversity
Upon the bosom of that sea
Thy comings and thy goings be!
For gentleness and love and trust
Prevail o'er angry wave and gust;
And in the wreck of noble lives
Something immortal still survives!

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'T is of the wave and not the rock;
'T is but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,

In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!

THE EVENING STAR.

JUST above yon sandy bar,
As the day grows fainter and dimmer,
Lonely and lovely, a single star
Lights the air with a dusky glimmer.

Into the ocean faint and far
Falls the trail of its golden splendor,
And the gleam of that single star
Is ever refulgent, soft, and tender.

Chrysaor rising out of the sea,
Showed thus glorious and thus emulous,
Leaving the arms of Callirrhoë,
Forever tender, soft, and tremulous.

Thus o'er the ocean faint and far
Trailed the gleam of his falchion brightly;
Is it a God, or is it a star
That, entranced, I gaze on nightly!

THE SECRET OF THE SEA.

AH! what pleasant visions haunt me
As I gaze upon the sea!
All the old romantic legends,
All my dreams, come back to me.

Sails of silk and ropes of sendal,
Such as gleam in ancient lore;
And the singing of the sailors,
And the answer from the shore!

Most of all, the Spanish ballad
Haunts me oft, and tarries long,
Of the noble Count Arnaldos
And the sailor's mystic song.

Like the long waves on a sea-beach,
Where the sand as silver shines,
With a soft, monotonous cadence,
Flow its unrhymed lyric lines;—

Telling how the Count Arnaldos,
With his hawk upon his hand,
Saw a fair and stately galley,
Steering onward to the land;—

How he heard the ancient helmsman
Chant a song so wild and clear,
That the sailing sea-bird slowly
Poised upon the mast to hear,

Till his soul was full of longing,
And he cried, with impulse strong,—
“Helmsman! for the love of heaven,
Teach me, too, that wondrous song!”

“Wouldst thou,”—so the helmsman answered,
“Learn the secret of the sea?
Only those who brave its dangers
Comprehend its mystery!”

In each sail that skims the horizon,
In each landward-blowing breeze,
I behold that stately galley,
Hear those mournful melodies;

Till my soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea,
And the heart of the great ocean
Sends a thrilling pulse through me

TWILIGHT.

THE twilight is sad and cloudy,
The wind blows wild and free,
And like the wings of sea-birds
Flash the white caps of the sea.

But in the fisherman's cottage
There shines a ruddier light,
And a little face at the window
Peers out into the night.

Close, close it is pressed to the window,
As if those childish eyes
Were looking into the darkness,
To see some form arise.

And a woman's waving shadow
Is passing to and fro,
Now rising to the ceiling,
Now bowing and bending low.

What tale do the roaring ocean,
And the night-wind, bleak and wild,
As they beat at the crazy casement,
Tell to that little child?

And why do the roaring ocean,
And the night-wind, wild and bleak,
As they beat at the heart of the mother,
Drive the color from her cheek?

SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT.¹

SOUTHWARD with fleet of ice
Sailed the corsair Death;
Wild and fast blew the blast,
And the east-wind was his breath.

¹ *Str Humphrey Gilbert*. "When the wind abated and the vessels were near enough, the Admiral was seen constantly sitting in the stern, with a book in his hand. On the 9th of September he was seen for the last time, and was heard by the people of the Hind to say, 'We are as near heaven by sea as by land.' In the following night, the lights of the ship suddenly disappeared. The people in the other vessel kept a good lookout for him during the remainder of the voyage. On the 22d of September they arrived, through much tempest and peril, at Falmouth. But nothing more was seen or heard of the Admiral."—*Belknap's American Biography*, I, 203.

His lordly ships of ice
Glistened in the sun;
On each side, like pennons wide,
Flashing crystal streamlets run.

His sails of white sea-mist
Dripped with silver rain;
But where he passed there were cast
Leaden shadows o'er the main.

Eastward from Campobello
Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed;
Three days or more seaward he bore,
Then, alas! the land-wind failed.

Alas! the land-wind failed,
And ice-cold grew the night;
And never more, on sea or shore,
Should Sir Humphrey see the light.

He sat upon the deck,
The Book was in his hand;
"Do not fear! Heaven is as near,"
He said, "by water as by land!"

In the first watch of the night,
Without a signal's sound,
Out of the sea, mysteriously,
The fleet of Death rose all around.

The moon and the evening star
Were hanging in the shrouds;
Every mast, as it passed,
Seemed to rake the passing clouds.

They grappled with their prize,
At midnight black and cold !
As of a rock was the shock ;
Heavily the ground-swell rolled.

Southward through day and dark,
They drift in close embrace,
With mist and rain, to the Spanish Main ;
Yet there seems no change of place.

Southward, forever southward,
They drift through dark and day ;
And like a dream, in the Gulf-Stream
Sinking, vanish all away.

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

THE rocky ledge runs far into the sea,
And on its outer point, some miles away,
The Lighthouse lifts its massive masonry,
A pillar of fire by night, a cloud by day.

Even at this distance I can see the tides,
Upheaving, break unheard along its base,
A speechless wrath, that rises and subsides
In the white lip and tremor of the face.

And as the evening darkens, lo ! how bright,
Through the deep purple of the twilight air,
Beams forth the sudden radiance of its light
With strange, unearthly splendor in its glare !

Not one alone; from each projecting cape
And perilous reef, along the ocean's verge,
Starts into life a dim, gigantic shape,
Holding its lantern o'er the restless surge.

