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FLORILEGIUM AMANTIS

COVENTRY PATMORE

FLORILEGIUM AMANTIS

EDITED BY

RICHARD GARNETT

Thou Primal Love, who grantest wings
And voices to the woodland birds,
Grant me the power of saying things
Too simple and too sweet for words!

LONDON

GEORGE BELL & SONS, YORK STREET

COVENT GARDEN

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CONTENTS.



	PAGE
IN A WOOD	I
FIRST LOVE	3
THE HEATHEN LAND	4
THE KISS	5
THE REVELATION	6
A CHILD'S LOVE	7
LOVE AND DUTY	11
THE PRISM	12
THE LOVER	13
HOPE AGAINST HOPE	15
AMELIA	16
THE SPIRIT'S EPOCHS	23
L'ALLEGRO	24
THE CATHEDRAL CLOSE	28
" IF I WERE DEAD "	33
" MY MEMORY OF HEAVEN AWAKES "	34
OLYMPUS	36
THE ROSY-BOSOM'D HOURS	39
THE AFTER-GLOW	42
THE RAINBOW	44

824034

	PAGE
THE CIRCLES	45
THE PARADOX	47
A FAREWELL	50
NIGHT AND SLEEP	52
THE MORNING CALL	54
SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY	57
THE STORM	60
A DREAM	62
ÆTNA AND THE MOON	64
THE YEAR	68
THE TRIBUTE	69
THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW	70
THE JOYFUL WISDOM	73
BACK TO ENGLAND	76
THE CHASE	77
A THUNDER SHOWER	81
LOVE JUSTIFIED	83
WINTER	84
LOVE SERVICEABLE	87
MA BELLE	88
A WARNING	89
SARUM PLAIN	90
WIND AND WAVE	94
DAWN	96
REJECTED	97
MIGNONNE	98
THE FOREIGN LAND	100
THE TOYS	101

CONTENTS.

vii

	PAGE
THE VIOLETS	103
HONORIA	107
THE ROSE OF THE WORLD	108
ALEXANDER AND LYCON	111
RACHEL	112
THE OPPORTUNITY	113
AURAS OF DELIGHT	115
IN LOVE	118
THE QUEEN'S ROOM	121
FELICITY	125
EVENING PEACE	126
LOVE-SICK	127
THE CHANGED ALLEGIANCE	128
OUTWARD BOUND	132
“LET BE!”	134
THE FRIENDS	136
A PORTRAIT	139
THE AMARANTH	140
SEMELE	141
THE MARRIED LOVER	142
THE WIFE'S TRAGEDY	144
THE MINISTERS OF LOVE	146
A DEMONSTRATION	150
THE WORST	151
AFTER BAD WEATHER	153
DEPARTURE	157
“SHE WAS MINE”	159
FINIS CORONAT OPUS	160

	PAGE
THE AZALEA	162
LOVE'S IMMORTALITY	164
"LOVE IS ENOUGH"	165
PAIN	167
FELIX TO HONORIA	170
MAGNA EST VERITAS	179
LIFE OF LIFE	180
TO THE UNKNOWN EROS	181
LOVE THINKING	185
TO THE BODY	187
THE OBSCURE HOPE	190
DELICIE SAPIENTIE DE AMORE	192
LOVE'S REALITY	198
A WEDDING SERMON	199
THE NURSLING OF CIVILITY	218
SPONSA DEI	219
AUREA DICTA	222
ARBOR VITÆ	225
LADY CLITHEROE TO EMILY GRAHAM	227

IN A WOOD.

'TWAS when the spousal time of May
Hangs all the hedge with bridal wreaths,
And air's so sweet the bosom gay
Gives thanks for every breath it breathes,
When like to like is gladly moved,
And each thing joins in Spring's refrain,
"Let those love now who never loved ;
Let those who have loved love again ;"
That I, in whom the sweet time wrought,
Lay stretch'd within a lonely glade,
Abandon'd to delicious thought
Beneath the softly twinkling shade.
The leaves, all stirring, mimick'd well
A neighbouring rush of rivers cold,
And, as the sun or shadow fell,
So these were green and those were gold ;

In dim recesses hyacinths droop'd,
And breadths of primrose lit the air,
Which, wandering through the woodland, stoop'd
And gather'd perfumes here and there ;
Upon the spray the squirrel swung,
And careless songsters, six or seven,
Sang lofty songs the leaves among,
Fit for their only listener, Heaven.

FIRST LOVE.

BRIGHT thro' the valley gallops the brooklet ;
Over the clear sky travels the cloud ;
Touch'd by the zephyr, dances the harebell ;
Cuckoo sits somewhere, singing so loud ;
Two little children, seeing and hearing,
Hand in hand wander, shout, laugh, and sing :
Lo, in their bosoms, wild with the marvel,
Love, like the crocus, is come ere the Spring.
Young men and women, noble and tender,
Yearn for each other, faith truly plight,
Promise to cherish, comfort, and honour ;
Vow that makes duty one with delight.
Oh, but the glory, found in no story,
Radiance of Eden unquench'd by the Fall ;
Few may remember, none may reveal it,
This the first first-love, the first love of all !

THE HEATHEN LAND.

THE richest realm of all the earth
Is counted still a heathen land ;
Lo, I, like Joshua, now go forth
To give it into Israel's hand.
I will not hearken blame or praise ;
For so should I dishonour do
To that sweet Power by which these Lays
Alone are lovely, good, and true ;
Nor credence to the world's cries give,
Which ever preach and still prevent
Pure passion's high prerogative
To make not follow precedent.
From love's abysmal ether rare
If I to men have here made known
New truths, they, like new stars, were there
Before, though not yet written down.
Moving but as the feelings move,
I run, or loiter with delight,
Or stop to mark where gentle Love
Persuades the soul from height to height.
Yet know ye, though my words are gay
As David's dance, which Michol scorn'd,
If kindly you receive the Lay,
You shall be sweetly help'd and warn'd.

THE KISS.

I N arms and policy and books
Prince Victor was a Prince indeed.
Amanda, Princess of sweet looks,
Of such things had no heed.
But once, both acting in a Play,
Victor, who found it in his Part,
Gave the cold Maid, with all his heart,
A kiss which took her breath away ;
And, thenceforth, they were hand and glove,
He, Prince in arms, books, policy,
Prince of Amanda too, and she
A little, laughing flame of love.
“ Arms, policy, and books must go,”
He sigh’d, “ since she loves kisses so !”
But she, his bee by honey caught,
Would only now her sweetness yield
For meed of arduous honour, sought
In Study, Parliament, or Field.
And ever thus from kisses grow
The thoughts that soar ’bove kisses so !

THE REVELATION.

AN idle poet, here and there,
Looks round him ; but, for all the rest,
The world, unfathomably fair,
Is duller than a witling's jest.
Love wakes men, once a lifetime each ;
They lift their heavy lids, and look ;
And, lo, what one sweet page can teach
They read with joy, then shut the book.
And some give thanks, and some blaspheme,
And most forget ; but, either way,
That and the Child's unheeded dream
Is all the light of all their day.

A CHILD'S LOVE.

AS, ere the Spring has any power,
The almond branch all turns to flower,
Though not a leaf is out, so she
The bloom of life provoked in me ;
And, hard till then and selfish, I
Was thenceforth nought but sanctity
And service : life was mere delight
In being wholly good and right,
As she was ; just, without a slur ;
Honouring myself no less than her ;
Obeying, in the loneliest place,
Ev'n to the slightest gesture, grace ;
Assured that one so fair, so true,
He only served that was so too.
For me, hence weak towards the weak,
No more the unnested blackbird's shriek
Startled the light-leaved wood ; on high
Wander'd the gadding butterfly,
Unscared by my flung cap ; the bee,
Rifing the hollyhock in glee,
Was no more trapp'd with his own flower,
And for his honey slain. Her power,

From great things even to the grass
Through which the unfenced footways pass,
Was law, and that which keeps the law,
Cherubic gaiety and awe ;
Day was her doing, and the lark
Had reason for his song ; the dark
In anagram innumeros spelt
Her name with stars that throbb'd and felt ;
'Twas the sad summit of delight
To wake and weep for her at night ;
She turn'd to triumph or to shame
The strife of every childish game ;
The heart would come into my throat
At rosebuds ; howsoe'er remote,
In opposition or consent,
Each thing, or person, or event,
Or seeming neutral howsoe'er,
All, in the live, electric air,
Awoke, took aspect, and confess'd
In her a centre of unrest,
Yea, stocks and stones within me bred
Anxieties of joy and dread.

O bright apocalyptic sky
O'erarching childhood ! Far and nigh
Mystery and obscuration none,
Yet nowhere any moon or sun !
What reason for these sighs ? What hope,
Daunting with its audacious scope

The disconcerted heart, affects
These ceremonies and respects?
Why stratagems in everything?
Why, why not kiss her in the ring?
'Tis nothing strange that warriors bold,
Whose fierce, forecasting eyes behold
The city they desire to sack,
Humbly begin their proud attack
By delving ditches two miles off,
Aware how the fair place would scoff
At hasty wooing ; but, O child,
Why thus approach thy playmate mild?

One morning, when it flush'd my thought
That, what in me such wonder wrought
Was call'd, in men and women, love,
And, sick with vanity thereof,
I, saying loud, " I love her," told
My secret to myself, behold,
A crisis in my mystery !
For, suddenly, I seem'd to be
Whirl'd round, and bound with showers of threads
As when the furious spider sheds
Captivity upon the fly,
To still his buzzing till he die ;
Only, with me, the bonds that flew,
Enfolding, thrill'd me through and through
With all the bliss that heaven can have,
And pride to dream myself her slave.

A long, green slip of wilder'd land,
With Knatchley Wood on either hand,
Sunder'd our home from hers. This day
Glad was I as I went her way.
I stretch'd my arms to the sky, and sprang
O'er the elastic sod, and sang
"I love her, love her!" to an air
Which with the words came then and there ;
And even now, when I would know
All was not always dull and low,
I mind me awhile of the sweet strain
Love taught me in that lonely lane.

Such glories fade, with no more mark
Than when the sunset dies to dark.
They pass, the rapture and the grace
Ineffable, their only trace
A heart which, having felt no less
Than pure and perfect happiness,
Is duly dainty of delight ;
A patient, poignant appetite
For pleasures that exceed so much
The poor things which the world calls such,
That, when these tempt it, then you may
The lion with a wisp of hay.

LOVE AND DUTY.

ANNE lived so truly from above,
She was so gentle and so good,
That duty bade me fall in love,
And "but for that," thought I, "I should!"
I worshipp'd Kate with all my will.
In idle moods you seem to see
A noble spirit in a hill,
A human touch about a tree.

THE PRISM.

OF infinite Heaven the rays,
Piercing some eyelet in our cavern black,
Ended their viewless track
On thee to smite
Solely, as on a diamond stalactite,
And in mid-darkness lit a rainbow's blaze,
Wherein the absolute Reason, Power, and Love,
That erst could move
Mainly in me but toil and weariness,
Renounced their deadening might,
Renounced their undistinguishable stress
Of withering white,
And did with gladdest hues my spirit caress,
Nothing of Heaven in thee showing infinite,
Save the delight.

THE LOVER.

HE meets, by heavenly chance express,
The destined maid ; some hidden hand
Unveils to him that loveliness
Which others cannot understand.
His merits in her presence grow,
To match the promise in her eyes,
And round her happy footsteps blow
The authentic airs of Paradise.
For joy of her he cannot sleep ;
Her beauty haunts him all the night ;
It melts his heart, it makes him weep
For wonder, worship, and delight.
O paradox of love, he longs,
Most humble when he most aspires,
To suffer scorn and cruel wrongs
From her he honours and desires.
Her graces make him rich, and ask
No guerdon ; this imperial style
Affronts him ; he disdains to bask
The pensioner of her priceless smile.

He prays for some hard thing to do,
Some work of fame and labour immense,
To stretch the languid bulk and thew
Of love's fresh-born magnipotence.
No smallest boon were bought too dear,
Though barter'd for his love-sick life ;
Yet trusts he, with undaunted cheer,
To vanquish heaven, and call her Wife.
He notes how queens of sweetness still
Neglect their crowns, and stoop to mate ;
How, self-consign'd with lavish will,
They ask but love proportionate ;
How swift pursuit by small degrees,
Love's tactic, works like miracle ;
How valour, clothed in courtesies,
Brings down the haughtiest citadel ;
And therefore, though he merits not
To kiss the braid upon her skirt,
His hope, discouraged ne'er a jot,
Out-soars all possible desert.

HOPE AGAINST HOPE.

THE waves, this morning, sped to land,
And shouted hoarse to touch the strand,
Where Spring, that goes not out to sea,
Lay laughing in her lovely glee ;
And, so, my life was sunlit spray
And tumult, as, once more to-day,
For long farewell did I draw near
My Cousin, desperately dear.
Faint, fierce, the truth that hope was none
Gleam'd like the lightning in the sun ;
Yet hope I had, and joy thereof.
The father of love is hope (though love
Lives orphan'd on, when hope is dead),
And, out of my immediate dread
And crisis of the coming hour,
Did hope itself draw sudden power.
So the still brooding storm, in Spring,
Makes all the birds begin to sing.

AMELIA.

WHENE'ER mine eyes do my Amelia greet
It is with such emotion

As when, in childhood, turning a dim street,
I first beheld the ocean.

There, where the little, bright, surf-breathing
town,

That show'd me first her beauty and the sea,
Gathers its skirts against the gorse-gilt down
And scatters gardens o'er the southern lea,
Abides this Maid

Within a kind, yet sombre Mother's shade,
Who of her daughter's graces seems almost afraid,
Viewing them ofttimes with a scared forecast,
Caught, haply, from obscure love-peril past.

Howe'er that be,

She scants me of my right,

Is cunning careful evermore to balk

Sweet separate talk,

And fevers my delight

By frets, if, on Amelia's cheek of peach,

I touch the notes which music cannot reach,

Bidding "Good-night!"

Wherefore it came that, till to-day's dear date,
I curs'd the weary months which yet I have to wait
Ere I find heaven, one-nested with my mate.

To-day, the Mother gave,
To urgent pleas and promise to behave
As she were there, her long-besought consent
To trust Amelia with me to the grave
Where lay my once-betrothed, Millicent :
"For," said she, hiding ill a moistening eye,
"Though, Sir, the word sounds hard,
God makes as if He least knew how to guard
The treasure He loves best, simplicity."

And there Amelia stood, for fairness shown
Like a young apple-tree, in flush'd array
Of white and ruddy flow'r, auroral, gay,
With chilly blue the maiden branch between ;
And yet to look on her moved less the mind
To say "How beauteous !" than "How good and
kind !"

And so we went alone
By walls o'er which the lilac's numerous plume
Shook down perfume ;
Trim plots close blown
With daisies, in conspicuous myriads seen,
Engross'd each one
With single ardour for her spouse, the sun ;
Garths in their glad array
Of white and ruddy branch, auroral, gay,

With azure chill the maiden flow'r between ;
Meadows of fervid green,
With sometime sudden prospect of untold
Cowslips, like chance-found gold ;
And broadcast buttercups at joyful gaze,
Rending the air with praise,
Like the six-hundred-thousand-voiced shout
Of Jacob camp'd in Midian put to rout ;
Then through the Park,
Where Spring to livelier gloom
Quicken'd the cedars dark,
And, 'gainst the clear sky cold,
Which shone afar
Crowded with sunny alps oracular,
Great chestnuts raised themselves abroad like cliffs
 of bloom ;
And everywhere,
Amid the ceaseless rapture of the lark,
With wonder new
We caught the solemn voice of single air,
“ Cuckoo !”

And when Amelia, 'bolden'd, saw and heard
How bravely sang the bird,
And all things in God's bounty did rejoice,
She who, her Mother by, spake seldom word,
Did her charm'd silence doff,
And, to my happy marvel, her dear voice
Went as a clock does, when the pendulum's off.

Ill Monarch of man's heart the Maiden who
Does not aspire to be High-Pontiff too !

So she repeated soft her Poet's line,

“ By grace divine,

Not otherwise, O Nature, are we thine !”

And I, up the bright steep she led me, trod,

And the like thought pursued

With, “ What is gladness without gratitude,

And where is gratitude without a God ?”

And of delight, the guerdon of His laws,

She spake, in learned mood ;

And I, of Him loved reverently, as Cause,

Her sweetly, as Occasion of all good.

Nor were we shy,

For souls in heaven that be

May talk of heaven without hypocrisy.

And now, when we drew near

The low, grey church, in its sequester'd dell,

A shade upon me fell.

Dead Millicent indeed had been most sweet,

But I how little meet

To call such graces in a Maiden mine !

A boy's proud passion free affection blunts ;

His well-meant flatteries oft are blind affronts ;

And many a tear

Was Millicent's before I, manlier, knew

That maidens shine

As diamonds do,

Which, though most clear,
Are not to be seen through ;
And, if she put her virgin self aside
And sate her, crownless, at my conquering feet,
It should have bred in me humility, not pride.
Amelia had more luck than Millicent :
Secure she smiled and warm from all mischance
Or from my knowledge or my ignorance,
And glow'd content
With my—some might have thought too much—
superior age,
Which seem'd the gage
Of steady kindness all on her intent.
Thus nought forbade us to be fully blent.
While, therefore, now
Her pensive footstep stirr'd
The darnell'd garden of unheedful death,
She ask'd what Millicent was like, and heard
Of eyes like hers, and honeysuckle breath,
And of a wiser than a woman's brow,
Yet fill'd with only woman's love, and how
An incidental greatness character'd
Her unconsider'd ways.
But all my praise
Amelia thought too slight for Millicent,
And on my lovelier-freighted arm she leant,
For more attent ;
And the tea-rose I gave,

To deck her breast, she dropp'd upon the grave.
"And this was hers," said I, decoring with a band
Of mildest pearls Amelia's milder hand.
"Nay, I will wear it for *her* sake," she said :
For dear to maidens are their rivals dead.

And so,
She seated on the black yew's tortured root,
I on the carpet of sere shreds below,
And nigh the little mound where lay that other,
I kiss'd her lips three times without dispute,
And, with bold worship suddenly aglow,
I lifted to my lips a sandall'd foot,
And kiss'd it three times thrice without dispute.
Upon my head her fingers fell like snow,
Her lamb-like hands about my neck she wreathed,
Her arms like slumber o'er my shoulders crept,
And with her bosom, whence the azalea breathed,
She did my face full favourably smother,
To hide the heaving secret that she wept !

Now would I keep my promise to her Mother :
Now I arose, and raised her to her feet,
My best Amelia, fresh-born from a kiss,
Moth-like, full-blown in birthdew shuddering
sweet,

With great, kind eyes, in whose brown shade
Bright Venus and her Baby play'd !

At inmost heart well pleased with one another,
What time the slant sun low

Through the plough'd field does each clod sharply
 show,
And softly fills
With shade the dimples of our homeward hills,
With little said,
We left the 'wilder'd garden of the dead,
And gain'd the gorse-lit shoulder of the down
That keeps the north-wind from the nestling town,
And caught, once more, the vision of the wave,
Where, on the horizon's dip,
A many-sailed ship
Pursued alone her distant purpose grave ;
And, by steep steps rock-hewn, to the dim street
I led her sacred feet ;
And so the Daughter gave,
Soft, moth-like, sweet,
Showy as damask-rose and shy as musk,
Back to her Mother, anxious in the dusk.
And now " Good-night !"
Me shall the phantom months no more affright.
For heaven's gates to open well waits he
Who keeps himself the key.

THE SPIRIT'S EPOCHS.

NOT in the crises of events,
Of compass'd hopes, or fears fulfill'd,
Or acts of gravest consequence,
Are life's delight and depth reveal'd.
The day of days was not the day ;
That went before, or was postponed ;
The night Death took our lamp away
Was not the night on which we groan'd.
I drew my bride, beneath the moon,
Across my threshold ; happy hour !
But, ah, the walk that afternoon
We saw the water-flags in flower !

