













# The Princess and other Poems

BY ✓

Alfred Lord Tennyson

POET LAUREATE

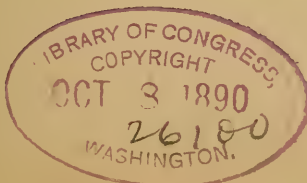
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BY

Charles Howard Johnson



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## THE PRINCESS ; A MEDLEY.

— \* \* —  
PROLOGUE.

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day  
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
Up to the people : thither flocked at noon  
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half  
The neighboring borough with their Institute  
Of which he was the patron. I was there  
From college, visiting the son,— the son  
A Walter too,— with others of our set,  
Five others : we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,  
Greek, set with busts : from vases in the hall  
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their  
names,  
Grew side by side ; and on the pavement lay  
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,  
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time ;  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together ; celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans

Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs  
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,  
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,  
His own forefathers' arms and armour hung.

And "this," he said, "was Hugh's at Agincourt;  
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:  
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle  
With all about him"—which he brought, and I  
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights,  
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings  
Who laid about them at their wills and died;  
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd  
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,  
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

' O miracle of women ' said the book,  
" O noble heart who, being strait-besieged  
By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,  
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost —  
Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire —  
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,  
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,  
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,  
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,  
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,  
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook!  
O miracle of noble womanhood!"



"THITHER FLOCK'D AT NOON."

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle ;  
And, I all rapt in this, ‘ Come out,’ he said,  
“ To the Abbey : there is Aunt Elizabeth



“ A MAN WITH KNOBS AND WIRES AND VIALS FIRED A  
CANNON.”

And sister Lilia with the rest.” We went  
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)  
Down thro’ the park : strange was the sight to me



---

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown  
With happy faces and with holiday.  
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads,  
The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone  
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,  
The fountain of the moment, playing, now  
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball  
Danced like a wisp : and somewhat lower down  
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired  
A cannon : Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields : and here were telescopes  
For azure views ; and there a group of girls  
In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter : round the lake  
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied  
And shook the lilies : perch'd about the knolls  
A dozen angry models jetted steam :  
A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon  
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
And dropt a fairy parachute and past :  
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations ; so that sport  
Went hand in hand with Science ; otherwhere  
Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamour bowl'd  
And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd about  
Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men and maids  
Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light  
And shadow, while the twangling violin  
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead

The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time ;  
And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,  
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave  
The park, the crowd, the house ; but all within  
The sward was trim as any garden lawn :  
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
From neighbour seats: and there was Ralph himself,  
A broken statue propt against the wall,  
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
Half child half woman as she was, had wound  
A scarf of orange round the stony he'lm,  
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook  
Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a feast  
Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the guests,  
And there we join'd them : then the maiden Aunt  
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd  
An universal culture for the crowd,  
And all things great ; but we, unworthier, told  
Of college : he had climb'd across the spikes,  
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,  
And he had breath'd the Proctor's dogs ; and one  
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,  
But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;  
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw  
The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which brought  
My book to mind : and opening this I read  
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her  
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,  
And much I praised her nobleness, and "Where,"  
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay  
Beside him) "lives there such a woman now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are thousands now  
Such women, but convention beats them down :  
It is but bringing up ; no more than that :  
You men have done it : how I hate you all !  
Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were  
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,  
That love to keep us children ! O I wish  
That I were some great princess, I would build  
Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are taught ;  
We are twice as quick !" And here she shook aside  
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling "Pretty were the sight  
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt  
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,  
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.  
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,  
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph  
Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear,  
If there were many Lilias in the brood,

However deep you might embower the nest,  
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot :  
"That's your light way ; but I would make it death  
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd ;  
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make her, she :  
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,  
And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"  
And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,  
All else was well, for she-society.  
They boated and they cricketed ; they talk'd  
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;  
They lost their weeks ; they vex't the souls of deans ;  
They rode ; they betted ; made a hundred friends,  
And caught the blossom of the flying terms,  
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,  
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,  
Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,  
"We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much.  
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did "

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns  
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,  
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd  
And wrung it. "Doubt my word again !" he said.



Said Lilia ; “ Why not now ? ” the maiden Aunt.  
 “ Why not a summer’s as a winter’s tale ?  
 A tale for summer as befits the time,  
 And something it should be to suit the place,  
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
 Grave, solemn ! ”

Walter warp’d his mouth at this  
 To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh’d  
 And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth  
 An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,  
 Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden Aunt  
 (A little sense of wrong had touch’d her face  
 With color) turn’d to me with “ As you will ;  
 Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
 Or be yourself your hero if you will. ”

“ Take Lilia, then, for heroine ” clamour’d he,  
 “ And make her some great princess, six feet high,  
 Grand, epic, homicidal ; and be you  
 The Prince to win her ! ”

“ Then follow me, the Prince, ”  
 I answer’d, “ each be hero in his turn !  
 Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—  
 Heroic seems our Princess as required —  
 But something made to suit with Time and place,  
 A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
 A talk of college and of ladies’ rights,  
 A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
 And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments  
 For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all —  
 This *were* a medley ! we should have him back  
 Who told the ‘ Winter’s tale ’ to do it for us.

No matter : we will say whatever comes,  
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad or a song  
To give us breathing-space."

So I began,

And the rest follow'd : and the women sang  
Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :  
And here I give the story and the songs.

## PART I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,



Of temper amorous, as  
the first of May,

With lengths of yellow  
ringlet, like a  
girl,

For on my cradle  
shone the North-  
ern star.

There lived an an-  
cient legend in our  
house.

Some sorcerer, whom  
a far-off grandsire  
burnt

Because he cast no  
shadow, had fore-  
told,

Dying, that none of all  
our blood should  
know

The shadow from the  
substance, and that  
one



Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.  
For so, my mother said, the story ran.  
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,  
An old and strange affection of the house.  
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what :  
On a sudden in the midst of men and day,  
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,  
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.  
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,  
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd "catalepsy."  
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers ;  
My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,  
So gracious was her tact and tenderness :  
But my good father thought a king a king ;  
He cared not for the affection of the house ;  
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand  
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands  
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass  
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd  
To one, a neighbouring Princess : she to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
At eight years old ; and still from time to time  
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,  
And of her brethren, youths of puissance ;  
And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
And one dark tress ; and all around them both  
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their  
queen.



“TORE THE KING’S LETTER.”

But when the days drew nigh  
 that I should wed,  
 My father sent ambassadors  
 with furs  
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her :  
 these brought back  
 A present, a great labour of the  
 loom ;  
 And therewithal an answer  
 vague as wind :  
 Besides, they saw the king ; he  
 took the gifts ;  
 He said there was a compact ;  
 that was true :  
 But then she had a will ; was he  
 to blame ?  
 And maiden fancies ; loved to  
 live alone  
 Among her women ; certain,  
 would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood  
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends :  
 The first, a gentleman of broken means  
 (His father’s fault) but given to starts and bursts  
 Of revel ; and the last, my other heart,  
 And almost my half-self, for still we moved  
 Together, twinn’d as horse’s ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father’s face  
 Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
 Inflamed with wrath : he started on his feet,

Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent  
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof  
From skirt to skirt ; and at last he sware  
That he would send a hundred thousand men,  
And bring her in a whirlwind : then he chew'd  
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen  
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. " My father, let me go.  
It cannot be but some gross error lies  
In this report, this answer of a king,  
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable :  
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,  
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,  
May rue the bargain made." And Florian said :  
" I have a sister at the foreign court,  
Who moves about the Princess ; she, you know,  
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence :  
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
The lady of three castles in that land :  
Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean."  
And Cyril whisper'd : " Take me with you too."  
Then laughing, " what if these weird seizures come  
Upon you in those lands, and no one near  
To point you out the shadow from the truth !  
Take me : I'll serve you better in a strait ;  
I grate on rusty hinges here : " but " No !"  
Roar'd the rough king, " you shall not ; we ourself  
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
In iron gauntlets : break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and past

Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town ;  
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out ;  
 Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed  
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees :  
 What were those fancies? wherefore break her troth?  
 Proud look'd the lips : but while I meditated  
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
 And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks



“HALF IN DREAD TO HEAR MY FATHER’S CLAMOUR AT OUR BACKS.”

Of the wild woods together; and a Voice  
 Went with it, “Follow, follow, thou shalt win.”

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
 Became her golden shield, I stole from court  
 With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,  
 Cat-footed thro’ the town and half in dread  
 To hear my father’s clamour at our backs

---

With Ho ! from some bay-window shake the night ;  
But all was quiet : from the bastion'd walls  
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,  
And flying reach'd the frontier : then we crost  
To a livelier land ; and so by tilth and grange,  
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,  
We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,  
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and small his voice,  
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind  
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines ;  
A little dry old man, without a star,  
Not like a king : three days he feasted us,  
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,  
And my betroth'd. " You do us, Prince," he said,  
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,  
" All honour. We remember love ourselves  
In our sweet youth : there did a compact pass  
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony —  
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.  
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,  
With my full heart : but there were widows here,  
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;  
They fed her theories, in and out of place  
Maintaining that with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.  
They harp'd on this ; with this our banquets rang ;  
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk ;  
Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot  
To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter held,  
Was all in all : they had but been, she thought,

As children ; they must lose the child, assume  
 The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,  
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,  
 But all she is and does is awful ; odes  
 About this losing of the child ; and rhymes  
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying change  
 Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;  
 And they that know such things— I sought but  
 peace ;

No critic I — would call them masterpieces :  
 They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a boon,  
 A certain summer-palace which I have  
 Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,  
 Yet being an easy man, gave it : and there,  
 All wild to found an University  
 For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and more  
 We know not,— only this : they see no men,  
 Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
 Her brethren, tho' they loved her, looked upon her  
 As on a kind of paragon ; and I  
 (Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed  
 Dispute betwixt myself and mine : but since  
 (And I confess with right) you think me bound  
 In some sort, I can give you letters to her ;  
 And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance  
 Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king ;

And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur  
 With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
 Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets  
 But chafing me on fire to find my bride)  
 Went forth again with both my friends. We rode

Many a long league back to the North. At last  
From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,  
We dropt with evening on a rustic town  
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,  
Close at the boundary of the liberties ;  
There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host  
To council, plied him with his richest wines,  
And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
As blank as death in marble ; then exclaim'd  
Averring it was clear against all rules  
For any man to go : but as his brain  
Began to mellow, " If the king," he said,  
" Had given us letters, was he bound to speak ?  
The king would bear him out ;" and at the last —  
The summer of the vine in all his veins —  
" No doubt that we might make it worth his while.  
She once had passed that way ; he heard her speak ;  
She scared him ; life ! he never saw the like ;  
She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave :  
And he, he revered his liege-lady there ;  
He always made a point to post with mares ;  
His daughter and his housemaid were the boys :  
The land, he understood, for miles about  
Was till'd by women ; all the swine were sows,  
And all the dogs" —

But while he jested thus,  
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,  
Remembering how we three presented Maid  
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,  
In masque or pageant at my father's court.

We sent mine host to purchase female gear ;  
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake  
The midriff of despair with laughter, help  
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes  
We rustled : him we gave a costly bribe  
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,  
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,  
And rode till midnight when the college lights  
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
And linden alley : then we passed an arch,  
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings  
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars ;  
And some inscription ran along the front,  
But deep in shadow : further on we gain'd  
A little street half garden and half house ;  
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise  
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling  
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
Of fountains spouted up and showering down  
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose :  
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,  
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and  
Earth  
With constellation and with continent,  
Above an entry : riding in, we call'd ;  
A plump-arm'd Ostler and a stable wench  
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.



Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,  
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave  
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
In laurel : her we ask'd of that and this,  
And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche" she said,  
"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,  
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are we,"  
One voice, we cried ; and I sat down and wrote,  
In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East :

"Three ladies of the Northern empire pray  
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,  
As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes :  
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;  
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd  
To float about a glimmering night, and watch  
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell  
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,  
O we fell out I know not why,  
And kiss'd again with tears.  
And blessings on the falling out  
That all the more endears,  
When we fall out with those we love  
And kiss again with tears !  
For when we came where lies the child  
We lost in other years,  
There above the little grave,  
O there above the little grave,  
We kiss'd again with tears,

## PART II.

At break of day the College Portress came ;  
She brought us Academic silks, in hue  
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
And zoned with gold ; and now when these were on,  
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,  
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know  
The Princess Ida waited ; out we paced,  
I first, and following thro' the porch that  
All round with laurel, issued in a court  
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths  
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers,  
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,  
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst,  
And here and there on lattice edges lay  
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,  
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,  
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne  
All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant  
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,  
Than our man's earth ; such eyes were in her head,  
And so much grace and power, breathing down

From over her arch'd brows, with every turn  
 Lived thro her to the tips of her long hands,  
 And to her feet. She rose her height, and said :

“ We give you welcome : not without redound  
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
 The first-fruits of the stranger : aftertime,  
 And that full voice which circles round the grave,  
 Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.  
 What ! are the ladies of your land so tall ?”  
 “ We of the court,” said Cyril. “ From the court,”  
 She answer'd, “ then ye know the Prince ?” and he:  
 “ The climax of his age ! as tho' there were  
 One rose in all the world, your Highness that,  
 He worships your ideal :” she replied :  
 “ We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear  
 This barren verbiage, current among men,  
 Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.  
 Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem  
 As arguing love of knowledge and of power ;  
 Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,  
 We dream not of him : when we set our hand  
 To this great work, we purpos'd with ourself  
 Never to wed. You likewise will do well,  
 Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling  
 The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,  
 Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
 You may with those self-styled our lords ally  
 Your fortunes justlier balanced, scale with scale.”

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves,  
 Perused the matting ; then an officer

Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these :  
Not for three years to correspond with home ;  
Not for three years to cross the liberties ;  
Not for three years to speak with any men ;  
And many more, which hastily subscribed,  
We enter'd on the boards : and " Now," she cried,  
" Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our  
hall !

Our statues ! — not of those that men desire,  
Sleek Odaliskes, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ; but she  
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she  
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows  
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose  
Convention, since to look on noble forms  
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism  
That which is higher. O lift your natures up :  
Embrace our aims : work out your freedom. Girls,  
Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd :  
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble. Leave us : you may go :  
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before ;  
For they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive."

She spoke, and bowing waved

Dismissal : back again we crost the court  
 To Lady Psyche's : as we enter'd in,  
 There sat along the forms, like morning doves  
 That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,  
 A patient range of pupils ; she herself  
 Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
 A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,  
 And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
 Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,  
 In shining draperies, headed like a star,  
 Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
 Aglaïa slept. We sat : the Lady glanced :  
 Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame  
 That whisper'd " Asses' ears," among the sedge,  
 " My sister." " Comey, too, by all that's fair,"  
 Said Cyril. " O hush, hush !" and she began.

" This world was once a fluid haze of light,  
 Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast  
 The planets : then the monster, then the man ;  
 Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
 Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate ;  
 As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here  
 Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took  
 A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past ;  
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
 As emblematic of a nobler age ;  
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those  
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo ;  
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines



“ERECT BEHIND A DESK OF SATIN-WOOD.”

Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
How far from just ; till warming with her theme  
She fulmined out her scorn of laws Salique  
And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet  
With much contempt, and came to chivalry :  
When some respect, however slight, was paid  
To woman, superstition all awry :  
However then commenced the dawn : a beam  
Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
Of promise ; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,  
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared  
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert  
None lordlier than themselves but that which made  
Woman and man. She had founded ; they must  
build.

Here might they learn whatever men were taught :  
Let them not fear : some said their heads were less :  
Some men's were small ; not they the least of men ;  
For often fineness compensated size :  
Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew  
With using ; thence the man's, if more was more ;  
He took advantage of his strength to be  
First in the field : some ages had been lost ;  
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life  
Was longer, and albeit their glorious names  
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth  
The highest is the measure of the man,  
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,  
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,  
But Homer, Plato, Verulam ; even so  
With woman : and in arts of government



Elizabeth and others ; arts of war  
The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace  
Sappho and others vied with any man :  
And, last not least, she who had left her place,  
And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow  
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight  
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
Dilating on the future ; "everywhere  
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,  
Two in the tangled business of the world,  
Two in the liberal offices of life,  
Two plummetts dropt for one to sound the abyss  
Of science, and the secrets of the mind :  
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more :  
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth  
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,  
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the  
world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us : the rest  
Parted ; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she  
Began to address us, and was moving on  
In gratulation, till as when a boat  
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice  
Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried  
"My brother !" "Well, my sister." "O," she  
said,  
"What do you here ? and in this dress ? and these ?  
Why who are these ? a wolf within the fold !

A pack of wolves ! the Lord be gracious to me !  
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all !”  
 “ No plot, no plot,” he answer’d. “ Wretched boy,  
 How saw you not the inscription on the gate,  
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH ?”  
 “ And if I had,” he answer’d, “ who could think  
 The softer Adams of your Academe,  
 O sister, Sirens tho’ they be, were such  
 As chanted on the blanching bones of men ?”  
 “ But you will find it otherwise,” she said.  
 “ You jest : ill jesting with edge-tools ! my vow  
 Bids me to speak, and O that iron will,  
 That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,  
 The Princess.” “ Well then, Psyche, take my life,  
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
 For warning : bury me beside the gate,  
 And cut this epitaph above my bones :  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
 All for the common good of womankind.*”  
 “ Let me die too,” said Cyril, “ having seen  
 And heard the Lady Psyche.”

I struck in :

“ Albeit so mask’d, Madam, I love the truth ;  
 Receive it ; and in me behold the Prince  
 Your countryman, affianced years ago  
 To the Lady Ida : here, for here she was,  
 And thus (what other way was left) I came.”  
 “ O Sir, O Prince, I have no country ; none ;  
 If any, this ; but none. Whate’er I was  
 Disrooted what I am is grafted here.  
 Affianced, Sir ? love-whispers may not breathe  
 Within this vestal limit, and how should I,

Who am not mine, say, live : the thunderbolt  
Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ; it falls.”  
“ Yet pause,” I said : “ for that inscription there,  
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
To scare the fowl from fruit ; if more there be,  
If more and acted on, what follows? war ;  
Your own work marr’d : for this your Academe,  
Whichever side be victor, in the halloo  
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass  
With all fair theories only made to gild  
A stormless summer.” “ Let the Princess judge  
Of that” she said : “ farewell, Sir— and to you.  
I shudder at the sequel, but I go.”

“ Are you that Lady Psyche,” I rejoin’d,  
“ The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
Yet hangs his portrait in my father’s hall  
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)  
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,  
And all else fled? we point to it, and we say,  
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
But branches current yet in kindred veins.”  
“ Are you that Psychè,” Florian added ; “ she  
With whom I sang about the morning hills,  
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,  
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you  
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,  
To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming draught  
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you

That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?  
 You were that Psyche, but what are you now?"  
 "You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom  
 I would be that for ever which I seem,  
 Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
 And glean your scatter'd sapience."

Then once more,  
 "Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,  
 "That on her bridal morn before she part  
 From all her old companions, when the king  
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties  
 Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;  
 That were there any of our people there  
 In want or peril, there was one to hear  
 And help them? look! for such are these and I."  
 "Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd, "to whom,  
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
 Came flying while you sat beside the well?  
 The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,  
 And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood  
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.  
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.  
 O by the bright head of my little niece,  
 You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"  
 "You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,  
 "The mother of the sweetest little maid,  
 That ever crow'd for kisses."

"Out upon it!"

She answer'd, "peace! and why should I not play  
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
 Him you call great: he for the common weal,

The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
As I might slay this child, if good need were,  
Slew both his sons : and I, shall I, on whom  
The secular emancipation turns  
Of half this world, be swerved from right to save  
A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.  
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.  
O hard, when love and duty clash ! I fear  
My conscience will not count me fleckless ; yet --  
Hear my conditions : promise (otherwise  
You perish) as you came, to slip away  
To-day, to-morrow, soon : it shall be said,  
These women were too barbarous, would not learn ;  
They fled, who might have shamed us : promise,  
all."

What could we else, we promised each ; and she,  
Like some wild creature, newly-caged, commenced  
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
By Florian ; holding out her lily arms  
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said :  
" I knew you at the first : tho' you have grown  
You scarce have alter'd : I am sad and glad  
To see you, Florian. *I* give thee to death  
My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.  
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
Our mother, is she well ?"

With that she kiss'd  
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung  
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up  
From out a common vein of memory  
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,

And far allusion, till the gracious dews  
Began to glisten and to fall : and while  
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,  
“ I brought a message here from Lady Blanche.”  
Back started she, and turning round we saw  
The Lady Blanche’s daughter where she stood,  
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,  
That clad her like an April daffodilly  
(Her mother’s color) with her lips apart,  
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,  
As bottom agates seen to wave and float  
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.  
Then Lady Psyche, “ Ah — Melissa — you !  
You heard us ? ” and Melissa, “ O pardon me !  
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish :  
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,  
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,  
To give three gallant gentlemen to death.”  
“ I trust you,” said the other, “ for we two  
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine :  
But yet your mother’s jealous temperament —  
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove  
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear  
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
My honour, these their lives.” “ Ah, fear me not’  
Replied Melissa ; “ no — I would not tell,  
No, not for all Aspasia’s cleverness,  
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things  
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.”



“MELISSA, WITH HER HAND UPON THE LOCK.”



“CYRIL TOOK THE CHILD.”

“Be it so” the other,  
 “that we still may  
 lead  
 The new light up, and  
 culminate in peace,  
 For Solomon may come  
 to Sheba yet.”  
 Said Cyril, “Madam, he  
 the wisest man  
 Feasted the woman wisest  
 then, in halls  
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor  
 should you  
 (Tho’ Madam *you* should  
 answer, *we* would ask)  
 Less welcome find among  
 us, if you came  
 Among us, debtors for  
 our lives to you,  
 Myself for something  
 more.” He said not  
 what,  
 But “Thanks,” she an-  
 swer’d, “Go: we have  
 been too long  
 Together: keep your  
 hoods about the face;

They do so that affect abstraction here.  
 Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold  
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well.”