Like the great giant Christopher it stands
Upon the brink of the tempestuous wave,
Wading far out among the rocks and sands,
The night-o'ertaken mariner to save.

And the great ships sail outward and return,
Bending and bowing o'er the billowy swells,
And ever joyful, as they see it burn,
They wave their silent welcomes and farewells.

They come forth from the darkness, and their sails
Gleam for a moment only in the blaze,
And eager faces, as the light unveils,
Gaze at the tower, and vanish while they gaze.

The mariner remembers when a child,
On his first voyage, he saw it fade and sink;
And when, returning from adventures wild,
He saw it rise again o'er ocean's brink.

Steadfast, serene, immovable, the same
Year after year, through all the silent night
Burns on for evermore that quenchless flame,
Shines on that inextinguishable light!

It sees the ocean to its bosom clasp
The rocks and sea-sand with the kiss of peace;
It sees the wild winds lift it in their grasp,
And hold it up, and shake it like a fleece.

The startled waves leap over it; the storm
Smites it with all the scourges of the rain,
And steadily against its solid form
Press the great shoulders of the hurricane.

The sea-bird wheeling round it, with the din
Of wings and winds and solitary cries,
Blinded and maddened by the light within,
Dashes himself against the glare, and dies.

A new Prometheus, chained upon the rock,
Still grasping in his hand the fire of Jove,
It does not hear the cry, nor heed the shock,
But hails the mariner with words of love.

“Sail on!” it says, “sail on, ye stately ships!
And with your floating bridge the ocean span;
Be mine to guard this light from all eclipse,
Be yours to bring man nearer unto man!”

THE FIRE OF DRIFT-WOOD.

WE sat within the farmhouse old,
Whose windows, looking o'er the bay,
Gave to the sea-breeze, damp and cold,
An easy entrance, night and day.

Not far away we saw the port,—
The strange, old-fashioned, silent town,—
The lighthouse,—the dismantled fort.—
The wooden houses, quaint and brown.

We sat and talked until the night,
Descending, filled the little room;
Our faces faded from the sight,
Our voices only broke the gloom.

We spake of many a vanished scene,
Of what we once had thought and said,
Of what had been, and might have been,
And who was changed, and who was dead;

And all that fills the hearts of friends,
When first they feel, with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again;

The first slight swerving of the heart,
That words are powerless to express,
And leave it still unsaid in part,
Or say it in too great excess.

The very tones in which we spake
Had something strange, I could but mark;
The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark.

Oft died the words upon our lips,
As suddenly, from out the fire
Built of the wreck of stranded ships,
The flames would leap and then expire.

And, as their splendor flashed and failed,
We thought of wrecks upon the main,—
Of ships dismasted, that were hailed
And sent no answer back again.

The windows, rattling in their frames,—
The ocean, roaring up the beach,—
The gusty blast,—the bickering flames,
All mingled vaguely in our speech;

Until they made themselves a part
Of fancies floating through the brain,
The long-lost ventures of the heart,
That send no answers back again.

O flames that glowed! O hearts that yearned!
They were indeed too much akin,
The drift-wood fire without that burned,
The thoughts that burned and glowed within.

BY THE FIRESIDE.

RESIGNATION.

THERE is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended
But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapors
Amid these earthly damps;
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers
May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no Death! What seems so is transition.
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead,—the child of our affection,—
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest,—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.

THE BUILDERS.

ALL are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these;
Leave no yawning gaps between;
Think not, because no man sees,
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the Gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen!
Make the house, where Gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire, and clean.

Else our lives are incomplete,
Standing in these walls of Time,
Broken stairways, where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
And one boundless reach of sky.

SAND OF THE DESERT IN AN HOUR- GLASS.

A HANDFUL of red sand, from the hot clime
Of Arab deserts brought,
Within this glass becomes the spy of Time,
The minister of Thought.

How many weary centuries has it been
About those deserts blown!
How many strange vicissitudes has seen,
How many histories known!

Perhaps the camels of the Ishmaelite
Trampled and passed it o'er,
When into Egypt from the patriarch's sight
His favorite son they bore.

Perhaps the feet of Moses, burnt and bare,
Crushed it beneath their tread;
Or Pharaoh's flashing wheels into the air
Scattered it as they sped;

Or Mary, with the Christ of Nazareth
Held close in her caress,
Whose pilgrimage of hope and love and faith
Illumed the wilderness;

Or anchorites beneath Engaddi's palms
Pacing the Dead Sea beach,
And singing slow their old Armenian psalms
In half-articulate speech;

Or caravans, that from Bassora's gate
With westward steps depart;
Or Mecca's pilgrims, confident of Fate,
And resolute in heart!

These have passed over it, or may have passed!
Now in this crystal tower
Imprisoned by some curious hand at last,
It counts the passing hour.

And as I gaze, these narrow walls expand;—
Before my dreamy eye
Stretches the desert with its shifting sand,
Its unimpeded sky.

And borne aloft by the sustaining blast,
This little golden thread
Dilates into a column high and vast,
A form of fear and dread.

And onward, and across the setting sun,
Across the boundless plain,
The column and its broader shadow run,
Till thought pursues in vain,

The vision vanishes! These walls again
Shut out the lurid sun,
Shut out the hot, immeasurable plain;
The half-hour's sand is run!

BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

BLACK shadows fall
From the lindens tall,
That lift aloft their massive wall
Against the southern sky;

And from the realms
Of the shadowy elms
A tide-like darkness overwhelms
The fields that round us lie.