L'ALLEGRO.

FELICITY,
Who ope'st to none that knocks, yet, laughing
 weak,
Yield'st all to Love that will not seek,
And who, though won, wilt droop and die,
Unless wide doors bespeak thee free,
How safe's the bond of thee and me,
Since thee I cherish and defy !
Is't Love or Friendship, Dearest, we obey ?
Ah, thou art young, and I am grey ;
But happy man is he who knows
How well time goes,
With no unkind intruder by,
Between such friends as thou and I !
'Twould wrong thy favour, Sweet, were I to say,
'Tis best by far,
When best things are not possible,
To make the best of those that are ;
For, though it be not May,
Sure, few delights of Spring excel
The beauty of this mild September day !

So with me walk,
And view the dreaming field and bossy Autumn
wood,
And how in humble russet goes
The Spouse of Honour, fair Repose,
Far from a world whence love is fled
And truth is dying because joy is dead ;
And, if we hear the roaring wheel
Of God's remoter service, public zeal,
Let us to stiller place retire
And glad admire
How, near Him, sounds of working cease
In little fervour and much peace ;
And let us talk
Of holy things in happy mood,
Learnt of thy blest twin-sister, Certitude ;
Or let's about our neighbours chat,
Well praising this, less praising that,
And judging outer strangers by
Those gentle and unsanction'd lines
To which remorse of equity
Of old hath moved the School divines.
Or linger where this willow bends,
And let us, till the melody be caught,
Harken that sudden, singing thought,
On which unguess'd increase to life perchance
depends.
He ne'er hears twice the same who hears

The songs of heaven's unanimous spheres,
And this may be the song to make, at last, amends
For many sighs and boons in vain long sought !
Now, careless, let us stray, or stop
To see the partridge from the covey drop,
Or, while the evening air's like yellow wine,
From the pure stream take out
The playful trout,
That jerks with rasping check the struggled line ;
Or to the Farm, where, high on trampled stacks,
The labourers stir themselves amain
To feed with hasty sheaves of grain
The deafning engine's boisterous maw,
And snatch again,
From to-and-fro tormenting racks,
The toss'd and hustled straw ;
Whilst others tend the shedded wheat
That fills yon row of shuddering sacks,
Or shift them quick, and bind them neat,
And dogs and boys with sticks
Wait, murderous, for the rats that leave the ruin'd
 ricks ;
And, all the bags being fill'd and rank'd fivefold,
 they pour
The treasure on the barn's clean floor,
And take them back for more,
Until the whole bared harvest beauteous lies
Under our pleased and prosperous eyes.

Then let us give our idlest hour
To the world's wisdom and its power ;
Hear famous Golden-Tongue refuse
To gander sauce that's good for goose,
Or the great Clever Party con
How many grains of sifted sand,
Heap'd, make a likely house to stand,
How many fools one Solomon.
Science, beyond all other lust
Endow'd with appetite for dust,
We glance at where it grunts, well-sty'd,
And pass upon the other side.
Pass also by, in pensive mood,
Taught by thy kind twin-sister, Certitude,
Yon puzzled crowd, whose tired intent
Hunts like a pack without a scent.
And now come home,
Where none of our mild days
Can fail, though simple, to confess
The magic of mysteriousness ;
For there 'bide charming Wonders three,
Besides, Sweet, thee,
To comprehend whose commonest ways,
Ev'n could that be,
Were coward's 'vantage and no true man's praise.

•

THE CATHEDRAL CLOSE.

1.

ONCE more I came to Sarum Close,
 With joy half memory, half desire,
 And breathed the sunny wind that rose
 And blew the shadows o'er the Spire,
 And toss'd the lilac's scented plumes,
 And sway'd the chestnut's thousand cones,
 And fill'd my nostrils with perfumes,
 And shaped the clouds in waifs and zones,
 And wafted down the serious strain
 Of Sarum bells, when, true to time,
 I reach'd the Dean's, with heart and brain
 That trembled to the trembling chime.

2.

'Twas half my home, six years ago.
 The six years had not alter'd it :
 Red-brick and ashlar, long and low,
 With dormers and with oriels lit.
 Geranium, lychnis, rose array'd
 The windows, all wide open thrown ;
 And some one in the Study play'd
 The Wedding March of Mendelssohn.

And there it was I last took leave :

'Twas Christmas : I remember'd now
The cruel girls, who feigned to grieve,
Took down the evergreens ; and how
The holly into blazes woke
The fire, lighting the large, low room,
A dim, rich lustre of old oak
And crimson velvet's glowing gloom.

3.

No change had touch'd Dean Churchill : kind,
By widowhood more than winters bent,
And settled in a cheerful mind,
As still forecasting heaven's content.
Well might his thoughts be fix'd on high,
Now she was there ! Within her face
Humility and dignity
Were met in a most sweet embrace.
She seem'd expressly sent below
To teach our erring minds to see
The rhythmic change of time's swift flow
As part of still eternity.
Her life, all honour, observed, with awe
Which cross experience could not mar,
The fiction of the Christian law
That all men honourable are ;
And so her smile at once conferr'd
High flattery and benign reproof ;

And I, a rude boy, strangely stirr'd,
 Grew courtly in my own behoof.
 The years, so far from doing her wrong,
 Anointed her with gracious balm,
 And made her brows more and more young
 With wreaths of amaranth and palm.

4

Was this her eldest, Honor ; prude,
 Who would not let me pull the swing ;
 Who, kiss'd at Christmas, call'd me rude,
 And, sobbing low, refused to sing ?
 How changed ! In shape no slender Grace,
 But Venus ; milder than the dove ;
 Her mother's air : her Norman face ;
 Her large sweet eyes, clear lakes of love.
 Mary I knew. In former time
 Ailing and pale, she thought that bliss
 Was only for a better clime,
 And, heavenly overmuch, scorn'd this.
 I, rash with theories of the right,
 Which stretch'd the tether of my Creed,
 But did not break it, held delight
 Half discipline. We disagreed.
 She told the Dean I wanted grace.
 Now she was kindest of the three,
 And soft wild roses deck'd her face.
 And, what, was this my Mildred, she

To herself and all a sweet surprise?
My Pet, who romp'd and roll'd a hoop?
I wonder'd where those daisy eyes
Had found their touching curve and droop.

5.

Unmannerly times ! But now we sat
Stranger than strangers ; till I caught
And answer'd Mildred's smile ; and that
Spread to the rest, and freedom brought.
The Dean talk'd little, looking on,
Of three such daughters justly vain.
What letters they had had from Bonn,
Said Mildred, and what plums from Spain !
By Honor I was kindly task'd
To excuse my never coming down
From Cambridge ; Mary smiled and ask'd
Were Kant and Goethe yet outgrown ?
And, pleased, we talk'd the old days o'er ;
And, parting, I for pleasure sigh'd.
To be there as a friend (since more)
Seem'd then, seems still, excuse for pride ;
For something that abode endued
With temple-like repose, an air
Of life's kind purposes pursued
With order'd freedom sweet and fair.
A tent pitch'd in a world not right
It seem'd, whose inmates, every one,

On tranquil faces bore the light
Of duties beautifully done,
And humbly, though they had few peers,
Kept their own laws, which seem'd to be
The fair sum of six thousand years'
Traditions of civility.

“ IF I WERE DEAD.”

“ IF I were dead, you'd sometimes say, Poor
Child !”

The dear lips quiver'd as they spake,
And the tears brake
From eyes which, not to grieve me, brightly smiled.
Poor Child, poor Child !
I seem to hear your laugh, your talk, your song.
It is not true that Love will do no wrong.
Poor Child !
And did you think, when so you cried and smiled,
How I, in lonely nights, should lie awake,
And of those words your full avengers make ?
Poor Child, poor Child !
And now, unless it be
That sweet amends thrice told are come to thee,
O God, have thou *no* mercy upon me !
Poor Child !

“MY MEMORY OF HEAVEN AWAKES.”

MY memory of Heaven awakes !
She's not of the earth, although her light,
As lantern'd by her body, makes
A piece of it past bearing bright.
So innocently proud and fair
She is, that Wisdom sings for glee
And Folly dies, breathing one air
With such a bright-cheek'd chastity ;
And though her charms are a strong law
Compelling all men to admire,
They go so clad with lovely awe
None but the noble dares desire.
He who would seek to make her his
Will comprehend that souls of grace
Own sweet repulsion, and that 'tis
The quality of their embrace
To be like the majestic reach
Of coupled suns, that, from afar,
Mingle their mutual spheres, while each
Circles the twin obsequious star ;

And, in the warmth of hand to hand,
Of heart to heart, he'll vow to note
And reverently understand
How the two spirits shine remote ;
And ne'er to numb fine honour's nerve,
Nor let sweet awe in passion melt,
Nor fail by courtesies to observe
The space which makes attraction felt ;
Nor cease to guard like life the sense
Which tells him that the embrace of love
Is o'er a gulf of difference
Love cannot sound, nor death remove.

OLYMPUS.

THROUGH female subtlety intense,
Or the good luck of innocence,
Or both, my Wife, with whom I plan
To pass calm evenings when I can,
After the chattering girls and boys
Are gone, or the less grateful noise
Is over, of grown tongues that chime
Untruly, once upon a time
Prevail'd with me to change my mind
Of reading out how Rosalind
In Arden jested, and to go
Where people whom I ought to know,
She said, would meet that night. And I,
Who inly murmur'd, "I will try
Some dish more sharply spiced than this
Milk-soup men call domestic bliss,"
Took, as she, laughing, bade me take,
Our eldest boy's brown wide-awake
And straw box of cigars, and went
Where, like a careless parliament
Of gods olympic, six or eight
Authors and else, reputed great,

Were met in council jocular
On many things, pursuing far
Truth, only for the chase's glow,
Quick as they caught her letting go,
Or, when at fault the view-haloo,
Playing about the missing clue.
And coarse jests came ; " But gods are coarse,"
Thought I, yet not without remorse,
While memory of the gentle words,
Wife, Mother, Sister, flash'd like swords.
And so, after two hours of wit,
That burnt a hole where'er it hit,
I said I would not stay to sup,
Because my Wife was sitting up ;
And walk'd home with a sense that I
Was no match for that company.
Smelling of smoke, which, always kind,
Amelia said she did not mind,
I sipp'd her tea, saw Baby scold
And finger at the muslin fold,
Through which he push'd his nose at last,
And choked and chuckled, feeding fast ;
And, he asleep and sent upstairs,
She rang the servants in to prayers ;
And after heard what men of fame
Had urged 'gainst this and that. " For shame !"
She said, but argument show'd not.
" If I had answer'd thus," I thought,

“’Twould not have pass’d for very wise.
But I have not her voice and eyes !
Howe’er it be, I’m glad of home,
Yea, very glad at heart to come,
And lay a happy head to rest
On her unreasonable breast.”

THE ROSY BOSOM'D HOURS.

A FLORIN to the willing Guard
Secured, for half the way,
(He lock'd us in, ah, lucky-starr'd),
A curtain'd, front coupé.
The sparkling sun of August shone ;
The wind was in the West ;
Your gown and all that you had on
Was what became you best ;
And we were in that seldom mood
When soul with soul agrees,
Mingling, like flood with equal flood,
In agitated ease.
Far round, each blade of harvest bare
Its little load of bread ;
Each furlong of that journey fair
With separate sweetness sped.
The calm of use was coming o'er
The wonder of our wealth,
And now, maybe, 'twas not much more
Than Eden's common health.

We paced the sunny platform, while
The train at Havant changed :
What made the people kindly smile,
Or stare with looks estranged?
Too radiant for a wife you seem'd,
Serener than a bride ;
Me happiest born of men I deem'd,
And show'd perchance my pride.
I loved that girl, so gaunt and tall,
Who whisper'd loud, " Sweet Thing !"
Scanning your figure, slight yet all
Round as your own gold ring.
At Salisbury you stray'd alone
Within the shafted glooms,
Whilst I was by the Verger shown
The brasses and the tombs.
At tea we talk'd of matters deep,
Of joy that never dies ;
We laugh'd, till love was mix'd with sleep
Within your great sweet eyes.
The next day, sweet with luck no less
And sense of sweetness past,
The full tide of our happiness
Rose higher than the last.
At Dawlish, 'mid the pools of brine,
You stepp'd from rock to rock,
One hand quick tightening upon mine,
One holding up your frock.

On starfish and on weeds alone
You seem'd intent to be :
Flash'd those great gleams of hope unknown
From you, or from the sea ?
Ne'er came before, ah, when again
Shall come two days like these :
Such quick delight within the brain,
Within the heart such peace ?
I thought, indeed, by magic chance,
A third from Heaven to win,
But as, at dusk, we reach'd Penzance,
A drizzling rain set in.

THE AFTER-GLOW.

SUSPICION'S playful counterfeit
Begot your question strange :
The only thing that I forget
Is that there's any change.
Did that long blight which fell on you
My zeal of heart assuage?
Less willing shall I watch you through
The milder illness, age?
To my monopoly first blind
When risks no longer live,
And careless of the hand so kind
That has no more to give,
Shall I forget Spring like a tree,
Nor boast, " Her honied cup
Of beauty to his lips save me
No man has lifted up !"
Mine are not memories that come
Of joys that could not last :
They *are*; and you, Dear, are the sum
Of all your lovely past.

Yet if, with all this conscious weal,
I still should covet more,
The joy behind me shall reveal
The joy that waits before :
I'll mind from sickness how to life
You came, by tardy stealth,
Till, one spring day, I clasp'd my wife
Abloom with blandest health.

THE RAINBOW.

A STATELY rainbow came and stood,
When I was young, in High-Hurst Park ;
Its bright feet lit the hill and wood
Beyond, and cloud and sward were dark ;
And I, who thought the splendour ours
Because the place was, t'wards it flew,
And there, amidst the glittering showers,
Gazed vainly for the glorious view.
With whatsoever's lovely, know
It is not ours ; stand off to see ;
Or beauty's apparition so
Puts on invisibility.

THE CIRCLES.

“**W**ITHIN yon world-wide cirque of war
What’s hidden which they fight so for?”

My guide made answer, “Rich increase
Of virtue and use, which are by peace,
And peace by war. That inner ring
Are craftsmen, working many a thing
For use, and, these within, the wise
Explore the grass and read the skies.”

“Can the stars’ motions give me peace,
Or the herbs’ virtues mine increase?
Of all this triple shell,” said I,

“Would that I might the kernel spy !”

A narrower circle then I reach’d,
Where sang a few and many preach’d
Of life immortal. “But,” I said,

“The riddle yet I have not read.

Life I must know, that care I may
For life in me to last for aye.”

Then he, “Those voices are a charm
To keep yon dove-cot out of harm.”

In the centre, then, he show'd a tent
Where, laughing safe, a woman bent
Over her babe, and, her above,
Lean'd in his turn a graver love.
"Behold the two idolatries
By which," cried he, "the world defies
Chaos and death, and for whose sake
All else must war and work and wake."

THE PARADOX.

HOW strange a thing a lover seems
To animals that do not love !
Lo, where he walks and talks in dreams,
And flouts us with his Lady's glove ;
How foreign is the garb he wears ;
And how his great devotion mocks
Our poor propriety, and scares
The undevout with paradox !
His soul, through scorn of worldly care,
And great extremes of sweet and gall,
And musing much on all that's fair,
Grows witty and fantastical ;
He sobs his joy and sings his grief,
And evermore finds such delight
In simply picturing his relief,
That 'plaining seems to cure his plight ;
He makes his sorrow, when there's none ;
His fancy blows both cold and hot ;
Next to the wish that she'll be won,
His first hope is that she may not ;

He sues, yet deprecates consent ;
 Would she be captured she must fly ;
She looks too happy and content,
 For whose least pleasure he would die ;
Oh, cruelty, she cannot care
 For one to whom she's always kind !
He says he's nought, but, oh, despair,
 If he's not Jove to her fond mind !
He's jealous if she pets a dove,
 She must be his with all her soul ;
Yet 'tis a postulate in love
 That part is greater than the whole ;
And all his apprehension's stress,
 When he's with her, regards her hair,
Her hand, a ribbon of her dress,
 As if his life were only there ;
Because she's constant, he will change,
 And kindest glances coldly meet,
And, all the time he seems so strange,
 His soul is fawning at her feet ;
Of smiles and simple heaven grown tired,
 He wickedly provokes her tears,
And when she weeps, as he desired,
 Falls slain with ecstasies of fears ;
He blames her, though she has no fault,
 Except the folly to be his ;
He worships her, the more to exalt
 The profanation of a kiss ;

Health's his disease ; he's never well
But when his paleness shames her rose ;
His faith's a rock-built citadel,
Its sign a flag that each way blows ;
His o'erfed fancy frets and fumes ;
And Love, in him, is fierce, like Hate,
And ruffles his ambrosial plumes
Against the bars of time and fate.

A FAREWELL.

WITH all my will, but much against my heart,
We two now part.

My Very Dear,

Our solace is, the sad road lies so clear.

It needs no art,

With faint, averted feet

And many a tear,

In our opposed paths to persevere.

Go thou to East, I West.

We will not say

There's any hope, it is so far away.

But, O, my Best,

When the one darling of our widowhead,

The nursling Grief,

Is dead,

And no dews blur our eyes

To see the peach-bloom come in evening skies,

Perchance we may,

Where now this night is day,

And even through faith of still averted feet,
Making full circle of our banishment,
Amazed meet ;
The bitter journey to the bourne so sweet
Seasoning the termless feast of our content
With tears of recognition never dry.

NIGHT AND SLEEP.

I

HOW strange at night to wake
And watch, while others sleep,
Till sight and hearing ache
For objects that may keep
The awful inner sense
Unroused, lest it should mark
The life that haunts the emptiness
And horror of the dark !

2

How strange at night the bay
Of dogs, how wild the note
Of cocks that scream for day,
In homesteads far remote ;
How strange and wild to hear
The old and crumbling tower,
Amid the darkness, suddenly
Take tongue and speak the hour !

3

Albeit the love-sick brain
Affects the dreary moon,
Ill things alone refrain
From life's nocturnal swoon :
Men melancholy mad,
Beasts ravenous and sly,
The robber, and the murderer,
Remorse, with lidless eye.

4

The nightingale is gay,
For she can vanquish night ;
Dreaming, she sings of day,
Notes that make darkness bright ;
But when the refluent gloom
Saddens the gaps of song,
Men charge on her the dolefulness,
And call her crazed with wrong.

THE MORNING CALL.

I

"BY meekness charm'd, or proud to allow
 A queenly claim to live admired,
 Full many a lady has ere now
 My apprehensive fancy fired,
 And woven many a transient chain ;
 But never lady like to this,
 Who holds me as the weather-vane
 Is held by yonder clematis.
 She seems the life of nature's powers ;
 Her beauty is the genial thought
 Which makes the sunshine bright ; the flowers,
 But for their hint of her, were nought."

2

A voice, the sweeter for the grace
 Of suddenness, while thus I dream'd,
 "Good morning !" said or sang. Her face
 The mirror of the morning seem'd.
 Her sisters in the garden walk'd,
 And would I come? Across the Hall
 She led me ; and we laugh'd and talk'd,
 And praised the Flower-show and the Ball ;

And Mildred's pinks had gain'd the Prize ;
And, stepping like the light-foot fawn,
She brought me "Wiltshire Butterflies,"
The Prize-book ; then we paced the lawn,
Close-cut, and, with geranium-plots,
A rival glow of green and red ;
Then counted sixty apricots
On one small tree ; the gold-fish fed ;
And watch'd where, black with scarlet tans,
Proud Psyche stood and flash'd like flame,
Showing and shutting splendid fans ;
And in the prize we found its name.

3

The sweet hour lapsed, and left my breast
A load of joy and tender care ;
And this delight, which life oppress'd,
To fix'd aims grew, that ask'd for pray'r.
I rode home slowly ; whip-in-hand
And soil'd bank-notes all ready, stood
The Farmer who farm'd all my land,
Except the little Park and Wood ;
And, with the accustom'd compliment
Of talk, and beef, and frothing beer,
I, my own steward, took my rent,
Three hundred pounds for half the year.

