





ALICE CARY



POEMS OF ALICE
AND PHOEBE CARY



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117
THE POEMS

OF

ALICE AND PHOEBE CARY
11

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

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PROFESSOR IN WELLESLEY COLLEGE



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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS volume is made up of material contained in the following original issues:—

POEMS OF ALICE AND PHŒBE CAREY. Moss and Brother, Philadelphia. 1850. 12mo.

LYRA AND OTHER POEMS. By Alice Carey. Redfield, Clinton Hall, New York. 1852. 12mo.

POEMS AND PARODIES. By Phœbe Carey. Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields. 1854. 12mo.

POEMS. By Alice Cary. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1855. 12mo.

It will be noticed that the name of the authors was spelled "Carey" in the first three of these volumes, but with the fourth, as in subsequent issues, the "e" was omitted.

The earliest of these books had on its title-page the motto—

"in their delicious clime
Mocking the birds with more melodious songs,"

and carried the following "Advertisement":—

"The publishers but comply with the general desire in issuing this first edition of the collected writings of the 'two sisters of the West,' ALICE and PHŒBE CAREY, whose occasional contributions to the literary journals have within a few years secured for them a rank among the most popular writers of their sex in this country. It is believed that these leaves, gathered into a volume,

will more than confirm the favorable judgments awarded to them upon their original and separate appearance."

This paragraph, dated Philadelphia, October, 1849, was followed by a "Notice of the Authors," taken from Griswold's *Female Poets of America*.

The poems contributed by Alice Cary to this first volume are ninety-one in number. *Lyra* included seventy-two poems, of which the author retained all but fourteen in her collection of 1855. To these she added a Mexican romance in blank verse, amounting to some two thousand lines, and sixty-five new short poems, with twenty-four reprints from the volume of 1850. Alice Cary's poems are placed here in the original order of the volumes of 1850 and 1855. The few poems from *Lyra* which were not included in the volume of 1855 are grouped directly before *The Maiden of Tlascala*.

Phoebe Cary contributed to the initial volume forty-five poems. Nine of these she reprinted, four years later, in *Poems and Parodies*, bringing the full count for the volume up to seventy-three. Her poems are given here in the original order. In cases where the sisters used the same poems in successive volumes, this collection holds to the order of their first appearance, although the revised form, as foot-notes point out, is often adopted.

These original texts have been scrupulously reproduced. The punctuation is often at fault and, in other respects, the volumes show signs of careless proof-reading. A copy of the 1850 volume in the Boston Public Library has certain manuscript emendations, which suggest, by their character, an author's corrections. The handwriting is not that of Alice Cary, but shows some resemblance to Phoebe's script, so far as this can be determined from a single signature. These emendations are retained in foot-notes.

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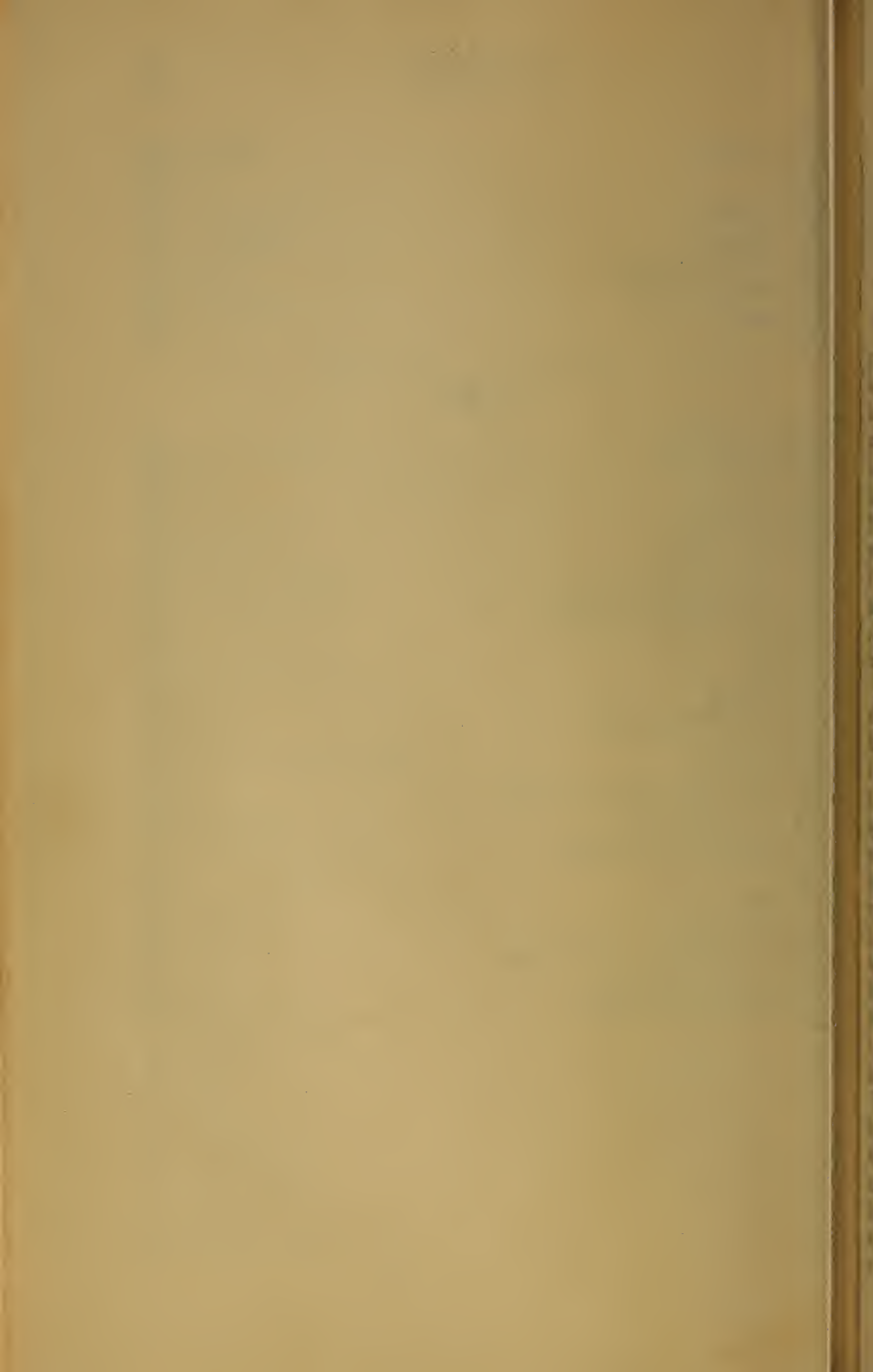
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ALICE AND PHŒBE CARY.

THESE authors fill a place in our literary history out of proportion to their actual achievement. The poetry of the West began in the Ohio valley, in that old brown homestead, with cherry branches brushing the window-panes and a sweetbrier climbing to the eaves, where Alice and Phœbe Cary passed their earlier girlhood. As the pioneer singers of the West, as lyrists praised by Poe and Whittier, as women of letters who lived by their pens and gathered about them the most notable society of New York a generation since, they have peculiar claims upon remembrance and esteem. Better artists of a later date have won less recognition. The story of the Cary sisters has become a part of our literary tradition.

The Cary family claimed descent from Sir Robert Cary, who, in the reign of Henry V, accepted on behalf of English valor the challenge of a haughty knight-errant of Aragon and vanquished the boaster at a public tilt in London. Sir Robert's father had lost, through his loyalty to Richard II, the ancestral estates, but the young king, delighted at this feat, restored a portion of them to the champion, and authorized him and his posterity to wear thenceforth the arms of the humbled knight of Aragon. Alice and Phœbe Cary, especially the latter, were proud of this doughty ancestor. When they had established their New York home, the coat of arms was framed for their library wall, and Phœbe had it engraved on a seal ring which she wore until her death.

The American immigrant was one John Cary, who taught the first Latin class in Plymouth colony. His son Joseph moved to Connecticut, where the family remained for several generations, well-to-do, public-spirited, and pious. There were Yale graduates among them and men of professional eminence. The original settler in Ohio was Christopher Cary, to whom a grant of land

there, in Hamilton County, had been accorded in recompense for his services in the Revolutionary War. It was one hundred years ago, in 1802, that the long journey to the Western wilderness was undertaken. The adventures of emigrant wagon and flatboat were probably more keenly enjoyed by Robert Cary, then a lad of fifteen, than by his father, who knew himself to be facing hardship and danger and, at the best, a life of rugged toil.

The land on which "Uncle Christopher," as the neighborhood came to call the old soldier, finally set up his household gods was on the Hamilton road, about eight miles north of that thriving settlement, protected from the Indians by Fort Washington, which has grown into the city of Cincinnati. Robert Cary, after bearing arms, as was due to his name, in the War of 1812, married and went into debt for a quarter section of his father's land. It took years of laborious farming and frugal housekeeping to make the soil his own, but meanwhile there was plenty of happiness in the little brown homestead which he had built for his bride. In this his nine children were born, soon overflowing, for childish frolic, into the ampler barn, where doves and swallows were as much at home as they. The poems of the Cary sisters abound in fond memories of their childhood in Clovernook, — the orchard trees, in whose tops they had seen their brothers rocking; the mossy-stoned well, with its rude sweep, set up by their father's hand; the broad hearth, where all the family gathered at evening, tranquillized by the mother's voice and smile. Outside were woods and corn-fields, grazing cattle, and "meadows full of songs."

The joyous years were, after all, these years of struggle toward prosperity. It came at last, but brought deep shadows with it. By the autumn of 1832 the great result of eighteen years of unremitting industry and economy was attained. The farm was paid for, and a more spacious house, built of brick and well porticoed, stood ready for occupancy. Triumphantly the family removed to their new roof-tree, — the father and mother careworn and workworn, but with smiles for the merry troop of children that reached from grown daughters to mere toddlers. Alice, born April 26, 1820, came fourth in the list. Of her three elder sisters, Rowena, Susan, and Rhoda, the last was her closest friend and associate.

A brother, Asa, intervened between Alice and Phœbe, whose birthday was Septembér 4, 1824. Phœbe's intimate in the group was the second boy, Warren, two years her junior. The pet of the household was the blue-eyed and golden-haired Lucy, three years old, the only one of the children who resembled their beautiful mother. Elmina was the baby. An unbroken band, the family entered into their new home with bright anticipations of better days. In a little more than a year Rhoda died, and a month later little Lucy. The mother followed, and soon a stepmother of uncongenial temper made the new house unhomelike and enhanced the children's sense of loss and desolation. Alice and Phœbe especially, with their craving for books and their awakening impulse toward song, suffered from the hard, narrow, utilitarian rule of this stranger, to whom housework was the whole duty of woman. Their own mother, after her busiest and weariest days, had been wont to take time from the night for reading, but her successor would let no candles be wasted on such folly, and it was by light of "a saucer of lard with a bit of rag for wick" that Alice and Phœbe made acquaintance with the new English and American poets. Two years before her death Alice Cary, as quoted by Mary Clemmer Ames, thus summarized her girlhood:

"I don't like to think how much we are robbed of in this world by just the conditions of our life. How much better work I should have done, how much more success I might have won, if I had had a better opportunity in my youth. But, for the first fourteen years of my life, it seemed as if there was actually nothing in existence but work. The whole family struggle was just for the right to live free from the curse of debt. My father worked early and late; my mother's work was never done. The mother of nine children, with no other help than that of their little hands, I shall always feel that she was taxed far beyond her strength, and died before her time. I have never felt myself to be the same that I was before Rhoda's death. Rhoda and I pined for beauty; but there was no beauty about our homely house but that which nature gave us. We hungered and thirsted for knowledge; but there were not a dozen books on our family shelf, not a library within our reach. There was little time to study, and had there been more,

there was no chance to learn but in the district school-house, down the road. I never went to any other — not very much to that. It has been a long struggle. Now that I can afford to gather a few beautiful things about me, it is too late.”

The poetic feeling of the Cary sisters seems to have been an inheritance from their father. Their mother’s mind turned rather to the ethical questions of the day, but the dreaming, nature-loving temperament belonged to Robert Cary. The school readers and copy-books of Alice and Phoebe showed, even in childhood, crude attempts at verse. Alice, four years the elder, was naturally the first adventurer. The swiftly successive deaths of those three members of the household who were peculiarly dear to her, occurring as these did in the most sensitive period of her girlhood, stamped her early songs with a monotonous melancholy. This strain of mournful sentiment was unfortunately emphasized by an unhappy love affair. She yielded her whole heart to a man who never came back to claim it. She trusted and waited, until she chanced, in a newspaper, upon the announcement of his marriage. This blow was the final impelling force that drove her out from the rustic seclusion of Clovernook to make a literary career for herself in New York City.

It was in 1850 that Alice Cary made her daring plunge. During the fifteen years that had elapsed since the death of her mother, she had learned to versify so effectively that the journals of her neighboring city, Cincinnati, of the Universalist church, in whose faith she had been bred, and even such eastern magazines as the *Boston Ladies’ Repository* and *Graham’s* of New York printed her work. Phoebe followed her lead, and Griswold represented both the sisters in his “Female Poets of America.” In reviewing this anthology, Poe gave the palm to Alice Cary’s “Pictures of Memory.” “In all the higher elements of poetry,” he wrote, “in true imagination, in the power of exciting the only real poetical effect — elevation of *the soul* in contradistinction from mere excitement of the intellect or heart, — the poem in question is the noblest in the book.”

Meanwhile private words of appreciation and encouragement were seeking the Ohio singers out. Whittier

wrote to them. Horace Greeley, then editor of the *New York Tribune*, went out from Cincinnati to see them in their home. And, in 1848, Griswold approached them with a plan for securing the publication of a joint volume of their poems. Out of the resultant correspondence have been preserved three letters from Alice Cary :

July 3, 1848.

MR. GRISWOLD: It gives me great pleasure to comply with the request of your very obliging letter by placing at your disposal the poems in your possession. I have also taken the liberty of sending you some other specimens, which, to quote Willis, I prefer to remember as my own. Not that I wish to press for the admission of a larger number, or dictate to your better judgment, but that you may have an ampler field from which to select. Should you elsewhere meet with anything from either of our pens in time to serve you, it will be at your disposal.

With regard to the prefatory notes, I have only to say that we are sisters, and were born in a pretty and secluded district in the vicinity of Cincinnati, where we still live.

Our educational attainments are limited to the meagre and infrequent advantages of an obscure district school, whence we were removed altogether at a very early age. With nothing from which to draw but our own hearts, subjected to the toils and privations of poverty and orphanage, with neither books nor literary friends to encourage our predilections, we have been, and still are, humble worshippers of the glorious Temple of Song.

We write with great facility, often producing two or three poems a day, and never elaborate.

Very respectfully,
ALICE CARY.

P.S.—Permit me to add a word with reference to publishing our poems in a collected form. We have some three hundred and fifty, exclusive of our early productions, which those in your possession, as to length and ability, fairly represent.

I think they would make a readable book, and our circumstances urge their publication if it would be in the least to our pecuniary advantage.

A. C.

Jan. 26, 1849.

MR. GRISWOLD: I can never sufficiently thank you for the kind interest you take in myself and sister. . . .

We think of visiting the Eastern cities next summer, when I hope for the happiness of seeing you — in the meantime, I shall not fail to exert myself to more fully merit the very flattering opinion you are pleased to express of me.

I am very happy to avail myself of your obliging offer to secure for us a more available disposal of our poems. Any arrangements you may find it convenient to make will be gratefully endorsed by us — but I must protest against your giving yourself any trouble on our account.

We have until quite recently written gratuitously, but are now receiving a trifling remuneration for our correspondence — to give you an idea of its amount, I will state that we write alternately for the *National Era* every week for two dollars an article! We have several other engagements on terms a trifle in advance of those stated, and as we are dependent on our poems almost exclusively, it is advisable that we make the best disposal of them.

Be assured that I shall be most happy to number you among my correspondents, and shall gratefully and proudly receive any communication with which you may be pleased to favor me, but business must plead my excuse for so early an intrusion upon your notice. It would certainly be a gratification to me to have our poems, or rather a selection from them, issued by one of our Eastern publishers, and if you can dispose of the copyright so as to ensure you a compensation for editing the work, and will consent to edit it, we shall be content to receive whatever more there may be, or if nothing more, to receive nothing. Should you be able to make such arrangements, we will immediately set about the preparation of the volume. We have selected "Wood-notes" as a title — what do you think of it? Any suggestions you may make with reference to the proposed volume will be gratefully received.

I cannot close without again offering my grateful acknowledgments for the kind favor with which you have been pleased to honor me, and expressing the hope you may be speedily restored to perfect health,

I am, with sincere regard,

Very truly yours,

ALICE CARY.

March 25, 1850.

DEAR SIR: . . . Well, how could I hope that it would be otherwise? I am but a simple and uncultured girl, and am perhaps best off in the shadow of my native hills. Again I beg your forgiveness, and promise that I will not listen to my heart again—not in this letter, certainly.

I half envy you the privilege of going abroad. I have sometimes hoped to see something of the great world beside in dreams, but I never shall. You must not, my dear Mr. Griswold, flatter yourself that I look any better than my daguerreotype—it is very correct, the expression not perfectly so, perhaps, as I changed countenance a little during the sitting. I hardly know how to describe myself, and am half inclined to cut from the letter of a friend a description which he tells me he has just been giving Whittier of me, for, strange to say, he has not flattered me. . . . I am five feet, two inches in height, not heavy, and not *very* thin, don't know how much I weigh, have black eyes, and hair darkly brown, am a brunette, and decidedly plain, having seen my twenty-ninth birthday. . . . I am sometimes passionately fervent in piety, and sometimes rebellious as the fallen. I love with deepest intensity, but do not hate, those I do not like I am indifferent to. . . . Mr. Whittier kindly proffers his aid and assistance in the getting up of the proposed work—advises me not to be in a hurry, which I shall not be; strongly recommends Ticknor. . . .

And so you do not like my rhymeless efforts. The two pieces you speak of are in my own opinion among the best things I have written, as also in the opinion of some whose opinion I value highly. I am glad you have told me what you think. I agree with you that lyrical composition is my forte, if I have any, but I am accustomed to let my thought flow as it will. Among literary artists I have no place. Mr. Whittier has just favored me with some very good advice; I hope I shall profit by it. He extends us a cordial invitation to visit himself and sister at Amesbury, which I hope to be able to accept.

I am sensitive to a painful degree, and have never had a correspondent, save yourself, of whom I could say they have written nothing I could wish unwritten. . . .

You think Phœbe more grave than I. She is less so.

Her daguerreotype does not do her justice. Her countenance in conversation is almost mirthful. She has dimples which show themselves constantly, is very sarcastic (though she denies it), and enjoys the reputation of being a wit. She is less [sic] and younger than I. . . .

Ever sincerely yours,

ALICE CARY.

The temperament of Phœbe Cary was blithe and sturdy, with a vein of practical good sense. She was still a child when the family afflictions came, and thus suffered no such deep and lasting grief as did the impressionable girl of fifteen. Phœbe, too, had escaped the pangs of love betrayed. Her attitude toward Dan Cupid, indeed, was from the first almost to the last saucy and defiant. She made fun of romance, she derided in verse and in speech the lordly ways of husbands, and she avowed in middle life that she had "never loved any man well enough to lie awake half an hour to be miserable about him." When asked by some impertinent if she had ever been disappointed in her affections, Phœbe replied promptly, "No; but a great many of my married friends have." Her epistolary comment at the concluded arrangement for that first volume of poems is characteristic :

"Alice and I have been very busy collecting and revising all our published poems, to send to New York. Rev. R. W. Griswold, quite a noted author, is going to publish them for us this summer, and we are to receive for them a hundred dollars. I don't know as I feel better or worse, as I don't think it will do us much good, or any one else."

Not even Griswold's faith in the Cary sisters carried him to the length of publishing their full count of three hundred and fifty poems. Of the one hundred and thirty-six that he selected, two-thirds were by Alice. About thirty of these are on themes connected with death—pictures of dying-beds, meditations in graveyards, mourning for the lost, longing to die. The best that can be said for them is that they are sincere, springing from actual experience of bereavement. The sentiment may be weak; it is not false. "The Orphan Girl," "The Homeless,"

is Alice Cary herself. The lines "To Lucy" directly refer to her little sister of that name. The "Myrrha" elegies commemorate Rhoda. Of the remaining poems, nearly half have to do with the fruitless waiting, the blighted hopes, and broken hearts of maidens abandoned by their lovers. The autobiographic tone is heard through them all, although the circumstances are varied. Sometimes the forsaken girl lives on "through long weary years" alone; sometimes

"With a cheek grown thinner, whiter,
And the dark locks put away
From a brow of patient beauty,
Dwells the maiden of my lay —
Dwells she where the peaceful shadow
Of her native hills is thrown,
Binding up the wounds of others
All the better for her own."

Usually, however, the unrewarded watcher droops and dies, and it may chance that the troth-breaker,

"the haughty child of pride —
The angel of delusive dreams,"

comes to weep above her deathbed or her burial-mound. Here, too, the writer has dipped the pen in her own heart. The events of her youth had been the death of mother and sisters, the desertion of her worldly minded wooer. How little else had come into that sequestered life the narrow range of this first volume testifies. Religious sensibility is present everywhere, and some half dozen poems are the direct expression of Christian devotion. As many more champion philanthropic and ethical movements of the time. Other themes are drawn from the most striking figures of history, — Hannibal, Cleopatra, Napoleon. A few pseudo-romantic ballads of feeble construction, a few personal addresses to friends, two or three songs for children, "Pictures of Memory," and the first draft of "The Old Homestead" nearly complete the reckoning.

There is something very touching in the intellectual and artistic poverty of the work. The sentences are often ungrammatical, and the vocabulary is sometimes inexact. The Norse king, for example, strides over the lintel, supposing it to be the threshold. The volume is

a confusion of rhythmic echoes, — of Byron, Bulwer, Mrs. Hemans. "The Two Missionaries" sets one repeating

"By Nebo's lonely mountain."

"Seko" owes its existence to "The Skeleton in Armor." The sentiment and even the diction of Longfellow are sometimes all but appropriated, as in "Visions of Light," "Old Stories," and that stanza of "Eloquence" which tells of

"muffled footsteps
In the corridors of crime."

The author acknowledges in a footnote her "indebtedness to Coleridge for one or two passages" in "Pitied Love," but there is no such owning up to her close imitation, in "Musings by Three Graves," of Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," though she has taken over his stanza, situation, mood, epithets, the very twilight shadow and sombre cadence of his monody. A wavering Shelley note, mingled with a hint of Keats, is manifest in "Two Visions," but the most extraordinary exhibition of innocent plagiarism may be found in the initial poem of the volume. This lament on the death of Keats is a dexterously woven web dyed through and through in the rich colors of the "Adonais" and "Eve of St. Agnes." Here and there the poetic "shreds and patches" are clearly discernible. The ode "To a Skylark" yielded the "embodied joy" and "sunken sun." The opening line of "Hyperion" is altered from

"Deep in the shady sadness of a vale"

to

"Deep in the shady cincture of the vale."

"Thanatopsis" gave suggestion, by

"Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste"

for

"Along the gray and melancholy air."

The "Ode to a Nightingale" contributed the idea of a cheating Fancy, and "Lycidas" could not well refuse "the eyelids of the morn," since the phrase was already

borrowed from the book of Job. The close of the poem is frankly reminiscent of "Alastor":—

"And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell."

But while this lyrical composite betrays the writer's ignorance of literary rights, it reveals the height of her aspiration and the glow of her poetic sympathy. The simpler verses in the collection, however, pleased the rank and file of her readers more. There were many who prized the pathos of her melodies, and others who enjoyed their true touches of outdoor beauty, so that the publication of the volume secured Alice Cary a certain modest standing as a poet.

Phœbe Cary's literary talent was generally looked upon, from the first, as slighter than her sister's. Her dominant tone is the religious and the ethical. She was in full accord with the impetuous reformers of her day, and denounced in rhyme, as roundly as Whittier himself, slavery, the gallows, war. She sang the praises of the cold water army and exhorted the winebibber. Pity for the poor and wretched, for the criminals made by law, and the outcasts of society, rings in her verse with no uncertain sound. Her poems on death are less numerous than her sister's, and, written as several of them were on occasion of the loss of friends, take on a more pronounced character of consolation and of heavenly hope. "The Place of Graves" describes the resting-spot of her mother, Rhoda, and little Lucy. The love sentiment is but a minor interest in Phœbe Cary's poetry, although she had something more akin to dramatic imagination than Alice possessed and could vary her situations more easily. A few of her love lyrics, however, take their color from Alice. The general tone of Phœbe's contribution to this first volume is bracing. She does not dwell on vain regrets nor cherish pathos for its own sake. She has a healthful relish for life, with all its brisk activities. Alice loved to sing of twilight and moonlight. Phœbe praised the early morning. Her grammar and her metaphors are as uncertain as her sister's. Her verses savor more of energetic speech than song. Her diction is generally commonplace, though sometimes rising to dignity. She is more independent of her models

than Alice, although it startles one to catch the note of Hogg's "Skylark" in a "Song of the Reformed." The occasional echoes of Moore and Hood and Whittier are less obtrusive.

Upon the publication of this volume, the two sisters, with their precious hundred dollars, took a momentous trip to the East and, in acceptance of a twice-urged invitation, went to see Whittier, somewhat to the scandal of his Quaker women-folk. His account of that brief visit is embodied in his memorial poem for Alice Cary, "The Singer."

Years since (but names to me before),
Two sisters sought at eve my door ;
Two song-birds wandering from their nest,
A gray old farm-house in the West.

How fresh of life the younger one,
Half smiles, half tears, like rain in sun !
Her gravest mood could scarce displace
The dimples of her nut-brown face.

Wit sparkled on her lips not less
For quick and tremulous tenderness ;
And, following close her merriest glance,
Dreamed through her eyes the heart's romance.

Timid and still, the elder had
Even then a smile too sweetly sad ;
The crown of pain that all must wear
Too early pressed her midnight hair.

Yet ere the summer eve grew long
Her modest lips were sweet with song ;
A memory haunted all her words
Of clover-fields and singing birds.

Her dark, dilating eyes expressed
The broad horizons of the West ;
Her speech dropped prairie flowers ; the gold
Of harvest wheat about her rolled.

Fore-doomed to song she seemed to me :
I queried not with destiny :
I knew the trial and the need,
Yet, all the more, I said, God speed !

With such encouragement as this, it was easier for Alice Cary to bid farewell to her native meadows and, in the late autumn, take a humble place among the literary workers of New York City. The two elder sisters had married, but the two younger, Phœbe and Elmina, joined her in the spring of 1851. The Ohio nest had lost its song-birds for good and all. In process of time, the old homestead passed from the father to the brothers. There is now no descendant of the family who cares to occupy it, and, in the spring of 1903, it was purchased by a benevolent citizen of Cincinnati to serve as a home for the blind. This was done at the instance of two other devoted Ohio sisters, Georgia and Florence Trader, the elder of whom is herself bereft of sight,—sisters who have already rendered noble service to the blind of Cincinnati. No disposition of Clovernook could be more fitting.

The small flat, up two flights, in an unfashionable quarter of New York, was maintained by the determined pen of Alice Cary. In 1852 she published three volumes. The most successful of these was "Clovernook; or, Recollections of our Neighborhood in the West." This fresh, candid account, in pleasant prose, of rural Ohio life, took so well that a second series was issued the next year, followed, in 1855, by "Clovernook Children," addressed to younger readers. In 1859 appeared a fourth volume of the same general tenor, "Pictures of Country Life." Of less fortunate augury was "Hagar: a Story of To-day." The main theme is the history of a simple village maiden forsaken by her plighted lover, an elegant young clergyman, who, haunted by remorse, ultimately goes mad. The treatment is uneven, the structure weak, the effect melodramatic. With characteristic resolution, Alice Cary kept on to the end of her life, trying to write prose fiction. Her short stories, printed by the leading magazines and journals, were better than her novels, which invariably lack unity and human truth. The amiable characters die lingering deaths; the tyrants, slovens, and hypocrites are overdone. The plots are ill proportioned and incoherent, the style uneven, the tone depressing.

The third venture of 1852 was a second volume of poems, "Lyra." This already showed advance in firmness and grace of workmanship. The author had evi-

dently been pouring over pastoral elegies, Elizabethan as well as Georgian, with the result that the more elaborate odes of the book confuse the reader by their throng of echoes. The Cary sisters were, in the finer sense of the term, spiritualists, and certainly this volume is a haunted house murmurous with poet ghosts, — Spenser, Marlowe, Jonson, Fletcher, Milton, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats. Yet through all the literary phraseology of shepherds and reeds, flocks and folds, Endymion, Proteus, Thisbe, Nereides, shine out vivid glimpses of genuine Ohio fields and woods. Artificial as these longer poems are, they witness to a higher poetic sense in Alice Cary than is usually attributed to her. They reveal her quest for a finer artistic beauty than the hard pen-driven conditions of her daily life ever allowed her to attain. In the shorter lyrics and the ballads, as well as in these ostentatious elegies, the old melancholy persists. She longs for the rest of the grave, portrays scenes of death and burial, and never tires of telling the tale of unrequited love. Jessie Carrol watches in vain

“From the Valley of the West”

for the faithless Allan Archer, the dying Madela calls on a lover who does not come, Agatha pines away for a recreant Harold.

The volume which Alice Cary published in 1855 was substantially a collection of the poems of her youth. Twenty-four were garnered from that eventful first book, and fifty-eight from “Lyra.” The new poems are sixty-six in number, the last being an ambitious blank-verse romance of about two thousand lines, based on an episode in Prescott’s “Conquest of Mexico.” But not the far-off Golden Age of Tezcuco, not those strange Aztec names which, the author naïvely confesses, she has not in every case known how to pronounce, could divert her from her one and only theme. The maiden of Tlascala is wooed, won, and forsaken by the proud Hualco, with the anticipated results of her pitiful death and his unavailing remorse.

Although the writer states in her grateful dedication to Mr. Griswold that she “could never learn to blot or to revise,” many of the poems reprinted in 1855, especially

the odes from "Lyra," had been worked over, shortened, and much altered in detail. The new poems show a new influence, that of Mrs. Browning, and still strive to follow in the footprints of Keats, but, taken as a whole, they suggest development toward simplicity and individuality — a development attested by the later work. Although continually contributing verse to the periodicals, it was not until 1866 that Alice Cary published another volume of poems, "Ballads, Lyrics, and Hymns." Two years later came "A Lover's Diary," called out by the death of the youngest sister, Elmina, whose invalid life had found shelter in the pretty home on Twentieth street, bought and furnished by unflagging literary toil. This home, with its informal Sunday evening receptions, had become a social centre for many of the choicest men and women of New York. Sought out by delightful friends, surrounded by the opportunities of a great city, here the sisters lived a quiet, industrious life. They would rise before five in their country-bred fashion, and ply their pens all day as diligently as if these had been knitting-needles, save as Alice snatched a little time for the housekeeping, and Phœbe, more willingly, for the sewing. The elder sister, on whom the main burden had always rested, endured this strenuous pace for but a score of years. After months of illness she died, on February 12, 1871. Her funeral was almost like a triumph, so great and so distinguished was the concourse gathered in honor of the gentle singer of Clovernook. Nor should it be forgotten that, like one of her own heroines, she had sent from her dying-bed for the false lover of her youth, who, a gray-haired, prosperous widower, came at the summons to receive her full forgiveness.

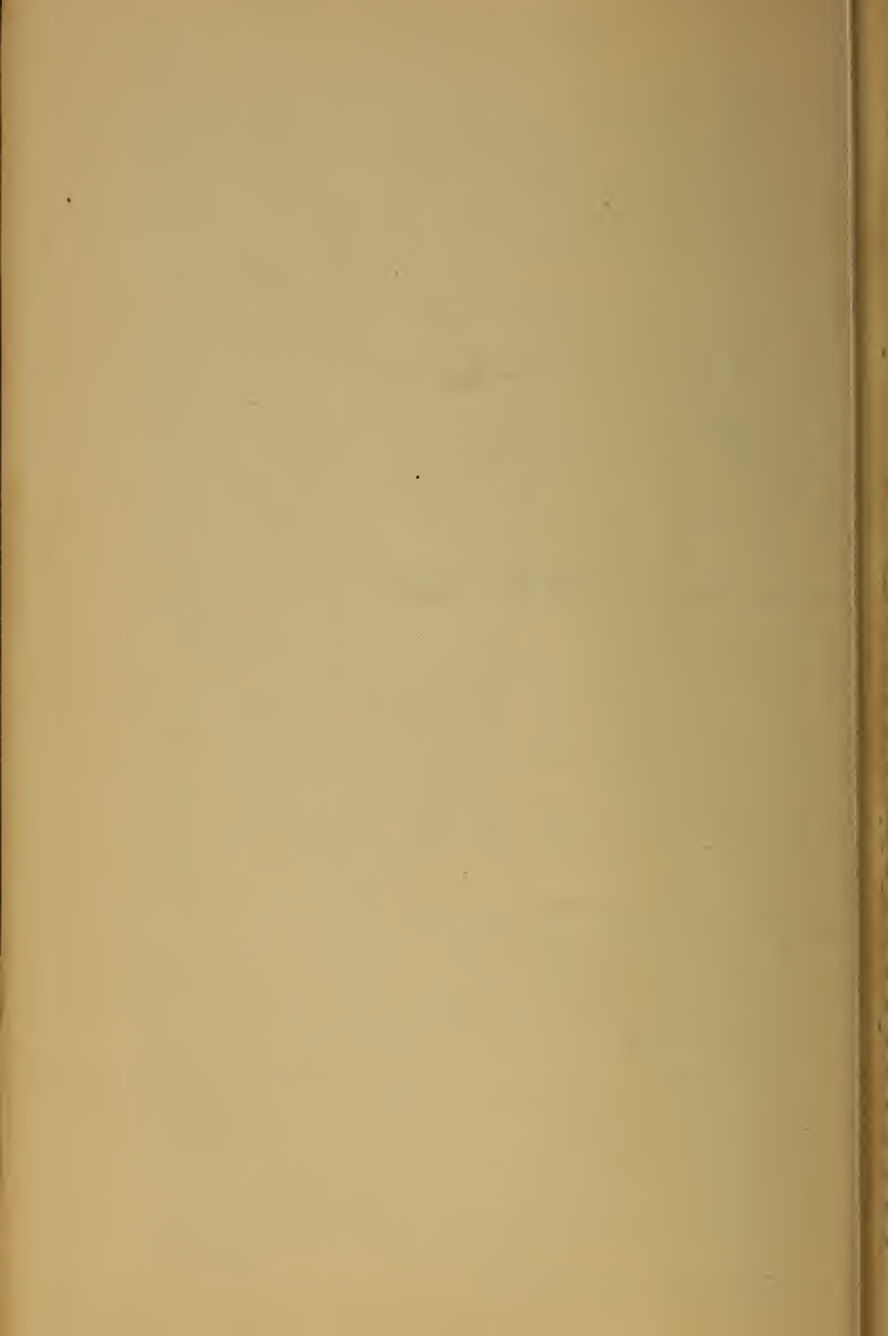
Phœbe's list of publications is short beside that of her more resolute sister. Her second volume of verse, "Poems and Parodies," came out in 1854. The parodies, with little redeeming salt of wit, must plead guilty to the sin of poetic irreverence. Byron, Moore, Willis, Mrs. Hemans, Bayard Taylor — personal friend though he was — are perhaps fair game, but toward such lyrical genius as that of Poe's "Annabel Lee," such sacred sorrow as that of Bryant's "The Future Life," of Wordsworth's "Lucy," and James Aldrich's "A Death-bed," toward Shakespeare, flippancy is all but profane. The

worthier half of the volume includes a few poems in merry, teasing vein, but the book opens rather ominously with a succession of thirteen dirges. The fervor of religious feeling, so notable in Phœbe Cary's first volume, finds keener expression in this. "Nearer Home," though its thought would seem to be peculiarly obvious, struck to the popular heart.

Phœbe Cary published but one more volume of original writing, "Poems of Faith, Hope, and Love," in 1868. Meanwhile, although by no means as indefatigable as Alice, she kept herself busy with literary work of a miscellaneous sort. She wrote short stories for the periodicals, and articles to order. With Alice she edited "The Josephine Gallery" and "From Year to Year." She compiled, with her friend and pastor, Dr. Deems, "Hymns for all Christians." Her mirth and fun made her the life of the home on Twentieth street. One of her pet cronies was the ingenious Mr. Barnum, who enjoyed her piquant comments when personally conducted through "the greatest show on earth." It was she who suggested, in reference to the marriage of the skeleton man and the fat woman, that they must have "loved through thick and thin." Well content with life as she found it, she had no sentimental concern about her state of spinsterhood, and laughed away all wooers until, when already entered into the vale of the forties, she sacrificed a new affection to the old. She dismissed an acceptable suitor rather than leave Alice, whose strength was then perceptibly on the wane.

The sisters, despite all temperamental differences, had held closely together through life, and in their deaths they were not divided. The younger did not survive the elder for six months. On the closing day of July Phœbe Cary died, and was laid beside Alice in Greenwood. Death and burial, which had borne so large a share in the poetic sentiment of both, were theirs at last. Posthumous volumes of their poems, for adults and for children, were issued under the editorship of their friend Mrs. Mary Clemmer Ames, who was also to become their biographer. Her intimate account bespeaks all honor for the women, while, as poets, they stand for a good and gracious influence in their generation and a fragrant memory down the years.

ALICE CARY



DEDICATION

TO THE VOLUME OF ALICE CARY'S POEMS
PUBLISHED IN 1855.

TO RUFUS WILMOT GRISWOLD.

MY DEAR FRIEND :

It is not to avert the censures of so judicious a critic that I dedicate to you this collection of my poems. You were the first to praise my simple rhymes, years before I met or dreamed of meeting you; and since we became personally acquainted you have always been ready to counsel and encourage me in those literary pursuits to which I was led by the natural inclination of my mind, and which at too early an age, perhaps, I adopted as the principal means of hoped-for usefulness and happiness. I have been pleased, therefore, with the thought, that in such an inscription as this I might express something of my gratitude to you, and my respect for you. I know, indeed, that it is not an unusual distinction to have been an object of your kindly interest—that there are many among our younger authors who owe much to your wise advice and generous aid—so that if all who are in this way your debtors were so to manifest their feelings, you would be wearied with such displays of their consideration; yet this is the only manner in which I can render you that homage which is due for your genius and worth, especially from me, who am under so many obligations to you; and I feel assured that you will receive my

offering with as much satisfaction as if it conferred on you more than on myself a desirable honor.

Of the character of these Poems I have little to say: I submit them to the world's judgment, not without fears that the favor with which a considerable number of them have been received, as from time to time they have been separately printed, will not be preserved when they are read in so large a collection. It may be a woman's weakness, but I confess that I could never learn to blot or to revise, and after any effusion of a moment has gone from my hands, have had no heart to look at it with the cold curiosity of a critic. "What is writ is writ," I have been content to say, adding with a just sense of its faults, "Would it were worthier," yet rarely or never feeling in the mood to destroy and re-create. Nevertheless, while the pieces in this volume have, for the most part, their original imperfections, I am not without a pleasing belief that time and pains have done away with some of my earlier faults, and that they will still enable me to improve. I feel very sensibly that I have not redeemed the kind prophecies of my friends, nor fulfilled the hopes I have had and have now for myself.

Born and reared in the midst of rural occupations, and all my most cherished memories keeping me still familiar with woods and fields, I have drawn from my own past the imagery and chief accessories of my poems, which have therefore in this respect a certain genuineness. It will be perceived that I have not often attempted new rhythms, but have been content in some cases to set my thoughts to music with which the world has sweetly rung for ages.

The longest of these poems is based on an episode in Mr. Prescott's admirable work, "The Conquest of Mexico," and is composed in the main with fidelity to

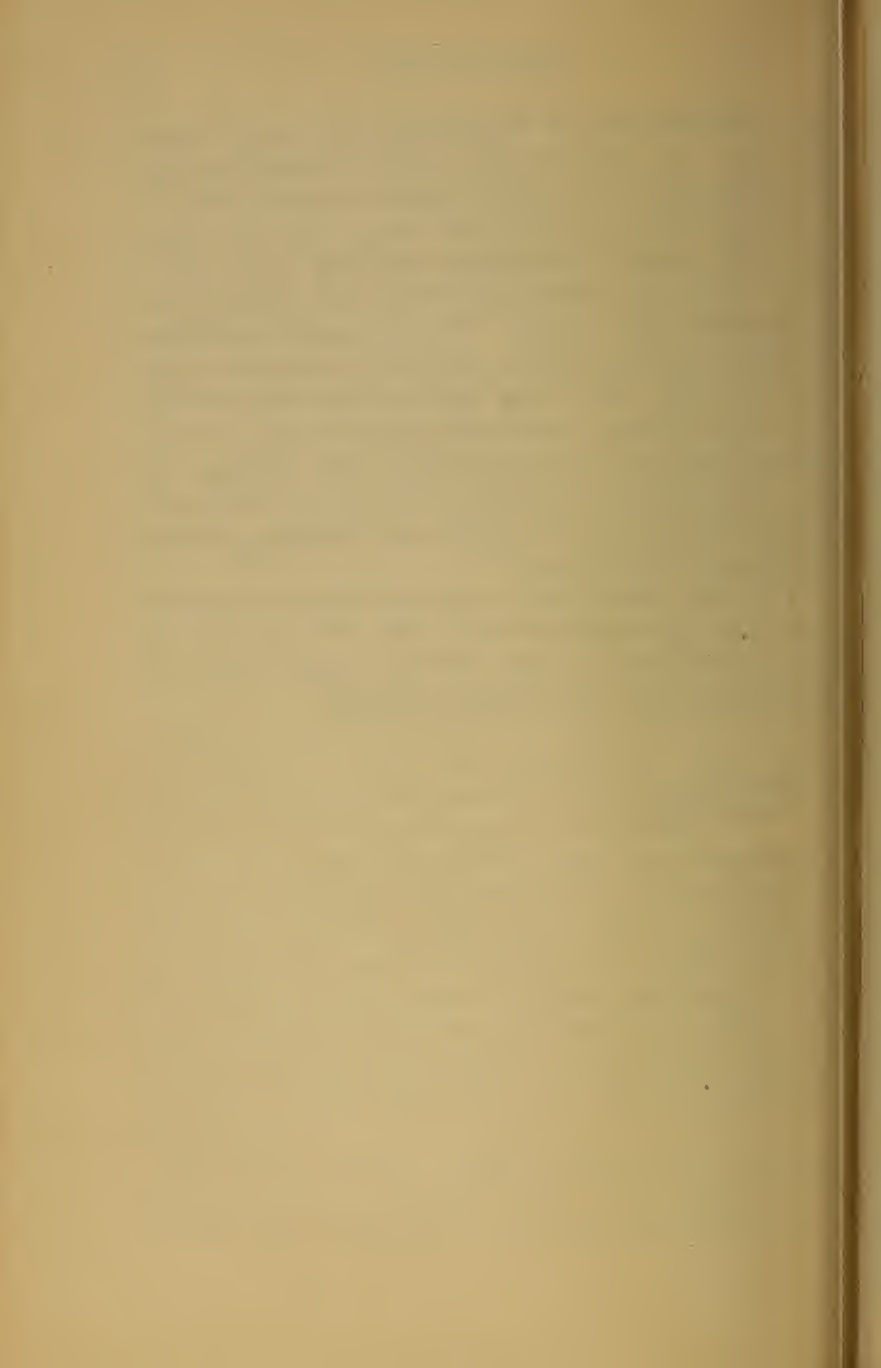
the representations of Prescott, Clavigero, Lord Kingsborough, and the few other authors within my reach who have written of Aztec history and civilization. I am not confident that I have always correctly understood the proper pronounciation of Aztec names, but I have as far as possible avoided the use of those which seemed the most difficult. To the objection sometimes urged against such themes, based on the idea that poetry has to do only with a high cultivation, accommodated to our own notions of taste and justice, I cannot assent; human nature is nearly the same in all conditions, and in every condition has elements of beauty, not less poetical because displayed sometimes amid barbaric splendors and savage superstitions.

I will not dwell further upon these poems — the written cloud and sunshine of so much of my life — but respectfully and gratefully dedicate them to you, as a memorial of our long existing friendship.

A. C.

NEW YORK,

October, 1854.



POEMS BY ALICE CARY.

—o-o-o-o—
KEATS.*

Till the future dares
Forget the past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light into † eternity. —SHELLEY.

Across the southern hills comes the young May,
In her lap bearing, wet with honied showers,
White and blue violets, open to the day,
Blush roses, and the yellow cowslip flowers;
But from her o'er-full arms they lean away
Toward the melodious shadows of warm June,
Where their first love a pallid ghost doth stray
Like a lorn maiden wailing 'neath the moon.

A very queen of beauty doth she move,
Waving her vermeil-blossomed wand in air;
While Hope with crimsoning cheek, and soft-eyed
Love,
Sprinkle the yellow sunshine of her hair
With winking flower-stars, and the blue above
With its dropped hem of silver, beauteously
Edged with the sea-green fringes of the grove,
Tents her about with glory fair to see.

Alone I sit, and yet not all alone,
For unsubstantial beings near me tread;
At times I hear them piteously moan —
Haply a plaint for the o'er-gifted dead,
That, to the perfectness of stature grown,
Had filled the vacant heart of Time for aye
With a deep sea of melody unknown,
And sunken from the embracing light of day.

* Revised as "Hyperion" in volume of 1855.

† Misprint for "unto."

And yet alone, for not a human heart
 Stirs with tumultuous throbbings the deep hush ;
 Almost the blue air seems to fall apart
 From the delirious warble of the thrush —
 A wave of lovely sound untouched of art,
 That floats above me like embodied joy ;
 O for such wasteless dowery, to impart
 Delight so dainty and without alloy !

Deep in the shady cincture of the vale
 I hear a long and melancholy cry,
 As a lost spirit might in anguish wail,
 Clinging to sin, yet longing for the sky :
 And o'er the hill-tops, crowned with verdure pale,
 A gnarled oak lifts above its fellow trees
 Its gray head, palsy-stricken by the gale,
 Defiant of the lapse of centuries.

A golden cloud above the sunken sun
 Holds the first star of the night's solemn train,
 Clasped from the world's profaneness, like a nun,
 Behind the shelter of the convent pane :
 Did the delicious light of such a one
 Fleck his dark pathway with its shimmering fire,
 Whose fingers, till life's little day was done,
 Clung like pale kisses to the charmed lyre ?

I've read, in some chance fragment of old song,
 A tale to muse of in this lovely light,
 About a maiden fled from cruel wrong
 Into the chilly darkness of the night ;
 Upon whose milk-white bosom, cold and long,
 Beat the rough tempest ; but a waiting arm
 Was reaching toward her, and in hope grown strong,
 Fled she along the woods and through the storm.

But how had he or heart or hope to sing
 Of Madeline or Porphyro the brave,
 While the dim fingers of pale suffering
 Were pressing down his eyelids to the grave ?
 How could he to the shrine of genius bring
 The constant spirit of a bended knee,
 Ruffling the horrent blackness of Death's wing
 With the clear echoes of eternity ?

Hark! was it but the wind that swept along,
 Shivering the hawthorn, pale with milky flowers?
 The swan-like music of the dying song
 Seems swimming on the bosom of the hours.
 If Fancy cheats me thus, she does no wrong —
 With mists of glory is my heart o'erblown,
 And shapes of beauty round about me throng,
 When of that muséd rhyme I catch the tone.

O lost and radiant wanderer of the storm,
 Beauty eternal shines along the wave,
 That bore thee on like an o'er-mastering arm
 To the blind silence of the hungry grave;
 Nor genial spring, nor summer sunshine warm,
 Broken to flakes of gold by boughs of gloom,
 Hath power to make life's frozen current warm,
 And the dark house of dust to re-illumine.

Tell me, ye sobbing winds, what sign ye made,
 Making the year with dismal pity rife,
 When the all-levelling and remorseless shade
 Closed o'er the lovely summer of his life?
 Did the sad hyacinths by the fountains fade,
 And tear-drops touch the eyelids of the morn,
 And Muses, empty-armed, the gods upbraid,
 When that great sorrow to the world was born?

Did Death stoop softly, and with gentle tone
 Sweetly dispose his pallid limbs to rest,
 As down the shadowy way he went alone,
 With Love's young music trembling in his breast?
 Then sunk as fair a star as ever shone
 Along the gray and melancholy air;
 And from Parnassus' hoary front, o'ergrown
 With plants immortal, moaned infirm Despair.

Weave close, ye woods, your blooming boughs to-night,
 Shut from my sense the joyous insect choir,
 And all the intense stars whose wannish light
 Checkers the wavy grass like spots of fire:
 Nature for my sad thought is all too bright,
 And half I long for clouds to veil the sky,
 And softly weep for the untimely blight
 Of all of him I sing of that could die.

The yellow leaves that covered up his grave
 Are hidden by the monumental stone;
 Immortal amarantths o'er his slumber wave,
 And fame's deep trumpet to the world has blown
 The echoes of his lyre. In her mute cave,
 Silence shall lock *my* little song away,
 And the vain longing for the fount that gave
 His name to glory, perish with the clay.

HANNIBAL'S LAMENT FOR HIS BROTHER.

IN the rich shadows of a gorgeous tent
 Sat the famed chief of Carthage, as through bars
 Of heavy gold the day's last beams were sent;
 And Eve, in her tiara of bright stars
 And garniture of purple, to her breast
 Like a fond mother, took her child to rest.
 The boding phantom of his bosom brings
 The Alps before him, with their icy crags,
 For victory, with her broad and starry wings,
 Is settling brightly on the Roman flags;
 And as the silent shadows round him close,
 His voice finds way through barriers of woes:—
 "My lost, my fallen brother! can it be
 That the proud beauty of thy brow is dim,
 Bright victor of fierce battles? Is the dust
 That hides the commonest soldier, strewed o'er thee?
 And must thy falchion ignominious rust?
 Yet, he fell bravely, not unworthy him
 Who was the offspring of a battle-star,
 And cradled in the bloody arms of war!
 And 't is my joy that he was not of those
 Who shrink from peril; with a stoic's pride
 He bared his bosom to his country's foes,
 And, rushing to the combat, fought and died!
 Lost star of glory! in my childhood's time
 Thou wert my sweetest counsellor and guide;
 And in the freshness of my manhood's prime
 I wooed thee to my bosom as a bride:
 But thou, whose banner in the dust is veiled,
 With thee the aim of my existence died;

And Fear, that never until now assailed,
Sits like a mocking demon by my side!

“For hungry wolves, the Spartan mothers tore
The babes from their warm bosoms, every day;
And if they smiled not, they at least forbore
To give vain sorrow an o’ermastering sway:
And have I more to sacrifice than they?
Yes, time, in part, their losses might restore,
But mine must be remediless for aye.

“I hear the constant singing of the streams,
Down in the vineyards, beautiful and wide,—
O thou embitterer of my goldenest dreams,
I thought to conquer thee before I died!
Ye gods! must I be rifled of that joy,
And taunted like a beardless, love-sick boy!
Yet have I battled with Rome’s chiefest men,
And triumphed gloriously; her brazen gates
Had not availed her haughty spirit then,
Had I led firmly onward,— but the Fates
Make me their sport and plaything, when one blow,
Dealt by the hand of her eternal foe,
Had crushed her power and placed her at my feet,—
Her mighty heart my pillow: this were sweet!

“Gaul’s proudest chivalry I ’ve met in fight,
And trampled them as reeds upon the plain;
Slaughtered at bay, and hunted down in flight,
They cried for quarter, but they cried in vain;
And the blue waters of the Rhone that night
Stood red and stagnant, choked with heaps of slain!”

Were there no spectral shadows gliding there,
O baffled champion, for thy country’s weal?
No semblances of “angels with bright hair
Dabbled in blood,” to fix the damning seal
To a close-hugged ambition? Better dwell
The lowliest shepherd of Arcadia’s bowers,
Than mount to where the insatiate fire of hell,
Like to a serpent’s tooth, the heart devours!

THE WRECK.

VEILED were our topsails to the blast; our helm was
 lashed a-lee;
 And fearlessly our vessel drove before a stormy sea,—
 O, safely in our midst that night had lain an empire's
 crown;
 For every mariner had said our vessel must go down!

Some shrieked aloud; some humbly knelt, who never
 knelt before;
 And some, with outstretched arms, looked forth toward
 the viewless shore;
 And rougher still the rough wind blew, and heavier roll'd
 the sea,
 Till every heart was poured in prayer, God of the storm,
 to Thee.

At length about the middle watch, an aged man and
 gray,
 Right in the solemn hush, stood up, and said he could
 not pray;
 And while, above our gallant deck, the mountain-billows
 broke,
 Each soul forgot the storm, while thus the trembling sin-
 ner spoke:—

“I've been a rover of the seas these four-and-forty years,
 And, in their darkest hours, my eyes have been ashamed
 of tears;
 But now I fain would give myself an offering to the
 deep,
 If I could say the prayers you say, or weep as you can
 weep.

“The blackest clouds along the sky, through which the
 thunders roll,
 Are calm as peace, when measured with the tempest in
 my soul:
 Once, when my heart was innocent, and joyous as a
 bird's,
 My mother taught me how to pray—I cannot say the
 words.

“T is well that mother died so soon, for oft, I know, she
smiled,
And talked about the happiness that waited for her
child;
And I have been long years of those whose troublings
never cease,
Aside from Virtue’s pleasant ways and all her paths of
peace.

“My spirit grew the house of pride; I scorned our hum-
ble cot,
And deemed that, for my lowliness, the world had loved
me not.
Once, when the night was dark, like this, the thunder’s
roll as deep,
There was a whisper in my heart that would not let me
sleep.

“I knew ’t was Satan telling me, Thou shalt not surely
die;
And yet I went, as goes the bird, down to the serpent’s
eye.
Hard by my father’s cot there dwelt a harmless man, and
old,
Whose house was filled with merchandise and shining
heaps of gold.

“That night I sought his dwelling out, and with a stealthy
tread,
Winding the gloomy passages, I stood beside his bed.
I said the night was dark with storm; but, by the light-
ning’s beam —
(Oh, would to Heaven the arm upraised had withered in
its gleam) —

“I saw him: I have been, since then, in lighted halls of
mirth —
In deserts vast, and palaces, and caverns of the earth —
A thousand and a thousand times I’ve sailed across the
deep.
And that old man has with me been, awake, and in my
sleep.

“ Almost my heart misgave me once, so wan he looked,
 and old;
 But when I turned to flee away, I saw the cursed gold;
 And so I slew him — twice he stirred, and once he feebly
 cried,
 As with a rough and heavy stone I smote him till he
 died.

“ Then clutching, in my bloody hands, the prize, I fled
 away;
 But shapeless things had followed me, that I could never
 slay.
 Three days in the thick woods I hid, afraid of every
 sound,
 And o’er and o’er I washed my hands in every pool I
 found.

“ My guilt upon the withered leaves* seemed writ, as on
 a scroll,
 And every wandering wind I met was questioning my
 soul:
 I thought the dead man’s gold so thrilled the marrow in
 my bones,
 And, seeking out a lonesome cave, I hid it in the stones.

“ But still there were accusing tongues in herb, and
 flower, and tree,
 And so I left the haunts of men, and wandered on the
 sea” —
 Just then our fated vessel struck upon a rocky shore, —
 One shriek arose, and all again grew silent as before.

I floated, as by miracle, upon the off-torn deck,
 And knew not any living soul was with me on the wreck;
 But when the morn, with misty eyes, looked down upon
 the tide,
 That old man, with his arms across, was sitting at my
 side.

* Corrected to “ each withered leaf,” in the Boston Public Library copy.

I WOULD TELL HIM THAT I LOVE HIM.

I WOULD tell him that I love him, but I know my tongue
would fail,
For his heart is proud and haughty, and would scorn the
simple tale;
Since my feet have never wandered from the home where
I was born,
Save among the pleasant meadows and the fields of yellow
corn.