But the night is fair,
And everywhere
A warm, soft vapor fills the air,
And distant sounds seem near;

And above, in the light
Of the star-lit night,
Swift birds of passage wing their flight
Through the dewy atmosphere.

I hear the beat
Of their pinions fleet,
As from the land of snow and sleet
They seek a southern lea.

I hear the cry
Of their voices high
Falling dreamily through the sky,
But their forms I cannot see.

O, say not so!
Those sounds that flow
In murmurs of delight and woe
Come not from wings of birds.

They are the throngs
Of the poet's songs,
Murmurs of pleasures, and pains, and wrongs,
The sound of wingèd words.

This is the cry
Of souls, that high
On toiling, beating pinions, fly,
Seeking a warmer clime.

From their distant flight
Through realms of light
It falls into our world of night,
With the murmuring sound of rhyme,

THE OPEN WINDOW.

THE old house by the lindens
 Stood silent in the shade,
And on the gravelled pathway
 The light and shadow played.

I saw the nursery windows
 Wide open to the air;
But the faces of the children,
 They were no longer there.

The large Newfoundland house-dog
 Was standing by the door;
He looked for his little playmates,
 Who would return no more.

They walked not under the lindens,
 They played not in the hall;
But shadow, and silence, and sadness
 Were hanging over all.

The birds sang in the branches,
 With sweet, familiar tone;
But the voices of the children
 Will be heard in dreams alone!

And the boy that walked beside me,
 He could not understand
Why closer in mine, ah! closer,
 I pressed his warm, soft hand!

KING WITLAF'S DRINKING-HORN.

WITLAF, a king of the Saxons,
Ere yet his last he breathed,
To the merry monks of Croyland
His drinking-horn bequeathed,—

That, whenever they sat at their revels,
And drank from the golden bowl,
They might remember the donor,
And breath a prayer for his soul.

So sat they once at Christmas,
And bade the goblet pass;
In their beards the red wine glistened
Like dewdrops in the grass.

They drank to the soul of Witlaf,
They drank to Christ the Lord,
And to each of the Twelve Apostles,
Who had preached his holy word.

They drank to the Saints and Martyrs
Of the dismal days of yore,
And as soon as the horn was empty
They remembered one Saint more.

And the reader droned from the pulpit,
Like the murmur of many bees,
The legend of good Saint Guthlac,
And Saint Basil's homilies;

Till the great bells of the convent,
From their prison in the tower,
Guthlac and Bartholomæus,
Proclaimed the midnight hour.

And the Yule-log cracked in the chimney,
And the Abbot bowed his head,
And the flamelets flapped and flickered,
But the Abbot was stark and dead.

Yet still in his pallid fingers
He clutched the golden bowl,
In which, like a pearl dissolving,
Had sunk and dissolved his soul.

But not for this their revels
The jovial monks forbore,
For they cried, "Fill high the goblet!
We must drink to one Saint more!"

GASPAR BECERRA.

By his evening fire the artist
Pondered o'er his secret shame;
Baffled, weary, and disheartened,
Still he mused, and dreamed of fame.

'Twas an image of the Virgin
That had tasked his utmost skill;
But alas! his fair ideal
Vanished and escaped him still.

From a distant Eastern island
 Had the precious wood been brought;
 Day and night the anxious master
 At his toil untiring wrought;

Till, discouraged and desponding,
 Sat he now in shadows deep,
 And the day's humiliation
 Found oblivion in sleep.

Then a voice cried, " Rise, O master!
 From the burning brand of oak
 Shape the thought that stirs within thee!"
 And the startled artist woke,—

Woke, and from the smoking embers
 Seized and quenched the glowing wood;
 And therefrom he carved an image,
 And he saw that it was good.

O thou sculptor, painter, poet!
 Take this lesson to thy heart;
 That is best which lieth nearest;
 Shape from that thy work of art.

PEGASUS IN POUND.

ONCE into a quiet village,
 Without haste and without heed,
 In the golden prime of morning,
 Strayed the poet's wingèd steed.

It was Autumn, and incessant
Piped the quails from shocks and sheaves,
And, like living coals, the apples
Burned among the withering leaves.

Loud the clamorous bell was ringing
From its belfry gaunt and grim;
'Twas the daily call to labor,
Not a triumph meant for him.

Not the less he saw the landscape,
In its gleaming vapor veiled;
Not the less he breathed the odors
That the dying leaves exhaled.

Thus, upon the village common,
By the school-boys he was found;
And the wise men, in their wisdom,
Put him straightway into pound.

Then the sombre village crier,
Ringing loud his brazen bell,
Wandered down the street proclaiming
There was an estray to sell.

And the curious country people,
Rich and poor, and young and old,
Came in haste to see this wondrous
Wingèd steed, with mane of gold.

Thus the day passed, and the evening
Fell, with vapors cold and dim;
But it brought no food nor shelter,
Brought no straw nor stall for him.

Patiently, and still expectant,
Looked he through the wooden bars,
Saw the moon rise o'er the landscape,
Saw the tranquil, patient stars;

Till at length the bell at midnight
Sounded from its dark abode,
And, from out a neighboring farmyard,
Loud the cock Alectryon crowed.

Then, with nostrils wide distended,
Breaking from his iron chain,
And unfolding far his pinions,
To those stars he soared again.

On the morrow, when the village
Woke to all its toil and care,
Lo! the strange steed had departed,
And they knew not when nor where.

But they found, upon the greensward
Where his struggling hoofs had trod,
Pure and bright, a fountain flowing
From the hoof-marks in the sod.