Our witnesses the Cook and Groom,
 We sign'd the lease for seven years more,
And bade Good-day ; then to my room
 I went, and closed and lock'd the door,
And cast myself down on my bed,
 And there, with many a blissful tear,
I vow'd to love and pray'd to wed
 The maiden who had grown so dear ;
Thank'd God who had set her in my path ;
 And promised, as I hoped to win,
That I would never dim my faith
 By the least selfishness or sin ;
Whatever in her sight I'd seem
 I'd truly be ; I'd never blend
With my delight in her a dream
 'Twould change her cheek to comprehend ;
And, if she wish'd it, I'd prefer
 Another's to my own success ;
And always seek the best for her,
 With unofficial tenderness.

4

Rising, I breathed a brighter clime,
 And found myself all self above,
And, with a charity sublime,
 Contemn'd not those who did not love.

SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY.

WELL dost thou, Love, thy solemn Feast to
hold
In vestal February,
Not rather choosing out some rosy day
From the rich coronet of the coming May,
When all things meet to marry !
O quick, præternal Power
That signall'st punctual through the sleepy mould
The Snowdrop's time to flower,
Fair as the rash oath of virginity
Which is first-love's first cry ;
O Baby Spring,
That flutter'st sudden 'neath the breast of Earth
A month before the birth ;
Whence is the peaceful poignancy,
The joy contrite,
Sadder than sorrow, sweeter than delight,
That burthens now the breath of everything,
Though each one sighs as if to each alone
The cherish'd pang were known ?
At dusk of dawn, on his dark spray apart,
With it the Blackbird breaks the young Day's heart ;

In evening's hush
About it talks the heavenly-minded Thrush ;
The hill with like remorse
Smiles to the Sun's smile in his westering course ;
The fisher's drooping skiff
In yonder sheltering bay ;
The choughs that call about the shining cliff ;
The children, noisy in the setting ray,
Own the sweet season, each thing as it may ;
Thoughts of strange kindness and forgotten peace
In me increase ;
And tears arise
Within my happy, happy Mistress' eyes,
And, lo, her lips, averted from my kiss,
Ask from Love's bounty, ah, much more than bliss.
Is't the sequester'd and exceeding sweet
Of dear Desire electing his defeat ?
Is't the waked Earth now to yon purpling cope
Uttering first-love's first cry,
Vainly renouncing, with a Seraph's sigh,
Love's natural hope ?
Fair-meaning earth, foredoom'd to perjury !
Behold, all-amorous May,
With roses heap'd upon her laughing brows,
Avoids thee of thy vows !
Were it for thee, with her warm bosom near,
To abide the sharpness of the Seraph's sphere ?
Forget thy foolish words ;

Go to her summons gay,
Thy heart with dead, wing'd Innocencies fill'd,
Ev'n as a nest with birds
After the old ones by the hawk are kill'd.

Well dost thou, Love, to celebrate
The noon of thy soft ecstasy
Or e'er it be too late,
Or e'er the Snowdrop die !

THE STORM.

WITHIN the pale blue haze above,
Some pitchy shreds took size and form,
And, like a madman's wrath or love,
From nothing rose a sudden storm.
The blossom'd limes, which seem'd to exhale
Her breath, were swept with one strong sweep,
And up the dusty road the hail
Came like a flock of hasty sheep,
Driving me under a cottage-porch,
Whence I could see the distant Spire,
Which, in the darkness, seem'd a torch
Touch'd with the sun's retreating fire.
A voice, so sweet that even her voice,
I thought, could scarcely be more sweet,
As thus I stay'd against my choice,
Did mine attracted hearing greet ;
And presently I turn'd my head
Where the kind music seem'd to be,
And where, to an old blind man, she read
The words that teach the blind to see.

She did not mark me ; swift I went,
Thro' the fierce shower's whistle and smoke,
To her home, and thence her woman sent
Back with umbrella, shoes, and cloak.
The storm soon pass'd ; the sun's quick glare
Lay quench'd in vapour fleecy, fray'd ;
And all the moist, delicious air
Was fill'd with shine that cast no shade ;
And, when she came, forth the sun gleam'd,
And clash'd the trembling Minster chimes ;
And the breath with which she thank'd me seem'd
Brought thither from the blossom'd limes.

A DREAM.

A MID the mystic fields of Love
I wander'd, and beheld a grove.
Breathlessly still was part, and part
Was breathing with an easy heart ;
And there below, in lamblike game,
Were virgins, all so much the same,
That each was all. A youth drew nigh,
And on them gazed with wandering eye,
And would have pass'd, but that a maid,
Clapping her hands above her, said,
“ My time is now !” and laughing ran
After the dull and strange young man,
And bade him stop and look at her.
And so he call'd her lovelier
Than any else, only because
She only then before him was.
And, while they stood and gazed, a change
Was seen in both, diversely strange :
The youth was ever more and more
That good which he had been before ;
But the glad maiden grew and grew
Such that the rest no longer knew

Their sister, who was now to sight
The young man's self, yet opposite,
As the outer rainbow is the first,
But weaker, and the hues reversed.
And whereas, in the abandon'd grove,
The virgin round the Central Love
Had blindly circled in her play,
Now danced she round her partner's way ;
And, as the earth the moon's, so he
Had the responsibility
Of her diviner motion. "Lo,"
He sang, and the heavens began to glow,
"The pride of personality,
Seeking its highest, aspires to die,
And in unspeakably profound
Humiliation Love is crown'd !
And from his exaltation still
Into his ocean of good-will
He curiously casts the lead
To find strange depths of lowlihead."

To one same tune, but higher, "Bold,"
The maiden sang, "is Love ! For cold
On Earth are blushes, and for shame
Of such an ineffectual flame
As ill consumes the sacrifice !"

ÆTNA AND THE MOON.

I

TO ease my heart I, feigning, seized
 A pen, and, showering tears, declared
 My unfeign'd passion ; sadly pleased
 Only to dream that so I dared.
 Thus was the fervid truth confess'd,
 But wild with paradox ran the plea,
 As wilfully in hope depress'd,
 Yet bold beyond hope's warranty :

2

" O, more than dear, be more than just,
 And do not deafly shut the door !
 I claim no right to speak ; I trust
 Mercy, not right ; yet who has more ?
 For, if more love makes not more fit,
 Of claimants here none's more nor less,
 Since your great worth does not permit
 Degrees in our unworthiness.

Yet, if there's aught that can be done
With arduous labour of long years,
By which you'll say that you'll be won,
O tell me, and I'll dry my tears.
Ah, no ; if loving cannot move,
How foolishly must labour fail !
The use of deeds is to show love ;
If signs suffice let these avail :
Your name pronounced brings to my heart
A feeling like the violet's breath,
Which does so much of heaven impart
It makes me yearn with tears for death ;
The winds that in the garden toss
The Guelder-roses give me pain,
Alarm me with the dread of loss,
Exhaust me with the dream of gain ;
I'm troubled by the clouds that move ;
Thrill'd by the breath which I respire ;
And ever, like a torch, my love,
Thus agitated, flames the higher ;
All's hard that has not you for goal ;
I scarce can move my hand to write,
For love engages all my soul,
And leaves the body void of might ;
The wings of will spread idly, as do
The bird's that in a vacuum lies ;
My breast, asleep with dreams of you,
Forgets to breathe, and bursts in sighs ;

I see no rest this side the grave,
 No rest or hope from you apart ;
Your life is in the rose you gave,
 It's perfume suffocates my heart ;
There's no refreshment in the breeze ;
 The heaven o'erwhelms me with its blue :
I faint beside the dancing seas ;
 Winds, skies, and waves are only you ;
The thought or act which not intends
 You service, seems a sin and shame ;
In that one only object ends
 Conscience, religion, honour, fame.
Ah, could I put off love ! Could we
 Never have met ! What calm, what ease !
Nay, but, alas, this remedy
 Were ten times worse than the disease !
For when, indifferent, I pursue
 The world's best pleasures for relief,
My heart, still sickening back to you,
 Finds none like memory of its grief :
And, though 'twere very hell to hear
 You felt such misery as I,
All good, save you, were far less dear
 Than is that ill with which I die !
Where'er I go, wandering forlorn,
 You are the world's love, life, and glee :
Oh, wretchedness not to be borne
 If she that's Love should not love me !”

3

I could not write another word,
Through pity for my own distress ;
And forth I went, untimely stirr'd
To make my misery more or less.
I went, beneath the heated noon,
To where, in her simplicity,
She sat at work ; and, as the Moon
On Ætna smiles, she smiled on me ;
But, now and then, in cheek and eyes,
I saw, or fancied, such a glow
As when, in summer-evening skies,
Some say ' It lightens,' some say ' No.
' Honoria,' I began——No more.
The Dean, by ill or happy hap,
Came home ; and Wolf burst in before,
And put his nose upon her lap.

THE YEAR.

THE crocus, while the days are dark.
Unfolds its saffron sheen ;
At April's touch, the crudest bark
Discovers gems of green.

Then sleep the seasons, full of might ;
While slowly swells the pod
And rounds the peach, and in the night
The mushroom bursts the sod.

The Winter falls ; the frozen rut
Is bound with silver bars ;
The snow-drift heaps against the hut,
And night is pierc'd with stars.

THE TRIBUTE.

BOON Nature to the woman bows ;
She walks in all its glory clad,
And, chief herself of earthly shows,
Each other helps her, and is glad :
No splendour 'neath the sky's proud dome
But serves for her familiar wear ;
The far-fetch'd diamond finds its home
Flashing and smouldering in her hair ;
For her the seas their pearls reveal ;
Art and strange lands her pomp supply
With purple, chrome, and cochineal,
Ochre, and lapis lazuli ;
The worm its golden woof presents ;
Whatever runs, flies, dives, or delves,
All doff for her their ornaments,
Which suit her better than themselves ;
And all, by this their power to give,
Proving her right to take, proclaim
Her beauty's clear prerogative
To profit so by Eden's blame.

THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW.

PERCHANCE she droops within the hollow gulf
Which the great wave of coming pleasure
draws,
Not guessing the glad cause !
Ye Clouds that on your endless journey go,
Ye Winds that westward flow,
Thou heaving Sea
That heav'st 'twixt her and me,
Tell her I come ;
Then only sigh your pleasure, and be dumb ;
For the sweet secret of our either self
We know.
Tell her I come,
And let her heart be still'd.
One day's controlled hope, and then one more,
And on the third our lives shall be fulfill'd !
Yet all has been before.
Palm placed in palm, twin smiles, and words astray.
What other should we say ?
But shall I not, with ne'er a sign, perceive,
Whilst her sweet hands I hold,
The myriad threads and meshes manifold
Which Love shall round her weave :

The pulse in that vein making alien pause
And varying beats from this ;
Down each long finger felt, a differing strand
Of silvery welcome bland ;
And in her breezy palm
And silken wrist,
Beneath the touch of my like numerous bliss
Complexly kiss'd,
A diverse and distinguishable calm ?
What should we say !
It all has been before ;
And yet our lives shall now be first fulfill'd,
And into their summ'd sweetness fall distill'd
One sweet drop more ;
One sweet drop more, in absolute increase
Of unrelapsing peace.

O heaving Sea,
That heav'st as if for bliss of her and me,
And separatest not dear heart from heart,
Though each 'gainst other beats too far apart,
For yet awhile
Let it not seem that I behold her smile.
O weary Love, O, folded to her breast,
Love in each moment years and years of rest,
Be calm, as being not.
Ye oceans of intolerable delight,
The blazing photosphere of central Night,
Be ye forgot.

Terror, thou swarthy Groom of Bride-bliss coy,
Let me not see thee toy.
O Death, too tardy with thy hope intense
Of kisses close beyond conceit of sense ;
O Life, too liberal, while to take her hand
Is more of hope than heart can understand ;
Perturb my golden patience not with joy,
Nor, through a wish, profane
The peace that should pertain
To him who does by her attraction move.
Has all not been before ?
One day's controlled hope, and one again,
And then the third, and ye shall have the rein,
O Life, Death, Terror, Love !
But soon let your unrestful rapture cease,
Ye flaming Ethers thin,
Condensing till the abiding sweetness win
One sweet drop more ;
One sweet drop more in the measureless increase
Of honied peace.

THE JOYFUL WISDOM.

WOULD Wisdom for herself be woo'd,
And wake the foolish from his dream,
She must be glad as well as good,
And must not only be, but seem.
Beauty and joy are hers by right ;
And, knowing this, I wonder less
That she's so scorn'd when falsely dight
In misery and ugliness.
What's that which Heaven to man endears,
And that which eyes no sooner see
Than the heart says, with floods of tears,
" Ah, that's the thing which I would be !"
Not childhood, full of frown and fret ;
Not youth, impatient to disown
Those visions high, which to forget
Were worse than never to have known ;
Not worldlings, in whose fair outside
Nor courtesy nor justice fails,
Thanks to cross-pulling vices tied,
Like Samson's foxes, by the tails ;
Not poets : real things are dreams,
When dreams are as realities,
And boasters of celestial gleams
Go stumbling aye for want of eyes ;

Not patriots or people's men,
In whom two worse-match'd evils meet
Than ever sought Adullam's den,
Base conscience and a high conceit ;
Not new-made saints, their feelings iced,
Their joy in man and nature gone,
Who sing " O easy yoke of Christ !"
But find 'tis hard to get it on ;
Not great men, even when they're good ;
The good man whom the time makes great,
By some disgrace of chance or blood,
God fails not to humiliate ;
Not these : but souls, found here and there,
Oases in our waste of sin,
Where everything is well and fair,
And Heav'n remits its discipline ;
Whose sweet subdual of the world
The worldling scarce can recognise,
And ridicule, against it hurl'd,
Drops with a broken sting and dies ;
Who nobly, if they cannot know
Whether a 'scutcheon's dubious field
Carries a falcon or a crow,
Fancy a falcon on the shield ;
Yet, ever careful not to hurt
God's honour, who creates success,
Their praise of even the best desert
Is but to have presumed no less ;

Who, should their own life plaudits bring,
Are simply vex'd at heart that such
An easy, yea, delightful thing
Should move the minds of men so much.
They live by law, not like the fool,
But like the bard, who freely sings
In strictest bonds of rhyme and rule,
And finds in them, not bonds, but wings.
Postponing still their private ease
To courtly custom, appetite,
Subjected to observances,
To banquet goes with full delight ;
Nay, continence and gratitude
So cleanse their lives from earth's alloy,
They taste, in nature's common food,
Nothing but spiritual joy.
They shine like Moses in the face,
And teach our hearts, without the rod,
That God's grace is the only grace,
And all grace is the grace of God.

BACK TO ENGLAND.

YONDER, at last, the glad sea roars
Along the sacred English shores !
There lies the lovely land I know,
Where men and women lordliest grow ;
There peep the roofs where more than kings
Postpone state cares to country things,
And many a gay queen simply tends
The babes on whom the world depends ;
There curls the wanton cottage smoke
Of him that drives but bears no yoke ;
There laughs the realm where low and high
Are lieges to society,
And life has all too wide a scope,
Too free a prospect for its hope,
For any private good or ill,
Except dishonour, quite to fill !

1856.

THE CHASE.

SHE wearies with an ill unknown ;
In sleep she sobs and seems to float,
A water-lily, all alone
 Within a lonely castle-moat ;
And as the full-moon, spectral, lies
 Within the crescent's gleaming arms,
The present shows her heedless eyes
 A future dim with vague alarms.
She sees, and yet she scarcely sees,
 For, life-in-life not yet begun,
Too many are its mysteries
 For thought to fix on any one.
She's told that maidens are by youths
 Extremely honour'd and desired ;
And sighs, " If those sweet tales be truths,
 What bliss to be so much admired !"
The suitors come ; she sees them grieve ;
 Her coldness fills them with despair ;
She'd pity if she could believe ;
 She's sorry that she cannot care.

But who now meets her on her way?
Comes he as enemy or friend,
Or both? Her bosom seems to say,
He cannot pass, and there an end.
Whom does he love? Does he confer
His heart on worth that answers his?
Or is he come to worship her?
She fears, she hopes, she thinks he is!
Advancing stepless, quick, and still,
As in the grass a serpent glides,
He fascinates her fluttering will,
Then terrifies with dreadful strides.
At first, there's nothing to resist;
He fights with all the forms of peace;
He comes about her like a mist,
With subtle, swift, unseen increase;
And then, unlook'd for, strikes amain
Some stroke that frightens her to death,
And grows all harmlessness again,
Ere she can cry, or get her breath.
At times she stops, and stands at bay;
But he in all, more strong than she,
Subdues her with his pale dismay,
Or more admired audacity.
She plans some final, fatal blow,
But when she means with frowns to kill,
He looks as if he loved her so,
She smiles to him against her will.

How sweetly he implies her praise !

His tender talk, his gentle tone,
The manly worship in his gaze,
They nearly make her heart his own.

With what an air he speaks her name ;

His manner always recollects
Her sex, and still the woman's claim
Is taught its scope by his respects.
Her charms, perceived to prosper first

In his beloved advertencies,
When in her glass they are rehearsed,
Prove his most powerful allies.

Ah, whither shall a maiden flee,
When a bold youth so swift pursues,
And siege of tenderest courtesy,
With hope perseverant, still renews ?

Why fly so fast ? Her flatter'd breast
Thanks him who finds her fair and good ;

She loves her fears ; veil'd joys arrest
The foolish terrors of her blood ;

By secret, sweet degrees, her heart,
Vanquish'd, takes warmth from his desire ;

She makes it more, with hidden art,
And fuels love's late dreaded fire.

The generous credit he accords
To all the signs of good in her
Redeems itself ; his praiseful words

The virtues they impute confer.

Her heart is thrice as rich in bliss,
She's three times gentler than before ;
He gains a right to call her his,
Now she through him is so much more !
'Tis heaven where'er she turns her head ;
'Tis music when she talks ; 'tis air
On which, elate, she seems to tread,
The convert of a gladder sphere !
Ah, might he, when by doubts aggrieved,
Behold his tokens next her breast,
At all his words and sighs perceived
Against its blithe upheaval press'd !
But still she flies. Should she be won,
It must not be believed or thought
She yields ; she's chased to death, undone,
Surprised, and violently caught.

A THUNDER SHOWER.

A DISTANT cloud, bright, huge, and calm
Rose, doubtful if for bale or balm ;
O'ertoppling towers and bulwarks bright
Appear'd, at beck of viewless might,
Along a rifted mountain range.
Untraceable and swift in change,
Those glittering peaks, disrupted, spread
To solemn bulks, seen overhead ;
The sunshine quench'd, from one dark form
Fumed the appalling light of storm.
Straight to the zenith, black with bale,
The Gipsies' smoke rose deadly pale ;
And one wide night of hopeless hue
Hid from the heart the recent blue.
And soon, with thunder crackling loud,
A flash reveal'd the formless cloud :
Lone sailing rack, far wavering rim,
And billowy tracts of stormland dim.
Against the whirl of leaves and dust
Kine dropp'd their heads ; the tortured gust
Jagg'd and convuls'd the ascending smoke
To mockery of the lightning's stroke.

The blood prick'd, and a blinding flash
And close coinstantaneous crash
Humbled the soul, and the rain all round
Resilient dimm'd the whistling ground,
Nor flagg'd in force from first to last,
Till, sudden as it came, 'twas past,
Leaving a trouble in the copse
Of brawling birds and tinkling drops.

Change beyond hope ! Far thunder faint
Mutter'd its vast and vain complaint,
And gaps and fractures, fringed with light,
Show'd the sweet skies, with squadrons bright
Of cloudlets, glittering calm and fair
Through gulfs of calm and glittering air.

LOVE JUSTIFIED.