No! my lips shall never speak it, for he knows I love
him now!
He has seen the burning blushes on my cheek and on
my brow;
He has heard my accent falter when he said that we must
part,
And he must have read the writing that is written in my
heart!

Unlearned am I in eloquence, save that of gentle words,
And I never harked to music that was sweeter than the
birds' —

O! if his haughty mother knew I loved but half so
well,
She would hate me with a bitterness that words could
never tell!

I've left my gentle sister and her ever warm embrace
When I knew that young Sir Richard would be coming
from the chase;
For somehow oft it chances in our rambles that we meet,
And I think — shall I deny it? — that a stolen kiss is
sweet!

Last night I dreamed I stood with him before a man of
prayer,
With the garland of white blossoms, that he gave me, in
my hair;
And he called me by a dearer name than sister, or than
friend —
O! how I wish so sweet a dream had never had an end!

Not for his lordly castles and his acres of broad land
 Do I love young Richard Percy; for with but his heart
 and hand,
 A cabin in the wilderness, a cavern by the sea,
 Or a tent in the wide desert, would be home enough for
 me.

THE SPECTRE WOMAN.

ALONG the hollow chancel the winds of autumn sung,
 And the heavy flitting of the bat was heard the aisles
 among;
 The sky was full of stars that night, the moon was at the
 full,
 And yet about the old gray church the light was some-
 thing dull.

And in that solemn churchyard, where the mould was
 freshly thrown,
 Wrapped in a thin, cold sheet, there sat a lovely maid
 alone:
 The dark and tangled tresses half revealed her bosom's
 charms,
 And a something that lay hidden, like a birdling in her
 arms.

By that pale, sad brow of beauty, and the locks that fall
 so low,
 And by the burning blushes in that lovely cheek, I know
 She hath listened to the tempter, she hath heard his
 whisper dread,
 When the "Get behind me, Satan," hath been all too
 faintly said.

It was not the willows trailing, as the winds among them
 stole,
 That was heard there at the midnight, nor the digging
 of the mole;
 Nor yet the dry leaves dropping where the grass was
 crushed and damp,
 And the light that shone so spectral was not the fire-fly's
 lamp.

The pale moon veiled her beauty in a lightly passing
 cloud,
 When a voice was heard thrice calling to that woman in
 the shroud !
 But whether fiend or angel were for her spirit come,
 The lips that could have told it have long been sealed
 and dumb.

But they say, who pass that churchyard at the dead watch
 of the night,
 That a woman in her grave-clothes, when the moon is full
 and bright,
 Is seen to bend down fondly, but without a mother's
 pride,
 Over something in her bosom that her tresses cannot hide.

 THE PAST AND PRESENT.

YE everlasting conjurers of ill,
 Who fear the Samiel in the lightest breeze,
 Go, moralize with Marius, if you will,
 In the old cradle of the sciences !
 Bid the sarcophagi uncloseth their lids —
 Drag the colossal sphinxes forth to view —
 Rouse up the builders of the pyramids,
 And raise the labyrinthian shrines anew ;
 And see the haughty favorite of the fates —
 The arbiter of myriad destinies :
 Thebes, with her " feast of lights " and hundred gates, —
 And Carthage, mother of sworn enmities,
 Not mantled with the desolate weeds and dust
 Of centuries, but as she sat apart,
 Nursing her lions, ere the eagle thrust
 His bloody talons deep into her heart ; —
 Then say, what was she in her palmiest times
 That we should mourn forever for the past ?
 In fame, a very Babylon — her crimes
 The plague-spot of the nations to the last !

And Rome ! the seven-hilled city ; she that rose
 Girt with the majesty of peerless might,

From out the ashes of her fallen foes —

She in whose lap was poured, like streams of light,
The wealth of nations: was she not endowed

With that most perilous gift of beauty — pride?
And spite of all her glories blazoned loud,

Idolatrous, voluptuous, and allied
Closer to vice than virtue? Hark! the sounds

Of tramping thousands in her stony street!
And now the amphitheatre resounds

With acclamations for the engrossing feat!

Draw near, where men of war and senates stood,

And see the *pastime*, whence they joyance drank, —
The Lybian lion lapping the warm blood

Oozed from the Dacian's bosom. On the bank

Of the sweet Danube, smiling children wait

To greet their sire, unconscious of his fate.

Oh, draw the wildering veil a little back,

Ye blind idolators of things that were;

Who, through the glory trailing in their track,

See but the whiteness of the sepulchre!

Then to the Present turning, ye will see

Even as one, the universal mind

Rousing, like genius from a reverie,

With the exalted aim to serve mankind:

Lo! as my song is closing, I can feel

The spirit of the Present in my heart;

And for the future, with a wiser zeal,

In life's great drama I would act my part:

That they may say, who see the curtain fall

And from the closing scene in silence go,

Haply as some light favor they recall,

Peace to her ashes, — she hath lessened woe!

DEATH OF CLEOPATRA:

THE stars of Egypt's haughty crown

Were settled on the brow,

And many a purple wave swept down

From royal dust below.

Girt with the realms that owned her power,
Enthroned in regal pride,
With priceless kingdoms for a dower,
Imperial beauty died.

The spoils of cities overthrown
Her broad dominion lined;
With pearls her palaces were sown
As blossoms by the wind.
Her merchant-ships on every sea
The royal flag unrolled,
Laden with spices heavily
And fragrant oil and gold.

And yet from all the proud array
That gather round a throne,
The queen imperious turned away,
Sickened, and died alone.
How died she? Through her chamber dim
Did songs and victories roll?
And were there fervent prayer and hymn
Said for the parting soul?

Not so: they brought her robes of state,
And decked her for the tomb,
And, cumbered with the gorgeous weight,
She proudly met her doom:
And o'er the hand of heavy clay
That once had guided wars,
In all their mocking beauty lay
The purple and the stars.

Earth lent her soul no power to stem
Such stormy waves as were;
And the sweet star of Bethlehem
Had risen not for her.
O Thou, who daily givest its beams,
Be the dark sins forgiven
Of her whose wild and mystic dreams
Were all she knew of Heaven.

PALESTINE.

BRIGHT inspiration! shadowing my heart
 Like a sweet dream of beauty — could I see
 Tabor and Carmel ere I hence depart,
 And tread the quiet vales of Galilee,
 And look from Hermon, with its dew and flowers,
 Upon the broken walls and mossy towers
 O'er which the Son of man in sadness wept,
 The dearest promise of my life were kept.

Alas! the beauteous cities, crowned with flowers,
 And robed with royalty! no more in thee,
 Fretted with golden pinnacles and towers,
 They sit in haughty beauty by the sea:
 Shadows of rocks, precipitate and dark,
 Rest still and heavy where they found a grave;
 There glides no more the humble fisher's bark,
 And the wild heron drinks not of the wave.

But still the silvery willows fringe the rills,
 Judea's shepherd watches still his fold;
 And round about Jerusalem the hills
 Stand in their solemn grandeur as of old;
 And Sharon's roses still as sweetly bloom
 As when the apostles, in the days gone by,
 Rolled back the shadows from the dreary tomb,
 And brought to light life's immortality.

The East has laid down many a beauteous bride
 In the dim silence of the sepulchre,
 Whose names are shrined in story, but beside
 There lives no sign to tell they ever were.
 The imperial fortresses of old renown —
 Rome, Carthage, Thebes — alas! where are they now?
 In the dim distance lost and crumbled down;
 The glory that was of them, from her brow
 Took off the wreath in centuries gone by,
 And walked the Path of Shadows silently.

But, Palestine! what hopes are born of thee —
 I cannot paint their beauty — hopes that rise,

Linking this perishing mortality
 To the bright, deathless glories of the skies!
 There the sweet Babe of Bethlehem was born —
 Love's mission finished there in Calvary's gloom,
 There blazed the glories of the rising morn,
 And Death lay gasping there at Jesus' tomb!

NAPOLEON AT THE DEATH OF DUROC.

THOU who movest through the tent-lights,
 Like a cloud among the stars,
 With the flags about thee streaming
 Like the shadows of red Mars;

Art thou he who lately slumbered
 By the Nile with turbans red,
 While the children of the desert
 Wailed about thee for their dead?

Yes, thou 'rt he whose standards fluttered
 Where the Rhine's bright billows flow,
 And where brave men left their footprints
 Red in Hohenlinden's snow!

He, upon whose shattered columns,
 Darkened by the artillery's frown,
 At the awful Beresina,
 Victory's starry wings came down!

From the plains of Rio Seco
 To Siberia's mountain heights,
 Glory with thy name is blended,
 Hero of a thousand fights!

Yet thou movest through the tent-lights
 Like a cloud among the stars,
 With the flags about thee floating
 Like the shadows of red Mars.

One thy great soul loves is dying,
 One of courage true and tried,
 And the spirit faints, and triumph
 Fails before affection's tide.

Hark! the bursts of lordly music
 On the midnight rise and fall!
 Wounded Eagle of the Legion,
 Wilt thou answer to its call?

Yes, the Imperial Guard are flying
 Toward the dark tent of the king!
 Death hath taken home his captive,
 Is the tidings which they bring!

Therefore moves he through the tent-lights
 Like a cloud among the stars,
 With the flags about him trailing
 Like the shadows of red Mars!

THE ORPHAN GIRL.*

My heart shall rest where greenly flow
 The willows o'er the meadow —
 The fever of this burning brow
 Be cooled beneath their shadow.
 When summer birds go singing by,
 And sweet rain wakes the blossom,
 My weary hands shall folded lie
 Upon a peaceful bosom.

When, Nature, shall the night begin
 That morning ne'er displaces,
 And I be calmly folded in
 Thy long and still embraces?
 Dearer than to the Arab maid,
 When sands are hotly glowing,
 The deep well and tented shade,
 Were peace of thy bestowing.

* Reprinted in the volume of 1855 without the third stanza.

My soul was once a house of light,
Whose joy might not be spoken ;
But Fancy wore a wing too bright,
And now my heart is broken !
But where the violets darkly bloom,
And greenly flows the willow —
Down on the pavement of the tomb,
There waits a quiet pillow.

THE HOMELESS.

As down on the wing of the raven
Or drops on the upas-tree lie,
So darkness and blight are around me
To-night, I can scarcely tell why !
Alone in the populous city !
No hearth for *my* coming is warm,
And the stars, the sweet stars, are all hidden
On high in the cloud and the storm !

The memories of things that are saddest,
The phantoms unbidden that start
From the ashes of hopes that have perished,
Are with me to-night in my heart !
Alas ! in this desolate sorrow,
The moments are heavy and long ;
And the white-pinioned spirit of Fancy
Is weary, and hushes her song.

One word of the commonest kindness
Could make all around me seem bright,
As birds in the haunts of the summer,
Or lights in a village at night ;
But lacking that word, on my spirit
There settles the heaviest gloom,
And I sit with the midnight around me,
And long for the peace of the tomb.

A NORLAND BALLAD.*

THE train of the Norse king
 Still winds the descents,
 Leading down where the waste-ridge
 Is white with his tents ;
 The eve star is climbing
 Above where they lie,
 Like hills at the harvest-time,
 White with the rye.

Who comes through the red light
 Of bivouac and torch,
 With footsteps unslackened
 By fasting or march ?
 Majestic in sorrow,
 No white hand, I trow,
 Can take from that forehead
 Its pale seal of woe :

Past grooms that are merrily
 Combing the steeds,
 To the tent of the Norse king
 He hurriedly speeds ;
 A right noble chieftain, —
 That gloved hand, I know,
 Has swooped the ger-falcon
 And bended the bow.

Out speaks he the counsel
 He comes to afford —
 “ As loves this engloved hand
 The hilt of my sword —
 As loves the pale martyr
 The sacrament seal —
 My heart loves my liege lord
 And prays for his weal.

“ I once wooed a maiden,
 As fair to my sight
 As the bride of the Norse king
 I plead for to-night ;

* Given here as reprinted, with a few verbal changes, in the volume of 1855.

As thou dost, I tarried,
Her fond faith to prove,
And the wall of the convent
Grew up 'twixt our love.

“ Hold we to our marching
Three leagues from this ridge,
And we compass our rear-guard
With moat and with bridge:
Give one heart such shriving
As priest can afford,
And a sweet loving lady
The arms of her lord !

“ O felt you sweet pity
For half I have borne,
The scourgings, the fastings,
The lip never shorn ;
You fain would not linger
For wassail's wild sway,
But leaping to saddle,
Would hold on the way.”

Outspoke then the Norse king,
Half pity, half scorn,
“ Go back to thy fasting
And keep thee unshorn ;
No tale of a woman
Pause I to divine ;”
And from the full goblet
He quaffed the red wine.

Then fell sire and liegeman
To feasting and song ;
I ween to such masquers
The night was not long :
And but one little trembler
Stood pale in the arch,
When gave the king signal
To take up the march.

If danger forewarn him,
The omen he hides,

And mounting right gaily,
 He sings as he rides :
 "Now, bird of the border,
 Look forth for thy chief ;
 By the bones of St. Peter,
 Thy watch shall be brief !"

"Stand forth, wretched prophet,"
 He cries in his wrath,
 As his foam-covered charger
 Has struck on the path
 Leading down to his castle ;
 "Stand forth ! here is moat,
 Here is drawbridge — we charge
 Back the lie in thy throat !"

"Pause, son of the mighty,
 My bode is not lost
 Till the step of the master
 The lintel has crossed ;
 And then if my counsel
 Prove ghostly or vain " —
 The king smiled in triumph
 And flung down the rein.

Lo ! passed is the threshold,
 None answer his call ;
 Why starts he and trembles ?
 There's blood in the hall !
 His step through the corridor
 Hurriedly dies,
 'Tis only an echo
 That answers his cries.

One pale golden ringlet
 That kissed the white cheek
 Of the beautiful lady
 They find as they seek :
 There was mounting of heralds
 In hot haste, I ween,
 But the bride of the Norse king
 Was never more seen.

MORNA.

ALAS! 't is many a weary day
 Since, on a pleasant eve of May,
 I first beheld her; slight and fair
 With simple violets in her hair,
 And a pale brow of thought beneath,
 That never wore a prouder wreath;
 And roses hanging on her arm,
 Fresh gathered from the mountain side;
 And wherefore, by her mien and form
 She is not mother, wife, nor bride?
 Surely the hopes of childish years
 Still freshly on her girlhood rise;
 But no, her cheek is wet with tears —
 What do they in those heavenly eyes?
 The mournful truth they well belie;
 The roses, and the child-like form,
 I know thee, by that look and sigh,
 A pale, sweet blossom of the storm.
 And see! she pauses now, and stands
 Where step save hers has scarcely trod,
 And softly, with her milk-white hands,
 Lays down her blossoms in the sod.
 There is no marble slab to tell
 Who lies so peacefully asleep;
 'T is written on the heart as well,
 Of her who lingers there to weep.

One evening in the accustomed vale
 I missed the blossoms from the turf,
 For Morna's lovely brow was pale,
 And cold as ocean's beaten surf.
 That night I learned, beside her bier,
 The story of her grief in part. —
 For much, that mortal might not hear,
 Lay hidden in her broken heart.
 She was the child of poverty,
 And knew from birth its friendless ills;
 But never blossom fair as she
 Grew up among her native hills.
 Sweet child! she early learned to sigh;
 The roses on her cheek grew pale;

It matters not to tell thee why —
 Who is there will not guess the tale?
 He was the haughty child of pride —
 The angel of delusive dreams;
 And therefore was she not a bride
 Who slumbers by her native streams.
 The weeds of desolate years o'erspread
 The pathway where so oft she trod;
 No mourner lingers o'er her bed,
 Or bears fresh blossoms to the sod.

ALDA.*

You would have loved her, had you seen;
 The beauty of her life was prayer;
 The sweet sky never wet with showers
 A bed of yellow primrose flowers
 As sunny as the lovely sheen
 Of her loose hair.

O'er the low casement her soft hands
 Twined tenderly the creeping vines;
 Out in the woodland's shady glooms
 Loved she to gather summer blooms,
 And where, from yonder valley lands,
 The river shines.

The rain was falling when she died,
 The sky was dismal with its gloom,
 And autumn's melancholy blight
 Shook down the yellow leaves that night,
 And mournfully the low winds sighed
 About her tomb.

At midnight, near the gray old towers
 That lift their lordly pride so high,
 Was heard the dismal raven's croak,
 From the red shadows of the oak,
 And with her pale arms full of flowers,
 The dead went by.

* Reprinted in volume of 1855.

An old man now, with thin white hair,
 Oft counts his beads beneath that tree;
 Sometimes when noontide's glow is bright,
 And sometimes in the lonesome night,
 He breathes the dead girl's name in prayer
 On bended knee.

A shepherd boy — so runs the tale —
 Once, as he pent his harmless flocks,
 Crossed the sweet maid, her lap all full
 Of lilies pied, and cowslips dull,
 Weaving up fillets, red and pale,
 For her long locks.

Sweetly the eve-star lit the towers,
 When, homeward riding from the chase,
 Down from his coal-black steed there leapt
 A courtier gay, whose dark plumes swept
 A cloud of ringlets bound with flowers,
 And love-lit face.

Summer is gone — the casement low,
 With dead vines darkened — winds are loud;
 Alda, no more the gray old towers
 Shut from thee heaven's sweet border flowers.
 Comb back the locks of golden glow,
 And bring the shroud.

THE PIRATE.

ELZIMINA! maid of ocean,
 With the bosom of soft light,
 Seest thou, settling down between us,
 Stormy, never-ending night?
 Through thy curtains of pale splendor,
 As the rosy lamp-light falls,
 Comes there not a memory, tender,
 Of my dungeon's stony walls?

Elzimina! maid of ocean,
 I can see thee, pale and meek,
 Wiping with thy amber tresses
 The salt waters from thy cheek —
 Struggling like a beam of brightness
 Towards my closing prison-door,
 With thy arms of tender whiteness
 Stretched to clasp me once, once more!

Elzimina! maid of ocean,
 But the love of heaven's sweet shore
 Or the dread of hell could tempt me
 That dark parting to live o'er.
 Will there not some mystic token
 Fill thy heart with bitter pain
 When the sod lies cold and broken
 Where thy head so oft hath lain?

Elzimina! maid of ocean,
 Rising from the hills I see,
 Thin and white, the mists of morning,
 That shall never set for me!
 Wrecks of vessels lost and stranded
 Filled thy soft heart with alarm,
 And the gray wings, beating landward,
 Warned the sailor of the storm.

When, O lovely maid of ocean,
 From the rocking deck with me,
 Saw ye last the fiery sunset
 Paint the arteries of the sea?
 When the red moon's reddest shadow
 Like a mantle clasped thy form,
 And the green waves like a meadow
 Rose and fell before the storm.

Elzimina! dream of beauty,
 'Neath the lips that dare not speak,
 Like the moonlight's falling crimson
 Burned thy lily brow and cheek.
 Destiny than will is stronger,
 And thy gentle eyes must weep,
 When my red flag lights no longer
 The blue bosom of the deep!

Elzimina! maid of ocean,
Farewell now to thee and hope,
E'en thy white hands cannot save me
From the coiling gallows rope.
From the scaffold, newly risen,
Creeps a shadow, dull and slow,
O'er the damp wall of my prison —
God have mercy on thy woe!

THE ORPHAN'S DREAM OF LOVE.

OH! how my very heart could weep
To think that none will see nor know;
Love's fountain may be still when deep,
And silent, though it overflow.
But blossoms may unheeded grow,
Whose leaves the sweetest balm enfold,
And streams be noiseless in their flow
That wander over sands of gold.
O love! thou word that sums all bliss —
Thou that no language ever told —
Best gift of brighter worlds to this, —
They err, and oh! their hearts are cold,
Who hope to speak thee: — such would seem
A thing too little worth to prize,
And mine is an ideal dream
The world can never realize!
They find, whose spirits blend with mine,
Thy best interpreter a sigh;
Bring their wreath offering to the shrine,
And lay their hearts down silently.
There comes at times, on viewless wings,
And nestles in my heart, a bird —
Of Heaven, I think — for oh! it sings
The sweetest songs I ever heard.
When first it came, 't was long ago,
For childhood's years were scarcely by,
Summer and evening time, I know,
For stars were floating in the sky.
With sunbeams on the hills at play,

And gathering moss and braiding flowers,
I had been out the long, long day
Till twilight came with dewy hours;
And treading carelessly along
The pathway, through the starlit glen,
I heard this sudden flow of song,
Which I had never heard till then.
I recked not of the time I stayed
Enraptured, so the melting lay
With sweetness filled the thickening shade;
But when at length I turned away
The stars had streaked with silver beams
The dusky mantle midnight wore,
And I was dreaming such sweet dreams
As I had never dreamed before!
I was an orphan — childhood's years
Had passed in heaviness of heart;
No second self had soothed my tears,
Or in my gladness bore a part.
But then — perchance the thought was weak,
Though vainly by the lips suppress,
For aught of which the heart can speak
Is never long a secret guest —
I thought that there might yet be won
What in the world is daily found,
"Something to love, to lean upon,
To clasp affection's tendrils round."
O, if love's dreams be all so sweet
As those which then to me were given,
Two kindred spirits, when they meet,
Must surely taste the bliss of heaven!
It may be, why I scarcely know,
But so to me it never seemed,
It may be fancy made it so,
But as I wandered on, I dreamed
That everything I looked upon
Was full of loveliness and light;
The starry wreath that night had on
Before had never shone so bright.
And with such blessings in his path,
I marvelled man should ever sin —
Oh! earth a crowning radiance hath
When all is light and peace within!

But since that vision of the glen
 Long weary years have o'er me flown,
 And left me what they found me then,
 Within the wide, wide world alone.

THE BLUE SCARF.

THE soldier of an elder clime —
 His bosom seamed with scars —
 Has oft beguiled my wanderings
 With legends of the wars.
 Once as we slacked our bridle-reins
 To gain a rising hill,
 He told a tale of other times
 That I remember still.

Sunset was slanting rosily,
 And every cloud on high
 Was like a floating pyramid
 Of blossoms in the sky.
 "There 's something," said the aged sire,
 "In everything I see
 That brings again the lights and shades
 Of other days to me:

"For one, of all my brethren
 The bravest in the fight,
 Stood with me in the crimson haze
 Of just so sweet a night.
 We heard, against the shelving rocks,
 The dashing of the seas,
 And saw the summer sun go down
 From just such hills as these.

"There never was a stronger arm
 In any field of war,
 Nor heart that beat more fearlessly
 Beneath a knight's broad star.
 For ever in the hottest fight
 We saw his scarf of blue:
 His eye repelled the curious —
 His name we never knew.

“ He never joined in revelry,
And never wept the slain,
And never either smiled or sighed
For any loss or gain :
For when the wings of victory
Were shining o'er our host,
I 've seen him in his tent as sad
As if the day were lost.

“ Once grappling with an enemy
Whose fingers, dropping blood,
Left on his flaunting scarf their print—
I slew him where he stood.
For this he seemed to love me more
Than aught of living breath,
And at the peril of his soul
Thrice rescued me from death.

“ And when all hacked with gaping wounds
That left me many a scar,
The long and weary march was his
Of the blue scarf and star.
And when sweet voices called me back
From warfare's stern array,
He girt my heavy armor on
And shared my homeward way.

“ The old ancestral hills, at last,
That overhung the sea,
Were reached, and eve put on a smile
As if to welcome me.
Then said the knight, most mournfully,
' Our path is one no more ;
Thine to yon ancient castle leads,
And mine is by the shore.'

“ When at the morning hour I saw
The heavy shades of night
Break sullenly and roll away
Before the welcome light,
Without a hand upon his rein,
As there was wont to be,
His steed, with all his housings on,
Stood champing by the sea.

“ And there, all wet and tangled, lay
 The bright blue scarf he wore,
 Among the sea-weed and the sand,
 Washed out upon the shore.
 O there were dark imaginings —
 They may have been untrue —
 For blent with that insignia
 Was all we ever knew.”

THE STRANGER'S EPITAPH.

'T is but a sad and simple line,
 Portraying well the sleeper's doom ;
 I pray it never may be thine —
 Stoop down and read it on her tomb.
 She gave it me the night she died ;
 I never thought to know the rest,
 Believing that her maiden pride
 Was fain to lock it in her breast.

“ *She perished of a broken heart,*” —
 In truth a sad and simple line ;
 If this her story doth impart,
 I pray it never may be mine !

The time I never shall forget,
 When, with her dark eyes full of tears,
 She told me that the seal was set
 Upon the limit of her years :
 And even ere she ceased to speak
 What secretly before I knew,
 The hectic deepening on her cheek
 Attested that the words were true.
 It was not that she feared to lie
 On the cold pillow of the tomb ;
 But sometimes, though we scarce know why,
 The heart is full, and tears will come.

Whatever griefs were hers to bear,
 They surely had no taint of sin ;

A temple outwardly so fair
 Could only have been pure within :
 And sometimes when the fountain stirred
 Too palpably within her breast,
 A sigh, a tear, a broken word,
 Have left her secret more than guessed.
 As from this vale we watched the stir
 Of the light billows of the sea,
 Both sadly musing — I of her,
 And she of anything but me —
 She warbled something in a tone
 As light and joyous as a bird's,
 (It never sounded like her own
 Unless the heart were in the words,)
 Something of summer fruit and flowers,
 Of waving meadows and ripe grain —
 Of home and hearth, and wedded hours,
 Then pausing suddenly — "'T is vain,
 'T is more than vain," she sadly said,
 "To nurse these haunting visions now :
 The nuptial and the bridal bed
 Were never meant for me and thou.
 O thou for whom I could have died,
 I am as nothing unto thee !
 Well, hast thou not another bride,
 And wherefore should I care to be ?"
 Then placing her thin hand in mine,
 Half sad, half playfully, she said,
 "I fain would have this simple line
 Upon my tomb when I am dead."
 Another evening came — the breeze
 Was lightly sporting with the wave,
 And wild birds dropping in the trees,
 Whose shadows rested on her grave.

Three summer-times the grass had grown
 Unshaven on her lowly bed,
 And autumn's yellow leaves been strown
 As often o'er the slumbering dead,
 When on the evening of a day
 As beautiful as that she died,
 A harper and a maiden gay, —
 Haply she may have been his bride,

Haply a sister, or a friend,
 I know not, — but her joyous laugh
 She checked, and here I saw them bend
 To read the stranger's epitaph.
 And both alike were young and fair,
 And both were happy, it may be,
 And yet, though lightly touched of care,
 Some dark thread in the destiny
 Of one must surely have had place —
 Leaning against this solemn yew,
 And muffling from the light his face,
 He wept as man may scarcely do ;
 It seemed as if some thought of pain
 By the sad epitaph was stirred,
 For oft he turned, then came again,
 And read it over word by word.
 The twilight's rosy hours went by,
 And evening deepened into gloom ;
 The last stars trembled in the sky,
 And still I saw them by the tomb.
 And once since then in every year,
 What time the reaper loves to see,
 I note the self-same minstrel here,
 And marvel what his grief can be.

She perished of a broken heart —
 We can but guess the harper's fate ;
 But surely thus to die apart
 Were better than to meet *too late* !

 THE BETRAYAL.*

TELL me when the stars are flashing
 In the northern sky so blue,
 Or when morning's tender crimson
 Sweetly burns among the dew,
 Comes there no reproachful whisper
 From the mornings and the eves,
 When Hope's white buds into beauty
 Opened like the faint young leaves ?

* Given here as reprinted, with slight changes, in the volume of 1855.

Ay, thou feel'st, despite thy silence —
 That betrayal burns thy cheek ;
 Even to Love's forgiving bosom
 There be thoughts thou canst not speak !
 From the roses of that bridal,
 The dark price of nameless woe,
 Thou mayst not unbind the curses
 Till thy last of suns is low !

Lost and broken is the music
 That with beauty filled the night, —
 Melted from the frozen branches
 Are the frost-stars glistening bright, —
 When a maid with trembling bosom
 Watched a ne'er returning steed,
 Cleaving through the silver shadows,
 On and on, his shaft-like speed !

Faint against the ringing pavement,
 Fainter still the hoof-strokes beat ;
 Scarcely can she tell the shimmer
 Of the flint-sparks from the sleet.
 Years are gone : the village hilltops
 Redden with the sunset's glow ;
 With a lap all bright with blossoms
 Still the summers come and go.

With a cheek grown thinner, whiter,
 And the dark locks put away
 From a brow of patient beauty,
 Dwells the maiden of my lay —
 Dwells she where the peaceful shadow
 Of her native hills is thrown,
 Binding up the wounds of others
 All the better for her own.

THE CHILDREN.

COME, sit down, little children,
 Beneath these green old trees,
 There's such a world of sweetness
 In the kisses of the breeze :

Now push away the tresses
From your young and healthful brows,
And listen to the music
Up above us in the boughs.

How pleasant is the stirring
Where the leaves are thick and bright;
And the wings of birds are floating,
Like the golden summer light.
The fragrance of the brier-rose
Is sweet upon the air;
And the pinks and dark-leaved violets
Are scattered everywhere.

The lilies hang their silver cups
Close to the water's edge,
And the pebbles are veined deeply
As the berries in the hedge.
But where yon winding pathway
Along the hill is trod,
'T is the mourner's heavy footstep
That has worn away the sod.

The smooth white stones, like spectres,
Are standing in the shade,
To mark the narrow chambers
Where the old and young are laid.
There hides the deadly night-shade
Where the tall and bent grass waves;
And willow's tresses, long and sad,
Are trailed above the graves.

Not with the gentle falling
Of the early summer rain;
Not with the pleasant rushing
Of the sickle in the grain;
Nor when the crimson mantle
Of the morn is o'er them spread,
Shall the pale hands be unfolded
From the bosoms of the dead.

But there 's a morn approaching
When the sleepers shall arise,
And go up and be with angels
In the ever-cloudless skies.

Oh, earth is very beautiful
 With sunshine and with flowers;
 But there 's a world, my little friends,
 Of purer hearts than ours.

TO MARY.*

OH, will affection's tendrils twine
 About that summer-time for aye,
 When, midway 'twixt thy home and mine
 The quiet village churchyard lay! —
 With stars beginning to ascend,
 The nighthawks scooping through the air —
 Dost thou remember, oh, my friend,
 How often we have parted there?

That summer was a sunlit sea,
 Reflecting neither cloud nor frown,
 Yet in its bright wave noiselessly
 Some ventures of the heart went down;
 Blest be the one that still outrides
 The silent but tumultuous strife
 Of hopes and fears, the heaving tides,
 That beat against the shore of life!

The flowers run wild that used to be
 So softly tended by thy hand —
 Colors of beauty struck at sea,
 And drifted backward to the land;
 Breathing of havens whence we sailed,
 Visions of lovelight seen and fled,
 Swift barks of gladness met and hailed,
 Of beacon fires, and land ahead!

To-night, sweet friend, the light and shade
 Are trembling softly in my heart;
 A hush upon my soul is laid —
 Our paths henceforth must lie apart;
 In the dim chamber where I sit,
 Fears, hopes, and memories rise and blend,
 Like cloud wastes with the sunshine lit —
 Only with them art thou, my friend!

* Given here as reprinted, with a few verbal changes, in the volume of 1855.

THE LOVER'S VISION.*

THE mist o'er the dark woods
Hangs whiter than snow,
And the dead leaves keep surging
And moaning below!
Who treads through their dim aisles?
Now answer me fair—
'T is not the bat's flabby wing
Beating the air!

A sweet vision rises,
Though dimly defined,
And a hand on my forehead
Lies cold as the wind!
I clasp the white bosom,
No heart beats beneath;
From the lips, once so lovely,
Forth issues no breath.

The red moon was climbing
The rough rocks behind,
And the dead leaves kept moaning,
As now, in the wind;
The white stars were shining
Through cloud-rifts above,
When first in these dim woods
I told her my love.

Half fond, half reproachful,
She gazed in my face,
And, shrinking, she suffered
My fervid embrace:
And speaking not, lingered
With love's bashful art,
Till the light of her dark eyes
Burned down to my heart!

* Given here as reprinted, with a few verbal changes, in the volume of 1855.

Like the leaf of the lily
 When Autumn is chill,
 The tiny hand trembled
 That now is so still;
 And I knew the sweet passion,
 Her lips only sighed,
 In the hush of her chamber
 The night that she died!

O'er the shroud of the pale one
 I made then a vow
 To kiss back the crimson
 Of life to her brow;
 If she from the still grave
 Would come, as she hath,
 And walk at the midnight
 This lone forest path.

The cloud-rifts are closing,
 The white stars are gone;
 But the hushed step of darkness
 Moves solemnly on.
 I call the dead maiden,
 But win no reply —
 She has gone, and forever, —
 Would I, too, could die.

MELODY.

WHERE white in the jungles
 Lay bones of the dead,
 All night the wild lioness
 Howled as she fed:
 The wind hot and sultry,
 And scarcely awake,
 Through the dust of the desert-sand
 Crept like a snake.

But a beacon gleamed redly
 The blue rocks along,
 Where a golden-tressed maiden
 Sat singing her song:

With her passionate warble
 The white sea-mist stirred,
 And a boat to the desert shore
 Flew like a bird.

The deep burning blushes
 That cover her brow,
 In a lover's embraces
 Are all hidden now.
 Wild rover of ocean,
 Proud scorner of storms,
 Guard fondly the treasure
 Thus clasped in thine arms.

As the eyes of the pilgrim,
 Wherever he be,
 Turn, down-trodden city
 Of beauty, to thee:
 Turn thou, in life's pauses
 Of dimness and care,
 To the sweet love of woman,
 That all things will dare!

 TO LUCY.

THE leaves are rustling mournfully,
 The yellow leaves and sere;
 For Winter with his naked arms
 And chilling breath is here.
 The rills that all the autumn-time
 Went singing to the sea,
 Are waiting in their icy chains
 For Spring to set them free.
 No bird is heard the livelong day
 Upon its mates to call,
 And coldly and capriciously
 The slanting sunbeams fall.

There is a shadow on my heart
 I cannot fling aside;
 Sweet sister of my soul! with thee
 Hope's brightest roses died.

I'm thinking of the pleasant hours
 That vanished long ago,
 When summer was the goldenest,
 And all things caught its glow :
 I'm thinking where the violets
 In fragrant beauty lay,
 Of the buttercups and primroses
 That blossomed in our way.

I see the willow, and the spring
 O'ergrown with purple sedge ;
 The lilies and the scarlet pinks
 That grew along the hedge ;
 The meadow, where the elm tree threw
 Its shadows dark and wide,
 And sister-flowers in beauty grew
 And perished side by side :
 O'er the accustomed vale and hill
 Now Winter's robe is spread ;
 The beetle and the moth are still,
 And all the flowers are dead.

I mourn for thee, sweet sister,
 When the wintry hours are here ;
 But when the days grow long and bright,
 And skies are blue and clear —
 Oh, when the Summer's banquet,
 Among the flowers is spread,
 My spirit is most sorrowful
 That thou art with the dead.
 We laid thee in thy narrow bed
 When autumn winds were high —
 Thy life had taught us how to live,
 And then we learned to die.

AN EVENING TALE.*

COME, thou of the drooping eyelid,
 And cheek that is meekly pale,
 Give over thy pensive musing
 And list to a lonesome tale ;

* Reprinted under title of "The Convent" in the volume of 1855.

For hearts that are torn and bleeding,
Or heavy as thine, and lone,
May find in another's sorrow
Forgetfulness of their own.
So heap on the blazing fagots
And trim the lamp anew,
And I'll tell you a mournful story —
I would that it were not true!

The bright red clouds of the sunset
On the tops of the mountains lay,
And many and goodly vessels
Were anchored below in the bay;
We saw the walls of the city,
And could hear its vexing din,
As our mules, with their nostrils smoking,
Drew up at a wayside inn:
The hearth was ample and blazing,
For the night was something chill,
But my heart, though I knew not wherefore,
Sank down with a sense of ill.

That night I stood on the terrace
O'erlooking a blossomy vale,
And the gray old walls of a convent,
That loomed in the moonlight pale —
Till the lamp of the sweet Madonna
Grew faint as if burning low,
And the midnight bell in the turret
Swung heavily to and fro —
When just as its last sweet music
Came back from the echoing hill,
And the hymn of the ghostly friars
In the fretted aisle grew still —
On a rude bench, hid among olives,
I noted a maiden fair,
Alone, with the night wind playing
In the locks of her raven hair.
Thrice came the sound of her sighing,
And thrice were her red lips pressed
With wild and passionate fervor
To the cross that hung on her breast:

But her bearing was not the bearing
 That to saintly soul belongs,
 Albeit she chanted the fragments
 Of holy and beautiful songs.

'T was the half hour after the midnight,
 And, so like that it might be now,
 The full moon was meekly climbing
 Over the mountain's brow —
 When the step of the singing maiden
 In the corridor lightly trod,
 And I presently saw her kneeling
 In prayer to the mother of God!
 On the leaves of her golden missal
 Darkly her loose locks lay,
 And she cried, "Forgive me, sweet Virgin,
 And mother of Jesus, I pray!"

When the music was softly melting
 From the eloquent lips of morn,
 Within the walls of the convent
 Those beautiful locks were shorn:
 And wherefore the veil was taken
 Was never revealed by time,
 But Charity sweetly hopeth
 For sorrow, and not for crime.

SAILOR'S SONG.

HA! the bird has fled my arrow —
 Though the sunshine of its plumes,
 Like the summer dew, is dropping
 On its native valley blooms:
 In the shadow of its parting wing
 Shall I sit down and pine,
 That it pours its song of beauty
 On another heart than mine?

From thy neck, my trusty charger,
 I will strip away the rein,
 But to crop the flowery prairie
 May it never bend again!

With thy hoof of flinty silver,
 And thy blue eye shining bright,
 Through the red mists of the morning
 Speed like a beam of light.

I'm sick of the dull landsmen —
 'T is time, my lads, that we
 Were crowding on the canvas,
 And standing out to sea!
 Ever making from the headlands
 Where the wrecker's beacons ride
 Red and deadly, like the shadow
 Of the lion's brinded hide;

And hugging close the islands,
 That are belted with the blue,
 Where a thousand birds are singing
 In the dells of light and dew;
 Time unto* our songs the billows
 With their dimpled hands shall keep,
 As we're ploughing the white furrows
 In the bosom of the deep!

In watching the light flashing
 Like live sparks from our prow,
 With but the bitter kisses
 Of the cold surf on my brow,
 May my voyage at last be ended,
 And my sleep be in the tide,
 With the sea-waves clasped around me.
 Like the white arms of a bride.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD.†

WHEN first the skies grow warm and bright
 And fill with light the hours,
 And, in her pale, faint robes, the Spring
 Is calling up the flowers, —

* Corrected to "to" in the Boston Public Library copy.

† This poem was rewritten by the author in later years, and a fifth stanza was added.

When children, with unslipperéd feet,
 Go forth with hearts of glee,
 To the straight and even furrows
 Where the yellow corn must be, —
 What a beautiful embodiment
 Of ease, devoid of pride,
 Is the good old-fashioned homestead,
 With doors still open wide!

But when the happiest time is come
 That to the year belongs,
 Of uplands bright with harvest gold,
 And meadows full of songs, —
 When fields of yet unripened corn
 And daily garnering stores
 Remind the thrifty husbandman
 Of ampler threshing-floors, —
 How pleasant, from the din and dust
 Of the thoroughfare aloof,
 Seems the old-fashioned homestead,
 With steep and mossy roof!

When home the woodsman plods, with axe
 Upon his shoulder swung,
 And in the knotted apple tree
 Are scythe and sickle hung, —
 When light the swallows twitter
 'Neath the rafters of the shed,
 And the table on the ivied porch
 With decent care is spread, —
 The hearts are lighter and freer
 Than beat in the populous town,
 In the old-fashioned homestead,
 With gables sharp and brown!

When the flowers of Summer perish
 In the cold and bitter rain,
 And the little birds with weary wings
 Have gone across the main, —
 When curls the blue smoke upward
 Toward the bluer sky,
 And cold along the naked hills
 And white the snow-drifts lie, —

In legends of love and glory
 They forget the cloud and storm,
 In the old-fashioned homestead,
 With hearth-stone ample and warm !

LIGHTS OF GENIUS.*

THESE are the pillars, on whose tops
 The white stars rest like capitals,
 Whence every living spark that drops
 Kindles and blazes as it falls ;
 And if the arch-fiend rise to pluck,
 Or stoop to crush their beauty down,
 A thousand other sparks are struck,
 That Glory settles in her crown.
 The huge ship, with its brassy share,
 Ploughs on to lead their light its course,
 And veins of iron cleave the air
 To waft it from its burning source ;

All, from the insect's tiny wings,
 And the small drop of morning dew,
 To the wide universe of things,
 The light is shining, burning through.
 The light that makes the poet's page
 Of stories beautiful as truth,
 And pours upon the locks of age
 The glory of eternal growth.†

I KNOW THOU ART FREE.

I KNOW thou art free from earth's sordid control,
 In the beautiful mansions above —
 That sorrow can never be flung o'er the soul
 That rests in the bosom of Love.
 I know that the wing of thy spirit is furled
 By the palm-shaded fountains of bliss,
 That erst in its strife for the bright upper world
 Was bruised and enfeebled in this.

* Given here as reprinted, shortened, and improved, in the edition of 1855.

† Changed to "youth" in later editions.

For oft as I gaze on thy dwelling of light,
 When the glory of stars is on high,
 I hear in my visions, as glowingly bright,
 The flutter of wings in the sky :
 And in the sweet islands that slumber afar
 From the tomb and the desert and sea,
 With glory around thee that nothing can mar,
 My soul hath revealings of thee.

But still like a captive confined from the day,
 My heart doth in bitterness pine ;
 And sigh for release from its prison of clay,
 And a blissful reunion with thine :
 Save when I am come to the heavenly shrine
 To pour supplication and prayer,
 For then doth my spirit seem nearer to thine,
 And lay down its mantle of care.

A GOOD MAN.

A MAN he was, of thin and silver hairs,
 Whose pious hands and never wearied feet
 Kept from a sacred field the enemy's tares,
 And nursed to vigorous growth the precious wheat.

Though he had loved and kept the rule of right,
 After the strictest manner, from his youth,
 Often his prayer went up for larger light,
 And deeper, holier reverence for truth.

Hard by the village church his mansion stood,
 Modest of bound, yet hospitably wide ;
 His highest eloquence was doing good,
 His simple meekness the rebuke of pride.

Oh! vainly cheerful glowed the evening fire,
 Amply in vain the housewife's board was spread,
 That night when homeward came the toil-worn sire
 And told his children the good man was dead.

Within God's holy temple there was woe —
 Woe that the Book of Life might scarce assuage ;
 The tremulous voice was dumb, and the white flow
 Of reverend locks swept not the sacred page.

Oft had that man of God, while living, said,
 "Wherefore, my children, do you vainly weep ?
 The friend you mourn so sadly is not dead,
 But only fallen in the Lord asleep !"

For he had preached, with zeal that would not cease,
 Christ and the resurrection, not in vain ;
 For, like a benediction full of peace,
 Came the blest memory to the weeping train.

And they rose up with souls less sadly dim,
 Young men, and maidens, and the bowed with care,
 Feeling that death had only been to him
 God's hour of answer to a life of prayer.

HYMN OF THE TRUE MAN.

PEACE to the True Man's ashes ! Weep for those
 Whose days in old delusions have grown dim :
 Such lives as his are triumphs, and their close
 An immortality. Weep not for him.

As feathers wafted from the eagle's wings
 Lie bright among the rocks they cannot warm,
 So lie the flowery lays that Genius brings,
 In the cold turf that wraps his honored form.

A practical rebuker of vain strife,
 Bolder in deeds than words, from beardless youth
 To the white hairs of age, he made his life
 A beautiful consecration to the Truth.

Virtue, neglected long, and trampled down,
 Grew stronger in the echo of his name ;
 And, shrinking self-condemned beneath his frown,
 The cheek of harlotry grew red with shame.

Serene with conscious peace, he strewed his way
 With sweet humanities, the growth of love ;
 Shaping to right his actions, day by day,
 Faithful to this world and to that above.

The ghosts of blind belief and hideous crime,
 Of spirit-broken loves and hopes betrayed,
 That flit among the broken walls of Time,
 Are by the True Man's exorcisms laid.

Blest is his life who to himself is true,
 And blest his death — for memory, when he dies,
 Comes, with a lover's eloquence, to renew
 Our faith in manhood's upward tendencies.

Weep for the self-abased, and for the slave,
 And for God's children darkened with the smoke
 Of the red altar — not for him whose grave
 Is greener than the mistletoe of the oak.

HYMN OF THE STUDENT OF NATURE.

“ I have learned to lean on my own soul, and not to look elsewhere
 for the reeds that a wind can break ” — BULWER.

I KNOW my humble lineage — that my way
 Has led among life's valleys, and does still ;
 But destiny is as the potter's clay,
 And we can make it glorious if we will !

Smiles settled on the lips of one who died
 In the quick tortures of a fiery bed ;
 And they by less severe ordeals tried
 May surely to an equal strength be wed.

True, many that I deemed my friends are gone,
 But, Nature, thou at least wilt still be kind ;
 For from thy naked bosom I have drawn
 The sweetest draughts I ever hope to find.

Out in the tents of summer I have heard
 Music that made me happy, not of art,
 But the wild song of some sweet-throated bird,
 That flowed, as all things best do, from the heart.

I will not chase the phantoms that are fled,
 Nor like a love-sick dreamer pray to die,
 Though I may have no shelter for my head
 But the blue curtain of God's equal sky.

But in some flowery nook, away from care,
 Fanning* my heart down to a pulse more even,
 I'll build me beautiful palaces of air
 For my soul's children, beings sweet as heaven.

And these shall be my friends, for friends like these
 Can trouble with no yearning to depart,
 And the cold kisses of the mountain breeze
 Wake not the tale of Indust† in the heart!

LIFE'S ANGELS.

O STILL, and dumb, and silent Earth,
 Unlock thy dim and pulseless arms;
 Wandering and weary from her birth,
 Thy child seeks refuge from life's storms!

Still from my heart a shadow lifts,
 And through my soul a lost voice thrills,
 As the soft starlight's golden drifts
 Sweep nightly o'er the western hills.

Life has its angels, though unkept
 The lovelight which their beauty brings,
 And though the blue heavens are not swept
 With the white radiance of their wings.

* Corrected to "Taming" in Boston Public Library copy.

† Corrected to "Judas" in Boston Public Library copy.

But a dark shadow — not the grave's —
 Has clasped the one I love from me,
 And winds have built their walls of wave *
 Between us in the eternal sea.

I dare not drink the mantling cup,
 Nor light the shrine in Love's sweet name,
 Lest from the dark be lifted up
 Pale hands to smother down the flame.

The music on the lip of morn,
 Wings glancing on the summer air,
 Love's rose-crown — all things earthly born —
 Are links that bind me to despair.

Whene'er the fires of sunset's glow
 Stream bright across some silver cloud,
 I think about the wavy flow
 Of long loose tresses o'er the shroud.

No more I tremble with sweet awe,
 For all life's shining waves grow dim,
 When there one burning star I saw
 Quench its bright axle to the rim.

Borne down and weary with life's storms,
 O Earth, receive me to thy breast;
 Unlock thy dim and pulseless arms,
 And cool this burning heart to rest.

THE PILGRIM.

THE child of an Eternal Sire!
 Great waves of burning desert sand
 And mountains with their tongues of fire
 Are but as dew-drops in His hand.

O'ershadowed by the gallows tree,
 And moaning like the hunted Jew,

* Probably a misprint for "wall of waves."

Our guilt is like a mighty sea,
With God's sweet mercy shining through!

How deep that mercy, and how wide!
The child of lost and recreant years
Can in a Father's bosom hide
His sins, his sorrows, and his tears!

Once, when the noontide's fervid rays
Like sickles in the dim grass lay,
Bent forward on his staff to gaze
For the loved city far away, —

I crossed a pilgrim, and I knew,
More by an instinct of the soul
Than by his white hairs, thin and few,
That he might never reach the goal.

And when I saw him onward start,
With fainter hope, and step more slow,
God knoweth that within my heart
The measure could have gauged his woe!

For I have seen all sad above,
And all below in bitterest strife,
When e'en the planet of my love
Sat darkly in my house of life.

And sometimes, my poor bleeding feet
Far from the cooling fountain wave,
I 've thought no shadow half so sweet
As that which darkened o'er the grave!

The temples, palaces, and towers
Of the old time I may not see,
Nor 'neath my reverent tread thy flowers
Bend meekly down, Gethsemane!

By Jordan's wave I may not stand,
Nor climb the hills of Galilee,
Nor break with my poor sinful hand
The crosier of apostasy!

Nor pitch my tent 'neath Salem's sky,
As faith's impassioned fervor bids,
Nor hear the wild bird's startled cry
From Egypt's awful pyramids.

I have not stood, and may not stand
Where Hermon's dew the blossoms feed,
Nor where the flint-sparks light the sand
Beneath the Arab lancer's steed.

Woe for the dark thread in my lot,
That still hath kept my feet away
From pressing toward the hallowed spot
Where Mary and the young child lay.

But oh! I thank the gracious Power,
That I, in nature's ponderous tome,
Can find a splendor in the flower,
A glory in the stars of home.

And haply o'er those planets bright,
That in the blue vault nightly spring,
Are farther worlds of larger light,
Each counted as a little thing

By Him, who day's wide splendor planned,
And gave, to glorify the night,
Those visible jewels of His hand —
Saying at first, Let there be light!

But with great systems for His care,
Beyond the farthest star we see,
He bends to hear the pleading prayer
Of every sinful child like me.

And in the ashes of the fears
That darken o'er the closing strife,
Faith, with her soft eyes full of tears,
Strews blossoms from the Tree of Life.

PITIED LOVE.*

FAINTLY the sunset's sinking fires
Redden the waters, and above
Tip the gray oaken boughs like spires,
While, struggling like despair with love,

Are rustling shadows dropt with gold,
Deepening and nearing with the night,
Until at length they close, and fold
In their embrace the fainting light.

Up from the river blue mists curl,
The dew shines in the vale below,
And overhead, like beads of pearl,
The white buds of the mistletoe.

Lo! while the shade and light ingrain,
A dryad dweller of the tree,
Like the hushed murmur of soft pain,
Is pouring its sweet note for thee,

Lone one, beneath whose drooping head
The red leaves of the autumn lie, —
The winds have stooped to make that bed,
O lonesome watcher of the sky!

Lifting his head a little up
From the poor pillow where it lay,
And pushing from his forehead pale
The long damp tresses all away:

He told me, with the eager haste
Of one who dare not trust his words,
He knew a mortal with a voice
As low and lovely as that bird's.

But that he saw once in a dell
Separate from that a weary space,
A pale, meek lily, that as well
Might woo that old oak's green embrace,

* The author acknowledges her indebtedness to Coleridge for one or two passages in this poem.— *Author's Note.*

As for his heart to hope that she,
Whose palace chamber ne'er grew dim,
Would leave the loves of royalty
To wander through the world with him.

Once, leaping in a murderous cave
He saved her from an outlaw band,
And with such tenderness she chid
When twice he kissed her lily hand.

With the sweet burden as he flew,
He dared to gaze upon her face,
And she forgave him, though he drew
Closer and closer the embrace.

Why shook the fair form with alarm?
The proud Earl Say to meet her came,
And shrinking from that boyish arm,
Her cheek grew darkly red with shame!

And he, scarce knowing what he did,
But feeling that his heart was broke,
Fled from her pitying glance, and hid
In the cold shadows of that oak;

Where, as he said, she came at night
And clasped him from the bitter air,
With her soft arms of tender white,
And the dark beauty of her hair.

But when the morning lit the spray,
And hung its soft wreaths o'er his head,
The lovely lady passed away
Through mist of glory, pale and red.

So bitter grew his heaving sighs,
So mournful dark the glance he raised,
I looked upon him earnestly,
And saw the gentle boy was crazed!

How fair he was! it made me sad,
And soft as sad my bosom grew,

To think no earthly hand could build
That beautiful ruin up anew.

But pointing where the full moon's light
Lay redly on the village hills,
I told him that my hearth that night
Was brighter: — How my bosom thrills,

Remembering how he hid his face
In earth's cold bosom, cold and bare,
And told me of the warm embrace
That meekly, sweetly kept him there.

Closer the dismal raven croaks —
Flutters the wild-bird nigh and nigher —
A colder shadow than the oak's
Has stilled that bosom's pulse of fire.

ALONE BY THE TOMB.

WHERE solemn and heavy the shadow
Of the old gray church is spread,
And the grass is crushed down and faded,
I muse on the early dead.

Not the voiceless peace of my chamber,
Nor the song, nor the hearth of light,
Nor the vistas of golden visions,
Could quiet my soul to-night.

I would think of the meekness and beauty
Of gentle and noiseless lives,
And not of the thwarted endeavor
Of the spirit that hopes and strives.

Of the sweetness of household duty ;
Of the loves that never depart ;
And not of the plummet of agony,
Sounding the depths of the heart.

The starlight is dimly burning
 In the leaves, but the birds are still,
 And no light gleams from the chambers,
 Narrow, and low, and chill.

I can hear the dull bat flitting,
 And the wind in the chancel moan —
 O how can my feet walk firmly
 The valley of shade alone!

Sole friend of my heart, be with me
 In the time of the parting strife,
 And read me the simple story
 Of the Cross, from the Book of Life.

'T will strengthen me more than the greenness
 Of the rosied hills above,
 To die on that pillow of beauty —
 The bosom of faithful love.

TWO VISIONS.

I SAW a shadow through the sunshine pass,
 Bright and unsteady, but without a sound,
 As a sleek serpent might divide the grass,
 Writhing and quivering with a mortal wound;
 So came the thing, or shadow, nigh and nigher —
 But my eyes, weary with excess of pain,
 Could tell not whether scales or sparks of fire
 Glistened and glinted on its tortuous train.

'T was gone, and where it vanished from my view
 I saw a red and horrible mist arise,
 And as it drifted thinly, straining through
 The fixed and ghastly shining of dead eyes.

And there were worms of shifting hues that lay
 Catching the radiance of the sinking sun,
 As sick to dizzy death I turned away,
 Loosening a helm, close where a fountain run

There was a woman with pale woe distressed,
 'Neath her long tresses, damp with evening's breath,
 Claspings a youth all softly, whose torn breast
 Was crimson with the bitter blood of death.

And as she looked upon him, her sweet eyes
 Grew moist with tenderer sorrow than might suit
 The severance of worn and common ties ;
 But though her frail frame shook, her lips were mute

He died, and rude men covered him away
 From her embraces, with the common dust ;
 And though her cheek grew whiter than the spray
 Of the vexed ocean, she forebore to trust
 Her sorrow to the consonance of words ;
 But, weaving up his name with her sad song —
 A broken warble like a wounded bird's —
 She passed unconsciously the worshipping throng.

But of her sufferings the elaborate tale
 Were a dark story that I cannot write ;
 Enough that in the thin grass of a vale
 Quiet and lonesome, azure-leaved and white,
 The violets are spreading o'er two graves,
 One newer than the other. When the fold
 Of a bright banner to wild music waves,
 I think about those locks of pale gold,
 Like the dissolving beam of a faint star ;
 And of the dying heart they clasped away
 From the red shadow of the wing of war,
 So strong of my strange vision is the sway.

There was a murmur through the shaken plumes
 Of the green forest, and along the sea,
 O'er the iced mountains, through the cavern glooms,
 Touching the lost heart of humanity.
 'T was like the voice of a hair-girdled John
 In the dim wilderness crying, Prepare the way,
 That the blind children of men may look upon
 The shining glories of the risen day.

His cold dissecting-knife in Nature's breast,
 Unlocking the joints and laying the arteries bare,

Of hidden knowledge limited not the guest,*
 But with their pale smile in his silver hair,
 He cross-examined the stars, resolved the plans
 Of their far orbits, difficult and vast ;
 And in the charnel, loosening the bands,
 Wrenched the dark secrets from the unanswering past!
 And when that soul of fire its aim had gained,
 Conning to wisdom even the martyr's blood,
 With the soft links of love mankind were chained
 Into one universal brotherhood.