We turn’d to go, but Cyril took the child,  
 And held her round the knees against his waist,



And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,  
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child  
Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd ;  
And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd

For half the day thro' stately theatres  
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard  
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate  
The circle rounded under female hands  
With flawless demonstration : follow'd then  
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out  
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long  
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time  
Sparkle for ever : then we dipt in all  
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
The morals, something of the frame, the rock,  
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,  
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
And whatsoever can be taught and known ;  
Till like three horses that have broken fence,  
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,  
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke :  
" Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we."  
" They hunt old trails " said Cyril " very well ;  
But when did woman ever yet invent ?"  
" Ungracious !" answer'd Florian ; " have you learnt  
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd  
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad ?"  
" O trash " he said, " but with a kernel in it.

Should I not call her wise, who made me wise ?  
And learnt ? I learnt more from her in a flash,  
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,  
And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,  
And round these halls a thousand baby loves  
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,  
Whence follows many a vacant pang ; but O  
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,  
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too ;  
He cleft me thro' the stoinacher ; and now  
What think you of it, Florian ? do I chase  
The substance or the shadow ? will it hold ?  
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I  
Flatter myself that always everywhere  
I know the substance when I see it. Well,  
Are castles shadows ? Three of them ? Is she  
The sweet proprietress a shadow ? If not,  
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat ?  
For dear are those three castles to my wants,  
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
And two dear things are one of double worth,  
And much I might have said, but that my zone  
Unmann'd me : then the Doctors ! O to hear  
The Doctors ! O to watch the thirsty plants  
Imbibing ! once or twice I thought to roar,  
To break my chain, to shake my mane : but thou,  
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry !  
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat ;  
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet

Star-sisters answering under crescent brows ;  
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose  
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
Where they like swallows coming out of time  
Will wonder why they came : but hark the bell  
For dinner, let us go !”



“IN THIS HAND HELD A VOLUME AS TO READ, AND SMOOTHED  
A PETTED PEACOCK DOWN WITH THAT.”

And in we stream'd  
Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
By twos and threes, till all from end to end  
With beauties every shade of brown and fair  
In colours gayer than the morning mist,

The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.  
 How might a man not wander from his wits  
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own  
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,  
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
 Sat compass'd with professors : they, the while,  
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro :  
 A clamour thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms



“ BUT WE THREE SAT MUFFLED LIKE THE FATES.”

Of art and science : Lady Blanche alone  
 Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
 With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,  
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
 In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace  
 Concluded, and we sought the gardens : there  
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and one

In this hand held a volume as to read,  
And smoothed a petted peacock down with that :  
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,  
Or under arches of the marble bridge  
Hung, shadow'd from the heat : some hid and  
sought

In the orange thickets : others tost a ball  
Above the fountain-jets, and back again  
With laughter : others lay about the lawns,  
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May  
Was passing : what was learning unto them ?  
They wished to marry ; they could rule a house ;  
Men hated learned women : but we three  
Sat muffled like the Fates ; and often came  
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
That harm'd not: then day droopt; the chapel bells  
Call'd us : we left the walks ; we mixt with those  
Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,  
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,  
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,  
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court  
A long melodious thunder to the sound  
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven  
A blessing on her labours for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow  
Wind of the western sea !  
Over the rolling waters go  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
Blow him again to me ;  
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
Father will come to thee soon ;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
Father will come to thee soon ;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west  
Under the silver moon :  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

PART III.

Morn in the white wake of the morning star  
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.  
We rose, and each by other drest with care  
Descended to the court that lay three parts



“MORN IN THE WHITE WAKE OF THE MORNING STAR.”

In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd  
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and  
watch'd,  
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd

Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,  
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes  
 The circled Iris of a night of tears ;  
 "And fly," she cried, "O fly, while yet you may !  
 My mother knows : " and when I ask'd her "how,"  
 "My fault" she wept "my fault ! and yet not  
     mine ;  
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.  
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night  
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
 She says the Princess should have been the Head,  
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms ;  
 And so it was agreed when first they came ;  
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,  
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used ;  
 Hers more than half the students, all the love.  
 And so last night she fell to canvass you :  
*Her* countrywomen ! she did not envy her.  
 ' Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?  
 Girls?—more like men ! ' and at these words the  
     snake,  
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast ;  
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek  
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye  
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd :  
 ' O marvellously modest maiden, you !  
 Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men  
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus  
 For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am shamed  
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse  
 What looks so little graceful : ' men ' (for still  
 My mother went revolving on the word)





"O MARVELLOUSLY MODEST MAIDEN, YOU!"

‘ And so they are, — very like men indeed —  
 And with that woman closeted for hours !  
 Then came these dreadful words out one by one,  
 ‘ Why — these — *are* — men !’ I shudder’d : ‘ and  
     you know it.’  
 ‘ O ask me nothing,’ I said : ‘ And she knows too,  
 And she conceals it.’ So my mother clutch’d  
 The truth at once, but with no word from me ;  
 And now thus early risen she goes to inform  
 The Princess : Lady Psyche will be crush’d ;  
 But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly :  
 But heal me with your pardon ere you go.”

“ What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush ?”  
 Said Cyril : “ Pale one, blush again : than wear  
 Those lilies, better blush our lives away.  
 Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven.”  
 He added, “ lest some classic Angel speak  
 In scorn of us, ‘ They mounted, Ganymedes,  
 To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.’  
 But I will melt this marble into wax  
 To yield us farther furlough :” and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought  
 He scarce would prosper. “ Tell us,” Florian ask’d,  
 “ How grew this feud between the right and left.”  
 “ O long ago,” she said, “ betwixt these two  
 Division smoulders hidden ; ’tis my mother,  
 Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
 Pent in a crevice : much I bear with her :  
 I never knew my father, but she says  
 (God help her) she was wedded to a fool ;

And still she rail'd against the state of things.  
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.  
But when your sister came she won the heart  
Of Ida: they were still together, grew  
(For so they said themselves) inosculated;  
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;  
One mind in all things: yet my mother still  
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,  
And angled with them for her pupil's love:  
She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:  
But I must go: I dare not tarry," and light,  
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her,  
"An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.  
If I could love, why this were she: how pretty  
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,  
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:  
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,  
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of the crane,  
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.  
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,  
But in her own grand way: being herself  
Three times more noble than three score of men,  
She sees herself in every woman else,  
And so she wears her error like a crown  
To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,  
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix

The nectar ; but — ah she — whene'er she moves  
 The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
 A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd  
 The terrace ranged along the Northern front,  
 And leaning there on those balusters, high  
 Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale  
 That blown about the foliage underneath,  
 And sated with the innumerable rose,  
 Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came  
 Cyril, and yawning "O hard task," he cried ;  
 "No fighting shadows here ! I forced a way  
 Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.  
 Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump  
 A league of street in summer solstice down,  
 Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.  
 I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd ; found her there  
 At point to move, and settled in her eyes  
 The green malignant light of coming storm.  
 Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,  
 As man's could be ; yet maiden-meeek I pray'd  
 Concealment : she demanded who we were,  
 And why we came ? I fabled nothing fair,  
 But, your example pilot, told her all.  
 Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.  
 But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,  
 She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.  
 I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,  
 And our three lives. True — we had limed our-  
 selves  
 With open eyes, and we must take the chance.



"CAME A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD."

But such extremes, I told her, well might harm  
 The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she  
 said,  
 'So puddled as it is with favouritism.'  
 I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall  
 Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew :  
 Her answer was 'Leave me to deal with that.'  
 I spoke of war to come and many deaths,  
 And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
 And duty duty, clear of consequences.  
 I grew discouraged, Sir ; but since I knew  
 No rock so hard but that a little wave  
 May beat admission in a thousand years,  
 I recommenced ; 'Decide not ere you pause.  
 I find you here but in the second place,  
 Some say the third — the authentic foundress you.  
 I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :  
 Wink at our advent : help my prince to gain  
 His rightful bride, and here I promise you  
 Some palace in our land, where you shall reign  
 The head and heart of all our fair she-world,  
 And your great name flow on with broadening time  
 For ever.' Well, she balanced this a little,  
 And told me she would answer us to-day,  
 Meantime be mute : thus much, nor more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.  
 "That afternoon the Princess rode to take  
 The dip of certain strata to the North.  
 Would we go with her? we should find the land  
 Worth seeing ; and the river made a fall  
 Out yonder : " then she pointed on to where

A double hill ran up his furrowy forks  
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all  
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.  
Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood  
Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one  
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd  
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near ;  
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came  
Upon me, the weird vision of our house :  
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,  
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
Her college and her maidens, empty masks,  
And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt  
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe ;  
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh  
Broke, as she smote me with the light of eyes  
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook  
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following up  
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said :  
“ O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not  
Too harsh to your companion yestermorn ;  
Unwillingly we spake.” “ No — not to her,”  
I answer'd, “ but to one of whom we spake  
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you  
say.”

“Again?” she cried, “are you ambassadors  
From him to me? we give you, being strange,  
A license : speak, and let the topic die.”

I stammer'd that I knew him — could have  
wish'd —

“Our king expects — was there no precontract?  
There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem  
All he prefigured, and he could not see  
The bird of passage flying south but long'd  
To follow : surely, if your Highness keep  
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to death,  
Or baser courses, children of despair.”

“Poor boy,” she said, “can he not read — no  
books?

Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor deals in that  
Which men delight in, martial exercise?  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Metinks he seems no better than a girl;  
As girls were once, as we ourself have been :  
We had our dreams ; perhaps he mixt with them :  
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,  
Being other — since we learnt our meaning here,  
To lift the woman's fall'n divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man.”

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile  
“And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,  
At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,  
O Vashti, noble Vashti ! Summon'd out



She kept her state, and left the  
drunken king  
To brawl at Shushan under-  
neath the palms."



"Alas your Highness  
breathes full East," I said,  
"On that which leans to you.  
I know the Prince,  
I prize his truth : and then how  
vast a work  
To assail this gray præminence  
of man !

" WOULD THEY GREW LIKE  
FIELD-FLOWERS EVERYWHERE !"

You grant me license ; might I use it ? think ;  
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail ;  
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,  
And takes and ruins all ; and thus your pains  
May only make that footprint upon sand  
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice  
Resmooth to nothing : might I dread that you,  
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds  
For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,  
Meanwhile, that every woman counts her due,  
Love, children, happiness ?"

And she exclaim'd,

" Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild !  
What ! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,  
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice ?  
You are bold indeed : we are not talk'd to thus :  
Yet will we say for children, would they grew  
Like field-flowers everywhere ! we like them well :

But children die ; and let me tell you, girl,  
 Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die ;  
 They with the sun and moon renew their light  
 For ever, blessing those that look on them.  
 Children — that men may pluck them from our  
                   hearts,

Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves —  
 O — children — there is nothing upon earth  
 More miserable than she that has a son  
 And sees him err : nor would we work for fame ;  
 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,  
 Who learns the one *POU STO* whence after-hands  
 May move the world, tho' she herself effect  
 But little : wherefore up and act, nor shrink  
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,  
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
 Of giants living, each, a thousand years,  
 That we might see our own work out, and watch  
 The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself  
 If that strange Poet-princess with her grand  
 Imaginations might at all be won.  
 And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:

“No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you ;  
 We are used to that : for women, up till this  
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,  
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
 In high desire, they know not, cannot guess  
 How much their welfare is a passion to us.

If we could give them surer, quicker proof —  
Oh if our end were less achievable  
By slow approaches, than by single act  
Of immolation, any phase of death,  
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,  
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear ;  
And up we came to where the river sloped  
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks  
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,  
And danced the colour, and, below, stuck out  
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd  
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,  
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her  
That will be." "Dare we dream of that," I ask'd,  
"Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,  
That practice betters?" "How," she cried, "you  
love

The metaphysics ! read and earn our prize,  
A golden brooch : beneath an emerald plane  
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
Of hemlock ; our device ; wrought to the life ;  
She rapt upon her subject, he on her :  
For there are schools for all." "And yet" I said  
'Methinks I have not found among them all  
One anatomic." "Nay, we thought of that,"  
She answer'd, "but it pleased us not : in truth  
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape  
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound  
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,

Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,  
 Encarnalize their spirits : yet we know  
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs :  
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
 Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,  
 For many weary moons before we came,  
 This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself  
 Would tend upon you. To your question now,  
 Which touches on the workman and his work.  
 Let there be light and there was light : 'tis so :  
 For was, and is, and will be, are but is ;  
 And all creation is one act at once,  
 The birth of light : but we that are not all,  
 As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,  
 And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and  
 make

One act a phantom of succession : thus  
 Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time ;  
 But in the shadow will we work, and mould  
 The woman to the fuller day."

She spake

With kindled eyes : we rode a league beyond,  
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came  
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
 Full of all beauty. "O how sweet" I said  
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask)  
 "To linger here with one that loved us." "Yea,"  
 She answer'd, "or with fair philosophies  
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields  
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,



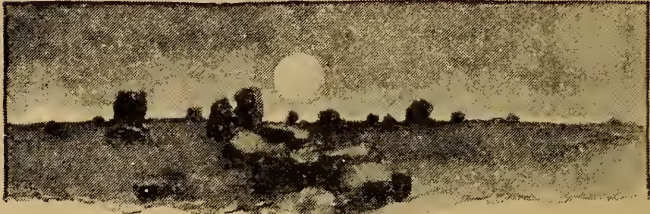
“I WITH MINE AFFIANCED.”

Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw  
The soft white vapour streak the crowned towers  
Built to the Sun :” then, turning to her maids,  
“ Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward ;  
Lay out the viands.” At the word, they raised  
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
With fair Corinna’s triumph ; here she stood,  
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
The woman-conquerer ; woman-conquer’d there  
The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,  
And all the men mourn’d at his side : but we  
Set forth to climb ; then, climbing, Cyril kept  
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,  
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
In the dark crag : and then we turn’d, we wound  
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names  
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,  
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all  
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendour falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story :  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going !  
O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :  
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river :  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul  
And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.



“ THERE SINKS THE NEBULOUS STAR WE CALL THE SUN.”

PART IV. +

“ There sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,  
 If that hypothesis of theirs be sound ”  
 Said Ida ; “ let us down and rest ;” and we  
 Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,  
 By every coppice-feather’d chasm and cleft,  
 Dropt thro’ the ambrosial gloom to where below  
 No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent  
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean’d on me,  
 Descending ; once or twice she lent her hand,  
 And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
 Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt  
 Beneath the satin dome and enter’d in,  
 There leaning deep in broider’d down we sank  
 Our elbows : on a tripod in the midst  
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow’d  
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.



Then she, "Let some  
one sing to us; lightlier  
move  
The minutes fledged with  
music:" and a maid,  
Of those beside her, smote  
her harp, and sang.

"Tears, idle tears, I  
know not what they  
mean,  
Tears from the depth of  
some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and  
gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy  
Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days  
that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam  
glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up  
from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which red-  
dens over one

That sinks with all we love  
below the verge ;

So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.



"AND A MAID, OF THOSE BESIDE HER,  
SMOTE HER HARP, AND SANG."

“ Dear as remember’d kisses after death,  
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign’d  
 On lips that are for others ; deep as love,  
 Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;  
 O Death in Life, the days that are no more.”

She ended with such passion that the tear,  
 She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl  
 Lost in her bosom : but with some disdain  
 Answer’d the Princess, “ If indeed there haunt  
 About the moulder’d lodges of the Past  
 So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
 Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool  
 And so pace by : but thine are fancies hatch’d  
 In silken-folded idleness ; nor is it  
 Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
 But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,  
 While down the streams that float us each and all  
 To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,  
 Throne after throne, and molten on the waste  
 Becomes a cloud : for all things serve their time  
 Toward that great year of equal might and rights,  
 Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end  
 Found golden : let the past be past ; let be  
 Their cancell’d Babels : tho’ the rough kex break  
 The starr’d mosaic, and the beard-blown goat  
 Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree split  
 Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear  
 A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
 Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns  
 Above the unrisen morrow :” then to me ;  
 “ Know you no song of your own land,” she said,

“ Not such as moans about  
the retrospect,  
But deals with the other dis-  
tance and the hues  
Of promise ; not a death's-  
head at the wine.”

Then I remember'd one  
myself had made,  
What time I watch'd the  
swallow winging south  
From mine own land, part  
made long since, and part  
Now while I sang, and  
maidenlike as far  
As I could ape their treble,  
did I sing.



“ O SWALLOW. SWALLOW, FLYING,  
FLYING SOUTH.”

“ O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

“ O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.

“ O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light  
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

“ O were I thou that she might take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

“ Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green ?

“ O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown :  
Say to her I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

“ O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

“ O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.”

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,  
And knew not what they meant ; for still my voice  
Rang false : but smiling “ Not for thee,” she said,  
“ O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers, rather, maid,  
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake  
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass : and this  
A mere love-poem ! O for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight : they mind us of the time  
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,  
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
And dress the victim to the offering up.  
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honour once ;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.  
So they blaspheme the muse! But great is song  
Used to great ends : ourself have often tried  
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd  
The passion of the prophetess ; for song  
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
Of spirit than to junketing and love.  
Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and this  
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,  
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered  
Whole in ourselves and owed to none. Enough!  
But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,  
That gives the manners of your countrywomen?"

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with  
eyes  
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,  
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had  
wrought,  
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began  
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch  
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,  
I frowning ; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook ;  
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows ;  
"Forbear," the Princess cried ; "Forbear, Sir" I ;  
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love.



"BEGAN TO TROLL A  
CARELESS, CARELESS  
TAVERN-CATCH."

I smote him on the breast ; he started  
up ;

There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd ;  
Melissa clamour'd "Flee the death ;"

"To horse"

Said Ida ; "home ! to horse !" and  
fled, as flies

A troop of snowy doves athwart the  
dusk,

When some one batters at the dove-  
cote-doors,

Disorderly the women. Alone I stood

With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,

In the pavilion : there like parting hopes

I heard them passing from me : hoof by hoof,

And every hoof a knell to my desires,

Clang'd on the bridge ; and then another shriek,

"The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head !"

For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd

In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom :

There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch

Rapt in the horrible fall : a glance I gave,

No more ; but women-vested as I was

Plunged ; and the flood drew ; yet I caught her ;

then

Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left

The weight of all the hopes of half the world,

Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree

Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd

To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave

Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,

And grasping down the bows I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd  
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew  
My burthen from mine arms; they cried "she  
lives:"



"FOUND AT LENGTH THE GARDEN PORTALS."

They bore her back into the tent : but I,  
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,  
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,  
Nor found my friends ; but push'd alone on foot

(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)  
 Across the woods, and less from Indian craft  
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length  
 The garden portals. Two great statues, Art  
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves  
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
 Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,  
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,  
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,  
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to  
     hue,  
 Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,  
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd  
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,  
 Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this were she,"  
 But it was Florian. "Hist O Hist," he said,  
 "They seek us : out so late is out of rules.  
 Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the cry.  
 How came you here?" I told him : "I" said he,  
 "Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.  
 Arriving all confused among the rest  
 With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath



The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial : each  
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us : last of all,  
Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first  
Was silent ; closer prest, denied it not :  
And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied :  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,  
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there ; she call'd  
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors ;  
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face ;  
And I slipt out : but whither will you now ?  
And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are fled :  
What, if together ? that were not so well.  
Would rather we had never come ! I dread  
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I  
That struck him : this is proper to the clown,  
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,  
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame  
That which he says he loves : for Cyril, how'er  
He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song  
Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips  
Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold  
These flashes on the surface are not he.  
He has a solid base of temperament :  
But as the waterlily starts and slides  
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."



“ THEY HALED US TO THE PRINCESS  
WHERE SHE SAT HIGH IN THE HALL.”

Scarce had I ceased  
when from a tamarisk  
near  
Two Proctors leapt upon  
us, crying, “Names :”  
He, standing still, was  
clutch’d, but I began  
To thrid the musky-cir-  
cled mazes, wind  
And double in and out the  
boles, and race  
By all the fountains : fleet  
I was of foot :  
Before me shower’d the  
rose in flakes ; behind  
I heard the puff’d pur-  
suer ; at mine ear  
Bubbled the nightingale  
and heeded not,  
And secret laughter  
tickled all my soul.  
At last I hook’d my ankle  
in a vine,  
That claspt the feet of a  
Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was  
caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat  
High in the hall : above her droop’d a lamp,  
And made the single jewel on her brow

Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,  
Prophet of storm : a handmaid on each side  
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair  
Damp from the river ; and close behind her stood  
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,  
Huge women blowzed with health, and wind, and  
rain,  
And labour. Each was like a Druid rock ;  
Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove  
An advent to the throne : and therebeside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
The lily-shining child ; and on the left,  
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,  
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,  
Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

“ It was not thus, O Princess, in old days :  
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips :  
I led you then to all the Castalies ;  
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me  
Your second mother : those were gracious times.  
Then came your new friend : you began to change —  
I saw it and grieved — to slacken and to cool ;  
Till taken with her seeming openness  
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,  
To me you froze : this was my meed for all.

Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil head,  
And chiefly you were born for something great,  
In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
When time should serve ; and thus a noble scheme  
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown ;  
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,  
Up in one night and due to sudden sun :  
We took this palace ; but even from the first  
You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.  
What student came but that you planed her path  
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
I your old friend and tried, she new in all ?  
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean ;  
Yet I bore up in hope she would be known :  
Then came these wolves : *they* knew her : *they* en-  
dured,  
Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,  
To tell her what they were, and she to hear :  
And me none told : not less to an eye like mine,  
A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
Last night their mask was patent, and my foot  
Was to you : but I thought again : I fear'd  
To meet a cold ' We thank you, we shall hear of it  
From Lady Psyche : ' you had gone to her,  
She told perforce ; and winning easy grace,  
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us  
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem  
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat

Were all miscounted as malignant haste  
To push my rival out of place and power.  
But public use required she should be known ;  
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,  
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.  
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,  
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done ;  
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)  
I came to tell you ; found that you had gone,  
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise : now, I thought,  
That surely she will speak ; if not, then I :  
Did she ? These monsters blazon'd what they were,  
According to the coarseness of their kind,  
For thus I hear ; and known at last (my work)  
And full of cowardice and guilty shame,  
I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies ;  
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,  
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,  
And talent, I — you know it — I will not boast :  
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff  
For every gust of chance, and men will say  
We did not know the real light, but chased  
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.'