WHAT if my pole-star of respect
Be dim to others? Shall their "Nay,"
Presumably their own defect,
Invalidate my heart's strong "Yea" ?
And can they rightly me condemn,
If I, with partial love, prefer?
I am not more unjust to them,
But only not unjust to her.
Leave us alone! After awhile,
This pool of private charity
Shall make its continent an isle,
And roll, a world-embracing sea;
This foolish zeal of lip for lip,
This fond, self-sanction'd, wilful zest,
Is that elect relationship
Which forms and sanctions all the rest.

WINTER.

I, SINGULARLY moved
To love the lovely that are not beloved,
Of all the Seasons, most
Love Winter, and to trace
The sense of the Trophonian pallor on her face.
It is not death, but plenitude of peace ;
And the dim cloud that does the world enfold
Hath less the characters of dark and cold
Than warmth and light asleep ;
And correspondent breathing seems to keep
With the infant harvest, breathing soft below
Its eider coverlet of snow.
Nor is in field or garden anything
But, duly look'd into, contains serene
The substance of things hoped for, in the Spring,
And evidence of Summer not yet seen.
On every chance-mild day
That visits the moist shaw,
The honeysuckle, 'sdaining to be crost
In urgency of sweet life by sleet or frost,
'Voids the time's law
With still increase

Of leaflet new, and little, wandering spray ;
Often, in sheltering brakes,
As one from rest disturb'd in the first hour,
Primrose or violet bewilder'd wakes,
And deems 'tis time to flower ;
Though not a whisper of her voice he hear,
The buried bulb does know
The signals of the year,
And hails far Summer with his lifted spear ;
The gorse-field dark, by sudden, gold caprice,
Turns, here and there, into a Jason's fleece ;
Lilies that, soon in Autumn, slipp'd their gowns of
 green
And vanish'd into earth,
And came again, ere Autumn died, to birth,
Stand full-array'd amidst the wavering shower,
And perfect for the Summer, less the flower ;
In nook of pale or crevice of crude bark,
Thou canst not miss,
If close thou spy, to mark
The ghostly chrysalis,
That, if thou touch it, stirs in its dream dark ;
And the flush'd Robin, in the evenings hoar,
Does of Love's Day, as if he saw it, sing.
But sweeter yet than dream or song of Summer or
 Spring
Are Winter's sometime smiles, that seem to well
From infancy ineffable ;

Her wandering, languorous gaze,
So unfamiliar, so without amaze,
On the elemental, chill adversity,
The uncomprehended rudeness ; and her sigh
And solemn, gathering tear,
And look of exile from some great repose, the sphere
Of ether, moved by ether only, or
By something still more tranquil.—

LOVE SERVICEABLE.

WHAT measure Fate to him shall mete
Is not the noble Lover's care ;
He's heart-sick with a longing sweet
To make her happy as she's fair.
Oh, misery, should she him refuse,
And so her dearest good mistake !
His own success he thus pursues
With frantic zeal for her sole sake.
To lose her were his life to blight,
Being loss to hers ; to make her his,
Except as helping her delight,
He calls but incidental bliss ;
And, holding life as so much pelf
To buy her posies, learns this lore :
He does not rightly love himself
Who does not love another more.

MA BELLE.

FAREWELL, dear Heart ! Since needs it must I go,
Dear Heart, farewell !
Fain would I stay, but that I love thee so.
One kiss, ma Belle !
What hope lies in the Land we do not know,
Who, Dear, can tell ?
But thee I love, and let thy 'plaint be, " Lo,
He loved me well ! "

A WARNING.

I SAW, and trembled for the day
When you should see her beauty, gay
And pure as apple-blooms, that show
Outside a blush and inside snow,
Her high and touching elegance
Of order'd life as free as chance.
Ah, haste from her bewitching side,
No friend for you, far less a bride !
He that but once too nearly hears
The music of forefended spheres,
Is thenceforth lonely, and for all
His days like one who treads the Wall
Of China, and, on this hand, sees
Cities and their civilities,
And, on the other, lions.

SARUM PLAIN.

I.

THE moods of love are like the wind,
And none knows whence or why they rise.
I ne'er before felt heart and mind
So much affected through mine eyes.
How cognate with the flatter'd air,
How form'd for earth's familiar zone,
She moved ; how feeling and how fair
For others' pleasure and her own !
And, ah, the heaven of her face
How, when she laugh'd, I seem to see
The gladness of the primal grace,
And how, when grave, its dignity !
Of all she was, the least not less
Delighted the devoted eye ;
No fold or fashion of her dress
Her fairness did not sanctify ;
Better it was as now to walk,
And humbly by her gentle side

Observe her smile and hear her talk,
 Than call the world's next best my bride.
 I could not else than grieve. What cause?
 Was I not blest? Was she not there?
 Likely my own? Ah, that it was :
 How like seem'd "likely" to despair?

2.

And yet to see her so benign,
 So honourable and womanly,
 In every maiden kindness mine,
 And full of gayest courtesy,
 Was pleasure so without alloy,
 Such unreprieved, sufficient bliss,
 I almost wish'd, the while, that joy
 Might never further go than this.
 I feign'd her won : the mind finite,
 Puzzled and fagg'd by stress and strain
 To comprehend the whole delight,
 Made bliss more hard to bear than pain.
 All good, save heart to hold, so summ'd
 And grasp'd, the thought smote like a knife
 How laps'd mortality had numb'd
 The feelings to the feast of life ;
 How passing good breathes sweetest breath ;
 And love itself at highest reveals
 More black than bright, commending death
 By teaching how much life conceals.

3.

But happier passions these subdued,
When from the close and sultry lane,
With eyes made bright by what they view'd
We emerged upon the mounded Plain.
As to the breeze a flag unfurls,
My spirit expanded, sweetly embraced
By those same gusts that shook her curls
And vex'd the ribbon at her waist.
To the future cast I future cares ;
Breathed with a heart unfreighted, free,
And laugh'd at the presumptuous airs
That with her muslins folded me ;
Till, one vague rack along my sky,
The thought that she might ne'er be mine
Lay half forgotten by the eye
So feasted with the sun's warm shine.

4.

By the great stones we chose our ground
For shade ; and there, in converse sweet,
Took luncheon. On a little mound
Sat the three ladies ; at their feet,
I sat ; and smelt the heathy smell,
Pluck'd harebells, turn'd the telescope
To the country round. My life went well,
For once, without the wheels of hope ;

And I despised the Druid rocks
That scowl'd their chill gloom from above,
Like churls whose stolid wisdom mocks
The lightness of immortal love.
And, as we talk'd, my spirit quaff'd
The sparkling winds ; the candid skies
At our untruthful strangeness laugh'd ;
I kiss'd with mine her smiling eyes ;
And sweet familiarness and awe
Prevail'd that hour on either part,
And in the eternal light I saw
That she was mine ; though yet my heart
Could not conceive, nor would confess
Such contentation ; and there grew
More form and more fair stateliness
Than heretofore, between us two.

WIND AND WAVE.

THE wedded light and heat,
 Winnowing the witless space,
Without a let,
What are they till they beat
Against the sleepy sod, and there beget
Perchance the violet !
Is the One found,
Amongst a wilderness of as happy grace,
To make Heaven's bound ;
So that in Her
All which it hath of sensitively good
Is sought and understood
After the narrow mode the mighty Heavens prefer ?
She, as a little breeze
Following still Night,
Ripples the spirit's cold, deep seas
Into delight ;
But, in a while,
The immeasurable smile
Is broke by fresher airs to flashes blent
With darkling discontent ;

And all the subtle zephyr hurries gay,
And all the heaving ocean heaves one way,
T'ward the void sky-line and an unguess'd weal ;
Until the vanward billows feel
The agitating shallows, and divine the goal,
And to foam roll,
And spread and stray
And traverse wildly, like delighted hands,
The fair and fleckless sands ;
And so the whole
Unfathomable and immense
Triumphing tide comes at the last to reach
And burst in wind-kiss'd splendours on the deaf'ning
 beach,
Where forms of children in first innocence
Laugh and fling pebbles on the rainbow'd crest
Of its untired unrest.

DAWN.

I COULD not rest, so rose. The air
Was dark and sharp ; the roosted birds
Cheep'd, " Here am I, Sweet ; are you there ?"
On Avon's misty flats the herds
Expected, comfortless, the day,
Which slowly fired the clouds above ;
The cock scream'd, somewhere far away ;
In sleep the matrimonial dove
Was crooning ; no wind waked the wood,
Nor moved the midnight river-damps,
Nor thrill'd the poplar ; quiet stood
The chestnut with its thousand lamps ;
The moon shone yet, but weak and blear,
And seem'd to watch, with bated breath,
The landscape, all made sharp and clear
By stillness, as a face by death.

REJECTED.

“**P**ERHAPS she’s dancing somewhere now !”
The thoughts of light and music wake
Sharp jealousies, that grow and grow
Till silence and the darkness ache.
He sees her step, so proud and gay,
Which, ere he spake, foretold despair ;
Thus did she look, on such a day,
And such the fashion of her hair,
And thus she stood, when, kneeling low,
He took the bramble from her dress,
And thus she laugh’d and talk’d, whose “ No ”
Was sweeter than another’s “ Yes.”
He feeds on thoughts that most deject ;
He impudently feigns her charms,
So revered in his own respect,
Dreadfully clasp’d by other arms ;
And turns, and puts his brows, that ache,
Against the pillow where ’tis cold.
If, only now his heart would break !
But oh, how much a heart can hold !

MIGNONNE.

W HATE'ER thou dost thou'rt dear !
 Uncertain troubles sanctify
That magic well-spring of the willing tear,
Thine eye.
Thy jealous fear,
With not the rustle of a rival near ;
Thy careless disregard of all
My tenderest care ;
Thy dumb despair
When thy keen wit my worship may construe
Into contempt of thy divinity ;
They please me too !
But should it once befall
These accidental charms to disappear,
Leaving withal
Thy sometime self the same throughout the year,
So glowing, grave, and shy,
Kind, talkative, and dear,
As now thou sitt'st to ply
The fireside tune
Of that neat engine deft at which thou sew'st
With fingers mild and foot like the new moon,

O, then what cross of any further fate
Could my content abate?
Forget, then (but I know
Thou canst not so),
Thy customs of some prædiluvian state.
I am no Bullfinch, fair my Butterfly,
That thou should'st try
Those zigzag courses, in the welkin clear ;
Nor cruel Boy that, fledd'st thou straight
Or paused, mayhap
Might catch thee, for thy colours, with his cap.

THE FOREIGN LAND.

A WOMAN is a foreign land,
Of which, though there he settle young,
A man will ne'er quite understand
The customs, politics, and tongue.
The foolish hie them post-haste through,
See fashions odd, and prospects fair,
Learn of the language, "How d'ye do,"
And go and brag that they've been there.
The most for leave to trade apply,
For once, at Empire's seat, her heart,
Then get what knowledge ear and eye
Glean chancewise in the life-long mart.
And certain others, few and fit,
Attach them to the Court, and see
The Country's best, its accent hit,
And partly sound its polity.

THE TOYS.

MY little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes,
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him, and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own ;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there with
careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.

So, when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said :
Ah, when at last we lie with tranced breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood,
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
“ I will be sorry for their childishness.”

THE VIOLETS.

I

I WENT not to the Dean's unbid :
I would not have my mystery,
From her so delicately hid,
Discuss'd by gossips at their tea.
A long, long week, and not once there,
Had made my spirit sick and faint,
And lack-love, foul as love is fair,
Perverted all things to complaint.
How vain the world had grown to be !
How mean all people and their ways,
How ignorant their sympathy,
And how impertinent their praise ;
What they for virtuousness esteem'd,
How far removed from heavenly right ;
What pettiness their trouble seem'd,
How undelightful their delight ;
To my necessity how strange
The sunshine and the song of birds ;
How dull the clouds' continual change,
How foolishly content the herds ;

How unaccountable the law
Which bade me sit in blindness here,
While she, the sun by which I saw,
Shed splendour in an idle sphere !
And then I kiss'd her stolen glove,
And sigh'd to reckon and define
The modes of martyrdom in love,
And how far each one might be mine.
I thought how love, whose vast estate
Is earth and air and sun and sea,
Encounters oft the beggar's fate,
Despised on score of poverty ;
How Heaven, inscrutable in this,
Lets the gross general make or mar
The destiny of love, which is
So tender and particular ;
How nature, as unnatural
And contradicting nature's source,
Which is but love, seems most of all
Well-pleas'd to harry true love's course ;
How, many times, it comes to pass
That trifling shades of temperament,
Affecting only one, alas,
Not love, but love's success prevent ;
How manners often falsely paint
The man ; how passionate respect,
Hid by itself, may bear the taint
Of coldness and a dull neglect ;

And how a little outward dust
Can a clear merit quite o'ercloud,
And make her fatally unjust,
And him desire a darker shroud ;
How senseless opportunity
Gives baser men the better chance ;
How powers, adverse else, agree
To cheat her in her ignorance ;
How Heaven its very self conspires
With man and nature against love,
As pleased to couple cross desires,
And cross where they themselves approve.
Wretched were life, if the end were now !
But this gives tears to dry despair,
Faith shall be blest, we know not how,
And love fulfill'd, we know not where.

2

While thus I grieved, and kiss'd her glove,
My man brought in her note to say,
Papa had bid her send his love,
And would I dine with them next day ?
They had learn'd and practised Purcell's glee,
To sing it by to-morrow night.
The postscript was : Her sisters and she
Enclosed some violets, blue and white ;

She and her sisters found them where
I wager'd once no violets grew ;
So they had won the gloves. And there
The violets lay, two white, one blue.

HONORIA.

THE noble Girl! With whom she talks
She knights first with her smile; she walks
Stands, dances, to such sweet effect,
Alone she seems to move erect.
The brightest and the chastest brow
Rules o'er a cheek which seems to show
That love, as a mere vague suspense
Of apprehensive innocence,
Perturbs her heart; love without aim
Or object, like the sunlit flame
That in the Vestals' Temple glow'd,
Without the image of a god.
And this simplicity most pure
She sets off with no less allure
Of culture, subtly skill'd to raise
The power, the pride, and mutual praise
Of human personality
Above the common sort so high,
It makes such homely souls as mine
Marvel how brightly life may shine!

THE ROSE OF THE WORLD.

L O, when the Lord made North and South
And sun and moon ordained, He,
Forthbringing each by word of mouth
In order of its dignity,
Did man from the crude clay express
By sequence, and, all else decreed,
He form'd the woman ; nor might less
Than Sabbath such a work succeed.
And still with favour singled out,
Marr'd less than man by mortal fall,
Her disposition is devout,
Her countenance angelical ;
The best things that the best believe
Are in her face so kindly writ
The faithless, seeing her, conceive
Not only heaven, but hope of it ;
No idle thought her instinct shrouds,
But fancy chequers settled sense,
Like alteration of the clouds
On noonday's azure permanence ;

Pure dignity, composure, ease
 Declare affections nobly fixed,
And impulse sprung from due degrees
 Of sense and spirit sweetly mix'd.
Her modesty, her chiefest grace,
 The cestus clasping Venus' side,
How potent to deject the face
 Of him who would affront its pride !
Wrong dares not in her presence speak,
 Nor spotted thought its taint disclose
Under the protest of a cheek
 Outbragging Nature's boast the rose.
In mind and manners how discreet ;
 How artless in her very art ;
How candid in discourse ; how sweet
 The concord of her lips and heart ;
How simple and how circumspect ;
 How subtle and how fancy-free ;
Though sacred to her love, how deck'd
 With unexclusive courtesy ;
How quick in talk to see from far
 The way to vanquish or evade ;
How able her persuasions are
 To prove, her reasons to persuade ;
How (not to call true instinct's bent
 And woman's very nature, harm),
How amiable and innocent
 Her pleasure in her power to charm ;

How humbly careful to attract,
 Though crown'd with all the soul desires,
Connubial aptitude exact,
 Diversity that never tires.

ALEXANDER AND LYCON.

“WHAT, no crown won,
These two whole years,
By man of fortitude beyond his peers,
In Thrace or Macedon?”

“No, none.

But what deep trouble does my Lycon feel,
And hide 'neath chat about the commonweal?”

“Glaucé but now the third time did again
The thing which I forbade. I had to box her ears.
'Twas ill to see her both blue eyes
Settled in tears

Despairing on the skies,
And the poor lip all pucker'd into pain ;
Yet, for her sake, from kisses to refrain !”

“Ho, Timocles, take down

That crown.

No, not that common one for blood with extreme
valour spilt,

But yonder, with the berries gilt.

'Tis, Lycon, thy just meed.

To inflict unmoved

And firm to bear the woes of the Beloved

Is fortitude indeed.”

RACHEL.

YOU loved her, and would lie all night
Thinking how beautiful she was,
And what to do for her delight.
Now both are bound with alien laws !
Be patient ; put your heart to school ;
Weep if you will, but not despair ;
The trust that nought goes wrong by rule
Should ease this load the many bear.
Love, if there's heav'n, shall meet his dues,
Though here unmatch'd, or match'd amiss ;
Meanwhile, the gentle cannot choose
But learn to love the lips they kiss.
Ne'er hurt the homely sister's ears
With Rachel's beauties ; secret be
The lofty mind whose lonely tears
Protest against mortality.

THE OPPORTUNITY.

I.

FROM little signs, like little stars,
Whose faint impression on the sense
The very looking straight at mars,
Or only seen by confluence ;
From instinct of a mutual thought,
Whence sanctity of manners flow'd ;
From chance unconscious, and from what
Concealment, overconscious, show'd ;
Her hand's less weight upon my arm,
Her lowlier mien ; that match'd with this ;
I found, and felt with strange alarm,
I stood committed to my bliss.

2.

I grew assured, before I ask'd,
That she'd be mine without reserve,
And in her unclaim'd graces bask'd,
At leisure, till the time should serve,
With just enough of dread to thrill
The hope, and make it trebly dear ;
Thus loth to speak the word to kill
Either the hope or happy fear.

3.

Till once, through lanes returning late,
Her laughing sisters lagg'd behind ;
And, ere we reach'd her father's gate,
We paused with one presentient mind ;
And, in the dim and perfumed mist,
Their coming stay'd, who, friends to me,
And very women, loved to assist
Love's timid opportunity.

4.

Twice rose, twice died my trembling word ;
The faint and frail Cathedral chimes
Spake time in music, and we heard
The chafers rustling in the limes.
Her dress, that touch'd me where I stood,
The warmth of her confided arm,
Her bosom's gentle neighbourhood,
Her pleasure in her power to charm ;
Her look, her love, her form, her touch,
The least seem'd most by blissful turn,
Blissful but that it pleased too much,
And taught the wayward soul to yearn.
It was as if a harp with wires
Was traversed by the breath I drew ;
And, oh, sweet meeting of desires,
She, answering, own'd that she loved too.

AURAS OF DELIGHT.

BEAUTIFUL habitations, auras of delight !
Who shall bewail the crags and bitter foam
And angry sword-blades flashing left and right
Which guard your glittering height,
That none thereby may come !
The vision which we have
Revere we so,
That yet we crave
To foot those fields of ne'er profaned snow ?
I, with heart-quake,
Dreaming or thinking of that realm of Love,
See, oft, a dove
Tangled in frightful nuptials with a snake,
The tortured knot,
Now, like a kite scant-weighted, flung bewitch'd
Sunwards, now pitch'd,
Tail over head, down, but with no taste got
Eternally
Of rest in either ruin or the sky,
But bird and vermin each incessant strives,
With vain dilaceration of both lives,

'Gainst its abhorred bond insoluble,
Coveting fiercer any separate hell
Than the most weary Soul in Purgatory
On God's sweet breast to lie.
And, in this sign, I con
The guerdon of that golden Cup, fulfill'd
With fornications foul of Babylon,
The heart where good is well-perceiv'd and known,
Yet is not will'd ;
And Him I thank, who can make live again
The dust, but not the joy we once profane,
That I, of ye,
Beautiful habitations, auras of delight,
In childish years, and since, had sometime sense
and sight,
But that ye vanish'd quite,
Even from memory,
Ere I could get my breath, and whisper " See !"
But did for me
They altogether die,
Those trackless glories glimps'd in upper sky?
Were they of chance, or vain,
Nor good at all again
For curb of heart or fret?
Nay, though, by grace,
Lest, haply, I refuse God to His face,
Their likeness wholly I forget,
Ah, yet,

Often in straits which else for me were ill,
I mind me still
I *did* respire the lonely auras sweet,
I *did* the blest abodes behold, and, at the moun-
tains' feet,
Bathed in the holy Stream by Hermon's thymy hill.