In the sweet pauses of the heart of prayer
 The air was full of music, meek as mild,
 The light wind drifting back the golden hair
 From her white bosom, sat a little child,
 And the wild warble of the morning bird
 Was hushed in its melodious throat, to trace
 The windings of her song, while all who heard
 Pined for the beauty of her soft embrace.

Down to the stony floor of the blue sea
 Sunk the dim ghost of suffering and crime ;
 And he of the white tresses bent the knee
 In reverent worship of the type sublime.

LOST DILLIE.

Don't you remember the old apple tree
 That grew in the edge of the meadow ;
 And the maiden whose thitherward straying with me
 Threw over the sward but one shadow ?
 Was it the blush of the apples that over us hung,
 Which threw o'er her cheek its soft splendor ;
 And the wild birds around us that lovingly sung,
 Which made her low warble so tender ?

You remember the bridal-time, bright with the flow
 Of the cup as deceitful as cheery,
 And the neat little cabin-home, always aglow
 With the sweet smile of Dillie, my dearie !

* Corrected to "quest" in Boston Public Library copy.

When the wine smothered love's passionate flame,
 Her blue eyes drooped mournful and lowly;
 How sadly she watched for the footstep that came
 Each night-time more slowly and slowly!

The path going down to the apple tree still
 Winds over the slope of the meadow;
 The dear little cabin peeps over the hill —
 But the roses run wild in its shadow!
 Don't you remember the ivy-grown church
 We used to think lonesome and dreary?
 Beneath the blue marble, just under the birch,
 Lies Dillie, lost Dillie, my dearie!

PICTURES OF MEMORY.*

AMONG the beautiful pictures
 That hang on Memory's wall,
 Is one of a dim old forest,
 That seemeth best of all:
 Not for its gnarled oaks olden,
 Dark with the mistletoe;
 Not for the violets golden
 That sprinkle the vale below.
 Not for the milk-white lilies
 That lean from the fragrant hedge,
 Coquetting all day with the sunbeams,
 And stealing their shining edge;
 Not for the vines on the upland
 Where the bright red berries be,
 Nor the pinks, nor the pale, sweet cowslip,
 It seemeth the best to me.

I once had a little brother,
 With eyes that were dark and deep —
 In the lap of that old dim forest
 He lieth in peace asleep:
 Light as the down of the thistle,
 Free as the winds that blow,
 We roved there the beautiful summers,
 The summers of long ago;

* Given here as reprinted in the volume of 1855.

But his feet on the hills grew weary,
 And, one of the autumn eves,
 I made for my little brother
 A bed of the yellow leaves.

Sweetly his pale arms folded
 My neck in a meek embrace,
 As the light of immortal beauty
 Silently covered his face :
 And when the arrows of sunset
 Lodged in the tree-tops bright,
 He fell, in his saint-like beauty,
 Asleep by the gates of light.
 Therefore, of all the pictures
 That hang on Memory's wall,
 The one of the old dim forest
 Seemeth the best of all.

THE TWO MISSIONARIES.

IN the pyramid's heavy shadows,
 And by the Nile's deep flood,
 They leaned on the arm of Jesus,
 And preached to the multitude :
 Where only the ostrich and parrot
 Went by on the burning sands,
 They builded to God an altar,
 Lifting up holy hands.

But even while kneeling lowly
 At the foot of the cross to pray,
 Eternity's shadows slowly
 Stole over their pilgrim way :
 And one, with the journey weary,
 And faint with the spirit's strife,
 Fell sweetly asleep in Jesus,
 Hard by the gates of life.

Oh, not in Gethsemane's garden,
 And not by Genesareth's wave,
 The light, like a golden mantle,
 O'erspreadeth his lowly grave ;

But the bird of the burning desert
 Goes by with a noiseless tread,
 And the tent of the restless Arab
 Is silently near him spread.

Oh, could we remember only,
 Who shrink from the slightest ill,
 His sorrows, who, bruised and lonely,
 Wrought on in the vineyard still —
 Surely the tale of sorrow
 Would fall on the mourner's breast,
 Hushing, like oil on the waters,
 The troubled wave to rest.

 LEILA.*

GONE from us hast thou, in thy girlish hours,
 What time the tenderest blooms of summer cease;
 In thy young bosom bearing life's pale flowers
 To the sweet city of eternal peace.

In the soft stops of silver singing rain,
 Faint be the falling of the pale-rose light
 O'er thy meek slumber, wrapt away from pain
 In the fair robes of dainty bridal white.

Seven nights the stars have wandered through the blue,
 Since thou to larger, holier life wert born;
 And day as often, sandalled with gray dew,
 Has trodden out the golden fires of morn.

Oft, ere the dim waves of the sea of woe
 Clasp the green shore of immortality,
 Life, like a planet cursed, lays down its glow
 And blindly wanders o'er immensity.

And, from thy starless passage and untried,
 Faith shrank alarmed at feeble nature's cry,
 Ere yet life's broken waves had multiplied
 The intense radiance of eternity.

* Compare with "Lellia."

But now, on every sunbeam leaning bright
 Across the white mists, trembling o'er the sea,
 My soul goes forth, as on a path of light,
 Questioning all things beautiful of thee.

Nor shall distrust or doubt my spirit move,
 Doomed though it be the seal of woe to wear;
 Since the blest memory of deathless love
 Stands like a star between me and despair.

THE HANDMAID.*

WHY rests a shadow on her woman's heart?
 In life's more girlish hours it was not so;
 Ill hath she learned to hide with harmless art
 The soundings of the plummet-line of woe!

Oh what a world of tenderness looks through
 The melting sapphire of her mournful eyes;
 Less softly-moist are violets full of dew,
 And the delicious color of the skies.

Serenely amid worship doth she move,
 Counting its passionate tenderness as dross;
 And tempering the pleadings of earth's love,
 In the still, solemn shadows of the cross.

It is not that her heart is cold or vain,
 That thus she moves through many worshippers;
 No step is lighter by the couch of pain,
 No hand on fever's brow lies soft as hers.

From the loose flowing of her amber hair
 The summer flowers we long ago unknit,
 As something between joyance and despair
 Came in the chamber of her soul to sit.

In her white cheek the crimson burns as faint
 As red doth in some cold star's chastened beam;

* Reprinted in the volume of 1855.

The tender meekness of the pitying saint
Lends all her life the beauty of a dream.

Thus doth she move among us day by day,
Loving and loved; but passion cannot move
The young heart that has wrapped itself away
In the soft mantle of a Saviour's love!

THE POOR.

CRADLED in poverty — unloved, alone,
Seeing far off the wave of gladness roll;
Sorrow, to happier fortune never known,
Strikes deep its poison-roots within the soul!

What need is there for rhetoric to seek
For the fine phrase of eloquence, to tell
Of the eye sunken, and the hueless cheek,
Where naked want and gnawing hunger dwell?

Down in the lanes and alleys of life's mart
Are beds of anguish that no kind hands tend;
And friendless wanderers, without map or chart,
Urged to despair, or, worse, a nameless end!

Their very smiles are bitter, in whose track
The fountains are with penury made chill;
For by their smiles, their sighs are driven back
To stifle in the heart-strings, and be still!

The poor are criminals! The opulent man
Is unsuspected, and must needs be true;
Such is the popular verdict, such the plan
That gives the loathsome hangman work to do!

If he who treads the convict's gloomy cell,
To soothe Heaven's vengeance with officious prayer,
Had dealt as kindly with him ere he fell,
Haply his presence had been needless there!

Oh there is need of union, firm and strong,
 Of effort vigorous and directed well;
 To rescue weakness from oppressive wrong
 Would shake the deep foundations of dark hell!

Dear are the humble in God's equal sight,
 And every hair upon their heads He sees,
 Even as the laurel freshening in the light,
 That trails along the path of centuries!

Then treat them kindly, for the selfsame hand,
 (And with as large an exercise of power,)
 That makes the planets in their order stand,
 Gives its meek beauty to the desert flower.

HEAVEN ON EARTH.

OH, in this beautiful world I fain would deem
 Some things, at least, are what they seem to me;
 That deepest joy is no ideal dream,
 Linking the thought to something yet to be.

That in the living present, we can find
 Enough to smooth the way beneath our feet, —
 That where heart blends with heart and mind with mind,
 Even life's bitterest bitter hath a sweet!

I've dreamed of heaven — the full and perfect bliss
 That waits the spirit in a larger sphere;
 And, looking up, have found enough in this
 To realize the rapturous vision here!

God hath made all things beautiful — the sky,
 The common earth, the sunshine, and the shade;
 And with affections that can never die,
 Hath gifted every creature He hath made.

Oh they but mock us with a hollow lie,
 Who made this goodly land a vale of tears;
 For if the soul hath immortality,
 This is the infancy of deathless years.

And if we live as God has given us power,
Heaven is begun: no blind fatality
Can shut the living soul from its high dower
Of shaping out a glorious destiny!

FAR AWAY.

FAR away, far away, there 's a region of bliss
Too bright for our vision to view,
Though faintly its glories are mirrored in this,
As the light of the stars in the dew.

The loved and the loving of life's early day,
Who left us in sorrow and gloom,
Are all in that beautiful land, far away,
Where the roses are always in bloom.

'T is true we have moments of bliss, even here,
But brief is the shadowless sky;
For hope, when the brightest, is mingled with fear,
And to live, is to know we must die.

The sunshine is followed by darkness and storm,
And friendship endures but a day,
And, oh! while the kiss of devotion is warm,
The loved and the trusted betray.

How oft, when the bride with her garland is crown'd,
The roses are brought from the grave!
And the sunniest fountain that ever I found
Had the serpent concealed in its wave.

Then why should I mourn thee, lost friend of my soul?
Death cannot divide us for aye,
Though dark are the billows between us that roll,
We'll meet in that home far away.

THE BETTER LAND.

Know ye the land where the roses and lilies
 Are bright on the hills, as the wing of a bird, —
 Where down in the depths of the beautiful valleys
 The song of the worshipper always is heard ?

'T is up where they mourn not o'er time and its fleetness,
 But, free from the cumbering cries * of the clod,
 Their songs are the chains that in rapturous sweetness
 Link men to the angels, and angels to God !

Sometimes with the eve in her starry tiara
 And mantle of gold sitting down in the west,
 Like echoes of harps from a far-away prairie,
 Faint melodies float from the land of the blest.

And sometimes, when sighing for one who would love me
 And share with me always in sadness or glee,
 I see, from a soft island floating above me,
 A pale hand of beauty that beckons to me !

FIRST LOVE.

Father of light, thy child recall,
 She hath known of earthly bliss the all ;
 She hath loved and been beloved. — SCHILLER.

COME with me, dear one, from these haunted dells !
 Still doth she linger, oh ! so sad and meek ;
 Though joy no more her maiden bosom swells,
 Nor kissing zephyr crimsons her white cheek.

In the cool shade of my delicious bower
 This mournful whisper of the past shall cease ;
 There will I fold thee to my heart, pale flower ;
 Come, lovely trembler, give thyself to peace.

Sweet-throated birds with glowing wings are there,
 Filling the woods with beauty all day long ;

* Corrected to "cares" in the Boston Public Library copy.

How softly thou wilt swim away from care,
 Upon the charmed wave of some blest song.

Faintly her young heart trembles, and the fringe
 Lifts from the dewy wells of her clear eyes:
 Her thin cheek deepens to a pale rose tinge—
 And doth she love him? Hush! that look replies.

The golden tissue of love's web was crossed
 With a dark sorrow, in this very vale;
 Gone is the beautiful dream, its love-light lost,
 The winding sheet were scarcely now so pale.

And the sweet, passionate pleading all is vain,
 Young wooer, of the eloquent lip and eye;
 Her heart clings closer to its tender pain
 If joy but whisper; leave her, then, to die.

For still she lingers in this haunted spot,
 The light wind playing with her yellow hair,
 And nestling to her cheek, she heeds it not;
 Then leave, oh! leave her— all *her* world is there!

THE MILL-MAID.*

Now comb her golden hair away;
 Meekly and sorrow-laden
 She waited for the closing day—
 Poor broken-hearted maiden!
 The ring from off her finger slip,
 And fold her hands together;
 No more love's music on her lip
 Will tremble like a feather.

Each Sabbath-time along the aisle
 Her step more faintly sounded,
 The light grew paler in her smile,
 Her cheek less softly rounded;

* Reprinted in the volume of 1855.

But never sank we in despair
 Till with that fearful crying,
 "The mill-maid of the golden hair
 And lily hand is dying!"

When the dim shadows of the birch
 Above her rest are swaying,
 The pastor of the village church
 Shall bless the place with praying:
 Deeming the voiceless sacrifice
 A loved and lovely blossom,
 Blown by the winds of Paradise
 To Jesu's folding bosom.

The mill-wheel for a day is still,
 The spindle silent lying,
 The little homestead on the hill
 Looks sadder for her dying;
 But ere the third time in the spire
 The Sabbath bell is ringing,
 Not one of all the village choir
 Will miss the mill-maid's singing.

LOVE.

NAY, do not pity me, that not a star
 Hangs in the bosom of my stormy sky,
 Nor winglet of white feathers flutters by,
 Nor like a soft dream swims or near or far
 The golden atmosphere of poesy.
 Down in the heart from frivolous joys aloof
 Burn the pale fires, whose keen intensity
 Flames through the web of life's discolored woof,
 And lights the white walls of eternity.
 Alas! the ravishment of Love's sweet trust
 May charm my life no more to passion's glow;
 Nor the light kisses of a lip of dust
 Crimson my forehead with the seal of woe;
 Well, were it otherwise, 't is better so!

DEATH.

WITH your pale burden, gently, gently tread —
She came to us a bride a year ago
And now Love's sweet star crimsons the pale snow,
About her early, melancholy bed.
Why weep ye for her? She hath done with pain,
And meekly to our common portion bowed.
Unthread the roses from the shining train
Of her long tresses, and prepare the shroud!
Her heart was full of dreams of heavenly birth,
While in the borders of dim life she stayed,
Like some young lily golden dew had weighed
Down to the chilly bosom of the earth.
For but the wing of death, while here she trod,
Rested between her beautiful life and God.

THE CHARMED BIRD.

“MOTHER, oh mother! this morning when Will
And Mary and I had gone out on the hill,
We stopped in the orchard to climb in the trees,
And brake off the blossoms that sweetened the breeze,
When right down before us, and close where we were,
There fluttered and fluttered a bird in the air.

“Its crest was so glossy, so bright were its eyes,
And its wings, oh! their color was just like the skies;
And still as it chirped, and kept eddying round
In narrower circles and nearer the ground,
We looked, and all hid in the leaves of the brake,
We saw, don't you think, oh! the ugliest snake!”

Caressingly folding the child in her arms,
With thoughts of sweet birds in a world full of charms,
“My child,” said the mother, “in life's later hours
Remember the morning you stopped for the flowers;
And still when you think of the bird in the air,
Forget not, my love, that the serpent was there.”

PRIDE.

THERE is a pride of heart, a damning pride,
 To which men sacrifice, that I detest;
 And Peter-like, what thousands would have lied
 Even with profanation, or confessed
 The Lord of glory with a burning cheek,
 If Pilate and the Rulers heard them speak.

Man sees his weaker brother faint and die,
 And coldly passes on the other side;
 Because within his bosom darkly lie
 The poisoned shadows of that Upas, pride,
 Which, since from bliss the rebel angels fell,
 Trail downward to the very gates of hell!

When, with the blushes burning on her cheek,
 And her dark locks unbound, the sinful came,
 And humbly sat herself at Jesus' feet,
 Did He reproach her with her life of shame?
 But for the many who aside have turned,
 How hardly is that beautiful lesson learned!

MISSIVE.

Know thou this truth, which the creeds cannot smother,
 Wherever man is found, there is thy brother;
 God his blest sire is, earth is his mother —
 Where most degraded, thy zeal most increase;
 Aid him and help him, till, ceasing to falter,
 He shall come up to humanity's altar,
 "Bearing white blocks for the city of Peace."

Shrink not away from the common and lowly —
 Good deeds, though never so humble, are holy;
 And though the recompense fall to thee slowly,
 Heroes unnumbered before thee have trod;
 By the sweet light of their blessed example,
 Work on — the field of love's labor is ample —
 Trusting Humanity, trusting in God!

Fight down the Wrong, howe'er specious its bearing,
 Lighten the burdens about thee by sharing,
 Fear not the glorious peril of daring,
 Be it the rack or the prison's dull bars;
 Hands are stretched out from the graves of past ages
 To brighten with holy deeds history's pages —
 Martyr-fires burn as intensely as stars.

Never sit down by the wayside to sorrow —
 Hope is a good angel, whence we may borrow
 Beauty and gladness and light for the morrow,
 However dark be the present with ill;
 And the far waves of Time's sorrowful river,
 Wandering and weary and moaning forever,
 Break on the rock of Eternity still.

ONE DEPARTED.

Blest inspiration of unworthy song,
 A heart of tender sadness woos thee back;
 If in blind weakness I have done thee wrong,
 Accord me sweet forgiveness! Like the track
 Of a bright bird, whereon soft notes are cast —
 The time, the place is where I saw thee last!

Life has been weary with me since we met,
 Though in it moments of deep joy there lie,
 Soft, as we see in cloud-rifts, cold and wet,
 Blue shifting patches of the summer sky:
 For oft, thy gold locks wet with my salt tears,
 Thy gentle semblance from the dust appears!

In the cold mists of morn, at evening soft,
 When odors make the winds so heavy-sweet,
 Stretching my arms out, I have called thee oft,
 And night has heard the soundings of my feet
 Where the blue slabs of marble, icy chill,
 Keep in thy breast life's azure rivers still!

Like the faint dim vibrations of a lay
 We sometimes half remember, half forget,

Thou, in the winding-sheet long wrapt away,
 Troublest my heart with wildering beauty yet:
 Nor have I ever met with mortal form
 Sweet as thy shadow to my clasping arm !

Fade back to ashes, visitant divine,
 Unutterably radiant as thou art,
 If ever smile of dewy lip, save thine,
 Hath touched the darkened ruins of my heart !
 Thou wert in thy young life, and still dost seem,
 The sweet and passionate music of a dream.

Sleep seals thy gentle eyes, but we are wed ;
 Thou wait'st my coming — shall I traitor prove
 To the deep slumbers of the bridal bed,
 And the birth-chamber of immortal love ?
 No ! as the sweet rain visits the pale bloom,
 I will come softly to thee in the tomb !

MUSINGS BY THREE GRAVES.*

THE dappled clouds are broken ; bright and clear
 Comes up the broad and glorious star of day ;
 And night, the shadowy, like a hunted deer,
 Flies from the close pursuer fast away.

Now on my ear a murmur faintly swells,
 And now it gathers louder and more deep,
 As the sweet music of the village bells
 Rouses the drowsy rustic from his sleep.

Hark ! there 's a footstep startling up the birds,
 And now as softly steals the breeze along ;
 I hear the sound, and almost catch the words
 Of the sweet fragment of a pensive song.

And yonder, in the clover-scented vale —
 Her bonnet in her hand, and simply clad —

* Reprinted in the volume of 1855. Compare with Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard."

I see the milkmaid with her flowing pail :
 Alas ! what is it makes her song so sad ?

In the seclusion of these lowly dells
 What mournful lesson has her bosom learned ?
 Is it the memory of sad farewells,
 Or faithless love, or friendship unreturned ?

Methinks yon sunburnt swain, with knotted thong,
 And rye-straw hat slouched careless on his brow,
 Whistled more loudly, passing her along,
 To yoke his patient oxen to the plough.

'T is all in vain ! she heeds not, if she hears,
 And, sadly musing, separate ways they go, —
 Oh, who shall tell how many bitter tears
 Are mingled in the brightest fount below ?

Poor, simple tenant of another's lands,
 Vexed with no dream of heraldic renown ;
 No more the earnings of his sinewy hands
 Shall make his spirit like the thistle's down.

Smile not, recipient of a happier fate,
 And haply better formed life's ills to bear,
 If e'er you pause to read the name and date
 Of one who died the victim of despair.

Now morn is fully up ; and while the dew
 From off her golden locks is brightly shed,
 In the deep shadows of the solemn yew,
 I sit alone and muse above the dead.

Not with the blackbird whistling in the brake,
 Nor when the rabbit lightly near them treads,
 Shall they from their deep slumbering awake,
 Who lie beneath me in their narrow beds.

Oh, what is life ? at best a narrow bound,
 Where each that lives some baffled hope survives —
 A search for something, never to be found,
 Records the history of the greatest lives !

There is a haven for each weary bark,
A port where they who rest are free from sin ;
But we, like children trembling in the dark,
Drive on and on, afraid to enter in.

Here lies an aged patriarch at rest,
To whom the needy never vainly cried,
Till in this vale, with toil and years oppressed,
His long-sustaining staff was laid aside.

Oft for his country had he fought and bled,
And gladly, when the lamp of life grew dim,
He joined the silent army of the dead —
Then why should tears of sorrow flow for him ?

We mourn not for the cornfield's deepening gold,
Nor when the sickle on the hills is plied ;
And wherefore should we sorrow for the old,
Who perish when life's paths have all been tried ?

How oft at noon beneath the orchard trees,
With brow serene and venerably fair,
I've seen a little prattler on his knees
Smoothing with dimpled hand his silver hair.

When music floated on the sunny hills,
And trees and shrubs with opening flowers were drest,
She meekly put aside life's cup of ills,
And kindly neighbors laid her here to rest.

And ye who loved her, would ye call her back,
Where its deep thirst the soul may never slake ;
And Sorrow, with her lean and hungry pack,
Pursues through every winding which we take ?

Where lengthened years but teach the bitter truth
That transient preference does not make a friend ;
That manhood disavows the love of youth,
And riper years of manhood, to the end.

Beneath this narrow heap of mouldering earth,
Hard by the mansions of the old and young,

A wife and mother sleeps, whose humble worth
And quiet virtues poet never sung.

With yonder cabin, half with ivy veiled,
And children by the hand of mercy sent,
And love's sweet star, that never, never paled,
Her bosom knew the fulness of content.

Mocking ambition never came to tear
The finest fibres from her heart away, —
The aim of her existence was to bear
The cross in patient meekness day by day.

No hopeless, blind idolater of chance,
The sport and plaything of each wind that blows,
But lifting still by faith a heavenward glance,
She saw the waves of death around her close.

And here her children come with pious tears,
And strew their simple offerings in the sod;
And learn to tread like her the vale of years,
Beloved of man, and reconciled to God.

Now from the village school the urchins come,
And shout and laughter echo far and wide;
The blue smoke curls from many a rustic home,
Where all their simple wants are well supplied.

The labored hedger, pausing by the way,
Picks the ripe berries from the gadding vine:
The axe is still, the cattle homeward stray,
And transient glories mark the day's decline.

TO THE EVENING ZEPHYR.*

I sit where the wild bee is humming,
And listen in vain for thy song;
I've waited before for thy coming,
But never, oh! never so long.

* Reprinted in the volume of 1855.

How oft with the blue sky above us,
 And waves breaking light on the shore,
 Thou, knowing they would not reprove us,
 Hast kissed me a thousand times o'er!

So sweet were thy dewy embraces,
 Thy falsity who could believe!
 Some phantom thy fondness effaces —
 Thou couldst not have aimed to deceive!

Thou *toldest* thy love for me never,
 But all the bright stars in the skies,
 Though striving to do so forever,
 Could scarcely have numbered thy sighs.

Alone in the gathering shadows,
 Still waiting, sweet Zephyr, for thee,
 I look for the waves of the meadows,
 And dimples to dot the blue sea.

The blossoms that waited to greet thee
 With heat of the noontide opprest,
 Now flutter so lightly to meet thee,
 Thou 'rt coming, I know, from the West.

Alas! if thou findest me pouting,
 'T is only my love that alarms;
 Forgive, then, I pray thee, my doubting,
 And take me once more to thy arms!

ANSWER.

BY MAJOR G. W. PATTEN, U. S. A.

OH! sweet as the prayer of devotion
 Comes thy song, fair enchantress, to me;
 And cleaving through mists of the ocean
 I quicken my pinions for thee.

I know that no day-breeze has dallied
 Unreproved, with thy ringlets of jet,
 Since the moon when so gaily I sallied
 From thy lips with my dew kisses wet.

That I love thee, I cannot dissemble —
 I would not if even I might;
 At thy touch doth my light pinion tremble,
 And my voice murmurs low at thy sight.

Though born for the pathways of heaven,
 My wing ever shadows the lea,
 If I rise with the light clouds of even,
 I soar but to wander to *thee*.

I 've sported in evergreen bowers
 With blossoms sweet-scented and gay,
 And I 've toyed, mid those beautiful flowers,
 With beings as peerless as they :

But naught did I ever discover,
 Whose nature seemed nearer divine,
 Than the lip of my warm-hearted lover
 When its kisses are mingled with mine.

Then no more "where the wild bee is humming,"
 Stay to "sit" and to "listen in vain;"
 I shall come — even now am I coming,
 To fondle and fan thee again.

 RESPONSE.

O'ER clouds of carnation and amber
 Shone faintly the first gentle star,
 As I caught from the hush of my chamber
 Thy answering song from afar.

If false thou hast sweetly dissembled,
 Light spirit of mountain and sea,
 And I — how my glad bosom trembled
 At even that whisper from thee !

Stoop down if thou wilt, breezy rover,
 To the blossoms thy pathway along,
 But lightly, my dewy-lipped lover,
 And oh! sing them not such a song.

For never an elfin nor fairy,
 Nor warbler with wing on the sky,
 Nor white-bosomed bird of the prairie
 Could love thee so fondly as I.

Not a moment the day-breeze has trifled
 "Unreproved with my ringlets of jet,"
 Since the moon when my fond heart was rified,
 The moon when as lovers we met.

Chanting over thy song of devotion,
 I 'll watch from the hill-tops each day,
 For the path through the white mists of ocean
 Where thy pinion is cleaving its way.

Till the last summer-bee ceases humming —
 The last bird goes over the sea,
 Since thou sayest, "I will come, I am coming,"
 I 'll wait, my sweet Zephyr, for thee!

THE SAILOR'S STORY.

NIGHT is falling, clouds are sweeping,
 And, ere morning, there may be
 Many a brother sailor sleeping
 In the white arms of the sea.

But with courage tempest-daring,
 Hearts through all things true and warm,
 Warily our vessels wearing,
 We may weather out the storm.

And, as o'er each other rising,
 Billows sweep our deck, as then,
 Even as impulses of sorrow
 Cross the souls of wicked men;

Listen, comrades, to a story
 Which the night with hope may arm —
 Heaven's soft rainbow, dropt with glory,
 Hangs its beauty o'er the storm.

In the shadows of dark sorrow,
By the river of wild woe,
Once there was a weary mortal
Ever wandering to and fro.

Ever wandering, ever gazing,
Half in love and half in dread,
On the blue and sunken hollows
Of that wretched river's bed.

For within those grayish caverns,
With each billow's fall and rise,
Coils of green and yellow serpents
Lifted up their hungry eyes.

Sadly dwelt he, wrapt from sunshine,
With a right hand maimed and dumb,
Crying often at the noontide,
"Will the morning never come?"

Once a sailor, lost, benighted,
Drifting on the whirlpool's rim,
Shouted for the help that came not —
Messmates, think you that was him?

With his long locks, briny, tangled,
Clasping a torn bosom round,
Washed upon the cold, wet sand-beach,
Once a dying man was found;

Where the plumes of pale-pink sea-weed
Drifted like a sunset cloud,
And the mists of woe's wild river
Hung about him like a shroud.

Morning, like a woman, clasped him
With her hair, a golden train,
And kissed back the living crimson
To his palid cheek again.

But, as near that solemn river
Wearily and slow he trod,

Pitying eye of mortal never
Rested on that child of God.

So the burning of roused hatred
In his heart dried up the dew,
And the very milk of kindness
Bitter in its fountain grew.

But with light upon their bosoms
Burning, burning evermore,
Birds that nested in the blossoms
Haunted that wild river-shore —

Telling their sweet-throated story,
From their morning beds of dew,
Upward, on their wings of glory,
Farther, farther as they flew.

From that heart, despised, despising,
Went a yearning for their song,
Like the sorrowful uprising
Of a passion smothered long.

As through waves of light uplifted
On and on he saw them swim,
He forgot the boat that drifted,
Helpless, on the whirlpool's rim.

And his thoughts, like wingéd swallows
From their dark home, rise and rise
O'er that river's sunken hollows,
Shining with the hungry eyes.

Plunging in, like a Leander
With a heart on fire, he flew,
And the waves before him parted,
Like a mist of sun and dew.

Once, a steed with smoking haunches,
And his loose mane streaming back,
To the rider's light caresses
Bounded on a pathless track.

With his glossy neck strained forward,
 And an eye of ocean blue,
 Through the ringing, moonlit forest
 Like an ebon shaft he flew.

Like the wild mane of the courser
 Flowing on the wind upborne,
 Went the wild song of the rider,
 Flowing from a lip unshorn.

Something of a wretched river
 Dimly moaning far behind,
 And of birds with burning bosoms,
 Was that music on the wind.

Pushing back a cloud of ringlets
 Bound with blossoms pale as snow,
 Softly blushing, fondly gazing
 Toward the line of woods below ;

Waited in her bridal chamber
 One whose faith was never dim —
 Eager horseman — frightened bosom,
 Dost thou tremble so for him ?

A LOCK OF HAIR.

THREE times the zephyr's whisper,
 And the soft sunlit showers,
 Have called up from their slumber
 The early spring-time flowers, —

Three times the Summer wild-birds
 Have built among the trees,
 And gone with the dull Autumn
 Three times across the seas, —

Since this bright lock was severed
 In the hopelessness of bliss :
 O, there 's a world of eloquence
 In simple things like this !

What a tumult of strange feelings
 It wakes within my brain ;
 Half joyous and half sorrowful —
 Half rapture, half of pain.

One moment I am dreaming
 Love's broken chain is whole,
 And echoes of lost music
 Are trembling in my soul.

Another, and I 'm sitting
 Where the lights of memory burn,
 And thinking of the summer-times
 That never can return.

Oft in the solemn watches
 Of the long and weary night,
 No link beside has bound me
 To the morning and the light.

'T is strange my heart will vibrate
 From gladness to despair,
 Whenever I am thinking of
 This simple tress of hair.

VISIONS OF LIGHT.*

THE moon is rising in beauty,
 The sky is solemn and bright,
 And the waters are singing like lovers
 That walk in the valleys at night.

Like the towers of an ancient city,
 That darken against the sky,
 Seems the blue mist of the river
 O'er the hill-tops far and high.

I see through the gathering darkness
 The spire of the village church,
 And the pale white tombs, half hidden
 By the tasselled willow and birch.

* Reprinted, without the last stanza, in the volume of 1855.

Vain is the golden drifting
Of morning light on the hill;
No white hands open the windows
Of those chambers low and still.

But their dwellers were all my kindred,
Whatever their lives might be,
And their sufferings and achievements
Have recorded lessons for me.

Not one of the countless voyagers
Of life's mysterious main
Has laid down his burden of sorrows,
Who hath lived and loved in vain.

From the bards of the elder ages
Fragments of song float by,
Like flowers in the streams of summer,
Or stars in the midnight sky.

Some plumes in the dust are scattered,
Where the eagles of Persia flew,
And wisdom is reaped from the furrows
The plough of the Roman drew.

From the white tents of the Crusaders
The phantoms of glory are gone,
But the zeal of the barefooted hermit
In humanity's heart lives on.

Oh! sweet as the bell of the Sabbath
In the tower of the village church,
Or the fall of the yellow moonbeams
In the tasselled willow and birch —

Comes a thought of the blessed issues
That shall follow our social strife,
When the spirit of love maketh perfect
The beautiful mission of life:

For visions of light are gathered
In the sunshine of flowery nooks,
Like the shades of the ghostly Fathers
In their twilight cells of books!

A LEGEND OF ST. MARY'S.*

ONE night, when bitterer winds than ours,
 On hill-sides and in valleys low,
 Built sepulchres for the dead flowers,
 And buried them in sheets of snow, —

When over ledges dark and cold,
 The sweet moon, rising high and higher,
 Tipped with a dimly burning gold
 St. Mary's old cathedral spire, —

The lamp of the confessional,
 (God grant it did not burn in vain,)
 After the solemn midnight bell,
 Streamed redly through the lattice-pane.

And kneeling at the father's feet,
 Whose long and venerable hairs,
 Now whiter than the mountain sleet,
 Could not have numbered half his prayers,

Was one — I cannot picture true
 The cherub beauty of his guise ;
 Lilies, and waves of deepest blue,
 Were something like his hands and eyes !

Like yellow mosses on the rocks,
 Dashed with the ocean's milk-white spray,
 The softness of his golden locks
 About his cheek and forehead lay.

Father, thy tresses, silver-sleet,
 Ne'er swept above a form so fair ;
 Surely the flowers beneath his feet
 Have been a rosary of prayer !

We know not, and we cannot know,
 Why swam those meek blue eyes with tears ;
 But surely guilt, or guiltless woe,
 Had bowed him earthward more than years.

* Reprinted in the volume of 1855.

All the long summer that was gone,
A cottage maid, the village pride,
Fainter and fainter smiles had worn,
And on that very night she died!

As soft the yellow moonbeams streamed
Across her bosom, snowy fair,
She said, (the watchers thought she dreamed,)
"T is like the shadow of his hair!"

And they could hear, who nearest came,
The cross to sign and hope to lend,
The murmur of another name
Than that of mother, brother, friend.

An hour — and St. Mary's spires,
Like spikes of flame, no longer glow —
No longer the confessional fires
Shine redly on the drifted snow.

An hour — and the saints had claimed
That cottage maid, the village pride;
And he, whose name in death she named,
Was darkly weeping by her side.

White as a spray-wreath lay her brow
Beneath the midnight of her hair,
But all those passionate kisses now
Wake not the faintest crimson there!

Pride, honor, manhood, cannot check
The vehemence of love's despair —
No soft hand steals about his neck,
Or bathes its beauty in his hair!

Almost upon the cabin walls
Wherein the sweet young maiden died,
The shadow of a castle falls,
Where for her young lord waits a bride!

With clear blue eyes and flaxen hair,
In her high turret still she sits;

But, ah! what scorn her ripe lips wear
 What shadow to her bosom flits!

From that low cabin tapers flash,
 And, by the shimmering light they spread,
 She sees beneath its mountain ash,
 Leafless, but all with berries red,

Impatient of the unclasped rein,
 A courser that should not be there —
 The silver whiteness of his mane
 Streaming like moonlight on the air!

Oh, Love! thou art avenged too well —
 The young heart, broken and betrayed,
 Where thou didst meekly, sweetly dwell,
 For all its sufferings is repaid.

Not the proud beauty, nor the frown
 Of her who shares the living years,
 From her the winding-sheet wraps down
 Can ever buy away the tears!

THE NOVICE OF ST. MARY'S.

FROM "THE MONASTERY" OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

DARK in the shade of the mountains,
 From a valley full of flowers,
 Rose up, in the light of the setting sun,
 St. Mary's chapel towers.

The bell of the old gray turret
 Was tolling deep and slow,
 And friars were telling their beads, and monks
 Chanting their hymns below.

But the breath of the silver censers,
 As they swung in the twilight dim,
 And the sacred hush as the beads were told,
 And the chant of the solemn hymn;

And the golden light of the sunset
 Might bear to the heart no joy,
 Of one whose mantle of coarsest serge
 Betokened a novice boy.

Pale was his brow, and dreamy,
 And his bright locks yet unshorn :
 He had but given his mother's smile
 For the convent's gloom that morn.

O, why are his pale hands folded
 In the chill of the cloister's gloom ?
 Why loses his cheek its roundness,
 And his lip its rosy bloom ?

Let Mary of Avenel answer,
 As she sits in the twilight dim,
 In the leafy shade of her garden bower
 Does she wait for the convent hymn ?

No, her young heart softly trembles
 From its even pulse of joy,
 As she hears a step, but 't is not the step
 Of St. Mary's Novice Boy !

HELVA.*

HER white hands full of mountain flowers,
 Down by the rough rocks and the sea,
 Helva, the raven-tressed, for hours
 Hath gazed forth earnestly.

Unconscious that the salt spray flecks
 The ebon beauty of her hair —
 What vision is it she expects,
 So meekly lingering there ?

Is it to see the sea-fog lift
 From the broad bases of the hills,
 Or the red moonlight's golden drift,
 That her soft bosom thrills ?

Or yet to see the starry hours
 Their silver network round her throw,
 That 'neath the white hands, full of flowers,
 Her heart heaves to and fro ?

Why strains so far the aching eye ?
 Kind nature wears to-night no frown,
 And the still beauty of the sky
 Keeps the mad ocean down.

Why are those damp and heavy locks
 Put back, the faintest sound to win ?
 Ah! where the beacon lights the rocks,
 A ship is riding in !

Who comes forth to the vessel's side,
 Leaning upon the manly arm
 Of one who wraps with tender pride
 The mantle round her form ?

Oh, Helva, watcher of lone hours,
 May God in mercy give thee aid !
 Thy cheek is whiter than thy flowers —
 Thy woman's heart betrayed !

THE TIME TO BE.*

I sit where the leaves of the maple
 And the gnarled and the knotted gum
 Are circling and drifting around me,
 And think of the time to come.

For the human heart is the mirror
 Of the things that are near and far ;
 Like the wave that reflects in its bosom
 The flower and the distant star.

And beautiful to my vision
 Is the time it prophetically sees,
 As was once to the monarch of Persia
 The gem of the Cycladés.

* Reprinted, without the third stanza, in the volume of 1855.

As change in the order of Nature,
 And beauty springs from decay,
 So in its destined season
 The false for the true makes way.

The darkening power of evil,
 And discordant jars and crime,
 Are the cry preparing the wilderness
 For the flower and the harvest-time ;

Though doubtings and weak misgivings
 May rise to the soul's alarm,
 Like the ghosts of the heretic burners,
 In the province of bold Reform.

And now as the summer is fading,
 And the cold clouds full of rain,
 And the net, in the fields of stubble
 And the briers, is spread in vain —

I catch, through the mists of life's river,
 A glimpse of the time to be,
 When the chain from the bondman rusted,
 Shall leave him erect and free —

On the solid and broad foundation,
 A common humanity's right,
 To cover his branded shoulder
 With the garment of love from sight.

 ELOQUENCE.

LIKEST the first Apostle,
 Fearless of scoffs he stood,
 Preaching Christ and the resurrection
 To the eager multitude.

The light on his broad clear forehead
 Fell not from the gorgeous pane,
 As he spoke of the blessed Jesus,
 Who died, and is risen again.

How beautiful on the mountains
The feet of the righteous are ;
How sweet is the silver singing
Of lips that are used to prayer.

Will the rain of the dull, cold autumn
Awaken the sleeping flower ?
Or the heart of the sinful soften,
Though the godless preach with power ?

But the light of the golden summer
Will ripen the harvest grain,
And words that are fitly spoken
Will meet a response again.

And the hearts of a thousand bosoms
Shrank frightened and trembling back,
Like a fawn in a heath of blossoms,
With the hunters on its track.

For they heard, as the full tone deepened
To eloquence sublime,
Echoes of muffled footsteps
In the corridors of crime ;

And saw the low-voiced Tempter
Thence lure the weak to die,
As the bird in narrowing circles
Goes down to the serpent's eye.

But when of Heaven's sweet mercy
He bade them not despair,
Bright through the vaulted temple
Floated the wings of prayer.

As home I journeyed slowly
From the multitude apart,
Messengers good and holy
Kept knocking at my heart.

When sleep descended brightly,
I heard the anthem's roll,
And all night my heart beat lightly
To the music in my soul.

TO ELMA.

How heavily the sea-waves break !
The storm wails loud and deep ;
Wake, sister, from thy slumber wake,
For, oh ! I cannot sleep.

My head is resting on thine arm,
Thy heart beats close to mine ;
But, oh ! this weary night of storm —
How can such peace be thine ?

Thou answerest not — again I hear
Thy breathing, calm and deep ;
No sorrow hast thou, and no fear —
I wish that I could sleep !

They tell of warning lights that gleam,
And ghosts such nights that glide,
And dreams — ay, once I had a dream —
'T is more than verified !

Louder against the flinty sand
I hear the dashing seas ;
No angel holds my trembling hand
Such fearful nights as these.

Why strive to cheat myself, or hark
To hear the tempest laid ?
'T is not the storm, and not the dark,
That makes my heart afraid !

For if my ear, in tempest strife,
Is quickened to its roll,
'T is that the promise of my life
Is broken in my soul.

Yet speak to me ! and lay thy hand
Upon my aching brow —
I've nothing on the sea or land
To love or cling to now.

TO FLORA.

Away with regal palaces
And diadems of gold :
There's nothing in the world so sweet
As love's embracing fold.

I care not if the sea be rough
And if the sky be dark,
If thou, beloved of my soul,
Art with me in the bark.

Blest inspiration of my song !
I would not leave thy side,
To wear the stars of royalty,
And be a monarch's bride.

May thy fond arms encircle me
As time goes smoothly by,
And may thy faithful bosom be
My pillow when I die.

The time to come with flowers we'll sow
As all the past has been,
And though our cabin may be low,
The angels will come in.

If bitterness our cup shall fill
And evil angels send,
Oh ! what a sweetener of the ill
To know we have a friend.

Of Heaven above I ask but this
Of happiness conferred —
One heart that feels diviner bliss
Whene'er my step is heard.

MYRRHA.

I'M thinking, my sweet Myrrha,
 Of that happy time in youth,
 When all the world appeared like thee,
 In innocence and truth.

Oh! when around the shining hearth,
 At night, we used to meet,
 There was music in the treading
 Of the little naked feet.

And I am thinking, Myrrha,
 Of the smiles and kindly words,
 That ever lulled us to our sleep,
 And called us with the birds.

I think, until it almost seems
 The kiss is on my brow; —
 Alas! 't is only in my dreams;
 I have no mother now!

I am thinking of the Sabbath,
 When, alone and sad, I trod
 A path each day is wearing down
 More deeply in the sod.

Sometimes, I have been happy since,
 And trust I yet shall be;
 But never, sister of my soul!
 Have I forgotten thee.

 TO MYRRHA.

The love where Death has set his seal,
 No age can chill nor rival steal,
 Nor falsehood disavow. — BYRON.

YES, the living cast me from them,
 As the rock the claspings wave;
 Once there was one who loved me —
 She is buried in the grave.

In the play-haunts of my childhood,
 She was always by my side;
 Oh! she loved me in her lifetime,
 And she loved me when she died.

God knoweth my dark sorrow
 When I knew that all was o'er,
 And called her every lovely name,
 But she could speak no more.

I could not, dare not, look upon
 The strife, the parting dread;
 But my heart I felt was breaking,
 And I knew that she was dead.

They told me she was passing
 Through the golden gates of day,
 When the hand that meekly clasped my neck
 Fell heavily away.

I forgot the harp of Gabriel,
 The glory of the crown —
 When the foldings of the winding-sheet
 Had wrapt her still heart down.

Shall I gather back my broken hopes
 From her cold sepulchre?
 No! none have loved me in their lives
 Or in their deaths like her.

TO THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

BRIGHT-WINGED spirit of the sky,
 Beautiful and holy,
 Pass thou not neglectful by
 The despised and lowly.

Where the mourner by the tomb
 Sits, the dark unheeding,
 With the white down of thy plume
 Bind the heart from bleeding.

Like the sweet light of the stars,
 Pierce the gloomiest prison,
 Leaving broken bolts and bars
 Cerements of the risen.

Where along the furrowed soil
 Corn and rice are springing,
 Let us hear the child of toil
 At his labor singing.

Though the downy lip of youth
 Whiten with vain terror
 With thy sacred wand, O Truth!
 Smite gray-bearded Error.

Right in Superstition's frown
 Be his doom allotted,
 And to lower the coffin down,
 Hangman's cords be knotted.

Where the progeny of sin
 Hold their horrid revels,
 In the Master's name go in,
 And rebuke the devils.

Surely the "good time" is nigh
 For thy wide diffusion;
 Else God's promise is a lie,
 And our faith, delusion.

—————

TO ———.

HAPLY beneath heaven's equal beams
 There lies some green and peaceful isle,
 Where, gathering up my broken dreams,
 I yet may smile, or seem to smile.
 Away, false hope, nor blind my eyes;
 I feel, I know my doom of ill;
 Unbind thy web of hollow lies,
 And let my heart bleed as it will.

I know that I am changed — that years
 Have left their shadows on my brow,
 And the dim traces of some tears —
 But these to thee are nothing now.
 I'm sitting on the mossy stone,
 Where we have talked of love till death,
 And thinking, but alone, *alone*,
 And thou — ah! who has broken faith?

I will not tell thee not to go,
 Nor ask thee yet to think of me;
 My doom of dark and hopeless woe
 Has been too much entwined with thee.
 For if thou seest, from me apart,
 A sunnier path than both have known,
 I'll fold the darkness to my heart,
 And sit, as now, alone, alone.

THE TWO LOVERS.

SINGING down a quiet valley,
 Singing to herself she went,
 And, with wing aslant, the zephyr
 To her cheek with kisses leant.

Dainty, with the golden blossoms
 Of the mulberries'* silver braid,
 Were the windings of the valley
 Where the singing maiden strayed.

Where the river mist was climbing
 Thin and white along the rocks,
 On a hollow reed sat piping,
 Like a shepherd to his flocks,

One whose lip was scarcely darkened
 With the dawn of manhood's pride,
 With his earnest eyes bent downward
 To the river's voiceless tide.

* Corrected to "mullens'" in the Boston Public Library copy.

Answering to his pleading music
 Smiled a lovelit, girlish face,
 Folded by the placid waters
 In their chilly, cold embrace.

Like the summer sunshine parted
 By the white wing of a dove,
 Like the mist that sweetly trembles
 Round the pensive star of love ;

Were the pale and wavy ringlets
 Drifting on the pearly tide,
 While the music, wilder, deeper,
 On the hushed air rose and died.

Treading down the golden blossoms
 Of the mulberries' * silver braid,
 Struck a steed, with lordly rider,
 Toward the half enchanted maid.

Like a rose-cloud from the sunset,
 Like the love-light from a dream,
 Fled the wildering shade of beauty
 From the bosom of the stream.

Haunted by the cherub shadow
 He could woo not from the wave,
 Day by day the boy grew sadder
 And went pining to the grave.

Singing down the quiet valley,
 Singing as the day grows dim,
 Walks the maiden, but her visions
 Blend not with a thought of him !

ABJURATION.

HAUNTING phantom, I abjure thee !
 Thou shalt never vex me more ;
 Though the past was sweet as summer,
 Better far to look before.

* Corrected to "mullens'" in the Boston Public Library copy.

Who would sit in memory's chambers,
Mantled from the loving light,
With the sea of life before them,
Broad, and beautiful, and bright ?

Wherefore in the port of sorrow
Should our moorings longer be ?
Helmsman, ho ! heave up the anchor !
Now, my messmates, for the sea !

Up, my chamois-footed reefer !
Let the canvas be unfurled —
Moth will fret away the garment
Faster than the wearing world !

Though our bark is not too steady,
And our compass sometimes errs,
Never let the sail be slackened —
Storms make skilful mariners :

True, beneath these waves of beauty,
Far from wind and tempest-frown
When the sky was full of sunshine
Many vessels have gone down.

Happiness is not in wooing
Phantoms to the vacant breast ;
But in earnest, healthful striving
And in blessing we are blest.

Are we ready ? are we freighted ?
Not with odors, not with gold ;
But with bright hopes for the future —
With true hearts and courage bold !

Downward from the shore of sorrow
Fresh the seaward breezes spring ;
And our flag is up and waving,
Like some proud bird's open wing.

When the showers of evening crimson
Fall like roses on the sea ;
Rocking o'er the glad, free billows,
Oh, how sweet my dreams will be !

OLD STORIES.*

No beautiful star will twinkle
To-night through my window-pane,
As I list to the mournful falling
Of the leaves and the autumn rain.

High up in his leafy covert
The squirrel a shelter hath ;
And the tall grass hides the rabbit,
Asleep in the churchyard path.

On the hills is a voice of wailing
For the pale dead flowers again,
That sounds like the heavy trailing
Of robes in a funeral train.

Oh, if there were one who loved me —
A kindly and gray-haired sire,
To sit and rehearse old stories
To-night by my cabin fire :

The winds as they would might rattle
The boughs of the ancient trees —
In the tale of a stirring battle
My heart would forget all these.

Or if, by the embers dying,
We talked of the past, the while,
I should see bright spirits flying
From the pyramids and the Nile.

Echoes from harps long silent
Would troop through the aisles of time,
And rest on the soul like sunshine,
If we talked of the bards sublime.

But, hark ! did a phantom call me,
Or was it the wind went by ?
Wild are my thoughts and restless,
But they have no power to fly.

In place of the cricket humming,
 And the moth by the candle's light,
 I hear but the deathwatch drumming —
 I 've heard it the livelong night.

Oh, for a friend who loved me —
 Oh, for a gray-haired sire,
 To sit with a quaint old story
 To-night by my cabin fire.

SPECTRES.

ONCE more the shadows darken
 Upon life's solemn stream —
 Once more I 'm in my chamber
 To ponder and to dream.

Down in the mist-white valley,
 Across the hills afar,
 The rosy light is gleaming
 From Love's descending star.

I hear from yonder parlor
 A prattler cry, "He 's come!"
 Oh, there 's a world of comfort —
 I wish *I* had a home!

All last night, round about me
 The lights of memory streamed,
 And my heart to long-lost music
 Kept beating as I dreamed.

We live with spectres haunted
 That we cannot exorcise —
 A pale and shadowy army
 Between us and the skies.

Conjured by mortal weakness,
 In their cerements they start
 From the lonesome burial-places
 Of the dead hopes of the heart.

They will meet thee, fellow-pilgrim,
For their graves are everywhere,
And thou canst not lay them better
Than by labor which is prayer.

LUCIFER.

USURPER of the throne of God,
From heaven's high battlement cast down,
What spot of earth hast thou not trod,
Wearing rebellion as a crown?

Like some bright meteor of the air
Streams o'er the world thy robe of flame;
Ruined, fallen, yet as angel fair,
I breathe my curses on thy name!

The broad road going down to death,
What thousands but for thee would quit,
And climb to the green hills of faith,
From the black ashes of the pit.

Once, when through Mercy's gates ajar,
I heard salvation's anthem flow,
Thy fire-wing led me, like a star,
Back to the wretched gates of woe!

O, Holy Spirit, cease to grieve
That slighted offer of thy grace;
My heart is breaking to receive
The beauty of thy sweet embrace.

I cannot, will not let thee go,
Has been my cry — nor shall it cease,
Till the wild billows of my woe
Shall bear me to the shore of peace.

Go lay thy forehead in hell's coals,
Proud scorner of the bended knee,
For broken faith and perjured souls
Charged all their awful guilt to thee.

And when at last the quick and dead
 Are summoned to the judgment bar,
 If there shall be a crime more dread
 Than all the rest, to answer for —

Thine is it; for no evil hand,
 Save that which opened first the grave,
 Could ever sink the accursed brand
 In the crouched shoulder of the slave.

BE ACTIVE.

THOU who silently art weeping,
 Thou of faded lip and brow,
 Golden harvests for thy reaping
 Wave before thee even now.

Fortune may be false and fickle —
 Should you, therefore, pause and weep?
 Taking in thy hand the sickle,
 Enter in the field, and reap.

Though the garden, famed Elysian,
 May be shut from thee by fate,
 Thou hast yet a holier mission
 Than to linger at the gate.

When so oft the rosiest morning
 Slumbers in the tempest's arms,
 Should the cloud of dismal warning
 Fill the soul with vague alarms?

Brightest visions from thy pillow*
 May have vanished, still thou'rt blest,
 While the waves of time's rough billows
 Wash the shores of endless rest.

Should the powers of darkness blind thee,
 Should their whispers fill thy heart,
 Say thou, Satan, get behind me!
 And the tempter will depart.

* Probably a misprint for "pillows."

Then, to every fortune equal,
Let us combat to the last,
That life's marches in the sequel
May retrieve the wasted past.

DEATH'S FERRYMAN.*

BOATMAN, thrice I've called thee o'er,
Waiting on life's solemn shore,
Tracing, in the silver sand,
Letters till thy boat should land.

Drifting out alone with thee,
Toward the clime I cannot see,
Read to me the strange device
Graven on thy wand of ice.

Push the curls of golden hue
From thy eyes of starlit dew,
And behold me where I stand,
Beckoning thy boat to land.

Where the river mist, so pale,
Trembles like a bridal veil,
O'er yon lowly drooping tree,
One that loves me waits for me.

Hear, sweet boatman, hear my call!
Last year, with the leaflets, fall,
Resting her pale hand in mine,
Crossed she in that boat of thine.

When the corn shall cease to grow,
And the rye-field's silver flow
At the reaper's feet is laid,
Crossing, spake the gentle maid:

Dearest love, another year
Thou shalt meet this boatman here —
The white fingers of despair
Playing with his golden hair.

* Reprinted in the volume of 1855.

From this silver-sanded shore,
 Beckon him to row thee o'er ;
 Where yon solemn shadows be,
 I shall wait thee — come and see !

There ! the white sails float and flow,
 One in heaven and one below ;
 And I hear a low voice cry,
 Ferryman of Death am I.

WATCHING.*

THY smile is sad, Elella,
 Too sad for thee to wear,
 For scarcely have we yet untwined
 The rosebuds from thy hair.

So, dear one, hush thy sobbing,
 And let thy tears be dried —
 Methinks thou shouldst be happier,
 Three little months a bride.

Hark ; how the winds are heaping
 The snow-drifts cold and white —
 The clouds like spectres cross the sky —
 Oh, what a lonesome night !

The hour grows late and later,
 I hear the midnight chime :
 Thy heart's fond keeper, where is he ?
 Why comes he not ? — 't is time !

Here make my heart thy pillow,
 And, if the hours seem long,
 I'll while them with a legend wild,
 Or fragment of old song —

Or read, if that will soothe thee,
 Some poet's pleasant rhymes :
 Oh, I have watched and waited thus,
 I cannot tell the times !

* Reprinted in the volume of 1855.

Hush, hark! across the neighboring hills
I hear the watch-dog bay —
Stir up the fire, and trim the lamp,
I 'm sure he 's on the way.

Could that have only been the winds
So like a footstep near?
No, smile, Elella, smile again,
He 's coming home — he 's here!

ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

VAIN it were to say that night
Folds away the morrow —
Oh, you cannot see the light
Through this aching sorrow!

Beauty from your lives is borne,
Brother, sister, weeping;
But the cherub boy you mourn
Is not dead, but sleeping.

Folded are the dimpled arms
From your soft caressing;
Yet our God in darker forms
Sendeth down his blessing.

Death, a breeze from heaven astray,
Still, with wing the fleetest,
Drifts the lovely flowers away,
Where hope clings the sweetest.

Strong to change, but not destroy
While the paley winglets
Veil the forehead of the boy
Bright with golden ringlets.

Faith, though dumb at the great loss
Which hath made you weepers,
Closer, closer clasps the Cross
Down among the sleepers.

And though wild your anguish be,
 And your hearts all broken,
 "Suffer them to come to me,"
 Hath been sweetly spoken.

CRADLE SONG.

WEARY of the mother's part?
 My sweet baby, never!
 I will rock thee on my heart
 Ever, yes, forever!

Loveliest of lovely things,
 Pure as the evangel!—
 O, in everything but wings
 Is my babe an angel!

Blue as heaven is are the eyes,
 'Neath the lids so waxen,
 And the gold of morning lies
 In the ringlets flaxen.

Fragrant shrub, or tropic tree,
 Never yielded blossom
 Half so lovely, sweet, as thee,
 Sleeping on my bosom!

When thy little dimpled cheek
 Mine is softly pressing,
 Not a wish have I to seek
 Any other blessing.