From that hour, the fount unfailing
Gladdens the whole region round,
Strengthening all who drink its waters,
While it soothes them with its sound.

TEGNER'S DRAPA.

I HEARD a voice, that cried,
“ Balder the Beautiful
Is dead, is dead!”
And through the misty air
Passed like the mournful cry
Of sunward sailing cranes.

I saw the pallid corpse
Of the dead sun
Borne through the Northern sky.
Blasts from Niffelheim
Lifted the sheeted mists
Around him as he passed.

And the voice forever cried,
“ Balder the Beautiful
Is dead, is dead!”
And died away
Through the dreary night,
In accents of despair.

Balder the Beautiful,
God of the summer sun,
Fairest of all the Gods!
Light from his forehead beamed,
Runes were upon his tongue,
As on the warrior's sword.

All things in earth and air
Bound were by magic spell

Never to do him harm;
Even the plants and stones;
All save the mistletoe,
The sacred mistletoe!

Hœder, the blind old God,
Whose feet are shod with silence,
Pierced through that gentle breast
With his sharp spear, by fraud
Made of the mistletoe,
The accursed mistletoe!

They laid him in his ship,
With horse and harness,
As on a funeral pyre.
Odin placed
A ring upon his finger,
And whispered in his ear.

They launched the burning ship!
It floated far away
Over the misty sea,
Till like the sun it seemed,
Sinking beneath the waves.
Balder returned no more!

So perish the old Gods!
But out of the sea of Time
Rises a new land of song,
Fairer than the old.
Over its meadows green
Walk the young bards and sing.

Build it again,
O ye bards,

Fairer than before!
Ye fathers of the new race,
Feed upon morning dew,
Sing the new Song of Love!

The law of force is dead!
The law of love prevails!
Thor, the thunderer,
Shall rule the earth no more,
No more, with threats,
Challenge the meek Christ.

Sing no more,
O ye bards of the North,
Of Vikings and of Jarls!
Of the days of Eld
Preserve the freedom only,
Not the deeds of blood!

SONNET

ON MRS. KEMBLE'S READINGS FROM SHAKSPEARE.

O PRECIOUS evenings! all too swiftly sped!
Leaving us heirs to amplest heritages
Of all the best thoughts of the greatest sages,
And giving tongues unto the silent dead!
How our hearts glowed and trembled as she read,
Interpreting by tones the wondrous pages
Of the great poet who foreruns the ages,
Anticipating all that shall be said!
O happy Reader! having for thy text

The magic book, whose Sibylline leaves have
caught

The rarest essence of all human thought!
O happy Poet! by no critic vexed!
How must thy listening spirit now rejoice
To be interpreted by such a voice!

THE SINGERS.

God sent his singers upon earth
With songs of sadness and of mirth,
That they might touch the hearts of men,
And bring them back to heaven again.

The first a youth, with soul of fire,
Held in his hand a golden lyre;
Through groves he wandered, and by streams,
Playing the music of our dreams.

The second, with a bearded face,
Stood singing in the market-place,
And stirred with accents deep and loud
The hearts of all the listening crowd.

A gray, old man, the third and last,
Sang in cathedrals dim and vast,
While the majestic organ rolled
Contrition from its mouths of gold.

And those who heard the Singers three
Disputed which the best might be;
For still their music seemed to start
Discordant echoes in each heart.

But the great Master said, " I see
No best in kind, but in degree;
I gave a various gift to each,
To charm, to strengthen, and to teach.

"These are the three great chords of might,
And he whose ear is tuned aright
Will hear no discord in the three,
But the most perfect harmony."

SUSPIRIA.

TAKE them, O Death! and bear away
Whatever thou canst call thine own!
Thine image, stamped upon this clay,
Dost give thee that, but that alone!

Take them, O Grave! and let them lie
Folded upon thy narrow shelves,
As garments by the soul laid by,
And precious only to ourselves!

Take them, O great Eternity!
Our little life is but a gust,
That bends the branches of thy tree,
And trails its blossoms in the dust.

HYMN

FOR MY BROTHER'S ORDINATION.

CHRIST to the young man said: "Yet one thing
more;

If thou wouldst perfect be,
Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor,
And come and follow me!"

Within this temple Christ again, unseen,
Those sacred words hath said,
And his invisible hands to-day have been
Laid on a young man's head.

And evermore beside him on his way
The unseen Christ shall move,
That he may lean upon his arm and say,
"Dost thou, dear Lord, approve?"

Beside him at the marriage feast shall be,
To make the scene more fair;
Beside him in the dark Gethsemane
Of pain and midnight prayer.

O holy trust! O endless sense of rest!
Like the belovèd John
To lay his head upon the Saviour's breast,
And thus to journey on!

ONLY the Lowland tongue of Scotland might
Rehearse this little tragedy aright;
Let me attempt it with an English quill;
And take, O Reader, for the deed the will.

THE BLIND GIRL OF CASTÈL-CUILLÈ,¹

FROM THE GASCON OF JASMIN.

I.

At the foot of the mountain height
Where is perched Castèl-Cuillè,
When the apple, the plum, and the almond tree
In the plain below were growing white,
This is the song one might perceive
On a Wednesday morn of Saint Joseph's Eve:

“The roads should blossom, the roads should
bloom,
So fair a bride shall leave her home!
Should blossom and bloom with garlands gay,
So fair a bride shall pass to-day!”