IN LOVE.

IF he's capricious she'll be so,
But, if his duties constant are,
She lets her loving favour glow
As steady as a tropic star ;
Appears there nought for which to weep,
She'll weep for nought, for his dear sake ;
She clasps her sister in her sleep ;
Her love in dreams is most awake.
Her soul, that once with pleasure shook,
Did any eyes her beauty own,
Now wonders how they dare to look
On what belongs to him alone ;
The indignity of taking gifts
Exhilarates her loving breast ;
A rapture of submission lifts
Her life into celestial rest ;
There's nothing left of what she was ;
Back to the babe the woman dies,
And all the wisdom that she has
Is to love him for being wise.

She's confident because she fears ;
And, though discreet when he's away,
If none but her dear despot hears,
She prattles like a child at play.
Perchance, when all her praise is said,
He tells the news, a battle won,
On either side ten thousand dead.
"Alas !" she says ; but if 'twere known,
She thinks, " He's looking on my face !
I am his joy ; whate'er I do,
He sees such time-contenting grace
In that, he'd have me always so !"
And, evermore, for either's sake,
To the sweet folly of the dove,
She joins the cunning of the snake,
To rivet and exalt his love ;
Her mode of candour is deceit ;
And what she thinks from what she'll say
(Although I'll never call her cheat)
Lies far as Scotland from Cathay.
Without his knowledge he was won ;
Against his nature kept devout ;
She'll never tell him how 'twas done,
And he will never find it out.
If, sudden, he suspects her wiles,
And hears her forging chain and trap,
And looks, she sits in simple smiles,
Her two hands lying in her lap.

Her secret (privilege of the Bard,
Whose fancy is of either sex)
Is mine ; but let the darkness guard
Myst'ries that light would more perplex !

THE QUEEN'S ROOM.

1.

THERE'S nothing happier than the days
In which young love makes every thought
Pure as a bride's blush, when she says
"I will" unto she knows not what ;
And lovers, on the love-lit globe,
For love's sweet sake, walk yet aloof,
And hear Time weave the marriage-robe,
Attraction warp and reverence woof !

2.

My Housekeeper, my Nurse of yore,
Cried, as the latest carriage went,
"Well, Mr. Felix, Sir, I'm sure
The morning's gone off excellent !
I never saw the show to pass
The ladies, in their fine fresh gowns,
So sweetly dancing on the grass,
To music with its ups and downs.

We'd such work, Sir, to clean the plate ;
'Twas just the busy times of old.
The Queen's Room, Sir, look'd quite like state.
Miss Smythe, when she went up, made bold
To peep into the Rose Boudoir,
And cried, ' How charming ! all quite new ;'
And wonder'd who it could be for.
All but Miss Honor look'd in too.
But she's too proud to peep and pry.
None's like that sweet Miss Honor, Sir !
Excuse my humbleness, but I
Pray Heav'n you'll get a wife like her !
The Poor love dear Miss Honor's ways
Better than money. Mrs. Rouse,
Who ought to know a lady, says
No finer goes to Wilton House.
Miss Bagshaw thought that dreary room
Had kill'd old Mrs. Vaughan with fright ;
She would not sleep in such a tomb,
For all her host was worth, a night !
Miss Fry, Sir, laugh'd ; they talk'd the rest
In French ; and French Sir's Greek to me.
But, though they smiled, and seem'd to jest,
No love was lost, for I could see
How serious-like Miss Honor was—"
" Well, Nurse, this is not my affair.
The ladies talk'd in French with cause.
Good-day ; and thank you for your prayer."

3.

I loiter'd through the vacant house,
 Soon to be hers ; in one room stay'd,
Of old my mother's. Here my vows
 Of endless thanks were oftenest paid.
This room its first condition kept ;
 For, on her road to Sarum Town,
Therein an English Queen had slept,
 Before the Hurst was half pull'd down.
The pictured walls the place became :
 Here ran the Brook Anaurus, where
Stout Jason bore the wrinkled dame
 Whom serving changed to Juno ; there,
Ixion's selfish hope, instead
 Of the nuptial goddess, clasp'd a cloud ;
And, here, translated Psyche fed
 Her gaze on Love, not disallow'd.

4.

And in this chamber had she been,
 And into that she would not look,
My Joy, my Vanity, my Queen,
 At whose dear name my pulses shook !
To others how express at all
 My worship in that joyful shrine ?
I scarcely can myself recall
 What peace and ardour then were mine !

And how more sweet than aught below,
The daylight and its duties done,
It felt to fold the hands, and so
Relinquish all regards but one ;
To see her features in the dark,
To lie and meditate once more
The grace I did not fully mark,
The tone I had not heard before ;
And from my pillow then to take
Her notes, her picture, and her glove,
Put there for joy when I should wake,
And press them to the heart of love ;
And then to whisper " Wife ! " and pray
To live so long as not to miss
That unimaginable day
Which farther seems the nearer 'tis ;
And still from joy's unfathom'd well
To drink, in dreams, while on her brows
Of innocence ineffable
Blossom'd the laughing bridal rose.

FELICITY.

TO marry her and take her home !
The poet, painting pureness, tells
Of lilies ; figures power by Rome ;
And each thing shows by something else !
But through the songs of poets look,
And who so lucky to have found
In universal nature's book
A likeness for a life so crown'd !
Here they speak best who best express
Their inability to speak,
And none are strong, but who confess
With happy skill that they are weak.

EVENING PEACE.

SO lay the Earth that saw the skies
Grow clear and bright above
As the repentant spirit lies
In God's forgiving love.
The lark forsook the waning day,
And all loud songs did cease ;
The Robin, from a wither'd spray,
Sang like a soul at peace.
Far to the South, in sunset glow'd
The peaks of Dartmoor ridge,
And Tamar, full and tranquil, flow'd
Beneath the Gresson Bridge.
There, conscious of the numerous noise
Of rain-awaken'd rills,
And gathering deep and sober joys
From the heart-enlarging hills,
I sat, until the first white star
Appear'd, with dewy rays,
And the fair moon began to bar
With shadows all the ways.

LOVE-SICK.

FOR more of heaven than her have I
No sensitive capacity.

Ah, she being mine, should God to me
Say "Lo ! my Child, I give to thee
All heaven besides," what could I then,
But, as a child, to Him complain
That whereas my dear Father gave
A little space for me to have
In His great garden, now, o'erblest,
I've that, indeed, but all the rest ;
Which, somehow, makes it seem I've got
All but my only cared-for plot !
Enough was that for my weak hand
To tend, my heart to understand.

THE CHANGED ALLEGIANCE.

WATCH how a bird that captived sings,
The cage set open, first looks out,
Yet fears the freedom of his wings,
And now withdraws, and flits about,
And now looks forth again ; until,
Grown bold, he hops on stool and chair,
And now attains the window-sill,
And now confides himself to air.
The maiden so, from love's free sky
In chaste and prudent counsels caged,
But longing to be loosen'd by
Her suitor's faith declared and gaged,
When blest with that release desired,
First doubts if truly she is free,
Then pauses, restlessly retired,
Alarm'd at too much liberty ;
But soon, remembering all her debt
To plighted passion, gets by rote
Her duty ; says, " I love him ! " yet
The thought half chokes her in her throat ;

And, like that fatal "I am thine,"
Comes with alternate gush and check
And joltings of the heart, as wine
Pour'd from a flask of narrow neck.
Is he indeed her choice? She fears
Her Yes was rashly said, and shame,
Remorse, and ineffectual tears
Revolt from his conceded claim.
Oh, treason! So, with desperate nerve,
She cries, "I am in love, am his;"
Lets run the cables of reserve,
And floats into a sea of bliss,
And laughs to think of her alarm,
Avows she was in love before,
Though his avowal was the charm
Which open'd to her own the door.
She loves him for his mastering air,
Whence, Parthian-like, she slaying flies;
His flattering look, which seems to wear
Her loveliness in manly eyes;
His smile, which, by reverse, portends
An awful wrath, should reason stir;
(How fortunate it is they're friends,
And he will ne'er be wroth with her!);
His power to do or guard from harm;
If he but chose to use it half,
And catch her up in one strong arm,
What could she do but weep, or laugh!

His words, which still instruct, but so,
That this applause seems still implied,
“ How wise in all she ought to know,
How ignorant of all beside !”
His skilful suit, which leaves her free,
Gives nothing for the world to name,
And keeps her conscience safe, while he,
With half the bliss, takes all the blame ;
His clear repute with great and small ;
The jealousy his choice will stir ;
But, ten times more than ten times all,
She loves him for his love of her.
How happy 'tis he seems to see
In her that utter loveliness
Which she, for his sake, longs to be !
At times, she cannot but confess
Her other friends are somewhat blind ;
Her parents' years excuse neglect,
But all the rest are scarcely kind,
And brothers grossly want respect ;
And oft she views what he admires
Within her glass, and sight of this
Makes all the sum of her desires
To be devotion unto his.
But still, at first, whatever's done,
A touch, her hand press'd lightly, she
Stands dizzied, shock'd, and flush'd, like one
Set sudden neck-deep in the sea ;

And, though her bond for endless time
To his good pleasure gives her o'er,
The slightest favour seems a crime,
Because it makes her love him more.
But that she ne'er will let him know ;
For what were love should reverence cease ?
A thought which makes her reason so
Inscrutable, it seems caprice.
With her, as with a desperate town,
Too weak to stand, too proud to treat,
The conqueror, though the walls are down,
Has still to capture street by street ;
But, after that, habitual faith,
Divorced from self, where late 'twas due,
Walks nobly in its novel path,
And she's to changed allegiance true ;
And, prizing what she can't prevent,
(Right wisdom, often misdeem'd whim),
Her will's indomitably bent
On mere submissiveness to him ;
To him she'll cleave, for him forsake
Father's and mother's fond command !
He is her lord, for he can take
Hold of her faint heart with his hand.

OUTWARD BOUND.

YONDER the sombre vessel rides
 Where my obscure condition hides.
 Waves scud to shore against the wind
 That flings the sprinkling surf behind ;
 In port the bickering pennons show
 Which way the ships would gladly go ;
 Through Edgely Park the rooted trees
 Are tossing, reckless, in the breeze ;
 On top of Edgely's firm-set tower,
 As foils, not foibles, of its power,
 The light vanes do themselves adjust
 To every veering of the gust :
 By me alone may nought be given
 To guidance of the airs of heaven ?

* * * *

Beholding such as her, a man
 Longs to lay down his life ! How can
 Aught to itself seem thus enough,
 When I have so much need thereof ?
 Blest in her place, blissful is she ;
 And I, departing, seem to be

Like the strange waif that comes to run
A few days flaming near the sun,
And carries back, through boundless night,
Its lessening memory of light.

“LET BE!”

AH, yes ; we tell the good and evil trees
By fruits : but how tell these?
Who does not know
That good and ill
Are done in secret still,
And that which shows is verily but show !
How high of heart is one, and one how sweet of
mood :
But not all height is holiness,
Nor every sweetness good :
And grace will sometimes lurk where who could
guess?
The Critic of his kind,
Dealing to each his share,
With easy humour, hard to bear,
May not impossibly have in him shrined,
As in a gossamer globe or thickly padded pod,
Some small seed dear to God.
Haply yon wretch, so famous for his falls,
Got them beneath the Devil-defended walls

Of some high Virtue he had vow'd to win ;
 And that which you and I
 Call his besetting sin
 Is but the fume of his peculiar fire
 Of inmost contrary desire,
 And means wild willingness for her to die,
 Dash'd with despondence of her favour sweet ;
 He fiercer fighting, in his worst defeat,
 Than I or you,
 That only courteous greet
 Where he does hotly woo,
 Did ever fight, in our best victory.
 Another is mistook
 Through his deceitful likeness to his look !
 Let be, let be :
 Why should I clear myself, why answer thou for
 me ?
 That shaft of slander shot
 Miss'd only the right blot.
 I see the shame
 They cannot see :
 'Tis very just they blame
 The thing that's not.

THE FRIENDS.

1.

FRANK'S long, dull letter, lying by
 The gay sash from Honoria's waist,
 Reproach'd me ; passion spared a sigh
 For friendship without fault disgraced.
 How should I greet him ? how pretend
 I felt the love he once inspired ?
 Time was when either, in his friend,
 His own deserts with joy admired ;
 We took one side in school-debate,
 Like hopes pursued with equal thirst,
 Were even-bracketed by Fate ;
 Twin-Wranglers, seventh from the First ;
 And either loved a lady's laugh
 More than all music ; he and I
 Were perfect in the pleasant half
 Of universal charity.

2.

From pride of likeness thus I loved
 Him, and he me, till love begot
 The lowliness which now approved
 Nothing but that which I was not.

Blest was the pride of feeling so
 Subjected to a girl's soft reign.
She was my vanity, and, oh,
 All other vanities how vain !

3.

Frank follow'd in his letter's track,
 And set my guilty heart at ease
By echoing my excuses back
 With just the same apologies.
So he had slighted me as well !
 Nor was my mind disburthen'd less
When what I sought excuse to tell
 He of himself did first confess.

4.

Each, rapturous, praised his lady's worth ;
 He eloquently thus : " Her face
Is the summ'd sweetness of the earth,
 Her soul the glass of heaven's grace,
To which she leads me by the hand ;
 Or, briefly all the truth to say
To you who briefly understand,
 She is both heaven and the way.
Displeasures and resentments pass
 Athwart her charitable eyes
More fleetingly than breath from glass,
 Or truth from foolish memories ;

Her heart's so touch'd with others' woes
 She has no need of chastisement ;
 Her gentle life's conditions close,
 Like God's commandments, with content,
 And make an aspect calm and gay,
 Where sweet affections come and go,
 Till all who see her, smile, and say,
 How fair, and happy that she's so !
 She is so lovely, true, and pure,
 Her virtue all virtue so endears,
 That often, when I think of her,
 Life's meanness fills mine eyes with tears—"

"You paint Miss Churchill ! Pray go on—"
 " She's perfect, and, if joy was much
 To think her nature's paragon,
 'Tis more that there's another such !"

5.

Praising and paying back their praise
 With rapturous hearts, t'ward Sarum Spire
 We walk'd, in evening's golden haze,
 Friendship from passion stealing fire.
 In joy's crown danced the feather jest,
 And, parting by the Deanery door,
 Clasp'd hands, less shy than words, confess'd
 We had not been true friends before.

A PORTRAIT.

ON her face, when she was laughing, was the
seriousness within ;

Her sweetest smiles (and sweeter did a lover never
win),

In passing, grew so absent that they made her fair
cheek thin.

On her face, when she was speaking, thoughts un-
worded used to live ;

So that when she whisper'd to me, "Better joy
Earth cannot give,"

Her following silence added, "But Earth's joy is
fugitive."

For there a nameless something, though suppress'd,
still spread around ;

The same was on her eyelids, if she look'd towards
the ground ;

In her laughing, singing, talking, still the same was
in the sound ;—

A sweet dissatisfaction, which at no time went away,
But shadow'd so her spirit, even at its brightest
play,

That her mirth was like the sunshine in the closing
of the day.

THE AMARANTH.

FEASTS satiate ; stars distress with height ;
Friendship means well, but misses reach,
And wearies in its best delight,
Vex'd with the vanities of speech ;
Too long regarded, roses even
Afflict the mind with fond unrest ;
And to converse direct with Heaven
Is a great labour in the breast ;
Whate'er the up-looking soul admires,
Whate'er the senses' banquet be,
Fatigues at last with vain desires,
Or sickens by satiety ;
But truly my delight was more
In her to whom I'm bound for aye
Yesterday than the day before
And more to-day than yesterday.

SEMELE.

NO praise to me !
My joy 'twas to be nothing but the glass
Thro' which the general boon of Heaven should
pass,
To focus upon thee.
Nor is't thy blame
Thou first should'st glow, and, after, fade i' the
flame.
It takes more might
Than God has given thee, Dear, so long to feel
delight.
Shall I, alas,
Reproach thee with thy change and my regret?
Blind fumblers that we be
About the portals of felicity !
The wind of words would scatter, tears would wash
Quite out the little heat
Beneath the silent and chill-seeming ash,
Perchance, still slumbering sweet.

THE MARRIED LOVER.

WHY, having won her, do I woo?
Because her spirit's vestal grace
Provokes me always to pursue,
But, spirit-like, eludes embrace ;
Because her womanhood is such
That, as on court-days subjects kiss
The Queen's hand, yet so near a touch
Affirms no mean familiarness,
Nay, rather marks more fair the height
Which can with safety so neglect
To dread, as lower ladies might,
That grace could meet with disrespect,
Thus she with happy favour feeds
Allegiance from a love so high
That thence no false conceit proceeds
Of difference bridged, or state put by ;
Because, although in act and word
As lowly as a wife can be,
Her manners, when they call me lord,
Remind me 'tis by courtesy ;

Not with her least consent of will,
Which would my proud affection hurt,
But by the noble style that still
Imputes an unattain'd desert ;
Because her gay and lofty brows,
When all is won which hope can ask,
Reflect a light of hopeless snows
That bright in virgin ether bask ;
Because, though free of the outer court
I am, this Temple keeps its shrine
Sacred to Heaven ; because, in short,
She's not and never can be mine.

THE WIFE'S TRAGEDY.

MAN must be pleased ; but him to please
Is woman's pleasure ; down the gulf
Of his condoled necessities

She casts her best, she flings herself.
How often flings for nought, and yokes
Her heart to an icicle or whim,
Whose each impatient word provokes
Another, not from her, but him ;
While she, too gentle even to force
His penitence by kind replies,
Waits by, expecting his remorse,
With pardon in her pitying eyes ;
And if he once, by shame oppress'd,
A comfortable word confers,
She leans and weeps against his breast,
And seems to think the sin was hers ;
And whilst his love has any life,
Or any eye to see her charms,
At any time, she's still his wife,
Dearly devoted to his arms ;

She loves with love that cannot tire ;
And when, ah woe, she loves alone,
Through passionate duty love springs higher,
As grass grows taller round a stone.

THE MINISTERS OF LOVE.

“All are but ministers of Love
And feed his sacred flame.”

COLERIDGE.

LET me, Beloved, while gratitude
Is garrulous with coming good,
Or ere the tongue of happiness
Be silenced by your soft caress,
Relate how, musing here of you,
The clouds, the intermediate blue,
The air that rings with larks, the grave
And distant rumour of the wave,
The solitary sailing skiff,
The gusty corn-field on the cliff,
The corn-flower by the crumbling ledge,
Or, far-down at the shingle's edge,
The sighing sea's recurrent crest
Breaking, resign'd to its unrest,
All whisper, to my home-sick thought,
Of charms in you till now uncaught,
Or only caught as dreams, to die
Ere they were own'd by memory.

High and ingenious Decree
Of joy-devising Deity !
You, whose ambition only is
The assurance that you make my bliss,
(Hence my first debt of love to show,
That you, past showing, indeed do so !),
Trust me, the world, the firmament,
With diverse-natured worlds besprent,
Were rear'd in no mere undivine
Boast of omnipotent design,
The lion differing from the snake
But for the trick of difference sake,
And comets darting to and fro
Because in circles planets go ;
But rather that sole love might be
Refresh'd throughout eternity
In one sweet faith, for ever strange,
Mirror'd by circumstantial change.
For, more and more, do I perceive
That everything is relative
To you, and that there's not a star,
Nor nothing in't, so strange or far,
But, if 'twere scann'd, 'twould chiefly mean
Somewhat, till then, in you unseen,
Something to make the bondage strait
Of you and me more intimate,
Some unguess'd opportunity
Of nuptials in a new degree.