Art thou, little baby, mine?
 Earlier love effacing:
 One whose smile is like to thine,
 Chides this long embracing.

No! as drops of light and dew
 Glorify each other,
 So shall we life journey through,
 Father, child, and mother.

SEKO.

BRIGHT dames had kept the knight
Long at the wassail;
Therefore his courser white
Flew toward his castle.

Deep moaned the ocean flood,
Howled the wind hoarser —
Right through the ringing wood
Struck the gay courser.

Hoof-strokes had trod the flowers
Where the rein slackened;
Fierce flames had left the towers
Ruined and blackened.

One look of mute despair
Gave he lost splendor;
One cry rose wildly there,
Wildly, but tender.

Up from the dismal rocks
Rose the sad echo —
Maid of the golden locks,
Dewy-eyed Seko!

Once more with smothered pain
Writhed his lip slightly,
Then 'neath a tightened rein
Flew the steed lightly.

Hushed be thy stormy wrath,
Desolate bosom;
Low in thy mountain path
Lies the lost blossom.

Pale uncaressing lips
Wait for the lover,
Pale as the plume that dips
Softly above her.

Bright o'er the icy rocks
 Of the roused echo
 Lay the long golden locks
 Of the dead Seko.

Drifting like silver rain
 Down o'er his master
 Went the white courser's mane—
 Woful disaster!

THE DESERTED FYLGIA.*†

LIKE a meteor, radiant, streaming,
 Seems her hair to me,
 And thou bear'st her feet like lilies,
 Dark and chilly sea!

Wannish fires enclasp her bosom,
 Like the Northern Light,
 And like icicles her fingers
 Glisten, locked and white.

On the blue and icy ocean,
 As a stony floor,
 Toward thy boat, O dying Viking,
 Walks she evermore!

Like a star on morning's forehead,
 When the intense air,
 Sweeping o'er the face of heaven,
 Lays its far depths bare—

Is the beauty of her smiling,
 Pale and cold and clear—
 What, O fearful, dying Viking,
 Doth the maiden here?

* "A Scandinavian warrior, having embraced Christianity, and being attacked by disease which he thought mortal, was naturally anxious that a spirit who had accompanied him through his pagan career should not attend him into that other world, where her society might involve him in disagreeable consequences. The persevering Fylgia, however, in the shape of a fair maiden, walked on the waves of the sea, after her Viking's ship." — Author's Note.

† Reprinted in volume of 1855.

Hath the wretched hell-maid, Belsta,
 Ever crossed her way,
 Weirdly driving herds of cattle,
 Cattle dark and gray ?

Hath she seen the maids of Skulda
 Draw from Urda's well
 Water where the awful snake-king
 Gnaws the roots of hell ?

Hath she seen the harts that ever
 Haunt the ashen tree,
 Keeping all its buds from blooming ?
 Viking, answer me !

Moaningly his white lips tremble,
 But no voice replies —
 Starlight in the blue waves frozen,
 Seem his closing eyes.

Woman's lot is thine, O Fylgia,
 Mourning broken faith,
 And her mighty love outlasting
 Chance and change and death !

MUSIC.

THERE is music, deep and solemn,
 Floating through the vaulted arch
 When, in many an angry column,
 Clouds take up their stormy march :
 O'er the ocean billows, heaping
 Mountains on the sloping sands,
 There are ever wildly sweeping
 Shapeless and invisible hands.

Echoes full of truth and feeling
 From the olden bards sublime,
 Are, like spirits, brightly stealing
 Through the broken walls of time.

The universe, that glorious palace,
 Thrills and trembles as they float,
 Like the little blossom's chalice
 With the humming of the mote.

On the air, as birds in meadows —
 Sweet embodiments of song —
 Leave their bright fantastic shadows
 Trailing goldenly along.
 Till, aside our armor laying,
 We like prisoners depart,
 In the soul is music playing
 To the beating of the heart.

ORPHAN'S SONG.

ON the white cliffs of the ocean
 The sea-bird rests her wing:
 For the meek and patient camel
 Of the desert, there's a spring:
 But the shore hath rocks as steady
 Whereon weary feet may stand,
 And fountains flow more sweetly
 From the meadow than the sand.

We are orphans, poor and homeless,
 And the tempest whistles loud;
 But the stars of heaven are hiding
 In the meshes of the cloud.
 With the sleet our locks are stiffened,
 And our path is white with snow,
 And we leave the print of naked feet
 Behind us as we go.

But we've honest hearts, my brothers,
 And sinewy hands beside,
 And our mother's benediction
 That she gave us when she died;
 And whatever may befall us,
 We will never bow our souls
 But to Him who kept the Hebrews
 In the furnace of hot coals.

BRIDGES.

My friend, thou art mournful and heavy,
 That life is a transient breath —
 Disheartened, it may be, with hearing
 The moan of the river of death.

Up! work out the fate of a hero,
 Or perish at least in the strife;
 Even we may be builders of bridges
 For the passage of souls into Life.

As the wave of existence is drifting
 And rushing to darkness and death,
 Let us hew, with the sword of the spirit,
 White blocks from the deep mine of faith.

The rainbow shall o'erarch our bridges,
 Olives the pathway shall pave,
 And the beautiful stone of the corner
 Rest on the floor of the grave.

Like bright birds under the rafters
 Shall hover the good deeds we do,
 And the fair pillars shine with the beauty
 Of lives to humanity true.

My friend, wilt thou lend me thy counsel?
 And then, if thou wilt, we will strive
 O'er the river of death to build bridges,
 That souls may o'erpass it and live.

BOOK OF LIGHT.

GENTLEST sister, I am weary —
 Bring, oh, bring the Book of Light!
 There are shadows dark and dreary
 Settling on my heart to-night.

That alone can soothe my sadness,
 That alone can dry my tears,
 When I see no spot of gladness
 Down the dusky vale of years.

Well I know that I inherit
 All that sometimes makes me blest;
 And in vain I ask my spirit
 Why this feeling of unrest.

But all day have been around me
 Voices that would not be still,
 And the twilight shades have found me
 Shrinking from a nameless ill.

Seeing not despair's swift lightning —
 Hearing not the thunders roll,
 Hands invisible are tightening
 Bands of sorrow on my soul.

Out beneath the jewelled arches
 Let us bivouac to-night,
 And to soothe days' dusty marches
 Bring, oh, bring the Book of Light!

THE CHILD OF NATURE.

HASTE, haste, my gentle sisters,
 Break away from slumber's chain,
 The light of morn streams redly
 Through my chamber lattice pane!

I hear the wild birds calling
 With their sweet throats all in tune —
 'T is the goldenest of the mornings
 Of the merry month of June!

On the horizon's blue edges
 The sweet light dimly burns,
 And the summer dew is dropping
 From the roses' crimson urns.

Leaving toilet and mirror —
With the sunshine on the hill
I will let the breezes dally
With my tresses as they will!

The spray-wreaths of the fountains
In the light of such a morn,
Must be like the snowy fleeces
Of the lambs among the corn.

Why should the heart be folded
In the mantle of dim care,
In so glorious a temple
For the offering up of prayer?

WHERE REST THE DEAD?

ANSWER, thou star whose brightening ray
Foretells the gathering shades of night,
If so 't is given thee, where are they
Who pass from mortal sight?

We know in some green isle of bliss,
Where clouds and tempests never roll,
There is a holier home than this —
A triumph for the soul!

The early birds, the summer flowers,
The tearful spring-time has restored;
But when shall they again be ours
O'er whom our love was poured?

We look to see the spirit's track,
And hear the stir of wings above,
And call, but win no answer back,
Nor token of their love.

While kindred smiles and tones of mirth
Are mingling brightly as the waves,
There still rests darkly on our hearth
A shadow from the graves.

Answer, thou star whose brightening ray
Foretells the gathering shades of night,
If so 't is given thee, where are they
Who pass from mortal sight?

LYRA: A LAMENT.*

MAIDENS, whose tresses shine,
Crownéd with daffodil and eglantine,
Or, from their stringéd buds of brier roses,
Bright as the vermeil closes
Of April twilights after sobbing rains,
Fall down in rippled skeins
And golden tangles low
About your bosoms, dainty as new snow;
While the warm shadows blow in softest gales
Fair hawthorn flowers and cheery blossoms white
Against your kirtles, like the froth from pails
O'er brimmed with milk at night,
When lowing heifers bury their sleek flanks
In winrows of sweet hay or clover banks —
Come near and hear, I pray,
My plainéd roundelay.
Where creeping vines o'errun the sunny leas,
Sadly, sweet souls, I watch your shining bands,
Filling with stainéd hands
Your leafy cups with lush red strawberries;
Or deep in murmurous glooms,
In yellow mosses full of starry blooms,
Sunken at ease — each busied as she likes,
Or stripping from the grass the beaded dews,
Or picking jagged leaves from the slim spikes
Of tender pinks — with warbled interfuse
Of poesy divine,
That haply long ago
Some wretched borderer of the realm of woe
Wrought to a dulcet line; —
If in your lovely years
There be a sorrow that may touch with tears

* Printed in "Lyra" and revised in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

The eyelids piteously, they must be shed
 FOR LYRA, DEAD.

The mantle of the May
 Was blown almost within the summer's reach,
 And all the orchard trees,
 Apple, and pear, and peach,
 Were full of yellow bees,
 Flown from their hives away.
 The callow dove upon the dusty beam
 Fluttered its little wings in streaks of light,
 And the gray swallow twittered full in sight;
 Harmless the unyoked team
 Browsed from the budding elms, and thrilling lays
 Made musical prophecies of brighter days;
 And all went jocundly. I could but say,
 Ah! well-a-day! —
 What time spring thaws the wold,
 And in the dead leaves come up sprouts of gold,
 And green and ribby blue, that after hours
 Encrown with flowers;
 Heavily lies my heart
 From all delights apart,
 Even as an echo hungry for the wind,
 When fail the silver-kissing waves to unbind,
 The music bedded in the drowsy strings
 Of the sea's golden shells —
 That, sometimes, with their honeyed murmurings
 Fill all its underswells; —
 For o'er the sunshine fell a shadow wide
 When Lyra died.

When sober Autumn, with his mist-bound brows,
 Sits drearily beneath the fading boughs,
 And the rain, chilly cold,
 Wrings from his beard of gold,
 And as some comfort for his lonesome hours,
 Hides in his bosom stalks of withered flowers,
 I think about what leaves are drooping round
 A smoothly shapen mound,
 And if the wild wind cries
 Where Lyra lies.
 Sweet shepherds softly blow

Ditties most sad and low —
 Piping on hollow reeds to your pent sheep —
 Calm be my Lyra's sleep,
 Unvexed with dream of the rough briers that pull
 From his strayed lambs the wool!
 Oh, star, that tremblest dim
 Upon the welkin's rim,
 Send with thy milky shadows from above
 Tidings about my love;
 If that some envious wave
 Made his untimely grave,
 Or if, so softening half my wild regrets,
 Some coverlid of bluest violets
 Was softly put aside,
 What time he died!
 Nay, come not, piteous maids,
 Out of the murmurous shades;
 But keep your tresses crownéd as you may
 With eglantine and daffodillies gay,
 And with the dews of myrtles wash your cheeks,
 When flamy streaks,
 Uprunning the gray orient, tell of morn —
 While I, forlorn,
 Pour all my heart in tears and plaints, instead,
 FOR LYRA, DEAD.

 IN ILLNESS.*

No harsh complaint nor rude unmannered woe
 Shall jar discordant in the dulcet flow
 Of music, raining through the chestnut wings
 Of the wild plaining dove,
 The while I touch my lyre's late shattered strings,
 Mourning about my love.

Now in the field of sunset, Twilight gray,
 Sad for the dying day,
 With wisps of shadows binds the sheaves of gold
 And Night comes shepherding his starry fold
 Along the shady bottom of the sky.

* Printed in "Lyra" and revised in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

Alas, that I
 Sunken among life's faded ruins lie —
 My senses from their natural uses bound!
 What thing is likest to my wretched plight? —
 A barley grain cast into stony ground,
 That may not quicken up into the light.

Erewhile I dreamed about the hills of home
 Whereon I used to roam;
 Of silver-leavéd larch,
 And willows, hung with tassels, when like bells
 Tinkle the thawing runnel's brimming swells;
 And softly filling in the front of March
 The new moon lies,
 Watching for harebells, and the buds that ease
 Heart's lovelorn, and the spotted adder's tongue,
 Dead heapéd leaves among —
 The verdurous season's cloud of witnesses;
 Of how the daisy shines
 White, i' the knotty and close-nibbled grass;
 Of thickets full of prickly eglantines,
 And the slim spice-wood and red sassafras,
 Stealing between whose boughs the twinkling heats
 Suck up the exhaléd sweets
 From dew-embalméd beds of primroses,
 That all unpresséd lie,
 Save of enamored airs, right daintily,
 And golden-ringéd bees;
 Of atmospheres of hymns,
 When wings go beating up the blue sublime
 From hedgerows sweet with vermeil-sprouting limbs,
 In April's showery time,
 When lilacs come, and straggling flag-flowers, bright,
 As any summer light
 Ere yet the plowman's steers
 Browse through the meadows from the traces free,
 Or steel-blue swallows twitter merrily,
 With slant wings shaving close the level ground,
 Where with his new-washed ewes thick huddled round,
 The careful herdsman plies the busy shears.
 But this was in life's May,
 Ere Lyra was away;
 And this fond seeming now no longer seems —

Aching and drowsy pains keep down my dreams ; —
 Even as a dreary wind
 Within some hollow, black with poison flowers,
 Swoons into silence, dies the hope that lined
 My lowly chamber with illumined wings,
 In life's enchanted hours,
 When, tender oxlips mixed through yellow strings
 Of mulleinstars, with myrtles interfused,
 Pulled out of pastures green, I gaily used
 To braid up with my hair. Ah, well-a-day!
 Haply the blue eyes of another May,
 Open from rosy lids, I shall not see,
 For the white shroud-folds. If it thus must be,
 Oh, friends who near me keep
 To watch or weep,
 When you shall see the coming of the night
 Comfort me with the light
 Of Lyra's love,
 And pray the saints above
 To pity me, if it be sin to know
 Heaven here below.

HYMN TO THE NIGHT.*

MIDNIGHT, beneath your sky,
 Where streaks of soft blue lie
 Between the starry ranks
 Like rivers with white lilies on their banks,
 Frown not that I am come,
 A little while to stay
 From the broad light of day.
 My passion shall be dumb,
 Nor vex with faintest moan
 For my life's summer flown
 The drowsy stillness hanging on the air.
 Therefore, with black despair
 Let me enfold my brow —
 I come to gather the gray ashes now
 That in the long gone hours

* Printed in "Lyra" and revised in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

Were blushing flowers.
Give me some gentle comfort, gentle Night,
For their untimely blight,
Feeding my soul with the delicious sounds
Of waters washing over hollow grounds
Through beds of hyacinths, and rushes green
With yellow ferns and broad-leaved flags between ;
Where the south winds do sleep,
Forgetting their white cradles in the deep.

The future is all dim,
No more my locks I trim
With myrtles or gay pansies, as I used,
Or with slim jasmines strung with pretty flowers,
As in the blessed hours
Ere yet I sadly mused,
Or covered up from my lamenting eyes
The too sweet skies,
With withered holly or the bitter rue,
As now, alas ! I do.
Since Lyra, for whose sake the world was fair,
Is lost, I know not where,
Ah me ! my sweetest song
Must do his beauty wrong —
To his white hands I give my heavy heart,
Saying, Lovely as thou art,
Be kindly piteous of my hapless woe ! —
Full well I know
How changed I am since all my young heart-beats
Were full of joyance, as of pastoral sweets
The long bright summer times
When Love first taught me rhymes.
Yet, dear one, in thy smile
The light they knew erewhile
My eyes would gather back, and in my cheek
Beneath thy lip the flush of spring would break.
Come, thou, about whose visionary bier
I strew in softest fear
Pale flowers of mandrakes in the nightly dreams,
That fly when morning streams
Slant through my casement and fades off again,
Soothing no jot my pain —
Come back and stay with me

And we will lovers be!
 In the brown shadows of the autumn trees,
 Lingering behind the bees
 Till the rough winds do blow
 And blustery clouds are full of chilly snow,
 We 'll sing old songs, and with love ditties gay
 Beguile the hours away.

And I with ivy buds thy locks will crown,
 And when in all their pretty lengths of gold
 Straightened with moisture cold

Sorrowfully drop they down,
 My hands shall press them dry, the while I keep
 Soft watches for thy sleep,
 Weaving some roundelay,

Of that pale huntress, haply, whose blue way
 Along the heavens was lost,
 Finding the low earth sweeter than the skies —
 Kissing the love-lit eyes

Of the fair boy Endymion, as he crossed
 The leafy silence of the woods alone,
 In the old myth-time flown;
 Haply of Proteus, all his dripping flocks
 Along the wild sea-rocks
 Driving to pastures in fresh sprouting meads,
 His sad brows crownéd with green murmurous reeds
 For love of Leonora — she for whom
 The blank blanched sands were shapen to a tomb,
 Where, under the wild midnight's troubled frown,
 With his pale burden in his arms, went down
 Her mortal lover. Moaningly the waves
 Wash by two lonesome graves;
 One holds the ashes of the beauteous boy
 Whose harmless joy
 Of playing the fifth season in the sun,
 Was all untimely done.

Away, my dream, away!
 Like young buds blackened in the front of May
 And wasted in the rude and envious frost,
 My early hopes are lost.
 Oh angel of the darkness, come and make,
 For pity's sake,
 My bed with sheets as white as sheets may be,

And give me sweeter grace to go with thee,
 Than e'er became my life. No lures have I,
 To draw thee nigh,
 Of beauty, wit, or friends to make ado ;
 Haply, or one or two,
 Seeing me in my shroud, would sigh, "Alas!"
 As for a daisy gone out of the grass
 Wherein bloomed better flowers. If so it fall,
 It were an end befitting most of all
 The close of my bad fortunes. Thou
 Hearing my pleading now,
 Knowest well how true I speak,
 There be no prints of kisses on the cheek
 I hide against thy bosom, praying to go
 Down to the chamber low,
 Where I shall be wed
 With Lyra, dead.

THE MINSTREL.

BENEATH a silvery sycamore
 His willow pipe I saw him playing.
 The heifer down the hill was straying —
 Her lengthening shadow went before,
 Toward the near stubble-land: the lowing
 Of labored oxen, pasturing,
 Called her that way. The wind was blowing,
 And the tall reeds against a spring
 Of unsunned waters, slantwise fell,
 But you might hear his song right well —
 "I would that I were bird or bee,
 Or anything that I am not —
 Sweet lady-love, I care not what,
 So I might live and die with thee."

The grass beneath its flowery cover
 Was softly musical with bees ;
 But well-a-day ! what sights may please
 The eyes of an enchanted lover ?
 In dusty hollows, here and there,
 Among gnarled roots the flocks were lying,
 O'erclomb by lambs ; and homeward flying,

The birds made dusky all the air ;
 The yellow light began to fade
 From the low tarn — the day was o'er ;
 And still his willow pipe he played,
 Under the silvery sycamore :
 “ I would that I were bird or bee,
 Or anything that I am not —
 Lost Lady-love, I care not what,
 So I might live and die with thee.”

Down through the long blue silences
 Came the owl's cry ; fire-flies were trimming
 Their torches for the night, and skimming
 Athwart the glooms ; between the trees,
 Went the blind, wretched bat : Ah me,
 The night and sorrow well agree !

The meadow king-cups and the furze
 Were pretty with the harvest dew,
 And in the brook the thistle threw
 The shadows of its many burs.
 I wis, he lovely was to see,
 In the gray twilight's pallid shade,
 As on his willow pipe he played,
 Crownéd with “ buds of poesy ” —
 “ I would that I were bird or bee,
 Or anything that I am not —
 A sound, a breeze, I care not what,
 So I might live and die with thee.”

Faint gales of starlight from above
 Blew softly from the casement light
 Across the pillow, milky white,
 Where slept the lady of his love,
 The floating tresses, black as sloe,
 Fell tangled round the dainty snow
 Of cheek and bosom. Gentle seemed
 The lady, smiling as she dreamed.
 But not of him her visions are,
 Who, for the sake of the sweet light
 Within her casement, vexed the night —
 Her thoughts are travelers elsewhere.

At midnight on a jutting cliff,
 A raven flapped his wings and cried ;
 Faintly the willow pipe replied —
 The hands upon its stops were stiff.
 Under the silvery sycamore
 The mournful playing was all done —
 If there be angels, he was one,
 For surely all his pain was o'er.
 At morn a lady walked that way,
 And when she saw his quiet sleeping,
 Upon the flowers, she fell a-weeping,
 And for her tears she could not pray.
 I had been little used to speak
 Of comfort, but was moved to see
 Her piteous heart so near to break,
 For the pale corse beneath the tree ;
 And so, to soothe her grief, I said
 The way he died, and told his song ;
 " Alas, he loved me well and long,"
 She sighed ; " I would that we were wed
 As lovers use, or else that I
 Were anything that I am not,
 Or bird, or bee, I care not what,
 Here in the pleasant flowers to die."

The mist, with many a soft fold, shrouds
 The eastern hills, birds wake their hymns,
 And through the sycamore's white limbs
 Shines the red climbing of the clouds.
 Making my rhymes, I heard her sigh,
 " Ah, well-a-day, that we were wed
 As lovers use, or else that I
 Here on the pleasant flowers were dead !"

 HYALA.

Low by the reedy sea went ancient Ops,
 Tracking for crownless Saturn : quietly
 From her gray hair waned off the sober light,
 For Eve, that Cyclops of the burning eye,
 Slow pacing down the slumberous hills, was gone.

Under the black boughs of a cedarn wood,
 Weary of hunting, Dian lay asleep,
 Kissed by the amorous winds. Close to her feet,
 Cropping the scant ambrosia, Io came,
 Her slender neck hung round with modest bells
 Of asphodel, the gift of Jupiter,
 Who, for the jealous love that Juno had,
 Made her the milk-white heifer that she was.
 So slept the huntress while, hard by the wood
 Where the slant sunset lay in crimson gores
 Athwart the dimness, that most chaste of maids
 Whom Dian loved, cold-bosomed Hyala,
 Stood leaning on her slack bow, all alone —
 Her forehead smooth as ice, and ivy-bound,
 And in her girdle of blue hyacinths
 Three sharpest arrows.

All unconsciously,
 Tripping bare-footed through the violets,
 Idalia, fairest shepherdess of all —
 In her white hands her silver milking-bowl,
 And on her lip the music of a heart
 Hungry for love — crossed the near field, her song
 Sweetly dividing the blue silent air :

“O fair Scamander, bed of loveliness,
 When wilt thou give my naked limbs to lie
 Among thy marriage pillows, white as foam !”

In the pale cheek of Hyala burned out
 An angry color, as she saw her sit
 Singing and milking in her silver bowl.
 One lily shoulder, under rippling lengths
 Of dropping tresses, pressing light the flank
 Of a plump goat, with eyes as black as sloe,
 And hoofs of pinky silver, dimpling deep
 The wild green turf thick-sprouting on a ridge
 That topt a flowery slope in Thessaly.

Scorn curled the lip of listening Hyala,
 And drawing from her belt the nimblest shaft,
 Straight from her steady hand it sped and sunk
 Deep in the forehead of the harmless beast,
 That moaning fell, and bled into the grass :
 So Hyala went laughing on her way.

GRAND-DAME AND CHILD.

THE maple's limbs of yellow flowers
 Made spots of sunshine here and there
 In the bleak woods; a merry pair
 Of blue-birds, which the April showers
 Had softly called, were come that day;
 Another week would bring the May
 And all the meadow-grass would shine
 With strawberries; and all the trees
 Whisper of coming blooms, and bees
 Work busy, making golden wine.

The white-haired grand-dame, faint and sick,
 Sits fretful in her chair of oak;
 The clock is nearly on the stroke
 Of all the day's best hour, and quick
 The dreamy house will glimmer bright —
 No candle needed any more,
 For Miriam's smile is so like light,
 The moths fly with her in the door.

The lilies carved in her chair
 The grand-dame counts, but cannot tell
 If they be three or seven; the pair
 Of merry blue-birds, singing well,
 She does not hear; nor can she see
 The moonshine, cold, and pure, and bright,
 Walk like an angel clothed in white,
 The path where Miriam should be.

Almost she hears the little feet
 Patter along the path of sands;
 Her eyes are making pictures sweet,
 And every breeze her cheek that fans,
 Half cheat her to believe, I wis,
 It is her pretty grandchild's kiss.

The dainty hood, her fancy too
 Sees hanging on the cabin wall,
 And from her modest eyes of blue,
 Fair Miriam putting back the fall

Of her brown hair, and laughing wild —
 Her darling merry-hearted child,
 Then with a step as light and low
 As any wood-birds in the snow,
 She goes about her household cares.

“The saints will surely count for prayers,
 The duties love doth sweeten so,”
 Says the pleased grand-dame; but alas!
 No feet are pattering on the grass,
 No hood is hanging on the wall —
 It was a foolish dreaming, all.

The morning-glories winding up
 The rustic pillars of the shed,
 Open their dark bells, cup by cup,
 To the June's rainy clouds; the bed
 Of rosemary and meadow-sweet
 Which Miriam kept with so much care,
 Is run to weeds, and everywhere
 Across the paths her busy feet
 Wore smooth and hard, the grass has grown —
 And still the grand-dame sits alone,
 Counting the lilies in her chair —
 Her ancient chair of carved oak —
 And fretful, listening for the stroke
 Of the old clock, and for the pair
 Of blue-birds that have long been still;
 Saying, as o'er the neighboring hill
 The shadows gather thick and dumb —
 “'T is time that Miriam were come.”

And now the spiders cease to weave,
 And from between the corn's green stems
 Drawing after her her scarlet hems,
 Dew-dappled, the brown-vested Eve
 Slow to his purple pillows drops;
 His tired team now the plowman stops;
 In the dim woods the axe is still,
 And sober, winding round the hill,
 The cows come home. “Come, pretty one,
 I'm watching for you at the door,”
 Calls the old grand-dame o'er and o'er,
 “'T is time the working all were done.”

And kindly neighbors come and go,
 But gently piteous; none have said,
 "Your pretty grandchild sleepeth so
 We cannot wake her;" but instead
 Piling the cushions in her chair,
 Carvéd in many a quaint design
 Of leaves and lilies, nice and fine,
 They tell her she must not despair
 To meet her pretty child again —
 To see her wear forevermore,
 A smile of brighter love than when
 The moths flew with her in the door.

 AGATHA TO HAROLD.*

COME there ever memories, Harold,
 Like a half-remembered song
 From the time of gladness vanished
 Down the distance, oh, so long!
 Come they to me — not in sadness,
 For they strike into my soul,
 As the sharp axe of the woodsman
 Strikes the dead and sapless bole.

Just across the orchard hill-top,
 Through the branches gray and bare,
 We can see the village church-yard —
 I shall not be lonesome there.
 When the cold wet leaves are falling
 On the turfless mound below,
 You will sometimes think about me,
 You will love me then, I know.
 In the window of my chamber
 Is a plant with pale blooms crowned —
 If the sun shines warm to-morrow,
 In that quiet church-yard ground
 I will set it; and at noontimes,
 When the school-girls thither wend,
 They will see it o'er me blossom
 And believe I had a friend.

* Printed in "Lyra" and revised in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

Knowest thou the time, oh Harold,
 When at many a green mound's head
 Read we o'er the simple records
 Love had written of the dead.
 While the west was faintly burning,
 Where the cloudy day was set,
 Like a blushing press of kisses —
 Ah, thou never canst forget!

“Thou art young,” thou saidst, “thy future
 All in sunlight seems to shine —
 Art content to crown thy maytime
 Out of autumn love like mine?
 Couldst thou see my locks a fading
 With no sorrow and no fears? —
 For thou knowest I stand in shadows
 Deep to almost twice thy years.”
 In that time my life-blood mounted
 From my bosom to my brow,
 And I answered simply, truly —
 (I was younger then than now) —
 “Were it strange if that a daisy
 Sheltered from the tempest stroke,
 Bloomed contented in the shadow
 Of the overarching oak?”

When the sun had like a herdsman
 Clipt the misty waves of morn,
 By the breezes driven seaward
 Like a flock of lambs new-shorn;
 Thou hadst left me, and oh, Harold,
 Half in gladness, half in tears,
 I was gazing down the future
 O'er the lapses of the years;
 To what time the clouds about me —
 All my night of sorrow done —
 Should blow out their crimson linings
 O'er the rising of love's sun;
 And I said in exultation,
 “Not the bright ones in the sky,
 Then shall know a sweeter pleasure
 Than, my Harold, thou and I.”

Thrice the scattered seed had sprouted
 As the spring thaw reappeared,
 And the winter frosts had grizzled
 Thrice the autumn's yellow beard;
 When that lovely day of promise
 Darkened with a dread eclipse,
 And my heart's long clasped joyance
 Died in moans upon my lips.
 Silent, saw I other maidens
 To a thousand pleasures wed —
 "Save me from the past, good angel!" —
 This was all the prayer I said.
 Sometimes they would smile upon me
 As their gay troops passed me by,
 Saying softly to each other,
 "How is she content to die?"
 Oh, they little guess the barren
 Wastes on which my visions go,
 And the conflicts fierce but silent
 That at last have made me so.
 Shall the bright-winged bird be netted
 Singing in the open fields,
 And not struggle with the fowler,
 Long and vainly ere it yields —
 Or the heart to death surrender
 Mortal hoping without strife?
 But the struggle now is ended —
 Give me, God, a better life!

 LEGEND OF SEVILLE.

THREE men that three gray mules bestrode
 Went riding through a lonesome road —
 Dust from the largest to the least
 Up to the fetlock of each beast.

The foremost was a stripling pale;
 "Comrades," he said, "within our hail
 I see a hostel, white as snow —
 'T is nightfall — shall we thither go?"

“Nay,” said the other two, “in sooth
’T is white enough, but of a truth,
Too lowly for our courtly need —
We ’ll gain a fairer with good speed.”

So, past the hostel white they rode,
These men that three gray mules bestrode,
Till led the pale young moon afar,
By her slim silver horn, one star.

Right wistfully then looking back,
Cried out the middle man, “Alack!
I spy a rude black inn — shalt see
If the host have good wine for three ?”

“Now,” said the hindmost, “by my troth
Shamed is my knighthood for ye both.” —
So, pricking sharply, on they rode,
These men who three gray mules bestrode.

Close where a whimpering river lay
Stood huts of fishers; all that day
Drying their loose nets in the sun,
They told how murders might be done.

A moorish tower of yellow stone
Shadowed that river-bridge, o’ergrown
With lichen and the marish moss —
Forward the stripling rode to cross.

Close came the others man by man,
But farther than the shadow ran,
The legend says, they never rode,
These men who three gray mules bestrode.

TO THE WINDS.*

TALK to my heart, oh winds —
Talk to my heart to-night;
My spirit always finds
With you a new delight,
Finds always new delight,
In your silver talk at night.

Give me your soft embrace
As you used to long ago,
In your shadowy trysting place,
When you seemed to love me so —
When you sweetly kissed me so,
On the green hills long ago.

Come up from your cool bed,
In the stilly twilight sea,
For the dearest hope lies dead,
That was ever dear to me;
Come up from your cool bed,
And we'll talk about the dead.

Tell me, for oft you go,
Winds, lovely winds of night,
About the chambers low
With sheets so dainty white,
If they sleep through all the night,
In the beds so chill and white:

Talk to me, winds, and say,
If in the grave be rest;
For, oh, life's little day
Is a weary one at best;
Talk to my heart and say
If death will give me rest.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

ANNUARIES.

I.*

A YEAR has gone down silently
 To the dark quiet of the Past
 Since I beneath this very tree
 Sat hoping, fearing, dreaming, last;
 Its waning glories, like a flame,
 Are trembling to the wind's light touch—
 All just a year ago the same,
 And I—oh! I—am changed so much!

The beauty of a wildering dream
 Hung softly round declining day;
 A star of all too sweet a beam
 In Eve's flushed bosom trembling lay;
 Changed in its aspect, yet the same,
 Still climbs that star from sunset's glow,
 But its embrace of beauteous flame
 No longer clasps the world from woe.

Another year shall I return,
 And cross the solemn chapel floor,
 While round me memory's shrine-lamps burn—
 Or shall this pilgrimage be o'er?
 One that I loved, grown faint with strife,
 When dropped and died the tenderer bloom,
 Folded the white tent of young life
 For the pale army of the tomb.

The dry seeds dropping from their pods,
 The hawthorn apples bright as dawn,
 And the gray mullen's starless rods,
 Were just as now a year ago;
 But changed is everything to me,
 From the small flower to sunset's glow
 Since last I sat beneath this tree,
 A year—a little year—ago.

* This first "Annuary" was reprinted with some verbal changes, in the volume of 1855, from the volume of 1850. The first, second, third, and fourth were printed in "Lyra," as well as in volume of 1855.

I leaned against this broken bough,
 This faded turf my footstep pressed;
 But glad hopes that are not there now,
 Lay softly trembling in my breast—
 Trembling, for through the golden haze
 Rose, as the dead leaves drifted by,
 As from the Vala of old days,
 The mournful voice of prophecy.

Give woman's heart one triumph hour,
 Even on the borders of the grave,
 And thou hast given her strength and power
 The saddest ills of life to brave;
 Crush that far hope down, thou dost bring
 To the poor bird the tempest's wrath,
 Without the petrel's stormy wing
 To beat the darkness from its path.

Once knowing mortal hope and fear,
 Whate'er in heaven's sweet clime thou art,
 Bend, pitying mother, softly near,
 And save, O save me from my heart!
 Be still, oh mournful memory,
 My knee is trembling on the sod—
 The heir of immortality,
 A child of the eternal God.

II.

When last year took her mournful flight,
 With all her train of woe and ill,
 As pale possessions sweep at night
 Across some lonesome burial hill—
 My soul with sorrow for its mate,
 And bowed with unrequited wrong,
 Stood knocking at the starry gate
 Of the wild wondrous realm of song.

Hope from my noon of life was gone,
 With all the sheltering peace it gave,
 And a dim twilight stealing on,
 Foretold the night-time of the grave.

Past is that time of wild unrest,
Hope reillumes its faded track,
And the soft hand of love has prest
Death's deep and awful shadows back.

A year agone, when wildly shrill
The wind sat singing on this bough
The churchyard on the neighboring hill
Had not so many graves as now.
Yet am I spared — God knoweth why,
And by the hand of fancy led,
The same as in the years gone by,
Musing this idle rhyme I tread.

When the May-morn, with hand of light,
The clouds about her bosom drew,
And o'er the blue, cold steeps of night
Went treading out the stars like dew —
One, whose dear joy it had been ours
Two little summer times to keep,
Folded his white hands from the flowers,
And, softly smiling, fell asleep.

And when the northern light streamed cold
Across October's moaning blast,
One whose brief tarrying was foretold
All the sweet summer that was past,
Meekly unlocked from her young arms
The scarcely faded bridal crown,
And in death's fearful night of storms
The dim day of her life went down.

Above yon reach of level mist
Bright shines the cross-crowned spire afar,
As in the sky's clear amethyst
The splendor of some steadfast star ;
And still beneath its steady light
The waves of time heave to and fro,
From night to day, from day to night,
As the dim seasons come and go.

Some eager for ambition's strife,
Some to love's banquet hurrying on,

Like pilgrims on the hills of life
 We cross each other, and are gone ;
 But though our lives are little drops,
 Welled from the infinite fount above,
 Our deaths are but the mystic stops
 In the great melody of love.

III.

Vailing the basement of the skies
 October's mists hang dull and red,
 And with each wild gust's fall and rise,
 The yellow leaves are round me spread ;
 'T is the third autumn, aye, so long !
 Since memory 'neath this very bough,
 Thrilled my sad lyre strings into song —
 What shall unlock their music now ?

Then sang I of a sweet hope changed,
 Of pale hands beckoning, glad health fled,
 Of hearts grown careless or estranged,
 Of friends, or living, lost, or dead.
 O living lost, forever lost,
 Your light still lingers, faint and far,
 As if an awful shadow crossed
 The bright disk of the morning star.

Blow, autumn, in thy wildest wrath,
 Down from the northern woodlands, blow !
 Drift the last wild-flowers from my path —
 What care I for the summer now !
 Yet shrink I, trembling and afraid
 From searching glances inward thrown ;
 What deep foundation have I laid,
 For any joyance not my own ?

While with my poor, unskilful hands,
 Half hopeful, half in vague alarm,
 Building up walls of shining sands
 That fell and faded with the storm,
 E'en now my bosom shakes with fear,
 Like the last leaflets of this bough,

For through the silence I can hear,
" Unprofitable servant, thou! "

Yet have there been, there are to-day
In spite of health, or hope's decline,
Fountains of beauty sealed away
From every mortal eye but mine;
Even dreams have filled my soul with light,
And on my way their splendor left,
As if the darkness of the night
Were by some planet's rising cleft.

And peace hath in my heart been born,
That shut from memory all life's ills,
In walking with the blue-eyed morn
Among the white mists of the hills.
And joyous, I have heard the wails
That heave the wild woods to and fro,
When autumn's crown of crimson pales
Beneath the winter's hand of snow.

Once, leaving all its lovely mates,
On yonder lightning-withered tree,
That vainly for the springtime waits,
A wild bird perched and sang for me;
And listening to the clear sweet strain
That came like sunshine o'er the day,
My forehead's hot and burning pain
Fell like a crown of thorns away.

But shadows from the western height
Are stretching to the valley low,
For through the cloudy gates of night
The day is passing, solemn, slow,
While o'er yon blue and rocky steep
The moon, half hidden in the mist,
Waits for the loving wind to keep
The promise of the twilight tryst.

Come thou, whose meek blue eyes divine,
What thou, and only thou canst see,
I wait to put my hand in thine —
What answer sendest thou to me?

Ah! thoughts of one whom helpless blight
Had pushed from all fair hope apart,
Making it thenceforth hers to fight
The stormy battles of the heart.

Well, I have no complaint of wrath,
And no reproaches for my doom;
Spring cannot blossom in thy path
So bright as I would have it bloom.

IV.

Oh, sorrowful and faded years,
Gathered away a time ago,
How could your deaths the fount of tears
Have troubled to an overflow?
I muse upon the songs I made
Beneath the maple's yellow limbs,
When down the aisles of thin cold shade
Sounded the wild bird's farewell hymns.

But no sad spell my spirit binds
As when, in days on which it broods,
October hunted with the winds
Along the reddening sunset woods.
Alas, the seasons come and go,
Brightly or dimly rise and set
The days, but stir no fount of woe,
Nor kindle hope, nor wake regret.

I sit with the complaining night,
And underneath the waning moon,
As when the lilies large and white
Lay round the forehead of the June,
What time within a snowy grave
Closed the blue eyes so heavenly dear,
Darkness swept o'er me like a wave,
And time has nothing that I fear.

The golden wings of summer's hours
Make to my heart a dirge-like sound,
The spring's sweet boughs of bridal flowers
Lie bright across a smooth-heaped mound.

What care I that I sing to-day
 Where sound not the old plaintive hymns,
 And where the mountains hide away
 The sunset maple's yellow limbs?

v.

On the brown, flowerless meadow lies
 The wraith of summer; oat flowers bright
 Nod heavy on her death-blind eyes,
 Smiling with melancholy light.
 And Autumn, with his eyelids red
 Drooped to her beauty, sits to-day,
 His sad heart sweetly comforted
 By storms upon their starless way.

Seasons continuous, mingling, thrill
 Our souls, as notes that sweetly blend,
 Until we cannot, if we will,
 Tell where they or begin or end.
 And while the blue fly sings so well,
 And while the cricket chirps so low:
 In the bright grass, I scarce can tell
 If there be daisy-flakes, or snow.

But when along the slumberous blue,
 And dreamy, quiet atmosphere,
 I look to find the April dew,
 I know the Autumn time is here.
 The lampless hollow of the skies
 Is full of mists, or blank, or dun;
 Where all day, soft and warm, there lies
 A shadow that should be the sun.

The winds go noiseless on their way,
 Scarcely the lightest twig is stirred;
 Not through the wild green boughs of May
 Slips the blue lizard so unheard.
 Under the woolly mullen, flat
 Against the dust, together creep
 The shining beetles; and the bat
 Is drowsing to his winter sleep.

The iron-weeds' red tops are down,
Wilted from all their summer sheen
The fennel's golden buds are brown,
And loneliest in all the scene :
Hither and thither lightly blows
A white cloud o'er the darkening wood,
Like some unpastured lamb that goes
Climbing and wandering for food.

But plenty gladdens all the world,
For corn is ripe, if flowers be o'er ;
Autumn, with yellow beard uncurled
In summer's grave-damps, sigh no more !
Sigh no more, Autumn ! sigh no more —
For if the blooming boughs have shed
Their pleasant leaves, the light will pour
So much the brighter on thy head.

And while thy mourning voice is staid
I'll play my pipe, so adding on
Another to the rhymes I made
Ere youth, my pretty mate, was gone.
Winds, stirring through the pinetops high,
Or hovering on the ocean's breast,
Blow softly on the ways that lie
Sloping and brightening toward the West.

Blow softly, for my thoughts would sweep,
Upon your still and beauteous waves,
Back to the woodlands green and deep,
Back to the firesides and the graves —
The firesides of the rosiest glow,
The graves wherein my kindred rest ;
Winds of the Northland, softly blow,
And bear me to the lovely West.

There linger sweetest voices yet,
That ever soothed from grief its pain ;
There glow the hills with suns long set,
And there my heart grows young again.
The hope which in the crimson boughs
Shut up her wings dim years away,

Sits with her wan and crownless brows
 Leaned on the sodded grave to-day.

For when the last sweet vision died
 She nursed for me, there fell a night
 Cloudy and black enough to hide
 Her smile's almost eternal light.
 When the unkenneled whining winds,
 Went last year tracking through the snow,
 My heart was comforted with friends
 Gone on the last long journey now —

Who in the middle heavens can view
 The noontide sun without a sigh —
 A yearning for the faded dew
 Where morning's broken splendors lie.
 And from the glory up above,
 My eyes come down to earth and mark
 The pain, the sorrow for lost love —
 The awful transit to the dark.

Weak and unworthy, still I live,
 Harvests and plenteous boughs to see;
 My God! how good thou art to give
 Such blessings as I have to me,
 Oh! add to these all needful grace —
 Divide me from that proud disdain,
 Climbing against the sunless base
 Of an eternity of pain.

VI.

Once more my annual harp! alas,
 'T is the sixth season nearly run
 Since the brown lizard through the grass
 Crept slow, and took the autumn sun:
 Since the wild maple boughs above
 Shook down their leaves of gold and red,
 The while I made my song of love —
 If there be angels overhead.

Methinks before their watchful eyes
 They well may cross their wings and rest;

What need they guardians in the skies
 Who with a human love are blest?
 Ah me! what wretched storms of tears
 Have made maturer life a dearth, —
 For the white visions of young years
 Grow dimmer than the common earth?

In vain! the swart October brings,
 In its rough arms, no April day —
 The ousel plunges its wild wings
 But in the rainy brooks of May.
 The rose that in the June time rain
 Comes open, could not, if it would
 Shut up its red-ripe leaves again,
 And go back to a blushing bud.

And when the step is dull and slow,
 And when the eye no longer beams
 With the glad hopes of years ago,
 What purpose has the heart with dreams?
 Away, wild thoughts of sorrow's flood —
 Wild dreams of early love, away!
 In calm and passionless womanhood,
 Why come ye thronging back to-day!

And you, ye questionings that rise,
 Of life and death and hope's surcease,
 Seal up again your mockeries —
 Peace, peace! I charge you give me peace!
 And let me from the pain and gloom
 Gather whatever seems like truth,
 Forgetful of the opening tomb,
 Forgetful of the closing youth.

Fain would my thoughts a searching go
 For one who left me years away —
 Haply the unblest grasses grow
 Upon his sweet shut eyes, to-day.
 Oft when the evening's mellow gleam
 Falls slantwise o'er some western hill,
 And like a ponderous, golden beam
 Lies rocking — all my heart grows still.

Listening and listening for the fall
 Of his dear step, the cold moon shines
 Betimes across the southern hall,
 And the black shadows of the vines
 O'erblow the mouldy walls, and lie
 Heavy along the winding walks —
 Where oft we set, in Mays gone by,
 Streaked lady-grass and hollyhocks.

Within a stone's throw seems the sky
 Against the faded woods to bend,
 Just as of old the corn-fields lie;
 But we, oh, we are changed, my friend!
 Since last I saw these maples fade,
 The locusts in the burial ground
 Have wrapt their melancholy shade
 About a new and turfless mound.

And one who last year heard with me
 The summer's dirges wild and dread,
 Has joined the peaceful company
 Whom we, the living, mourn as dead.
 Turning for solace unto thee,
 Oh, Future! from the pleasures gone,
 Misshapen earth, through mists I see,
 That fancy dare not look upon.

God of the earth and heaven above,
 Hear me in mercy, hear me pray —
 Let not one golden strand of love
 From my life's skein be shorn away,
 Or if, in thy all-wise decree,
 The edict be not written so,
 Grant, Lord of light, the earnest plea
 That I may be the first to go.

And when the harper of wide space
 Shall chant again his mournful hymn,
 While on the summer's pale dead face
 The leaves are dropping thick and dim —
 When songs of robins all are o'er,
 And when his work the ant forsakes,

And in the stubbly glebe no more
The grasshopper his pastime takes —

What time the gray-roofed barn is full,
The sober smiling harvest done,
And whiter than the late washed wool,
The flax is bleaching in the sun —
The friends who sewed my shroud, sometimes
Shall come about my grave: in tears
Repeating over saddest rhymes
From annuaries of past years.

LOST LIGHT.

So, close the window! gray and blank the sky
Slopes to the nightfall, and the wintry woods
Stand black and desolate; I shall not see
Spring, like a sunrise running o'er the hills,
Nor yet the lark, for love's insanity
Fly at the stars, singing his heart away.

In other seasons, I was little used
To miss the wild green boughs: thick flaws of rain
Fell round me like the moonlight.

Once, I know,
A mower brought me some red berries home,
And in bright plaits I wore them in my hair,
Playing along the meadow-side all day.
I wish that time were back. A foolish thought!
Its faith and love are fallen to dead dust
Where hope sets slips of roses all in vain;
And as the stormy, dull, and gusty eve
Shuts in the day, my day is closing too;
The playing in the meadows is all done.

Mine is the common error, to have given,
For shallow possibilities, the straight
And even chance of every probable good —
From fields of flowers to have but singled out
The bright one that was deadly, and to strive
Through prayer and passion vainly to win back
My blind way into peace, crying to be
Needless of all excuse — to be a child,

Treading cool furrows scented with crushed roots,
 To chase the stubble for the humming bird,
 And sing out with the homely grasshopper.

That once sweet music, April's pleasant rain,
 Plashing against the roof, grown thick with moss,
 Comes to me as though muffled by the clods.
 The tall reeds slant together as the winds
 Go piping through them, shepherding the lambs
 Where tiny fountains lie in hollow grounds,
 Rimmed round with uncroft daisies and bright grass.
 Birds mate and sing together, blossoming twigs
 Swing down with golden bees, the anthills swarm,
 And the black spider in his loom of limbs
 Weaves busily. The sad crow calls alone,
 The milk-maid plats her straw, the heifer's low
 Runs through the twilight, quick the harmless bat
 Flattens his thick damp wings against the pane,
 Love makes its lullaby, brown crickets run
 Along the hearth-light, proud bright hollyhocks
 Grow in the village garden with the corn,
 Lilies o'ertop the meadows, rough wild trees
 Sprout out with verdure; for the pleasant time,
 Glossy with purple plaits, out of their holes
 Snakes travel limberly; blood-hungry beasts
 Lean their great foreheads close and lovingly;
 Moles wallow toward the light; the sentinel cock
 Cries all the watches; yet no more the morn,
 Upright and white, smiles, gathering out the stars
 That redden, crown-like, round her yellow hair,
 But, prone, along the earth, from hill to hill,
 Slips noiselike,* like some earth-burrowing thing,
 That only lifts its pale throat in the sun.

Oh, if I dared to say these blushes climb
 Up to my cheek from a heart full of sin,
 Something might yet be done — my blind eyes be
 Couched to some apprehension of delight.
 Only the bad go sidling to the truth
 Through fate, necessity and evil chance,
 Saying, "I trifled with a tempting thing —
 Berry or leaf — an ugly-headed worm —
 Call it a viper — say I kissed its mouth,
 Or once, or twice, or oftener, if you will —

* Perhaps a misprint for "noiselessly."

And what of that, if it was but a part
That needs must be in life? Am I to blame?
Shrinking, yet drawn along by baffling power,
Even as the shamble's bloody enginery
Winds close against the windlass the beast's head."

Ay, who can be absolved by conscience so,
Or bring the lost light back into the world!

PAUL.

CROSSING the stubble, where, erewhile,
The golden-headed wheat had been,
I saw, and knew him by his smile.
Night, sad with rain, was flowing in —

I drew the curtains, soft and warm,
And when the room was full of light,
We sat — half listening to the storm,
Half talking — all the dreary night.

From their wet sheds, we heard the moan
Our oxen made — a pretty pair —
And heard the dead leaves often blown
In gusty eddies, here and there.

The dull-eyed spider ran along
The smoky rafters; the gray mouse
Crossed the bare floor; and his wild song
The cricket made through all the house.

Twisting the brown hair into rings,
Above his meditative eyes,
I counted all the long-gone springs
That we had sown with flowers; his sighs

Came thick and fast, as well they might,
But when I said, how on, and on,
For his sake, I had kept them bright —
The slow, reproachful smile was gone.

And seeing that my spoken truth
 Glowed in my silent looks, the same,
 All the proud beauty of his youth
 Back on his faded manhood came.

About my neck he clasped his arm,
 As in affection's morning prime,
 And said, how blest he was — that storm
 Was sweeter than the summer-time!

But when I kissed him back, and said —
 The embers never cast a gleam
 Through our low cabin, half so red,
 Sleep vanished — all had been a dream.

TO THE SPIRIT OF GLADNESS.*

UNDERNEATH a dreary sky,
 Spirit glad and free,
 Voyaging solemnly am I
 Toward an unknown sea.
 Falls the moonlight, sings the breeze,
 But thou speakest not in these.

In the summers overflown
 What delights we had!
 Now I sit all day alone,
 Weaving ditties sad;
 But thou comest not for the sake
 Of the lonesome rhymes I make.

Faithless spirit, spirit free,
 Where mayst thou be found?
 Where the meadow fountains be
 Raining music round,
 And the thistle burs so blue
 Shine the livelong day with dew.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Keep thee, in thy pleasant bowers,
 From my heart and brain ;
 Even the summer's lap of flowers
 Could not cool the pain ;
 And for pallid cheek and brow
 What companionship hast thou ?

Erewhile, when the rainy spring
 Filled the pastures full
 Of sweet daisies blossoming
 Out as white as wool ;
 We have gathered them and made
 Beds of Beauty in the shade.

Would that I had any friend
 Lovingly to go
 To the hollow where they blend
 With the grasses low,
 And a pillow soft and white
 Make for the approaching night.

THE TRYST.*

THE moss is withered, the moss is brown
 Under the dreary cedarn bowers,
 And fleet winds running the valleys down
 Cover with dead leaves the sleeping flowers.

White as a lily the moonlight lies
 Under the gray oak's ample boughs ;
 In the time of June 't were a paradise
 For gentle lovers to make their vows.

In the middle of night when the wolf is dumb,
 Like a sweet star rising out of the sea,
 They say that a damsel at times will come,
 And brighten the chilly light under the tree.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

And a blessed angel from out the sky
Cometh her lonely watch to requite ;
But not for my soul's sweet sake would I
Pray under its shadow alone at night.

A boy by the tarn of the mountain side
Was cruelly murdered long ago,
Where oft a spectre is seen to glide
And wander wearily to and fro.

The night was sweet like an April night,
When misty softness the blue air fills,
And the freckled adder's tongue makes bright
The sleepy hollows among the hills.

When, startled up from the hush that broods
Beauteously o'er the midnight time,
The gust ran wailing along the woods
Like one who seeth an awful crime.

The tree is withered, the tree is lost,
Where he gathered the ashen berries red,
As meekly the dismal woods he crossed —
The tree is withered, the boy is dead.

Now nightly, with footsteps slow and soft,
A damsel goes thither, but not in joy ;
Put thy arms round her, good angel aloft,
If she be the love of the murdered boy.

For still she comes as the daylight fades,
Her tryst to keep near the cedarn bowers.
Bear with her gently, tenderly, maids,
Whose hopes are open like summer flowers.

JESSIE CARROL.*

I.

At her window, Jessie Carrol,
As the twilight dew distils,
Pushes back her heavy tresses,
Listening toward the northern hills.
"I am happy, very happy,
None so much as I am blest —
None of all the many maidens
In the Valley of the West,"
Softly to herself she whispered;
Paused she then again to hear
If the step of Allan Archer,
That she waited for, were near.
"Ah, he knows I love him fondly! —
I have never told him so! —
Heart of mine, be not so heavy,
He will come to-night, I know."

Brightly is the full moon filling
All the withered woods with light,
"He has not forgotten surely —
It was later yesternight!"
Shadows interlock with shadows —
Says the maiden, "Woe is me!"
In the blue the eve-star trembles
Like a lily in the sea.
Yet a good hour later sounded, —
But the northern woodlands sway! —
Quick a white hand from her casement
Thrust the heavy vines away.
Like the wings of restless swallows
That a moment brush the dew,
And again are up and upward,
Till we lose them in the blue,
Were the thoughts of Jessie Carrol
For a moment dim with pain,
Then with pleasant waves of sunshine,
On the hills of hope again.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

"Selfish am I, weak and selfish,"
 Said she, "thus to sit and sigh:
 Other friends and other pleasures
 Claim his leisure well as I.
 Haply, care or bitter sorrow
 'T is that keeps him from my side,
 Else he surely would have hasted
 Hither at the twilight tide.
 Yet sometimes I can but marvel
 That his lips have never said,
 When we talked about the future
 Then, or then, we shall be wed! —
 Much I fear me that my nature
 Cannot measure half his pride,
 And perchance he would not wed me
 Though I pined of love and died.
 To the aims of his ambition
 I would bring nor wealth nor fame.
 Well, there is a quiet valley
 Where we both shall sleep the same!"
 So, more eves than I can number,
 Now despairing, and now blest,
 Watched the gentle Jessie Carrol,
 From the Valley of the West.

II.

Down along the dismal woodland
 Blew October's yellow leaves,
 And the day had waned and faded,
 To the saddest of all eves.
 Poison rods of scarlet berries
 Still were standing here and there,
 But the clover blooms were faded,
 And the orchard boughs were bare.
 From the stubble-fields the cattle
 Winding homeward, playful, slow,
 With their slender horns of silver
 Pushed each other to and fro.
 Suddenly the hound up-springing
 From his sheltering kennel, whined,
 As the voice of Jessie Carrol
 Backward drifted on the wind —

Backward drifted from a pathway
Sloping down the upland wild,
Where she walked with Allan Archer,
Light of spirit as a child;
All her young heart wild with rapture
And the bliss that made it beat —
Not the golden wells of Hybla
Held a treasure half so sweet!
But as oft the shifting rose-cloud,
In the sunset light that lies,
Mournful makes us, feeling only
How much farther are the skies, —
So the mantling of her blushes,
And the trembling of her heart,
'Neath his steadfast eyes but made her
Feel how far they were apart.