This old Te Deum, rustic rites attending,
Seemed from the clouds descending;
When lo! a merry company

¹ Jasmin, the author of this beautiful poem, is to the South of France what Burns is to the South of Scotland,—the representative of the heart of the people,—one of those happy bards who are born with their mouths full of birds (*la bouco pleno d'aouzelous*). He has written his own biography in a poetic form, and the simple narrative of his poverty, his struggles, and his triumphs is very touching. He still lives at Agen, on the Garonne; and long may he live there to delight his native land with native songs!

Of rosy village girls, clean as the eye,
 Each one with her attendant swain,
 Came to the cliff, all singing the same strain;
 Resembling there, so near unto the sky,
 Rejoicing angels, that kind Heaven has sent
 For their delight and our encouragement.

Together blending,
 And soon descending
 The narrow sweep
 Of the hillside steep,
 They wind aslant
 Towards Saint Amant,
 Through leafy alleys
 Of verdurous valleys
 With merry sallies
 Singing their chant:

“The roads should blossom, the roads should
 bloom,
 So fair a bride shall leave her home!
 Should blossom and bloom with garlands gay,
 So fair a bride shall pass to-day!”

It is Baptiste, and his affianced maiden,
 With garlands for the bridal laden!

The sky was blue; without one cloud of gloom,
 The sun of March was shining brightly,
 And to the air the freshening wind gave lightly
 Its breathings of perfume.

When one beholds the dusky hedges blossom,
 A rustic bridal, ah! how sweet it is!
 To sounds of joyous melodies,
 That touch with tenderness the trembling bosom,

A band of maidens
Gayly frolicking,
A band of youngsters
Wildly rollicking!
 Kissing,
 Caressing,
With fingers pressing,
 Till in the veriest
Madness of mirth, as they dance,
They retreat and advance,
 Trying whose laugh shall be loudest
 and merriest;
While the bride, with roguish eyes,
Sporting with them, now escapes and cries:
 “ Those who catch me
 Married verily
 This year shall be ! ”
And all pursue with eager haste,
And all attain what they pursue,
And touch her pretty apron fresh and new.
And the linen kirtle round her waist.

Meanwhile, whence comes it that among
These youthful maidens fresh and fair,
So joyous, with such laughing air,
Baptiste stands sighing, with silent tongue ?
And yet the bride is fair and young !
Is it Saint Joseph would say to us all,
That love, o'er-hasty, precedeth a fall ?
 O, no ! for a maiden frail, I trow,
 Never bore so lofty a brow !
What lovers ! they give not a single caress !
To see them so careless and cold to-day,
 These are grand people, one would say,

What ails Baptiste ? what grief doth him oppress ?

It is, that, half way up the hill,
In yon cottage, by whose walls
Stand the cart-house and the stalls,
Dwelleth the blind orphan still.
Daughter of a veteran old ;
And you must know, one year ago,
That Margaret, the young and tender,
Was the village pride and splendor,
And Baptiste her lover bold.
Love, the deceiver, them ensnared ;
For them the altar was prepared ;
But alas ! the summer's blight,
The dread disease that none can stay,
The pestilence that walks by night,
Took the young bride's sight away.

All at the father's stern command was changed ;
Their peace was gone, but not their love estranged.
Wearied at home, ere long the lover fled ;
Returned but three short days ago,
The golden chain they round him throw,
He is enticed, and onward led
To marry Angela, and yet
Is thinking ever of Margaret.

Then suddenly a maiden cried,
" Anna, Theresa, Mary, Kate !
Here comes the cripple Jane ! " And by a foun-
tain's side
A woman, bent and gray with years,
Under the mulberry-trees appears,
And all towards her run, as fleet
As had they wings upon their feet.
It is that Jane, the cripple Jane,

Is a soothsayer, wary and kind.
She telleth fortunes, and none complain.
She promises one a village swain,
Another a happy wedding-day,
And the bride a lovely boy straightway.
All comes to pass as she avers;
She never deceives, she never errs.

But for this once the village seer
Wears a countenance severe,
And from beneath her eyebrows thin and white
Her two eyes flash like cannons bright
Aimed at the bridegroom in waistcoat blue,
Who, like a statue, stands in view;
Changing color, as well he might,
When the beldame wrinkled and gray
Takes the young bride by the hand,
And, with the tip of her reedy wand
Making the sign of the cross, doth say:—
“Thoughtless Angela, beware!
Lest, when thou weddest this false bridegroom,
Thou diggest for thyself a tomb!”
And she was silent; and the maidens fair
Saw from each eye escape a swollen tear;
But on a little streamlet silver-clear,
What are two drops of turbid rain?
Saddened a moment, the bridal train
Resumed the dance and song again;
The bridegroom only was pale with fear;—
And down green alleys
Of verdurous valleys,
With merry sallies,
They sang the refrain:—

“ The roads should blossom, the roads should
 bloom,
 So fair a bride shall leave her home!
 Should blossom and bloom with garlands gay,
 So fair a bride shall pass to-day!”

II.

And by suffering worn and weary,
 But beautiful as some fair angel yet,
 Thus lamented Margaret,
 In her cottage lone and dreary:—
 “ He has arrived! arrived at last!
 Yet Jane has named him not these three days past;
 Arrived! yet keeps aloof so far!
 And knows that of my night he is the star!
 Knows that long months I waited alone, benighted,
 And count the moments since he went away!
 Come! keep the promise of that happier day,
 That I may keep the faith to thee I plighted!
 What joy have I without thee? what delight?
 Grief wastes my life, and makes it misery;
 Day for the others ever, but for me
 Forever night! forever night!
 When he is gone 'tis dark! my soul is sad!
 I suffer! O my God! come, make me glad.
 When he is near, no thoughts of day intrude;
 Day has blue heavens, but Baptiste has blue eyes!
 Within them shines for me a heaven of love,
 A heaven all happiness, like that above,
 No more of grief! no more of lassitude!
 Earth I forget,—and heaven, and all distresses,
 When seated by my side my hand he presses;
 But when alone, remember all!