She ceased : the Princess answer'd coldly, " Good :  
Your oath is broken : we dismiss you : go.  
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)  
Our mind is changed : we take it to ourself."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,

And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.  
“The plan was mine. I built the nest” she said  
“To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!” and stoop’d to up-  
drag

Melissa : she, half on her mother propt,  
Half-drooping from her, turn’d her face, and cast  
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
Which melted Florian’s fancy as she hung,  
A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,  
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven ; and while  
We gazed upon her came a little stir  
About the doors, and on a sudden rush’d  
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear  
Stared in her eyes, and chalk’d her face, and wing’d  
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
Delivering seal’d dispatches which the Head  
Took half-amazed, and in her lion’s mood  
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom  
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick  
Flames, and his anger reddens in the Heavens ;  
For anger most it seem’d, while now her breast  
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,  
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
In the dead hush the papers that she held  
Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet  
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;  
The plaintive cry jarr’d on her ire ; she crush’d  
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn

As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say  
"Read," and I read — two letters — one her sire's.



"AND WING'D HER TRANSIT TO THE THRONE."

"Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way  
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you are built,  
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell  
 Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
 You lying close upon his territory,  
 Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
 And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's running thus :  
 " You have our son : touch not a hair of his head :  
 Render him up unscathed : give him your hand :  
 Cleave to your contract : tho' indeed we hear  
 You hold the woman is the better man ;  
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
 Would make all women kick against their Lords  
 Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve  
 That we this night should pluck your palace down ;  
 And we will do it, unless you send us back  
 Our son, on the instant, whole."

So far I read :

And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

" O not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
 But led by golden wishes, and a hope  
 The child of regal compact, did I break  
 Your precinct ; not a scorner of your sex  
 But venerator, zealous it should be  
 All that it might be : hear me, for I bear,  
 Tho' man, yet human, whatso'er your wrongs,  
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life  
 Less mine than yours ; my nurse would tell me of  
 you ;  
 I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,



Vague brightness ; when a boy, you stoop'd to me  
From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south  
And blown to inmost north ; at eve and dawn  
With *Ida, Ida, Ida*, rang the woods ;  
The leader wildswan in among the stars  
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm  
light  
The mellow breaker murmur'd *Ida*. Now,  
Because I would have reach'd you, had you been  
Sphered up with *Cassiopeïa*, or the enthroned



THE LEADER WILDSWAN IN AMONG THE STARS."

Persephonè in Hades, now at length,  
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
A man I came to see you : but, indeed,  
Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,  
O noble *Ida*, to those thoughts that wait  
On you, their centre : let me say but this,  
That many a famous man and woman, town  
And landskip, have I heard of, after seen  
The dwarfs of presage : tho' when known, there  
grew  
Another kind of beauty in detail

Made them worth knowing ; but in you I found  
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled down  
 And master'd, while that after-beauty makes  
 Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,  
 Within me, that except you slay me here,  
 According to your bitter statute-book,  
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
 The seal does music ; who desire you more  
 Than growing boys their manhood ; dying lips,  
 With many thousand matters left to do,  
 The breath of life ; O more than poor men wealth,  
 Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine —  
                   but half  
 Without you ; with you, whole ; and of those  
                   halves  
 You worthiest ; and howe'er you block and bar  
 Your heart with system out from mine, I hold  
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
 To follow up the worthiest till he die :  
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
 Behold your father's letter."

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd  
 Unopen'd at her feet : a tide of fierce  
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,  
 As waits a river level with the dam  
 Ready to burst and flood the world with foam :  
 And so she would have spoken, but there rose  
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
 Gather'd together : from the illumined hall  
 Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a press

Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,  
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,  
And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro  
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some  
pale,  
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
Some crying there was an army in the land,  
And some that men were in the very walls,  
And some they cared not ; till a clamour grew  
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
And worse-confounded : high above them stood  
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head : but rising up  
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so  
To the open window moved, remaining there  
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves  
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light  
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and  
call'd  
Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

“ What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?  
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks : *I* dare  
All these male thunderbolts : what is it ye fear?  
Peace ! there are those to avenge us and they come :  
If not, — myself were like enough, O girls,  
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
Die : yet I blame you not so much for fear ;

Six thousand years of fear have made you that  
From which I would redeem you : but for those  
That stir this hubbub — you and you — I know  
Your faces there in the crowd — to-morrow morn  
We hold a great convention : then shall they  
That love their voices more than duty, learn  
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live  
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,  
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,  
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,  
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,  
Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,  
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,  
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,  
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands : thereat the crowd  
Muttering, dissolved : then with a smile, that look'd  
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom  
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said :

“ You have done well and like a gentleman,  
And like a prince : you have our thanks for all :  
And you look well too in your woman's dress :  
Well have you done and like a gentleman.  
You saved our life : we owe you bitter thanks :  
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood —  
Then men had said — but now — What hinders me  
To take such bloody vengeance on you both? —  
Yet since our father — Wasps in our good hive,  
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,



“THEY PUSH'D US, DOWN THE STEPS, AND THRO' THE COURT.”

Barbarians, grosser than your native bears —  
 O would I had his sceptre for one hour!  
 You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd  
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us —  
*I* wed with thee! *I* bound by precontract  
 Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold  
 That veins the world were pack'd to make your  
                   crown,  
 And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,  
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:  
 I trample on your offers and on you:  
 Begone: we will not look upon you more.  
 Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough  
 Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd  
 Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause,  
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands  
 The weight of destiny: so from her face  
 They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the  
                   court,  
 And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound  
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard  
 The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came  
 On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:  
 I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;  
 The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,  
 The jest and earnest working side by side,  
 The cataract and the tumult and the kings  
 Were shadows; and the long fantastic night

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With all its doings had and had not been,  
And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits  
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy ;  
Not long ; I shook it off ; for spite of doubts  
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one  
To whom the touch of all mischance but came  
As night to him that sitting on a hill  
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun  
Set into sunrise ; then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,  
That beat to battle where he stands ;  
Thy face across his fancy comes,  
And gives the battle to his hands :  
A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
He sees his brood about thy knee ;  
The next, like fire he meets the foe,  
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-possess'd,  
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words ;  
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd  
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime —  
Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
The music — clapt her hands and cried for war,  
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end :  
And he that next inherited the tale  
Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
“ Sir Ralph has got your colours : if I prove  
Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me ? ”  
It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb  
Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
She took it and she flung it. “ Fight ” she said,  
“ And make us all we would be, great and good.”  
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
Arranged the favour, and assumed the Prince.



PART V.

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,  
We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace" I.



"The second two: they wait," he said, "pass on;  
His Highness wakes:" and one, that clash'd in  
arms,  
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led

Threading the soldier-city, till we heard  
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake  
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent  
 Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light

Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to hear  
 As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes  
 A lisp of the innumerable leaf and dies,  
 Each hissing in his neighbor's ear, and then  
 A strangled titter, out of which there brake  
 On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,  
 Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings  
 Began to wag their baldness up and down,  
 The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering  
     teeth,  
 The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,  
 And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,  
 Panted from weary sides "King, you are free!  
 We did but keep you surety for our son,  
 If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin, thou,  
 That tends her bristled grunners in the sludge:"  
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,  
 More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,  
 And all one rag, dispriced from head to heel.  
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm  
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him, "Look,  
 He has been among his shadows." "Satan take  
 The old women and their shadows! (thus the King  
 Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.  
 Go: Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink  
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
From what was left of faded woman-slough  
To sheathing splendours and the golden scale  
Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,  
And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us.  
A little shy at first, but by and by  
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given  
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon  
Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away  
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night  
Had come on Psyche weeping: "then we fell  
Into your father's hand, and there she lies.  
But will not speak, nor stir."

He show'd a tent  
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there  
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,  
Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,  
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,  
And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,  
All her fair length upon the ground she lay:  
And at her head a follower of the camp,  
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,  
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come" he whisper'd to her,  
"Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.  
What have you done but right? you could not slay  
Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:  
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,

When fall'n in darker ways." And likewise I :  
 " Be comforted : have I not lost her too,  
 In whose least act abides the nameless charm  
 That none has else for me ?" She heard, she moved,  
 She moan'd, a folded voice ; and up she sat,  
 And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth  
 As those that mourn half shrouded over death



" ALL HER FAIR LENGTH UPON THE GROUND SHE LAY :"

In deathless marble. " Her," she said, " my friend —  
 Parted from her — betray'd her cause and mine —  
 Where shall I breathe ? why kept ye not your faith ?  
 O base and bad ! what comfort ? none for me !"  
 To whom remorseful Cyril, " Yet I pray  
 Take comfort : live, dear lady, for your child !"  
 At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

“ Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,  
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more !  
For now will cruel Ida keep her back ;  
And either she will die from want of care,  
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say  
The child is hers— for every little fault,  
The child is hers ; and they will beat my girl  
Remembering her mother : O my flower !  
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,  
And she will pass me by in after-life  
With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.  
Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,  
The horror of the shame among them all:  
But I will go and sit beside the doors,  
And make a wild petition night and day,  
Until they hate to hear me like the wind  
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child :  
And I will take her up and go my way,  
And satisfy my soul with kissing her :  
Ah ! what might that man not deserve of me  
Who gave me back my child ?” “ Be comforted,”  
said Cyril, “ you shall have it :” but again  
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so  
Like tender things that being caught feign death,  
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran  
Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts  
With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
We left her by the woman, and without

Found the gray kings at parle : and "Look you" cried  
 My father "that our compact be fulfill'd :  
 You have spoilt this child ; she laughs at you and  
 man :

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him :  
 But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire ;  
 She yields, or war."

Then Gama turn'd to me :  
 "We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time  
 With our strange girl : and yet they say that still  
 You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large :  
 How say you, war or not ?"

"Not war, if possible,  
 O king," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,  
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
 The smouldering homestead, and the household  
 flower

Torn from the lintel — all the common wrong —  
 A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
 Three times a monster : now she lightens scorn  
 At him that mars her plan, but then would hate  
 (And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,  
 And every face she look'd on justify it)  
 The general foe. More soluble is this knot,  
 By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
 What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd  
 Your cities into shards with catapults,  
 She would not love ; — or brought her chain'd, a  
 slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
 Not ever would she love ; but brooding turn  
 The book of scorn, till all my fitting chance



"Some wild shur' who's  
mbs of wrock"

Were caught within the record of her wrongs,  
 And crush'd to death : and rather, Sire, than this  
 I would the old God of war himself were dead,  
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,  
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,  
 Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake

My father, "Tut, you know them not, the girls.  
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
 That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!  
 Man is the hunter ; woman is his game :  
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,  
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins ;  
 They love us for it, and we ride them down.  
 Wheedling and siding with them ! Out ! for shame !  
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them  
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,  
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes  
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in  
 Among the women, snares them by the score  
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, though dash'd with death  
 He reddens what he kisses : thus I won  
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
 Worth winning ; but this firebrand — gentleness  
 To such as her ! if Cyril spake her true,  
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
 To trip a tiger with a gossamer,  
 Were wisdom to it."

"Yea but Sire," I cried,  
 "Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No :  
 What dares not Ida do that she should prize



The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose  
The yesternight, and storming in extremes,  
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down  
Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,  
No, not the soldier's : yet I hold her, king,  
True woman : but you clash them all in one,  
That have as many differences as we.  
The violet varies from the lily as far  
As oak from elm : one loves the soldier, one  
The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,  
And some unworthily ; their sinless faith,  
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
Glorifying clown and satyr ; whence they need  
More breadth of culture : is not Ida right?  
They worth it? truer to the law within?  
Severer in the logic of a life?  
Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
Of earth and Heaven? and she of whom you speak,  
My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
Creation minted in the golden moods  
Of sovereign artists ; not a thought, a touch,  
But pure as lines of green that streak the white  
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves ; I say,  
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,  
But whole and one : and take them all-in-all,  
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,  
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs  
As dues of Nature. To our point : not war :  
Lest I lose all."

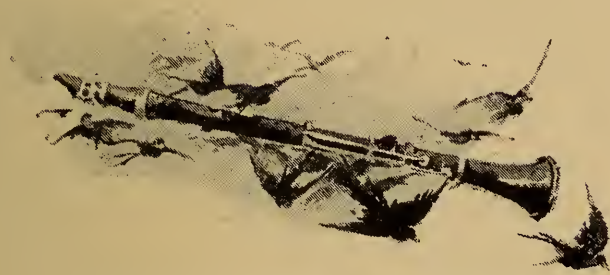
“Nay, nay, you spake but sense”

Said Gama. We remember love ourself  
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then  
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
 You talk almost like Ida : *she* can talk ;  
 And there is something in it as you say :  
 But you talk kindlier : we esteem you for it.—  
 He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
 I would he had our daughter : for the rest,  
 Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,  
 Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —  
 We would do much to gratify your Prince —  
 We pardon it ; and for your ingress here  
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,  
 You did but come as goblins in the night,  
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,  
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,  
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream :  
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,  
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,  
 And speak with Arac : Arac's word is thrice  
 As ours with Ida : something may be done —  
 I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.  
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,  
 Follow us : who knows? we four may build some plan  
 Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd  
 White hands of farewell to my Sire, who growl'd  
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,  
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns  
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring

In every bole, a song on every spray  
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke  
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed  
All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode  
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews  
Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air  
On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than Peace  
Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,  
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers



“OF BIRDS THAT PIPED THEIR VALENTINES.”

With clamour: for among them rose a cry  
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;  
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum  
Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;  
And in the blast and bray of the long horn  
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced  
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen  
Such thews of men; the midmost and the highest  
Was Arac: all about his motion clung

The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them  
glance

Like those three stars of the airy giant's zone,  
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark ;  
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard  
War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of force,  
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
Stir in me as to strike : then took the king  
His three broad sons ; with now a wandering hand  
And now a pointed finger, told them all :  
A common light of smiles at our disguise  
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest  
Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,  
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

“Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he himself  
Your captive, yet my father wills not war :  
And 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war or no ?  
But then this question of your troth remains :  
And there's a downright honest meaning in her ;  
She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet  
She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme ;  
She prest and prest it on me — I myself,  
What know I of these things ? but, life and soul !  
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs ;  
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what of that ?

I take her for the flower of womankind,  
And so I often told her, right or wrong,  
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,  
And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all,  
I stand upon her side : she made me swear it —  
'Sdeath — and with solemn rites by candle-light —  
Swear by St. something — I forget her name —  
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men ;  
*She* was a princess too ; and so I swore.  
Come, this is all : she will not : waive your claim :  
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once  
Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's will."

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up  
My precontract, and loth by brainless war  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet ;  
Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat " Like to like !  
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."  
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow !  
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,  
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point  
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,  
" Decide it here : why not ? we are three to three."

Then spake the third " But three to three ? no more ?  
No more, and in our noble sister's cause ?  
More, more, for honour : every captain waits  
Hungry for honour, angry for his king.  
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each

---

May breathe himself, and quick ! by overthrow  
Of these or those, the question settled die."

"Yea," answer'd I, "for this wild wreath of air,  
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
Foam of men's deeds — this honour, if ye will.  
It needs must be for honour if at all :  
Since, what decision ? if we fail, we fail,  
And if we win, we fail : she would not keep  
Her compact." "'Sdeath ! but we will send to her,"  
Said Arac, "worthy reasons why she should  
Bide by this issue : let our missive thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the word."

"Boys !" shriek'd the old king, but vainlier than a hen  
To her false daughters in the pool ; for none  
Regarded ; neither seem'd there more to say :  
Back rode we to my father's camp and found,  
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life : three times he went :  
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'd :  
He batter'd at the doors ; none came : the next,  
An awful voice within had warn'd him thence :  
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough  
Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his hair,  
And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild : not less one glance he caught  
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
Tho' compassed by two armies and the noise



"HE THRICE HAD SENT A HERALD TO THE GATES."

Of arms ; and standing like a stately Pine  
 Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
 When storm is on the heights, and right and left  
 Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills roll  
 The torrents, dash'd to the vale : and yet her will  
 Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged  
 To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd  
 His iron palms together with a cry ;  
 Himself would tilt it out among the lads :  
 But overborne by all his bearded lords  
 With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce  
 He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur :  
 And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
 And swore to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field  
 Flat to the garden-wall : and likewise here,  
 Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,  
 A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,  
 And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris  
 And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
 But now fast barr'd : so here upon the flat  
 All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,  
 And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
 With message and defiance, went and came ;  
 Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
 But shaken here and there, and rolling words  
 Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

“ O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,  
 What heats of indignation when we heard



Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet ;  
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride  
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge ;  
Of living hearts that crack within the fire  
Where smoulder their dead despots ; and of those, —  
Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity, fling  
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops  
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
Made for all noble motion : and I saw  
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
With smoother men : the old leaven leaven'd all :  
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,  
No woman named : therefore I set my face  
Against all men, and lived but for mine own.  
Far off from men I built a fold for them :  
I stored it full of rich memorial :  
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey  
And prosper'd ; till a rout of saucy boys  
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,  
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what  
Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
Seal'd not the bond — the striplings! — for their  
sport! —

I tamed my leopards : shall I not tame these?  
Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd  
In honour — what, I would not aught of false —  
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know  
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood  
You draw from, fight ; you failing, I abide  
What end soever : fail you will not. Still

Take not his life : he risk'd it for my own ;  
 His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you do,  
 Fight and fight well ; strike and strike home. O  
 dear

Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you  
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,  
 The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,  
 Your very armour hallow'd, and your statues  
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd aside,  
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mould a generation strong to move  
 With claim on claim from right to right, till she  
 Whose name is yoked with children's, know her-  
 self ;

And Knowledge in our own land make her free,  
 And, ever following those two crowned twins,  
 Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain  
 Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
 Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest.  
 "See that there be no traitors in your camp :  
 We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust  
 Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt-plague of men !  
 Almost our maids were better at their homes,  
 Than thus man-girdled here : indeed I think  
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
 Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :  
 She shall not have it back : the child shall grow  
 To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
 This morning : there the tender orphan hands

Man for the field  
and woman for  
the hearth :  
Man for the sword  
and for the needle  
she :  
Man with the head  
and woman with the  
heart :  
Man to command  
and woman to obey :



“MAN FOR THE FIELD AND WOMAN FOR THE HEARTH.”

Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence  
The wrath I nursed against the world : farewell."

I ceased ; he said, "Stubborn, but she may sit  
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms,  
And breed up warriors ! See now, tho' yourself  
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
That swallow common sense, the spindling king,  
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.  
When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,  
And topples down the scales ; but this is fixt  
As are the roots of earth and base of all ;  
Man for the field and woman for the hearth :  
Man for the sword and for the needle she :  
Man with the head and woman with the heart :  
Man to command and woman to obey ;  
All else confusion. Look you ! the gray mare  
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman  
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of Hell  
Mixed with his hearth : but you — she's yet a colt —  
Take, break her : strongly groom'd and straitly  
curb'd  
She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl  
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.  
They say she's comely ; there's the fairer chance :  
I like her none the less for rating at her !  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace  
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,  
The bearing and the training of a child

Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king :

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon :  
I pored upon her letter which I held,  
And on the little clause "take not his life :"  
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,  
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt win :"  
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,  
And how the strange betrothment was to end :  
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse  
That one should fight with shadows and should  
fall ;

And like a flash the weird affection came :  
King, camp and college turn'd to hollow shows ;  
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
To dream myself the shadow of a dream :  
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed  
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
The trumpet, and again : at which the storm  
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears  
And riders front to front, until they closed  
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,  
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I dream'd  
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,  
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.  
Part sat like rocks : part reel'd but kept their seats :

Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew :  
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down  
 From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down  
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
 The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere  
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,  
 And all the plain, — brand, mace, and shaft, and  
 shield —

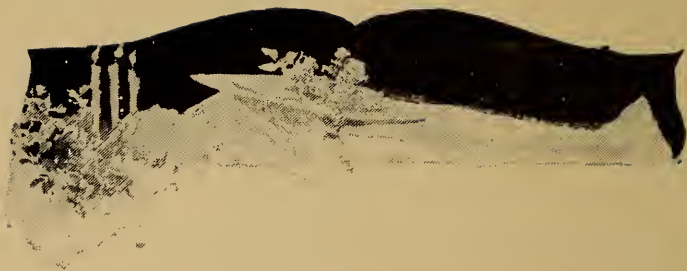
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd  
 With hammers ; till I thought, can this be he  
 From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this be so,  
 The mother makes us most — and in my dream  
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,  
 And highest, among the statues, statuelike,  
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
 A single band of gold about her hair,  
 Like a Saint's glory up in heaven : but she  
 No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —  
 Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me fight,  
 Yea, let her see me fall ! with that I drave  
 Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,  
 And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my dream  
 All that I would. But that large-moulded man,  
 His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back  
 With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman,  
 came

As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,  
 And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes

---

On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,

And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth  
Reels, and the herdsmen cry ; for everything  
Gave way before him : only Florian, he  
That loved me closer than his own right eye,  
Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him down :  
And Cyril, seeing it, push'd against the Prince,  
With Psyche's colour round his helmet, tough,  
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms ;  
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote  
And threw him : last I spurr'd ; I felt my veins  
Stretch with fierce heat : a moment hand to hand,  
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,  
Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade glanced,  
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth  
Flow'd from me ; darkness closed me ; and I fell.