“Allan,” said she, “I will tell you
Of a vision that I had —
All the livelong night I dreamed it,
And it made me very sad.
We were walking slowly seaward,
In the twilight — you and I —
Through a break of clearest azure
Shone the moon — as now — on high;
Though I nothing said to vex you,
O'er your forehead came a frown,
And I strove, but could not soothe you —
Something kept my full heart down;
When, before us, stood a lady
In the moonlight's pearly beam.
Very tall and proud and stately —
(Allan, this was in my dream! —)
Looking down, I thought, upon me,
Half in pity, half in scorn,
Till my soul grew sick with wishing
That I never had been born.
'Cover me from woe and madness!'
Cried I to the ocean flood,
As she locked her milk-white fingers
In between us where we stood, —
All her flood of midnight tresses
Softly gathered from their flow,

By her crown of bridal beauty,
 Paler than the winter snow.
 Striking then my hands together,
 O'er the tumult of my breast, —
 All the beauty waned and faded
 From the Valley of the West!"

In the beard of Allan Archer
 Twisted then his fingers white,
 As he said, "My gentle Jessie
 You must not be sad to-night;
 You must not be sad, my Jessie,
 You are over kind and good,
 And I fain would make you happy,
 Very happy — if I could!"
 Oft he kissed her cheek and forehead,
 Called her darling oft, but said,
 Never, that he loved her fondly,
 Or that ever they should wed;
 But that he was grieved that shadows
 Should have chilled so dear a heart,
 That the time, foretold so often,
 Then was come — and they must part!
 Shook her bosom then with passion,
 Hot her forehead burned with pain,
 But her lips said only, "Allan,
 Will you ever come again?"
 And he answered, lightly dallying
 With her tresses all the while,
 Life had not a star to guide him
 Like the beauty of her smile,
 And that when the corn was ripened
 And the vintage harvest prest,
 She would see him home returning
 To the Valley of the West.

When the moon had veiled her splendor,
 And went lessening down the blue,
 And along the eastern hill-tops
 Burned the morning in the dew,
 They had parted — each one feeling
 That their lives had separate ends;

They had parted — neither happy —
Less than lovers — more than friends.
For as Jessie mused in silence,
She remembered that he said,
Never, that he loved her fondly,
Or that ever they should wed.

'T was full many a nameless meaning
My poor words can never say,
Felt without the need of utterance
That had won her heart away.
O! the days were weary! weary!
And the eves were dull and long,
With the cricket's chirp of sorrow,
And the owlet's mournful song.
Out of slumber oft she started
In the still and lonesome nights,
Hearing but the traveler's footstep
Hurrying toward the village lights.

So moaned by the dreary winter —
All her household tasks fulfilled —
Till beneath the last year's rafters
Came the swallows back to build.
Meadow-pinks, in flakes of crimson,
Through the pleasant valleys lay,
And again were oxen ploughing
Up and down the hills all day.
Thus the dim days dawned and faded
To the maid, forsaken, lorn,
Till the freshening breeze of summer
Shook the tassels of the corn.
Ever now within her chamber
All night long the lamp-light shines,
But no white hand from her casement
Pushes back the heavy vines.
On her cheek a fire was feeding,
And her hand transparent grew —
Ah, the faithless Allan Archer!
More than she had dreamed was true.

No complaint was ever uttered,
Only to herself she sighed, —

As she read of wretched poets
 Who had pined of love and died.
 Once she crushed the sudden crying
 From her trembling lips away,
 When they said the vintage harvest
 Had been gathered in that day.
 Often, when they kissed her, smiled she,
 Saying that it soothed her pain,
 And that they must not be saddened —
 She would soon be well again!
 Thus nor hoping nor yet fearing,
 Meekly bore she all her pain,
 Till the red leaves of the autumn
 Withered from the woods again;
 Till the bird had hushed its singing
 In the silvery sycamore,
 And the nest was left unsheltered
 In the lilac by the door;
 Saying, still, that she was happy —
 None so much as she was blest —
 None of all the many maidens
 In the Valley of the West.

III.

Down the heath and o'er the moorland
 Blows the wild gust high and higher,
 Suddenly the maiden pauses
 Spinning at the cabin fire,
 And from out her taper fingers
 Falls away the flaxen thread,
 As some neighbor, entering, whispers,
 "Jessie Carrol lieth dead."
 Then, as pressing close her forehead
 To the window-pane, she sees
 Two stout men together digging
 Underneath the church-yard trees,
 And she asks in kindest accents,
 "Was she happy when she died?"
 Sobbing all the while to see them
 Void the heavy earth aside;
 Or, upon their mattocks leaning,
 Through their fingers numb to blow,

For the wintry air is chilly,
And the grave-mounds white with snow.

And the neighbor answers softly,
"Do not, dear one, do not cry ;
At the break of day she asked us
If we thought that she must die ;
And when I had told her, sadly,
That I feared it would be so,
Smiled she, saying, 'T will be weary
Digging in the churchyard snow !'
Earth, I said, was very dreary —
That its paths at best were rough ;
And she whispered, she was ready,
That her life was long enough.
So she lay serene and silent,
Till the wind, that wildly drove,
Soothed her from her mortal sorrow,
Like the lullaby of love."
Thus they talked, while one that loved her
Smoothed her tresses dark and long,
Wrapped her white shroud down, and simply
Wove her sorrow to this song :

IV.

Sweetly sleeps she: pain and passion
Burn no longer on her brow —
Weary watchers, ye may leave her —
She no more will need you now !
While the wild spring bloomed and faded,
Till the autumn came and passed,
Calmly, patiently, she waited —
Rest has come to her at last !
Never have the blessed angels,
As they walked with her apart,
Kept pale Sorrow's battling armies
Half so softly from her heart.
Therefore, think not, ye that loved her,
Of the pallor hushed and dread,
Where the winds like heavy mourners,
Cry about her lonesome bed,

But of white hands softly reaching
 As the shadow o'er her fell,
 Downward from the golden bastion
 Of the eternal citadel.

HYPERION.*

IN the May woods alone — yet not alone,
 For unsubstantial beings near me tread —
 At times I hear them piteously moan,
 Haply a plaint for the o'ergifted dead,
 That, to the perfectness of stature grown,
 Had filled for aye the vacant heart of time
 With dulcet rhythms, and cadences unknown,
 In all the sweetest melody of rhyme.

And yet alone, for not a human heart
 Stirs with tumultuous throbbings the deep hush;
 Almost I hear the blue air fall apart
 From the delirious warble of the thrush —
 A wave of lovely sound, untouched of art,
 Going through air — “a disembodied joy:”
 But in between each blissful stop and start,
 (Belike such sweet food else our hearts would cloy,)

From the thick woods there comes into the vale
 A long and very melancholy cry,
 As of a spirit in that saddest bale —
 Clinging to sin yet longing for the sky.
 Across the hill-tops crowned with verdure pale,
 A gnarled oak stands above the neighboring trees,
 Rocking itself asleep upon the gale —
 The proudest billow of the woodland seas.

A thin dun cloud above the sunken sun
 Holds the first star of evening's endless train,
 Clasped from the world's profaneness, like a nun
 Within the shelter of the convent pane.

* A revision of “Keats.”

Did the delicious light of such a one
Fleck his dark pathway with its shimmering fire,
Whose fingers, till life's little day was done,
Clung like charmed kisses to his wondrous lyre ?

I've read, in some chance fragment of old song,
A tale to muse of in this lovely light,
About a maiden, flying from deep wrong
Into the chilly darkness of the night,
Upon whose milk-white bosom, cold and long,
Beat the rough tempest; but a waiting arm
Was reaching toward her, and, in hope grown strong,
Fled she along the woods and through the storm.

But how had he or heart or hope to sing
Of Madeline or Porphyro the brave,
While the thin fingers of wan suffering
Were pressing down his eyelids to the grave ?
How could he to the shrine of genius bring
The constant spirit with the bended knee,
Ruffling the horrent blackness of Death's wing
With the clear echoes of eternity ?

Hark! was it but the wind that swept along,
Shivering the hawthorn hedges, white with flowers ?
The swan-like music of the dying song
Seems swimming on the current of the hours.
If Fancy cheats me thus, she does no wrong —
For mists of glory o'er my heart are blown,
And shapes of beauty round about me throng,
When of that muséd rhyme I catch the tone.

Tell me, ye sobbing winds, what sign ye made,
Making the year with dismal pity rife,
When the all-levelling and remorseless shade
Closed o'er the lovely summer of his life :
Did the sad hyacinths by the fountains fade,
And tear-drops touch the eyelids of the morn,
And Muses, empty-armed, the gods upbraid,
When that great sorrow to the world was born ?

Ere Fame's wild trumpet to the world had thrown
The echo of his lyre, or fortune bless'd,

Pausing where "men but hear each other groan,"
 He felt the daisies growing on his breast.
 Then sunk as fair a star as ever shone
 Along the gray and melancholy air ;
 And from Parnassus' hoary front, o'erstrawn
 With plants immortal, moaned infirm Despair.

Weave, closely weave, your vermeil boughs to-night,
 Fresh-budding red woods — hide the crookéd moon,
 Soft-shining through the sunset, slim and bright
 As in some golden millet field at noon,
 Might shine a mower's scythe. Too much of light
 Rains through the boughs, too much is in the sky,
 To sort with singing of untimely blight,
 And mourning all of Genius that can die.

THE DAUGHTER.*

ALACK, it is a dismal night —
 In gusts of thin and vapory light
 Bloweth the moonshine cold and white
 Betwixt the pauses of the storm,
 That beats against, but cannot harm
 The lady, whose chaste thoughts do charm
 Better than pious fast or prayer
 The evil spells and sprites of air —
 In sooth, were she in saintly care
 Safer she could not be than now
 With truth's white crown upon her brow —
 So sovereign, innocence, art thou.

Just in the green top of a hedge
 That runs along a valley's edge
 One star has thrust a shining wedge,
 And all the sky beside is drear —
 It were no cowardice to fear
 If some belated traveler near,
 To visionary fancies born,
 Should see upon the moor, forlorn
 With spiky thistle burs and thorn,

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

The lovely lady silent go,
Not on a "palfrey white as snow,"
But with sad eyes and footstep slow;
And softly leading by the hand
An old man who has nearly spanned
With his white hairs, life's latest sand.

Hope in her faint heart newly thrills
As down a barren reach of hills
Before her fly two whippoorwills;
But the gray owl keeps up his wail—
His feathers ruffled in the gale,
Drowning almost their dulcet tale.

Often the harmless flock she sees
Lying white along the grassy leas,
Like lily-bells weighed down with bees.
Sometimes the boatman's horn she hears
Rousing from rest the plowman's steers,
Lowing untimely to their peers.
And now and then the moonlight snake
Curls up its white folds, for her sake,
Closer within the poison brake.
But still she keeps her lonesome way,
Or if she pauses, 't is to say
Some word of comfort, else to pray.
For 't is a blustery night withal,
In spite of star or moonlight's fall,
Or the two whippoorwills' sweet call.
What doth the gentle lady here
Within a wood so dark and drear,
Nor hermit's lodge nor castle near?
See in the distance robed and crowned
A prince with all his chiefs around,
And like sweet light o'er sombre ground
A meek and lovely lady, there
Proffering her earnest, piteous prayer
For an old man with silver hair.

But what of evil he hath done
O'erclouding beauty's April sun
I know not—nor if lost or won.

The lady's pleading sweet and low —
 About her pilgrimage of woe,
 Is all that I shall ever know.

ANNIE CLAYVILLE.*

In the bright'ning wake of April
 Comes the lovely, lovely May,
 But the step of Annie Clayville
 Falleth fainter day by day.
 In despite of sunshine, shadows
 Lie upon her heart and brow ;
 Last year she was gay and happy —
 Life is nothing to her now !

When she hears the wild bird singing,
 Or the sweetly humming bee,
 Only says she, faintly smiling,
 What have you to do with me ?

Yet, sing out for pleasant weather,
 Wild birds in the woodland dells —
 Fly out, little bees, and gather
 Honey for your waxen wells,
 Softly, sunlit rain of April,
 Come down singing from the clouds,
 Till the daffodils and daisies
 Shall be up in golden crowds ;
 Till the wild pinks hedge the meadows,
 Blushing out of slender stems,
 And the dandelions, starry,
 Cover all the hills with gems.

From your cool beds in the rivers,
 Blow, fresh winds, and gladness bring
 To the locks that wait to hide you —
 What have I to do with spring ?

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

May is past — along the hollows
Chime the rills in sleepy tune,
While the harvest's yellow chaplet
Swings against the face of June.

Very pale lies Annie Clayville —
Still her forehead, shadow-crowned,
And the watchers hear her saying,
As they softly tread around:
Go out, reapers, for the hill tops
Twinkle with the summer's heat —
Lay from out your swinging cradles
Golden furrows of ripe wheat!
While the little laughing children,
Lightly mixing work with play,
From between the long green winrows
Glean the sweetly-scented hay.
Let your sickles shine like sunbeams
In the silver-flowing rye,
Ears grow heavy in the cornfields —
That will claim you by and by.
Go out, reapers, with your sickles,
Gather home the harvest store!
Little gleaners, laughing gleaners,
I shall go with you no more.

Round the red moon of October,
White and cold the eve-stars climb,
Birds are gone, and flowers are dying —
'T is a lonesome, lonesome time.
Yellow leaves along the woodland
Surge to drifts — the elm-bough sways,
Creaking at the homestead window
All the weary nights and days.
Dismally the rain is falling —
Very dismally and cold;
Close, within the village graveyard
By a heap of freshest mould,
With a simple, nameless headstone,
Lies a low and narrow mound,
And the brow of Annie Clayville
Is no longer shadow crowned.

Rest thee, lost one, rest thee calmly,
 Glad to go where pain is o'er —
 Where they say not, through the night-time,
 "I am weary," any more.

YESTERNIGHT.*

YESTERNIGHT — how long it seems! —
 Met I in the land of dreams,
 One that loved me long ago —
 Better it had not been so.

For, we met not as of old —
 I was planting in the mould
 Of his grave, some flowers to be,
 When he came and talked with me.

White his forehead was, and fair,
 With such crowns as angels wear,
 And his voice — but I alone
 Ever heard so sweet a tone!

All I prized but yesterday
 In the distance lessening lay,
 Like some golden cloud afar,
 Fallen and faded from a star.

Hushed the chamber is, he said,
 Hushed and dark where we must wed,
 But our bridal home is bright —
 Wilt thou go with me to-night?

Answering then, I sadly said,
 I am living, thou art dead;
 Darkness rests between us twain,
 Who shall make the pathway plain?

Ah! thou lovest not, he cried,
 Else to thee I had not died;
 Else all other hope would be
 As a rain-drop to the sea.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Farther, dimmer, earth withdrew,
 Lower, softer bent the blue,
 And like bubbles in the wine
 Blent the whispers, I am thine.

Angels saw I to their bowers
 Bearing home the sheaves of flowers,
 And could hear their anthem swells,
 Reaping in the asphodels.

O'er my head a wildbird flew,
 Shaking in my face the dew;
 Underneath a woodland tree,
 I, my love, had dreamed of thee.

 WINTER.*

Now sits the twilight palaced in the snow,
 Hugging away beneath a fleece of gold
 Her statue beauties, dumb and icy cold,
 And fixing her blue steadfast eyes below;
 Where, in a bed of chilly waves afar,
 With dismal shadows o'er her sweet face blown,
 Tended to death by evening's constant star,
 Lies the lost Day alone.

Where late, with red mists thick about his brows,
 Went the swart Autumn, wading to the knees
 Through drifts of dead leaves, shaken from the boughs
 Of the old forest trees,
 The gusts upon their baleful errands run
 O'er the bright ruin, fading from our eyes —
 And over all, like clouds about the sun,
 A shadow lies.

For fallen asleep upon a dreary world,
 Slant to the light, one late unsmiling morn,
 From some rough cavern blew a tempest cold,
 And tearing off his garland of ripe corn,

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Twisted with blue grapes, sweet with luscious wine,
 And Ceres' drowsy flowers, so dully red,
 Deep in his cavern leafy and divine,
 Buried him with his dead.

Then, with his black beard glistening in the frost,
 Under the icy arches of the north,
 And o'er the still graves of the seasons lost,
 Blustered the Winter forth —
 Spring, with your crown of roses budding new,
 Thought-nursing and most melancholy Fall,
 Summer, with bloomy meadows wet with dew,
 Unmindful of you all.

Oh heart, your spring-time dream will idle prove,
 Your summer but forerun your autumn's death,
 The flowery arches in the home of love
 Fall, crumbling, at a breath;
 And, sick at last with that great sorrow's shock,
 As some poor prisoner, pressing to the bars
 His forehead, calls on Mercy to unlock
 The chambers of the stars —
 You, turning off from life's first mocking glow
 Leaning, it may be, still on broken faith,
 Will down the vale of Autumn gladly go
 To the chill winter, Death.

Hark! from the empty bosom of the woods
 I hear a sob, as one forlorn might pine —
 The white-limbed beauty of a god is thine,
 King of the season! even the night that hoods
 Thy brow majestic, glorifies thy reign —
 Thou surely hast no pain.
 But only far away
 Makest stormy prophecies; well, lift them higher,
 Till morning on the forehead of the day
 Presses a seal of fire.
 Dearer to me the scene
 Of nature shrinking from thy rough embrace,
 Than Summer, with her rustling robe of green,
 Cool blowing in my face.

The moon is up — how still the yellow beams
 That slantwise lie upon the stirless air,
 Sprinkled with frost, like pearl-entangled hair,
 O'er beauty's cheeks that streams!
 How the red light of Mars their pallor mocks,
 And the wild legend from the old time wins,
 Of sweet waves kissing all the drowning locks
 Of Ilia's lovely twins!

Come, Poesy, and with thy shadowy hands
 Cover me softly, singing all the night —
 In thy dear presence find I best delight;
 Even the saint that stands
 Tending the gate of heaven, involved in beams
 Of rarest glory, to my mortal eyes
 Pales from the blest insanity of dreams
 That round thee lies.

Unto the dusky borders of the grove
 Where "gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,"*
 Sat in his grief alone,
 Or, where young Venus, searching for her love,
 Walked through the clouds, I pray,
 Bear me to-night away.

Or wade with me through snows
 Drifted in loose fantastic curves aside
 From humble doors where Love and Faith abide,
 And no rough winter blows,
 Chilling the beauty of affections fair,
 Cabined securely there, —
 Where round their fingers winding the white slips
 That crown his forehead, on the grandsire's knees,
 Sit merry children, teasing about ships
 Lost in the perilous seas;
 Or listening with a tremulous joy, yet deep,
 To stories about battles, or of storms,
 Till weary grown, and drowsing into sleep,
 Slide they from out his arms.

* From Keats's "Hyperion." In "Lyra," where the poem appeared in 1852, the phrase was given without quotation points, and with "silent" for "quiet."

Where, by the log-heap fire,
 As the pane rattles and the cricket sings,
 I with the gray-haired sire
 May talk of vanished summer-times and springs,
 And harmlessly and cheerfully beguile
 The long, long hours —
 The happier for the snows that drift the while
 About the flowers.

Winter, will keep the love I offer thee?
 No mesh of flowers is bound about my brow;
 From life's fair summer I am hastening now.
 And as I sink my knee,
 Dimpling the beauty of thy bed of snow —
 Dowerless, I can but say —
 Oh, cast me not away!

WOOD NYMPHS.*

Wood nymphs, that do hereabouts
 Dwell, and hold your pleasant routs,
 When beneath her cloak so white,
 Holding close the black-eyed Night,
 Twilight, sweetly voluble,
 Acquaints herself with shadows dull;
 While above your rustic camp,
 Hesperus, his pallid lamp
 For the coming darkness trims,
 From the gnarléd bark of limbs
 Rough and crabbed — slide to view!
 I have work for you to do.

To this neighborhood of shade
 Came I, the most woful maid
 That did ever comfort glean
 From the songs of birds, I ween;
 Or from rills through hollow meads,
 Washing over beds of reeds,

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

When, to vex with more annoy,
Found I here this sleeping boy.

I must learn some harmless art,
That will bind to mine his heart.
Never creature of the air
Saw I in a dream so fair.
Wood nymphs, lend your charmed aid —
Underneath the checkered shade
Of each tangled bough that stirs
To the wind, in shape of burs,
Rough and prickly, or sharp thorn —
Whence the tame ewe, newly shorn,
Stained with crimson, hurries oft,
Bleating toward the distant croft —
Dew of potency is found
That would leave my forehead crowned
With the very chrisms of joy —
The sweet kisses of this boy.
These quaint uses you must know —
Poets wise have writ it so.

When the charm so deftly planned
Shall be wrought, I have in hand,
Work your nimble crew to please,
Mixed along of sweetnesses.
This it is to bring to me
Fairest of all flowers that be —
Oxlips red, and columbines,
Ivies, with blue flowering twines,
Flags that grow by shallow springs,
Purple, pranked with yellow rings;
Slim ferns, bound in golden sheaves;
Mandrakes, with the notched leaves;
Pink and crowbind, nor o'erpass
The white daisies in the grass.
Of the daintiest that you pull,
I will tie a garland full,
And upon this oaken bough
Drooping coolest shadows now,
Hang it 'gainst his face to swing,
Till he wakes from slumbering;

Evermore to live and love
In this dim consenting grove.

Shaggy beasts with hungry eyes —
Ugly, spotted, dragonflies —
Limber snakes drawn up to rings,
And the thousand hateful things
That are bred in forests drear,
Never shall disturb us here ;
For my love and I will see
Only the sweet company
Of the nymphs that round me glide
With the shades of eventide.

Crow of cock, nor belfry chime,
Shall we need to count the time —
Tuneful footfalls in the flowers
Ringing out and in the hours.

OCTOBER.*

Not the light of the long blue Summer,
Nor the flowery huntress, Spring,
Nor the chilly and moaning Winter,
Doth peace to my bosom bring,
Like the hazy and red October,
When the woods stand bare and brown,
And into the lap of the south land,
The flowers are blowing down ;
When all night long, in the moonlight,
The boughs of the roof-tree chafe,
And the wind, like a wandering poet,
Is singing a mournful waif ;
And all day through the cloud-armies,
The sunbeams like sentinels move —
For then in my path first unfolded
The sweet passion-flowers of love.

With bosom as pale as the sea-shell,
And soft as the flax unspun,

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

And locks like the nut-brown shadows
 In the light of the sunken sun,
 Came the maiden whose wonderful beauty
 Enchanted my soul from pain,
 And gladdened my heart, that can never,
 No, never be happy again.
 Away from life's pain and passion,
 Away from the cares that blight,
 She went like a star that softly
 Goes out from the tent of night.
 But oft, when the fields of the Autumn
 Are warm with the summer beams,
 We meet in the mystic shadows
 That border the land of dreams.
 For seeing my woe through the splendor
 That hovers about her above,
 She puts from her forehead the glory,
 And listens again to my love.

THE NEW YEAR.

LIKE the cry of Despair, where the war-weapons rattle,
 Or the moan of a god in some mythical battle,
 Rung out o'er the senses of pain and of swooning
 Above the death woe of immortal discrowning,
 There came yesternight in the midst of my dreaming
 A wail, waking visions of terrible seeming.

The fires of the sunset had burnt from the shadows
 Their leashes, and slipt, they ran over the meadows,
 Deepening up from the dulness and grayness of ashes
 To the hue of that deep wave the night-time that washes,
 Where sorrow's black tresses are gathered up never,
 But sweep o'er the red pillows ever and ever.

Thus startled from slumber, I fearfully listened:
 The frost had been busy, and phantom-shapes glistened,
 Along the cold pane where the dead bough was creaking,
 When, close in my chamber, I heard a low speaking;
 And I said, "Wherefore comest thou, mystical spirit?
 Have I evil or good at thy hands to inherit?"

Like a rose-vine entwining some ruinous column,
 The sweet and the lovely were over the solemn,
 As fell through the silence this cadence, replying;
 "Watch with me, oh mortal, watch with me, I'm dying!"
 And I answered, "I will, by the blessed evangel!"
 Unknowing my guest whether demon or angel.

It seems, as I sat with the sad darkness holding
 Communion, I almost could hear the shroud folding
 About the still bosom and smoothly wound tresses
 That love might imprison no more with caresses —
 The half smothered sobs, and the orphan-like calling,
 With passionate kisses the dust over falling.

"Art thou dead?" I said, "thus doth my watch have its
 ending?
 And needest thou not any more my befriending?"
 "Nay, not dead, but fallen, and mortally wounded,"
 The death-subdued accent along the dark sounded —
 "Claimest thou of me largess?" "Yes," said I, "thy
 story,
 So number me swiftly the days of thy glory."

Along the wild moorland the wind whistled dreary,
 And low as a death-watch my heart beat a-weary,
 As like one beside the hushed portal of Aiden,
 Awaiting the accent to soothe or to sadden,
 I sat in expectancy, charméd and holy,
 Till thus spake the spirit, serenely and slowly:

"On a bed of dead leaves and a snow-pillow lying,
 The winds stooping round him, and sorrowful crying,
 His beard full of ice, his hands folded from reaping,
 My sire, when I woke into life, lay a-sleeping,
 And so of my brief reign was given the warning,
 Ere yet I beheld the sweet eyes of the morning.

'Blow winds of the wilderness,' cried I, 'and cover
 With dim dust the pallid corpse under and over,
 For through the bright gates of the orient, sweeping,
 The heralds of day come — I would not be weeping;
 And putting away from my lip sorrow's chalice,
 I left him beside the blue wall of my palace.

So, a twelvemonth ago, with my young wing expanded,
 On the shores of my kingdom, a monarch I landed ;
 Star-lamps were aglow in the cloudy-lined arches,
 As I sent the first embassy hours on their marches ;
 And day, softly wrapped in a fleece that was golden,
 Came up when my council with light first was holden.

The silvery rings of two moons had their filling,
 When the north drew his breath in so bitterly chilling,
 And clad in a robe of red hunter-like splendor,
 On a hollow reed piping a madrigal tender,
 Through meadow and orchard, came March, his loud
 laughter,
 Half drowned in the whine of the winds, crouching after.

Next came from the south land, one, fair as a maiden,
 Her lap with fresh buds and green sprouting leaves
 laden ;
 Her slight dewy fingers with daffodils crowded,
 Her lip ever smiling, her brow ever clouded ;
 But the birds on her flowery wake that came flying,
 Beside a thick blossoming hedge, found her dying.

Blown, like a silvery cloud o'er the edges
 Of morning, the elder-blooms swayed in the hedges,
 The quail whistled out in the stubble, and over
 The meadow the bee went in search of the clover ;
 When came, with a train of delights for her warders,
 The dewy-eyed May, up the green river borders.

Bright ridges of bees round the full hive were humming,
 Away in the thick woods the partridge was drumming ;
 The rush of the sickle, the scythe-stroke serener,
 Were pleasantly mixed with the song of the gleaner,
 When under the shadows of full-blowing roses
 The days of the virginal June had their closes.

When oxen unyoked laid their foreheads together,
 And berries were ripe for the school-boys to gather ;
 When sultry heats over the hill-tops were winking,
 And down in the hollows the streamlets were shrinking ;
 When birds hushed their musical glee to a twitter,
 Came July, with a mist of gold over her litter.

Like the slim crescent moon through an amber-cloud
shining

Above the brown woods when the day is declining,
Among the ripe wheat-shocks the sickle was glowing,
And over the summer dark shadows went blowing,
When, crowned with the oat-flowers, heavy and yellow,
Came August, her cheek with the summer's sun fallow.

About the next comer deep calmness was lying,
And yet from her presence the wild birds went flying,
As out of the orchards and grape-woven bowers,
She gathered the fruit with no sigh for the flowers,
And shook down the nuts on the withering mosses,
Unmindful of all the bright summer-time losses.

When harvesters home from the cornfield were bringing
The baskets of ripe ears, with laughter and singing,
What time his past labor the husbandman blesses
In cups of sweet cider, just oozed from the presses,
Beneath the broad forest boughs, saddened in seeming,
And hooded with red leaves, October sat dreaming.

Winds for the dead flowers mournfully searching,
Tall phantoms that out of the darkness came marching,
Clouds, full of blackness and storms, fleetly flying,
Or on the bleak edges of winter-time lying,
Quenching with chilly rain Autumn's last splendor —
These were the handmaids that came with November.

Making the gentle kine, sorrowful lowing,
Turn from the tempest so bitterly blowing —
Now lying on slopes, to the southern light slanted,
Now filling the woods with hymns mournfully chanted,
I saw — my steps weakly beginning to falter —
The last Season lay his white gift on the altar.

Then I knew by the chill through my bosom slow stealing,
And the pang at my heart, that my dark doom was sealing,
And seeing before me the ever-hushed portal,
I sought to reveal to some pitying mortal,
The while from my vision the life-light was waning
The gladness and grief of my bright and brief reigning.

Ah, many a poet I had whose sweet idyls
 Made vocal the chambers of births and of bridals,
 And many a priest, too, both shaved and unshaven,
 To hide in the meal of the world the Word's leaven ;
 But still at the church and the merry mirth-making,
 With the good and the gay there were hearts that were
 breaking.

Deeds darker than night and words sharper than daggers
 Have peopled my wilderness places with Hagers,
 The wayfaring man has been often benighted,
 Where never a taper for guidance was lighted,
 But over the desolate cloud and the scorning
 Has risen the gladness that comes with the morning.

On the white cheek of beauty the blushes have trembled,
 Betraying the heart that would else have dissembled,
 When the eloquent whisper of young Love was spoken ;
 But oh, when the burial sod has been broken
 For dear ones, with hands folded close for the sleeping,
 The nights have been dismal with comfortless weeping.

Thus, mortal, I give to your keeping this story
 Of transient dominion — its sadness and glory,
 And while my last accents are mournfully spoken,
 The sceptre I swayed, in my weak hand is broken,
 And darkness unending my gray hair is hooding,
 And over, and round me, the midnight is brooding.”

The silence fell heavy : my watching was over,
 The old year was dead, and though many a lover
 He had in his lifetime, not one would there tarry
 To mourn at his death-bed — for all must make merry
 About the young monarch, some grace to be winning,
 With welcome or gift, while his reign was beginning.

IN THE SUGAR CAMP.

UPON the silver beeches moss
 Was drawing quaint designs,
 And the first dim-eyed violets
 Were greeting the March winds.

'T was night — the fire of hickory wood
 Burned warm, and bright, and high —
 And we were in the Sugar Camp,
 Sweet Nelly Grey and I.

'T was merry, though the willows yet
 Had not a tassel on ;
 The blue birds sung that year, I know
 Before the snow was gone.
 Through bunches of stiff, frosty grass
 The brooks went tinkling by ;
 We heard them in the Sugar Camp,
 Sweet Nelly Grey and I.

Broken and thin the shadows lay
 Along the moonlit hill,
 For like the wings of chrysalids
 The leaves were folded still.
 And so, betwixt the times we heaped
 The hickory wood so high,
 When we were in the Sugar Camp,
 Sweet Nelly Grey and I.

I said I loved her — said I'd make
 A cabin by the stream,
 And we would live among the birds —
 It was a pretty dream !
 I could not see the next year's snow
 Upon her bosom lie —
 When we were in the Sugar Camp,
 Sweet Nelly Grey and I.

RHYME OF MY PLAYMATE.

ALAS ! his praise I cannot write,
 Nor paint him true for other eyes ;
 For only in love's blessed light
 Could you have known him good or wise.

Beside him from my birth I grew,
 E'en to the middle time of youth,

And never was there heart so true,
Though shy of all the shows of truth.

Silent he often sat, and sad,
While on his lips there played a smile,
Which told you that his spirit had
Some lovely vision all the while.

Like flowers that drop in hidden streams,
Low under shelving weights of ground,
His thoughts went drooping into dreams
Though never trembling into sound.

The common fields, the darkening woods,
The silver runnels and blue skies,
He mused of in his solitudes
And gazed on with a lover's eyes.

The hollow where we used to stray,
Gathering the rush with purple joints —
Till from the haycocks thick and gray,
The shadows stretched in dusky points,

And homeward with their glittering scythes
The mowers came, and paused to say
Some playful reprimand (the tithes
Of our thus idling all the day) — *

Lay green beneath the crimson swaths
Of sunset, when I thither came,
And the thick wings of twilight moths
Flitted in circles all the same.

And the brown beetle hummed upon
The furrow as the day grew dim,
As, when in sunset lights long gone,
I trod the meadow-side with him.

The swallow round the gable led
Her fledgling brood, but far and near,
O'er wood and wold there seemed to spread
A dry and dreary atmosphere.

* Between this stanza and the next some lines have apparently fallen out.

Unpraised but in my simple rhymes,
 With sullen brow and footsteps slow,
 Along the wilds of burning climes
 Alone, unloved, I saw him go.

No heart but mine his memory keeps —
 The world will never hear his name,
 Dreamless he lingers by the steeps
 Whereon he might have climbed to fame.

THE COMING OF NIGHT.

As white as the moonlight that fell at her feet
 She stood, but for blushes, as many and sweet
 As the tops of the blossoms that grew in the wheat,
 And softly caressed me —
 Her eyes on the light of the valley hard by ;
 I rose for the bidding, and kissed back the sigh
 And the speaking to silence, that said "I would die
 Where the love-story blessed me !"

The wind sung her lullabies out of the trees
 With starlights betwixt them — her head on my knees,
 She said to me only such sad words as these —
 "Farewell, I am going."
 And so fell the watches, and so on the night,
 Came wider and wider the daybreak so white,
 Till shadows of flying larks went through the light
 Where the shroud must be sewing.

I felt on my bosom the burden grow cold,
 And holding her closer, said, "Sweet one, behold,
 The sunrise is turning the woodside to gold,
 And birds go up singing!"
 She smiled not, and knowing my terrible loss,
 I made her a pillow of loveliest moss,
 And laid her down gently — her white hands across,
 While mine fell a wringing.

I gathered her black tresses up from the ground,
 Away from her forehead their beauty I wound
 And when with fair pansies and roses I bound
 Their dim lengths from straying,
 And smoothed out her garment so soft and so white,
 Lying there in the shadows of morning and night,
 She looked like a bride gone asleep in the light
 Of the sweet altar-praying.

I knelt to the white ones who live in the blue,
 And told them how good she had been and how true,
 And then there was nothing more that I could do,
 The need was all over —
 Low down in a valley of quietest shade
 With blossoms strewed over the shroud which I made
 On a bed very narrow and still she is laid,
 To sleep by her lover.

 FIRE PICTURES.*

In the embers all aglow,
 Fancy makes the pictures plain,
 As I listen to the snow
 Beating chill against the pane —
 The wild December snow
 On the lamp-illumined pane.

Bent downward from his prime,
 Like the ripe fruit from its bough,
 As I muse my simple rhyme
 I can see my father now,
 With the warning flowers of time
 Blooming white about his brow.

Sadly flows the willow tree
 On the hill so dear, yet dread,
 Where the resting places be,
 Of our dear ones that are dead —
 Where the mossy headstones be,
 Of my early playmates dead.

* This poem is given here as it appeared in "Lyra." When reprinted in the volume of 1855 the fifth stanza was dropped.

But despite the dismal snow,
 Blinding all the window o'er,
 And the wind, that, crouching low,
 Whines against my study door,
 In the embers' twilight glow
 I can see one picture more.

Down the beechen-shaded hills,
 With the summer lambs at play,
 Run the violet-nursing rills
 Through the meadows sweet with hay,
 Where the gray-winged plover trills
 Of its joy the live-long day —

Seeming almost within call,
 Neath our ancient trysting tree,
 Art thou pictured, source of all
 That was ever dear to me ;
 But the wasted embers fall,
 And the night is all I see —

The night with gusts of snow
 Blowing wild against the pane,
 And the wind that crouches low,
 Crying mournfully in vain,
 And the dreams that come and go
 Through my memory-haunted brain.

THE WOOD LILY.

BETWIXT the green rows of the corn,
 Ne'er grew a wild blossom so sweet —
 Her mother's low cabin was gay
 With the music that followed her feet :

Combing now the white lengths of the wool
 With hands that were whiter than they ;
 Spinning now in the mossy-roofed porch
 Till the time when the birds go away.

Her hair was as black as the storm ;
 No maiden in all the green glen
 Was so pretty, so praised, or so loved :
 We called her the Wood Lily, then.

The church wall, so gray and so cold,
 Is streaked with the vines which she set,
 And her roses beside the arched door,
 In summer half smother it yet.

And often with pitiful looks
 They pause, who put by the lithe shoots,
 As if something said, "It were well,
 If Lily lay down at the roots."

Dull spiders reel up their white skeins
 On the wheel where she comes not to spin,
 And her hands have pulled all the bright flowers
 From the locks that are faded and thin.

And if you go near to the door,
 You will choke with the coming of sighs,
 For by the dark hearth-stone she sits
 All the day, singing low lullabies,

So low, they may scarcely be heard,
 While the smile of her lip and her brow,
 Like sunbeams have gone under clouds —
 And this is our Wood Lily, now.

TO THE SPIRIT OF SONG.*

COME, sweet spirit, come, I pray,
 Thou hast been too long away ;
 Come, and in the dreamland light,
 Keep with me a tryst to-night.

When the reapers once at morn
 Bound the golden stocks of corn,
 Shadowy hands, that none could see,
 Gleaned along the field with me.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Come, and with thy wings so white
 Hide me from a wicked sprite,
 That has vexed me with a sign
 Which I tremble to divine.

At a black loom sisters three
 Saw I weaving; Can it be,
 Thought I, as I saw them crowd
 The white shuttles, 't is a shroud?

Silently the loom they left,
 Taking mingled warp and weft,
 And, as wild my bosom beat,
 Measured me from head to feet.

Liest thou in the drowning brine,
 Sweetest, gentlest love of mine,
 Tangled softly from my prayer,
 By some Nereid's shining hair?

Or, when mortal hope withdrew,
 Didst thou, faithless, leave me too,
 Blowing on thy lovely reed,
 Careless how my heart should bleed?

By this sudden chill I know
 That it is, it must be so —
 Sprite of darkness, sisters three,
 Lo, I wait your ministry.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.*

'T is Christmas Eve, and by the firelight dim,
 His blue eyes hidden by his fallen hair,
 My little brother — mirth is not for him —
 Whispers, how poor we are!

Come, dear one, rest upon my knee your head,
 And push away those curls of golden glow,
 And I will tell a Christmas tale I read
 A long, long time ago.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

'T is of a little orphan boy like you,
Who had on earth no friend his feet to guide
Into the path of virtue, straight and true,
And so he turned aside.

The parlor fires, with genial warmth aglow,
Threw over him their waves of mocking light,
Once as he idly wandered to and fro,
In the unfriendly night.

The while a thousand little girls and boys,
With look of pride, or half-averted eye,
Their hands and arms o'erbrimmed with Christmas toys,
Passed and repassed him by.

Chilled into half-forgetfulness of wrong,
And tempted by the splendors of the time,
And roughly jostled by the hurrying throng,
Trembling, he talked with crime.

And when the Tempter once had found the way,
And thought's still threshold, half-forbidden, crossed,
His steps went darkly downward day by day,
Till he at last was lost.

So lost, that once from a delirious dream,
As consciousness began his soul to stir,
Around him fell the morning's checkered beam —
He was a prisoner.

Then wailed he in the frenzy of wild pain,
Then wept he till his eyes with tears were dim,
But who would kindly answer back again
A prisoner-boy like him ?

And so his cheek grew thin and paled away,
But not a loving hand was stretched to save ;
And the snow covered the next Christmas-day
His lonesome little grave.

Nay, gentle brother, do not weep, I pray,
You have no sins like his to be forgiven,

And kneeling down together, we can say,
 Father, who art in Heaven.

So shall the blessed presence of content
 Brighten our home of toil and poverty,
 And the dear consciousness of time well spent,
 Our Christmas portion be.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

THE winds of March are piping shrill,
 The half-moon, slanting low,
 Is shining down the wild sea-hill
 Where, long and long ago,
 Love ditties singing all for me,
 Sat blue-eyed Coralin —
 Her grave is now beneath the tree
 Where then she used to spin.

Three walnut trees, so high and wild,
 Before the homestead stand —
 Their smooth boles often, when a child,
 I've taken in my hand;
 And that the nearest to the wall,
 Though once alike they grew,
 Is not so goodly, nor so tall,
 As are the other two.

The spinning work was always there —
 There all our childish glee,
 But when she grew a maiden fair,
 The songs were not for me.
 One night, twice seven years 't has been,
 When shone the moon as now,
 The slender form of Coralin
 Hung swinging on the bough

That's gnarled and knotty grown; in spring
 When all the fields are gay
 With madrigals, no bird will sing
 Upon that bough, they say.

And through the chamber where the wheel
With cobwebs is o'erspread,
Pale ghosts are sometimes seen to steal,
Since Coralin is dead.

The waters once so bright and cool,
Within the mossy well,
Are shrunken to a sluggish pool;
And more than this, they tell,
That oft the one-eyed mastiff wakes,
And howls as if in fear,
From midnight till the morning breaks —
The dead is then too near.

THE MURDERESS.*

ALONG the still cold plain o'erhead,
In pale embattled crowds,
The stars their tents of darkness spread,
And camped among the clouds;
Cinctured with shadows, like a wraith,
Night moaned along the lea;
Like the blue hungry eye of Death,
Shone the perfidious sea;
The moon was wearing to the wane,
The winds were wild and high,
And a red meteor's flaming mane
Streamed from the northern sky.

Across the black and barren moor,
Her dainty bosom bare;
And white lips sobbing evermore,
Rides Eleanor the fair.
So hath the pining sea-maid plained
For love of mortal lips,
Riding the billows, silver-reined,
Hard by disastrous ships.

* Printed in "Lyra" and, revised, in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

Why covers she her mournful eyes?
 Why do her pulses cease,
 As if she saw before her rise
 The ghost of murdered Peace?
 From out her path the ground-bird drifts
 With wildly startled calls,
 The moonlight snake its white fold lifts
 From where her shadow falls.

Ah me! that delicate hand of hers,
 Now trembling like a reed,
 Like to the ancient mariner's
 Hath done a hellish deed;
 And full of mercy were the frown
 Which might the power impart
 To press the eternal darkness down
 Against her bleeding heart.

CONTENT.

My house is low and small,
 But behind a row of trees,
 I catch the golden fall
 Of the sunset in the seas;
 And a stone wall hanging white
 With the roses of the May,
 Were less pleasant to my sight
 Than the fading of to-day.
 From a brook a heifer drinks
 In a field of pasture ground,
 With wild violets and pinks
 For a border all around.

My house is small and low,
 But the willow by the door
 Doth a cool deep shadow throw
 In the summer on my floor;
 And in long and rainy nights
 When the limbs of leaves are bare,
 I can see the window lights
 Of the homesteads elsewhere.

My house is small and low,
 But with pictures such as these
 Of the sunset and the row
 Of illuminated trees,
 And the heifer as she drinks
 From the field of meadowed ground,
 With the violets and pinks
 For a border all around,
 Let me never, foolish, pray
 For a vision wider spread,
 But contented, only say,
 Give me, Lord, my daily bread.

 OF ONE ASLEEP.*

ONCE when we lingered, sorrow-proof,
 My gentle love and me,
 Beneath a green and pleasant roof,
 Of oak leaves by the sea,
 Like yellow violets, springing bright
 From furrows newly turned,
 Among the nut-brown clouds the light
 Of sunset softly burned.
 Then veiling close her pensive face
 In clouds of transient flame,
 The silent child of the embrace
 Of light and darkness came:
 We saw her closing now the flower
 And warning home the bee,
 Now painting with a godlike power
 The arteries of the sea;
 And heard the wind beneath night's frown
 Displacing quick her smile,
 Laughingly running up and down
 The green hills all the while;
 Love to our hearts had newly brought
 Sweeter than Eden gleams,
 And no dark underswell of thought
 Troubled the sea of dreams.

* Printed in "Lyra" and, revised, in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

Low down beneath an oaken roof
 Of dim leaves by the sea —
 Where then we lingered, sorrow-proof,
 My gentle love and me —
 While sunset softly lights the bower,
 And wave embraces wave,
 The shadow of the passion flower
 Lies darkly on his grave.
 And musing of his pillow low,
 His slumber deep and long,
 My heart keeps heaving to and fro
 Upon the waves of song.
 No more through sunset's sinking fire
 Are Eden-gleams descried,
 The sweetest chord of all life's lyre
 Was shattered when he died.
 Yet not one memory would I sell,
 However woeful proved,
 For all the brightest joys that dwell
 In souls that never loved.

DISSATISFIED.*

FOR me, in all life's desert sand
 No well is made, no tent is spread;
 No father's nor a brother's hand
 Is laid in blessing on my head.
 The radiance of my mortal star
 Is crossed with signs of woe to me,
 And all my thoughts and wishes are
 Sad wanderers toward eternity.

Stricken, riven helplessly apart
 From all that blest the path I trod;
 Oh tempt me, tempt me not, my heart,
 To arraign the goodness of my God!
 For suffering hath been made sublime,
 And souls, that lived and died alone,
 Have left an echo for all time,
 As they went wailing to the throne.

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There have been moments when I dared
 Believe life's mystery a breath,
 And deem Faith's beauteous bosom bared
 To the betraying arms of Death;
 For the immortal life but mocks
 The soul that feels its ruin dire,
 And like a tortured demon rocks
 Upon the cradling waves of fire.
 To mine is pressed no loving lip,
 Around me twines no helping arm:
 And like a frail dismantled ship
 I blindly drift before the storm.

 DYING SONG.*

LEAVE me, O leave me! my o'er-wearied feet,
 O my beloved! may walk no more with thee;
 For I am standing where the circles meet
 That mortals name, Time and Eternity.

Tell me, O tell me not of summer flowers
 In vales where once our steps together trod;
 Even though I now behold the shining towers
 That rise above the city of our God.

I know that the wide fields of heaven are fair —
 That on their borders grief is all forgot,
 That the white tents of beauty, too, are there —
 But how shall I be blessed where thou art not?

Over the green hills, that are only crossed
 By drifts of light, and choruses of glee,
 How shall I wander like a spirit lost,
 And fallen and ruined, missing, mourning thee!

If any wrong of mine, or thought, or said,
 Has given thee pain or sorrow, O forgive!
 As wilt thou not, my friend, when I am dead,
 And by my errors better learn to live.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

There is not found in all the pleasant past,
 One memory of thee that I deplore,
 Or wish not to be in my heart at last,
 When I shall fall asleep to wake no more.

Then leave, oh leave me! though I see the light
 Of heaven's sweet clime, and hear the angel's call,
 Where there is never any cloud nor night,
 Thy love is stronger, mightier than all!

LILY LEE.*

I DID love thee, Lily Lee,
 As the petrel loves the sea,
 As the wild bee loves the thyme,
 As the poet loves his rhyme,
 As the blossom loves the dew —
 But the angels loved thee, too!

Once when twilight's dying head
 Pressed her saffron-sheeted bed,
 And the silent stars drew near,
 White and tremulous with fear,
 While the night with sullen frown
 Strangled the young zephyr down,
 Told I all my love to thee,
 Hoping, fearing, Lily Lee.

Fluttered then her gentle breast
 With a troubled, sweet unrest,
 Like a bird too near the net
 Which the fowler's hand hath set;
 But her mournful eyes the while,
 And her spirit-speaking smile,
 Told me love could not dispart
 Death's pale arrow from her heart.

Hushing from that very day
 Passion pleading to have way —

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Folding close her little hand,
Watched I with her, till the sand,
Crumbling from beneath her tread,
Lowered her softly to the dead,
Where in peace she waits for me —
Sweetest, dearest Lily Lee.

As the chased hart loves the wave,
As blind silence loves the grave,
As the penitent loves prayer,
As pale passion loves despair,
Loved I, and still love I thee,
Angel-stolen Lily Lee.

MIRACLES.

AN old man sits beside a wall,
Where grow two hollyhocks — one tall
And flowerless, one bright and small.

His hair is full of silver streaks,
The tears are running down his cheeks,
And his lip trembles as he speaks.

“Come, little daughter Maud, I pray,
And tell me truly why you stay
So often and so long away.”

A moment, and two arms, so fair,
Are round his neck — a sunny pair
Of eyes look on him — Maud is there.

“See, pretty dear,” the old man said,
“These hollyhocks, one fresh and red
With youthful bloom — the other dead.

“The stony wall whereby they be,
Is the hard world, and you’ll agree
The hollyhocks are you and me.

“My weary, worn out life is done,
With all of rain, and dew, and sun,
Thine, darling, is but just begun.

“So take my staff and hang it high,
And kiss me: Nay, you must not cry,
I’ve nothing left to do but die!”

And Maud hath made her blue eyes dry,
And in a whisper makes reply,
“And if you die, I too must die!”

That night, beside the stony wall,
Where grew two hollyhocks — one tall
And flowerless — one bright and small —

Covered with moonshine they were found,
Lying dead together on the ground,
Their arms about each other wound.

What miracle may not be true,
Since oft the hardest one to do
Is done — the making one of two?

TOKENS.

TRUTH, with her calm and steady eyes,
Looked sternly in my face one morning,
And of the night, that closes on
Life’s worn out day, I saw such warning
As sunken cheeks and gray hairs give,
And faint smiles fading into sorrow;
And hiding from the light my face,
I cried, “Oh night, that knows no morrow!
Gather your solemn clouds away;
And leave me and my youth together,
And make its joys grow thick and bright
As apples in the summer weather.”
And night was silent, and the sea
Was silent, and the eyes of heaven
Shut under lid-like clouds, and thus
An answer to my prayer was given.

I in a vision went, and saw
 From the low grave, asunder breaking,
 A face of beauty smiling like
 A baby's in the cradle waking;
 And heard a voice that said to me
 "Stay, if thou wilt, among the living;
 But earth thy ancient mother is,
 And rest is only of her giving.
 Plain is the creed of nature's book,
 Daily you read the truthful story
 That when the day is dim with clouds
 The twilight has the most of glory.
 The tassel of the corn must fade —
 The ear will grow not in its shadow,
 And for the winter snow there blooms
 So much the brighter harvest meadow.
 So, send no more instead of praise
 Through God's good purposes, a sighing,
 The gray hairs and the fading cheeks
 Are tokens of the glorifying."

TO THE HOPEFUL.*

HARK! for the multitude cry out,
 Oh, watchman, tell us of the night;
 And hear the joyous answering shout,
 The hills are red with light!

Lo! where the followers of the meek,
 Like Johns, are crying in the wild,
 The leopard lays its spotted cheek
 Close to the new-born child.

The gallows-tree with tremor thrills —
 The North to mercy's plea inclines;
 And round about the Southern hills
 Maidens are planting vines.

* As printed in "Lyra," the poem had two additional stanzas, which were dropped from the reprint in the volume of 1855.

The star that trembled softly bright,
 Where Mary and the young child lay,
 Through ages of unbroken night
 Hath tracked his luminous way.

From the dim shadow of the palm
 The tattooed islander has leant,
 Helping to swell the wondrous psalm
 Of love's great armament!

And the wild Arab, swart and grave,
 Looks startled from his tent, and scans
 Advancing truth, with shining wave,
 Washing the desert sands.

Forth from the slaver's deadly crypt
 The Ethiop like an athlete springs,
 And from her long-worn fetters stript,
 The dark Liberian sings.

But sorrow to and fro must keep
 Its heavings until evil cease,
 Like the great cradle of the deep,
 Rocking a storm to peace.

GOING TO SLEEP.*

Now put the waxen candle by,
 Or shade the light away,
 And tell me if you think she 'll die
 Before another day.
 She asked me but an hour ago,
 What time the moon would rise,
 And when I told her, she replied,
 "How fair 't will make the skies."
 Then came a smile across her face,
 And though her lips were dumb
 I think she only wished to live
 Until that hour were come.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

And folding her transparent hands
 Together on her breast,
 She fell in such a tranquil sleep
 As scarce seems breathing rest.
 Was that the third stroke of the clock ?
 The hour is almost told. —
 Above yon bare and jagged rock
 Should shine the disk of gold.
 The moon is coming up — a glow
 Runs faint along the blue,
 How soft her sleep is ! shall I call,
 That she may see it too ?
 Nay, friend, she would not see the light,
 Though called you ne'er so loud,
 So bring of linen, dainty white,
 The measure of the shroud.
 The drowsy sexton may not wake,
 He must be called betimes,
 'T will take him all the day to make
 Her grave beneath the limes ;
 For when our little Ellie died,
 The days were, oh, so long !
 And what with telling ghostly tales,
 And humming scraps of song,
 To school-boys gathered curiously
 About the bed so chill,
 I heard him digging till the sun
 Was down behind the hill.

Oh, do not weep my friend, I pray,
 This rest so still and deep
 Keeps all the evil things away
 That troubled once her sleep.

THE DYING MOTHER.*

WE were weeping round her pillow,
 For we knew that she must die ;
 It was night within our bosoms —
 It was night within the sky.

There were seven of us children —
 I the oldest one of all ;
 So I tried to whisper comfort,
 But the blinding tears would fall.

On my knee my little brother
 Leaned his aching brow and wept,
 And my sister's long black tresses
 O'er my heaving bosom swept.

The shadow of an awful fear
 Came o'er me as I trod,
 To lay the burden of our grief
 Before the throne of God.

Oh ! be kind to one another,
 Was my mother's pleading prayer,
 As her hand lay like a snow-flake
 On the baby's golden hair.

Then a glory bound her forehead,
 Like the glory of a crown,
 And in the silent sea of death
 The star of life went down.

Her latest breath was borne away
 Upon that loving prayer,
 And the hand grew heavier, paler,
 In the baby's golden hair.

THE LULLABY.

I HEAR the curlew's lonesome call,
 The cushat crooning in the tree —
 The sunset shadow on the wall
 Fades slowly off — come nearer me.

Sweet Mary, come and take my hand
 And hold it close and kiss my cheek —
 The tide is crawling up the sand —
 O, Mary, sweetest sister, speak.

And say my fears are all untrue,
 And say my heart has boded wrong—
 How slow the light fades — never grew
 A twilight half nor half so long.

And Mary smiling a sad smile,
 Looked wistful out into the night,
 Combing the sick girl's hair the while,
 (Death-dampened) with her fingers white.

And still the curlew's lonesome call
 Went on — the cushat wildly well
 Crooned in the tree, and on the wall
 Darker and darker shadows fell.

How gustily the night-time falls!
 Dear Mary, is the milking past?
 And are the oxen in their stalls —
 Hark! is 't the rain that falls so fast?

Kneel softly down beside my bed —
 (How terrible the storm will be,
 And say again the prayer you said
 Last night; but, Mary, not for me.

The cushat still went crooning on —
 The curlew made her lonesome cry —
 The sick girl fast asleep was gone —
 That prayer had been her lullaby.

GLENLY MOOR.*

THE summer's golden glow was fled,
 In eve's dim arms the day lay dead,
 Over the dreary woodland wild,
 The first pale star looked out and smiled
 On Glenly Moor.

Nor lonely call of lingering bird,
 Nor insect's cheerful hum was heard,

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Nor traveler in the closing day
 Humming along the grass-grown way
 Of Glenly Moor.

No voice was in the sleepy rills,
 No light shone down the village hills,
 And withered on their blackening stalks
 Hung the last flowers along the walks
 Of Glenly Moor.

Within a thin, cold drift of light
 The buds of the wild rose hung bright,
 Where broken turf and new-set stone
 Told of a pale one left alone
 In Glenly Moor.

All the clear splendor of the skies
 Was gathered from her meek blue eyes,
 And therefore shadows dark and cold
 Hang over valley, hill, and wold
 In Glenly Moor.

And the winged morning from the blue
 Winnowing the crimson on the dew
 May ne'er unlock the hands so white
 That lie beneath that drift of light
 In Glenly Moor.

ROSEMARY HILL.*

'T was the night he had promised to meet me,
 To meet me on Rosemary Hill,
 And I said, at the rise of the eve-star,
 The tryst he will haste to fulfil.

Then I looked to the elm-bordered valley,
 Where the undulous mist whitely lay,
 But I saw not the steps of my lover
 Dividing its beauty away.

* Printed in "Lyra" and, revised, in the volume of 1855. The revision is followed here.

The eve-star rose red o'er the tree-tops,
The night-dews fell heavy and chill,
And wings ceased to beat through the shadows —
The shadows of Rosemary Hill.

I heard not, through hoping and fearing,
The whippoorwill's musical cry,
Nor saw I the pale constellations
That lit the blue reach of the sky.