But, oh, with what a novel force
Your best-conn'd beauties, by remorse
Of absence, touch ! and, in my heart,
How bleeds afresh the youthful smart
Of passion fond, despairing still
To utter infinite good-will
By worthy service ! Yet I know
That love is all that love can owe,
And this to offer is no less
Of worth, in kind speech or caress,
Than if my life-blood I should give.
For good is God's prerogative,
And Love's deed is but to prepare
The flatter'd, dear Beloved to dare
Acceptance of His gifts. When first
On me your happy beauty burst,
Honor'd, verily it seem'd
That nought beyond you could be dream'd
Of beauty and of heaven's delight.
Zeal of an unknown infinite
Yet bade me ever wish you more
Beatified than e'er before.
Angelical were your replies
To my prophetic flatteries ;
And sweet was the compulsion strong
That drew me in the course along
Of heaven's increasing bright allure,
With provocations fresh of your

Victorious capacity.

Whither may love, so fledged, not fly?

Did not mere Earth hold fast the string
Of this celestial soaring thing,
So measure and make sensitive,
And still, to the nerves, nice notice give
Of each minutest increment
Of such interminable ascent,
The heart would lose all count, and beat
Unconscious of a height so sweet,
And the spirit-pursuing senses strain
Their steps on the starry track in vain !

A DEMONSTRATION.

NATURE, with endless being rife,
Parts each thing into "him" and "her,"
And in the arithmetic of life,
The smallest unit is a pair ;
And thus, oh, strange, sweet half of me,
If I confess a loftier flame,
If more I love high Heaven than thee,
I more than love thee, thee I am ;
And, if the world's not built of lies,
Nor all a cheat the Gospel tells,
If that which from the dead shall rise
Be I indeed, not something else,
There's no position more secure
In reason or in faith than this,
That those conditions must endure,
Which, wanting, I myself should miss.

THE WORST.

I THOUGHT the worst had brought me balm :
'Twas but the tempest's central calm.
Vague sinkings of the heart aver
That dreadful wrong is come to her,
And o'er this dream I brood and dote,
And learn its agonies by rote.
As if I loved it, early and late
I make familiar with my fate,
And feed, with fascinated will,
On very dregs of finish'd ill.
I think, she's near him now, alone,
With wardship and protection none ;
Alone, perhaps, in the hindering stress
Of airs that clasp him with her dress,
They wander whispering by the wave ;
And haply now, in some sea-cave,
Where the ribb'd sand is rarely trod,
They laugh, they kiss. O God ! O God !
There comes a smile acutely sweet
Out of the picturing dark ; I meet
The ancient frankness of her gaze,
That soft and heart-surprising blaze

Of great goodwill and innocence,
And perfect joy proceeding thence !
Ah ! made for earth's delight, yet such
The mid-sea air's too gross to touch.
At thought of which, the soul in me
Is as the bird that bites a bee,
And darts abroad on frantic wing,
Tasting the honey and the sting ;
And, moaning where all round me sleep
Amidst the moaning of the deep,
I start at midnight from my bed—
And have no right to strike him dead.

AFTER BAD WEATHER.

I.

ONE morn I watch'd the rain subside ;
And then fared singly forth
Below the clouds, till eve to ride
From Edgecumb to the North.
Once, only once, I paused upon
The sea-transcending height,
And turn'd to gaze : far breakers shone,
Slow gleams of silent light.
Into my steed I struck the spur ;
Sad was the soul in me ;
Sore were my lids with tears for her
Who slept beneath the sea.
But soon I sooth'd my startled horse,
And check'd that sudden grief,
And look'd abroad on crag and gorse
And Dartmoor's cloudy reef.
Far forth the air was dark and clear,
The crags acute and large,
The clouds uneven, black, and near,
And ragged at the marge.

The spider, in his rainy mesh,
Shook not, but, as I rode,
The opposing air, sweet, sharp, and fresh,
Against my hot lids flow'd.
Peat-cutters pass'd me, carrying tools ;
Hawks glimmer'd on the wing ;
The ground was glad with grassy pools,
And brooklets galloping ;
The sparrow chirp'd with feathers spread,
And dipp'd and drank his fill,
Where, down its sandy channel, fled
The lessening road-side rill.

2.

I cross'd the furze-grown table-land,
And near'd the northern vales,
That lay perspicuously plann'd
In lesser hills and dales.
Then rearward, in a slow review,
Fell Dartmoor's jagged lines ;
Around were dross-heaps, red and blue,
Old shafts of gutted mines ;
Impetuous currents copper-stain'd,
Wheels steam-urged with a roar,
Sluice-guiding grooves, strong works that strain'd
With freight of upheaved ore.
And then, the train, with shock on shock,
Swift rush and birth-scream dire,

Grew from the bosom of the rock,
And pass'd in noise and fire.
With brazen throb, with vital stroke,
It went, far heard, far seen,
Setting a track of shining smoke
Against the pastoral green.
Then, bright drops, lodged in budding trees,
Were loos'd in sudden showers,
Touch'd by the novel western breeze,
Friend of the backward flowers.
Then rose the Church at Tavistock,
The rain still falling there ;
But sunny Dartmoor seem'd to mock
The gloom with cheerful glare.
About the West the gilt vane reel'd
And poised ; and, with sweet art,
The sudden, jangling changes peal'd,
Until, around my heart,
Conceits of brighter times, of times
The brighter for past storms,
Clung thick as bees, when brazen chimes
Call down the hiveless swarms.

3.

In love with home, I rose and eyed
The rainy North ; but there
The distant hill-top, in its pride,
Adorn'd the brilliant air ;

And, as I pass'd from Tavistock,
The scatter'd dwellings white,
The Church, the golden weather-cock,
Were 'whelm'd in happy light ;
The children 'gan the sun to greet,
With song and senseless shout ;
The lambs to skip, their dams to bleat ;
In Tavy leapt the trout ;
Across a fleeting eastern cloud,
The splendid rainbow sprang,
And larks, invisible and loud,
Within its zenith sang.

DEPARTURE.

IT was not like your great and gracious ways !
Do you, that have nought other to lament,
Never, my Love, repent
Of how, that July afternoon,
You went,
With sudden, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,
Upon your journey of so many days,
Without a single kiss or a good-bye ?
I knew, indeed, that you were parting soon ;
And so we sate, within the low sun's rays,
You whispering to me, for your voice was weak,
Your harrowing praise.
Well, it was well
To hear you such things speak,
And I could tell
What made your eyes a growing gloom of love,
As a warm South-wind sombres a March grove.
And it was like your great and gracious ways
To turn your talk on daily things, my Dear,
Lifting the luminous, pathetic lash,
To let the laughter flash,

Whilst I drew near,
Because you spoke so low that I could scarcely hear.
But all at once to leave me at the last
More at the wonder than the loss aghast,
With huddled, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,
And go your journey of all days
With not one kiss or a good-bye,
And the only loveless look the look with which you
 pass'd,
'Twas all unlike your great and gracious ways.

“SHE WAS MINE.”

“**T**HY tears o’erprize thy loss ! Thy wife,
In what was she particular ?
Others of comely face and life,
Others as chaste and warm there are,
And when they speak they seem to sing ;
Beyond her sex she was not wise ;
And there is no more common thing
Than kindness in a woman’s eyes.
Then wherefore weep so long and fast,
Why so exceedingly repine !
Say, how has thy Beloved surpass’d
So much all others ?” “She was mine.”

FINIS CORONAT OPUS.

TOO soon, too soon comes Death to show
We love more deeply than we know !
The rain, that fell upon the height
Too gently to be call'd delight,
Within the dark vale reappears
As a wild cataract of tears ;
And love in life should strive to see
Sometimes what love in death would be !
Easier to love, we so should find,
It is than to be just and kind.
She's gone : shut close the coffin-lid :
What distance for another did
That death has done for her ! The good,
Once gazed upon with heedless mood,
Now fills with tears the famish'd eye,
And turns all else to vanity.
'Tis sad to see, with death between,
The good we have pass'd and have not seen !
How strong appear the words of all !
The looks of those that live appal.
They are the ghosts, and check the breath :
There's no reality but death,

And hunger for some signal given
That we shall have our own in heaven.
But this the God of love lets be
A horrible uncertainty.

THE AZALEA.

THERE, where the sun shines first
 Against our room,
She train'd the gold Azalea, whose perfume
She, Spring-like, from her breathing grace dispersed.
Last night the delicate crests of saffron bloom,
For that their dainty likeness watch'd and nurst,
Were just at point to burst.
At dawn I dream'd, O God, that she was dead,
And groan'd aloud upon my wretched bed,
And waked, ah, God, and did not waken her,
But lay, with eyes still closed,
Perfectly bless'd in the delicious sphere
By which I knew so well that she was near,
My heart to speechless thankfulness composed.
Till 'gan to stir
A dizzy somewhat in my troubled head—
It *was* the azalea's breath, and she *was* dead !
The warm night had the lingering buds disclosed ;
And I had fall'n asleep with to my breast
A chance-found letter press'd
In which she said,

“ So, till to-morrow eve, my Own, adieu !
Parting’s well-paid with soon again to meet,
Soon in your arms to feel so small and sweet,
Sweet to myself that am so sweet to you !”

LOVE'S IMMORTALITY.

HOW vilely 'twere to misdeserve
 The poet's gifts of perfect speech,
 In song to try, with trembling nerve,
 The limit of its utmost reach,
 Only to sound the wretched praise
 Of what to-morrow shall not be ;
 So mocking with immortal bays
 The cross-bones of mortality !
 I do not thus. My faith is fast
 That all the loveliness I sing
 Is made to bear the mortal blast,
 And blossom in a better Spring.
 Doubts of eternity ne'er cross
 The Lover's mind, divinely clear ;
For ever is the gain or loss
 Which maddens him with hope or fear :
 So trifles serve for his relief,
 And trifles make him sick and pale ;
 And yet his pleasure and his grief
 Are both on a majestic scale.
 The chance, indefinitely small,
 Of issue infinitely great,
 Eclipses finite interests all,
 And has the dignity of fate.

“LOVE IS ENOUGH.”

THEY bade adieu ; I saw them go
 Across the sea ; and now I know
 The ultimate hope I rested on,
 The hope beyond the grave, is gone,
 The hope that, in the heavens high,
 At last it should appear that I
 Loved most, and so, by claim divine,
 Should have her, in the heavens, for mine,
 According to such nuptial sort
 As may subsist in the holy court,
 Where, if there are all kinds of joys
 To exhaust the multitude of choice
 In many mansions, then there are
 Loves personal and particular,
 Conspicuous in the glorious sky
 Of universal charity,
 As Phosphor in the sunrise. Now
 I've seen them, I believe their vow
 Immortal ; and the dreadful thought,
 That he less honour'd than he ought
 Her sanctity, is laid to rest,
 And, blessing them, I too am blest.

My goodwill, as a springing air,
Unclouds a beauty in despair ;
I stand beneath the sky's pure cope
Unburthen'd even by a hope ;
And peace unspeakable, a joy
Which hope would deaden and destroy,
Like sunshine fills the airy gulf
Left by the vanishing of self.
That I have known her ; that she moves
Somewhere all-graceful ; that she loves,
And is belov'd, and that she's so
Most happy, and to heaven will go,
Where I may meet with her (yet this
I count but accidental bliss),
And that the full, celestial weal
Of all shall sensitively feel
The partnership and work of each,
And thus my love and labour reach
Her region, there the more to bless
Her last, consummate happiness,
Is guerdon up to the degree
Of that alone true loyalty
Which, sacrificing, is not nice
About the terms of sacrifice,
But offers all, with smiles that say,
'Tis little, but it is for aye !

PAIN.

O PAIN, Love's mystery,
Close next of kin
To joy and heart's delight,
Low Pleasure's opposite,
Choice food of sanctity
And medicine of sin,
Angel, whom even they that will pursue
Pleasure with hell's whole gust
Find that they must
Perversely woo,
My lips, thy live coal touching, speak thee true.
Thou sear'st my flesh, O Pain,
But brand'st for arduous peace my languid brain,
And bright'nest my dull view,
Till I, for blessing, blessing give again,
And my roused spirit is
Another fire of bliss,
Wherein I learn
Feelingly how the pangful purging fire
Shall furiously burn
With joy, not only of assured desire,
But also present joy

Of seeing the life's corruption, stain by stain,
Vanish in the clear heat of Love irate,
And, fume by fume, the sick alloy
Of luxury, sloth, and hate
Evaporate ;
Leaving the man, so dark erewhile,
The mirror merely of God's smile.
Herein, O Pain, abides the praise
For which my song I raise ;
But even the bastard good of intermittent ease
How greatly doth it please !
With what repose
The being from its bright exertion glows,
When from thy strenuous storm the senses sweep
Into a little harbour deep
Of rest ;
When thou, O Pain,
Having devour'd the nerves that thee sustain,
Sleep'st, till thy tender food be somewhat grown
 again ;
And how the lull
With tear-blind love is full !
What mockery of a man am I express'd
That I should wait for thee
To woo !
Nor even dare to love, till thou lov'st me.
How shameful, too,
Is this :

That, when thou lov'st, I am at first afraid
Of thy fierce kiss,
Like a young maid ;
And only trust thy charms
And get my courage in thy throbbing arms.
And, when thou partest, what a fickle mind
Thou leav'st behind,
That, being a little absent from mine eye,
It straight forgets thee what thou art,
And ofttimes my adulterate heart
Dallies with Pleasure, thy pale enemy.
O, for the learned spirit without attain
That does not faint,
But knows both how to have thee and to lack,
And ventures many a spell,
Unlawful but for them that love so well,
To call thee back.

FELIX TO HONORIA.

DEAREST, my Love and Wife, 'tis long
Ago I closed the unfinish'd song
Which never could be finish'd ; nor
Will ever Poet utter more
Of love than I did, watching well
To lure to speech the unspeakable !
And yet, ah, twenty-fold my Bride !
Rising, this twentieth festal-tide,
You still soft sleeping, on this day
Of days, some words I long to say,
Some words superfluously sweet
Of fresh assurance, thus to greet
Your waking eyes, which never grow
Weary of telling what I know
So well, yet only well enough
To wish for further news thereof.
Here, in this early autumn dawn,
By windows opening on the lawn,
Where sunshine seems asleep, though bright,
And shadows yet are sharp with night,
And, further on, the wealthy wheat
Bends in a golden drowse, how sweet

To sit and cast my careless looks
Around my walls of well-read books,
Wherein is all that stands redeem'd
From time's huge wreck, all men have dream'd
Of truth, and all by poets known
Of feeling, and in weak sort shown,
And, turning to my heart again,
To find I have what makes them vain,
The thanksgiving mind, which wisdom sums,
And you, whereby it freshly comes
As on that morning (can there be
Twenty-two years 'twixt it and me?)
When, thrill'd with hopeful love I rose
And came in haste to Sarum Close,
Past many a homestead slumbering white
In lonely and pathetic light,
Merely to fancy which drawn blind
Of thirteen had my Love behind,
And in her sacred neighbourhood
To feel that sweet scorn of all good
But her, which let the wise forbend
When wisdom learns to comprehend!

Dearest, as each returning May
I see the season new and gay
With new joy and astonishment,
And Nature's infinite ostent
Of lovely flowers in wood and mead
That weet not whether any heed,

So see I, daily wondering, you,
And worship with a passion new
The Heaven that visibly allows
Its grace to go about my house,
The partial Heaven, that, though I err
And mortal am, gave all to her
Who gave herself to me. Yet I
Boldly thank Heaven (and so defy
The beggarly soul'd humbleness
Which fears God's bounty to confess)
That I was fashion'd with a mind
Seeming for this great gift design'd,
So naturally it moved above
All sordid contraries of love,
Strengthen'd in youth with discipline
Of light, to follow the divine
Vision (which ever to the dark
Is such a plague as was the ark
In Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron), still
Discerning with the docile will
Which comes of full persuaded thought,
That intimacy in love is nought
Without pure reverence, whereas this,
In tearfullest banishment, is bliss.

And so, dearest Honoria, I
Have never learn'd the weary sigh
Of those that to their love-feasts went,
Fed, and forgot the Sacrament ;

And not a trifle now occurs
But sweet initiation stirs
Of new-discover'd joy, and lends
To feeling change that never ends ;
And duties, which the many irk,
Are made all wages and no work.

How sing of such things save to her,
Love's self, so love's interpreter?
How the supreme rewards confess
Which crown the austere voluptuousness
Of heart, that earns, in midst of wealth,
The appetite of want and health ;
Relinquishes the pomp of life
And beauty to the pleasant Wife
At home, and does all joy despise
As out of place but in her eyes?
How praise the years and gravity
That make each favour seem to be
A lovelier weakness for her lord?
And, ah, how find the tender word
To tell aright of love that glows
The fairer for the fading rose?
Of frailty which can weight the arm
To lean with thrice its girlish charm?
Of grace which, like this autumn day,
Is not the sad one of decay,
Yet one whose pale brow pondereth
The far-off majesty of death?

How tell the crowd, whom passion rends
That love grows mild as it ascends?
That joy's most high and distant mood
Is lost, not found in dancing blood ;
Albeit kind acts and smiling eyes,
And all those fond realities
Which are love's words, in us mean more
Delight than twenty years before?

How, Dearest, finish, without wrong
To the speechless heart, the unfinish'd song,
Its high, eventful passages,
Consisting, say, of things like these :—

One morning, contrary to law,
Which, for the most, we held in awe,
Commanding either not to intrude
On the other's place of solitude
Or solitary mind, for fear
Of coming there when God was near,
And finding so what should be known
To Him who is merciful alone,
And views the working ferment base
Of waking flesh and sleeping grace,
Not as we view, our kindness check'd
By likeness of our own defect,
I, venturing to her room, because
(Mark the excuse !) my Birthday 'twas,
Saw, here across a careless chair,
A ball-dress flung, as light as air,

And, here, beside a silken couch,
Pillows which did the pressure vouch
Of pious knees (sweet piety !
Of goodness made and charity,
If gay looks told the heart's glad sense,
Much rather than of penitence),
And, on the couch, an open book,
And written list—I did not look,
Yet just in her clear writing caught :—
“ Habitual faults of life and thought
Which most I need deliverance from.”
I turn'd aside, and saw her come
Adown the filbert-shaded way,
Beautified with her usual gay
Hypocrisy of perfectness,
Which made her heart, and mine no
less,
So happy ! And she cried to me,
“ You lose by breaking rules, you see !
Your Birthday treat is now half-gone
Of seeing my new ball-dress on.”
And, meeting so my lovely Wife,
A passing pang, to think that life
Was mortal, when I saw her laugh,
Shaped in my mind this epitaph :
“ Faults had she, child of Adam's stem,
But only Heaven knew of them.”

Or thus :

For many a dreadful day,
In sea-side lodgings sick she lay,
Noteless of love, nor seem'd to hear
The sea, on one side, thundering near,
Nor, on the other, the loud Ball
Held nightly in the public hall ;
Nor vex'd they my short slumbers, though
I woke up if she breathed too low.
Thus, for three months, with terrors rife,
The pending of her precious life
I watch'd o'er ; and the danger, at last,
The kind Physician said, was past.
Howbeit, for seven harsh weeks the East
Breathed witheringly, and Spring's growth ceased,
And so she only did not die ;
Until the bright and blighting sky
Changed into cloud, and the sick flowers
Remember'd their perfumes, and showers
Of warm, small rain refreshing flew
Before the South, and the Park grew,
In three nights, thick with green. Then she
Revived, no less than flower and tree,
In the mild air, and, the fourth day,
Look'd supernaturally gay
With large, thanksgiving eyes, that shone,
The while I tied her bonnet on,
So that I led her to the glass,
And bade her see how fair she was,

And how love visibly could shine.
Profuse of hers, desiring mine,
And mindful I had loved her most
When beauty seem'd a vanish'd boast,
She laugh'd. I press'd her then to me,
Nothing but soft humility ;
Nor e'er enhanced she with such charms
Her acquiescence in my arms.
And, by her sweet love-weakness made
Courageous, powerful, and glad,
In a clear illustration high
Of heavenly affection, I
Perceived that utter love is all
The same as to be rational,
And that the mind and heart of love,
Which think they cannot do enough,
Are truly the everlasting doors
Wherethrough, all unpetition'd, pours
The eternal pleasance. Wherefore we
Had innermost tranquillity,
And breathed one life with such a sense
Of friendship and of confidence,
That, recollecting the sure word :
" If two of you are in accord,
On earth, as touching any boon
Which ye shall ask, it shall be done
In heaven," we ask'd that heaven's bliss
Might ne'er be any less than this ;

And, for that hour, we seem'd to have
The secret of the joy we gave.