Home they brought her warrior dead :  
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :  
All her maidens, watching, said,  
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
Truest friend and noblest foe ;  
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
Lightly to the warrior stept,  
Took the face-cloth from the face ;  
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Set his child upon her knee —  
Like summer tempest came her tears —  
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."





PART VI.

My dream had never died or lived again.  
As in some mystic middle state I lay ;  
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard :  
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all  
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,  
That all things grew more tragic and more strange ;  
That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause  
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,  
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran  
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque  
And grovell'd on my body, and after him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
With Psyche's babe in arm : there on the roofs  
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : the seed,  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came ;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears : they heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand :  
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came,  
The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !  
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they struck;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power : and roll'd  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

“ And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary  
Is violatèd, our laws broken : fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms  
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day  
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,  
When dames and heroines of the golden year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,  
To rain an April of ovation round

Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.  
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,  
Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer these  
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there  
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries  
Of female hands and hospitality.”

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led  
A hundred maids in train across the Park.  
Some cowl'd, and some bare headed, on they came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by them went  
The enamour'd air sighing, and on their curls  
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,  
And over them the tremulous isles of light  
Slided, they moving under shade : but Blanche  
At distance follow'd : so they came : anon  
Thro' open field into the lists they wound  
Timorously ; and as the leader of the herd  
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,  
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,  
The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
To where her wounded brethren lay ; there stay'd ;  
Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, — and prest  
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,  
And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
And said “ You shall not lie in the tents but here,  
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and  
served  
With female hands and hospitality.”

Then, whither moved by this, or was it chance,  
 She past my way. Up started from my side  
 The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,  
 Silent ; but when she saw me lying stark,  
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,  
 Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and when she saw  
 The haggard father's face and reverend beard  
 As grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
 Of his own son, shudder'd a twitch of pain,  
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past  
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said :  
 " He saved my life : my brother slew him for it."  
 No more : at which the king in bitter scorn  
 Drew from my neck the painting and the tress  
 And held them up : she saw them, and a day  
 Rose from the distance on her memory,  
 When the good Queen, her mother, shore the tress  
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche :  
 And then once more she look'd at my pale face :  
 Till understanding all the foolish work  
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
 Her iron will was broken in her mind ;  
 Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;  
 She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ; she  
 laid

A feeling finger on my brows, and presently  
 " O Sire," she said, " he lives : he is not dead :  
 O let me have him with my brethren here  
 In our own palace : we will tend on him  
 Like one of these ; if so, by any means,  
 To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make  
 Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

"O SIRE," SHE SAID, "HE LIVES: HE IS NOT DEAD."



She said : but at the happy word " he lives"  
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.  
So those two foes above my fallen life,  
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt  
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole  
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,  
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance  
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms  
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
Brook'd not, but clamouring out " Mine — mine —  
not yours,  
It is not yours, but mine : give me the child"  
Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :  
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,  
And turn'd each face her way : wan was her cheek  
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,  
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half  
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared  
Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,  
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood  
Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
The mother, me, the child ; but he that lay  
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
Trail'd himself up on one knee : then he drew  
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd  
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it seem'd,  
Or self involved ; but when she learnt his face,



“ DOWN SHE LOOK'D AT THE ARM'D MAN SIDWAYS.”

Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
 Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew  
 Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said :

“O fair and strong and terrible ! Lioness  
 That with your long locks play the Lion's mane !  
 But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible  
 And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks  
 We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.  
 What would you more ? give her the child ! remain  
 Orb'd in your isolation : he is dead,  
 Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :  
 Win you the hearts of women ; and beware  
 Lest, where you seek the common love of these,  
 The common hate with the revolving wheel  
 Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis  
 Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire  
 And tread you out forever : but howsoe'er  
 Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms  
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her,  
 Give her the child ! O if, I say, you keep  
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved  
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,  
 Or own one port of sense not flint to prayer,  
 Give her the child ! or if you scorn to lay it,  
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,  
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault  
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,  
 Give *me* it : *I* will give it her.”

He said :

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd





"WE TWO MUST PART."

Dry flame, she listening ; after sank and sank  
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt  
 Full on the child ; she took it : “ Pretty bud !  
 Lily of the vale ! half-open’d bell of the woods !  
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world  
 Of traitorous friend and broken system made  
 No purple in the distance, mystery,  
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell ;  
 These men are hard upon us as of old,  
 We two must part : and yet how fain was I  
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think  
 I might be something to thee, when I felt  
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast  
 In the dead prime : but may thy mother prove  
 As true to thee as false, false, false to me !  
 And, if thou needs must bear the ycke, I wish it  
 Gentle as freedom” — here she kiss’d it : then —  
 “ All good go with thee ! take it, Sir,” and so  
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,  
 Who turn’d half-round to Psyche as she sprang  
 To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks ;  
 Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,  
 And hugg’d and never hugg’d it close enough,  
 And in her hunger mouth’d and mumbled it,  
 And hid her bosom with it ; after that  
 Put on more calm and added suppliantly :

“ We two were friends : I go to mine own land  
 For ever : find some other : as for me  
 I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet speak to  
     me,  
 Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.”

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
Then Arac. "Ida — 'sdeath! you blame the man;  
You wrong yourselves — the woman is so hard  
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!  
I am your warrior: I and mine have fought  
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she weeps:  
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,  
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

"I've heard that there is iron in the blood,  
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?  
Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,  
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.  
She said you had a heart — I heard her say it —  
'Our Ida has a heart' — just ere she died —  
'But see that some one with authority  
Be near her still' and I — I sought for one —  
All people said she had authority —  
The Lady Blanche: much profit! not one word;  
No! tho' your father sues: see how you stand  
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maim'd,  
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
For your wild whim: and was it then for this,  
Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,  
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,  
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,  
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?  
Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,  
When first she came, all flush'd you said to me

Now had you got a friend of your own age,  
 Now could you share your thought ; now should  
 men see

Two women faster welded in one love

Than pairs of wedlock ;  
 she you walk'd with,  
 she

You talk'd with, whole  
 nights long, up in the  
 tower,

Of sine and arc, spheroid  
 and azimuth,

And right ascension,  
 Heaven knows what ;  
 and now

A word, but one, one  
 little kindly word,

Not one to spare her : out  
 upon you, flint !

You love nor her, nor  
 me, nor any ; nay,

You shame your mother's  
 judgment too. Not  
 one ?

You will not ? well — no  
 heart have you, or  
 such

As fancies like the ver-  
 min in a nut

Have fretted all to dust  
 and bitterness."

So said the small king moved beyond his wont.



"SHE YOU TALK'D WITH, WHOLE  
 NIGHTS LONG, UP IN THE TOWER."

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force  
By many a varying influence and so long.  
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept :  
Her head a little bent ; and on her mouth  
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon  
In a still water : then brake out my sire,  
Lifting his grim head from my wounds. " O you,  
Woman, whom we thought woman even now,  
And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,  
Because he might have wish'd it — but we see  
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,  
And think that you might mix his draught with  
death,  
When your skies change again : the rougher hand  
Is safer : on to the tents : take up the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to attend  
A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her broke  
A genial warmth and light once more, and shone  
Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.

"Come hither.

O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace me, come,  
Quick while I melt ; make reconcilment sure  
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour :  
Come to the hollow heart they slander so !  
Kiss and be friends, like children being chid !  
*I* seem no more : *I* want forgiveness too :  
I should have had to do with none but maids,  
That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,  
Dear traitor, too much loved, why ? — why ? — Yet  
see,  
Before these kings we embrace you yet once more

With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,  
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,  
Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,  
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it ;  
Taunt me no more : yourself and yours shall have  
Free adit ; we will scatter all our maids  
Till happier times each to her proper hearth :  
What use to keep them here — now ? grant my  
prayer.

Help, father, brother, help ; speak to the king :  
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that  
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down  
From my fixt height to mob me up with all  
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
Poor weakling ev'n as they are."

Passionate tears

Follow'd : the king replied not : Cyril said :  
"Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask for him  
Of your great head — for he is wounded too —  
That you may tend upon him with the prince."

"Ay so," said Ida with a bitter smile,  
"Our laws are broken ; let him enter too."

Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,  
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
Petition'd too for him. "Ay so," she said,  
"I stagger in the stream : I cannot keep  
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour :  
We break our laws with ease, but let it be."

"Ay so ?" said Blanche : "Amazed am I to hear  
Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with ease

The law your Highness did not make : 'twas I.  
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,  
And block'd them out ; but these men came to woo  
Your Highness — verily I think to win."

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye :  
But Ida with a voice, that like a bell  
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,  
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

" Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not one, but all,  
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,  
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,  
Till the storm die ! but had you stood by us,  
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base  
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,  
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.  
We brook no further insult but are gone."

She turn'd ; the very nape of her white neck  
Was rosed with indignation : but the Prince  
Her brother came ; the king her father charm'd  
Her wounded soul with words : nor did mine own  
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

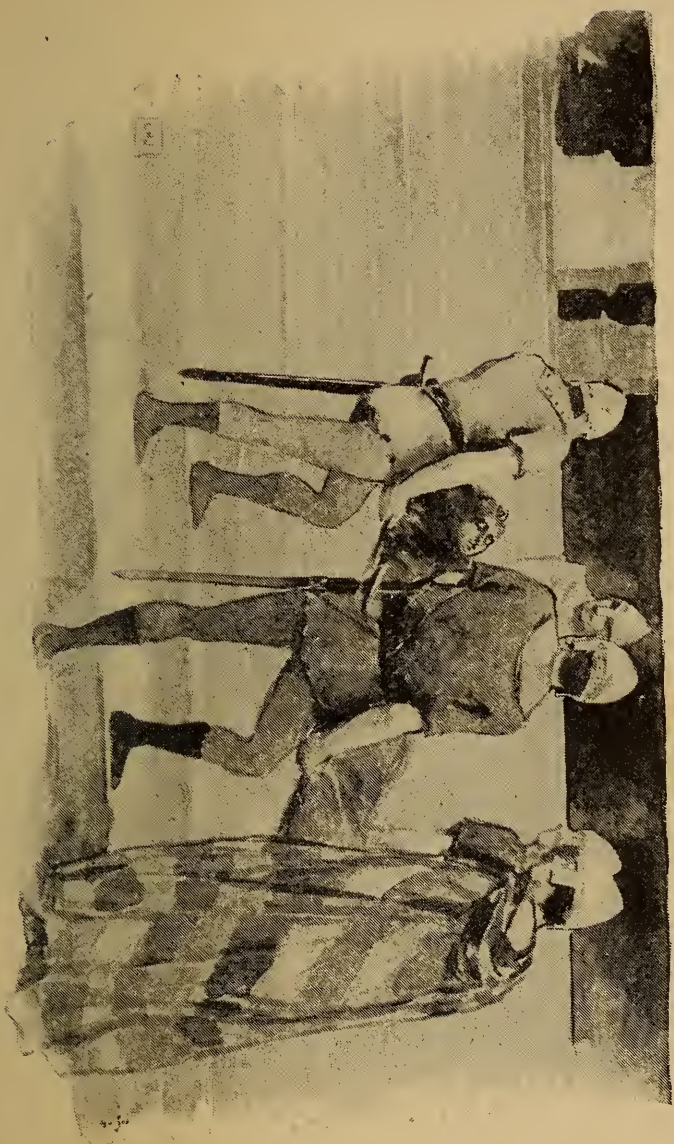
Then as they lifted up, dead weights, and bare  
Straight to the doors : to them the doors gave way  
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd  
The virgin marble under iron heels :  
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there  
Rested : but great the crush was, and each base,

To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd  
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
 Of female whisperers : at the further end  
 Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats  
 Close by her, like supporters on a shield,  
 Bow-back'd with fear : but in the centre stood  
 The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed  
 They glared upon the women, and aghast  
 The women stared at these, all silent, save  
 When armour clash'd or jingled, while the day,  
 Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot  
 A flying splendour out of brass and steel  
 That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,  
 Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
 Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,  
 And now and then an echo started up,  
 And shudder fled from room to room, and died  
 Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice

Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :  
 And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'  
 The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors  
 To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due  
 To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ;  
 And others elsewhere they laid ; and all  
 That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
 And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
 Till happier times ; but some were left of those  
 Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
 From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,  
 Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.





"THEY BORE UP THE BROAD STAIRS."

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the sea ;  
The cloud may stoop from Heaven and take the  
shape  
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;  
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I give ?  
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :  
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die !  
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are seal'd ;  
I strove against the stream and all in vain :  
Let the great river take me to the main :  
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;  
Ask me no more.

## PART VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;  
At first with all confusion : by and by  
Sweet order lived again with other laws :  
A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere  
Low voices with a ministering hand  
Hung round the sick : the maidens came, they  
    talk'd,  
They sang, they read : till she not fair began  
To gather light, and she that was, became  
Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro  
With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,  
Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they moved.

    But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame  
Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke : but oft  
Climb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours  
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field : void was her use,  
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud  
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,  
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,  
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,



“OFT CLOMB TO THE ROOFS, AND GAZED  
ALONE FOR HOURS.”

And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown the  
bowers

Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,  
Star after star, arose and fell; but I,  
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay  
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,  
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand

And quenching  
lake by lake and  
tarn by tarn

Expunge the world:  
so fared she gaz-  
ing there;

So blacken'd all her  
world in secret,  
blank

And waste it seem'd  
and vain; till  
down she came,

And found fair  
peace once more  
among the sick.

And twilight  
dawn'd; and morn  
by morn the lark

Shot up and shrill'd  
in flickering  
gyres, but I

Lay silent in the  
muffled cage of  
life:

That nursed me,  
more than infants  
in their sleep.

But Psyche tend-  
ed Florian : with  
her oft,

Melissa came ; for  
Blanche had  
gone, but left

Her child among  
us, willing she  
should keep

Court-favour: here  
and there the  
small brighthead,

A light of healing,  
glanced about  
the couch,

Or thro' the parted  
silks the tender  
face

Peep'd, shining in  
upon the wound-  
ed man

With blush and  
smile, a medicine  
in themselves

To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw  
The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange that soon  
He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd that hearts



"THRO' THE PARTED SILKS."

So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,  
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake  
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,  
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd  
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn  
That after that dark night among the fields  
She needs must wed him for her own good name ;  
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ;  
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd  
To incense the Head once more ; till on a day  
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung  
A moment, and she heard, at which her face  
A little flush'd, and she past on ; but each  
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved  
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls  
Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.  
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
Nor did mine own now reconciled ; nor yet  
Did those twin-brothers, risen again and whole ;  
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :  
Then came a change ; for sometimes I would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
" You are not Ida ; " clasp it once again,

And call her *Ida*, tho' I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold which seem'd a truth :  
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,  
And often she believed that I should die :  
Till out of long frustration of her care,  
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,  
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks  
Throbb'd thunders thro' the palace floors, or call'd  
On flying Time from all their silver tongues —  
And out of memories of her kindlier days,  
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
And at the happy lovers heart in heart —  
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,  
And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek —  
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,  
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears  
By some cold morning glacier ; frail at first  
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death  
For weakness : it was evening : silent light  
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought  
Two grand designs ; for on one side arose  
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd  
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cramm'd  
The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest  
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side

Hortensia spoke against the tax ; behind,  
 A train of dames : by axe and eagle sat,  
 With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,  
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,  
 The fierce triumvirs ; and before them paused  
 Hortensia pleading : angry was her face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where I was :  
 They did but look like hollow shows ; nor more  
 Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat : the dew  
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
 And rounder seem'd : I moved : I sigh'd : a touch  
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand :  
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran  
 Mine down my face, and with what life I had,  
 And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,  
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
 Fixed my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly :

“ If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,  
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :  
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
 I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,  
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.  
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.”

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,  
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,  
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,  
 But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd ; she  
 paused ;



She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt a cry ;  
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death ;  
And I believed that in the living world  
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;



“ MY SPIRIT CLOSED WITH IDA'S AT THE LIPS.”

Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose  
Glowing all over noble shame ; and all  
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,  
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
Than in her mould that other, when she came  
From barren deeps to conquer all with love ;  
And down the streaming crystal dropt ; and she  
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out  
For worship without end ; nor end of mine,  
Stateliest, for thee ! but mute she glided forth,  
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,  
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she, near me, held  
 A volume of the Poets of her land :  
 There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

“ Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white ;  
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;  
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font :  
 The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,  
 And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
 And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up  
 And slips into the bosom of the lake :  
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
 Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

I heard her turn the page ; she found a small  
 Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read :

“ Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain  
 height :  
 What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)  
 In height and cold, the splendour of the hills ?  
 But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease  
 To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,

---

To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
And find him ; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :  
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down  
To find him in the valley ; let the wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,  
That like a broken purpose waste in air :  
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all the vales  
Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee ; the children call, and I  
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet ;  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned ; while with shut eyes I lay  
Listening ; then look'd. Pale was the perfect face ;  
The bosom with long sighs labour'd ; and mcek  
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,  
And the voice trembled and the hand. She said



"I THY SHEPHERD PIPE."

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd  
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;  
That all her labour was but as a block  
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,  
She still were loth to yield herself to one  
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights  
Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.  
She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her  
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than  
power

In knowledge: something wild within her breast,  
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.  
And she had nursed me there from week to week:  
Much had she learned in little time. In part  
It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl—  
“Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce!  
When comes another such? never, I think,  
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs.”

Her voice

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,  
And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past  
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;  
Till notice of a change in the dark world  
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,  
That early woke to feed her little ones,  
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:  
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

“Blame not thyself too much,” I said, “nor  
blame  
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;



“SHE MOVED, AND AT HER  
FEET THE VOLUME FELL.”

These were the rough ways  
of the world till now.  
Henceforth thou hast a help-  
er, me that know  
The woman's cause is man's :  
they rise or sink  
Together, dwarf'd or godlike,  
bond or free :  
For she that out of Lethe  
scales with man  
The shining steps of Nature,  
shares with man  
His nights, his days, moves  
with him to one goal,  
Stays all the fair young  
planet in her hands —  
If she be small, slight-natur-  
ed, miserable,  
How shall men grow? but  
work no more alone !  
Our place is much : as far as  
in us lies  
We two will serve them both  
in aiding her —

Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag her down —  
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
Within her — let her make herself her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn and be  
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.  
For woman is not undevelop't man,  
But diverse : could we make her as the man,

Sweet Love were slain : his dearest bond is this,  
Not like to like, but like in difference.  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;  
The man be more of woman, she of man ;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world ;  
She mental breath, nor fail in childward care,  
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words ;  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,  
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,  
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,  
Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other ev'n as those who love.  
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :  
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm :  
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.  
May these things be !”

Sighing she spoke, “ I fear

They will not.”

“ Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest  
Of equal ; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,  
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,  
Life.”

And again sighing she spoke : " A dream  
That once was mine ! what woman taught you  
this ? "

" Alone," I said, " from earlier than I know,  
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,  
I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives  
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,  
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipped with crime :  
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one  
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,  
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet  
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce  
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,  
And girdled her with music. Happy he  
With such a mother ! faith in womankind  
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall  
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

" But I,"

Said Ida, tremulously, " so all unlike —  
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words :  
This mother is your model. I have heard  
Of your strange doubts : they well might be : I seem  
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince ;  
You cannot love me."



“Nay but thee” I said  
“From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,  
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw  
The woman thro’ the crust of iron moods  
That mask’d thee from men’s reverence up, and  
forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood : now,  
Giv’n back to life, to life indeed, thro’ thee,  
Indeed I love : the new day comes, the light  
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my doubts are dead,  
My haunting sense of hollow shows : the change,  
This truthful change in thee has kill’d it. Dear,  
Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,  
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world ;  
Approach and fear not ; breathe upon my brows ;  
In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this  
Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come  
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels  
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,  
I waste my heart in signs : let be. My bride,  
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,  
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
And so thro’ those dark gates across the wild  
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee : come,  
Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine are one :  
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself ;  
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.”



## CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all  
The random scheme as wildly as it rose :  
The words are mostly mine ; for when we ceased  
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,  
"I wish she had not yielded!" then to me,  
"What, if you drest it up poetically!"  
So pray'd the men, the women : I gave assent :  
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven  
Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?  
The men required that I should give throughout  
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
With which we banter'd little Lilia first :  
The women — and perhaps they felt their power,  
For something in the ballads which they sang,  
Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,  
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close —  
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,  
A gallant fight, a noble princess — why  
Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime?  
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?  
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.  
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
Betwixt the mockers and the realists :  
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,  
And yet to give the story as it rose,

I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part  
In our dispute : the sequel of the tale  
Had touch'd her ; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,  
She flung it from her, thinking : last, she fixt  
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,  
" You — tell us what we are " who might have told  
For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,  
But that there rose a shout : the gates were closed  
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,  
To take their leave, about the garden rails.



" THE GATES WERE CLOSED AT SUNSET. "

So I and some went out to these : we climb'd  
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw  
The happy valleys, half in light, and half  
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace ;  
Gray halls alone among their massive groves ;  
Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic tower  
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat ;  
The shimmering glimpses of a stream ; the seas ;  
A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond,  
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

“ Look there, a garden ! ” said my college friend,  
The Tory member's elder son, “ and there !  
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,  
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,  
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —  
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,  
Some patient force to change them when we will,  
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd —  
But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sudden heat,  
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,  
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world  
In mock heroics stranger than our own ;  
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
No graver than a schoolboys' barring out ;  
Too comic for the solemn things they are,  
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,  
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream

As some of theirs — God bless the narrow seas!  
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.”

“Have patience,” I replied, “ourselves are full  
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams  
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:  
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,  
This fine old world of ours is but a child  
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time  
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides.”