But fronting despair like a martyr,
I pled with my heart to be still,
As round me fell, deeper and darker,
The shadows of Rosemary Hill.

On a bough that was withered and dying,
I leaned as the midnight grew dumb,
And told my heart over and over,
How often he said he would come.

He is hunting, I said, in dim Arnau —
He was there with his dogs all day long —
And is weary with winging the plover,
Or stayed by the throstle's sweet song.

Then heard I the whining of Eldrich,
Of Eldrich so blind and so old,
With sleek hide embrowned like the lion's,
And brindled and freckled with gold.

How the pulse of despair in my bosom
Leapt back to a joyous thrill,
As I went down to meet my dear lover,
Down fleetly from Rosemary Hill.

More near seemed the whining of Eldrich,
More loudly my glad bosom beat;
When lo! I beheld by the moonlight,
A newly made grave at my feet.

And when with the passion-vine lovely,
That grew by the stone at the head,
The length of the grave I had measured,
I knew that my lover was dead.

MY BROTHER.

THE beech-wood fire is burning bright
'T is wild November weather —
Like that of many a stormy night
We 've sat and talked together.

Such pretty plans for future years
We told to one another —
I cannot choose but ask with tears,
Where are they now, my brother ?

Where are they now, the dreams we dreamed
That scattered sunshine o'er us,
And where the hills of flowers that seemed
A little way before us ?

The hills with golden tops, and springs,
Than which no springs were clearer ?
Ah me, for all our journeyings
They are not any nearer !

One, last year, who with sunny eyes
A watch with me was keeping,
Is gone : across the next hill lies
The snow upon her sleeping.

And so alone, night after night,
I keep the fire a-burning,
And trim and make the candle light,
And watch for your returning.

The clock ticks slow, the cricket tame
Is on the hearth-stone crying,
And the old Bible just the same
Is on the table lying.

The watch-dog whines beside the door,
My hands forget the knitting —
Oh, shall we ever any more
Together here be sitting !

Sometimes I wish the winds would sink,
The cricket hush its humming,
The while I listened, for I think
I hear a footstep coming.

Just as it used so long ago ;
My cry of joy I smother —
'T is only fancy cheats me so,
And never thou, my brother !

NELLIE, WATCHING.

You might see the river shore
From the shady cottage door
Where she sat, a maiden mild —
Not a woman, not a child ;
But the grace which heaven confers
On the two, I trow was hers :
Dimpled cheek, and laughing eyes,
Blue as bluest summer skies,
And the snowy fall and rise
Of a bosom, stirred, I weet,
By some thought as dewy sweet
As the red ripe strawberries,
Which the morning mower sees ;
Locks so long and brown (half down
From the modest wild-flower crown
That she made an hour ago,
Saying, "I will wear it, though
None will praise it, that I know !")
Twined she round her fingers white —
Sitting careless in the light,
Sweetly mixed of day and night —
Twined she, peeping sly the while
Down the valley, like an aisle,
Sloping to the river-side.
Blue-eyes ! wherefore ope so wide ?
They are fishers on the shore
That you look on — nothing more.

Pettishly she pouts — ah me!
 Saucy Nellie, you will see
 Ere an hour has fled away,
 Little reck's it what you say —
 That those eyes with anger frowning
 Darkly, will be near to drowning,
 And the lips repeating so
 Oft and proudly "Let him go!"
 Will be sighing.

Ah, I know!

I have watched as you have done
 This fair twilight, pretty one,
 Watched in trembling hope, and know
 Spite of all your frowning so,
 That the wave of sorrow, flowing
 In your heart, will soon be showing
 In the cheek, now brightly blushing, —
 Hark! 't is but the wild birds hushing
 To their nests — and not a lover
 Brushing through the valley clover!

Purple as the morning-glories
 Round her head the shadows fall;
 Is she thinking of sad stories,
 That, when wild winds shriek and call,
 And the snow comes, good old folks,
 Sitting by the fire together,
 Tell, until the midnight cocks
 Shrilly crow from hill to hill —
 Stories, not befitting ill
 Wintry nights and wintry weather?

The small foot that late was tapping
 On the floor, has ceased its rapping,
 And the blue eyes opened wide,
 Half in anger, half in pride,
 Now are closed as in despair,
 And the flowers that she would wear
 Whether they were praised or no,
 On the ground are lying low.

Foolish Nellie, see the moon,
 Round and red, and think that June
 Will be here another day,
 And the apple-boughs will grow
 Brighter than a month ago:
 Beauty dies not with the May!
 And beneath the hedgerow leaves,
 All the softly-falling eves,
 When the yellow bees are humming
 And the blue and black birds coming
 In at will, we two shall walk,
 Making out of songs or talk
 Quiet pastime.

Nellie said,
 "Those fine eves I shall be dead,
 For I cannot live and see
 Him I love so, false to me,
 And till now I never staid
 Watching vainly in the shade."

"In good sooth, you are betrayed!
 For I heard you, careless, saying,
 'T is not *I* for love that pine,'
 And I 've been a long hour staying
 In the shadow of the vine!"

So a laughing voice, but tender,
 Said to Nellie: quick the splendor
 Of the full moon seemed to fade,
 For the smiling and the blushing
 Filling all the evening shade.
 It was not the wild birds hushing
 To their nests an hour ago,
 But in verity a lover
 Brushing through the valley-clover.

Would all watches maidens keep,
 When they sit alone and weep
 For their heart-aches, ended so!

ROSALIE.

FROM the rough bark green buds were breaking ;
 The birds chirped gaily for the taking
 Of summer mates ; April was trilling,
 Like a young psaltress, to the wind,
 That stopt from dancing to unbind
 The primrose ; for the thawing weather
 The runnels brimmed. We were together —
 I singing out aloud, she stilling
 Her hurried heart-beats. While, that day,
 Idly I hummed the poet's rhyming,
 Her thoughts were all another way,
 Where the white flower of love was climbing
 Through sunshine of sweet eyes — not mine !
 We were divided by that light :
 The self-same minute we might twine
 Our distaffs with new flax — at night
 Put by our wheels at once ; the gloaming
 Fall just the same upon the combing
 And braiding of our hair — in vain !
 Our hearts were never one again.

Beneath the barn-roof, thick with moss,
 Rumbled the fanmill ; uncomplaining,
 The oxen from its golden raining
 (One milky-white, the other dun)
 Went the long day to plow across
 The stubble, slantwise from the sun.
 The yellow mist was on the thorns,
 And here and there a fork of flowers
 Shone whiter than, athwart the showers
 Of winnowed chaff, the heifer's horns.
 And while the springtime came and went
 With showery clouds and sunny gleaming,
 We were together : she a-dreaming,
 I scarcely happy, yet content.

Alone beside the southern wall
 I digged the earth ; the summer flowers
 In pleasant times, betwixt the showers,
 I sadly planted, one and all ;

And when they made a crimson blind
 Before the window with their bloom,
 I spun alone within the room —
 Right hardly did the wisps unbind,
 So wet they were with tears. Ah, me!
 Blithe songs they said the winds were blowing —
 From where the harvesters were mowing —
 I only cared for Rosalie.

'T was autumn; gray with twilight's hue,
 The embers of the day were lying;
 Athwart the dusk the bat was flying,
 And insects made their faint ado.
 So evening sloped into the night,
 And all the black tops of the furs
 Shone as with golden, prickly burrs,
 So small the stars were, and so bright.
 Close by the homestead, old and low,
 A gnarled and knotty oak was growing,
 And shadows of red leaves were blowing
 Across the coverlid of snow.

Awake, sweet Rosalie, I said,
 The moon's pale fires run harmlessly
 Down the dry holts — awake and see!
 She did not turn her in the bed.
 My heart, I thought, must fall abreaking:
 All — all but one wild wish — was past:
 For that white sunken mouth, once speaking,
 To say she loved me, at the last!
 Two comforts yet were mine to keep:
 Betwixt her and her faithless lover
 Bright grass would spread a flowery cover;
 And Rosalie was well asleep.

 JUSTIFIED.

COME up, my heart, come from thy hiding-place:
 Stern memory grows importunate to make
 Hard accusation; and if that I be
 Not grossly misadvised, thou 'rt much to blame.

Was 't thou, that on a certain April night,
 When sweetnesses were breaking all the buds,
 And the red creeping vines of strawberries
 Hung out their dainty blossoms toward the sun —
 When first the dandelion from his cell
 Came, like a miser dragging up his gold,
 And making envious the poor traveler,
 And the wild brook — thou wottest how it ran,
 Betwixt the stubby oat-field and the slope
 Where, free from needless shepherding, that night
 The sheep went cropping thistle leaves, and I
 For the soft tinkling of their silver bells
 Staid listening, so I said, and said again,
 To be unto my conscience justified —
 Was 't thou that tempted me to let the dew
 Of midnight straiten all my pretty curls,
 And woo the bat-like clinging damps to come
 And bleach the morning blushes from my cheeks?
 Ah, me! how many years since that same night
 Have come and gone, nor brought a fellow to it!
 Thou need'st not shake so, guilty prisoner,
 For though those white hairs round my forehead teach
 A judgment cold and passionless, and though
 The hand that writes is palsy-touched, withal,
 I cannot wrong so deeply, grievously,
 The glorifying beauty of the world,
 As to declare that thou art all condemned!

Yet stay, I pray thee: make some sweet excuse
 To that staid saintly dame, Austerity;
 For she and I have been a thousand times
 At variance about her sober rule.
 Once when I left my gleaning in the wheat,
 (The time was June, sunset within an hour,)
 And underneath a hedge, that rained down flowers
 Of hawthorn and wild roses in my lap,
 Sat idling with young Jocelyn, till that
 The shadows of the mowers, stretching out
 Like threatening ghosts, did cut our pastime off,
 She rated me so mercilessly hard
 That I was fain with fables to make peace.
 I said that I was tired, and that a bird,
 Soft-singing in the hedge, drew me that way;
 And then I said I looked for catydid,

(It was three months before their chirping time,
 And that 't was pleasant to look thence and see
 The sunshine topping all the wide-leaved corn,
 And the young apples on the orchard boughs
 With the betraying red upon their cheeks.
 What other most improbable conceits
 I told to her, I now remember not;
 But I remember that her frowning brows
 So chid me to confusion that I said
 It was not *Jocelyn* that kept me there!
 She smiled, and we since then are enemies.
 Silent? thou hast no eloquence to win
 Her cold regard upon my waywardness.
 Well, be it so! and though the great wide world
 Stare blank that I do soften judgment so,
 Thou stand'st acquitted, yea, and justified.

 ISIDORE'S DREAM.

I WANDERED in a visionary field:
 Lilacs were purpling out, the ousel, fleet,
 Plunged in the rainy brook; the air was sweet
 With sprouting beech buds; and the full moon sealed
 The red-leaved book of evening with pure white;
 The golden falling of a bridal night
 Were scarcely to a lover's eyes so fair —
 And yet my thoughts clung, bat-like, to despair.
 I would not see the green and pleasant grass,
 But willows dim and cypresses instead;
 I said they made me sad, and sighed, Alas!
 And said, Another year I should be dead,
 And rest from labor and be done with care —
 That the May moon would wrap my grave with light;
 And picking in my lap the daisies white,
 I braided such a crown as corpses wear.

Walking the visionary meadow o'er,
 My wreath upon my arm, and sighing so,
 And praying to be dead, the day-break snow
 Blushed red as any rose: "Come, Isidore —
 In the dim rainy East an hour agone

The sun was traveling ; wake, I pray thee, sweet !
 One kiss before we part, perhaps to meet
 Next in eternity." My dream went on
 The same sad way when I was wide awake,
 And still through all the days and nights I sigh,
 And try to make my heart believe that I
 Am grieved for anything but love's sweet sake.

BURNS.* †

HE died : he went from all the praise
 That fell on ears unheeding,
 And scarcely can we read his lays
 For pauses in the reading,
 To mourn the buds of poesy,
 That never came to blushing ;
 For who can choose but sigh, ah me !
 For their untimely crushing !

And when we see, o'er ruins dim,
 The summer roses climbing,
 We sadly pause, and think of him,
 The beauty of whose rhyming
 Spread sunshine o'er the darkest ill, —
 Alas ! it could not cover
 The heart from breaking, that was still
 Through all despairs a lover —

A lover of the beautiful,
 In nature's sweet evangel ;
 For his great heart was worshipful,
 For men, and for the angels.
 The rank with him was not the man,
 He knew no servile bowing ;
 And wee things o'er the furrow ran
 Unharm'd beside his plowing.

* Written on reading in the Letters of Burns, " We have no flour in the house, and must borrow for a few days." — *Author's Note.*

† Compare Mrs. Browning's poem on " Cowper."

Lights flowing out of palaces
 Dimmed not the candles burning,
 Whereby the glorious mysteries
 Of music he was learning;
 And not with envious looks he eyed
 The morning larks upgoing,
 From meadows that were all too wide
 And green for peasant mowing.

For by his cabin door the green
 Was pleasant with the daisies;
 And o'er the brae, some bonny lass
 Was happy in his praises.
 Oh Thou who hear'st my simple strain,
 The while I muse his story —
 Here knew he all a poet's pain,
 Grant now he have the glory!

 THE EMIGRANTS.

Don't you remember how oft you have said,
 Darling Coralin May,
 "When the hawthorns are blossoming we shall wed,
 And then to the prairie away!"
 And now, all over the hills they peep,
 Milkwhite, out of the spray,
 And sadly you turn to the past and weep,
 Darling Coralin May.

When the cricket chirped in the hickory blaze,
 You cheerily sung, you know, —
 "Oh for the sunnier summer days,
 And the time when we shall go!"
 The corn-blades now are unfolding bright,
 While busily calls the crow;
 And clovers are opening red and white,
 And the time has come to go —

To go to the cabin our love has planned,
 On the prairie green and gay,
 In the blushing light of the sunset land,
 Darling Coralin May.

There was watching and weeping, and when he was dead
 'Neath that tree by the seaside they made him a bed ;
 A stone that was nameless and rude at his head —

His feet had another ;

And the schoolmaster said, though we laid him so low,
 And so humbly and nameless, we surely should know
 For his beauty, where only the beautiful go —

My good little brother.

JULIET TO ROMEO.

NAY, sweet, one moment more, thy lips, mayhap,
 Will soothe this heavy aching in my brows —
 Stay, while the twilight in the dusky boughs
 Sits smiling with the moon upon her lap.

And dost thou kiss me to be free to go ?
 How royally the purple shadows sway
 Across the gorgeous chamber of dead day ;
 Now pr'ythee, stay, while they are shining so.

That kiss has made me better — I shall be
 Quite well anon — nay, gentle Romeo,
 I hear the vesper-chanting, soft and low —
 When the last echo dies thou shalt be free.

Could that have been the owlet's cry ? the light
 Is scarcely faded from the hill-tops yet,
 'T is not a half hour since the sun was set ;
 Wait dear one, for the dim concealing night.

The bell is striking ; hark ! 't is only nine,
 I counted truly, love, it was not ten —
 Would you be falsest of all faithless men,
 And leave me in the lonely night to pine !

I hear the watch-dog baying at the moon,
 And hear the noisy cock crow loud and long —
 He cannot cheat me with his shrilly song —
 I know the midnight has not come so soon.

What ruddy streaks are running up the sky —
 Is that the lark that past the turret flies!
 Ah me, 't is morning's golden-lidded eyes
 Peeping above the hills; so, sweet, good-by!

OF HOME.

My heart made pictures all to-day
 Of the old homestead far away.
 It is the middle of the May,
 And the moon is shining full and bright —
 The middle of May, and the middle of night.

Darkly against the southern wall,
 Three cherry-trees, so smooth and tall,
 Their shadows cast — we planted all,
 One morning in March that is long gone by, —
 My brother Carolan and I.

I hear the old clock tick and tick
 In the small parlor, see the thick
 Unfeathered wings of bats, that stick
 To moon-lit windows, see the mouse,
 Noiseless, peering about the house.

I 'm going up the winding stairs,
 I 'm counting all the vacant chairs,
 And sadly saying, "They were theirs, —
 The brothers and sisters who no more
 Go in and out at the homestead door."

I hear my sweet-voiced mother say,
 "Leave, children, leave all work to-day,
 And go into the fields and play."
 And the birds are singing where'er we go —
 How beautiful, to be dreaming so!

And yet, while I am dreaming on,
 I know my playmates all are gone;
 That none the hope of our childhood keep,
 That some are weary, and some asleep,
 And that I from the homestead am far away
 This middle of night, in the middle of May.

MY FRIEND.

ALONG the west the stormy red
Burned blackest gaps afar and near ;
Across the coverlid of snow
We saw the shadows come and go,
But no one to his neighbor said
His saddest fear.

Peered from his hole the bright-eyed mouse,
The winds were blowing wild and wide,
Up the bleak sand the tide ran white
And icy as the full moon's light,
And in his lonesome hollow house
The brown owl cried.

We knew her pain and care were o'er,
We knew that angels led the way,
Yet wept, and could not choose but weep
The while we saw her go to sleep
For the long night that falls before
The eternal day.

The starlight glimmering faintly through
The window, shone beside her bed,
But ere the solemn time had worn
To the white breaking of the morn,
It faded off. Alas, I knew
That she was dead.

I put my hair before my eyes,
And all my soul to sorrow gave ;
My only comfort was to know
That she no longer saw my woe —
All heaven was gone out of the skies
Into the grave.

From off the windy threshing floors
The dust in golden flaws was blown,
The cock crew out, flail answered flail,
And limbs of apples, red and pale,
Beside the open cottage doors,
Together shone.

They kissed me, saying I must know
 How sober plenty smiled for me,
 But round my mortal life there lay
 And shall do till my dying day,
 Thy still and awful shadow, oh
 Eternity!

PARTING AND MEETING.

LIKE music in a reed, the light
 Was shut up in the dim, wild night;
 And 'twixt the black boughs fell the snowing —
 The black March boughs together blowing,
 Till hill and valley all were white.

The windows of the old house glowed
 With the dry hickory, burning brightly,
 As in the old house burned it nightly;
 So little cared they that it snowed —
 The two my rhyme is of. If tears
 Or shadows filled the eyes, else lit
 With sunshine, it were best unwrit,
 And all about sweet hopes and fears
 Were best unsaid, too. Tares will grow
 In spite of the most careful sowing;
 We find them in the time of mowing,
 Instead of flowers, we all do know.

So it were better that I write
 No whit about the lady's sighing;
 'T were better said she had been tying,
 To make it pretty for the night,
 Buds, white and scarlet, in her hair; —
 And that the ribbon she should wear
 Had sadly vexed her — not a hue,
 Purple nor carmine that would do;
 Or that the cowslips of the May,
 Her little hand had freely given —
 Nay, more, the sweetest star of heaven —
 To gain a rose the more that day
 For her sad cheek: so foolish runs

In all of us the blood of youth
 Ere wintry frosts or summer suns
 Bleach fancy's fabrics, and the truth
 Of sober senses turns aside
 The images once deified.

It was a time of parting dread —
 For middle night the cock was crowing,
 The black March boughs together blowing,
 The lady mourning to be dead;
 And idly pulling down the flowers,
 Tied prettily about her hair —
 Alas! she had but little care
 For any bliss of future hours!
 That parting made the world all dim
 To her, which ever way she saw;
 I know not what it was to him —
 Haply but as the gusty flaw
 That went before the buds — if so,
 Hers was a doubly piteous woe!
 And years are gone, or fast or slow,
 And many a love has had its making
 Since these two parted, at the breaking
 Of daylight, whiter than the snow.

Again 't is March: the lady's brows
 Are circled with another light
 Than that of burning hickory boughs,
 Which lit the house that parting night.
 And they have met: the eyes so sweet
 In the old time again she sees —
 Hears the same voice — and yet for these
 Her heart has not an added beat.
 If there be tremblings now, or sighs,
 They are not hers; she feels no sorrow
 That he will be away to-morrow,
 Nor joy that bridal mornings rise
 Out of his smiling — she is free!
 Oh, give her pity, give her tears!
 By one great wave of passion's sea,
 Drifted alike from hopes and fears.

A RUIN.*

A SILVER mist the valley shrouds,
 The summer day is nearly by ;
 Like pyramids of flowers, the clouds
 Are floating in the sunset sky.
 Now up the hills the white mists curl,
 The dew shines in the vale below,
 And on the oak, like beads of pearl,
 The white buds of the mistletoe.
 The rustling shadows, dropt with gold,
 Among the boughs of green and white,
 Are mingling softly, soon to fold
 In their embrace the fainting light.
 "Lone one, above whose solemn brow
 The oak leaves wave so green and slow,
 Night, gloomy night is darkening now :
 Sweet friend, arise and let us go."

Lifting his head a little up
 From the poor pillow where it lay,
 And pushing from his forehead pale
 The long, damp tresses all away —
 He told me with the eager haste
 Of one who dare not trust his words,
 He knew a mortal with a voice
 As low and lovely as a bird's ;
 But that he saw once in a dell
 Away from them a weary space,
 A fragile lily, which as well
 Might woo that old oak's green embrace,
 As for his heart to hope that she,
 Whose palace chambers ne'er grew dim,
 Would leave the light in which she moved
 To wander through the dark with him ;

For that, once being out to sow
 The rows of poppies in the corn,
 She crossed him, and he, kneeling low,
 Said, "Sweetest lady e'er was born,
 Have pity on my love ;" but quite
 Her scornful eyes eclipsed the day ;

* This poem is substantially a revision of "Pitied Love," see p. 57.

And passing, all the hills grew bright,
 As if the spring had gone that way.
 And he, scarce knowing what he did,
 But feeling that his heart was broke,
 Fled from her pitiless glance, and hid
 In the cold shadows of that oak,
 Where, as he said, she came at night,
 And clasped him from the bitter air,
 With her soft arms of fairest white,
 And the dark beauty of her hair.
 But when the morning lit the spray,
 And hung its wreath about his head,
 The lovely lady passed away,
 Through mists of glory pale and red.

So bitter grew his heaving sighs,
 So mournful dark the glance he raised;
 I looked upon him earnestly
 And saw the gentle boy was crazed.
 How fair he was! it made me sad,
 And sadder still my bosom grew,
 To think no earthly hand could build
 That beautiful ruin up anew.

 THE POET.*

UPON a bed of flowery moss,
 With moonbeams falling all across,
 Moonbeams chilly and faint and dim,
 (Sweet eyes I ween do watch for him)
 Lieth his starry dreams among,
 The gentlest poet ever sung.

The wood is thick — 't is late in night,
 Yet feareth he no evil sprite,
 Nor vexing ghost — such things there be
 In many a poet's destiny.
 Haply some wretched fast or prayer,
 Pained and long, hath charmed the air.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Softer than hymenial hymns
 The fountains, bubbling o'er their rims,
 Wash through the vernal reeds, and fill
 The hollows : all beside is still,
 Save the poet's breathing, low and light.
 Watch no more, lady — no more to-night ! —
 Heavy his gold locks are with dew,
 Yet by the pansies mixed with rue
 Bitter and rough, but now that fell
 From his shut hand, he sleepeth well.
 He sleepeth well, and his dream is bright
 Under the moonbeams chilly and white.

The night is dreary, the boy is fair —
 Hath he been mated with Despair,
 Or crossed in love, that he lies alone
 With shadows and moonlight overblown —
 Shadows and moonlight chilly and dim ?
 And do no sweet eyes watch for him ?

Nay, rather is his soul instead
 With immortal thirst disquieted,
 That oft like an echo wild and faint
 He makes to the hills and the groves his plaint ?
 That oft the light on his forehead gleams,
 So troubled under its crown of dreams ?

Watch no more, lady, no more, I pray,
 He is wrapt in a lonely power away !
 Sweet boy, so sleeping, might it be
 That any prayer I said for thee
 Could answer win from the spirit shore,
 This were it, " Let him wake no more ! "

ASPIRATIONS.

THE temples, palaces and towers
 Of the old time, I may not see ;
 Nor 'neath my reverend tread, thy flowers
 Bend meekly down, Gethsemane !

By Jordan's wave I may not stand,
Nor climb the hills of Galilee;
Nor break, with my poor, sinful hand,
The emblems of apostacy.

Nor pitch my tent 'neath Salem's sky,
As faith's impassioned fervor bids;
Nor hear the wild bird's startled cry,
From Egypt's awful pyramids.

I have not stood, and may not stand,
Where Hermon's dews the blossoms feed;
Nor where the flint-sparks light the sand,
Beneath the Arab lancer's steed.

Woe for the dark thread in my lot,
That still hath kept my feet away
From pressing toward the hallowed spot,
Where Mary and the young child lay.

But the unhooded soul may track
Even as it will, the dark or light,
From noontide's sunny splendors, back
To the dead grandeur of old night.

And even I, by visions led,
The Arctic wastes of snow may stem;
The Tartar's black tents view, or tread
Thy gardens, oh Jerusalem!

O'er Judah's hills may travel slow,
Or ponder Kedron's brook beside,
Or pluck the reeds that overgrow
The tomb which held the Crucified.

And does not He, who planned the bliss
Above us, hear the praise that springs
From every dust-pent chrysalis,
That feels the stirring of its wings?

CHANGED.

ALAS, the pleasant dew is dry,
That made so sweet the morn;
And midway in the walk of life
He sits as one forlorn.

I know the time when this was not,
When at the close of day
He brought his little boys the flowers
Ploughed up along his way.

The ewes that browsed the daisy buds
Erewhile (there were but twain),
Are now the grandams of a flock
That whiten all the plain.

The twigs he set his marriage-day,
Against the cabin door,
Make shadows in the summer now,
That reach across the floor.

The birds with red brown eyes, he sees
Fly round him, hears the low
Of pasturing cattle, hears the streams
That through his meadows flow.

He sees the pleasant lights of home,
And yet as one whose ills
Seek comfort of the winds or stars,
He stays about the hills.

The once dear wife his lingering step
A joy no longer yields;
No more he brings his boys the flowers
Ploughed up along the fields.

WEARINESS.

OH, still, and dumb, and silent earth,
Unlock thy dim and pulseless arms;
Wandering and weary from my birth,
I seek for refuge from life's storms.

For a dark shadow — not the grave's —
Has clasped the one I loved from me,
And winds have built their walls of waves,
Between us in the eternal sea.

No flowery, sheltering nook have I,
Wherein to lay my weary head;
Nature's fair bosom is drawn dry,
While I am hungry and unfed.

Oh, for the dream of long ago,
When to my raptured eyes 't was given,
To see, in this wild world below,
Only a lower range of Heaven.

And still, sometimes, the shadow lifts,
And through my soul a lost voice thrills,
What time the sunset's golden drifts
Come sweeping from the western hills.

But, in the noontide's broader beam,
I see how well the shadows lie,
And, turning from the twilight dream,
I bow my face to earth and cry.

Borne down, and weary with the storms,
O, earth! receive me to thy breast,
Unlock thy dim and pulseless arms,
And cool this burning heart to rest.

EDITH TO HAROLD.*

SPEAK soft, and smile when you do speak, I pray,
 For though I seem as gentle as the moon
 In her white bed of clouds, or thrice as gay
 As any robin of the April woods,
 You must not trust me wholly; I am like
 Some mountain creature that will not be tamed,
 But goes back to its nature when your hand
 Caressees it most fondly. Even a look
 May put between my heart and all the world
 The heavy memory of my monstrous wrongs,
 And make me hate you, sweetest, with the rest.
 The fatal malady is in my blood,
 And even when Death shall shear away the thread
 That holds my body and my soul in one,
 No flowers but poison ones will strike their roots
 In my earthed ashes. 'T is a dreadful thought —
 The last May grass on little Thyra's grave
 Was full of violets — so bright and blue!
 Nay, frown not, for the prophecy is true.
 Look at me close, and see if in my eyes
 Are not the half-reproachful, half-mad looks
 Of beasts too sharply goaded — I do fear
 The loosing of all fair humanities.
 Tell me you love me, kiss my cheek, my mouth,
 And talk about that meadow with the brook
 Brimful of sleepy waters, over which
 A milk-white heifer leaned her silver horns,
 Wound bright with scarlet flowers, and where the sheep
 Graze shepherdless, save when of fairest nights
 Some honest rustic walks and counts his lambs,
 So making pastime with his lady-love,
 The starry lighting of whose golden hair
 To his pleased eyes makes all the meadow shine.
 Once, when we stood before the eastern gate
 Of Hilda's castle, you did tell it me,
 With your white fingers combing the long mane
 Of your brown charger — dead in the last war.
 It was a pretty picture, and the end
 Was harmless, happy love. It gave my heart
 For a full hour such pleasant comforting,

* See Sir Bulwer Lytton's "Harold, the Last of the Saxon Kings." — *Author's Note.*

That I did after make the story mine,
 And feign to be the damsel by the brook ;
 For of my shepherd I could be the queen,
 As, sweetest, Harold, I may not be yours.

PARTING WITH A POET.*

ALL the sweet summer that is gone,
 Two paths I sighed to mark —
 One brightly leading up and on,
 One downward to the dark.

No prophecy enwrapt my heart,
 No Vala's gifts were mine ;
 Yet knew I that our paths must part —
 The loftier one be thine.

For not a soul inspiredly thrills,
 Whose wing shall not be free
 To sweep across the eternal hills,
 Like winds across the sea.

And, wheresoe'er thy lot may be,
 As all the past has proved,
 Love shall abide and be with thee,
 For genius must be loved.

While I, the heart's vain yearning stilled,
 The heart that vexed me long,
 Essay with my poor hands to build
 The silvery walls of song.

Still, through the nights of wild unrest,
 That softer joyance bars,
 Winding about my vacant breast
 The tresses of the stars.

While at the base of heights sublime,
 Dim thoughts forevermore
 Lie moaning, like the waves of time
 Along the immortal shore.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

THE RECLAIMING OF THE ANGEL.*

OH smiling land of the sunset,
 How my heart to thy beauty thrills —
 Veiled dimly to-day with the shadow
 Of the greenest of all thy hills!
 Where daisies lean to the sunshine,
 And the winds a plowing go,
 And break into shining furrows
 The mists in the vale below;
 Where the willows hang out their tassels,
 With the dews all white and cold,
 Strung over their wands so limber,
 Like pearls upon chords of gold;
 Where in milky hedges of hawthorn
 The red-winged thrushes sing,
 And the wild vine, bright and flaunting
 Twines many a scarlet ring;
 Where, under the ripened billows
 Of the silver-flowing rye,
 We ran in and out with the zephyrs —
 My sunny-haired brother and I.

Oh, when the green kirtle of May time,
 Again over the hill-tops is blown,
 I shall walk the wild paths of the forest
 And climb the steep headlands alone —
 Pausing not where the slopes of the meadows
 Are yellow with cowslip beds,
 Nor where, by the wall of the garden,
 The hollyhocks lift their bright heads.
 In hollows that dimple the hill-sides,
 Our feet till the sunset had been,
 Where pinks with their spikes of red blossoms,
 Hedged beds of blue violets in,
 While to the warm lip of the sunbeam
 The cheek of the blush rose inclined,
 And the pansy's soft bosom was flushed with
 The murmurous love of the wind.

* Printed in "Lyra" and, revised, in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

But when 'neath the heavy tresses
That swept o'er the dying day,
The star of the eve like a lover
Was hiding his blushes away,
As we came to a mournful river
That flowed to a lovely shore,
"Oh, sister," he said, "I am weary —
I cannot go back any more!"
And seeing that round about him
The wings of the angels shone —
I parted the locks from his forehead
And kissed him and left him alone.

ADELYN.

COME, comb my hair, good Hepsiba,
The sun is going down,
And I within an hour must wear
My pretty wedding-gown!

'T is bleached white upon the grass,
The rainy grass of May,
Go bring it, my good Hepsiba,
It is my wedding-day.

And Hepsiba looks out and sees,
Behind the windy hill,
The cloudy sun go down, and hastes
To do the bride's sweet will.

And from her sick-bed Adelyn
Was softly lifted down,
To have her black hair combed so smooth,
And wear her wedding-gown.

Oh! never o'er the windy hills
Came clouds so fast and dread,
And never beat so wild a rain
Above a marriage-bed.

Unpastured o'er the dry, brown sands,
 The noisy billows crept,
 The cattle lowed, but Adelyn
 Through all the tumult slept.

Upon her sweet shut eyes they laid
 The roses from her hair,
 And when the bridegroom kissed her cheek,
 She never looked so fair.

At morning, he who came to meet
 The bridal train so brave,
 Hung willows in his boat, and rowed
 A corse across the wave.

MADELA.*

“Oh, my dear one! oh, my lover!
 Comes no faintest sound to you,
 As I call your sweet words over,
 All the weary night-time through!
 Drearly the rain keeps falling —
 I can hear it on the pane;
 Oh, he cannot hear my calling —
 He will never come again!”
 So a pale one, lowly lying
 On her sick bed, often cried —
 “Come, my dear one, I am dying!”
 But no lover's voice replied.

“When the morning light is shining
 Over all the eastern hills,
 Thou, whose heart is still divining
 Every wish in mine that thrills —
 If he come, and I am dying,
 If my hands be cold as clay,
 And my lips make no replying
 To the wild words he will say,
 As he fondly bends above me,
 Just as you are bending now,

* Printed in “Lyra,” as well as in the volume of 1855.

Saying how he used to love me,
 Pressing kisses on my brow —
 Take this ringlet ere from twining
 Dampened in that dew so near;
 He has often praised its shining —
 Will he when I cannot hear?
 Give it softly to his keeping,
 Saying, as I would have said,
 ‘Go not through the world a-weeping
 For the dear one who is dead;’
 And, as you the shroud upgather,
 That shall hide me from his eyes,
 Tell him of the pitying Father —
 Of the love that never dies.”

Through the eastern clouds the amber,
 Burning, tells the night-time past!
 Dark and silent is her chamber —
 She is sleeping well at last!
 Is ’t the white hand of her lover
 Puts her curtain’s fold away?
 Is it he that bends above her,
 Saying, “Dear one, wake, ’t is day!”
 No; the wind, despite Death’s warning,
 ’T is, that in her curtain stirs,
 And the blue eyes are the morning’s,
 That are bending down to her’s.
 Lay the hands, for love’s sake lifted
 Oft in prayer, together bound,
 While the unheeded ringlet drifted
 Lightly, brightly, to the ground.

 THE BROKEN HOUSEHOLD.*

VAINLY, vainly memory seeks,
 Round our father’s knee,
 Laughing eyes and rosy cheeks
 Where they used to be:
 Of the circle once so wide,
 Three are wanderers, three have died.

* Printed in “Lyra,” as well as in the volume of 1855.

Golden-haired and dewy-eyed,
 Prattling all the day,
 Was the baby, first that died ;
 Oh, 't was hard to lay
 Dimpled hand and cheek of snow
 In the grave so dark and low.

Smiling back on all who smiled,
 Ne'er by sorrow thrall'd,
 Half a woman, half a child,
 Was the next one called :
 Then a grave more deep and wide
 Made they by the baby's side.

When or where the other died
 Only Heaven can tell ;
 Treading manhood's path of pride
 Was he when he fell ;
 Haply thistles, blue and red,
 Bloom about his lonely bed.

I am for the living three
 Only left to pray ;
 Two are on the stormy sea ;
 Farther still than they,
 Wanders one, his young heart dim —
 Oftenest, most I pray for him.

Whatsoe'er they do or dare,
 Wheresoe'er they roam,
 Have them, Father, in Thy care,
 Guide them safely home ;
 Home, oh, Father, in the sky,
 Where none wander and none die.

PARTING SONG.*

BEHIND their cloudy curtains,
 Over sunset's crimson sea,
 Like fires along a battle field,
 Intensely, mournfully,

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

The radiant stars are burning
That will burn no more for me.

Ere on yon path of glory,
Which still the daylight warms,
Walks silently the midnight,
With the silence in her arms,
I shall be where longings trouble not,
Nor haunting fear alarms.

Nay, weep not, gentlest, dearest,
When joy should most abound,
That the dewy, tender clasping
Of thy arms must be unwound;
We have journeyed long together
In life's wilderness profound.

Like the shining threads of silver
Which the showers of summer leave,
When to webs of beauty woven
By the golden loom of eve,
Is the path that lies before me now —
Then, dear one, do not grieve.

Mortality has been to me
A wheel of pain, at best,
And I sink, although thy gentle love
Has soothed and almost blest,
As a pilgrim in the shadow
Of the sepulchre, to rest.

Not when the morn is glowing,
Like a banner o'er the brave,
Nor when the world is bathing
In the noontide's amber wave,
Will I come, oh Love, to meet thee
From the chamber of the grave.

But through the silver columns
Leaning earthward from the arch,
When the pale and solemn army
Of the night is on the march,

I will glide, oh Love, to meet thee,
From the shadow of the larch.

As the poet's bosom trembles
With some awful melody,
Till he hears the dark procession
Of the ages sweeping by,
Lo! my heart is trembling, beating,
To the music of the sky.

THE BRIDAL OF WOE.*

DIMLY the shadows stretch across the seas,
With glistening frost the window pane is white;
And the blind winds go moaning through the trees —
Oh! 't is a mournful night!

Under the rafters, where, in summer's heat,
The twittering swallow hung her nest of clay,
The new-milked heifer, sheltered from the sleet,
Chews the sweet-scented hay.

On southern slopes, hard by the leafy wold,
Where the stray sunbeams all the day kept warm,
Instinct is shepherding the harmless fold
From the ice-bearded storm.

The watch-dog, shivering couchant on the sill,
Watches the moon, slow sailing up the sky,
Nor answers, calling from the churchyard hill,
The owlet's frequent cry.

In the dim grass the little flowers are dead,
No more his song the grasshopper awakes,
And the pale silver of the spider's thread,
No wanton wild-bird breaks.

* Printed in "Lyra" and, revised, in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

Yet does my soul, whose flights have sometimes stirred
 The cloud that curtains back eternity,
 Lie wailing in my bosom, like a bird,
 Driven far out at sea.

On such a night my heart was wed to pain,
 And joy along its surface can but gleam,
 Like the red threads of morning's fiery skein
 Along the frozen stream.

A DREAM UNTOLD.*

BENEATH the yellow hair of May
 The blushing flowers together lay,
 The winds along the bending lea,
 Kept flowing, flowing like a sea
 That could not rest,
 When first a maid with tresses brown,
 And blue eyes softly drooping down,
 Sat in her chamber high and lone,
 Locking a sweet dream, all her own,
 Within her breast.

The elms around the homestead low
 All night went swaying to and fro,
 And the young summer's silver rain
 Kept beating on the window pane,
 So soft and low,
 It could not trouble the fair maid
 Who tremblingly and half afraid
 Lay gazing on the village lights,
 That glimmered o'er the neighboring heights,
 In sleepless woe.

The summer's tender glow is fled,
 The early budding flowers are dead,
 But others, with their leaves scarce paled,
 And their flushed bosoms all unveiled,
 In bloom remain;

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

The hills are white with ripened rye,
 The quails from out the meadows fly;
 The mower's whistling, blithely gay,
 Makes answer to the milkmaid's lay,
 In vain — in vain!

'T is one of autumn's lonesome eves,
 And eddying drifts of withered leaves
 Are scattered in the woods behind,
 By the damp fingers of the wind;
 But hope dies not,
 And happy maids and youths are seen
 Together straying on the green,
 While trembling hand and blushing cheek
 Tell better far than words can speak,
 Each other's thought.

Winter is come — the homestead low
 Is whitened by the falling snow;
 In the warm hearth the cricket cries,
 And the storm-shaken bough replies;
 The watch-dog's bay
 Is answered from the neighboring hill —
 " 'T is very dark, the night is chill,"
 Is by the pale lips faintly said,
 Of her beside whose dying bed
 They kneel to pray.

Morning is up — her wing of fire
 Is shivering o'er the village spire,
 And in the churchyard down below
 Shining along the mounds of snow
 Serenely bright;
 The maiden with the hair so brown,
 And blue eyes softly drooping down,
 Her dream, whate'er it was, unknown,
 Shall lie beneath the cross of stone,
 Ere close of night.

THE CONVICT.*

THE first of the September eves
Sunk its red basement in the sea,
And like swart reapers, bearing sheaves,
Dim shadows thronged immensity.
Then from his ancient kingdom, Night
Wooing the tender Twilight, came,
And from her tent of soft blue light,
Bore her away, a bride of flame.

Pushing aside her golden hair,
And listening to the Autumn's tread,
Along the hill-tops, bleak and bare,
Went Summer, burying her dead;
The frolic winds, out-laughing loud,
Played with the thistle's silver beard,
And drifting seaward like a cloud,
Slowly the wild-birds disappeared.

Upon a hill with mosses brown,
Beneath the blue roof of the sky,
As the dim day went sadly down,
Stood all the friend I had, and I—
Watching the sea-mist of the strand
Wave to and fro in Evening's breath,
Like the pale gleaming of the hand
That beckons from the shore of Death,
Talking of days of gladness flown,
Of Sorrow's great o'erwhelming waves,
Of friends loved well as they were known,
Now sleeping in the voiceless graves;
And as our thoughts o'erswept the past,
Like stars that through the darkness move,
Our hearts grew softer, and at last
We talked of friendship, talked of love.
Then, as the long and level reach
Back to our homestead slow we trod,
We gave our fond pure pledges each,
Of truth unto ourselves and God.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Forth to life's conflict and its care,
 Doomed wert thou, oh my friend, to go,
 Leaving me only hope and prayer
 To shelter my poor heart from woe.
 "A little year, and we shall meet!"
 Still at my heart that whisper thrills —
 The spring-shower is not half so sweet,
 Covering with violets all the hills.

Dimly the days sped, one by one,
 Slowly the weeks and months went round,
 Until again September's sun
 Lighted the hill with moss embrowned.
 That night we met — my friend and I —
 Not as the last year saw us part:
 He as a convict doomed to die,
 I with a bleeding, breaking heart —
 Not in our homestead, low and old,
 Nor under Evening's roof of stars,
 But where the earth was damp and cold,
 And the light struggled through the bars.

Others might mock him, or disown,
 With lying tongue: my place was there,
 And as I bore him to the throne
 Upon the pleading arms of prayer,
 He told me how Temptation's hand
 Pressed the red wine-cup to his lip,
 Leaving him powerless to withstand
 As the storm leaves the sinking ship;
 And how, all blind to evil then,
 Down from the way of life he trod,
 Sinning against his fellow-men —
 Reviling the dear name of God.

SICK AND IN PRISON.

WILDLY falls the night around me,
 Chains I cannot break have bound me,
 Spirits unrebuked, undriven
 From before me, darken heaven;
 Creeds bewilder, and the saying
 Unfelt prayers, makes need of praying.

In this bitter anguish lying,
Only thou wilt hear my crying —
Thou, whose hands wash white the erring
As the wool is at the shearing;
Not with dulcimer or psalter,
But with tears, I seek thy altar.

Feet that trod the mount so weary,
Eyes that pitying looked on Mary,
Hands that brought the Father's blessing
Heads of little children pressing,
Voice that said, "Behold thy brother,"
Lo, I seek ye and none other.

Look, oh gentlest eyes of pity
Out of Zion, the glorious city;
Speak, oh voice of mercy, sweetly;
Hide me, hands of love, completely;
Sick, in prison, lying lonely,
Ye can lift me up, ye only.

In my hot brow soothe the aching,
In my sad heart stay the breaking,
On my lips the murmur trembling,
Change to praises undissembling;
Make me wise as the evangels,
Clothe me with the wings of angels.

Power that made the few loaves many,
Power that blessed the wine at Cana,
Power that said to Lazarus, "Waken!"
Leave, oh leave me not forsaken!
Sick and hungry, and in prison,
Save me Crucified and Risen!

LONGINGS.

I AM weary of the mystery
Of life and death, and long to see
Into the great eternity:

The locked hands loosed, the feet untied,
The blank eyes re-illuminéd,
The senseless ashes deified.

For as the ages come and go,
The tides of being ever flow,
From light to darkness, ending so.

A little gladness for the birth,
For youth a little soberer mirth,
For age, a looking toward the earth —

A listening for the spirit's call,
A reaching up the smooth, steep wall
Of the close grave — and this is all.

Hoping, we find that hope is vain;
Are pleased, and pleasure ends in pain;
Loving, we win no love again.

We bring our sorrow, a wild weight,
Praying inexorable fate
To comfort us, and when we wait —

Winning no answer to the quest,
Madly with angels we contest,
Asking if that which is, is best.

So life wears out, and so the din
Goes on, and other lives begin
The same as though we had not been.

True, here and there in time's dead mould,
There stands some obelisk of gold,
For which, God knoweth, peace was sold.

For they must meet their fellows' frown,
And wear on throbbing brows the crown,
O'er whom death's curtain shuts not down.

Others for fame may do and dare,
For me it seems enough to bear
The ills of being while we are :

Without the strife, to leave behind
 A name with laurels intertwined,
 To be of evil tongues maligned.

And had I power to choose, to-day,
 Some good to help me on my way,
 I truly think that I would say —

“Oh thou who gavest me mortal breath,
 And hold'st me here 'twixt life and death,
 Double the measure of my faith!”

 REMORSE.

BREAK sweetly, red morning,
 I shudder with fear,
 For dreaming at midnight
 My darling, my dear,
 My Mary, my lost loving Mary, was here.

Soft smoothing my pillow,
 Soft soothing my woe,
 She folded the coverlid,
 Dainty as snow,
 About my chill bosom, and kneeling so slow,

Meek clasped she together
 Her hands, lily white,
 While the flow of her tresses,
 All golden with light
 Of the world where there never is any more night,

Fell over my forehead,
 And bathed it like dew,
 As the pale mortal sorrow
 In lifetime she knew,
 Was mixed with the fond whisper, “Pray I for you.”

And therefore this tremulous
 Shudder of pain
 Shakes my desolate bosom;
 This agonized rain
 Fills my eyes, that I thought not to vex me again.

Break sweetly, red morning,
 Break sweetly, I pray ;
 In the darkness of midnight
 As moaning I lay,
 Fled this vision, this beautiful vision away.

On a hill where the larches
 Trail low to the ground,
 Till the moon lights but faintly
 The headstones around,
 Fast asleep lieth Mary beneath the hushed mound.

In her white shroud she lieth
 Beneath the cold stone —
 My life was the shadow
 That darkened her own,
 And my death-crown to-night is of thorns I have sown.

DESPAIR.*

COME, most melancholy maid,
 From thy tent of woeful shade.
 And with hemlock, sere and brown,
 Keep the struggling daylight down.
 From thy pale unsmiling brow
 Wind the heavy tresses now,
 And in whispers sad and low
 I will tell thee all my woe.

The path watched and guarded most,
 By an evil star is crossed,
 And a dear one lies to-day
 Sick, in prison, far away —
 Naked, famished, suffering wrong ;
 Dreamed I of him all night long,
 And each dreary wind o'erblown
 Seemed an echo of his moan.

When he left me, long ago,
 Brown locks, touched of summer's glow,

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Beautified his boyish brow —
Thinned and faded are they now.

Seeing clouds like oxen stray
Through the azure fields all day,
And the lengthening sunbeams lie
Like bright furrows of the sky,
Underneath an oaken roof
We were sitting, sorrow-proof —
Cheating I with tales the hours,
Heaping he my lap with flowers.

As yon elm, the ivied one,
Came between us and the sun,
And the lambs went toward the fold,
I remember that I told,
How the robin and the wren,
Friendless and unburied men
Cover with the leaves of flowers
From the twilight's chilly hours.

Now along the level snow
Glistening the frost specks glow,
And the trees stand high and bare,
Shivering in the bitter air
— Come, oh melancholy maid,
From thy tent of woeful shade,
That in whispers, sad and low,
I may tell thee all my woe.

RESPIRE.*

LEAVE me, dear one, to my slumber,
Daylight's faded glow is gone;
In the red light of the morning
I must rise and journey on.

I am weary, oh, how weary!
And would rest a little while;
Let your kind looks be my blessing,
And your last "Good-night" a smile.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

We have journeyed up together,
 Through the pleasant day-time flown;
 Now my feet have pressed life's summit,
 And my pathway lies alone.

And, my dear ones, do not call me,
 Should you haply be awake,
 When across the eastern hill-tops
 Presently the day shall break.

For, while yet the stars are lying
 In the gray lap of the dawn,
 On my long and solemn journey
 I shall be awake and gone;

Far from mortal pain and sorrow,
 And from passion's stormy swell,
 Knocking at the golden gateway
 Of the eternal citadel.

Therefore, dear ones, let me slumber —
 Faded is the day and gone;
 And with morning's early splendor,
 I must rise and journey on.

OF ONE DYING.*

IN the blue middle heavens of June
 The sun was burning bright,
 What time we parted — now! alas,
 'T is winter-time and night.
 The swart November long ago,
 With troops of gloomy hours,
 Went folding the October's tents
 Of misty gold, like flowers.

The wind hangs moaning on the pane,
 The cricket tries to sing,
 And a voice tells me all the while,
 It never will be spring;

* Printed in "Lyra" and, revised, in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

It never will be spring to her,
 For in the west wind's flow,
 I hear a sound that seems to me
 Like digging in the snow.

She will not have to lay away
 The baby from her knees —
 The wild birds sung his lullaby
 Last summer in the trees ;
 The cedars and the cypresses,
 That in the churchyard grow —
 But little Alice will be left —
 How shall we make her know,

When she shall see the pallid brow,
 The shroud about the dead,
 That the beloved one is in
 The azure overhead ?
 For scarcely by the open grave,
 Have we of larger light
 And clearer faith, the strength to shape
 The spirit's upward flight.

MAY VERSES.*

Do you hear the wild birds calling —
 Do you hear them, oh my heart ?
 Do you see the blue air falling
 From their rushing wings apart ?

With young mosses they are flocking,
 For they hear the laughing breeze,
 With dewy fingers rocking
 Their light cradles in the trees !

Within Nature's bosom holden,
 Till the wintry storms were done,
 Little violets, white and golden,
 Now are leaning to the sun.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

With its stars the box is florid,
 And the wind-flower, sweet to view,
 Hath uncovered its pale forehead
 To the kisses of the dew.

While thousand blossoms tender,
 As coquettishly as they,
 Are sunning their wild splendor
 In the blue eyes of the May!

In the water softly dimpled —
 In the flower-enameled sod —
 How beautifully exampled
 Is the providence of God!

From the insect's little story
 To the fartherest star above,
 All are waves of glory, glory,
 In the ocean of his love!

WURTHA.*

THROUGH the autumn's mists so red
 Shot the slim and golden stocks
 Of the ripe corn; Wurtha said,
 "Let us cut them for our flocks."

Answered I, "When morning leaves
 Her bright footprints on the sea,
 As I cut and bind the sheaves,
 Wurtha, thou shalt glean for me."

"Nay, the full moon shines so bright
 All along the vale below,
 I could count our flocks to-night;
 Haco, let us rise and go.
 For when bright the risen morn
 Leaves her footprints on the sea,
 Thou may'st cut and bind the corn,
 But I cannot glean for thee."

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

And as I my reed so light
 Blowing, sat, her fears to calm,
 Said she, "Haco, yesternight
 In my dream I missed a lamb,
 And as down the misty vale
 Went I pining for the lost,
 Something shadowy and pale,
 Phantom-like, my pathway crossed,
 Saying, 'In a chilly bed,
 Low and dark, but full of peace,
 For your coming, softly spread,
 Is the dead lamb's snowy fleece.'"

Passed the sweetest of all eves —
 Morn was breaking, for our flocks:
 "Let us go and bind to sheaves,
 All the slim and golden stocks;
 Wake, my Wurtha, wake" — but still
 Were her lips as still could be,
 And her folded hands too chill
 Ever more to glean for me.

THE SHEPHERDESS.*

SAT we on the mossy rocks
 In the twilight, long ago,
 I and Ulna keeping flocks —
 Flocks with fleeces white as snow.
 Beauty smiled along the sky;
 Beauty shone along the sea;
 "Ulna, Ulna," whispered I,
 "This is all for you and me!"

Brushing back my heavy locks,
 Said he, not, alas! in glee,
 "Art content in keeping flocks
 With a shepherd boy like me?" —
 Shone the moon so softly white
 Down upon the mossy rocks,
 Covering sweetly with her light
 Me and Ulna, and our flocks.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

Running wild about our feet
 Were the blushing summer flowers —
 “Ulna,” said I, “what is sweet
 In this world that is not ours?”
 Thrice he kissed my cheek, and sighed,
 These are dreary rocks and cold —
 Oh, the world is very wide,
 And I weary of my fold!

Now a thousand oxen stray
 That are Ulna’s, down the moor,
 And great ships their anchors weigh,
 Freighted with his priceless ore.
 But my tears will sometimes flow,
 Thinking of the mossy rocks
 Where we sat, so long ago,
 I and Ulna, keeping flocks.

WASHING THE SHEEP.

“OH, Jesse, go and wash the sheep —
 The hills are white with May,
 The mossy brook is brimming full —
 ’T is shearing time to-day.
 And I will bring my spinning-wheel,
 And tie the bands anew,
 And when to-night, the lilac buds
 Break open with the dew,
 I ’ll come and meet you, as I used,
 The summer eves ago,
 When first you loved me, Jesse dear —
 Or when you told me so.”

’T was Emily, the fair young wife
 Of Jesse thus who spake;
 And, kissing her, he straight became
 A shepherd for her sake.
 She heard him singing to the sheep,
 Across the hills, all day,

As one by one he plunged them in
 The rainy brook of May.
 But ere the eve, the shadows fell,
 The sun in clouds was gone,
 And dreary through the western woods,
 The windy night came on.

Her gold curls beaten straight beneath
 The rain that wildly drove,
 Sad Emily along the hills
 Went calling to her love;
 And calling by the brooks of May,
 The grassy brooks o'erfull,
 What sees she 'mid the new-washed lambs,
 Gleam whiter than their wool?
 Oh never winter frost, nor ice,
 So filled her heart with dread;
 And never kissed she living love
 As then she kissed the dead!

GEORGE BURROUGHS.*

OH, dark as the creeping of shadows,
 At night, o'er the burial hill,
 When the pulse in the stony artery
 Of the bosom of earth is still —
 When the sky, through its frosty curtain,
 Shows the glitter of many a lamp,
 Burning in brightness and stillness,
 Like the fire of a far-off camp —
 Must have been the thoughts of the martyr,
 Of the jeers and the taunting scorn,
 And the cunning trap of the gallows,
 That waited his feet at morn,

* No purer hearts or more heroic spirits ever perished at the stake than some crushed and broken on the wheel of bigotry during the Puritan Reign of Terror. Among them I would instance the Rev. George Burroughs, who prayed with and for his repentant accuser the day previous to his execution, and whose conviction demonstrated the righteousness of God to the Rev. Cotton Mather. After his execution, to which he was conveyed in an open cart, Mr. Burroughs was stripped of his clothing, dragged by the hangman's rope to a rocky excavation, in which, being thrown and trampled on by the mob, he was finally left partly uncovered.

— *Author's Note.*

As, down in his lonesome dungeon,
 The hours trooped silent and slow,
 Like sentinels through the thick darkness,
 Hard by the tents of the foe.

Could he hear the voices of music
 Which thrilled that deep heart of gloom ?
 Or see the sorrowful beauty
 That meekly leaned by the tomb ?
 Could he note in the cold and thin shadow
 That swept through his prison bars,
 The white hand of the pure seraph
 That beckoned him to the stars,
 As, roused to the stony rattle
 Of the hangman's open cart,
 He smothered, till only God heard it,
 The piercing cry of his heart ?

Can Christ's mercy wash back to whiteness
 The feet his raiment that trod,
 Whose soul from that dark persecution,
 Went up the bosom of God ?
 Hath he forgiveness, who shouted,
 " Righteously do ye, and well,
 To quench in blood, hot and smoking,
 This firebrand, which is of hell ? "

Over fields moistened thus darkly
 Wave harvests of tolerance now—
 But the tombstones of the old martyrs
 Sharpened the share of the plough !

LUTHER.