Where is Baptiste? he hears not when I call!
A branch of ivy, dying on the ground,
I need some bough to twine around!
In pity come! be to my suffering kind!
True love, they say, in grief doth more abound!
What then—when one is blind?

“Who knows? perhaps I am forsaken!
Ah! woe is me! then bear me to my grave!
O God! what thoughts within me waken!
Away! he will return! I do but rave!
He will return! I need not fear!
He swore it by our Saviour dear;
He could not come at his own will;
Is weary, or perhaps is ill!
Perhaps his heart, in this disguise,
Prepares for me some sweet surprise!
But some one comes! Though blind, my heart
can see!
And that deceives me not! 'tis he! 'tis he!”

And the door ajar is set,
And poor, confiding Margaret
Rises, with outstretched arms, but sightless eyes;
'Tis only Paul, her brother, who thus cries:—

“Angela the bride has passed!
I saw the wedding guests go by;
Tell me, my sister, why were we not asked?
For all are there but you and I!”
“Angela married! and not send
To tell her secret unto me!
O speak! who may the bridegroom be?”
“My sister, 'tis Baptiste, thy friend!”

A cry the blind girl gave, but nothing said;
 A milky whiteness spreads upon her cheeks;
 An icy hand, as heavy as lead,
 Descending, as her brother speaks,
 Upon her heart, that has ceased to beat,
 Suspends awhile its life and heat.
 She stands beside the boy, now sore distressed,
 A wax Madonna as a peasant dressed.

At length, the bridal song again
 Brings her back to her sorrow and pain.

“Hark! the joyous airs are ringing!
 Sister, dost thou hear them singing?
 How merrily they laugh and jest!
 Would we were bidden with the rest!
 I would don my hose of homespun gray,
 And my doublet of linen striped and gay;
 Perhaps they will come; for they do not wed
 Till to-morrow at seven o’clock, it is said!”

“I know it!” answered Margaret;
 Whom the vision, with aspect black as jet,
 Mastered again; and its hand of ice
 Held her heart crushed, as in a vice!
 “Paul, be not sad! ’Tis a holiday;
 To-morrow put on thy doublet gay!
 But leave me now for a while alone.”
 Away, with a hop and a jump, went Paul,
 And, as he whistled along the hall,
 Entered Jane, the crippled crone.

“Holy Virgin! what dreadful heat!
 I am faint, and weary, and out of breath;
 But thou art cold,—art chill as death;
 My little friend! what ails thee, sweet?”

“ Nothing! I heard them singing home the bride;
And, as I listened to the song,
I thought my turn would come ere long,
Thou knowest it is at Whitsuntide.
Thy cards forsooth can never lie,
To me such joy they prophesy,
Thy skill shall be vaunted far and wide
When they behold him at my side.
And poor Baptiste, what sayest thou?
It must seem long to him;—methinks I see him
now!”

Jane, shuddering, her hand doth press:
“ Thy love I cannot all approve;
We must not trust too much to happiness;—
Go, pray to God, that thou mayst love him less!”
“ The more I pray, the more I love!
It is no sin, for God is on my side!”
It was enough; and Jane no more replied.

Now to all hope her heart is barred and cold;
But to deceive the beldame old
She takes a sweet, contented air,
Speak of foul weather or of fair,
At every word the maiden smiles!
Thus the beguiler she beguiles;
So that, departing at the evening's close,
She says, “ She may be saved! she **nothing**
knows!”

Poor Jane, the cunning sorceress!
Now that thou wouldst, thou art no prophetess!
This morning, in the fulness of thy heart,
Thou wast so, far beyond thine art!

III.

Now rings the bell, nine times reverberating,
And the white daybreak, stealing up the sky,
Sees in two cottages two maidens waiting,
How differently!

Queen of a day, by flatterers caressed,
The one puts on her cross and crown,
Decks with a huge bouquet her breast,
And flaunting, fluttering up and down,
Looks at herself, and cannot rest.

The other, blind, within her little room,
Has neither crown nor flower's perfume;
But in their stead for something gropes apart,
That in a drawer's recess doth lie,
And, 'neath her bodice of bright scarlet dye,
Convulsive clasps it to her heart.

The one, fantastic, light as air,
'Mid kisses ringing,
And joyous singing,
Forgets to say her morning prayer!
The other, with cold drops upon her brow,
Joins her two hands, and kneels upon the floor,
And whispers, as her brother opes the door,
"O God! forgive me now!"

And then the orphan, young and blind,
Conducted by her brother's hand,
Towards the church, through paths unscanned,
With tranquil air, her way doth wind.

Odors of laurel, making her faint and pale,
Round her at times exhale,
And in the sky as yet no sunny ray,
But brumal vapors gray.

Near that castle, fair to see,
Crowded with sculptures old, in every part,
Marvels of nature and of art,
And proud of its name of high degree,
A little chapel, almost bare
At the base of the rock, is builded there;
All glorious that it lifts aloof,
Above each jealous cottage roof,
Its sacred summit, swept by autumn gales,
And its blackened steeple high in air,
Round which the osprey screams and sails.