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,  
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,  
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,  
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd  
No little lily-handed Baronet he,  
A great broad shoulder'd genial Englishman,  
A lord of fat prize oxen and of sheep,  
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;  
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;  
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those  
That stood the nearest — now address'd to speech —  
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed  
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year  
To follow: a shout arose again, and made  
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve  
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer  
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang

Beyond the bourn of sunset ; O, a shout  
More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
Premier of king ! Why should not these great Sirs  
Give up their parks some dozen times a year  
To let the people breathe ? So thrice they cried,  
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,  
So much the gathering darkness charm'd ; we sat  
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,  
Perchance upon the future man : the walls  
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,  
And gradually the powers of the night,  
That range above the region of the wind,  
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up  
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph  
From those rich silks, and home well-pleas'd we  
went.









*Revered, beloved — O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria, — since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;*

*And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there ;*

*Then — while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song;  
For tho' the faults were as thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule as long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day!  
May children of our children say,  
"She wrought her people lasting good;*

*"Her court was pure; her life serene;  
God gave her peace; her land reposed;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen;*

*"And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*"By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea."*

*March, 1851.*



"THE SOLEMN OAK-TREE SIGHETH."

## JUVENILIA.

—◆◆◆—  
CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

### I.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall :  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

### II.

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone :  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone ;  
At midnight the moon cometh  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,

The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throstle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be weary of flowing  
Under my eye ?

When will the wind be weary of blowing  
Over the sky ?

When will the clouds be weary of fleeting ?

When will the heart be weary of beating ?  
And nature die ?

Never, oh ! never, nothing will die ;

The stream flows,

The wind blows,

The cloud fleets,

The heart beats,

Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;

All things will change

Thro' eternity.

'Tis the world's winter ;

Autumn and summer

Are gone long ago ;

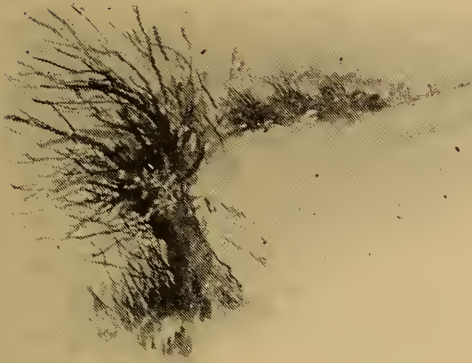
Earth is dry to the centre,

But spring, a new comer,

A spring rich and strange,

Shall make the winds blow

Round and round,  
Thro' and thro',  
    Here and there,  
    Till the air  
And the ground  
Shall be fill'd with life anew.



“SO LET THE WIND RANGE.”

The world was never made ;  
It will change, but it will not fade.  
So let the wind range ;  
For even and morn  
    Ever will be  
    Thro' eternity.  
Nothing was born ;  
Nothing will die ;  
All things will change.



“THE BLUE RIVER CHIMES IN ITS FLOWING.”

ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing  
Under my eye ;  
Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing  
Over the sky.  
One after another the white clouds are fleeting ;  
Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating  
Full merrily ;  
Yet all things must die.  
The stream will cease to flow ;  
The wind will cease to blow ;  
The clouds will cease to fleet ;  
The heart will cease to beat ;  
For all things must die.  
All things must die.  
Spring will come never more.  
Oh ! vanity !  
Death waits at the door.



See! our friends are all forsaking  
The wine and the merrymaking.  
We are call'd— we must go.  
Laid low, very low,  
In the dark we must lie.  
The merry glees are still ;  
The voice of the bird  
Shall no more be heard,  
Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh ! misery !

Hark ! death is calling  
While I speak to ye,  
The jaw is falling,  
The red cheek paling,  
The strong limbs failing ;  
Ice with the warm blood mixing ;  
The eyeballs fixing.  
Nine times goes the passing bell :  
Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth  
Had a birth,  
As all men know,  
Long ago.

And the old earth must die.  
So let the warm winds range,  
And the blue wave beat the shore ;  
For even and morn  
Ye will never see  
Thro' eternity.  
All things were born.  
Ye will come never more,  
For all things must die.

LEONINE ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the broad valley  
dimmed in the gloaming :  
Thro' the black-stem'd pines only the far river  
shines.  
Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-  
blowing bushes,  
Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall.  
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerily ; the grasshop-  
per carolleth clearly ;  
Deeply the wood-dove coos ; shrilly the owlet hal-  
loos ;  
Winds creep ; dews fall chilly : in her first sleep  
earth breathes stilly :  
Over the pools in the burn water-gnats murmur and  
mourn.  
Sadly the far kine loweth : the glimmering water  
out-floweth :  
Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to the dark  
hyaline.  
Low-throned Hesper is stayed between the two  
peaks ; but the Naiad  
Throbbing in mild unrest holds him beneath in her  
breast.  
The ancient poetess singeth, that Hesperus all  
things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind : bring me my love,  
Rosalind.

Thou comest morning or even ; she cometh not  
morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my sweet  
Rosalind ?

## SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND.

O GOD! my God! have mercy now.  
I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou  
Didst die for me, for such as *me*,  
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,  
And that my sin was as a thorn  
Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,  
Wounding Thy soul. — That even now,  
In this extremest misery  
Of ignorance, I should require  
A sign! and if a bolt of fire  
Would rive the slumbrous summer moon  
While I do pray to Thee alone,  
Think my belief would stronger grow!  
Is not my human pride brought low?  
The boastings of my spirit still?  
The joy I had in my free-will  
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown:  
And what is left to me, but Thou,  
And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;  
Christians with happy countenances —  
And children all seem full of Thee!  
And women smile with saint-like glances  
Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd  
Above Thee, on that happy morn

---

When angels spake to men aloud,  
And Thou and peace to earth were born.  
Good-will to me as well as all —  
I one of them : my brothers they :  
Brothers in Christ — a world of peace  
And confidence, day after day ;  
And trust and hope till things should cease,  
And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith !  
To hold a common scorn of death !  
And at a burial to hear  
The creaking cords which wound and eat  
Into my human heart, whene'er  
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,  
With hopeful grief, were passing sweet !

Thrice happy state again to be  
The trustful infant on the knee !  
Who lets his rosy fingers play  
About his mother's neck, and knows  
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.  
They comfort him by night and day ;  
They light his little life alway ;  
He hath no thought of coming woes ;  
He hath no care of life or death ;  
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
Because the Spirit of happiness  
And perfect rest so inward is ;  
And loveth so his innocent heart,  
Her temple and her place of birth,  
Where she would ever wish to dwell,

Life of the fountain there, beneath  
Its salient springs, and far apart,  
Hating to wander out on earth,  
Or breathe into the hollow air,  
Whose chillness would make visible  
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,  
Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
Fulfils him with beatitude.  
Oh ! sure it is a special care  
Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
To arm in proof, and guard about  
With triple-mailed trust, and clear  
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were  
As thine, my mother, when with brows  
Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld  
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,  
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer —  
For me unworthy ! — and beheld  
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew  
The beauty and repose of faith,  
And the clear spirit shining thro'.  
Oh ! wherefore do we grow awry  
From roots which strike so deep ? why dare  
Paths in the desert ? Could not I  
Bow myself down, where thou has knelt,  
To the earth — until the ice would melt  
Here, and I feel as thou has felt ?  
What Devil had the heart to scathe  
Flowers thou hadst rear'd — to brush the dew  
From thine own lily, when thy grave

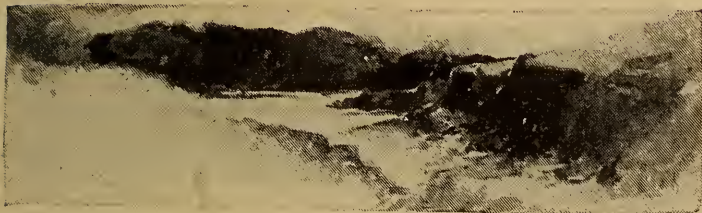
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?  
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I  
So little love for thee? But why  
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why pray  
To one who heeds not, who can save  
But will not? Great in faith, and strong  
Against the grief of circumstance  
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if  
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,  
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance  
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
Unto the death, not sunk! I know  
At matins and at even-song,  
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,  
In deep and daily prayers would'st strive  
To reconcile me with thy God.  
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
At heart, thou wouldest murmur still —  
“Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,  
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.”  
Would'st tell me I must brook the rod  
And chastisement of human pride;  
That pride, the sin of devils, stood  
Betwixt me and the light of God!  
That hithero I had defied  
And had rejected God — that grace  
Would drop from his o'er-brimming love,  
As manna on my wilderness,  
If I would pray — that God would move  
And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence,  
Sweet in their utmost bitterness,

Would issue tears of penitence  
Which would keep green hope's life. Alas!  
I think that pride hath now no place  
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,  
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.  
Why not believe then? Why not yet  
Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea  
At midnight, when the crisp slope waves  
After a tempest, rib and fret  
The broad-imbased beach, why he  
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?  
Wherefore his ridges are not curls  
And ripples of an inland mere?  
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can  
Draw down into his vexed pools  
All that blue Heaven which hues and paves  
The other? I am too forlorn,  
Too shaken: my own weakness fools  
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

“Yet,” said I, in my morn of youth,  
The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,  
When I went forth in quest of truth,  
“It is man's privilege to doubt,  
If so be that from doubt at length,  
Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,  
An image with profulgent brows,  
And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
Of running fires and fluid range  
Of lawless airs, at last stood out



This excellence and solid form  
Of constant beauty. For the Ox  
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
The horned valleys all about,  
And hollows of the fringed hills  
In summer heats, with placid lows  
Unfearing, till his own blood flows  
About his hoof. And in the flocks  
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,  
And raceth freely with his fere,



"HOLLOWS OF THE FRINGED HILLS."

And answers to his mother's calls  
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,  
Of which he wots not, run short pains  
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from whence  
He knows not, on his light there falls  
A shadow; and his native slope,  
Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
And something in the darkness draws  
His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope

As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
Living, but that he shall live on?  
Shall we not look into the laws  
Of life and death, and things that seem,  
And things that be, and analyse  
Our double nature, and compare  
All creeds till we have found the one,  
If one there be?" Ay me! I fear  
All may not doubt, but everywhere  
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,  
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove  
Shadow me over, and my sins  
Be unremember'd, and Thy love  
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet  
Somewhat before the heavy clod  
Weighs on me, and the busy fret  
Of that sharp-headed worm begins  
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!  
O spirit and heart made desolate!  
O damned vacillating state!

## THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep ;  
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep  
The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sunlights flee  
About his shadowy sides : above him swell  
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height ;  
And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell  
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi  
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.  
There hath he lain for ages and will lie  
Battenning upon huge seaworms in his sleep,  
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep ;  
Then once by man and angels to be seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

SONG.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,  
Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
Breathed low around the rolling earth  
With mellow preludes, "We are free."

The streams thro' many a liliated row  
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,  
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow  
Atween the blossoms, "We are free."



I.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Claps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can ;  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks  
Pleasance in love-sighs,  
She, looking thro' and thro' me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speaks :  
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,

From beneath her gathered wimple  
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
Till the lightning laughters dimple  
The baby-roses in her cheeks ;  
Then away she flies.

## III.

Prythee weep, May Lilian !  
Gaiety without eclipse  
Wearieth me, May Lilian :  
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
When from crimson-threaded lips  
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :  
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

## IV.

Praying all I can,  
If prayers will not hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian.

## ISABEL.

### I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,  
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane  
Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dispread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her head ;  
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign  
The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

### II.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
And thorough-edged intellect to part  
Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;  
The laws of marriage character'd in gold  
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;  
A love still burning upward, giving light  
To read those laws ; an accent very low  
In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,

Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,  
 Winning its way with extreme gentleness  
 Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride ;  
 A courage to endure and to obey ;  
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
 Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,  
 The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

## III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;  
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
 Till in its onward current it absorbs  
 With swifter movement and in purer light  
 The vexed eddies of its wayward brother:  
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
 Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite  
 With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs  
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other —  
 Shadow forth thee :— the world hath not another  
 (Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,  
 And thou of God in thy great charity)  
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.



MARIANA.

“ Mariana in the moated grange.”

*Measure for Measure.*

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots  
Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
The rusted nails fell from the knots  
That held the pear to the gable-wall.  
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :  
Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
Upon the lonely moated grange.  
She only said, “ My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,” she said ;  
She said, “ I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead !”

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;  
She could not look on the sweet Heaven,  
Either at morn or eventide.  
After the flitting of the bats,  
When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
So drew her casement-curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.



"I WOULD THAT I WERE DEAD!"

---

She only said, "The night is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,  
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :  
The cock sung out an hour ere light :  
From the dark fen the oxen's low  
Came to her : without hope of change,  
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn  
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, "The day is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.  
Hard by the poplar shook alway,  
All silver-green with gnarled bark :  
For leagues no other tree did mark  
The level waste, the rounding gray.

She only said, "My life is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,  
     And the shrill winds were up and away,  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
     She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
 But when the moon was very low,  
     And wild winds bound within their cell,  
 The shadow of the poplar fell  
 Upon her bed, across her brow.  
     She only said, "The night is dreary,  
     He cometh not," she said;  
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
     I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,  
     The doors upon their hinges creak'd;  
 The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse  
     Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,  
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
     Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
     Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
 Old voices called her from without.  
     She only said, "My life is dreary,  
     He cometh not," she said;  
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
     I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
     The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
 Which to the wooing wind aloof  
     The poplar made, did all confound

Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour  
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
Athwart the chambers, and the day  
Was sloping toward his western bower.

Then, said she, "I am very dreary,  
He will not come," she said ;

She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,  
Oh God, that I were dead !"

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,  
The house thro' all the level shines,  
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
And silent in its dusty vines :  
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
An empty river-bed before,  
And shallows on a distant shore,  
In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,  
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,  
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
From brow and bosom slowly down  
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
To left and right, and made appear  
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
Her melancholy eyes divine,  
The home of woe without a tear.  
And "Ave Mary," was her moan,  
"Madonna, sad is night and morn,"  
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
Low on her knees herself she cast,  
Before Our Lady murmur'd she ;  
Complaining, " Mother, give me  
    grace  
To help me of my weary load."  
And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
The clear perfection of her face.

" Is this the form," she made  
    her moan,  
" That won his praises night  
    and morn ?"

And " Ah," she said, " but I  
    wake alone,  
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."



"LOW ON HER KNEES HER-  
SELF SHE CAST."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,  
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
But day increased from heat to heat,  
On stony drought and steaming salt ;  
Till now at noon she slept again,  
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,  
And heard her native breezes pass,  
And runlets babbling down the glen.  
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
And murmuring, as at night and morn,  
She thought, " My spirit is here alone,  
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :  
She felt he was and was not there.

She woke : the babble of the stream  
Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.  
The river-bed was dusty-white ;  
And all the furnace of the light  
Struck up against the blinding wall.  
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan  
More inward than at night or morn,  
"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
Live forgotten and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew  
Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,  
To what is loveliest on earth."  
An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look at her with slight, and say  
"But now thy beauty flows away,  
So be alone for evermore."  
"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,  
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,  
Is this the end to be left alone,  
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?"

But sometimes in the falling day  
An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look into her eyes and say,  
"But thou shalt be alone no more."  
And flaming downward over all  
From heat to heat the day decreased,  
And slowly rounded to the east  
The one black shadow from the wall.



---

“The day to night,” she made her moan,  
“The day to night, the night to morn,  
And day and night I am left alone  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.”

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
There came a sound as of the sea ;  
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
And lean'd upon the balcony.  
There all in spaces rosy-bright  
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
And deepening thro' the silent spheres  
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.  
And weeping then she made her moan,  
“The night comes on that knows not morn,  
When I shall cease to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.”

TO —.

I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,  
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain  
The knots that tangle human creeds,  
The wounding cords that bind and strain  
The heart until it bleeds,  
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
Roof not a glance so keen as thine :  
If aught of prophecy be mine,  
Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;  
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :  
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now  
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
Nor martyr-flames nor trenchant swords  
Can do away that ancient lie ;  
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,  
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
Until she be an athlete bold,

And weary with a finger's touch  
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;  
Like that strange angel which of old,  
Until the breaking of the light,  
Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,  
And Heaven's mazed signs stood still  
In the dim tract of Penuel.



“ UNTIL THE BREAKING OF THE LIGHT.”

MADÉLINE.

I.

THOU art not steep'd in golden langours,  
No tranced summer calm is thine,  
Ever varying Madeline.  
Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,  
Sudden glances sweet and strange,  
Delicious spites and darling angers,  
And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
Revealings deep and clear are thine  
Of wealthy smiles: but who may know  
Whether smile or frown be fleeter?  
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
Who may know?  
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,  
Ever varying Madeline.  
Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
From one another,  
Each to each is dearest brother;

---

Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
Momently shot into each other.  
All the mystery is thine ;  
Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
Ever varying Madeline.

## III.

A subtle, sudden flame,  
By veering passion fann'd,  
About thee breaks and dances :  
When I would kiss thy hand,  
The flush of anger'd shame  
O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown :  
But when I turn away,  
Thou, willing me to stay,  
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest ;  
But, looking fixedly the while,  
All my bounding heart entanglest  
In a golden-netted smile ;  
Then in madness and in bliss,  
If my lips should dare to kiss  
Thy taper fingers amorously,  
Again thou blushest angerly ;  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG — THE OWL.

I.

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
And dew is cold upon the ground,  
And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whirring sail goes round,  
And the whirring sail goes round ;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch  
Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
Twice or thrice his roundelay ;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.



“WHEN MERRY MILKMAIDS CLICK THE LATCH.”

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

I.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
Which upon the dark afloat,  
So took echo with delight,  
So took echo with delight,  
That her voice untuneful grown,  
Wears all day a fainter tone.

II.

I would mock thy chaunt anew ;  
But I cannot mimick it ;  
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.



RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN  
NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free  
In the silken sail of infancy,  
The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
The forward-flowing tide of time ;



“ BY GARDEN PORCHES ON THE BRIM, THE COSTLY DOORS  
FLUNG OPEN WIDE,”

And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
High-walled gardens green and old ;

---

True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
 The citron-shadows in the blue :  
 By garden porches on the brim,  
 The costly doors flung open wide,  
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
 And broider'd sofas on each side :  
 In sooth it was a goodly time,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often where clear-stemm'd platans guard  
 The outlet, did I turn away  
 The boat-head down a broad canal  
 From the main river sluiced, where all  
 The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
 Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
 Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
 Adown to where the water slept.  
 A goodly place, a goodly time,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
 Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
 My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
 Until another night in night

I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome  
Of hollow boughs. — A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillets musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-colour'd shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odour in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;  
Not he : but something which possess'd  
The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,  
    Apart from place, withholding time,  
    But flattering the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grotts  
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were ranged  
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :  
A sudden splendour from behind  
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,  
And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
    Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
    For it was in the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame :  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,

---

Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn —  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time,  
In honour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares  
From the long alley's latticed shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
After the fashion of the time,  
And humour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look'd to shame



The hollow-vaulted dark,  
 and stream'd  
 Upon the mooned domes  
 aloof  
 In inmost Bagdat, till  
 there seem'd  
 Hundreds of crescents on  
 the roof  
 Of night new-risen, that  
 marvellous time  
 To celebrate the golden  
 prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

“THE SWEETEST LADY OF THE TIME.” Then stole I up, and  
 trancedly

Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
 Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
 Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
 Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
 Tressed with redolent ebony,  
 In many a dark delicious curl,  
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;  
 The sweetest lady of the time,  
 Well worthy of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
 Throne of the massive ore, from which  
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,

Engarlanded and diaper'd  
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
With merriment of kingly pride,  
Sole star of all that place and time,  
I saw him — in his golden prime,  
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO —.

I.

THOU who stealest fire,  
From the fountains of the past,  
To glorify the present ; oh, haste,  
Visit my low desire !  
Strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,  
Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
On the white day ; but robed in soften'd light  
Of orient state.  
Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kiss'd,  
When, she, as thou,  
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight  
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,  
Which in winter-tide shall star  
The black earth with brilliance rare.



## III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
And with the evening cloud,  
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast  
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind  
Never grow sere,  
When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
Because they are the earliest of the year).  
Nor was the night thy shroud.  
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest  
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.  
The eddyng of her garments caught from thee  
The light of thy great presence ; and the cope  
Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
Tho' deep not fathomless,  
Was cloven with the million stars which tremble  
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.  
Small thought was there of life's distress ;  
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could dull  
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful :  
Sure she was nigher to Heaven's spheres,  
Listening the lordly music flowing from  
The illimitable years.  
O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes !  
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines

Unto mine inner eye,  
 Divinest Memory !  
 Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall  
 Which ever sounds and shines  
 A pillar of white light upon the wall  
 Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :  
 Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side,  
 The seven elms, the poplars four  
 That stand beside my father's door,  
 And chiefly from the brook that loves  
 To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,  
 Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
 Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,  
     In every elbow and turn,  
 The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland,  
     O ! hither lead thy feet !  
 Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
 Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,  
     Upon the ridged wolds,  
 When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud  
 Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
 What time the amber morn  
 Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

## V.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
 To the young spirit present  
     When first she is wed ;  
     And like a bride of old  
 In triumph led,  
     With music and sweet showers  
     Of festal flowers,

---

Unto the dwelling she must sway.  
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,  
In setting round thy first experiment  
With royal frame-work of wrought gold ;  
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,  
And foremost in thy various gallery  
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls  
Upon the storied walls ;  
For the discovery  
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,  
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest  
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs  
With thee unto the love thou bearest  
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,  
Ever retiring thou dost gaze  
On the prime labour of thine early days :  
No matter what the sketch might be ;  
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,  
Or even a sand-built ridge  
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,  
Where from the frequent bridge,  
Like emblems of infinity,  
The trenched waters run from sky to sky ;  
Or a garden bower'd close  
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
Long alleys falling down to twilight grotts,  
Or opening upon level plots  
Or crowned lilies, standing near  
Purple-spiked lavender :

Whither in after life retired  
From brawling storms,  
From weary wind,  
With youthful fancy re-inspired,  
    We may hold converse with all forms  
Of the many-sided mind,  
And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,  
Were how much better than to own  
A crown, a sceptre and a throne!  
O strengthen me, enlighten me!  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.