Oh ages ! add with reverend light
 New splendors to the name of him
 Who fought for conscience a good fight,
 And sung for truth the morning hymn !

Who, when old sanctions like a flood
 Drove wrathful on, to work his fall,
 Put forth his single hand and stood
 Sublimar, mightier than they all.

Stood, from all precedent apart,
 The double challenge to prefer —
 A conflict with his own weak heart
 As well as with the powers that were.

Who spake, and, speaking, clave in twain
 The mocking symbols in his way;
 Who prayed, and scoffing tongues grew fain
 To pray the prayers they heard him pray.

Who, guided by a righteous aim,
 Enkindled with his mortal breath
 A beacon, on the cliffs of fame,
 That shines across the wastes of death;

From cell to old cathedral height,
 From cowléd monk to vestal nun,
 As, through the cloudy realms of night,
 The fiery seams of daybreak run —

Till in the pilgrim's way, the reeds
 Like unto strong red cedars thrive,
 And free from wrappings of old creeds
 The corpse of thought stands up alive.

Gone from the watchings of the night,
 The wrestling might of lonely prayers; —
 Oh, ages! add your reverend light
 To the great glory that he bears!

THE EVENING WALK.

“MOTHER, see my cottage bonnet!
 Never was it bleached so white;
 I have put fresh ribbons on it,
 And three roses for to-night.
 Think you, mother, they will fade
 For a half hour in the shade?”
 ’T was the coaxing Adelaide
 Thus who said, the bonnet tying
 Close about her golden hair.

Waiting not for a replying
 To her questions, she must wear
 The new ribbons and the flowers —
 None would see them — 't was her mood ;
 On the hill-side near the wood
 She would be the next two hours.
 " If you want me, mother dear —
 Call, I shall be sure to hear."
 So said joyous Adelaide —
 Pretty, self-deceiving maid.

Many times before that day
 She had gone the self-same way,
 Singing, skipping here and there,
 Where a daisy bloomed, or where
 Patches of bright grasses lay.
 She would pout if you should say
 Sweeter music twilight cheers
 Than the birds make, and with tears
 Tell you, it is not the truth
 She has ever seen a youth
 Driving cattle any night
 Down a meadow full in sight —
 Down a meadow thick with flowers
 Driving cattle, brown and white,
 Slowly towards a shallow well,
 Hedged with lilies all around,
 Brighter than the speckled shell
 Of the " sweet beast " Hermés found.

What deceitful hearts are ours !
 For 't is true, say all she can,
 That the farm-boy, Corolan,
 Drives at night his cattle so —
 Silent sometimes drives them, slow —
 Sometimes trilling songs of glee —
 Treading very near the shade
 Where, unconscious, it may be,
 Sits the blushing Adelaide.
 The huge leader of the flock
 Often with a golden strand,
 Made of oat straw, gaily bound
 His black forehead round and round,

Close to Corolan doth walk,
Gently guided by his hand.

Haply 't is but for the pleasing
Of his own eyes he doth make
The gold cordage, and for sake
Of the green and flowery dells
His white oxen wear the bells,
And the song may be for easing
A young heart that loves the flowing
Of soft sounds in solitudes,
And the lonesome echoes going
Like lost poets through the woods.
Or all haply, happens so—

For the maiden says with tears,
“On the white necks of the steers
Silver bells make music low
When the pastured cattle go
Toward the spring — but not a sound
Sweeter, ever echoes round” —

So it cannot be she hears!
And if thither Corolan strays,
She has seen him not, she says;
And if eyes so bold and bright
As you hint of, pierced the shade,
She would not be night by night
On the hill side.

Adelaide

Surely would not so declare
If she saw young Corolan there.
So we will not wrong the maid
Guessing why the cottage bonnet
Had fresh flowers and ribbons on it,
Or for what the hill side shade
Pleased her — beauteous Adelaide.

MY MOTHER.

'T WAS in the autumn's dreary close,
A long, long time ago:
The berries of the brier-rose
Hung bright above the snow,

And night had spread a shadow wild
 About the earth and sky,
 When, calling me her orphan child,
 She said that she must die.

She rests within the quiet tomb,
 The narrow and the chill —
 The window of our cabin home
 Looks out upon the hill.
 Oh, when the world seems wild and wide,
 And friends to love me few,
 I think of how she lived and died,
 And gather strength anew.

LAST SONG.*

THE beetle from the furrow goes,
 The bird is on the sheltering limb,
 And in the twilight's pallid close
 Sits the gray evening, hushed and dim.

In the blue west the sun is down,
 And soft the fountain washes o'er
 Green limes and hyacinths so brown
 As never fountain washed before.

I scarce can hear the curlew call,
 I scarce can feel the night wind's breath;
 I only see the shadows fall,
 I only feel this chill is death.

At morn the bird will leave the bough,
 The beetle o'er the furrow run,
 But with the darkness falling now,
 The morning for my eyes is done.

Piping his ditty low and soft
 If shepherd chance to cross the wold,
 Bound homeward from the flowery croft,
 And the white tendance of his fold,

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

And find me lying fast asleep,
 Be inspiration round him thrown,
 That he may dig my grave down deep,
 Where never any sunshine shone.

WEARINESS.*

GENTLE, gentle sisters twain,
 I am sad with toil and pain,
 Hoping, struggling, all in vain,
 And would be with you again.

Sick and weary, let me go
 To our homestead, old and low,
 Where the cool, fresh breezes blow —
 There I shall be well, I know.

Violets, gold, and white, and blue,
 Sprout up sweetly through the dew —
 Lilacs now are budding, too, —
 Oh, I pine to be with you!

I am lonely and unblest —
 I am weary, and would rest
 Where all things are brightest, best,
 In the lovely, lovely West.

PERVERSITY.*

IF thy weak, puny hand might reach away
 And rend out lightnings from the clouds to-day,
 At little pains, as, with a candle flame
 Touching the flax upon my distaff here
 Would fill the house with light, it were the same —
 A little thing to do. It is the far
 Makes half the poet's passion for the star,
 The while he treads the shining dewdrop near.

Of mortal weaknesses I have my share—
 Pining and longing, and the madman's fit
 Of groundless hatreds, blindest loves, despair—
 But in this rhyméd musing I have writ
 Of an infirmity that is not mine:
 My heart's dear idol were not less divine
 That no grave gaped between us, black and steep;
 Though, if it were so, I could oversweep

Its gulf — all gulfs — though ne'er so widely riven;
 Or from hot desert sands dig out sweet springs;
 For I believe, and I have still believed,
 That Love may even fold its milk-white wings
 In the red bosom of hell, nor up to heaven
 Measure the distance with one thought aggrieved.
 Why should I tear my flesh, and bruise my feet,
 Climbing for roses, when, from where I stand,
 Down the green meadow I may reach my hand,
 And pluck them off as well? — sweet, very sweet
 This world which God has made about us lies, —
 Shall we reproach him with unthankful eyes?

WHEN MY LOVE AND I LIE DEAD.

WHEN my love and I lie dead,
 Both together on one bed,
 Shall it first be truly said,
 "Fate was kindly: they are wed!"

When they come the shroud to make
 Some sweet soul shall say, "Awake
 From your long white sleep, and take
 Feast of kisses for love's sake."

And though we nor see nor hear —
 Safe from sorrow — safe from fear,
 Both together on one bier,
 We shall feel each other near.

Oh my lover, oh my friend,
 This I know will be the end —
 Only when our ashes blend
 Will our heavy fortunes mend.

HIDDEN LIGHT.

THE rain is beating sullenly to-night;
 The wild red flowers like flames are drenched away;
 Down through the gaps of the black woods the light
 Strikes cold and dismal. Only yesterday
 It seems since Spring along the neighboring moor
 Washed up the daisies, and the barks of trees
 Cracked with green buds, while at my cabin door
 The brier hung heavy with the yellow bees.

Now all is blank: the wind climbs drearily
 Against the hills, the pastures close are browsed;
 Snakes slip in gaps of earth, gray crickets cry,
 Ants cease from running, and the bat is housed.
 No bright star, throbbing through the dark, one beam
 Of comfort sends me from its home above —
 I only see the splendor of a dream,
 Slowly and sadly fading out of love.

I only see the wild boughs as they blow
 Against my window, see the purple slant
 Of twilight shadows into darkness go;
 And yet again the whistling March will plant
 The April meadows, wheat fields will grow bright
 In their own time, the king-cups in their day
 Come through the grass; and somewhere there is Light
 If my weak thoughts could strike upon the way.

DEVOTION.

WITHIN a silver wave of cloud
 The yellow sunset light was staid,
 As on the daisied turf she bowed:
 I saw and loved her as she prayed —
 Thy holy will on earth be done,
 As in the heavens, all-hallowed One!

No evil word her lip had learned;
 Her heart with love was overfull;

No scarlet sinfulness had turned
 Her garment from the look of wool:
 Give us, oh Lord, our daily bread;
 Keep us and guide us home, she said.

No violet, with head so low,
 Were sweetly meek as she in prayer;
 Nor rising from the April snow
 A daffodilly, half so fair,
 As her uprising from the sod,
 Fresh from communion with her God.

PROPHECY.*

I THINK thou lovest me — yet a prophet said
 To-day, Elhadra, if thou laidest dead,
 From thy white forehead would he fold the shroud,
 And crown thee with his kisses. Nay, not so —
 The love that to thy living presence bowed,
 When death shall claim thee will be quick to go.
 Shall the wood fall to ashes, and the flame,
 Feeding on nothing, live and burn the same?

So, with my large faith unto gloom allied,
 Sprang up a shadow sunshine could not quell,
 And the voice said, Would'st haste to go outside
 This continent of being, it were well —
 Where finite, growing toward the Infinite,
 Its robe of glory gathers out of dust,
 And, looking down the radiances white,
 Sees all God's purposes about us, just.

Canst thou, Elhadra, reach out of the grave,
 And draw the golden waters of love's well?
 His years are chrims of brightness in time's wave —
 Thine are as dewdrops in the nightshade's bell!

Then straightening in my hands the rippled length
 Of all my tresses, slowly, one by one,

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

I took the flowers out. Dear one, in thy strength
 Pray for my weakness. Thou hast seen the sun,
 Large in the setting, drive a column of light,
 Down through the darkness; so, within death's night,
 Oh, my beloved! when I shall have gone,
 If it might be so, would my love burn on.

LIGHT AND LOVE.

LIGHT waits for us in heaven: Inspiring thought!
 That when the darkness all is overpast,
 The beauty which the lamb of God has bought
 Shall flow about our saved souls at last,
 And wrap them from all night-time and all woe:
 The spirit and the word assure us so.

Love lives for us in heaven: Oh, not so sweet
 Is the May dew which mountain flowers inclose
 Nor golden raining of the winnowed wheat,
 Nor blushing out of the brown earth, of rose,
 Or whitest lily, as, beyond time's wars,
 The silvery rising of these two twin stars!

A RETROSPECT.*

Down in the west, the sunset gold
 Is fading from the sombre cloud,
 And a fixed sorrow, hushed and cold,
 Is closing round me like a shroud;
 Closing with thoughts of twilight hours,
 When gaily, on the homestead hill,
 Two children played among the flowers—
 I would that they were children still.

For as I scan with tear-dimmed eyes
 The future, till life's sun hangs low,
 No white hand reaches from the skies,
 With chrisms of healing for our woe.

* Printed in "Lyra" and, with the omission of the last quatrain, in the volume of 1855. The second version is given here.

And though it may be either mind
Has grown with toil and years and strife,
Experience, like a blighting wind,
Has made a barren waste of life —

A barren waste, whose reach of sands
Lies glowing in the noontide heat,
Where no bright tree of blossoms stands,
Dropping cool shadows round our feet.

THE HOMELESS.

As down on the wing of the raven,
Or drops on the upas-tree lie,
So darkness and blight are around me
To-night, I can scarcely tell why!

Alone in the populous city!
No hearth for *my* coming is warm,
And the stars, the sweet stars, are all hidden
Away in the cloud and the storm!

The thoughts of all things that are saddest,
The phantoms unbidden that start
From the ashes of hopes that have perished,
Are with me to-night in my heart!

Alas! in this desolate sorrow,
The moments are heavy and long;
And the white-pinioned spirit of Fancy
Is weary, and hushes her song.

One word of the commonest kindness
Could make all around me seem bright
As birds in the haunts of the summer,
Or lights in a village at night.

A PRAYER.

FORGIVE me, God! forgive thy child, I pray,
 And if I sin, thy holy spirit move
 My heart to better moods: I cannot say,
 Disjoin my human heart from human love!

If, in the rainy woods, the traveler sees,
 Through some black gap, a splendor fair and
 white,
 Shining beneath the wild rough-rinded trees,
 His steps turn thither. Through the infinite

Of darkness that would else be, as we pass
 From silence into silence, round our way,
 Love shineth so. Doth not the mower stay
 His scythe, if that a bird be in the grass?

If God be love, then love is likest God,
 And our low natures the divineness mock,
 If, when we hear the blest "Arise and walk,"
 We turn our faces back against the sod.

The plowman, tired, among the furrowed corn,
 Leans on the ox's shoulder; done with play,
 Childhood among the daisies drops away
 Into the lap of sleep, and dreams till morn.

It is as if, when angels had their birth,
 The one with heaviest glory on its wings,
 Dropt from its proper sphere into the earth,
 Where, piteous of our mortal needs, it sings.

Sings sweeter melodies than winds do make,
 Playing their dulcimers for the young May;
 Blessed Forever! if sometimes I take
 Their beauty round my heart — forgive, I pray!

KINDNESS.*

In the dull shadows of long hopeless strife
 I talked with sorrow — round about me lay
 The broken plans and promises of life, —
 When first thy Kindness crossed my friendless way

Then felt I, hushed with wonder and sweet awe,
 As with his weary banners round him furled
 Felt ocean's wanderer, when first he saw
 The pale-lipt billows kissing a new world.

The joy, the rapture of that glad surprise,
 Haply some heart may know that inly grieves,
 Some sad Ruth bowing from love-speaking eyes
 Her trembling bosom over alien sheaves.

ENJOY.

THAT the dear tranced Pleasures of a night
 Puts on her hood of thorns at break of day —
 Passing the cornfields, and the hedges gay
 With honeysuckles, straight: her feet, so white,
 Buried down deep in dust — aside from all
 The sweet birds making love-songs in the woods,
 The way-side cottage with its cold green wall
 Of moss against the sun, the fennel buds
 Fringing the hay-fields — all of us do know;
 And yet, for that we are not always blest,
 Shall we be always weepers, and so burn
 Our dainty bodies, slacking with our tears
 The scorched stones our stumblings overturn,
 And making double measurements of woe?
 Nay, I do rather deem that road the best,
 Which hath good inns beside; where oftenest cheers
 The well, where man and beast may drink their fill,
 Nor stint belated travelers one whit;

* Printed in "Lyra" and, revised, in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

And all the house is with white candles lit
 When day burns down, and where the housewife still
 Hath some red earthen pot of marigolds
 That look like sunshine when the withered wolds
 Are under the flat snow. For is it wrong
 If human needs have human comforting?
 Or shall the sweetness of our winter song
 Keep the green April buds from blossoming?

 APRIL.

IF, in the sunshine of this April morn,
 Thick as the furrows of the unsown corn,
 I saw the grave-mounds darkening in the way
 That I have come, I would not therefore lay
 My brow against their shadows. Sadly brown
 May fade the boughs once blowing brightly down
 About my playing; never any more
 May fall my knocking on the homestead door,
 And never more the wild birds (pretty things)
 Against my yellow primrose beds their wings
 May nearly slant, as singing toward the woods
 They fly in summer. Shall I hence take moods
 Of moping melancholy — sobbings wild
 For the blue modest eyes, that sweetly lit
 All my lost youth? Nay! though this rhyme were writ
 By funeral torches, I would yet have smiled
 Betwixt the verses. God is good, I know;
 And though in this bad soil a time we grow
 Crooked and ugly, all the ends of things
 Must be in beauty. Love can work no ill;
 And though we see the shadow of its wings
 Only at times, shall we not trust it still!
 So, even for the dead I will not bind
 My soul to grief: Death cannot long divide;
 For is it not as if the rose that climbed
 My garden wall, had bloomed the other side?

AT THE GRAVE.

THE grass grew green between us, and I said
 There is no soul to love me — peace is lost;
 Over my heavy heart my hands I crossed,
 And mourned the sun away: "She is not dead

But sleepeth only; time is as a wall
 Where death makes rents, and thro' which come and go
 Hourly, the spirits which ye mourn for so,
 Faithless, and faint, and blind." As if a call

Came out of heaven, I lifted up my eyes,
 And thought to see white wings along the air;
 The many stars, the single moon, were there —
 Seeing not, I felt, the might that deifies.

The darkness had the quality of light;
 I knew no soul that God had made could die —
 That time is knitted to eternity,
 And finite drawn into the Infinite.

The violets of seven bright times of bloom
 Lay purple in the moonlight as before,
 But I, who came a mourner, mourned no more;
 An angel had been sitting at the tomb —

The stone was rolled away. A temple gate,
 O'errun with flowers, and shining with the light
 Of altar-fires, life seemed to me that night,
 Where, for the marriage crowning, lovers wait.

MULBERRY HILL.*

OH, sweet was the eve when I came from the mill,
 Adown the green windings of Mulberry Hill:
 My heart like a bird with its throat all in tune,
 That sings in the beautiful bosom of June.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

For there, at her spinning, beneath a broad tree,
 By a rivulet shining and blue as the sea,
 First I saw my Mary — her tiny feet bare,
 And the buds of the sumach among her black hair.

They called me a bold enough youth, and I would
 Have kept the name honestly earned, if I could;
 But, somehow, the song I had whistled was hushed,
 And, spite of my manhood, I felt that I blushed.

I would tell you, but words cannot paint my delight,
 When she gave the red buds for a garland of white,
 When her cheek with soft blushes — but no, 't is in vain!
 Enough that I loved, and she loved me again.

Three summers have come and gone by with their charms,
 And a cherub of purity smiles in my arms,
 With lips like the rosebud and locks softly light
 As the flax which my Mary was spinning that night.

And in the dark shadows of Mulberry Hill,
 By the grass-covered road where I came from the mill,
 And the rivulet shining and blue as the sea,
 My Mary lies sleeping beneath the broad tree.

A RUSTIC PLAINT.

SINCE thou, my love, didst level thy wild wings
 To goodlier shelter than my cabin makes,
 I work with heavy hands, as one who breaks
 The flax to spin a shroud of. April rings

With silvery showers, smiles light the face of May,
 The thistle's prickly leaves are lined with wool,
 And their gray tops of purple burs set full;
 Quails through the stubble run. From day to day

Through these good seasons I have sadly mused,
 The very stars, thou knowest, sweet, for what,
 Draw their red flames together, standing not
 About the mossy gables as they used.

No more I dread the winds, though ne'er so rough :
 Better the withered bole should prostrate lie ;—
 Only the ravens in its black limbs cry,
 And better birds will find green boughs enough.

THE SPIRIT-HAUNTED.*

O'ER the dark woods, surging, solemn,
 Hung the new moon's silver ring ;
 And in white and naked beauty,
 Out from Twilight's luminous wing,
 Peered the first star of the eve ; —
 'T was the time when poets weave
 Radiant songs of love's sweet passion,
 In the loom of thought sublime,
 And with throbbing, quick pulsations
 Beat the golden web of rhyme.

On a hillside very lonely
 With the willows' dewy flow
 Shutting down like sombre curtains
 Round the silent beds below,
 Where the lip from love is bound,
 And the forehead napkin-crowned, —
 I beheld the spirit-haunted —
 Saw his wild eyes burn like fire,
 Saw his thin hands, clasped together,
 Crush the frail strings of his lyre,
 As, upon a dream of splendor
 His abraded soul was stretched,
 And across the heart's sad ruins
 Winged imaginations reached
 Toward the glory of the skies —
 Toward the love that never dies.

In a tower, shadow-laden,
 With a casement high and dim,
 Years ago there dwelt a maiden,
 Loving and beloved by him.

* Printed in "Lyra" and, revised, in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

But while singing sweet one day
A bold masker crossed her way.

Then — her bosom softly trembling
Like a star in morning's light —
Faithless to her mortal lover
Fled she forth into the night, —
A great feast for her was spread
In the Kingdom overhead.

Woe, oh woe! for the abandoned ;
Dim his mortal steps must be ;
Death's high priest his soul has wedded
Unto immortality! —
Twilight's purple fall, or morn,
Finds him, leaves him, weary, lorn.

In her cave lies Silence, hungry
For the beauty of his song ;
Echoes, locked from mortal waking,
Tremble as he goes along,
And for love of him pale maids
Lean like lilies from the shades.

But the locks of love unwinding
From his bosom as he may,
Buries he his soul of sorrow
In the cloud-dissolving day
Of the spirit-peopled shore
Ever, ever, evermore.

ULALIE.*

THE crimson of the maple trees
Is lighted by the moon's soft glow ;
Oh, nights like this, and things like these,
Bring back a dream of long ago.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

For on an eve as sweet as this —
 Upon this bank — beneath this tree —
 My lips, in love's impassioned kiss,
 Met those of Ualie.

Softly as now the dewdrops burned
 In the flushed bosoms of the flowers,
 Backward almost seems time to have turned
 The golden axis of the hours,
 Till, cold as ocean's beaten surf,
 Beneath these trailing boughs, I see
 The white cross and the faded turf
 Above lost Ualie.

ON THE PICTURE OF A MAGDALEN.

To be unpitied, to be weary,
 To feel the nights, the daytimes, dreary,
 To find nor bread nor wine that 's cheery,
 To live apart,
 To be unneighbored among neighbors,
 Sharing the burdens and the labors,
 Never to have the songs of tabors
 Gladden the heart.

To be penitent forever,
 And yet a sinner — never, never
 At peace with the Divine Forgiver —
 Always at prayer,
 Longing for Mercy's white pavilion,
 Yet all the while a stubborn alien,
 Uprising proudly in rebellion,
 Hell, Heaven, to dare.

To feel all thoughts alike unholy,
 To count all pleasures but as folly,
 To mope in ways of melancholy,
 Nor rest to know ;
 To be a gleaner, not a reaper,
 A scorner proud, a humble weeper,
 And of no heart to be the keeper,
 This is my woe !

DEATH SONG.*

FRIEND, if there be any near,
 Is the blessed summer here ?
 Is 't the full moon, are they flowers,
 Make so bright, so sweet the hours ?
 Is 't the wind from cowslip beds,
 That such fragrance o'er me sheds ?

O my kindred, do not weep ;
 Never fell so sweet a sleep
 Over mortal eyes. At night,
 All the hills with snow were white,
 And the tempest moaning drear —
 But I wake with summer here.

Haste, and take my parting hand !
 We are pushing from the land,
 And adown a lovely stream
 Gently floating — is 't a dream ?
 For the oarsman near me sings,
 Keeping time with snowy wings.

Stranger, with the wings of snow,
 Singing by me as we row,
 Tell my dear ones on the shore,
 I have need of them no more ;
 Weeping will not let them see
 That an angel goes with me.

 YOUNG LOVE.†

LIFE hath its memories lovely,
 That over the heart are blown,
 As over the face of the Autumn
 The light of the summer flown ;

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

† As printed in "Lyra," this poem had a third stanza, which was dropped in the reprint of 1855.

Rising out of the midst so chilling
That oft life's sky enshrouds,
Like a new moon sweetly filling
Among the twilight clouds.

And among them comes, how often,
Young love's unresting wraith,
To lift lost hope out of ruins
To the gladness of perfect faith;
Drifting out of the past as lightly
As winds of the May-time flow:
And lifting the shadows brightly,
As the daffodil lifts the snow.

THE MORNING.

BREAK, morning, break, I weary of the night,
Longing to see and know the truth of things,
To gather faith up, as the bird her wings,
And soar into the kingdom, where is light.

Arise, oh Sun! for while the midnight lay
Along the path we traveled — dense, profound,
The hands and feet of my sweet mate were bound,
And he is prisoned till the break of day.

Shadows, wild shadows, from the air be gone —
Where shaken boughs of golden lilies stood,
Came up a black impenetrable wood,
When love was lost — I cannot journey on.

By the King's palace low my knees I bow,
On the dark porch beside the palace white
Waiting the morn which shall husk out the light
From the thick shell of darkness round me now.

A WAKENING.

His hair is as white as the snow,
 And I am his only child —
 (How wild the storm beats on my chamber low —)
 When we parted last he smiled.

He smiled, and his hand was laid
 Like the summer dew on my head —
 ('T is a fearful night, I am half afraid,)
 God bless you, my child, he said.

On the meadow the mist hung low,
 The beauty of summer was o'er,
 And the winds as they went to and fro,
 Shook the red-rinded pears at the door.

How well I remembered * it all,
 The brier-buds close at the pane,
 And the trumpet-vine tied to the wall —
 I never shall see them again.

I must sink to the shadowy vale —
 'T is dreary alone to go,
 O temper, sweet Pity, my tale,
 His hair is as white as the snow.

 TIMES.

TIMES are there when I long to know
 The mystery beyond life's wave,
 Even at the awful price, to go
 Unmated through the grave.

Times when our loves and hatreds, all
 Of level vast, or skyey steep,
 Seem only like the meadow wall
 A very lamb might leap.

* Probably a misprint for "remember."

Times, when within my heart the grain
 Of faith into a mountain grows,
 As suddenly as in the rain
 The bud becomes a rose.

Times, when in fancy's shining fold
 Joys out of heaven are drawn to me,
 As stars in twilight's net of gold
 Out of the sunset sea.

Times, when rebellion so abounds
 Within me, I, though Satan's mark,
 Would twist his fiery wings to crowns,
 And glorify the dark.

Times, when I feel myself a wreck
 And hear a voice say in my heart,
 "Better a mill-stone round thy neck,
 Than being what thou art."

So am I driven upon life's stream,
 By every wave, by every breeze,
 From good to ill — my life a gleam
 Between the darknesses.

THE PROPHECY.

WE two were playmates, — Rosalie
 Had lived full three years more than I.
 One wild March day she said to me,
 "Sweet, would you grieve if I should die?"

The black cock clapped his wings and crew
 Loud, from the willow overhead:
 I laughed for the good sign — she drew
 Her gold hair through her hands and said,

The while the tears came, "We shall play
 Under these boughs no more!" Alas!
 I know now that she saw that day
 The daisies in the churchyard grass.

I tried to see the squirrel climb
 The silver beech-bole, — tried to see
 The bees, thick-flying, — all the time
 My eyes were fixed on Rosalie.

A week or more the March had worn
 Upon the April's flowery way, —
 And pale, and all her long locks shorn,
 On our low bed sweet Rosy lay.

Across her pillow in bright strands
 I saw them fall (and wept to see),
 The self-same way her little hands
 Had twined them 'neath the willow tree.

I had been with her all the night;
 Softly she slept the time away.
 In the wet woods before the light
 The little brown birds sang for day.

Over the locks that lay across
 The pillow where so well she slept,
 Long years has grown the churchyard moss, —
 One golden tangle only, kept.

WORSHIP.

I HAVE no seasons and no times
 To think of heaven; sometimes at night
 I go up on a stair of rhymes,
 And find the journey very bright:
 And for some accidental good,
 Wrought by me, saints have near me stood.

I do not think my heart is hard
 Beyond the common heart of men,
 And yet sometimes the best award
 Smites on it like a stone; and then
 A sunbeam, that may brightly stray
 In at my window, makes me pray.

The flower I 've chanced on, in some nook
 Giving its wild heart to the bee,
 Has taught me meekness, like a book
 Of written preaching; and to see
 A corn field ripe, an orchard red,
 Has made me bow with shame my head.

Of stated rite and formula,
 A formal use the meaning wears;
 When mostly in God's works I see
 And feel his love, I make my prayers,
 And by the peace that comes, I know
 My worship is accepted so.

ONLY TWO.

WHEN the wind shall come again,
 The last leaflet will be cleft
 From the bough that chafes the pane—
 Only two of us are left.
 Two of us to smile or weep:
 All the others are asleep.

Ah, the winds more softly blow,
 But the wild rain falls instead;
 And the last sad leaf must go:
 All its pretty mates are dead.
 So I sit in musing sad,
 Of the mates that I have had.

And the while I make my rhymes,
 Harking to the dim rain fall,
 In between my dreams, sometimes,
 They come smiling, one and all—
 They of whom we are bereft:
 Only two of us are left.

Many a time we lay across
 Beds of softest, whitest down,
 As it made the low roof moss
 Green upon a ground of brown.
 They who close beside me lay
 Do not hear the rain to-day.

NOBILITY.

HILDA is a lofty lady,
Very proud is she —
I am but a simple herdsman
Dwelling by the sea.
Hilda hath a spacious palace,
Broad, and white and high ;
Twenty good dogs guard the portal —
Never house had I.

Hilda hath a thousand meadows —
Boundless forest lands ;
She hath men and maids for service —
I have but my hands.
The sweet summer's ripest roses,
Hilda's cheeks outvie —
Queens have paled to see her beauty —
But my beard have I.

Hilda from her palace windows
Looketh down on me,
Keeping with my dove-brown oxen
By the silver sea.
When her dulcet harp she playeth,
Wild birds, singing nigh,
Cluster listening by her white hands —
But my reed have I.

I am but a simple herdsman,
With nor house nor lands ;
She hath men and maids for service —
I have but my hands.
And yet what are all her crimsons
To my sunset sky —
With my free hands and my manhood
Hilda's peer am I.

DOOMED.*

OH demon waiting o'er the grave,
 To plead against thy power were vain ;
 Turning from heaven, I blindly gave
 My soul to everlasting pain.
 Take me and torture me at will —
 My hands I will not lift for aye,
 The flames that die not, nor can kill,
 To wind from my poor heart away ;
 For I have borne and still can bear
 The pain of sorrow's wretched storms,
 But, love, how shall I hush the prayer
 For the sweet shelter of thy arms ?

Oh home ! no more your dimpling rills
 Would cool this forehead from its pain ;
 Flowers, blowing down the western hills,
 Ye may not fill my lap again ;
 Time, speed with wilder, stormier wings,
 The smile that lights my lip to-day,
 As like the ungenial fire that springs
 From the pale ashes of decay.
 O ! lost, like some fair planet beam,
 In clouds that tempests over-brim,
 How could the splendor of a dream
 Make all the future life so dim !

 THE WAY.

I CANNOT plainly see the way,
 So dark the grave is ; but I know
 If I do truly work and pray,
 Some good will brighten out of woe.

For the same hand that doth unbind
 The winter winds, sends sweetest showers,
 And the poor rustic laughs to find
 His April meadows full of flowers.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

I said I could not see the way,
 And yet what need is there to see,
 More than to do what good I may,
 And trust the great strength over me ?

Why should my spirit pine, and lean
 From its clay house ; or restless, bow,
 Asking the shadows, if they mean
 To darken always, dim as now ?

Why should I vainly seek to solve
 Free will, necessity, the pall ?
 I feel — I know — that God is love,
 And knowing this, I know it all.

THISBE.*

SUNSET's pale arrows shivering near and far ! —
 A little gray bird on an oaken tree,
 Pouring its tender plaint, and eve's lone star
 Resting its silver rim upon the sea !

In dimmest abandonment she lies —
 The undone Thisbe, witless of the night,
 Locking the sweet time from her mournful eyes,
 With her thin fingers, a most piteous sight.

O'er her soft cheek the sprouting grasses lean,
 And the round moon's gray, melancholy light
 Creeps through the darkness, all unfelt, unseen,
 And folds the tender limbs from the chill night.

Pressing your cold hands over rushy springs,
 And making your chaste beds in beaded dew,
 About her, Nereides, draw your magic rings,
 And wreath her golden-budded hopes anew.

For by the tumult of thick-coming sighs,
 The aspect wan that hath no mortal name,
 I know the wilful god of the blind eyes
 Hath sped a love-shaft with too true an aim.

* Printed in "Lyra" and, revised, in the volume of 1855. The revision is given here.

SAFE.

OH, stormy wind of winter-time,
 Moan wildly as you will ;
 His rest you cannot trouble now,
 His heart you cannot chill.

Lean to the earth, oh, summer corn,
 Before the dim wet blast ;
 His eyes have seen the golden calm
 Of harvests never past.

Deep in your bosom fold, oh earth,
 Your shining flowers away ;
 His steps are in the lily fields
 Of never ending May.

Draw your red shadows from the wall,
 Oh beauteous ember-glow ;
 Drift cold about his silent house,
 Oh white December snow ;

Across the sparkle of the dew
 Dry dust in whirlwinds pour ;
 Hide, new moon, in the cloudy skies —
 He needs your light no more !

 ADELIED.*

UNPRAISED but of my simple rhymes
 She pined from life, and died,
 The softest of all April times
 That storm and shine divide.

The swallow twittered within reach
 Impatient of the rain,
 And the red blossoms of the peach
 Blew down against the pane.

* Printed in "Lyra," as well as in the volume of 1855.

When, feeling that life's wasting sands
Were wearing into hours,
She took her long locks in her hands
And gathered out the flowers.

The day was nearly at the close,
And on the eave in sight,
The doves were gathered in white rows
With bosoms to the light;

When first my sorrow flowed to rhymes
For gentle Adeliéd —
The light of thrice five April-times
Had kissed her when she died.

WHAT AN ANGEL SAID.

I DREAMED of love; I thought the air
Was glowing with the smile of God —
An angel told me all the sod
Was beauteous with answered prayer —
I looked, and lo! the flowers were there.

I could not tell what place to tread,
So thick the yellow violets run;
Along the brooks, and next the sun
The woods were like a garden bed;
And whispering soft, the angel said,

(While in his own he took my hand,)
“Dear soul, thou art not in a dream,
All things are truly what they seem —
Thou art but newly come to land,
Through shadows and across the sand.”

I felt the light wings cross my face,
My heavy eyes I felt unclose,
And from my dreaming I arose,
If I had dreamed, and by God's grace,
Saw glory in the angel's place.

MY PLAYMATE.

I LITTLE care to write her praise,
 In truth I little care that she
 Should seem as pure in all her ways,
 To others, as she seems to me.

At morn a sparrow's note we heard,
 His shadow fell across her bed,
 She smiled and listened to the bird ;
 And when the evening twilight red,

Fell with the dew, he came again,
 And perching on the nearest bough,
 Higher and wilder sang the strain —
 She did not smile to hear him now.

Many and many years, the light
 Thin moonbeams, sheets for her have spread :
 And scented clovers, red and white,
 Have made the fringes of her bed.

Small care for sitting in the sun
 Have I — small care to war with fate :
 The wine and wormwood are as one,
 Since thou art dead, my pretty mate.

 THE WORKERS.

Who are seers and who are sages ?
 They who know and understand —
 Not the sphinxes of old ages,
 With their dead eyes in the sand.

Every worm beside you creeping,
 Every insect flying well,
 Every pebble in earth's keeping,
 Has a history to tell.

The small homely flower that 's lying
 In your pathway, may contain
 Some elixir, which the dying
 Generations sought in vain.

In the stone that waits the turning
 Of some curious hand, from sight
 Fiery atoms may be burning,
 That would fill the world with light.

Let us then, in reverence bowing,
 Honor most of all mankind,
 Such as keep their great thoughts plowing
 Deepest in the field of mind.

LOOKING BACK.

I HAVE been looking back to-day
 Upon life's April promise hours,
 Its June is with me now, but May
 Left all her blushes in the flowers.

A still and sober gladness reigns
 Where there was hopeful mirth, erewhile —
 Hardly the soul its wisdom gains —
 Through suffering we learn to smile.

The heart that went out beating wild
 With visions of the bliss to be,
 Has come back weary, like a child
 That sits beside the mother's knee.

The vision of a coming bliss —
 A bliss from earth that never springs —
 In youth was but the chrysalis
 That time has glorified with wings.

And if I see no longer here
 The splendor of a transient good,
 A cloud has left my atmosphere,
 And heaven is shining where it stood.

HYMN.

Bow, angels, from your glorious state
 If e'er on earth you trod,
 And lead me through the golden gate
 Of prayer, unto my God.

I long to gather from the Word
 The meaning, full and clear,
 To build unto my gracious Lord
 A tabernacle here.

Against my face the tempests beat,
 The snows are falling chill,
 When shall I hear the voice so sweet,
 Commanding, Peace, be still!

The angels said, God giveth you
 His love — what more is ours?
 Even as the cisterns of the dew
 O'erflow upon the flowers,

His grace descends; and, as of old,
 He walks with men apart,
 Keeping the promise, as foretold,
 With all the pure in heart.

 LEILIA.*

GONE from us hast thou, in thy girlish hours,
 What time the tenderest blooms of summer cease
 In thy young bosom bearing life's sweet flowers
 To the good city of eternal peace.

In the soft stops of silver singing rain,
 Faint be the falling of the pale red light
 O'er thy meek slumber, wrapt away from pain
 In the fair robes of dainty bridal white.

* A revision of "Leila," printed in the volume of 1850.

Seven nights the stars have wandered through the blue,
 Since thou to larger, holier life wert born;
 And day as often, sandaled with gray dew,
 Has trodden out the golden fires of morn.

The wearying tumult of unending strife,
 The jars that through the heart discordant ring,
 Drive the dim current of our mortal life
 Against the shore where reigns unending spring.

And though I mourn for Leilia, she who died
 When all the tenderest blossoms ceased to be,
 Her being's broken wave has multiplied
 The stars that shine across eternity.

 MILNA GREY.

BURNED the blushing cheek of morning
 Soft, beneath the locks of Day,
 As within his noble garden
 Stanley mused of Milna Grey.
 Heedless of the bright laburnums
 Raining on his path in showers;
 Of the lilacs faint and tender,
 And the peach-wands full of flowers;
 Of the red-winged thrush's singing;
 Of the wind, whose separate trills
 Broke the mists to golden furrows
 Up and down the peakéd hills —
 Heedless of the huntsmen riding
 With their hawks and hounds away,
 If the lattice lights be darkened
 With the locks of Milna Grey.
 "Ere the sun, so brightly rising,
 Dimly down the west shall go,
 I will tell her all my story —
 It can add not to my woe."

Warmer, broader, fell the sunshine,
 Birds and bees about him flew,

And the flower-stocks on the borders
Dript no longer with the dew.
Suddenly his wan cheek flushes
And his step turns half away ;
Slowly down the alder shadows
Walks the lovely Milna Grey ;
Sadly then his heart misgave him,
And his lip an utterance found,
Only said, " Why, gentlest Milna,
Is thy brow with sorrow crowned ? "
Not as his, her bosom trembled —
Not as his, her glances fell,
As she answered, sweetly, meekly,
" Though the tale be sad to tell ;
Something in the slips so silken
Fallen uncurled adown thy cheek —
Something in thy blue eyes, Stanley,
Wins what else I would not speak.
A bright path through years of darkness
Is cleft open by thy smile,
And I feel life's blossoms slipping
Through my fingers as erewhile,
As my thoughts in pensive gladness
Over barren reaches flow
To a shrine of wondrous beauty,
Broken, ruined long ago.
By the gray wall of the churchyard
Where the red-stalked creeper clings,
And the wild-breeze in the larch-boughs
Oft in summer stops and sings ;
In the rains of seven dim autumns
Has the throstle sadly cried,
And the white grass fallen above him,
Who to me has never died.
Yet my love was not as mortals',
In hope's sweetest passion nursed —
Dreams and prophecies forewarned me
Of our dark doom from the first.
Oft my lost one smiled, to soothe me,
Saying, faith is strong to save,
And though life, he knew, was turning
The dark furrow of the grave,
Seemed he scarce to heed the fading

Of the day, or night hard by —
 Folding down the golden shadows
 Of love's twilight in our sky —
 But, more leaning on God's mercy,
 As the mortal fainter grew,
 Went he close to death's still water,
 And the angels took him through.
 Even as some young bough of blossoms
 Stricken into pallid stone,
 Was my heart transformed thenceforward,
 And my nature left alone."

Sorrow fixed the brow of Stanley,
 And his cheek grew white with woe,
 As he answered — oh, how sadly! —
 "Milna, this was long ago.
 Life is charméd — is there nothing
 For which thou would'st love recall —
 Or, alas, too fondly faithful,
 Hast thou, Milna, buried all?
 Wilt thou, when the star of twilight
 Breaks in beauty through the blue,
 Meet me here beneath the alders? —
 I would tell a story too."

So, from out the pleasant garden
 Passed they, as the lingering mist
 From the eastern hill-tops lifted,
 Musing of the twilight tryst.
 Slowly to the sad, and gaily
 To the gay, sped on the hours,
 Till the bees went humming homeward
 From the softly closing flowers;
 Till the daylight waned and faded,
 And the sun grew large and set,
 And the rooks in long rows gathered
 Gloomily on the parapet.
 In the blue wake of the twilight
 Brings the star the trysting hour —
 On her knees her white hands folded,
 Milna waits within her bower.
 Scarcely heeding how the shadows
 Dark and darker round her fall —

Haply she but hears the throistle
 Singing by the churchyard wall!
 With the dews the red laburnums,
 And the golden rods were bent,
 But no step disturbed the silence,
 And the midnight came and went.

Stanley, blue-eyed, gentle Stanley,
 If he liveth, none may say,
 But within the pleasant garden
 Never walked he from that day.
 In his stall his black steed fasted,
 Drooping lowly from his pride,
 And his lithe hound stayed from trailing,
 Crouching, whining, till he died.
 And the mournful tears of Milna
 Often for lost Stanley fell,
 As in part she guessed the story
 That he never came to tell.

THE BETROTHED.

I HAVE acted as they bid me,
 He said that he was bless'd,
 And the sweet seal of betrothal
 On my forehead has been press'd;
 But my heart gave back no echo
 To the rapture of his bliss,
 And the hand he clasped so fondly
 Was less tremulous than his.

They praise his lordly beauty,
 And I know that he is fair —
 Oh, I always loved the color
 Of his sunny eyes and hair;
 And though my bosom may have held
 A happier heart than now,
 I have told him that I love him,
 And I cannot break the vow.

He called me the fair lady
 Of a castle o'er the seas,
 And I thought about a cottage
 Nestled down among the trees ;
 And when my cheek beneath his lip
 Blushed not nor turned aside,
 I thought how once a lighter kiss
 Had left it crimson-dyed.

What care I for the breathing
 Of wind-harps among the vines ?
 I better love the swinging
 Of the sleepy mountain pines,
 And to track the timid rabbit
 In the snow shower as I list,
 Than to ride his coal-black hunter
 With the hawk upon my wrist.

Fain would I leave the grandeur
 Of the oaken-shadowed lawns,
 And the dimly stretching forest,
 Where the red roe leads her fawns,
 To gather the blue thistle
 And the fennel's yellow bloom,
 Where frowning turrets cumber not
 The path with gorgeous gloom.

Let them wreath the bridal roses
 With my tresses as they may —
 There are phantoms in my bosom
 That I cannot keep away ;
 To my heart, as to a banquet,
 They are crowding pale and dread,
 But I told him that I loved him,
 And it cannot be unsaid.

 THE GOOD ANGEL.

LIKE a prophetess of sorrow
 Dying day foretells the night,
 And adown the eastern hill-tops
 Floats and falls the deep'ning light ;

Floats and falls the light so golden
 From the full, uprisen moon,
 And the little birds are nestled
 In the bosom of young June.

I am sitting where so often
 I have sat in summers gone,
 Down the dim and solemn future,
 Fixedly, gazing, on and on.
 I can see sweet gleams of sunshine
 Drifting through a valley wide,
 Where a thousand hopes aforetime—
 Ventures of the heart have died.

Then a phantom hand of darkness
 Comes between the moon and I,
 And the stars, like pallid spirits,
 Wander, aimless, through the sky.
 And the dreary winds about me,
 Sigh and moan in under breath,
 As, sometimes, unwary watchers
 Hold their prophecies of death.

Rise not like a far-off planet,
 Time of beauty vanished long,
 Come not back, lost voice, to haunt me
 Like a half-remembered song.
 And if down the long, long future,
 No sweet Eden smiles for me,
 Save one from the past, good angel,
 This is all I ask of thee!

MY FRIEND AND I.

MARCH is piping Springtime's praises,
 Night by night the new moon fills—
 Soon the golden-hearted daisies
 Will be over all the hills.
 Oh! the winds are dreary, dreary!
 'T is a long and lonesome night:
 And her heart, she said, was weary—
 Weary, waiting for the light.

Soft the lovely Summer weather
 Bloweth up the southern heights,
 When the blue-bell in the heather
 Blooms beneath our lattice lights.
 Dismally the winds are crying ;
 I am reft, she said, and lorn,
 And my heart is sad with sighing,
 Sighing for the distant morn.

Blithely will the birds keep singing,
 Till the Autumn, sad of mien,
 Comes his yellow chaplet swinging,
 'Gainst the Summer's robe of green.
 Drearly the wind is blowing —
 Long and lonely is the night ;
 Keep me not, she said, from going —
 Going where 't is always light.

Blisses, hope has not foretasted,
 Fill with sweetnesses the skies ;
 There young love is never blasted —
 There the Summer never dies.
 Have the rough winds ceased their blowing —
 Doth the morning break ? she said ;
 The life-tide was outward flowing —
 She was dying — she was dead.

OUT BY THE WATERS.

THE hedges of roses and islands of gold
 Have floated and faded away from the sky,
 And I long, as their vanishing glow I behold,
 For a home where the beautiful never shall die :

For a home, where the children of sorrow shall cease
 To mourn over dreams that are broken and gone ;
 Where the wings of the soul may be folded in peace
 By the rivers that always flow shingly on !

I'm sitting alone in a deep bosomed vale,
 On a bank of fresh moss that hangs over a rill;
 And catching at times, from the wings of the gale
 The laughter of children at play on the hill.

For the wandering spirit of beauty is back
 With fragrance and verdure for hill-top and tree,
 Leaving sunshine and blossoms, and birds on her track,
 And filling the young heart with innocent glee.

I forget the dark lessons of history's page
 In listening to footsteps so careless and light:
 I forget the deep plottings of manhood and age —
 Their scorning of weakness, and trampling of right:

There 's a cloud on the moon! but the light is so sweet,
 ('T is one of the Spring-time's most beautiful eves)
 I can tell every blossom that lies at my feet,
 And the birds that are up o'er my head in the leaves.

Oh I love to be out by the waters at night
 As they trip to the sea on the bright-tinted sands:
 And deem their glad billows are children of light
 With songs on their lips and the stars in their hands.

LOVE'S CHAPEL.

As if soft odors from the vales of bliss
 Pressed open, dear one, the pearl gates above,
 Came in the Hybla sweetness of thy kiss,
 The gentle, gentle meaning of thy love.

Then felt I as some mortal maid who lies
 Beneath a rose-roof bower that sunshine warms,
 Who, having charmed a god from the blue skies,
 First feels his gold locks trembling in her arms.

Haste! bring me river-lilies pale as snow,
 Meek wood-flowers faintly streaked with jet and blue,
 Blush-roses gathered where the west winds blow,
 And little moss-cups dripping wet with dew.

And when the silver ring of the new moon
 Hangs o'er the dark woods sloping to the sea,
 When hope lies dallying in the lap of June,
 I'll twine a chapel for my love and me.

A quiet chapel 'neath the quiet boughs,
 Whose dusky beauty makes the days like eves,
 Where kneeling softly we may make our vows
 In the pale light like broken lily leaves.

Feeding my heart with dreams of that dear hour,
 Nor pain, nor alien sorrow, nor dim fear
 Shall cross the threshold of our chapel bower,
 Till that sweet time, oh gentle love, be here!

As suddenly the brown leaf-buried root,
 When the spring thaw brings down the genial shower,
 Into the blue air lifts its tender shoot,
 Crowned with the beauty of its perfect flower:

So is my hope, long buried under fears,
 And walled from sunshine by the helpless night,
 Crowned with the beauty of its primal years,
 Uplifted softly to the loving light.

FALLEN GENIUS.

No tears for him! — he saw by faith sublime
 Through the wan shimmer of life's wasted flame,
 Across the green hills of the future time,
 The golden breaking of the morn of fame.

Faded by the diviner life, and worn,
 The dust has fallen away, and ye but see
 The ruins of the house wherein were borne
 The birth-pangs of an immortality.

His great life from the wondrous life to be,
 Clasped the bright splendors that no sorrow mars,
 As some pale, shifting column of the sea,
 Mirrors the awful beauty of the stars.

What was Love's lily pressure, what the light
 Of its pleased smile, that a chance breath may chill!
 His soul was mated with the winds of night,
 And wandered through the universe at will.

Oft in his heart its stormy passion woke,
 Yet from its bent his soul no more was stirred,
 Than is the broad green bosom of the oak
 By the light flutter of the summer bird.

His loves were of forbidden realms, unwrought
 In poet's rhyme, the music of his themes,
 Hovering about the watch-fires of his thought,
 On the dim borders of the land of dreams.

For while his hand with daring energy
 Fed the slow fire that, burning, must consume,
 The ravishing joys of unheard harmony
 Beat like a living pulse within the tomb.

Pillars of fire that wander through life's night,
 Children of genius! ye are doomed to be,
 In the embrace of your far-reaching light,
 Locking the radiance of eternity.

DYING.

LIGHT comes no more to thy weary eyes
 When moons are filling, or morn unfolds;
 Thy feet have struck on the path that lies
 Bordering the Eden that faith beholds.

Why dost thou linger and backward gaze
 To the hills now lying so faint and far,
 Where plowing a furrow through golden haze,
 Came up the beautiful morning star.

That star that paled in the sky and fled,
 Ere yet the blossoms of spring were blown;
 The stormy wings of the night o'erspread
 The mists of glory that round it shone.

But though the light of the day is gone,
 The valley of shadows is bright with dew,
 And where the river of death moans on,
 The angels are waiting to take thee through.

I think of the visions of bliss we wove
 In the faded beauty of years o'erflown,
 That thou hast been crowned with a crown of love,
 And I am a dreamer of dreams alone.

I think of the children that climb thy knees,
 And how dim the light of the hearth will be,
 In the time that prophecy plainly sees
 When the circle is narrowed away from thee :

And question the bodiless shapes of air
 That hover about when the soul is sad,
 To know why the angel of death should spare
 The worn and weary instead of the glad.

But they answer not, and I only know,
 Seeing thee wasted and pale with pain,
 Where the rivers of Paradise sweetly flow,
 They never say I am sick again.

 HARRIET.

Down the west the gust is rushing
 Through the twilight's cloudy bars,
 And the crescent moon is pushing
 Her slim horn between the stars.

Now the winter night is falling
 O'er the hills of crispéd snow,
 But she hears, she says, the calling
 Of an angel, and must go.

She is pale and very weary,
 But her thin lips never moan,
 And though night is chill and dreary,
 Fears she not to go alone.

Surely, when the shroud shall cover
 Her meek beauty, death subdued,
 From his eyes who *was* her lover,
 He will love her angelhood.

He that, for the wine-cup's kisses
 Sold away her gentle love —
 Not alas, for holy blisses,
 Earthly, or of heaven above.

Morning sadly, dimly presses
 Up the orient, and the few
 Belated stars their yellow tresses
 Gather from her pathway blue.

Broader now the light is falling,
 And the day comes on and on,
 As the angel skyward calling,
 Calls no longer — she is gone.

FALMOUTH HALL.

'T WAS just a year at the summer's tide,
 And now was the leaflet's fall,
 Since the lady Camilla, a blushing bride,
 In the graceful beauty of matron pride,
 First came to the Falmouth Hall.

The air was chilly, the winds were high,
 Lifting and drifting the leaves;
 The hills were bare, for the ripened rye
 In the golden gales of the warm July
 Was bound into silver sheaves.

Sir Philip is mounting his courser fleet,
 Though dismally falls the night,
 Nor heeds at all if his glances meet
 The locks of the lady, the pale and sweet,
 That darken the lattice-light.

The lady was lovely — her lord was true,
As the maids of the mansion say,
But cold as sleet were his words, and few,
As he struck through the fall of the night, and flew
From the home of his sires away.

Hath he gone to the field of the holy war?
He hath nor helmet, nor sword, nor star.
Doth he go as a jousting knight?
And when will he tighten his flowing rein
At the gate of the Falmouth Hall again,
And the heart of Camilla be light?

'T was the middle watch by the castle clock,
'T was the middle watch, and the plumed cock
Crew shrilly as cock may crow,
When a voice to my lady did sweetly call,
Who lovingly leant from the castle wall,
As if to her lord below.

'T was the middle watch of the chilly night,
In the time of the leaflet's fall,
When my lady appeared in her robes of white,
And the watch-dog woke as in sudden fright,
And howled from the Falmouth Hall.

But the tale may be of the lowly born,
For the lip of the lady was curled in scorn
At the breath of the lightest word,
Though the picture that lay on her heart at morn
Was not of her absent lord.

The legends of Falmouth mansion say
Sir Philip perished in some dark fray,
For a bird, with a blood-red plume,
Oft came in the mists of the morning gray
Where the ancient lord of the mansion lay,
And sang on the cross of the tomb.

SONG.

COME to my bosom, thou beautiful bird,
 My soul with thy seraph-like singing is stirred :
 Say'st thou we never more, never shall part —
 Light of the wilderness, joy of my heart ?
 Are thy capricious wings never to fly ?
 Sing me the blessed words — sing till I die !

Oh, I have thought of thee, long weary years,
 Nursing thy memory only with tears ;
 My heart dreaming dreams of thee, sweeter than dew,
 Beating, where thousands were, only for you :
 Said'st thou thou lovest me in thy soft strain ?
 Tell me the blessed words, tell them again !

Spring in her robe of Light, Summer with flowers,
 Autumn with golden fruit, Winter's lone hours ;
 These on their fleeting wings came and went by,
 Finding their welcoming only a sigh.
 Say'st thou thou lovest me fondly and true ?
 Tell me the blessed words — tell them anew.

The earth, like an angel, sits mantled in light,
 The skies are grown bluer, the stars are more bright ;
 And leaves by the breezes are fresher and true,
 Because of thy singing, my beautiful bird :
 Surely such happiness soon will be o'er —
 Tell me the blessed words, tell them once more !

Earth henceforth has nothing of sorrow for me ;
 My bosom, sweet minstrel, thy pillow shall be ;
 The goldenest morning that ever has smiled,
 Were dim in thy presence, young fawn of the wild :
 Oh, if your heart for me beat as you say,
 Tell me the blessed words, tell them for aye !

 LIVE AND HELP LIVE.

MIGHTY in faith and hope, why art thou sad !
 Sever the green withes, look up and be glad !
 See all around thee, below and above,
 The beautiful, bountiful gifts of God's love !

What though our hearts beat with death's sullen waves?
 What though the green sod is broken with graves?
 The sweet hopes that never shall fade from their bloom,
 Make their dim birth-chamber down in the tomb!

Parsee or Christianman, bondman or free,
 Loves and humanities still are for thee;
 Some little good every day to achieve,
 Some slighted spirit no longer to grieve.

In the tents of the desert, alone on the sea,
 On the far-away hills with the starry Chaldee;
 Condemned and in prison, dishonored, reviled,
 God's arm is around thee, and thou art his child.

Mine be the lip ever truthful and bold;
 Mine be the heart, never careless nor cold;
 A faith humbly trustful, a life free from blame —
 All else is unstable as flax in the flame.

And while the soft skies are so starry and blue;
 And while the wide earth is so fresh with God's dew,
 Though all around me the sad sit and sigh,
 I will be glad that I live and must die.

TO ELMINA.

SOFT dweller in the sunset light,
 How pleads my heavy heart for thee,
 That some good angel's hand to-night
 Gather thy sweet love back from me.

For down the lonesome way I tread,
 No summer flower will ever bloom —
 All hope is lost, all faith is dead —
 Thou must not, canst not, share my doom.

Nay, let me send no shadow chill
 To the blue beauty of thy sky;
 Fain would I shape my song to still
 Thy sad fears like a lullaby.

Not in thy memory would I seem
 As one that woe and sorrow claim —
 Think of me, dear one, as a dream
 That faded when the morning came.

HOMESICK.