“ Paul, lay thy noisy rattle by! ”

Thus Margaret said. “ Where are we? we ascend! ”

“ Yes; seest thou not our journey’s end? ”

Hearst not the osprey from the belfry cry?
The hideous bird, that brings ill luck, we know!
Dost thou remember when our father said,
The night we watched beside his bed,
‘ O daughter, I am weak and low;
Take care of Paul; I feel that I am dying!’
And thou, and he, and I, all fell to crying?
Then on the roof the osprey screamed aloud;
And here they brought our father in his shroud.
There is his grave; there stands the cross we set;
Why dost thou clasp me so, dear Margaret?

Come in! The bride will be here soon:

Thou tremblest! O my God! thou art going to
swoon! ”

She could no more,—the blind girl, weak and weary!

A voice seemed crying from that grave so dreary,
 “What wouldst thou do, my daughter?”—and she started;

And quick recoiled, aghast, faint-hearted;
 But Paul, impatient, urges ever more
 Her steps towards the open door;
 And when, beneath her feet, the unhappy maid
 Crushes the laurel near the house immortal,
 And with her head, as Paul talks on again,
 Touches the crown of filigrane
 Suspended from the low-arched portal,
 No more restrained, no more afraid,
 She walks, as for a feast arrayed,
 And in the ancient chapel’s sombre night
 They both are lost to sight.

At length the bell,
 With booming sound,
 Sends forth, resounding round,
 Its hymneal peal o’er rock and down the dell.
 It is broad day, with sunshine and with rain;
 And yet the guests delay not long,
 For soon arrives the bridal train,
 And with it brings the village throng.

In sooth, deceit maketh no mortal gay,
 For lo! Baptiste on this triumphant day,
 Mute as an idiot, sad as yester-morning,
 Thinks only of the beldame’s words of warning.

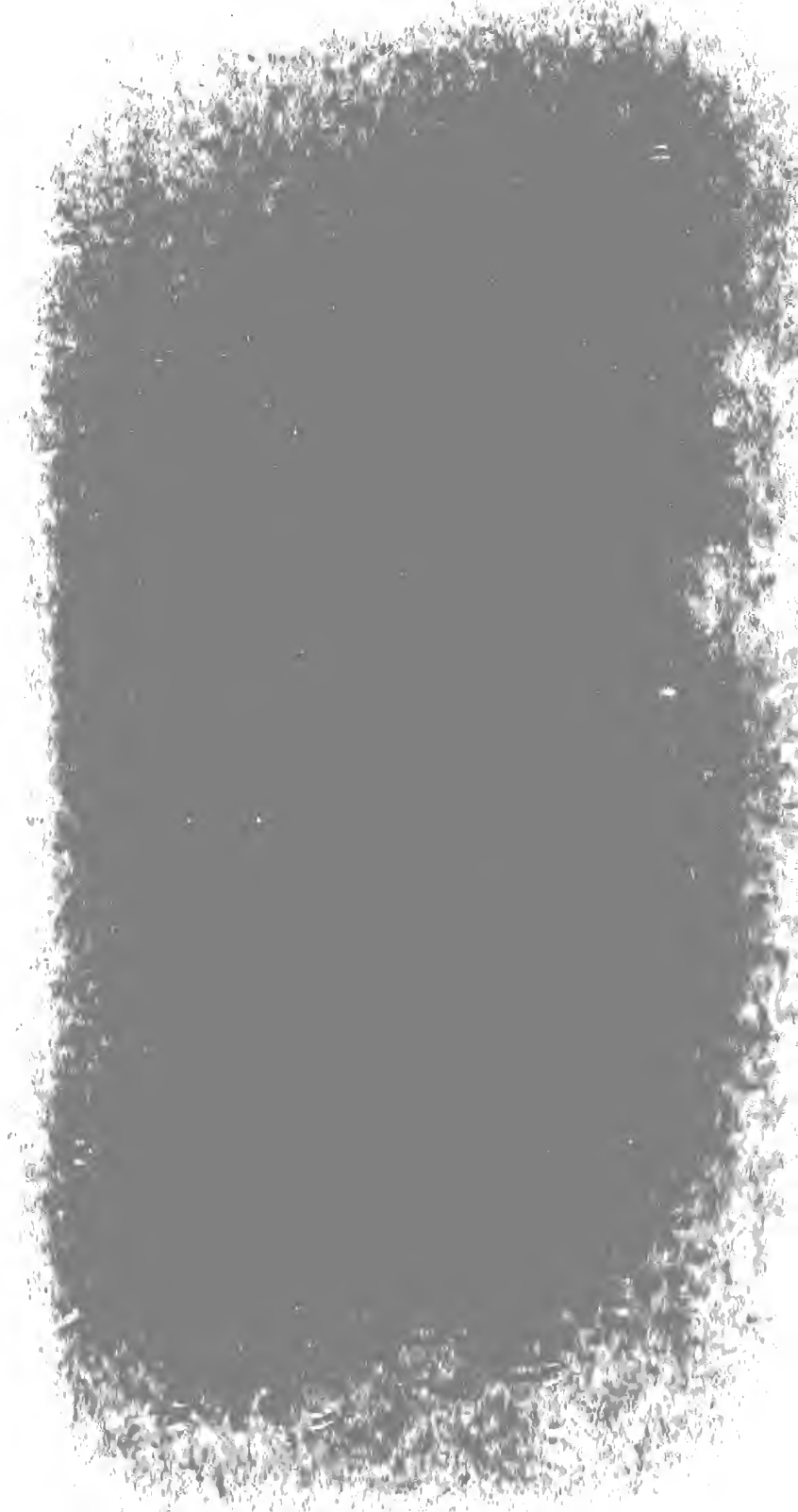
And Angela thinks of her cross, I wis;
 To be a bride is all! The pretty lisper

Feels her heart swell to hear all round her whisper
“How beautiful! how beautiful she is!”