I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :  
To himself he talks ;

For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh  
    In the walks ;  
    Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks  
Of the mouldering flowers :  
    Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
    Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;  
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
    Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose  
    An hour before death ;  
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves  
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,  
    And the breath  
    Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
And the year's last rose.  
    Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
    Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;  
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
    Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## A CHARACTER.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky  
At night he said, "The wanderings  
Of this most intricate Universe  
Teach me the nothingness of things."  
Yet could not all creation pierce  
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull  
Saw no divinity in grass,  
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;  
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,  
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods  
More purely, when they wish to charm  
Pallas and Juno sitting by :  
And with a sweeping of the arm,  
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour  
He canvass'd human mysteries,  
And trod on silk, as if the winds

Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
And stood aloof from other minds  
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
Himself unto himself he sold :  
Upon himself himself did feed :  
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
And other than his form of creed,  
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.



## THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
    With golden stars above ;  
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
    The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,  
    He saw thro' his own soul.  
The marvel of the everlasting will,  
    An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded  
    The secretest walks of fame :  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
    And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,  
    And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
    Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore  
    Them earthward till they lit ;  
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,  
    The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew  
Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew  
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring  
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,  
Tho' one did fling the fire.  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams  
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world  
Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
Sunn'd by those orient skies ;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame  
WISDOM, a name to shake

All evil dreams of power— a sacred name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word  
She shook the world.



THE POET'S MIND.

I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit :  
Vex not thou the poet's mind ;  
For thou canst not fathom it.  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river ;  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;  
All the place is holy ground ;  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here.  
Holy water will I pour  
Into every spicy flower  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.  
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.  
In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.  
Where you stand you cannot hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.

---

In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants.  
It would fall to the ground if you came in.

In the middle leaps a fountain

Like sheet lightning,

Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder ;

All day and all night it is ever drawn

From the brain of the purple mountain

Which stands in the distance yonder :

It springs on a level of bowery lawn,

And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,

And it sings a song of undying love ;

And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,

You never would hear it ; your ears are so dull ;

So keep where you are : you are foul with sin ;

It would shrink to the earth if you came in.



### THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,  
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,  
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest  
To little harps of gold ; and while they mused  
Whispering to each other half in fear,  
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no  
more.

Whither away from the high green field, and the  
happy blossoming shore?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls :

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls

From wandering o'er the lea :

Out of the live-green heart of the dells

They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,

And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells

High over the full-toned sea :

O hither, come hither and furl your sails,  
Come hither to me and to me :  
Hither, come hither and frolic and play ;  
Here it is only the mew that wails ;  
We will sing to you all the day :  
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
For here are the blissful downs and dales,  
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,  
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,  
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land  
Over the islands free ;  
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand ;  
Hither, come hither and see ;  
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,  
And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,  
And sweet shall your welcome be :  
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
For merry brides are we :  
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words :  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
With pleasure and love and jubilee :  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords  
Runs up the ridged sea.  
Who can light on as happy a shore  
All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?  
Whither away ? listen and stay : mariner, mariner,  
fly no more.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE.

### I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
Side by side,  
Leaving door and windows wide :  
Careless tenants they !

### II.

All within is dark as night :  
In the windows is no light  
And no murmur at the door,  
So frequent on its hinge before.

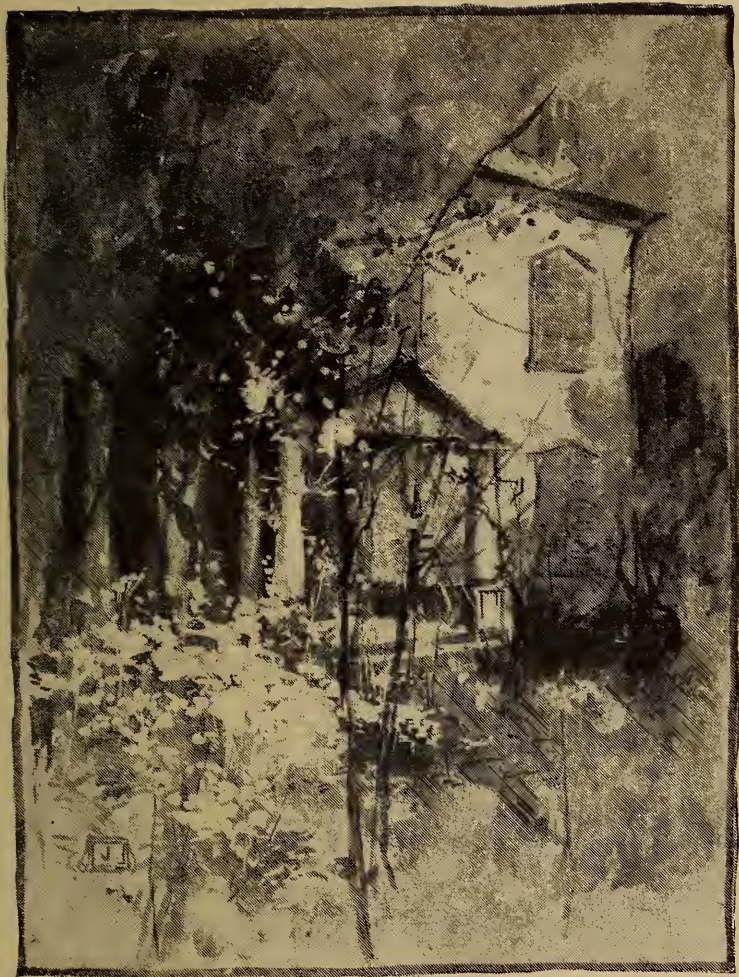
### III.

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.

### IV.

Come away : no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.





“THE DARK DESERTED HOUSE.”

v.

Come away : for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell ;  
    But in a city glorious —  
A great and distant city — have bought  
    A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with us !

## THE DYING SWAN.

### I.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
    An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
    And loudly did lament.  
    It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
    And took the reed-tops as it went.

### II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
    One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
    Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
    And far thro' the marish green and still  
    The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

## III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
 Of that waste place with joy  
 Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear  
 The warble was low, and full and clear ;  
 And floating about the under-sky,  
 Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole



“THE SHEPHERD WHO WATCHETH THE EVENING STAR.”

Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;  
 But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
 With a music strange and manifold,  
 Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;  
 As when a mighty people rejoice  
 With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,  
 And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
 Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
 To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.

And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the sougning reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

I.

Now is done thy long day's work ;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.

Let them rave.

Shadows of the silver birk  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;  
Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny?

Let them rave.

---

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;  
The woodbine and eglatere  
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.  
Let them rave.  
Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.  
Let them rave.  
These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidry of the purple clover.  
Let them rave.  
Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VII.

Wild words wander here and there :  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused :  
    But let them rave.  
The balm-cricket carols clear  
In the green that folds thy grave.  
    Let them rave.



## LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light  
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes ;  
When, turning round a cassia, full in view,  
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
And talking to himself, first met his sight :  
“ You must begone,” said Death, “ these walks are  
mine.”

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight ;  
Yet ere he parted said, “ This hour is thine :  
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree  
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,  
So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of death ;  
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,  
But I shall reign for ever over all.”

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
    Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,  
    Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow,  
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
    Oriana,  
Alone I wander to and fro,  
    Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
    Oriana,  
At midnight the cock was crowing,  
    Oriana :  
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battle going,  
    Oriana ;  
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
    Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,  
    Oriana,  
Ere I rode into the fight,  
    Oriana,

While blissful tears blinded my sight  
By star-shine and by moonlight,  
    Oriana,  
I to thee my troth did plight,  
    Oriana.



“SHE STOOD UPON THE CASTLE WALL.”

She stood upon the castle wall,  
    Oriana :  
She watch'd my crest among them all,  
    Oriana :

She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
Oriana,  
Atween me and the castle wall,  
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,  
Oriana :  
The false, false arrow went aside,  
Oriana :  
The damned arrow glanced aside,  
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,  
Oriana !  
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,  
Oriana.  
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
Oriana.  
Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
The battle deepen'd in its place,  
Oriana ;  
But I was down upon my face,  
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
Oriana !  
How could I rise and come away,  
Oriana ?

---

How could I look upon the day?  
They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
    Oriana —  
They should have trod me into clay,  
    Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
    Oriana !  
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
    Oriana !  
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,  
And then the tears run down my cheek,  
    Oriana ;  
What wantest thou? whom dost thou seek,  
    Oriana ?

I cry aloud ; none hear my cries,  
    Oriana.  
Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
    Oriana.  
I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
    Oriana.  
Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
    Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !  
    Oriana !  
O happy thou that liest low,  
    Oriana !

All night the silence seems to flow  
Beside me in my utter woe,  
    *Oriana.*  
A weary, weary way I go,  
    *Oriana.*

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
    *Oriana,*  
I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
    *Oriana.*  
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
    *Oriana.*  
I hear the roaring of the sea,  
    *Oriana.*



### CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbour villages  
Playing mad pranks along the healthy leas ;  
Two strangers meeting at a festival ;  
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ;  
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease ;  
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,  
Wash'd with still rains and daisy blossomed ;  
Two children in one hamlet born and bred ;  
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.



## THE MERMAN.

### I.

WHO would be  
A merman bold,  
Sitting alone,  
Singing alone  
Under the sea,  
With a crown of gold,  
On a throne?

### II.

I would be a merman bold,  
I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;  
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power ;  
But at night I would roam abroad and play  
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,  
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;  
And holding them back by their flowing locks  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
    Laughingly, laughingly ;  
And then we would wander away, away  
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,  
    Chasing each other merrily.



## III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;  
But the wave would make music above us afar —  
Low thunder and light in the magic night —  
    Neither moon nor star.  
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,  
Call to each other and whoop and cry  
    All night, merrily, merrily ;  
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,  
Laughing and clapping their hands between,  
    All night, merrily, merrily :  
But I would throw to them back in mine  
Turkis and agate and almandine :  
Then leaping out upon them unseen  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
    Laughingly, laughingly.  
Oh ! what a happy life were mine  
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !  
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;  
We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID.

I.

WHO would be  
A mermaid fair,  
Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne?

II.

I would be a mer-  
maid fair ;  
I would sing to myself  
the whole of the  
day ;  
With a comb of pearl  
I would comb my  
hair ;



"A MERMAID FAIR."

And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,  
"Who is it loves me? who loves not me?"  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall  
    Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry sea-bud crown  
    Low adown and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of gold  
    Springing alone  
    With a shrill inner sound,  
    Over the throne  
    In the midst of the hall;  
Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.  
And all the mermen under the sea  
Would feel their immortality  
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III.

But at night I would wander away, away,  
    I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,  
And lightly vault from the throne and play  
    With the mermen in and out of the rocks;  
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,  
    On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,  
    Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.  
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,  
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap

From the diamond-ledges that jut from the dells ;  
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list,  
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ;  
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,  
In the purple twilights under the sea ;  
But the king of them all would carry me,  
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
In the branching jaspers under the sea ;  
Then all the dry pied things that be  
In the hueless mosses under the sea  
Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
All looking up for the love of me.  
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft  
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,  
All looking down for the love of me.



ADELINE.

I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
Faintly smiling Adeline,  
Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
But beyond expression fair  
With thy floating flaxen hair ;  
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
Take the heart from out my breast.  
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
Like a lily which the sun  
Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
And a rose-bush leans upon,  
Thou that faintly smilest still,  
As a Naiad in a well,  
Looking at the set of day,  
Or a phantom two hours old  
Of a maiden past away,  
Ere the placid lips be cold ?

Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline?

## III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine?  
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?  
For sure thou art not all alone.  
Do beating hearts of salient springs  
Keep measure with thine own?  
Hast thou heard the butterflies  
What they say betwixt their wings?  
Or in stillest evenings  
With what voice the violet woos  
To his heart the silver dews?  
Or when little airs arise,  
How the merry bluebell rings  
To the mosses underneath?  
Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
Of the lilies at sunrise?  
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
Some spirit of a crimson rose  
In love with thee forgets to close  
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
All night long on darkness blind.  
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou  
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,

---

And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

## v.

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
When thou gazest at the skies?  
Doth the low-tongued Orient  
Wander from the side of the morn,  
Dripping with Sabæan spice  
On thy pillow, lowly bent  
With melodious airs lovelorn,  
Breathing Light against thy face,  
While his locks a-drooping twined  
Round thy neck in subtle ring  
Make a carcanet of rays?  
And ye talk together still,  
In the language wherewith Spring  
Letters cowslips on the hill?  
Hence that look and smile of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline.

## MARGARET.

### I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
Who lent you love, your mortal dower  
    Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
    Your melancholy sweet and frail  
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?  
From the westward-winding flood,  
From the evening-lighted wood,  
    From all things outward you have won  
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
    Between the rainbow and the sun.  
The very smile before you speak,  
    That dimples your transparent cheek,  
    Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
The senses with a still delight  
    Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
    Like the tender amber round,  
    Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

### II.

You love, remaining peacefully,  
    To hear the murmur of the strife,  
    But enter not the toil of life.



---

Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
You are the evening star, alway



"OF PENSIVE THOUGHT AND ASPECT PALE."

Remaining betwixt dark and bright :  
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
 Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
 Float by you on the verge of night.

## III.

What can it matter, Margaret,  
 What songs below the waning stars  
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
 Sang looking thro' his prison bars?  
 Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
 Just ere the falling axe did part  
 The burning brain from the true heart,  
 Even in her sight he loved so well?

## IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made  
 And gave you on your natal day.  
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
 Keeps real sorrow far away.  
 You move not in such solitudes,  
 You are not less divine,  
 But more human in your moods,  
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,  
 And less aërially blue,  
 But ever trembling thro' the dew  
 Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

## v.

O sweet pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
Come down, come down, and hear me speak :  
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :  
    The sun is just about to set,  
The arching lines are tall and shady,  
    And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
    Moving in the leavy beech.  
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
    Where all day long you sit between  
    Joy and woe, and whisper each.  
Or only look across the lawn,  
    Look out below your bower-eaves,  
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn  
    Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

ROSALIND.

I.

MY Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,  
Whose free delight, from any height of rapid flight,  
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,  
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,  
Careless both of wind and weather,  
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,  
Up or down the streaming wind?

II.

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd strains,  
The shadow rushing up the sea,  
The lightning flash atween the rains,  
The sunlight driving down the lea,  
The leaping stream, the very wind,  
That will not stay, upon his way,  
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,

---

Is not so clear and bold and free  
As you, my falcon Rosalind.  
You care not for another's pains,  
Because you are the soul of joy,  
Bright metal all without alloy.  
Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,  
And flashes off a thousand ways,  
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.  
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,  
Keen with triumph, watching still  
To pierce me thro' with pointed light ;  
But oftentimes they flash and glitter  
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
And your words are seeming-bitter,  
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
From excess of swift delight.

## III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,  
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :  
Too long you keep the upper skies ;  
Too long you roam and wheel at will ;  
But we must hood your random eyes,  
That care not whom they kill,  
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue  
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,  
Some red heath-flower in the dew,  
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind  
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,

Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,  
And clip your wings, and make you love :  
When we have lured you from above,  
And that delight of frolic flight, by day or night,  
    From North to South,  
    We'll bind you fast in silken cords,  
    And kiss away the bitter words  
    From off your rosy mouth.

## ELEANORE.

### I.

THY dark eyes open'd not,  
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English air,  
For there is nothing here,  
Which, from the outward to the inward brought,  
Moulded thy baby thought.  
Far off from human neighbourhood,  
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,  
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd  
With breezes from our oaken glades,  
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land  
Of lavish lights, and floating shades :  
And flattering thy childish thought  
The oriental fairy brought,  
At the moment of thy birth,  
From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
And the hearts of purple hills,  
And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,  
The choicest wealth of all the earth,  
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

## II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
 Thro' half-open lattices  
 Coming in the scented breeze,  
     Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
     With whitest honey in fairy gardens cull'd —  
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
 With the hum of swarming bees  
     Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

## III.

Who may minister to thee?  
 Summer herself should minister  
     To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
     On golden salvers, or it may be,  
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and blinded  
     With many a deep-hued bell-like flower  
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
     Sleepeth over all the Heaven,  
     And the crag that fronts the Even,  
     All along the shadowing shore,  
 Crimsons over an inland mere,  
     Eleänore !

## IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
     How may measured words adore



Thy full-flowing harmony  
Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
    Eleänore?  
The luxuriant symmetry  
Of thy floating gracefulness,  
    Eleänore?  
Every turn and glance of thine,  
Every lineament divine,  
    Eleänore,  
And the steady sunset glow,  
That stays upon thee? For in thee  
Is nothing sudden, nothing single ;  
Like two streams of incense free  
    From one censer in one shrine,  
    Thought and motion mingle,  
Mingle ever. Motions flow  
To one another, even as tho'  
They were modulated so  
    To an unheard melody,  
Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
Of richest pauses, evermore  
Drawn from each other mellow-deep ;  
    Who may express thee, Eleänore ?

## v.

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;  
    I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
Daily and hourly, more and more.  
I muse, as in a trance, the while  
    Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.

I muse, as in a trance, whene'er  
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
 Float on to me. I would I were  
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
 To stand apart, and to adore,  
 Gazing on thee for evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore !

## VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity  
 Gazing, I seem to see  
 Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,  
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,  
 I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
 But am as nothing in its light :  
 As tho' a star, in inmost Heaven set,  
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
 Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow  
 To a full face, there like a sun remain  
 Fix'd — then slowly fade again,  
 And draw itself to what it was before ;  
 So full, so deep, so slow,  
 Thought seems to come and go  
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

## VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
 Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,  
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,



“ON SILKEN CUSHIONS HALF RECLINED.”

Grow golden all about the sky ;  
In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
Losing his fire and active might

In a silent meditation,  
 Falling into a still delight,  
 And luxury of contemplation :  
 As waves that up a quiet cove  
 Rolling slide, and lying still  
 Shadow forth the banks at will :  
 Or sometimes they swell and move,  
 Pressing up against the land,  
 With motions of the outer sea :  
 And the self-same influence  
 Controlleth all the soul and sense  
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,  
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee.  
 And so would languish evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

## VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,  
 While the amorous, odorous wind  
 Breathes low between the sunset and the moon ;  
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
 On silken cushions half reclined ;  
 I watch thy grace ; and in its place  
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
 While I muse upon thy face ;  
 And a languid fire creeps  
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon

---

From thy rose-red lips MY name  
Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,  
With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
I lose my colour, I lose my breath,  
I drink the cup of a costly death,  
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.  
I die with my delight, before  
I hear what I would hear from thee ;  
Yet tell my name again to me,  
I *would* be dying evermore,  
So dying ever, Eleänore.

“MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS.”

I.

My life is full of weary days,  
But good things have not kept aloof,  
Nor wander'd into other ways :  
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink  
Of that deep grave to which I go :  
Shake hands once more : I cannot sink  
So far — far down, but I shall know  
Thy voice, and answer from below.

II.

When in the darkness over me  
The four-handed mole shall scrape,  
Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,  
Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,  
But pledge me in the flowing grape.



"MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS"

And when the sappy field and wood  
    Grow green beneath the showery gray,  
And rugged barks begin to bud,  
    And thro' damp holts new-flush'd with may,  
    Ring sudden scritchings of the jay.

Then let wise Nature work her will,  
    And on my clay her darnel grow ;  
Come only, when the days are still,  
    And at my headstone whisper low,  
    And tell me if the woodbines blow.



## EARLY SONNETS.

— ❖ —

I.

TO ———.

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,  
And ebb into a former life, or seem  
To lapse far back in some confused dream  
To states of mystical similitude ;  
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,  
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,  
So that we say, " All this hath been before,  
All this hath been, I know not when or where." —  
So, friend, when first I look'd upon your face,  
Our thought gave answer each to each, so true —  
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each —  
That tho' I knew not in what time or place,  
Methought that I had often met with you,  
And either lived in either's heart and speech.

## II.

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou wilt be  
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;  
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:  
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;  
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy  
To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk  
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne  
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark  
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

## III.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and free,  
Like some broad river rushing down alone,  
With the self-same impulse wherewith he was thrown  
From his loud fount upon the echoing lea :—  
Which with increasing might doth forward flee  
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,  
And in the middle of the green salt sea  
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.  
Mine be the power which ever to its sway  
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;  
Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of Florida  
Floats far away into the Northern seas  
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

## IV.

## ALEXANDER.

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right arm debased  
The throne of Persia, when her Satrap bled  
At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled  
Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, disgraced  
For ever -- thee (thy pathway sand-erased)  
Gliding with equal crowns two serpents led  
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed  
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.  
There in a silent shade of laurel brown  
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine  
Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries :  
High things were spoken there, unhand'd down ;  
Only they saw thee from the secret shrine  
Returning with hot cheek and kindled eyes.

## V.

## BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,  
Madman! — to chain with chains, and bind with  
bands

That island queen who sways the floods and lands  
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,  
When from her wooden walls, — lit by sure hands, —  
With thunders, and with lightnings, and with  
smoke, —

Peal after peal, the British battle broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.  
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsinore  
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,  
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden fires  
Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once more  
We taught him : late he learned humility  
Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd with  
briers.

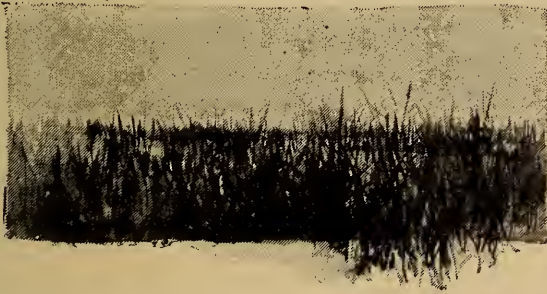
## VI.

## POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,  
And trampled under by the last and least  
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not ceased  
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth drown  
The fields, and out of every smouldering town  
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,  
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East  
Transgress his ample bound to some new crown:—  
Cries to thee, "Lord, how long shall these things be:  
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite  
Oppress the region?" Us, O Just and Good,  
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in three;  
Us, who stand now, when we should aid the right—  
A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

## VII.

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch and stand,  
And run thro' every change of sharp and flat ;  
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy band,  
And chased away the still-recurring gnat,  
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.  
But now they live with Beauty less and less,  
For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,  
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds ;  
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,  
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.



“A SINGLE STAR, THAT SETS AT TWILIGHT IN A LAND  
OF REEDS.”

## VIII.

THE form, the form alone is eloquent !  
A nobler yearning never broke her rest  
Than but to dance and sing, be gaily drest,  
And win all eyes with all accomplishment :  
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,  
My fancy made me for a moment blest  
To find my heart so near the beauteous breast  
That once had power to rob it of content.  
A moment came the tenderness of tears,  
The phantom of a wish that once could move,  
A ghost of passion that no smiles restore —  
For ah ! the slight coquette, she cannot love,  
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand years,  
She still would take the praise, and care no more.



## IX.

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take the cast  
Of those dead lineaments that near thee lie?  
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the past,  
In painting some dead friend from memory?  
Weep on : beyond his object Love can last :  
His object lives : more cause to weep have I :  
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,  
No tears of love, but tears that Love can die.  
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
Nor care to sit beside her where she sits —  
Ah pity — hint it not in human tones,  
But breathe it into earth and close it up  
With secret death for ever, in the pits  
Which some green Christmas crams with weary  
bones.

## X.

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,  
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,  
And range of evil between death and birth,  
That I should fear, — if I were loved by thee?  
All the inner, all the outer world of pain  
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert  
mine,  
As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,  
Fresh-water springs come up through bitter brine.  
'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand with thee,  
To wait for death — mute — careless of all ills,  
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge  
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills  
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge  
Below us, as far on as eye could see.



"IF I WERE LOVED, AS I DESIRE TO BE."

## XI.

## THE BRIDESMAID.

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot was tied,  
Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly see ;  
Thy sister smiled and said, " No tears for me !  
A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride."  
And then, the couple standing side by side,  
Love lighted down between them full of glee,  
And over his left shoulder laugh'd at thee.  
" O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride."  
And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,  
For while the tender service made thee weep,  
I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not hide,  
And prest thy hand, and knew the press return'd,  
And thought, " My life is sick of single sleep :  
O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride !"

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

ON either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,



“THE LADY OF SHALOTT.”

That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;  
And thro' the field the road runs by

To many-tower'd Camelot ;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
    Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
    The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses ; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
    Skimming down to Camelot :  
But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
Or at the casement seen her stand?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
    The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly  
    Down to tower'd Camelot :

And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy  
Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day  
A magic web with colours gay.  
She has heard a whisper say,  
A curse is on her if she stay  
    To look down to Camelot.  
She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily,  
And little other care hath she,  
    The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
That hangs before her all the year,  
Shadows of the world appear.  
There she sees the highway near  
    Winding down to Camelot:  
There the river eddy whirls,  
And there the surly village-churls,  
And the red cloaks of market girls,  
    Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
    Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two :  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often thro' the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights  
     And music, went to Camelot :  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed ;  
 " I am half sick of shadows," said  
     The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
     Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
 A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
 To a lady in his shield,  
 That sparkled in the yellow field,  
     Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
 Like to some branch of stars we see  
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
 The bridle bells rang merrily  
     As he rode down to Camelot



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And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
"Tirra lirra," by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
 The mirror crack'd from side to side ;  
 "The curse is come upon me," cried  
     The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,  
 The pale yellow woods were waning,  
 The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
 Heavily the low sky raining  
     Over tower'd Camelot ;  
 Down she came and found a boat  
 Beneath a willow left afloat,  
 And round about the prow she wrote  
     *The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse  
 Like some bold seër in a trance,  
 Seeing all his own mischance —  
 With a glassy countenance  
     Did she look to Camelot.  
 And at the closing of the day  
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;  
 The broad stream bore her far away,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
 That loosely flew to left and right —



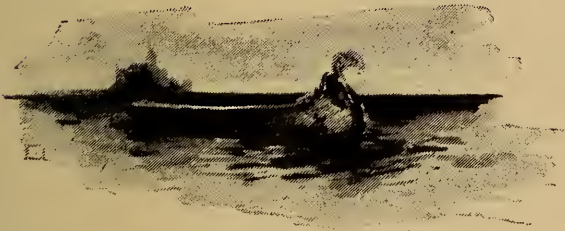
"THE MIRROR CRACK'D FROM SIDE TO SIDE."

The leaves upon her falling light —  
Thro' the noises of the night  
    She floated down to Camelot :  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song  
    The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly  
    Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
    The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
    Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
    *The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer;  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
    All the knights at Camelot :  
But Lancelot mused a little space ;  
He said, "She has a lovely face ;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
    The Lady of Shalott."



## THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL, small voice spake unto me,  
"Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?"

Then to the still small voice I said ;  
"Let me not cast in endless shade  
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply ;  
"To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk : from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings : like gauze they grew ;  
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew."

I said, "When first the world began,  
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.

---

“ She gave him mind, the lordliest  
Proportion, and, above the rest,  
Dominion in the head and breast.”

Thereto the silent voice replied ;  
“ Self-blinded are you by your pride :  
Look up thro’ night : the world is wide.

“ This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

“ Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
Could find no statelier than his peers  
In yonder hundred million spheres ? ”

It spake, moreover, in my mind :  
“ Tho’ thou wert scatter’d to the wind,  
Yet is there plenty of the kind.”

Then did my response clearer fall :  
“ No compound of this earthly ball  
Is like another, all in all.”

To which he answer’d scoffingly ;  
“ Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,  
Who’ll weep for thy deficiency ?

“ Or will one beam be less intense,  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancell’d in the world of sense ? ”

I would have said, "Thou canst not know,"  
But my full heart, that work'd below,  
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :  
"Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely 'twere better not to be.

"Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
Nor any train of reason keep :  
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep."

I said, "The years with change advance :  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier chance.

"Some turn the sickness yet might take,  
Ev'n yet." But he : "What drug can make  
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?"

I wept, "Tho' I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

"And men, thro' novel spheres of thought  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not."

"Yet," said the secret voice, "some time,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.



---

“ Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
Rapt after Heaven’s starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

“ Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The furzy prickle fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.”

I said that “ all the years invent ;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

“ Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Tho’ watching from a ruin’d tower  
How grows the day of human power ? ”

“ The highest-mounted mind,” he said,  
“ Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

“ Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main ?

“ Or make that morn, from his cold crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town ?

“ Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, milleniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream’d not yet.

“Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

“'Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

“Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.”

I said, “When I am gone away,  
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,  
Doing dishonour to my clay.”

“This is more vile,” he made reply,  
“To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

“Sick art thou — a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

“Do men love thee? Art thou so bound  
To men, that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground?

“The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

---

“Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust ;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just.”

“Hard task, to pluck resolve,” I cried,  
“From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride !

“Nay — rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

“When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

“I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear —

“Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life —

“Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love —

“As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about —

“ To search thro’ all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law :

“ At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

“ To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause —



“ AND LIKE A WARRIOR OVERTHROWN.”

“ In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honour’d, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown ;

“ Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When, soil’d with noble dust, he hears  
His country’s war-song thrill his ears :

“ Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman’s line is broke,  
And all the war is roll’d in smoke.”

“ Yea ! ” said the voice, “ thy dream was good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

“ If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour ?

“ Then comes the check, the change, the fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

“ Yet hadst thou, thro’ enduring pain,  
Link’d month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

“ Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labour little worth.

“ That men with knowledge merely play’d  
I told thee — hardly nigher made,  
Tho’ scaling slow from grade to grade ;

“ Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

“ For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

“ Cry, faint not : either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

“Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

“Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

“I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

“If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know’st not. Shadows thou dost strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

“And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

“Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?  
There is one remedy for all.”

“O dull, one-sided voice,” said I,  
“Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die ?

“I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

---

“ I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

“ Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream ;

“ But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head —

“ Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

“ He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with stones :

“ But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.”

The sullen answer slid betwixt

“ Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd.”

I said, “ I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

“ And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new :

“ Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

“ For I go, weak from suffering here :  
Naked I go, and void of cheer :  
What is it that I may not fear? ”

“ Consider well,” the voice replied,  
“ His face, that two hours since hath died ;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

“ Will he obey when one commands ?  
Or answer should one press his hands ?  
He answers not, nor understands.

“ His palms are folded on his breast :  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

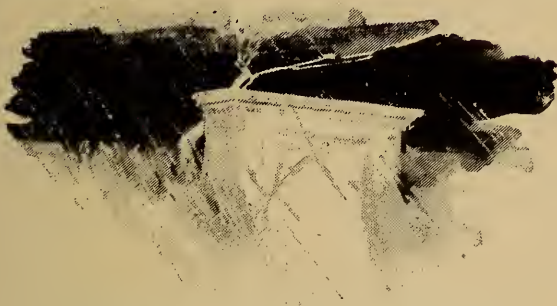
“ His lips are very mild and meek :  
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

“ His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonour to her race —



“ His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honour, some to shame, —  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

“ He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.



“ WINTER RAINS THAT BEAT HIS GRAVE.”

“ High up the vapours fold and swim :  
About him broods the twilight dim :  
The place he knew forgetteth him.”

“ If all be dark, vague voice,” I said,  
“ These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

“ The sap dries up : the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

“ I found him when my years were few ;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

“ From grave to grave the shadow crept :  
In her still place the morning wept :  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

“ The simple senses crown'd his head :  
' Omega ! thou art Lord,' they said,  
' We find no motion in the dead.'

“ Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

“ Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense ?

“ He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

“ Here sits he shaping wings to fly :  
His heart forebodes a mystery :  
He names the name Eternity.

“ That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.

---

“ He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro’ thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end.

“ The end and the beginning vex  
His reason : many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

“ He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

“ Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

“ Ah ! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt,

“ But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

“ The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve.”

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced.

“ Where wert thou when thy father play’d  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

“ A merry boy they call’d him then,  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again.

“ Before the little ducks began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man :

“ Who took a wife, who rear’d his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather’d on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days :

“ A life of nothings, nothing worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth !”

“ These words,” I said, “ are like the rest ;  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast :

“ But if I grant, thou mightst defend  
The thesis which thy words intend —  
That to begin implies to end ;

“ Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould ?

---

“ I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

“ It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

“ As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state.

“ As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.

“ So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch.

“ But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

“ Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of night ;

“ Or if thro' lower lives I came —  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame —

“ I might forget my weaker lot ;  
For is not our first year forgot ?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

“ And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

“ Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory :

“ For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime ?

“ Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

“ Of something felt, like something here ;  
Of something done, I know not where ;  
Such as no language may declare.”

The still voice laugh'd. “ I talk,” said he,  
“ Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality.”

“ But thou,” said I, “ hast missed thy mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

---

“Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new ?

“Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

“'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant ;  
More life, and fuller, that I want.”

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
“Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.”

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest :  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measured footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :  
I spoke, but answer came there none :  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, " Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighbourhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
" I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
" I may not speak of what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes :



Such seem'd the whisper at my side :  
"What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?" I cried.  
"A hidden hope," the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers :  
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along :  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong ;

And all so variously wrought,  
I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, "Rejoice ! Rejoice !"

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that knew him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead drily cur'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver cup —  
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest — gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by.  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self-same day.



"IN YONDER CHAIR I SEE HIM SIT."

Have I not found a happy earth?  
 I least should breathe a thought of pain.  
 Would God renew me from my birth  
 I'd almost live my life again.  
 So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
 And once again to woo thee mine —  
 It seems in after-dinner talk  
 Across the walnuts and the wine —

To be the long and listless boy  
 Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
 Where this old mansion mounted high  
 Looks down upon the village spire :  
 For even here, where I and you  
 Have lived and loved alone so long,  
 Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
 By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
 In firry woodlands making moan ;  
 But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
 I had no motion of my own.  
 For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
 Before I dreamed that pleasant dream —  
 Still hither thither idly sway'd  
 Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear  
 The mill-dam rushing down with noise,  
 And see the minnows everywhere  
 In crystal eddies glance and poise,

The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,  
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When after roving in the woods  
('Twas April then), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue ;  
And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of my brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
I watched the little circles die ;  
They past into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye ;  
The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,  
That morning, on the casement-edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the ledge :



“THAT MORNING, ON THE CASEMENT-EDGE.”

And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met with two so full and bright —  
Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
That I should die an early death :  
For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.  
My mother thought, What ails the boy?  
For I was alter'd, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still,  
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
The dark round of the dripping wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
I saw the village lights below ;  
I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill ;  
And "by that lamp," I thought, "she sits !"  
The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.

“ O that I were beside her now !  
O will she answer if I call ?  
O wou'd she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all ? ”

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;  
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.  
At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white with May,  
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
Flush'd like the coming of the day ;  
And so it was — half-sly, half-shy,  
You would, and would not, little one !  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire :  
She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
I might have look'd a little higher ;  
And I was young — too young to wed :  
“ Yet must I love her for your sake ;  
Go fetch your Alice here,” she said :  
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.



And down I went to fetch my bride :  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;  
This dress and that by turns you tried,  
Too fearful that you should not please.  
I loved you better for your fears,  
I knew you could not look but well ;  
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,  
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
The doubt my mother would not see ;  
She spoke at large of many things,  
And at the last she spoke of me ;  
And turning look'd upon your face,  
As near this door you sat apart,  
And rose, and, with a silent grace  
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well — but sing the foolish song  
I gave you, Alice, on the day  
When, arm in arm, we went along,  
A pensive pair, and you were gay  
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,  
As in the nights of old, to lie  
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
That trembles in her ear :



"IT IS THE MILLER'S  
DAUGHTER."

For hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and  
white.

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against  
me,

In sorrow and in rest:  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and  
tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs,  
And I would lie so light, so light,  
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells —  
True love interprets — right alone.  
His light upon the letter dwells,  
For all the spirit is his own.  
So, if I waste words now, in truth  
You must blame Love. His early rage  
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou art,

Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
Do make a garland for the heart :  
So sing that other song I made,  
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
The day, when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget ?  
Many suns arise and set.  
Many a chance the years beget.  
Love the gift if Love the debt.

Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
Love is made a vague regret.  
Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love? for we forget :  
Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,  
Round my true heart thine arms entwine  
My other dearer life in life,  
Look thro' my very soul with thine !  
Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
May those kind eyes for ever dwell !  
They have not shed a many tears,  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part  
Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,  
The still affection of the heart  
Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before ;  
Although the loss had brought us pain,  
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee :  
But that God bless thee, dear — who wrought  
Two spirits to one equal mind —  
With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
To yon old mill across the wolds ;  
For look, the sunset, south and north,  
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
And fires your narrow casement glass,  
Touching the sullen pool below :  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

O, LOVE, Love, Love ! O withering might !  
O sun, that from thy noonday height  
Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,

Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, parched and wither'd, deaf and blind,  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers :  
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :  
I roll'd among the tender flowers :  
I crushed them on my breast, my mouth ;  
I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,  
From my swift blood that went and came  
A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
O Love, O fire ! once he drew  
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'  
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.



"BELOW THE CITY'S EASTERN TOWERS."

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Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly : from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
Before him, striking on my brow.

In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,  
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the noon a fire  
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire ;  
And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,  
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
Droops blinded with his shining eye :  
I *will* possess him or will die.

I will grow round him in his place,  
Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

ŒNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine  
In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
Stands up and takes the morning : but in front  
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn  
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck  
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.  
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,  
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade  
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.



---

For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :  
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :  
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.  
The purple flower droops : the golden bee  
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.  
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
And I am all weary of my life.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves  
That house the cold crown'd snake ! O mountain  
    brooks,  
I am the daughter of a River-God,  
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
A cloud that gather'd shape : for it may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine :  
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft :  
 Far up the solitary morning smote  
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes  
 I sat alone : white breasted like a star  
 Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin  
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair  
 Cluster'd about his temples like a God's :  
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens  
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart  
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm  
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech  
 Came down upon my heart.

‘ My own *Cenone*,  
 Beautiful-brow'd *Cenone*, my own soul,  
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n  
 “ For the most fair,” would seem to award it thine,  
 As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
 Of movement, and the charm of married brows.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
 And added ‘ This was cast upon the board,  
 When all the full-faced presence of the Gods  
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon



"WITH DOWN-DROPT EYES I SAT ALONE."

Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due :  
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,

Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
 Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each  
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave  
 Behind yon whispering tufts of oldest pine,  
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
 Here all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 It was the deep midnight : one silvery cloud  
 Had lost his way between the piney sides  
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,  
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,  
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
 Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,  
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
 With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd  
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom  
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows  
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue  
 Wherewith to embellish state, ' from many a vale

And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,  
Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.  
Honour,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,  
From many an inland town and haven large,  
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowy citadel  
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

“O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,  
'Which in all action is the end of all ;  
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred  
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbour crowns  
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,  
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power  
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power  
Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood  
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear  
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek  
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“ ‘ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
 Yet not for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Again she said : ‘ I woo thee not with gifts.  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbias'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,  
 So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,  
 To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,  
 Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
 Commesure perfect freedom.’

“ Here she ceas'd.

And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, ‘ O Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas ! ’ but he heard me not,  
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Idalian Aphroditè beautiful,  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,  
With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
And shoulder : from the violets her light foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form  
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
Half-whisper'd in his ear, ‘ I promise thee  
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,’  
She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my sight for fear :  
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,  
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,  
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
And I was left alone within the bower ;  
And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die.

“ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Fairest — why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?  
My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail  
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she ?  
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms

Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest  
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew  
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 They came, they cut away my tallest pines,  
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge



“A WILD AND WANTON PARD, EYED LIKE THE EVENING STAR.”

High over the blue gorge, and all between  
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
 Foster'd the callow eaglet — from beneath  
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn  
 The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat  
 Low in the valley. Never, never more  
 Shall lone *Ænone* see the morning mist  
 Sweep thro' them ; never see them overlaid  
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,  
 Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.



“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,  
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her  
The Abominable, that uninvited came  
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,  
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
And bred this change ; that I might speak my mind,  
And tell her to her face how much I hate  
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,  
In this green valley, under this green hill,  
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?  
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?  
O happy tears, and how unlike to these !  
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face ?  
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?  
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,  
There are enough unhappy on this earth,  
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :  
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,  
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear

Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
Conjectures of the features of her child  
Ère it is born : her child ! — a shudder comes  
Across me : never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes !

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me  
Walking the cold and starless road of Death  
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth  
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire.”

THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race :  
She was the fairest in the face :  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.



"UPON MY LAP HE LAID HIS HEAD."

They were together, and she fell ;  
Therefore revenge became me well.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.  
The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,  
To win his love I lay in wait :  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bad him come ;  
I won his love, I brought him home.  
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head :  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.  
The wind is raging in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.  
The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.

I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.

O the Earl was fair to see !

TO —.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it) of a soul,  
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind)  
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if Good,  
Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters  
That doat upon each other, friends to man,  
Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without tears.  
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be  
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie  
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth  
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears  
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

## THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass  
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
My soul would live alone unto herself  
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I  
said,  
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade  
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily :  
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
So royal-rich and wide."

Four courts I made, East, West and South and  
North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row  
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,  
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky  
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell  
Across the mountain stream'd below  
In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise?"



For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,  
And, while day sank or mounted higher,  
The light aërial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
From shadow'd grotts of arches interlaced,  
And tipt with frost-like spires.

. . . . .

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,  
All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,  
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract of sand,  
And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.  
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full fed river winding slow  
By herds upon an endless plain,  
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
With shadow-streaks of rain.



“A TRACT OF SAND, AND SOME ONE PACING THERE  
ALONE.”

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones and slags,  
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,  
And highest, snow and fire.

---

And one, an English home — gray twilight pour'd  
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep — all things in order stored,  
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
As fit for every mood of mind,  
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there  
Not less than truth design'd.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx  
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;  
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
A group of Houris bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear  
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward borne :  
From one hand droop'd a crocus : one hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair  
Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,  
Not less than life, design'd.

. . . . .

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,  
Moved of themselves, with silver sound ;  
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung  
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild ;  
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;  
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.



“ A BEAST OF BURDEN SLOW.”

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
    Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings ;  
Here play'd a tiger, rolling to and fro  
    The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose an athlete, strong to break or bind  
    All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man declined,  
    And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells  
    Began to chime. She took her throne :  
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
    To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured flame  
    Two godlike faces gazed below ;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
    The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were  
    Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair  
    In divers raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,  
    Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew  
    Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,  
Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,  
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : " All these are mine,  
And let the world have peace or wars,  
'Tis one to me." She — when young night divine  
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils —  
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils  
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic Heaven ; and clapt her hands and cried,  
" I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.

" O all things fair to sate my various eyes !  
O shapes and hues that please me well !  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

" O God-like isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine  
That range on yonder plain.

“ In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,  
 They graze and wallow, breed and sleep ;  
 And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
 And drives them to the deep.”

Then of the mortal instinct would she prate  
 And of the rising from the dead,  
 As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate ;  
 And at the last she said :

“ I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
 I care not what the sects may brawl.  
 I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
 But contemplating all.”

. . . . .

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
 Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
 Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,  
 And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd : so three years  
 She prosper'd : on the fourth she fell,  
 Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,  
 Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
 God, before whom ever lie bare  
 The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
 Plagued her with sore despair.



When she would think, where'er she turned her  
sight

The airy hand confusion wrought,  
Wrote, "Mene, mene," and divided quite  
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
Fell on her, from which mood was born  
Scorn of herself, again, from out that mood  
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength," she  
said,  
"My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid  
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,  
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,  
Left on the shore ; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.  
“ No voice,” she shrieked in that lone hall,  
“ No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world :  
One deep, deep silence all ! ”

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering  
sod,  
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,  
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a trembling tomb, girt round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moon-rise hears the low  
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, " I have found  
A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, " I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die ? "

So when four years were wholly finished  
She threw her royal robes away.  
" Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,  
" Where I may mourn and pray.

" Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
So lightly, beautifully built :  
Perchance I may return with others there  
When I have purged my guilt."

LADY CLARA VÈRE DE VÈRE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
Of me you shall not win renown :  
You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime, ere you went to town.  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired :  
The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence I came.  
Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that doats on truer charms.  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meeke pupil you must find,  
For were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love,  
And my disdain is my reply.



"ARE THERE NO BEGGARS AT YOUR GATE?"

'337)

The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my head.  
Not thrice your branching limes have blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :  
A great enchantress you may be ;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's view,  
She had the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of you.  
Indeed I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
There stands a spectre in your hall :  
The guilt of blood is at your door :  
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.  
You held your course without remorse,  
To make him trust his modest worth,  
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
From yon blue Heavens above us bent

The gardener Adam and his wife  
Smile at the claims of long descent.  
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,  
You pine among your halls and towers :  
The languid light of your proud eyes  
Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
But sickening of a vague disease,  
You know so ill to deal with time,  
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
If time be heavy on your hands,  
Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands ?  
Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
And let the foolish yeoman go.

## THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early,  
mother dear ;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
New-year ;  
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest  
merriest day ;  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none  
so bright as mine ;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caro-  
line :  
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they  
say,  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never  
wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to  
break :  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and  
garlands gay,



---

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I  
see,  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-  
tree?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him  
yesterday,  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in  
white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of  
light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they  
say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never  
be :  
They say his heart is breaking, mother — what is  
that to me?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer  
day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made  
the Queen ;  
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from  
far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its  
wavy bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet  
cuckoo-flowers ;  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in  
swamps and hollows gray,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the  
meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten  
as they pass ;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the  
livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and  
still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the  
hill,

---

And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance  
and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early,  
mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
New-year :  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merri-  
est day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

IF you're waking call me early, call me early,  
mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no  
more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my  
peace of mind ;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall  
never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the  
tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a  
merry day ;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me  
Queen of May ;  
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel  
copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white  
chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on  
the pane :

I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out  
on high :

I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-  
tree,

And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'll come back again with summer  
o'er the wave,

But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering  
grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of  
mine,

In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the  
hill,

When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the  
world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the  
waning light

You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at  
night ;

When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow  
cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bul-  
rush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the haw-  
thorn shade,  
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am  
lowly laid.  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you  
when you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and  
pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive  
me now ;  
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere  
I go ;  
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be  
wild.  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have an-  
other child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my rest-  
ing-place ;  
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon  
your face ;  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what  
you say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm  
far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight  
for evermore,  
And you see me carried out from the threshold of  
the door ;

Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be  
growing green :  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :  
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never garden  
more :  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush  
that I set  
About the parlour-window and the box of mignon-  
ette.

Goodnight, sweet mother : call me before the day  
is born.  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-  
year.  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother  
dear.

## CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ,  
And in fields all around I hear the bleating of the  
lamb.

How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the  
year !

To die before the snowdrop came, and now the  
violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the  
skies,

And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that  
cannot rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers  
that blow,

And sweeter far is death than life to me that long  
to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the  
blessed sun,

And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will  
be done !

But still I think it can't be long before I find re-  
lease ;

And that good man, the clergyman, has told me  
words of peace.





- All in the mad March-morning, I  
heard the angels call;  
It was when the moon was setting, and  
the dark was over all.



W. B. E.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver  
hair !  
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet  
me there !  
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver  
head !  
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside  
my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all  
the sin.  
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One  
will let me in :  
Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that  
could be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for  
me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-  
watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the night and  
morning meet :  
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand  
in mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels  
call ;  
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark  
was over all ;

---

The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to  
roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call  
my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie  
dear ;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer  
here ;  
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I  
felt resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the  
wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my  
bed,  
And then did something speak to me — I know not  
what was said ;  
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all  
my mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the  
wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, "It's not for  
them : it's mine."  
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for  
a sign.  
And once again it came, and close beside the win-  
dow-bars,  
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die  
among the stars.

---

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I  
know  
The blessed music went that way my soul will have  
to go.  
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past  
away.

And say to Robin a kind word. and tell him not to  
fret ;  
There's many a worthier than I, would make him  
happy yet.  
If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might have been  
his wife ;  
But all these things have ceased to be, with my  
desire of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the Heavens are in  
a glow ;  
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I  
know.  
And there I move no longer now, and there his  
light may shine —  
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than  
mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this  
day is done  
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond  
the sun —

For ever and for ever with those just souls and  
true —

And what is life, that we should moan? why make  
we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home —

And there to wait a little while till you and Effie  
come —

To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your  
breast —

And the wicked cease from troubling, and the  
weary are at rest.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS.

“COURAGE!” he said, and pointed toward the land,  
“This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.”  
In the afternoon they came unto a land  
In which it seemed always afternoon.  
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,  
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;  
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,  
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;  
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,  
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
From the inner land : far off, three mountain-tops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with showery  
drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts the dale  
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale  
And meadow, set with slender galingale ;  
A land where all things always seem'd the same !  
And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.



“THREE SILENT PINNACLES OF AGED SNOW.”

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;  
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;  
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore  
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
Then some one said, " We will return no more ;"  
And all at once they sang, " Our Island home  
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam."



CHORIC SONG.

I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;  
Music that gentler on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful  
    skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness ?  
All things have rest : why should we toil alone,  
We only toil who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,

Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;  
 Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
 " There is no joy but calm ! "  
 Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of  
 things ?

## III.

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,  
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
 With winds upon the branch, and there  
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
 Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
 Falls, and floats adown the air.  
 Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
 Drops in a silent autumn night.  
 All its allotted length of days,  
 The flower ripens in its place,  
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV.

Hateful is the dark blue sky,  
 Vaulted o'er the dark blue-sea.  
 Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
 Should life all labour be ?  
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.

Let us alone. What is it that will  
last?

All things are taken from us, and  
become

Portions and parcels of the dreadful  
Past.

Let us alone. What pleasure can  
we have

To war with evil? Is there any  
peace

In ever climbing up the climbing  
wave?

All things have rest, and ripen  
toward the grave

In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :

Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful  
ease.



“DEATH IS THE END OF  
LIFE.”

v.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream !  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;  
To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;

To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

## VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change :  
For surely now our household hearths are cold :  
Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :  
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
Or else the island princes over-bold  
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
Is there confusion in the little isle ?  
Let what is broken so remain.  
The Gods are hard to reconcile :  
'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
There *is* confusion worse than death,  
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
Long labour unto aged breath,  
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII.

But propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)  
With half-dropt eyelid still,  
Beneath a Heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
His waters from the purple hill —  
To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine —  
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling  
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!  
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the  
    pine.

## VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :  
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-  
    dust is blown.  
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the  
    surge was seething free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-  
    fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal  
mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are  
hurl'd  
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are  
lightly curl'd  
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleam-  
ing world :  
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted  
lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring  
deeps and fiery sands,  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking  
ships, and praying hands.  
But they smile, they find a music centred in a dole-  
ful song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of  
wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are  
strong ;  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave  
the soil,  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring  
toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and  
oil ;  
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis whis-  
per'd — down in hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys  
dwell,

---

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the  
shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave  
and oar ;  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander  
more.



A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
“ *The Legend of Good Women,*” long ago  
Sung by the morning star of song, who made  
His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
Held me above the subject, as strong gales  
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,  
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land  
I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
And trumpets blown for wars ;



---

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs ;  
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries ;  
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs  
Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;  
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,  
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,  
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,

That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp faucies, by down-lapsing thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep  
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and  
brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far  
In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest dew  
The maiden splendours of the morning star  
Shook in the stedfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest  
green,  
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,

---

And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd  
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in  
dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame  
The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime,  
"Pass freely thro' : the wood is all thine own,  
Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stillter than chisell'd marble standing there ;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise  
Froze my swift speech : she turning on my face  
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place.

"I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :  
No one can be more wise than destiny.

Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came  
I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair field  
Myself for such a face had boldly died,"  
I answer'd free ; and turning I appeal'd  
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
To her full height her stately stature draws ;  
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse :  
This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron years :  
My father held his hand upon his face ;  
I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with  
sighs  
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,  
Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat ;  
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore ;  
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat ;  
Touch'd ; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward brow :  
"I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,  
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,  
Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,  
As thunder drops fall on a sleeping sea :  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come here,  
That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a fiery rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd ;  
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,  
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :  
"I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd  
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.  
Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humour ebb and flow.  
I have no men to govern in this wood :  
That makes my only woe.

"Nay — yet it chafes me that I could not bend  
One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,  
Where is Mark Antony ?

"The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime  
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God :  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
And flooded at our nod.

“ We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit  
Lamps which out-burn’d Canopus. O my life  
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

“ And the wild kiss, when fresh from war’s alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die !



“ I DIED A QUEEN.”

“ And there he died : and when I heard my name  
Sigh’d forth with life I would not brook my fear  
Of the other : with a worm I balk’d his fame.  
What else was left ? look here ! ”

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polish’d argent of her breast to sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,  
Showing the aspick’s bite.)

---

“I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,  
A name for ever! — lying robed and crown’d,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.”

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro’ all change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight ;  
Because with sudden motion from the ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill’d with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts ;  
As once they drew into two burning rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming thro’ the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird  
That claps his wings at dawn.

“The torrent brooks of hallow’d Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro’ the dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

“The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams  
divine :  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell  
With spires of silver shine.”

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied  
To where he stands, — so stood I, when that flow  
Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure : as when she went along  
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,  
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : “ Heaven heads the count of  
crimes  
With that wild oath.” She render'd answer high :  
“ Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times  
I would be born and die.”

“ Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,  
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.



“ My God, my land, my father — these did move  
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,  
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love  
Down to a silent grave.

“ And I went mourning, ‘ No fair Hebrew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame among  
The Hebrew mothers ’ — emptied of all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song,

‘ Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow  
Beneath the battled tower.

“ The light white cloud swam over us. Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his den ;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,  
Or, from the darken'd glen,

“ Saw God divide the night with flying flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

“ When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire !

“It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father’s will ;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

“Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew’d Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer



“WHEN MIDNIGHT BELLS CEASE RINGING SUDDENLY.”

On Arnon unto Minneth.” Here her face  
Glow’d, as I look’d at her.

She lock’d her lips : she left me where I stood :  
“Glory to God,” she sang, and past afar,  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

---

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
And the old year is dead.

“ Alas ! alas ! ” a low voice, full of care,  
Murmur'd beside me : “ Turn and look on me :  
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
If what I was I be.

“ Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor !  
O me, that I should ever see the light !  
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night.”

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust :  
To whom the Egyptian : “ O, you tamely died !  
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust  
The dagger thro' her side.”

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping  
beams,  
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams  
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,  
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance  
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,  
A light of ancient France ;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,  
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore  
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep  
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain  
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike  
Into that wondrous track of dreams again !  
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,  
Desiring what is mingled with past years,  
In yearnings that can never be exprest  
By signs or groans or tears ;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,  
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.

## THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :  
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,  
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :  
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that gold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry :  
Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once, when young.

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,  
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sighing :  
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die ;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
He will not see the dawn of day.  
He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;  
So long as you have been with us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;  
A jollier year we shall not see.

But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;  
We did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er  
To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
But he'll be dead before.

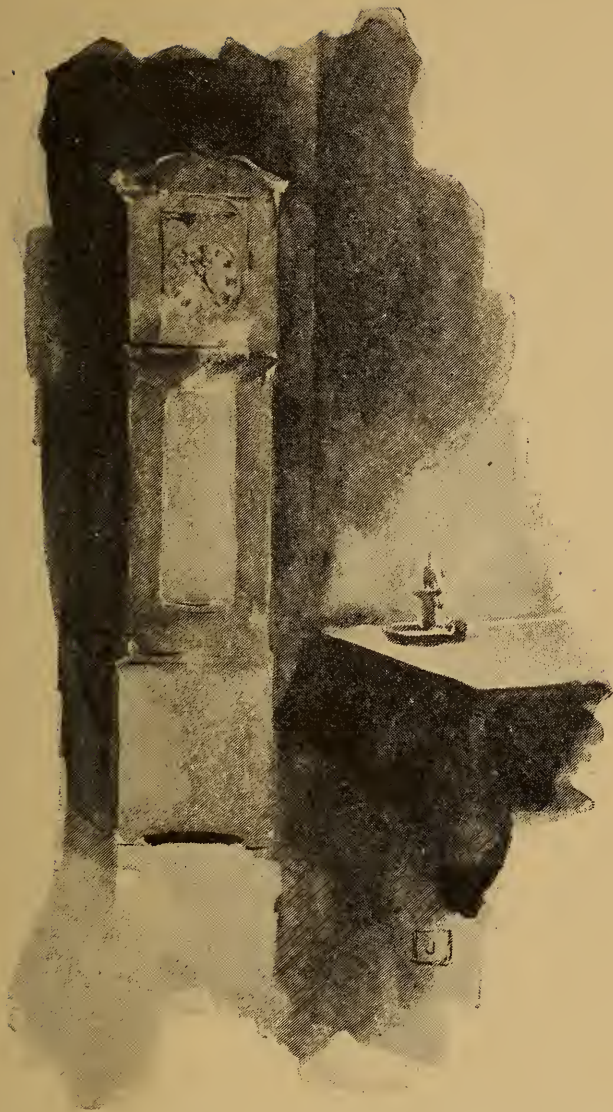
Every one for his own.  
The night is starry and cold, my friend,  
And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend,  
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro :  
The cricket chirps : the light burns low :  
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.  
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :  
What is it we can do for you ?  
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
Alack ! our friend is gone.





“THE LIGHT BURNS LOW: 'TIS NEARLY TWELVE O'CLOCK.”

Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.

There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,

And a new face at the door, my friend,

A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
More softly round the open wold,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love  
He lends us ; but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass ;  
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair is seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
Rose with you thro' a little arc  
Of Heaven, nor having wander'd far  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust  
I honour and his living worth :  
A man more pure and bold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.  
Great Nature is more wise than I :  
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,  
I will not even preach to you,  
“ Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.”

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
She loveth her own anguish deep  
More than much pleasure. Let her will  
Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, “ God's ordinance  
Of Death is blown in every wind ; ”  
For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in Heaven half the night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat  
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
Who miss the brother of your youth ?  
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :  
Both are my friends, and my true breast  
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make  
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease  
Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.  
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

ON A MOURNER.

I.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
Imitates God, and turns her face  
To every land beneath the skies,



"THE SWAMP."

Counts nothing that she meets with base,  
But lives and loves in every place ;

II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
The swamp, where hums the dropping snipe,  
With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
Saying, "Beat quicker, for the time  
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
Going before to some far shrine,  
Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,  
Till all thy life one way incline  
With one wide Will that closes thine.

V.

And when the zoning eve has died  
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,  
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride,  
From out the borders of the morn,  
With that fair child betwixt them born.

## VI.

And when no mortal motion jars  
The blackness round the tumbing sod,  
Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have trod,  
And Virtue, like a household god

## VII.

Promising empire ; such as those  
Once heard at dead of night to greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.



“YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO’ ILL AT EASE.”

You ask me, why, tho’ ill at ease,  
    Within this region I subsist,  
    Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,  
    That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
    The land, where girt with friends or foes  
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
    A land of just and old renown,  
    Where freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
    But by degrees to fullness wrought,  
    The strength of some diffusive thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
    Opinion, and induce a time  
    When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to land  
The name of Britain trebly great—  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,  
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South



"THE PALMS AND TEMPLES OF THE SOUTH."

“OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE  
HEIGHTS.”

OF old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet :  
Above her shook the starry lights :  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fullness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
    The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
    Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
    Make bright our days and light our dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
    The falsehood of extremes !

“LOVE THOU THY LAND.”

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought  
From out the storied Past, and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;  
But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years :  
 Cut Prejudice against the grain :  
 But gentle words are always gain :  
 Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place or touch,  
 Of pension, neither count on praise :  
 It grows to guerdon after-days :  
 Nor deal in watch-words overmuch :

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;  
 Not master'd by some modern term ;  
 Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :  
 And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
 With Life, that, working strongly, binds —  
 Set in all lights by many minds,  
 To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
 And moist and dry, devising long,  
 Thro' many agents making strong,  
 Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
 Our being, lest we rust, in ease.  
 We all are changed by still degrees,  
 All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
 To ingroove itself with that which flies,

---

And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;  
For all the past of Time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom —  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school ;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapour, hard to mark ;  
And round them sea and air are dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head ;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword away —

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes :  
And if some dreadful need should rise  
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
As we bear blossom of the dead ;  
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay,



ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782.

O THOU, that sendest out the man  
To rule by land and sea,  
Strong mother of a Lion-line,  
Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
Who wrench'd their rights from thee !

What wonder, if in noble heat  
Those men thine arms withstood,  
Retought the lesson thou hadst taught,  
And in thy spirit with thee fought —  
Who sprang from English blood !

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
Lift up thy rocky face,  
And shatter, when the storms are black,  
In many a streaming torrent back,  
The seas that shock thy base !

Whatever harmonies of law  
The growing world assume,  
Thy work is thine — The single note  
From that deep chord which Hampden smote  
Will vibrate to the doom.

## THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife  
lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held  
together ;  
There strode a stranger  
to the door,  
And it was windy  
weather.

He held a goose upon  
his arm,  
He utter'd rhyme  
and reason,  
“Here, take the goose,  
and keep you  
warm,  
It is a stormy sea-  
son.”

She caught the white  
goose by the leg,  
A goose — ’twas no  
great matter.  
The goose let fall a  
golden egg  
With cackle and with  
clatter.



“I KNEW AN OLD WIFE LEAN AND POOR”

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbours ;  
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able bodied ;  
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder :  
But ah ! the more the white goose laid  
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

“ A quinsy choke thy cursed note ! ”  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
“ Go, take the goose and wring her throat,  
I will not bear it longer.”

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat ;  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd words of scorning :  
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning."

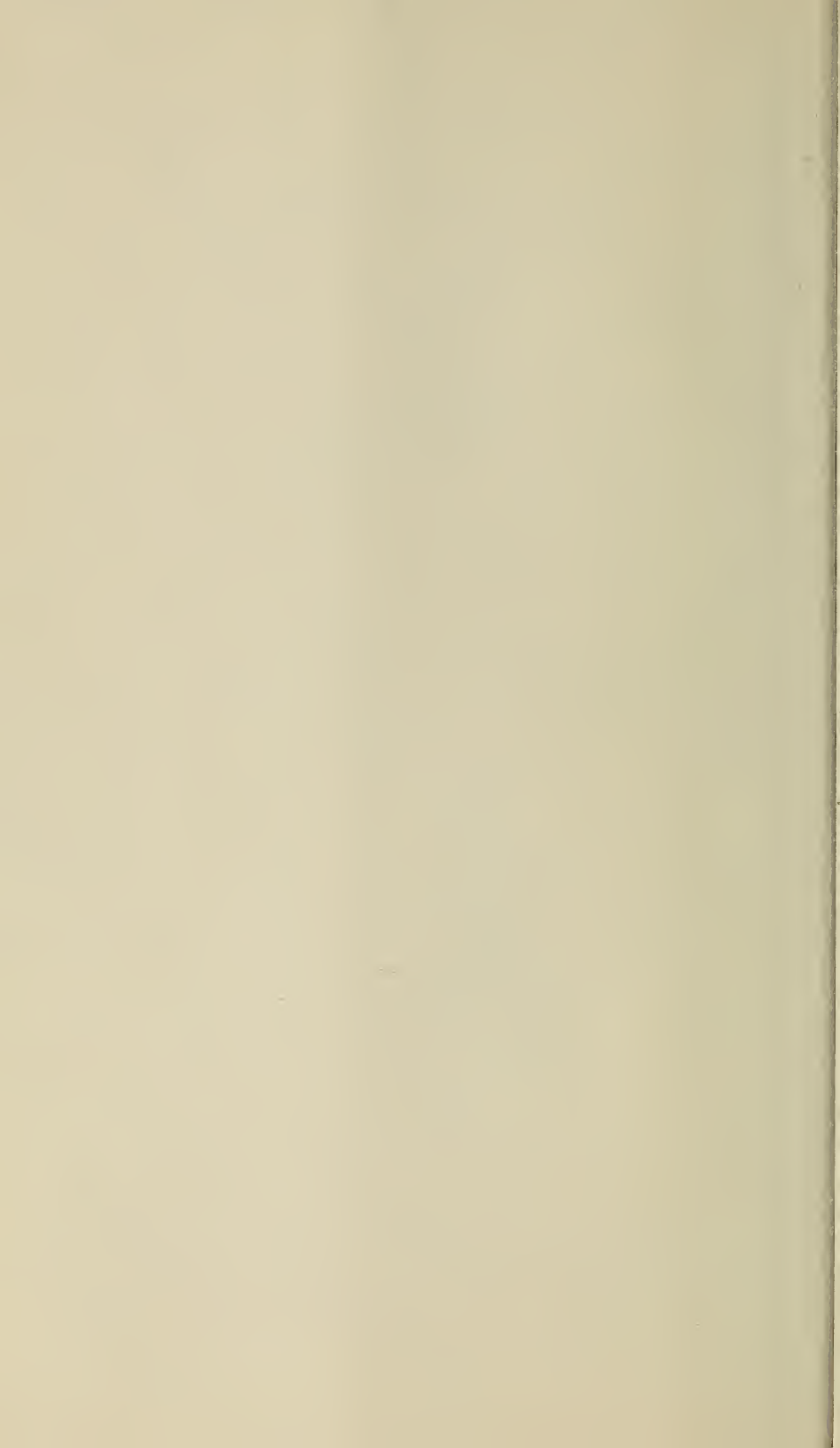
The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled:

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder :

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger !"















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