How sing of such things, save to her,
Love's self, so love's interpreter?

How read from such a homely page

In the ear of this unhomely age?

'Tis now as when the Prophet cried :

“ The nation hast Thou multiplied,

But Thou hast not increased the joy !”

And yet, ere wrath or rot destroy

Of England's state the ruin fair,

Oh, might I so its charm declare,

That, in new Lands, in far-off years,

Delighted he should cry that hears :

“ Great is the Land that somewhat best

Works, to the wonder of the rest !

We, in our day, have better done

This thing or that than any one ;

And who but, still admiring, sees

How excellent for images

Was Greece, for laws how wise was Rome ;

But read this Poet, and say if home

And private love did e'er so smile

As in that ancient English isle !”

MAGNA EST VERITAS.

HERE, in this little Bay,
Full of tumultuous life and great repose,
Where, twice a day,
The purposeless, glad ocean comes and goes,
Under high cliffs, and far from the huge town,
I sit me down.
For want of me the world's course will not fail :
When all its work is done, the lie shall rot ;
The truth is great, and shall prevail,
When none cares whether it prevail or not.

LIFE OF LIFE.

WHAT'S that, which, ere I spake, was gone
So joyful and intense a spark
That, whilst o'erhead the wonder shone,
The day, before but dull, grew dark.
I do not know ; but this I know,
That, had the splendour lived a year,
The truth that I some heavenly show
Did see, could not be now more clear.
This know I too : might mortal breath
Express the passion then inspired,
Evil would die a natural death,
And nothing transient be desired ;
And error from the soul would pass,
And leave the senses pure and strong
As sunbeams. But the best, alas,
Has neither memory nor tongue !

TO THE UNKNOWN EROS.

WHAT rumour'd heavens are these
Which not a poet sings,
O Unknown Eros? What this breeze
Of sudden wings
Speeding at far returns of time from interstellar space
To fan my very face,
And gone as fleet,
Through delicatest ether feathering soft their solitary
beat,
With ne'er a light plume dropp'd, nor any trace
To speak of whence they came, or whither they
depart?
And why this palpitating heart,
This blind and unrelated joy,
This meaningless desire,
That moves me like the Child
Who in the flushing darkness troubled lies,
Inventing lonely prophecies,
Which even to his Mother mild
He dares not tell ;
To which himself is infidel ;

His heart not less on fire
With dreams impossible as wildest Arab Tale,
(So thinks the boy),
With dreams that turn him red and pale,
Yet less impossible and wild
Than those which bashful Love, in his own way
and hour,
Shall duly bring to flower !
O Unknown Eros, sire of awful bliss,
What portent and what Delphic word,
Such as in form of snake forebodes the bird,
Is this ?
In me life's even flood
What eddies thus ?
What in its ruddy orbit lifts the blood
Like a perturbed moon of Uranus
Reaching to some great world in ungauged darkness
hid ;
And whence
This rapture of the sense
Which, by thy whisper bid,
Reveres with obscure rite and sacramental sign
A bond I know not of nor dimly can divine ;
This subject loyalty which longs
For chains and thongs
Woven of gossamer and adamant,
To bind me to my unguess'd want,
And so to lie,

Between those quivering plumes that thro' fine ether
 pant,
For hopeless, sweet eternity?
What God unhonour'd hitherto in songs,
Or which, that now
Forgettest the disguise
That Gods must wear who visit human eyes,
Art Thou?
Thou art not Amor ; or, if so, yon pyre,
That waits the willing victim, flames with vestal
 fire ;
Nor mooned Queen of maids ; or, if thou'rt she,
Ah, then, from Thee
Let Bride and Bridegroom learn what kisses be !
In what veil'd hymn
Or mystic dance
Would he that were thy Priest advance
Thine earthly praise, thy glory limn?
Say, should the feet that feel thy thought
In double-center'd circuit run ;
In that compulsive focus, Nought,
In this a furnace like the sun ?
And might some note of thy renown
And high behest
Thus in enigma be express'd :
" There lies the crown
Which all thy longing cures.
Refuse it, Mortal, that it may be yours !

It is a Spirit, though it seems red gold ;
And such may no man, but by shunning, hold.
Refuse it, though refusing be despair ;
And thou shalt feel the phantom in thy hair."

LOVE THINKING.

WHAT lifts her in my thought so far
Beyond all else? Let Love not err!
'Tis that which all right women are,
But which I'll know in none but her.
She is to me the only Ark
Of that high mystery which locks
The lips of joy, or speaks in dark
Enigmas and in paradox;
That potent charm, which none can fly,
Nor would, which makes me bond and free,
Nor can I tell if first 'twas I
Chose it, or it elected me;
Which, when I look intentest, lo,
Cheats most mine eyes, albeit my heart,
Content to feel and not to know,
Perceives it all in every part;
I kiss its cheek; its life divine
Exhales from its resplendent shroud;
Ixion's fate reversed is mine,
Authentic Juno seems a cloud;

I feel a blessed warmth, I see
A bright circumference of rays,
But darkness, where the sun should be,
Fills admiration with amaze ;
And when, for joy's relief, I think
To fathom with the line of thought
The well from which I, blissful, drink,
The spring's so deep I come to nought.

TO THE BODY.

CREATION'S and Creator's crowning good ;
Wall of infinitude ;
Foundation of the sky ;
In Heaven forecast
And long'd for from eternity,
Though laid the last ;
Reverberating dome,
Of music cunningly built home
Against the void and indolent disgrace
Of unresponsive space ;
Little, sequester'd pleasure-house
For God and for His Spouse ;
Elaborately, yea, past conceiving, fair,
Since, from the graced decorum of the hair,
Ev'n to the tingling, sweet
Soles of the simple, earth-confiding feet,
And from the inmost heart
Outwards unto the thin
Silk curtains of the skin,
Every least part
Astonish'd hears
And sweet replies to some like region of the spheres ;

Form'd for a dignity prophets but darkly name,
Lest shameless men cry "Shame!"
So rich with wealth conceal'd
That Heaven and Hell fight chiefly for this
 field ;
Clinging to everything that pleases thee
With indefectible fidelity ;
Alas, so true
To all thy friendships that no grace
Thee from thy sin can wholly disembrace ;
Which thus 'bides with thee as the Jebusite,
That, maugre all God's promises could do,
The chosen People never conquer'd quite ;
Who therefore lived with them,
And that by formal truce and as of right,
In metropolitan Jerusalem.
For which false fealty
Thou needs must, for a season, lie
In the grave's arms, foul and unshriven,
Albeit, in Heaven,
Thy crimson-throbbing Glow
Into its old abode aye pants to go,
And does with envy see
Enoch, Elijah, and the Lady, she
Who left the lilies in her body's lieu.
O, if the pleasures I have known in thee
But my poor faith's poor first-fruits be,
What quintessential, keen, ethereal bliss

Then shall be his
Who has thy birth-time's consecrating dew
For death's sweet chrism retain'd,
Quick, tender, virginal, and unprofaned !

THE OBSCURE HOPE.

C OUSIN, my thoughts no longer try
To cast the fashion of the sky.
Imagination can extend
Scarcely in part to comprehend
The sweetness of our common food
Ambrosial, which ingratitude
And impious inadvertence waste,
Studious to eat but not to taste.
And who can tell what's yet in store
There, but that earthly things have more
Of all that makes their inmost bliss,
And life's an image still of this,
But haply such a glorious one
As is the rainbow of the sun?
Sweet are your words, but, after all
Their mere reversal may befall
The partners of His glories who
Daily is crucified anew :
Splendid privations, martyrdoms
To which no weak remission comes ;
Perpetual passion for the good
Of them that feel no gratitude ;

Far circlings, as of planets' fires,
Round never-to-be-reach'd desires ;
Whatever rapturously sighs
That life is love, love sacrifice.
All I am sure of heaven is this :
Howe'er the mode, I shall not miss
One true delight which I have known.
Not on the changeful earth alone
Shall loyalty remain unmoved
T'wards everything I ever loved.
So Heaven's voice calls, like Rachel's voice
To Jacob in the field, " Rejoice !
Serve on some seven more sordid years,
Too short for weariness or tears ;
Serve on ; then, O Beloved, well-tried,
Take me for ever as thy Bride ! "

DELICIÆ SAPIENTIÆ DE AMORE.

L OVE, light for me
 Thy ruddiest blazing torch,
 That I, albeit a beggar by the Porch
 Of the glad Palace of Virginity,
 May gaze within, and sing the pomp I see ;
 For, crown'd with roses all,
 'Tis there, O Love, they keep thy festival !
 But first warn off the beatific spot
 Those wretched who have not
 Even afar beheld the shining wall,
 And those who, once beholding, have forgot,
 And those, most vile, who dress
 The charnel spectre drear
 Of utterly dishallow'd nothingness
 In that refulgent fame,
 And cry, Lo, here !
 And name
 The Lady whose smiles inflame
 The sphere.
 Bring, Love, anear,
 And bid be not afraid
 Young Lover true, and love-foreboding Maid,

And wedded Spouse, if virginal of thought ;
 For I will sing of nought
 Less sweet to hear
 Than seems

A music in their half-remember'd dreams.

The magnet calls the steel :
 Answers the iron to the magnet's breath ;
 What do they feel
 But death !

The clouds of summer kiss in flame and rain,
 And are not found again ;

But the heavens themselves eternal are with fire
 Of unapproach'd desire,
 By the aching heart of Love, which cannot rest,
 In blissfullest pathos so indeed possess'd.

O spousals high ;

O doctrine blest,

Unutterable in even the happiest sigh ;

This know ye all

Who can recall

With what a welling of indignant tears

Love's simpleness first hears

The meaning of his mortal covenant,

And from what pride comes down

To wear the crown

Of which 'twas very heaven to feel the want.

How envies he the ways

Of yonder hopeless star,

And so would laugh and yearn
With trembling lids eterne,
Ineffably content from infinitely far
Only to gaze
On his bright Mistress's responding rays,
That never know eclipse ;
And, once in his long year,
With præternuptial ecstasy and fear,
By the delicious law of that ellipse
Wherein all citizens of ether move,
With hastening pace to come
Nearer, though never near,
His Love
And always inaccessible sweet Home ;
There on his path doubly to burn,
Kiss'd by her doubled light
That whispers of its source,
The ardent secret ever clothed with Night,
Then go forth in new force
Towards a new return,
Rejoicing as a Bridegroom on his course !
This know ye all ;
Therefore gaze bold,
That so in you be joyful hope increas'd,
Thorough the Palace portals, and behold
The dainty and unsating Marriage-Feast.
O, hear
Them singing clear

"Cor meum et caro mea" round the "I am,"
 The Husband of the Heavens, and the Lamb
 Whom they for ever follow there that kept,
 Or, losing, never slept
 Till they reconquer'd had in mortal fight
 The standard white.
 O, hear
 From the harps they bore from Earth, five-strung,
 what music springs,
 While the glad Spirits chide
 The wondering strings !
 And how the shining sacrificial Choirs,
 Offering for aye their dearest hearts' desires,
 Which to their hearts come back beatified,
 Hymn, the bright aisles along,
 The nuptial song,
 Song ever new to us and them, that saith,
 "Hail Virgin in Virginitie a Spouse !"
 Heard first below
 Within the little house
 At Nazareth ;
 Heard yet in many a cell where Brides of Christ
 Lie hid, emparadised,
 And where, although
 By the hour 'tis night,
 There's light,
 The Day still lingering in the lap of snow.
 Gaze and be not afraid

Ye wedded few that honour, in sweet thought
And glittering will,
So freshly from the garden gather still
The lily sacrificed ;
For ye, though self-suspected here for nought,
Are highly styled
With the thousands twelve times twelve of undefiled.
Gaze and be not afraid
Young Lover true and love-foreboding Maid.
The full noon of deific vision bright
Abashes nor abates
No spark minute of Nature's keen delight.
'Tis there your Hymen waits !
There where in courts afar all unconfused they
 crowd,
As fumes the starlight soft
In gulfs of cloud,
And each to the other, well-content,
Sighs oft,
" 'Twas this we meant !"
Gaze without blame
Ye in whom living Love yet blushes for dead shame.
There of pure Virgins none
Is fairer seen,
Save One,
Than Mary Magdalene.
Gaze without doubt or fear
Ye to whom generous Love, by any name, is dear.

Love makes the life to be
A fount perpetual of virginity ;
For, lo, the Elect
Of generous Love, how named soe'er, affect
Nothing but God,
Or mediate or direct,
Nothing but God,
The Husband of the Heavens :
And who Him love, in potence great or small,
Are, one and all,
Heirs of the Palace glad
And inly clad
With the bridal robes of ardour virginal.

LOVE'S REALITY.

I WALK, I trust, with open eyes ;
I've travell'd half my worldly course ;
And in the way behind me lies
 Much vanity and some remorse ;
I've lived to feel how pride may part
 Spirits, tho' match'd like hand and glove ;
I've blush'd for love's abode, the heart ;
 But have not disbelieved in love ;
Nor unto love, sole mortal thing
 Of worth immortal, done the wrong
To count it, with the rest that sing,
 Unworthy of a serious song ;
And love is my reward ; for now,
 When most of dead'ning time complain,
The myrtle blooms upon my brow,
 Its odour quickens all my brain.

A WEDDING SERMON.

I.

THE truths of Love are like the sea
For clearness and for mystery.
Of that sweet love which, startling, wakes
Maiden and Youth, and mostly breaks
The word of promise to the ear,
But keeps it, after many a year,
To the full spirit, how shall I speak?
My memory with age is weak,
And I for hopes do oft suspect
The things I seem to recollect.
Yet who but must remember well
'Twas this made heaven intelligible
As motive, though 'twas small the power
The heart might have, for even an hour,
To hold possession of the height
Of nameless pathos and delight !

2.

In Godhead rise, thither flow back
All loves, which, as they keep or lack,
In their return, the course assign'd,
Are virtue or sin. Love's every kind,

Lofty or low, of spirit or sense,
Desire is, or Benevolence.
He who is fairer, better, higher
Than all His works, claims all desire,
And in His Poor, His Proxies, asks
Our whole benevolence : He tasks,
Howbeit, His People by their powers ;
And if, my Children, you, for hours
Daily, untortur'd in the heart,
Can worship, and time's other part
Give, without rough recoils of sense,
To the claims ingrate of indigence,
Happy are you, and fit to be
Wrought to rare heights of sanctity,
For the humble to grow humbler at.
But if the flying spirit falls flat,
After the modest spell of prayer
That saves the day from sin and care,
And the upward eye a void descries,
And praises are hypocrisies,
And, in the soul, o'erstrain'd for grace,
A godless anguish grows apace ;
Or, if impartial charity
Seems, in the act, a sordid lie,
Do not infer you cannot please
God, or that He His promises
Postpones, but be content to love
No more than He accounts enough.

Every ambition bears a curse,
And none, if height metes error, worse
Than his who sets his hope on more
Godliness than God made him for.
Account them poor enough who want
Any good thing which you can grant ;
And fathom well the depths of life
In loves of Husband and of Wife,
Child, Mother, Father ; simple keys
To what cold faith calls mysteries.

3.

The love of marriage claims, above
All other kinds, the name of love,
As perfectest, though not so high
As love which Heaven with single eye
Considers. Equal and entire,
Therein Benevolence, Desire,
Elsewhere ill-join'd or found apart,
Become the pulses of one heart,
Which now contracts, and now dilates,
And, both to the height exalting, mates
Self-seeking to self-sacrifice.
Nay, in its subtle paradise
(When purest) this one love unites
All modes of these two opposites,
All balanced in accord so rich
Who may determine which is which ?

Chiefly God's Love does in it live,
 And nowhere else so sensitive ;
 For each is all that the other's eye,
 In the vague vast of Deity,
 Can comprehend and so contain
 As still to touch and ne'er to strain
 The fragile nerves of joy. And then
 'Tis such a wise goodwill to men
 And politic economy
 As in a prosperous State we see,
 Where every plot of common land
 Is yielded to some private hand
 To fence about and cultivate.
 Does narrowness its praise abate?
 Nay, the infinite of man is found
 But in the beating of its bound,
 And, if a brook its banks o'erpass,
 'Tis not a sea, but a morass.

4.

No giddiest hope, no wildest guess
 Of Love's most innocent loftiness
 Had dared to dream of its own worth,
 Till Heaven's bold sun-gleam lit the earth.
 Christ's marriage with the Church is more,
 My Children, than a metaphor.
 The heaven of heavens is symbol'd where
 The torch of Psyche flash'd despair.

But here I speak of heights, and heights
Are hardly scaled. The best delights
Of even this homeliest passion, are
In the most perfect souls so rare,
That they who feel them are as men
Sailing the Southern ocean, when,
At midnight, they look up, and eye
The starry Cross, and a strange sky
Of brighter stars ; and sad thoughts come
To each how far he is from home.

5.

Love's inmost nuptial sweetness see
In the doctrine of virginity !
Could lovers, at their dear wish, blend,
'Twould kill the bliss which they intend ;
For joy is love's obedience
Against the law of natural sense ;
And those perpetual yearnings sweet
Of lives which dream that they can meet
Are given that lovers never may
Be without sacrifice to lay
On the high altar of true love,
With tears of vestal joy. To move
Frantic, like comets to our bliss,
Forgetting that we always miss,
And so to seek and fly the sun,
By turns, around which love should run,

Perverts the ineffable delight
Of service guerdon'd with full sight
And pathos of a hopeless want,
To an unreal victory's vaunt,
And plaint of an unreal defeat.
Yet no less dangerous misconceit
May also be of the virgin will,
Whose goal is nuptial blessing still,
And whose true being doth subsist,
There where outward forms are miss'd,
In those who learn and keep the sense
Divine of "due benevolence,"
Seeking for aye, without alloy
Of selfish thought, another's joy,
And finding in degrees unknown,
That which in act they shunn'd, their own.
For all delights of earthly love
Are shadows of the heavens, and move
As other shadows do : they flee
From him that follows them ; and he
Who flies, for ever finds his feet
Embraced by their pursuings sweet.

6.

Then, even in love humane, do I
Not counsel aspirations high,
So much as sweet and regular
Use of the good in which we are.

As when a man along the ways
Walks, and a sudden music plays,
His step unchanged, he steps in time,
So let your Grace with Nature chime.
Her primal forces burst, like straws,
The bonds of uncongenial laws.
Right life is glad as well as just,
And, rooted strong in "This I must,"
It bears aloft the blossom gay
And zephyr-toss'd, of "This I may ;"
Whereby the complex heavens rejoice
In fruits of uncommanded choice.
Be this your rule : seeking delight,
Esteem success the test of right ;
For 'gainst God's will much may be done,
But nought enjoy'd, and pleasures none
Exist, but, like to springs of steel
Active no longer than they feel
The checks that make them serve the soul,
They take their vigour from control.
A man need only keep but well
The Church's indispensable
First precepts, and she then allows,
Nay, more, she bids him leave, for his spouse,
Even his heavenly Father's awe,
At times, and his immaculate law,
Construed in its extremer sense.
Jehovah's mild magnipotence

Smiles to behold His children play
In their own free and childish way,
And can His fullest praise descry
In the exuberant liberty
Of those who, having understood
The glory of the Central Good,
And how souls ne'er may match or merge,
But as they thitherward converge,
Take, in love's innocent gladness, part,
With infantine, untroubled heart,
And faith that, straight t'wards heaven's far Spring
Sleeps, like the swallow, on the wing.