But she must calm that giddy head,
For already the Mass is said;
At the holy table stands the priest;
The wedding ring is blessed; Baptiste receives it;
Ere on the finger of the bride he leaves it,
He must pronounce one word at least!
’Tis spoken; and sudden at the groomsman’s side
“’Tis he!” a well-known voice has cried.
And while the wedding guests all hold their breath,
Opes the confessional, and the blind girl, see!
“Baptiste,” she said, “since thou hast wished my
death,
As holy water be my blood for thee!”
And calmly in the air a knife suspended!
Doubtless her guardian angel near attended,
For anguish did its work so well,
That, ere the fatal stroke descended,
Lifeless she fell!

At eve, instead of bridal verse,
The De Profundis filled the air;
Decked with flowers a simple hearse
To the churchyard forth they bear;
Village girls in robes of snow
Follow, weeping as they go;
Nowhere was a smile that day,
No, ah no! for each one seemed to say:—

“The roads should mourn and be veiled in gloom,
So fair a corpse shall leave its home!
Should mourn and should weep, ah, well-away!
So fair a corpse shall pass to-day!”





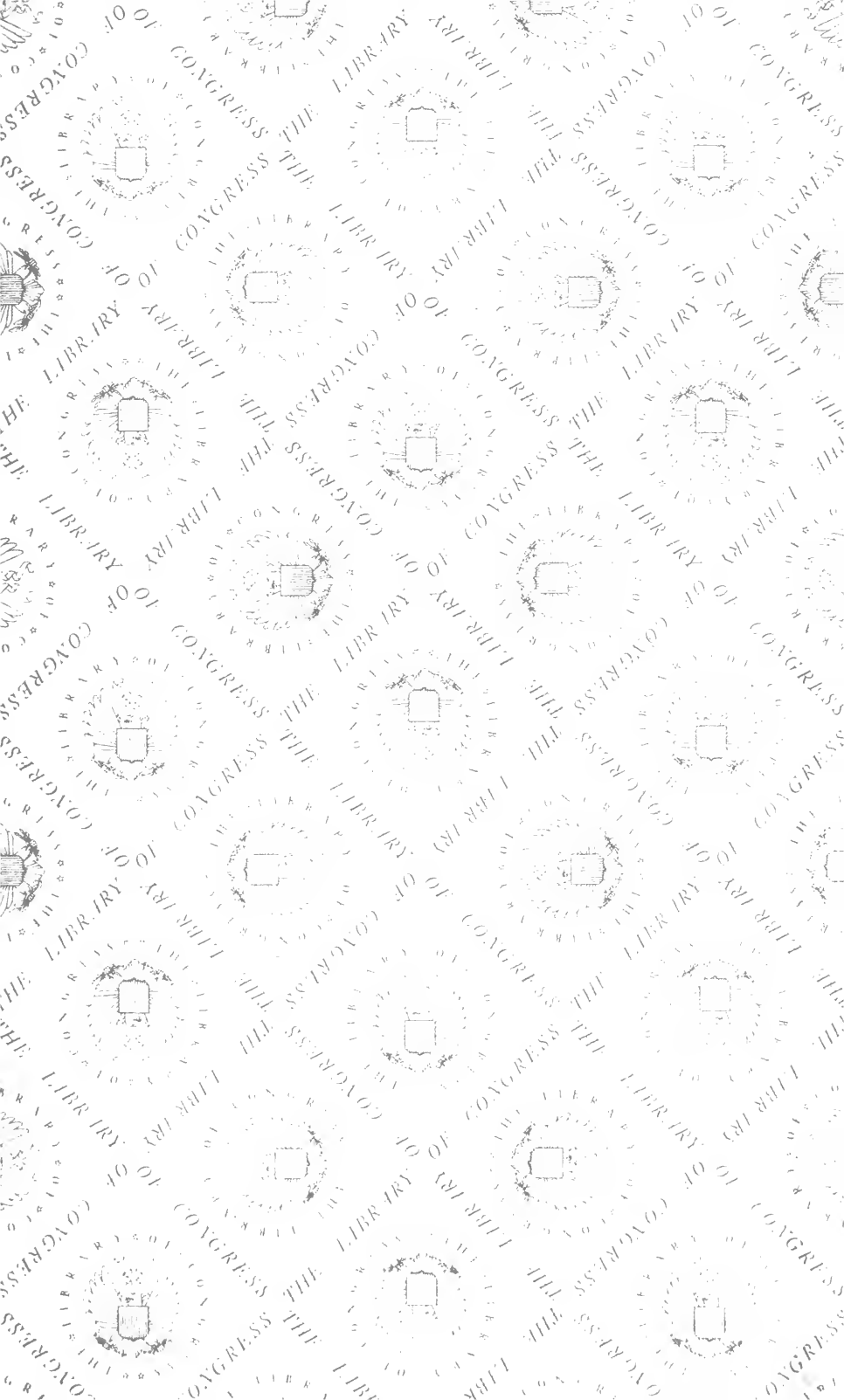


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