7.

Lovers, once married, deem their bond
Then perfect, scanning nought beyond
For love to do but to sustain
The spousal hour's delighted gain.
But time and a right life alone
Fulfil the promise then foreshown.
The Bridegroom and the Bride withal
Are but unwrought material
Of marriage ; nay, so far is love,
Thus crown'd, for being thereto enough,
Without the long, compulsive awe
Of duty, that the bond of law
Does oftener marriage-love evoke,
Than love, which does not wear the yoke

Of legal vows, submits to be
Self-rein'd from ruinous liberty.
Lovely is love ; but age well knows
'Twas law which kept the lover's vows
Inviolate through the year or years
Of worship pieced with panic fears,
When she who lay within his breast
Seem'd of all women perhaps the best,
But not the whole, of womankind,
Or love, in his yet wayward mind,
Had ghastly doubts its precious life
Was pledged for aye to the wrong wife.

Could it be else? A youth pursues
A maid, whom chance, not he, did choose,
Till to his strange arms hurries she
In a despair of modesty.
Then simply and without pretence
Of insight or experience,
They plight their vows. The parents say,
" We cannot speak them yea or nay ;
The thing proceedeth from the Lord !"
And wisdom still approves their word ;
For God created so these two
They match as well as others do
That take more pains, and trust Him less
Who never fails, if ask'd, to bless
His children's helpless ignorance
And blind election of life's chance.

Verily, choice not matters much,
 If but the woman's truly such,
 And the young man has led the life
 Without which how shall e'er the wife
 Be the one woman in the world?
 Love's sensitive tendrils sicken, curl'd
 Round folly's former stay ; for 'tis
 The doom of all unsanction'd bliss
 To mock some good that, gain'd, keeps still
 The taint of the rejected ill.

8.

Howbeit, though both were perfect, she
 Of whom the maid was prophecy
 As yet lives not, and Love rebels
 Against the law of any else ;
 And, as a steed takes blind alarm,
 Disowns the rein, and hunts his harm,
 So, misdespairing word and act
 May now perturb the happiest pact.

The more, indeed, is love, the more
 Peril to love is now in store.
 Against it nothing can be done
 But only this : leave ill alone !
 Who tries to mend his wife succeeds
 As he who knows not what he needs.
 He much affronts a worth as high
 As his, and that equality

Of spirits in which abide the grace
 And joy of her subjected place ;
 And does the still growth check and blur
 Of contraries, confusing her
 Who better knows what he desires
 Than he, and to that mark aspires
 With perfect zeal, and a deep wit
 Which nothing helps but trusting it.

So, loyally o'erlooking all
 In which love's promise short may fall
 Of full performance, honour that
 As won, which aye love worketh at !
 It is but as the pedigree
 Of perfectness which is to be
 That our best good can honour claim ;
 Yet honour to deny were shame
 And robbery ; for it is the mould
 Wherein to beauty runs the gold
 Of good intention, and the prop
 That lifts to the sun the earth-drawn crop
 Of human sensibilities.

Such honour, with a conduct wise
 In common things, as, not to steep
 The lofty mind of love in sleep
 Of over much familiarness ;
 Not to degrade its kind caress,
 As those do that can feel no more,
 So give themselves to pleasures o'er ;

Not to let morning-sloth destroy
The evening-flower, domestic joy ;
Not by uxoriousness to chill
The warm devotion of her will
Who can but half her love confer
On him that cares for nought but her ;—
These, and like obvious prudencies
Observed, he's safest that relies,
For the hope she will not always seem,
Caught, but a laurel or a stream,
On time ; on her unsearchable
Love-wisdom ; on their work done well,
Discreet with mutual aid ; on might
Of shared affliction and delight ;
On pleasures that so childish be
They're 'shamed to let the children see,
By which life keeps the valleys low
Where love does naturally grow ;
On much whereof hearts have account,
Though heads forget ; on babes, chief fount
Of union, and for which babes are
No less than this for them, nay far
More, for the bond of man and wife
To the very verge of future life
Strengthens, and yearns for brighter day,
While others, with their use, decay ;
And, though true marriage purpose keeps
Of offspring, as the centre sleeps

Within the wheel, transmitting thence
 Fury to the circumference,
 Love's self the noblest offspring is,
 And sanction of the nuptial kiss ;
 Lastly, on either's primal curse,
 Which help and sympathy reverse
 To blessings.

9.

God, who may be well
 Jealous of His chief miracle,
 Bids sleep the meddling soul of man,
 Through the long process of this plan,
 Whereby, from his unweeting side,
 The Wife's created, and the Bride,
 That chance one of her strange, sweet

sex

He to his glad life did annex,
 Grows more and more, by day and night,
 The one in the whole world opposite
 Of him, and in her nature all
 So suited and reciprocal
 To his especial form of sense,
 Affection, and intelligence,
 That, whereas love at first had strange
 Relapses into lust of change,
 It now finds (wondrous this, but true !)
 The long-accustom'd only new,

And the untried common ; and, whereas
 An equal seeming danger was
 Of likeness lacking joy and force,
 Or difference reaching to divorce,
 Now can the finish'd lover see
 Marvel of me most far from me,
 Whom without pride he may admire,
 Without Narcissus' doom desire,
 Serve without selfishness, and love
 "Even as himself," in sense above
 Niggard "as much," yea, as she is
 The only part of him that's his.

10.

I do not say love's youth returns ;
 That joy which so divinely yearns !
 But just esteem of present good
 Shows all regret such gratitude
 As if the sparrow in her nest,
 Her woolly young beneath her breast,
 Should these despise, and sorrow for
 Her five blue eggs that are no more.
 Nor say I the fruit has quite the scope
 Of the flower's spiritual hope.
 Love's best is service, and of this,
 Howe'er devout, use dulls the bliss.
 Though love is all of earth that's dear,
 Its home, my Children, is not here :

The pathos of eternity
Does in its fullest pleasure sigh.
Be grateful and most glad thereof.
Parting, as 'tis, is pain enough.
If love, by joy, has learn'd to give
Praise with the nature sensitive,
At last, to God, we then possess
The end of mortal happiness,
And henceforth very well may wait
The unbarring of the golden gate,
Wherethrough, already, faith can see
That apter to each wish than we
Is God, and curious to bless
Better than we devise or guess ;
Not without condescending craft
To disappoint with bliss, and waft
Our vessels frail, when worst He mocks
The heart with breakers and with rocks,
To happiest havens. You have heard
Your bond death-sentenced by His Word.
What, if, in heaven, the name be o'er,
Because the thing is so much more?
All are, 'tis writ, as angels there,
Nor male nor female. Each a stair
In the hierarchical ascent
Of active and recipient
Affections, what if all are both
By turn, as they themselves betroth

To adoring what is next above,
Or serving what's below their love?

Of this we are certified, that we
Are shaped here for eternity,
So that a careless word will make
Its dint upon the form we take
For ever. If, then, years have wrought
Two strangers to become, in thought,
Will, and affection, but one man
For likeness, as none others can,
Without like process, shall this tree
The king of all the forest, be,
Alas, the only one of all
That shall not lie where it doth fall?
Shall this unflagging flame, here nursed
By everything, yea, when reversed,
Blazing, in fury, brighter, wink,
Flicker, and into darkness shrink,
When all else glows, baleful or brave,
In the keen air beyond the grave?

Beware ; for fiends in triumph laugh
O'er him who learns the truth by half !
Beware ; for God will not endure
For men to make their hope more pure
Than His good promise, or require
Another than the five-string'd lyre
Which He has vow'd again to the hands
Devout of him who understands

To tune it justly here ! Beware
The Powers of Darkness and the Air,
Which lure to empty heights man's hope,
Bepraising heaven's ethereal cope,
But covering with their cloudy cant
Its ground of solid adamant,
That strengthens ether for the flight
Of angels, makes and measures height,
And in materiality
Exceeds our Earth's in such degree
As all else Earth exceeds ! Do I
Here utter aught too dark or high ?
Have you not seen a bird's beak slay
Proud Psyche, on a summer's day ?
Down fluttering drop the frail wings four,
Missing the weight which made them soar.
Spirit is heavy Nature's wing,
And is not rightly anything
Without its burthen, whereas this,
Wingless, at least a maggot is,
And, wing'd, is honour and delight
Increasing endlessly with height.

II.

If unto any here that chance
Fell not, which makes a month's romance,
Remember, few wed whom they would.
And this, like all God's laws, is good ;

For nought's so sad, the whole world o'er,
As much love which has once been more.
Glorious for light is the earliest love ;
But worldly things, in the rays thereof,
Extend their shadows every one
False as the image which the sun
At noon or eve dwarfs or protracts.
A perilous lamp to light men's acts !
By Heaven's kind, impartial plan,
Well-wived is he that's truly man
If but the woman's womanly,
As such a man's is sure to be.
Joy of all eyes and pride of life
Perhaps she is not ; the likelier wife !
If it be thus ; if you have known
(As who has not ?) some heavenly one,
Whom the dull background of despair
Help'd to show forth supremely fair ;
If memory, still remorseful, shapes
Young Passion bringing Eshcol grapes
To travellers in the Wilderness,
This truth will make regret the less :
Mighty in love as graces are,
God's ordinance is mightier far ;
And he who is but just and kind
And patient, shall for guerdon find,
Before long, that the body's bond
Is all else utterly beyond

In power of love to actualise
The soul's bond which it signifies,
And even to deck a wife with grace
External in the form and face.
A five years' wife, and not yet fair !
Blame let the man, not Nature, bear !
For, as the sun, warming a bank
Where last year's grass droops grey and dank,
Evokes the violet, bids disclose
In yellow crowds the fresh primrose,
And foxglove hang her flushing head,
So vernal love, where all seems dead,
Makes beauty abound.

Then was that nought,
That trance of joy beyond all thought,
The vision, in one, of womanhood ?
Nay, for all women holding good,
Should marriage such a prologue want,
'Twere sordid and most ignorant
Profanity ; but, having this,
'Tis honour now, and future bliss ;
For where is he that, knowing the height
And depth of ascertain'd delight,
Inhumanly henceforward lies
Content with mediocrities !

THE NURSLING OF CIVILITY.

L O, how the woman once was woo'd ;
Forth leapt the savage from his lair
And fell'd her, and to nuptials rude
He dragg'd her, bleeding, by the hair.
From that to Chloe's dainty wiles
And Portia's dignified consent,
What distance ! But these pagan styles
How far below Time's far intent !
Siegfried sued Kriemhild. Sweeter life
Could Love's self covet? Yet 'tis sung
In what rough sort he chid his wife
For want of curb upon her tongue !
Shall Love, where last I leave him, halt ?
Nay ; none can fancy or foresee
To how strange bliss may time exalt
This nursling of civility.

SPONSA DEI.

WHAT is this Maiden fair
The laughing of whose eye
Is in man's heart renew'd virginity ;
Who yet sick longing breeds
For marriage which exceeds
The inventive guess of Love to satisfy
With hope of utter binding and of loosing endless
dear despair ?
What gleams about her shine,
More transient than delight and more divine !
If she does something but a little sweet,
As gaze towards the glass to set her hair,
See how his soul falls humbled at her feet !
Her gentle step, to go or come,
Gains her more merit than a martyrdom ;
And, if she dance, it doth such grace confer
As opes the heaven of heavens to more than her,
And makes a rival of her worshipper.
To die unknown for her were little cost !
So is she without guile,
Her mere refused smile
Makes up the sum of that which may be lost !

Who is this Fair
Whom each hath seen,
The darkest once in this bewailed dell.
Be he not destined for the glooms of hell?
Whom each hath seen
And known, with sharp remorse and sweet, as Queen
And tear-glad Mistress of his hopes of bliss,
Too fair for man to kiss ?
Who is this only happy She,
Whom, by a frantic flight of courtesy
Born of despair
Of better lodging for his Spirit fair,
He adores as Margaret, Maude, or Cecily ?
And what this sigh,
That each one heaves for earth's last lowlihead
And the Heaven high
Ineffably lock'd in dateless bridal-bed?
Are all, then, mad, or is it prophecy?
" Sons now we are of God," as we have heard,
" But what we shall be hath not yet appear'd."
O Heart, remember thee
That man is none,
Save One.
What if this Lady be thy soul, and He
Who claims to enjoy her sacred beauty be,
Not thou, but God ; and thy sick fire
A female vanity,
Such as a bride, viewing her mirror'd charms,

Feels whens he sighs, " All these are for his arms !"
A reflex heat
Flash'd on thy cheek from His immense desire
Which waits to crown, beyond thy brain's conceit,
Thy nameless, secret, hopeless longing sweet,
Not by-and-by, but now,
Unless deny Him thou !

AUREA DICTA.

I.

BECOME whatever good you see,
Nor sigh if, forthwith, fades from view
The grace of which you may not be
The subject and spectator too.

II.

You love? That's high as you shall go ;
For 'tis as true as Gospel text,
Not noble then is never so,
Either in this world or the next.

III.

Love, kiss'd by Wisdom, wakes twice Love,
And Wisdom is, thro' loving, wise.
Let Dove and Snake, and Snake and Dove,
This Wisdom's be, that Love's device.

IV.

'Tis truth (although this truth's a star
Too deep-enski'd for all to see),
As poets of grammar, lovers are
The fountains of morality.

V.

Kind souls, you wonder why, love you,
When you, you wonder why, love none.
We love, Fool, for the good we do,
Not that which unto us is done !

VI.

Endow the Fool with sun and moon,
Being his, he holds them mean and low,
But to the wise a little boon
Is great, because the giver's so.

VII.

To tryst Love blindfold goes, for fear
He should not see, and eyeless night
He chooses still for breathing near
Beauty, that lives but in the sight.

VIII.

“ I saw you take his kiss !” “ 'Tis true.”
“ O modesty !” “ 'Twas strictly kept :
He thought me asleep ; at least, I knew
He thought I thought he thought I slept.”

IX.

“ I'll hunt for dangers North and South,
To prove my love, which sloth maligns !”
What seems to say her rosy mouth ?
“ I'm not convinced by proofs but signs.”

X.

I vow'd unvarying faith, and she,
To whom in full I pay that vow,
Rewards me with variety
Which men who change can never know.

XI.

Did first his beauty wake her sighs ?
That's Lais ! Thus Lucretia's known :
The beauty in her Lover's eyes
Was admiration of her own.

XII.

The lack of lovely pride, in her
Who strives to please, my pleasure numbs,
And still the Maid I most prefer
Whose care to please with pleasing comes.

XIII.

Who pleasure follows pleasure slays ;
God's wrath upon himself he wreaks ;
But all delights rejoice his days
Who takes with thanks, and never seeks.

XIV.

The wrong is made and measured by
The right's inverted dignity.
Change love to shame, as love is high
So low in hell your bed shall be.

ARBOR VITÆ.

WITH honeysuckle, over-sweet, festoon'd ;
 With bitter ivy bound ;
 Terraced with funguses unsound ;
 Deform'd with many a boss
 And closed scar, o'ercushion'd deep with moss
 Bunch'd all about with pagan mistletoe ;
 And thick with nests of the hoarse bird
 That talks, but understands not his own word ;
 Stands, and so stood a thousand years ago,
 A single tree.
 Thunder has done its worst among its twigs,
 Where the great crest yet blackens, never pruned,
 But in its heart, always
 Ready to push new verdurous boughs whene'er
 The rotten saplings near it fall and leave it air,
 Is all antiquity and no decay.
 Rich, though rejected by the forest-pigs,
 Its fruit, beneath whose rough, concealing rind
 They that will break it find
 Heart-succouring savour of each several meat,
 And kernell'd drink of brain-renewing power,
 With bitter condiment and sour,

And sweet economy of sweet,
And odours that remind
Of haunts of childhood and a different day.
Beside this tree,
Praising no Gods nor blaming, sans a wish
Sits, Tartar-like, the Time's civility,
And eats its dead-dog off a golden dish.

LADY CLITHEROE TO EMILY
GRAHAM.

MY dearest Niece, I'm charm'd to hear
 The scenery's fine at Windermere,
 And glad a six-weeks' wife defers
 In the least to wisdom not yet hers.
 But, Child, I've no advice to give !
 Rules only make it hard to live.
 And where's the good of having been
 Well taught from seven to seventeen,
 If, married, you may not leave off,
 And say, at last, ' I'm good enough !'
 Weeding out folly, still leave some.
 It gives both lightness and aplomb.
 We know, however wise by rule,
 Woman is still by nature fool ;
 And men have sense to like her all
 The more when she is natural.
 'Tis true that, if we choose, we can
 Mock to a miracle the man ;
 But iron in the fire red hot,
 Though 'tis the heat, the fire 'tis not :
 And who, for such a feint, would pledge
 The babe's and woman's privilege,
 No duties and a thousand rights ?
 Besides, defect love's flow incites,

As water in a well will run
Only the while 'tis drawn upon.
 'Point de culte sans mystère,' you say,
 'And what if that should die away?'
Child, never fear that either could
Pull from Saint Cupid's face the hood.
The follies natural to each
Surpass the other's moral reach.
Just think how men, with sword and gun,
Will really fight, and never run ;
And all in sport ; for they'd have died,
For sixpence more, on the other side !
A woman's heart must ever warm
At such odd ways ; and, so, we charm
By strangeness which, the more they mark,
The more men get into the dark.
The marvel, by familiar life,
Grows, and attaches to the wife
By whom it grows. Thus, silly Girl,
To John you'll always be the pearl
In the oyster of the universe ;
And, though in time he'll treat you worse,
He'll love you more, you need not doubt,
And never, never find you out !

My dear, I know that dreadful thought
That you've been kinder than you ought.
It almost makes you hate him ! Yet
'Tis wonderful how men forget,

And how a merciful Providence
 Deprives our husbands of all sense
 Of kindness past, and makes them deem
 We always were what now we seem.
 For their own good we must, you know,
 However plain the way we go,
 Still make it strange with stratagem ;
 And instinct tells us that, to them,
 'Tis always right to bate their price.
 Yet I must say they're rather nice,
 And, oh, so easily taken in
 To cheat them almost seems a sin !
 And, dearest, 'twould be most unfair
 To John your feelings to compare
 With his, or any man's ; for she
 Who loves at all loves always ; he,
 Who loves far more, loves yet by fits,
 And, when the wayward wind remits
 To blow, his feelings faint and drop,
 Like forge-flames when the bellows stop.
 Such things don't trouble you at all,
 When once you know they are natural.

My love to John ; and, pray, my dear,
 Don't let me see you for a year ;
 Unless, indeed, ere then you've learn'd
 That Beauties wed are blossoms turn'd
 To unripe codlings, meant to dwell
 In modest shadow hidden well,

Till this green stage again permute
To glow of flowers with good of fruit.
I will not have my patience tried
By your absurd new-married pride,
That scorns the world's slow-gather'd sense,
Ties up the hands of Providence,
Rules babes, before there's hope of one,
Better than mothers e'er have done,
And for your poor particular,
Neglects delights and graces far
Beyond your crude and thin conceit.
Age has romance almost as sweet,
And much more generous than this
Of yours and John's. With all the bliss
Of the evenings when you coo'd with him,
And upset home for your sole whim,
You might have envied, were you wise,
The tears within your mother's eyes,
Which, I dare say, you did not see.
But let that pass! Yours yet will be,
I hope, as happy, kind, and true
As lives which now seem void to you.
Have you not seen shop-painters paste
Their gold in sheets, then rub to waste
Full half, and, lo, you read the name?
Well, Time, my dear, does much the same
With this unmeaning glare of love.

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