THE lamps are all lighted — how brightly they gleam !
 The music is flowing, soft stream upon stream,
 While youths and fair maidens, untroubled with care,
 Half blush as they whisper, How happy we are !

Well, braid up your tresses with gems as you may,
 Fly light through the dances, and smile and be gay ;
 The glow of the roses, the flow of the wine,
 Are not for a bosom so weary as mine.

O give me a cottage half-hid in the leaves,
 With vines on the windows, and birds on the eaves,
 And a heart there whose warm tide shall flow like the
 sea,
 But never, O never, for any but me !

THE MAIDEN OF TLASCALA.*

A ROMANCE OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF TEZCUCO.

WHITE-LIMBED and quiet, by her nightly tomb
 Sat the young Day, new-risen ; at her feet,
 Wrapt loose together, lay the burial clouds ;
 And on her forehead, like the unsteady crown
 Of a late winged immortal, flamed the sun.
 All seasons have their beauty : drowsy Noon,
 Winking along the hilltops lazily ;
 And fiery sandaled Eve, that bards of eld,
 Writing their sweet rhymes on the aloe leaves, †
 Paused reverently to worship, as she went,

* The notes affixed to this poem are Alice Cary's.

† The ancient MSS. of the Mexicans were for the most part on a fine fabric made of leaves of the aloe. It resembled the Egyptian papyrus, and was more soft and beautiful than parchment. The written leaves were commonly done up in volumes.

— Prescott.

Like a worn gleaner, with a sheaf of corn
 Pressed to her bosom, lessening, down the west ;
 And thou, dusk huntress ! through whose heavy locks
 Shimmer the icy arrows of the stars —
 About whose solemn brow once blinded Faith
 Wound the red shadows of the carnival,
 Till o'er its flower-crowned holocaust waxed pale
 The constellation of the Pleiades — *
 Fair art thou : but more fair the rising day !

And day was fully up : Along the hills,
 Black with a wilderness of ebony,
 Walked the wild heron ; and in Chalco's wave
 Waded the scarlet egret, while the Light,
 Flitting along the cloisters of the wood,
 Softly took up the rosaries of dew ;
 From stealthy trailing on the hunter's path
 The ocelot drew back, and in her lair
 Growled hungry, lapping with hot tongue her cubs ;
 While the iguana, gray and rough with warts,
 Checkt round with streaky gold, and cloven tongued,
 Crept sluggish up the rocks — a poison beast ;
 And the slim blue-necked snake of Xalapa
 Lifted its limber folds into the light.
 From his black cirque of rocks, stood up alone
 The monarch of the mountains ; † on his breast,
 The fiery foldings of his garment, bracked
 And seamed with ashes, and his gray head bare,

* On the termination of the great cycle of fifty years, says Prescott, there was celebrated a remarkable festival. The cycle would end in the latter part of December, and as the dreary season of the winter solstice approached, and the diminished light of day gave melancholy presage of its quick extinction, their apprehensions increased ; and as the last days arrived, they abandoned themselves to despair. The holy fires were suffered to go out in their temples, and none were lighted in their dwellings. Everything was thrown into disorder, for the coming of the evil genii, who were to descend on, and desolate, the earth. On the evening of the last day a procession of priests moved toward a lofty mountain, two leagues from the city. On reaching its summit, the procession paused till midnight, when, as the constellation of the Pleiades approached the zenith, the *new* fire was kindled on the wounded breast of the victim. Southey describes the scene, in *Madoc* :

“ On his bare breast the cedar boughs are laid ;
 On his bare breast dry sedge and odorous gums
 Laid ready to receive the sacred spark,
 And herald the ascending Sun,
 Upon his living altar.”

The flame was soon communicated to a funeral pile, on which the body of the slaughtered captive was thrown, and as the light streamed toward heaven, shouts of joy and triumph burst from the countless multitudes. Thirteen days were given up to festivity. It was the national jubilee of the Aztecs, like that of the Romans or Etruscans, which few alive had seen before, or could expect to see again.

† Pojatecate.

The while, with crystals rough, Chinantla's pride,*
 Sat, chiefest of a shining brotherhood,
 His turquoise eyes fast shut 'neath mossy lids,
 Regardless of the clamorous sea that lay
 Twining her wild green hair about his feet,
 Betwixt her heavy sobs, for love of him —
 Flat all her monstrous length along the sands.
 Joyous, the ranks of cedars and of pines
 Shook their thick limbs together, as the winds
 Toiled past them toward the red gaps of the hills,
 Through which the Morning came, and, where, for hours
 Tanning her cheeks with kisses, they would stay.
 But to the hopeless heaven itself were sad:
 The darkened senses fail to apprehend
 The elements of beauty; the dull gaze
 Is introverted to the world within,
 Whose all is ruins — seeing never more
 The all-serene and blessed harmony
 That lives and breathes through Nature: to the air
 Giving its motion and its melody,
 The trees their separate colors, the wild brooks
 Their silver syllables, 'gainst fruitless stones
 Joining bright grasses, knitting goldenly
 The clear white of the day's departing train
 Into the blank, black border of the night,
 Dew raining on the dust, and on the heart
 The comfortable influences of love.
 So, things which if left single, had been bad,
 Grow in affiliation, excellent.

Mindless of all the beauty of the time,
 Prone on the wasting ruins of a shrine
 Reared by the priests of Hometeuli,† long
 Gone down in still processions to the dark,
 Lay fallen Hualco — his unmailed arms
 Prostrate along the dust, while, like live coals,
 His eyes, no longer shadowed by a crown,
 Deep in their blue and famine-sunken rings
 Burned hungry for the life of Maxtala,‡ —

* Pojahtecate.

† The general name by which, according to Lord Kingsborough, the deity was known to the Mexicans.

‡ Maxtala, Maxtlaton, or Maxtla, was successor of the Tepanec conqueror, and his tyranny was evinced first against the son of the defeated and slain sovereign, whom he made an exile and a fugitive.

In wrappings of the sunrise purples, grand,
In awful desolation, glorious.
Is not the eagle hovering toward the sun
In broken flutterings to keep its hold
Up level with the mountains, more sublime
Than in the steady flight of stronger wings?
Thus in his exile, thus in solitude,
His manly port was nobler than a king's.
Not his the vain and groveling lust of power
That rounds the ambitious aims of selfishness:
His broken people he would fain have built
Into a mighty column, that should stand,
The beacon of the unborn centuries;
From the blind statues where Idolatry
Sunk deep her bleeding forehead in the dust,
He would have stript the wreaths voluminous,
And on the altar of the living God,
Laid them, a broidery for the robe of faith.
As Thought went searching through his soul, his face
Now with the piteous pallor of despair
Was overspread, and now was all transformed
Into the stormy beauty of roused hate.
Such change is seen when o'er some buried fire
The gust shoves heavy, and the quickened sparks
Burn red together in the ashen ground.
Fragments of temples, sacred to the rites
Of the departed Aztecs, round him lay,
Lapsing to common dust; and, great and still,
With snowy mantle blown along the clouds,
Iztacihuatla* listened to the stars,
And cast the terrible horoscope of storms.
From its rough rim of rocks stretching away,
Dark, to the unknown distance, lay the sea,
Where that lost god † took refuge, whose black beard
Heavy with kisses of the drowning waves,
Back from his wizard skiff of serpent skins

* Called afterwards by the Spaniards, *Sierra Nevada*.

† Quetzalcoatl, god of the air, who visited the earth to instruct the people in the arts of civilization. Incurring the wrath of one of the principal gods, he was compelled to abandon the country, and as he went toward the sea, he stopped at Cholula, where a temple was dedicated to his worship, of which there are still gigantic ruins, regarded as among the most interesting relics of Mexican antiquity. On the shores of the gulf he took leave of his followers, entered his wizard skiff of serpent skins, and embarking for Tlapalan, was never heard of again. He was large and fair, with long black hair and a flowing beard. See Prescott, and all the Spanish writers who have written of the Mexican mythology.

Dragged, as he sailed for fabulous Tlapalan.
 A prince, and yet a dweller in the woods
 So long, that in his path the fiercest wolves
 Walked tame as with their mates, and o'er his head
 Howled that strange beast* that to his fellows cries
 Till they devour the feast himself tastes not;
 And flying rats gnawed their repasts, hard by,
 From tawny barks of oily trees, or made
 With black and wrinkled wings the sunshine dusk!
 Cool in the shadows of the mountain palm,
 The white stag rested, fearless of his step,
 And the black alco, melancholy, dumb,
 Fixed his sad eyes upon him as he passed,
 And, sluggish, wallowing in his watery trough,
 His loose mane gray with brine, the amyztli,†
 Regardless of a kinglier presence, lay.
 But to Hualco it was all the same
 Whether the music of the Awakener,
 Starting at twilight, rung along the woods,
 Or whether Silence, fed of dreams alone,
 Pressed the sweet echoes back to solitude:
 Whether the ebony and cherry trees
 Spread over him their cool and tent-like shade,
 And pillows of the ceiba down lay white
 Upon his bed of moss, or whether hot
 And sharp against his face, its iron leaves
 The mirapanda thrust: To husk the sheathes
 From the sweet fruitage of the plant of light,
 Or, starved, to climb the rugged steps wherein
 The shelves of unsunned stone were folded full
 Of slimy lodgers, were to him as one.

A bright bud, broken from a royal tree
 And planted in the desert, how shall I
 Sing his strange story fitly, and so make
 A new moon in the sky of poesy?
 The bards of fair Tezcucó long ago
 Won from the mountains where he hid, **forlorn**,
 Treasures of beauty shining still along
 The dreary ways poetic pilgrims go,
 Like fountains roofed with rainbows — making all
 His wrongs and toils, in cloudy exile borne,

* The ocochtli, of whom this fable is related by Hernandez.

† The sea-lion.

The brief eclipse of the most glorious day
That ever shone along the Aztec hills.

While in the broidery of a baby king
Yet swathed, unconscious, all the lovely maids
From Actolan to Champala had come,
And from their girdles loosening the pearls
And amethysts, had left them at his feet,
And, for his beauty, kissed him as he slept;
Praying the gods to spare from breaking, long,
The chain of precious beads then newly hung
About the empire's neck. Ill-fated prince!
When the glad music sounding at his birth
Was muffled by disaster, love's brief day
Waned to untimely twilight, his bare arm
(The tiring of his royalty rent off)
Must cleave its way alone, or wither so!

Yet was he not ill-fated: when we see
The purposes God puts about our woe,
Behind the plowing storm run shining waves,
Like beetles through new furrows; the same hand
That peels the tough husk of the chrysalis,
Gives it its double wings to fly withal;
The rain that makes the wren sail heavily
Sets on the millet stocks their golden tops:
And earthly immortality is bought
At the great price of earthly happiness.
Only the gods from the blue skies come down,
Mad for the love of genius — Genius, named,
Also, the Sorrowful; and from the clouds,
That dim the lofty heaven of poesy,
Falls out the sweetest music; in the earth
The seed must be imprisoned, ere to life
It quicken and sprout brightly; the sharp stroke
Brings from the flint its fiery property;
And that we call misfortune, to the wise
Is a good minister, and knowledge brings:
And knowledge is the basis whereon power
Builds her eternal arches. In the dust
Of baffled purposes springs up resolve,
The plant which bears the fruit of victory.
The old astrologers were wrong: nor star,
Nor the vexed ghosts that glide into the light,
From the unquiet charnels of the bad,

Nor wicked sprite of air, nor such as leap
 Nimble from wave to wave along the sea,
 Enchanting with sweet tongues disastrous ships
 Till the rough crews are half in love with death,
 Have any spell of evil witchery
 To keep us back from being what we would,
 If wisdom temper the true bent of us.
 We drive the furrow, with the share of faith,
 Through the waste field of life, and our own hands
 Sow thick the seeds that spring to weeds or flowers,
 And never strong Necessity, nor Fate,
 Trammels the soul that firmly says, I WILL!
 Else are we playthings, and 't is Satan's mock
 To preach to us repentance and belief.
 Sweet saints I pray in piteous love agree,
 And from the ugly bosom of despair
 Draw back the nestling hand — heal the vexed heart
 And steady it — what time the faltering faith
 Keeps its own council with determinate Will,
 The hardy pioneer of all success.

“Among the ruins of my rightful hopes
 Shall I crouch down and say I am content?
 It is not in my nature. I would scorn
 The weakness of submission, though to that
 Life's miserable chance were narrowed up.
 Shame to the wearer of a beard who wears
 No manhood with it; double shame to him
 Whose plaything is the fillet of a crown.
 Even beasts whose lower senses are shut in
 From purposes of reason, have maintained
 A lordly disposition; taming not
 To the sleek touches of the keeper's hand.
 The uses of humility are still
 For underlings and women — not for kings.
 And yet to fate, if there be any fate,
 Even the gods must yield; they cannot make
 The truth a lie, nor make a lie the truth;
 And if to them there be a limit fixed,
 Shall I, with my weak hands of dust, essay
 To bend the untempered iron of destiny
 About my forehead? 'T is most maddening,
 The attempt and not the achievement — yet th' attempt
 Is all the wedge that splits its knotty way

Betwixt the impossible and possible.
From the flat shrubless desert to the waves
Of willowy rivers, flowing bright and cool,
From flowery thickets, up into the clouds,
The bird may fly in its own atmosphere;
But from the long dead reaches of blank space
Its free wings fall back baffled. So it is
With gods and men: each have their atmospheres,
Which they are free to move in, and to which
From ampler quests, they needs must flounder down.
Sometimes when goaded to the utmost verge
Of possible endurance — gathering all
My sorrows to one purpose, rebel like,
I would step out into the dark, when lo!
Fate ties my unwilling feet, and 'twixt my eyes
And the great Infinite, full in the sun
Makes quiet pictures. But ere I can shape
This chaos of crushed manhood that I am
To any purposes, the faithless light
Breaks up, and all is darkness as it was.
So are we crippled ever. Even like
The snake some burden fastens to the ground,
Now palpitating into stiff, bright rings,
Now lengthening limberly along the dust,
But gaining not a hair's breadth for its pains,
Is thought: its lengths now stretched to overclimb
The steep high walls about us: now, alas!
Dragging back heavily into itself.
Like am I to a drowning man, whose hands
Hold idly to the unsubstantial waves;
Or like some dreamer, on whose conscious form
A wretched weight lies heavy, while his tongue
Refuses utterance to his agony.
I cannot rise out of this living death,
More than the prematurely buried man,
Who, waking from his torpor, feels his limbs
Bound, from their natural uses, in the shroud,
And feebly strives to climb out of his grave.
“Is there no strength, in sorrow or in prayer,
To smite the brazen portals of the sun,
And bring some beam to lead me into hope?
Not so: the unoriginated Power
Sweeps back the audacious thought to emptiness.

What are the sufferings of one little life,
 Nay, of a thousand or ten thousand lives,
 Or what is all this large and curious world,
 Its meditative sighs, its hopes and loves,
 Rivers and mountains, rough and obstinate,
 Primeval solitudes, and darkneses
 Where the days drop like plummetts — what are all,
 Tumbled in one, and with a cerement bound,
 But as a bundle going up and down,
 In the vast ocean of eternity!
 High as the sun above the drop of dew
 The gods dwell over us, and have they need
 To buy our favor with some piteous sign?
 Their bliss we cannot lessen nor increase.
 But as we grow up to the topling heights
 Of our ambitions, more and more we catch
 Some dim reflection of their sovereignty.
 The path is narrow that goes up, and on,
 And Fame a jealous mistress. They who reach
 To take her hand must let all others go.

“Borders and plaits of red and saphirine
 Are pretty in the robe of royalty,
 But to the drowning man, who strains against
 The whelming waves, the gaud were cumbersome,
 And straightway shredded off, and wet, wild rocks
 Hugged to his bosom with a closer clasp
 Than the young mother to her baby gives.
 When from his steady footing hungry Death
 Goes moaning back, the time has come to pluck
 The honorable gear. I must be wise,
 And clutching at whatever means I may,
 Climb to the moveless stepping of my throne.
 If youth were back again, or th’ last year,
 Or even if yesterday might break anew,
 I would be vigilant; do thus, or thus.

“So sit we idle, till another day
 Dies, and is wrapt in purple like the rest.
 Years run to waste, and age comes stealing slow
 On our imperfect plans, till in our veins
 The life tide, sluggish, like an earth-worm lies.
 Where down yon mountain side the dragon’s blood*

* “Dragon’s Blood” runs from a large tree growing in the mountains of Quachinanco and those of the Cubuixcas. — *Clavigero*.

Drips till the rocks, in the close noontide heat,
 Smoke mistily, the miztli * couchant lies,
 His muscles quivering with excess of life;
 But should he lie there till his hungry howls
 Crash through the shaken forest like a storm,
 Would any beast divide his prey with him!
 Or wild bird, in the flowing of his mane
 Tangling its bright wings, sing his pain away?
 Weak, foolish grief, be dwarfed to nothingness!
 Henceforth I will not listen to your moans.
 Did Colhua's princess † buy with mortal life
 The honor to be mother of a god,
 And shall her woman's courage shame a king's?
 There is not air in all the blowing north
 For me to breathe, with Maxtala alive!
 Yet an I beggared, orphaned of all hope,
 Herding with the coyotli, ‡ while he reigns
 The monarch of my palace; and the maids,
 From Zalahua's shade to Tlascala,
 Bend for his gracious favor till their locks
 Flow in a bath of fragrance at his feet.
 Pipers, with garlands pranked fantastical,
 Blow on their reeds to please his idleness,
 Making the air so sweetly musical
 That the hushed birds hang listening on the boughs.
 And, for his whim, victims are led to death,
 Till the red footprints of his headsmen grim,
 In the hot noon of summer never dry;
 And masks unholy cheat the hours, what time,
 Stringing black poppies round her forehead, Eve
 Walks from her transient palace in the clouds,
 Her dark robe trailing down its base of blue;
 Or, when the morn, her sandals tied with light,
 Along the fields of heaven gathers the stars,
 Like blossoms, to her bosom. By the power
 Of all the gods, his wanton lip shall drink
 The wine of wormwood. I will husk full soon
 The splendor from his ugly body down,
 And whistle him out to run before my hate,
 Unkingdomed and unfriended, for his life.
 He, too, shall have, as I have now, the winds,

* The Mexican lion.

† Clavigero, i. 124, presents the curious details of the sacrifice and deification of this princess.

‡ The wolf.

At night, for chamberlains. My exile proves
 The executioner's brief drawing off,
 To strike betwixt the eyes — the sly recoil
 Before the deadly spring — this, only this!"

On this wise spoke Hualco: otherwhiles,
 The drowsy monotone of murmurous bees
 Crept softly under pansied coverlids;
 Or the still flowing of the cool west wind,
 Or sunset, haply, or the unshaken stars,
 Or interfuse of fair things without name —
 But of such wondrous, magical potency,
 That Love, the leash of chance enchantment slipt,
 Has in his bed of beauty drowsed sometimes,
 While Goodness, clothed not of the beautiful,
 Pined, dying for his whisper — to his heart
 Gave all their sweetest comfort. As the bough
 Drops in the storm its weights of rainy leaves,
 His roused soul dropt the heaviness away,
 And he went, mated with most rare delight,
 Through the green windings of the wilderness.
 Nature is kindly ever, and we all
 Have from her naked bosom drawn at times
 Drafts sweet as crusted nectar.

Charily

She gives us entertainment, if we come
 With hearts unsanctified and noisy feet,
 Into her tents of pious solitude.
 But when we go in worshipful, she spreads
 Her altars with the sacrament of peace,
 And lifts into her solemn psalmody
 Our spirits' else unuttered melodies.
 'T is not the outward garniture of things
 That through the senses makes creation fair,
 But the out-flow of an indwelling light,
 That gives its lovely aspect to the world.
 Sometimes his memory wandered to the hours
 When in the Mexic capital,* a child,
 And yet an exile, or in his own halls,
 By sufferance of the usurper, who had slain.
 (While he, concealed, look'd from the spreading palm
 That swung its odorous censers in the court,)

* The imperial families of Tezcuco were at this period allied, and the young prince found a temporary refuge within the palace of his relations.

Texcuco's sovereign, who at bay had held
 The trampling foe, tumultuous, which Tepan
 Sent, with a robber thirst and barbarous strength,
 To subjugate the fair land of the world —
 More fair for courtesy than even the arts
 Which reared its temples and its palaces ;
 Held them at bay, until his chiefs and legions,
 Borne down like cornstocks in a whirlwind, lay
 Along the wide field of blood-wanting war ;*
 And sometimes, past these scenes, to better hours,
 Wherein he sought a mastery of the lore,
 Far-reaching through the arches, low and dark,
 Which are the entrance of the eternal world —
 That greatest wisdom which a king should learn,
 Who with the gods would find himself a friend.
 But these were only sunbeams in his clouds,
 And often from their flush of brief delight
 An unseen spirit plucked him, and his soul
 Went darkly out from its serenity.
 For sometimes, keen and cold and pitiless truth,
 In spite of us, will press to open light
 The naked angularities of things,
 And, from the steep ideal, the soul drop
 In wild and sorrowful beauty, like a star,
 From the blue heights of heaven into the sea.
 In the dumb middle of the night he heard
 The plaining voice of one † who died for him,
 Saying, "Hualco, let my wasted blood
 Cement the broken beauty of thy throne,
 And so shine evermore upon thine eyes
 Like bright veins in the marble." He could see
 His pleading innocence, thrust by tyranny,
 Over the grave's steep edges, to the dark,
 And all the train of lovelight, hitherto
 Drawn after his firm footsteps, faded off
 To gray, blank mildew ; see the dying smile,
 The soul's expression, falling into dust.
 Sometimes, in pictures which his fancy made,
 Along Tozantla's hills he saw him go,

* These events occurred, according to Ixtlixochitl, in 1418.

† Not long after his flight from the field on which his father had been slain, the prince fell into the hands of his enemy, was borne off in triumph to his city, and thrown into a dungeon. He effected his escape, however, through the connivance of the governor of the fortress, a servant of his family, who took the place of the royal fugitive, and paid for his loyalty with his life.— *Prescott*.

With the wild scarlet of its running flowers,
 Tying his bundles of sharp arrows up,
 And in the shadows of the holy wood
 Rest in the noontide — lithe-limbed antelopes,
 And strings of wild birds, ruffled, open-winged,
 Strewing the ground about him; and, at night,
 He saw him cast his burden at the door
 Of the clay hut wherein his mother dwelt,
 Her love bewildered into wonderment,
 As, with a hunter's eloquence, he told
 How his quick shaft had blinded a huge beast
 That needs must stagger on his cunning trap.
 The tzanahuei's warble seemed his voice,
 Singing some boyish roundelay of love,
 And murmurous fall of water, like his coo
 To his pet tigress, penning her at night.

There was another picture, whose dark ground
 No gleam of light illumined: hands, close-bound
 From all the arrows, and the jetty locks
 Clipt for the axe's edge; brows pale, with pain,
 And sad eyes turned in mute reproach to him;
 And this it was that wrung his misery
 To that worst phase of all — the terrible sense
 Of injury done, with utter impotence,
 To lift the pallid forehead out of death,
 And crown it with our sorrow.

I believe

Such griefs make many madmen, driving some
 Into the lonesome wilderness, where all
 That fine intelligence which shines intrenched
 Fast in the mortal eyes of innocent men,
 Throbs fitful through the film, obscured at last
 To the scared glaring of a hunted beast:
 And others, of more speculative souls,
 Pushing to realms fantastic, where, athirst,
 They see the fountains sucked up by the sand,
 And hungry, pluck the red-cheeked fruits, to find
 The mortifying purples which make mad
 Such as do eat and die not; and where dwell
 Shapes incomplete, with brows of pale misease,
 That in the moon's infrequent glimmering
 Run from their shadows, gibbering their fear;
 Where earth seems from its beauteous uses worn

As with a slow eternity of pain —
Battered and worn, till no sweet grass can grow
Upon its old, scarred body, any more.
This was a grief indeed. No stabbing steel
Strikes through the dark like such a memory.
And every day he went into the past,
And lived his history over, setting up,
Against each false step, some excusing plea:
If this, or this transfixing point of time
Were a nonentity — if such an act
Had been beforehand of celerity —
And such a pretty dalliance with chance
Pressed into service, — he had held secure
In his own hands, the destiny which now
Stood at a murderer's mercy. For us all,
Within some fortunate moment, good is lodged,
And chance may possibly tumble on the prize —
But vigilance is opportunity.

I think, of all the sweetest gifts that be
Strung in the rosary of the love of God,
And flung about us mortals, there is none
Hath such divine excess of excellence
As that creative and mad faculty
Which out of nothing strings the lyres that ring
Along the shadowy palaces of dreams,
And so ring on and echo down the world,
Till, where time's circle meets eternity,
The trancing shivers of rapt melodies
Crumble away to silence, and fade off.
Blest is the wanderer out of human love
Who hath been answered by this oracle.
What need hath he of the poor shows of power,
Who can charm angels out of heaven, and cross
Their light wings on his bosom, in his song?
What need hath he of mortal company —
Weak heritors of passion and of pain —
That he should care to cower beneath their roofs?
What if his locks are heavy, drenched with dew —
Beings that duller mortals cannot see
Will stoop above him, and between their palms
Press them out dry, or the wild breeze may stop
And blow them loosely open to the sun.
Widen no rings about your fires for him

Who catches the white mantles of the clouds,
And round his bosom in the chilly night
Gathers the golden tresses of the stars;
For no abiding city men might build,
In the flat desert of their quietude,
Could stay him from his long bright wanderings.
The sea waves, roughly breaking on the rocks,
The terrible crash of the live thunderstroke,
Or the low earthquake's rumble, on his ear
Fall in a softer music than on yours
The lovely prattle of your lisping babes :
For in his soul is a transforming power
By you unapprehended and unknown.
And he of whom I sing, shaping his woe
To the charmed syllables of poesy,*
Built visionary kingdoms, and recrowned
His naked brows out of the light of dreams.
Even as the white steeds of the desert keep
Before the clouds of hot and blinding sand,
Ran his wild visions forward of the truth.
Sometimes he sung of maidens, shut in towers
Of unhewn rocks, cold bowers of beauty, where
The moonlight blew across the beds of love
Tinged with the scarlet of the sacrifice ;
Of the blue sky sometimes, or of the moon
Walking night's cloudy wilderness, as walks
The white doe through a jungle ; of steep rocks
Burnt red and pastureless, where strings of goats
Climbed, hungry, to the rattle of picked bones
In the near eyry ; sometimes of the hour
When in the sea of twilight the round sun
Sinks slow and sullen, and, one after one,
Circles of shadows crusted thick with stars
Come up and break upon the shore of night.
But mostly were his visions sorrowful ;
For all the higher attributes of life
Have still some touch of sadness : love and hope
Dwell ever in the haunted house of Fear,

* Neza-hualco-yotl, Clavigero says, excelled in poetry, and produced many compositions, which met with universal applause. In the sixteenth century, his sixty hymns, composed in honor of the Creator of heaven, were celebrated even among the Spaniards. Two of his odes or songs, translated into Spanish verse by his descendant, the historian Ixtlilxochitl, have been preserved into our time ; and Mr. Prescott has given us prose and lyrical versions of one of them, in his *Conquest of Mexico*.

And even the God incarnate wept to see
The blanched and purposeless repose wherein
We lie at last — our busy cares all done,
Shut in the darkness by white heavy death,
Like dreams within the hueless gates of day.

So busy thought bloomed into poesy,
As buds bloom into flowers — bloomed and was drowned
In storms of tears, and fell back on his heart,
As falls back to the earth the pretty moth
That flies into the rain — its wild wings drenched
From beauty to the color of the ground.
And the spring sprouted, and the summer smiled,
And day went darkly down, and morn came up
And ran between the mountains goldenly ;
The wandering wasp shut up its thin blue wings,
Pricking the soft green bark of the capote
With mortices — a ceaseless builder he ;
Nympha of bees hung on the oaken boughs,
Feasted the birds ; and red, along the grass,
The heads of burning worms like berries shone.
Others, with yellow venomous prickles set,
And coiled in globes, stuck burr-like in the shrubs,
While from their nests came out into the light
The black-downed spider and brown scorpion.
At night, the shining beetles, flying thick,
Glimmered, his tent-lights, and the woods hung low
Their long bright boughs — green curtains shutting down
About his slumber — while the blessed dew
Sunk pearl-like 'twixt his long and uncombed locks.
For whether morn ran goldenly along
The mountain rifts, and with her kisses broke
The blue and ruby-hearted flowers apart,
Or whether night fell black along the hills,
Tezcuco's heir, alone and sceptreless,
Travelled the woods, a price upon his head.

There was a cabin, with an aloe thatch,
And gables of cool moss, whereby three trees
Ruffled their tops together, through the which
A red vine ran convolved, as in the clouds,
Blowing and blending in the twilight wind,
A vein of fire runs zig-zag. South from the door,
A fountain, breaking into golden snow,
Cut a soft slope of fresh and beautiful green,

With its superfluous wealth, at evening fringed
 By goats, unprisoned, slowly feeding home.
 Close by this fountain, screened by drooping boughs,
 A wheel turned idly to the breeze's touch,
 And from the unbusy distaff the teased flax
 Twisted to tangly wisps. Here, until now,
 Spinning among the birds, a peasant's child,
 With eyes poetic, tawny cheeks, and hair
 Dark as a storm in winter, hath been used
 To sing the sun asleep.

Fate is discreet,
 And grapples as with hooks of steel the ends
 Of her great purposes; therefore the maid,
 Who sleeps beneath the aloe thatch at night,
 And sings and spins among the birds all day,
 Is gone to meet the exigence that weaves
 The dark thread of her story with my song.
 Ah, as she cuts the shining jointed stocks,
 And packs them into heaps, tossing away
 The heavy tresses from her stooping brow,
 Little she deems their sable near to line
 The pearly rimming of Tezcuco's crown!

A pall of clouds, bordered with dun faint fire,
 Veiled the dead face of day, and the young moon,
 Washed to her whitest splendor in the sea,
 Took the audacious pelting of the waves
 Betwixt her horns, nor staggered, and so clomb
 To fields of sweeter pasture. In the west,
 A ridge of pines, that burnt themselves to flame
 An hour ago, set their jagged tops
 Black in th' horizon. Thence, suddenly,
 Flitted a shape or shadow, and the feet
 Of the Tlascalan maiden, Tlaära,
 Were touched with prayerful kisses. Well-a-day!
 The ear too deaf to hear — though all at once,
 Sung fifty nightingales, covering the woods
 With undulating sweetness, as a cloud
 Of yellow bees covers a limb of flowers —
 Drinks eagerly the faintest sound of praise,
 And the poor peasant was less firmly held
 From quickly flying, by the hands that clung
 To her robe's hem, than by the kingly brow
 Dropping against the ground, obsequious.

Across the hills she heard the hot pursuit,
 And, for a moment, came a blinding wave
 From their far tops, of splendor; then, as one
 Whose foot is on the serpent's head, she cried,
 "Off, tempting fury! my weak woman's hands —
 Mock if thou darest! — have in them strength enough
 To bind a thousand of thy black-winged crew,
 And hold them level with their beds of fire.
 It is most false that they are strong alone,
 With a cold guard of virtue or of fear,
 Who keep thee from them always. She who once
 Hugs to her bosom any imp of thine,
 And rends it after, or with desperate will,
 Wrenches her heart from its infirmity,
 And on the very edges of the pit
 Shakes the red shadow from her soul, and turns
 To front the demon that has dragged her there —
 Believe me, she is stronger than they all
 Who dare not wait to listen!"

Oh, to such

Doubt not but that some piteous god will come,
 Beauteously whitening down the blue of heaven,
 And feed their souls with the blest sweetnesses
 Drawn out of Mercy's everliving wells,
 Till the air round them, with tumultuous joy
 Hangs shivering like a wilderness of leaves,
 And drifts of light run rippling through the clouds
 Like music through the wings of cherubim.
 And so she hid him — in among the stocks —
 Smothering the whispered prayer, "I am thy king,
 Hunted to death: wilt have the damned price
 That a usurper sets upon my head,
 Or be my angel, as thou look'st to be?"

The hungry hunters of his life came on,
 And saw the maiden at her quiet work,
 Close to the reedy prison, and so went
 Misguided forward.* Such tumultuous joy

* The prince sought a retreat in the mountainous and woody district by the borders of Tlascala, and there led a wandering life, hiding himself in deep thickets and caverns, and stealing out at night to satisfy the cravings of appetite; while kept in constant alarm by the activity of pursuers, always hovering on his track. On one occasion, says Prescott, he was just able to turn the crest of a hill, as they were climbing it on the other side, when he fell in with a girl who was reaping *chian*; he persuaded her to cover him up with the stocks she had been cutting; and when his pursuers came up and inquired if she had seen the fugitive, the girl coolly answered that she had, and pointed out a path as the one he had taken.

As filled her bosom only they may know
 Who, voyaging beyond mortality,
 Feel the prow's grating, golden, on the stars.
 Forgive her for that moment hesitant;
 Forgive her, if she saw the aloe thatch
 Of the clay cabin, where all day she spun,
 Widen above a palace, broad and brave;
 Forgive her if she saw, if so she did,
 Her jetty trailing locks strung round with gems,
 Drawing the eyes of princes after them;
 Forgive, for she was human, and we all
 At some time have had need to say, Forgive!
 Far from the banished Eden though we be,
 Some beautiful provision meets our need —
 Slumber, and dreamy pillows, for the tired;
 For labor, plenteous harvests, and for love
 The crowning nuptial; for old age, repose,
 And for the worn and weary, kindly death
 To make the all composing lullaby.
 But nothing in this low and ruined world
 Bears the meek impress of the Son of God
 So surely as forgiveness. The last plea,
 O'er slighted love and sorrow rising sweet,
 Lit for a time the ancient realm of death,
 As if within its still and black abysm
 A new-born star oped its gold-lidded eye,
 And for a season in the depths of hell
 Cooled the red burning like a cloud of dew.
 Like to two billows, tossed and worried long,
 That on some fearful breaker meet and close,
 Upon a desperate point of time there met
 This youth's and maiden's unshaped destinies —
 Met, and so closed to one. Oh, pitiful!
 Oh, woeful! that so bright a tide should ebb,
 And leave along this good life as it does
 Shoals of dry, barren dust. Somewhere is wrong!
 And night was past, and in the lap of day
 The morning nestled, and yet other nights
 Followed by other days had come and gone,
 And the wild sorrow of the tempter's voice
 Had dwarfed to utter silence, yet the maid
 Had loosed her clasping never on the cross,*

* It is curious that the cross should have been regarded as an object of religious worship where the light of Christianity had never risen. See Peter Martyr's *Decads*, as quoted by Lord Kingsborough, in his *Antiquities of Mexico*.

Bought at so great price of earthly fame.
But its rough, thorny wood, so heavy once,
Had budded bright with many a regal flower.
The heir of kingly generations laid
His crown upon her lap, for her sweet eyes,
And, for the zoning of her fond arms, gave
The warrior's belted glory : lovers they,
And blessed both — he calm in manhood's pride,
She trembling at the top of ecstasy.
How shall I paint the dear delicious hours !
No lilies swimming white in summer's waves,
No dove, soft cooing to her little birds,
No hushes of the half reluctant leaves,
When the south winds are wooing, passionate,
No bough of ripe red apples, streaked with white
And full in the fall sunshine, were so fair.
The blushes of a thousand summertimes,
Blent into one, and broken at the core,
Were in its sweetness incomparable
To the close kisses of the mouth we love.
In the voluptuous beauty of the clime,
That prisons summer everlastingly,
Tangling her bright hair with a thousand flowers,
Some large and heavy — reddening round her brows,
Like sunset round the day, what time she lies,
The cool sea billows climbing to her arms —
Some white and rimmed with gold, and purple some,
Soft streaked with faintest pink, and silver-edged,
Some azure, amber stained, and ashen some,
Dropt with dull brown and yellow, leopardlike,
With others blue and full of crescent studs
Or jetty-belled, fringed softly out of snow —
So prodigal is nature of her sweets —
Dwelt they, the past, the future, all forgot.
“ Henceforth thy love, soft-burning like a star,
Shall stand above my crown and comfort me,”
Hualco said, and Tlaära's soft cheek
Flushed out of olive, scarlet, and her heart
Drank in the essence of all happiness.
It was as if humanity attained
The stature of its immortality,
And earth were gathered up into the heavens.
For Love makes all things beautiful, and finds

No wilderness without its pleasure tent,
While Genius goes with melancholy step
Searching the world for the selectest forms
Of high, and pure, and passionless excellence —
Large-browed, unmated Genius — yearning still
For the divinities which in its dreams
Brighten along the mountain-tops of thought.
She could not pause, but birds pecked round her feet,
Fluttering and singing; if at eve she walked,
The clouds rained tender dew upon her head;
Meeting a hungry lion in the woods,
Grinding his tusks, he crouched and piteous whined,
Then turned his great sad face and fled away —
Love was her only armor, yet he fled.
Her wheel spun round itself; the trickiest goat
Stood patient for the milking; jubilant,
The smooth-stemmed corn its gray-green tassels shook,
As she went binding its broad blades to sheaves.
Sunshine which only she could see, made fair
Even alien fields; and if Hualco sighed,
She put a crown of kisses on his brow,
And drew him, with her smiling, from the thoughts
That wandered toward Tezcuco's palaces.
And for the vague, unfriendly fear, that made
His lessening love a possibility,
She gave into his hand the secretest key
Of her heart's treasury. Sometimes they walked
Between the moonbeams slanting up the hills,
In ways of shadow, edged with white cold light,
Or sat in solitudes where never sound
Fed the dumb lips of echo; but the flat
Of desertness, low lying, bare, and brown,
Their praises like a verdurous meadow drew,
And the black nettle and rude prickly burr
Challenged of each some tender eloquence.
Along their paths mute stones grew voluble,
And sweeter voices than of twilight birds,
Filling Olintha's mountain solitudes,
Flowed out of silence to their listening:
For silence hath a language and a glance
May burn into the heart like living fire,
Or freeze its living currents into ice.
Sometimes he told of maidens, fair as she,

That for his sake had folded in their arms
 The awful flames of martyrdom ; but quick
 The piteous flowing of her gentle tears
 Dried, in the burning crimson of his kiss.
 What was 't to them, that in the hemlock woods*
 Sad priests kept fast and vigil, with stooped brows
 Under their hoods of thorns, low from the light,
 As once the chieftain of the Aztec hosts
 Heard the wild bird, responsive to his thought,
 Still sadly crying o'er and o'er, "Tihui," †
 Warning from Aztlan all his tribe away ?
 So they, in every murmurous wind, could hear
 The sanctifying echoes of their hopes ;
 Daily, the tremulous arch above the world,
 Resting upon the mountains and the waves,
 For love's sake deepened its eternal blue ;
 In the red sea of sunset, not a star
 Swam in its white and tremulous nakedness,
 Doubling the blessed pulses in their hearts,
 That seemed not for that office specially made ;
 Such wondrous power hath that fair deity,
 Pictured sometimes as tyrannous as fair —
 If right or wrongfully, I cannot tell,
 But I do truly think there be few hearts
 For which at some time he had not unloosed
 The blushing binding of his nimble shafts.
 Poor Tlaära forgot that ugly death
 Burrowed in mortal soil, when that her lord
 Kissed her, and called her "sweetest ;" all her joy
 Was basemented upon a smile of his ;
 And if he frowned, the sun shut up his light.
 Ah, Tlaära, thou dream'st ; awake, be wise !
 Already the sleek, golden cub, erewhile
 Fondled and hidden in thy bosom, growls.

As some poor spinner puts a little wool
 Among her flax, to save the web from fire,
 So she has tried to twist with her poor name
 Some little splendor. Fate has baffled her ;
 But when the mists of tears shall clear away,
 She may attain to such majestic heights
 And atmospheres of glory as shut up

* For an account of the remarkable fasts kept, solitary, in the forests, by the Mexican priests, in times of extraordinary calamity, see *Clavigero*, i. 236.

† "Let us go." — *Clavigero*, i. 112.

Life's lower planes, with all the murmurs made
 O'er the death-fluttering of fledging hopes —
 All discords horrible, and rude complaints,
 That rise, when at some direful exigence
 Even courage staggers in its way, and lays,
 Bestial, its radiant front against the dust,
 Loud bellowing out its awful pain, alone.

When a friend dies, while yet the face has on
 The smiling look of life, 't is wise to lay
 The shroud about it, and so go again,
 Among what joys are left, with decent calm.
 When that which seemed the angel of our heaven
 Shuts close its wings, and its white body shrinks
 To a black, glistening coil, 't is little safe
 To wait the growth of fangs. And when we find
 That which, a little distant, seemed to us
 The clambering of roses on the rocks,
 To be the flag of pirates, shall we stay
 Hugging the coast, and, dropping anchor, hunt
 The bones of murdered men? or shall we wait —
 Deserted and betrayed, and scarce alive —
 To front the arrows of Love's sinking sun,
 And tempt the latest peril? Just as well
 The obstinate traveler might in pride oppose
 His puny shoulder to the icy slip
 Of the blind avalanche, and hope for life;
 Or Beauty press her forehead in the grave,
 And think to rise as from the bridal bed.
 But woman's creed knows not philosophy —
 Her heart-beats are the rosary that tells
 Her love off, even to the cross; and verily
 In telling this, and telling only this,
 Can they fill out her nature: so again
 Come we to our sweet truster, Tlaära.

“What! goes my lord alone?” So spake she once;
 “The spinning work is done, the milking past,
 And past the busy cares. See! the green hills
 Sit in the folding even-light, so fair,
 The dark house could not hold me, but for thee.
 Nay, chide me not, I will not speak a word,
 But walk so softly, love — blest, oh so blest,
 Treading the earth thy steps make proud before me!”
 She stood on tiptoe, waiting for the kiss

To give her, in the accustomed way, reply.
But there was silence at the first, and then
The sullen answer, "I would be alone."
The world fell sick and reeled before her eyes,
And in the dead and heavy atmosphere,
Where heaven had based itself a moment past,
A vulture spun down low, as if its wings
Could make no further head — all else was blank.
Poor simple girl! a little while the tears
Flowed faster than the blossoms from the bough
'Gainst which she leaned, despairing. A great woe
Crushes the fading of a century
Into a moment; and fair Tlascala,
Smiling so lately through the purpling light,
Lay like a shoal of ashes, dry and bare.
But hope, however smitten or borne down,
Is quick to right herself, and once astir
The world grows young again. And Tlaära
Chid presently her sighs and tears away,
For the seductive whispering, which said,
For her sake crown and kingdom had been lost;
Chid them away with quivering lip, and smiled,
And sought in cares, against her lord's return,
To wile the lengthening absence. As the bird,
Wounded, not death-struck, gathers up its wings,
True to its instinct, she, still true to hers,
Gathered up all her courage. He, the while,
Her lord, Hualco, with drooped eyes, and brow
Sullen with sorrow and remorseless pain,
Talked to his troubled soul in this wild sort:

"So I am he, who in yet beardless years
Did plot the ways to unkingdom Maxtala;
To measure his vile body with my sword,
And find what space would rid the world of him;
Ay, he who even thought to be a king —
Pining and love-sick in a peasant's cot,
Where I can never rightly apprehend
The distances betwixt me and my crown.
A king; *my* crown! Nay, it was all a dream,
That went before me from my youth till now —
More than a dream, it was a life-long lie
Reaching into the vale of years, and still
A brightness, wrapping up some old white hairs!

And can I see it fading, and yet smile?
 It is as if a corpse had power to feel
 The tying of its hands. My brain must crack,
 Or I must slip the dusty leash I wear,
 And run into the dark.

“See! the dead day
 Drifts out in scarlet light, and the round moon
 Whitens like day-break through the sullen clouds.
 I scarce can see our cabin through the gaps
 Of hills and woods, the night comes on so fast.
 Yes, I can see it now — the heavenly eyes
 Of that sweet lady, pretty Tlaära,
 Illumining the window toward the sea.
 She loves me, even me, who have beside
 No love in all the world; her little hands
 Part softly back the redwood’s rosy limbs,
 Low swinging in the winds, lest they should hide
 This sullen, crownless front — dear Tlaära! —
 And from that listening I was near to be
 Plucked off by devils; I was well nigh blind,
 Still gazing upon laurels that were knit
 With the white light of immortality.
 Sweet Tlaära, be patient, while I mourn
 These last weak tears behind the heavy hearse
 That bears the old dream from me: then again
 I will go singing, as we walk at eve
 Under the raining of the forest flowers,
 And count my homely verses once again
 By the brown spots our gentle leopard has,
 And beauty to our cabin will return.”
 Poor Tlaära, her tamest goat came close,
 And leaned his head against her, and the wind
 Rested a little, kissing her wet eyes,
 And blowing down her hair, the while she stood,
 Her sad thoughts dropping in the well of love,
 To tell how deep it was; an evil sign —
 Only despair can take its measurement.
 A little time ago the sun came up,
 Shearing the curly fleeces from the hills;
 Now he is dead, and the pale widowed west
 Hath slid the burial earth upon his face.
 “Blind eyes of mine,” she cries, “you cannot see,
 Though he should rise and climb the heavens again,

In the dim days to come; nor if, at night,
Under the silver shadows of the clouds,
With some red blushing star the moon keeps tryst —
No more, oh never more! blind, blind with tears!
Earth is stript bare of beauty, and, oh, lost!
I have forgone, close gazing upon thee,
The way struck open through the grave to heaven,
And needs must vaguely feel along the dark!"

"Forgive me, sweet, the shadow of a crown
Swept through love's sunshine, and my heart grew
chill" —

So said the recreant prince, half penitent —

"But not, my little empress, false to thee,
Nay, look upon me close and tenderly,
For I am like the child that pettishly
Slips down the nurse's knees, and straight climbs up,
Ending his pout with kisses — prythee, smile,
And think this transient mood the thing it was,
A hollow bubble on the sea of love,
Which thou mayst break for pastime, pretty one."
As one, close pressing to the fountain's brim,
Crumbles the black earth off into the wave,
And with an empty pitcher goes away —
So turned she, thirsting, from the fount of joy.
"Sweet Tlaära, thou wrongst me," he replied;
"Thy hands put down the flames of martyrdom,
Dilating for me like the eyes of fiends,
And with their gentle tendance through long days
And nights of exile, made me strong enough
To repossess a kingdom, that, henceforth,
Shall brighten round thy beauty; on thy lip
I press the seal of true allegiance,
My joy, my queen forever: Art content?
Or shall I swear, by every soldier's tomb,
Sunken along the war-grounds of the past,
My soul is thine henceforward, nor in heaven,
Nor in the heaven of heavens, is light enough
To sweep thy shadow from my royalty.
Command it, and I make the sweet oath o'er,
Till yonder brightly rising planet creeps
Into the rosy bosom of the morn,
And the day breaks along the orient,
White as the snow-top mountain. Dost thou weep?"

Well, let thy tears wash out the sad mistrust,
 Darkening the beauty of serener faith,
 And we be lovers as we were before.
 My life, young empress, is involved in thine
 As water is in water: mingling waves,
 Catching one light and shade, our lives shall flow
 Till they strike broken on the ice of death.
 But this, our happy summering of love,
 Must sometime have its ending. Yesterday
 We had been just as ready as to-day,
 To-morrow will not be a better time,
 So let it touch its limit, here and now."
 "Oh, my Hualco, oh my best beloved,
 If thou wilt leave me, yet remember thou,
 When glory shall grow heavy in thy hands,
 And, with its burdening circle, thy brows ache,
 That sober twilight, when, erewhile, weak arms
 Folded them up, thus, with a crown of love.
 Oh, think of her who, pressing down thy cheek,
 Dared to look up into thy eyes for hope,
 Even though she felt its lately crimsoning flowers,
 Burned to gray ashes, cold beneath her lip.
 Think how her trembling hand swept off thy locks,
 As one who lays the shroud back from her dead,
 And gives the last wild kisses to the dust."
 So Tlaära made answer, seeing not
 How night stretched tempest-like along the sky,
 And in the blustery sea the tumbling waves
 Shattered the gold repeatings of the stars,
 As through the rents of darkness they looked out;
 Only the silence heard the anguished cry —
 "Clasp me a moment longer; once again
 Kiss me, and say you love me; once, once more,
 Put back this fallen hair, as yesternight!
 Is it not white and heavy, like dead hair?
 This burning pain must bleach the blackness out.
 I cannot hear you speak; I cannot feel
 Your kisses — closer, sweet! nor yet — nor yet;
 I cannot see the eyes that said to mine
 Their speechless love so kindly — God! *his* needs
 Are all above my answering — take me Thou."

The harvester is pleased who finds a flower
 Blood-red or golden, in the dusky wheat,

Rustling against his stooping, but the child
Laughs for its beauty, and forgets to glean,
Crumbling its leaves with kisses manifold,
Till in her pastime, idly curious,
She turns it inside out, and finds it black
And rough with poisonous blisters. Such a child
Was Tlaära, and such a flower, her love.
She saw no more the hills of Tlascala
Crooking their monstrous bases in and out,
To give the light capricious stream its will —
Nor saw nor heard the never weary sea,
Fretting its way through marl and ironsand
To fiery opal and bright chrysophrase:
For 'twixt her eyes and all the sweet discourse
Nature, our quiet mother, makes for such
As wrap their painéd brows in her green skirts,
Fear, like a black fen, stretched for muddy miles.
She only saw Hualco's glorious fate,
And in its shadow a poor peasant girl,
Pining forlorn. Over all sounds she heard,
Traveling across the wild and piny hills,
And over many a reach of juniper,
Prickly with brier and burr, the voice of war.
Regal with sunbeams, which the journeying days
Trenched in their ancient snows, the mountains seemed
To mock her low estate; though when Love's tongue
Talked of the self-same splendor once, they stood
Serene like prophets, under whose white hairs
The lines of victory-seeing thoughts are fixed.
Beyond their bright tops great Hualco strained
His staring eyes, in one far-reaching look,
Fixed on that glittering pinnacle, a throne;
All hope, all love, all utmost energy,
To one determined purpose crucified.
So in her pictures Fancy fashioned him;
Nor did she with deceiving colors paint.
A nation from its slumbering was roused,
And centering to one mortal blow the strength
Of all its sinews. On ten thousand shells
The strings were stirred, axes were set to edge;
The while the morning music of the horn
Went doubling on the track of Tyranny,
And startling up the echoes, that ran wild

Along the trembling hill-tops, in full cry.
 Ruffled lay Pazcuaro's silver waves
 Under the storm melodious, and the belt
 Of black and shaggy pines that Arrio wore,
 With deadly spears of itzli, bristled bright;
 For the roused realm was risen to replace
 The usurpéd scepter in the kingly hand
 Of its long exiled but true sovereignty.

So ended "the sweet summering of love" —
 The royal lover of the forest maid
 Went back as from imprisonment, like him —
 The wondrous Mexic of the olden time —
 Changed to the morning star,* henceforth to shine
 Serenely in the sky of victory.
 The maiden went again to solitude,
 To fight alone the conflicts of the heart,
 And pray that Homeyoca would, in love,
 Crop the wild thoughts that climbed about a throne,
 And modulate her dreams to qualities
 Befitting chaste and sad humility, —
 But oftener to cry in bitterness,
 As Totec † from the house of sorrow cried.

The blue-eyed spring with all her blowing winds,
 And green lap brimming o'er with dainty sweets,
 Wakened no dulcet light about her heart;
 Nor nimble dance of waves, at shut of eve,
 Under the charmed moonlight, nor the groves,
 With all their leafy arches full of birds, —
 Not maddened Jurruyo's wild sublimity,
 When, from his hell of lava tossing high
 His fiery arms, that redden all the heavens —
 As, from his forehead, down his beard of pines,
 Trickle the blood-like flames — could fix her gaze,
 Or keep her thoughts from wandering on the way
 The footsteps of her kingly lover went.
 The goats grew wild, for Tlaära forgot
 The times of milking; idle stood the wheel,
 A loom for spiders; to the heavy length
 Of the dark shadow, keeping pace with death,
 Her sighs drew out themselves, and listening low

* Tolpéin, the first Mexican king, it was believed, was changed into Venus, the Morning Star, to which a slave was sacrificed on its first appearance in every autumn. — *Lord Kingsborough*.

† *Lord Kingsborough*, vi. 179.

She leaned against the faded face of earth,
As if its great dumb breast could move with life.

The lost wayfaring man, whose scanty lamp
In the wild rainy middle of the night
Burns sudden out — waits patient till he sees
The white-horned Daybreak pierce the cloudy east,
Traveling alone and slow, and the wet woods
Which from his mottled forehead parted, black,
Swing goldenly together. But, alas!
In the white dome of gentle womanhood
Love's sunrise knows no fellow. Sweetest heart!
How could she look for comfort? idols made
No answer to her praying; and at last,
Out of this sorrowful continent of life
Her visions failed of resting: mortal love
Drew back the hopes which vine-like clomb against
The columned splendors of eternity.

Forgive her, Thou, whose greatest name is Love,
If, with her heaven of ruins coupled against
The chasms that divide us from thy throne,
She saw imperfectly — saw not at all —
For, 'twixt the farthest reach of human eyes
And the eternal brightness round about thee,
There lies an unsunned shoal, a blank of gloom,
Which no keen continuity of thought
Can burn or blast its way through, till the grave
Opens its heavy and obstructive valves.

Sometimes she plaited berries in her hair,
And, sitting by the sea, called on each wave,
As it had been her lover, to come up
And put its quieting arm around her neck,
And hug her close, and kiss her into sleep;
"It is our fault, and not the gods," she said,
"If we outstay our pleasures, pining pale
In barren isolation, when one step
Divides us only from the realm of rest —
Is it not so, oh great and friendly sea?"
But the waves put their beaded foreheads down
Against the moon, late wasting in their arms,
Now blushing, bashful, for her beauty's growth,
And left her waiting on the wild, wet bank,
Her meditations all uncomforted.
Sometimes a kindly memory would pluck

A sunbeam from the midday of her love,
 And grief was awed to silence, and her heart
 Hushed into pulseless calm, as is the bard
 What time some grander vision than the rest,
 Swims, planet-like, along his starry dreams.

Oh, what a terrible day for Maxtala
 Was hovering in the rousing of that host,
 That, robbed unjustly of its majesty,
 Cried, like a whelpless lioness, for blood !
 As the cenocatli,* with its fiery coils
 Illumining the darkness, warns aside
 The step of the unequal traveler,
 So might the glitter of that hydra's front,
 Under its bossy wilderness of shields,
 Have warned the tyrant from the onslaught off.

For stripling lovers, maidens all the day
 Busied themselves with plumes, or, sedulous,
 Wrought into bracelets gems and precious stones ;
 Some green like emeralds, some divinely white,
 And some with streaky brown in grounds of gold,
 With milky pearls, and sea-blue amethysts,
 All curiously interwoven, meet to please
 The princely eyes of the discrowned king.
 Through the green passes of Tlacamama
 Struck the white † columns of young warriors,
 Eager to wheel into the battling lines—
 Armed with the triple-pointed tlalochtli,
 The maquahuitl, and the heavy bow
 Strung with the sinews of sea-cow, or lynx ;
 While stern old men, their gray hairs winding back,
 With most serene and steady majesty,
 From helms of tiger's or of serpent's heads,
 Went forth to death as to a festival.
 Along Mazatlan's summits, wild and high,
 The gathered legions hovered like a fleet,
 Dark in the offing. Ensigns mingled bright,
 Above the long lines lifted, as sometimes
 A cloud of scarlet hooded zopilots ‡
 Hangs mute along the sky, foretelling storms.

* A serpent that in the dark shines like a glow-worm.

† When first going to war, young men were dressed in a simple costume of white.—*Clavigero*, i. 365.

‡ Before a storm, these birds are often seen flying in vast numbers, high under the loftiest clouds.

Tizatlan's heron, wild and sad, was there,
 There couchant lay Tepeticpac's fierce wolf,
 The bundle of sharp arrows in his paws,
 With Mexic's dread armorial hard by —
 The eagle and the tiger, combatant;
 While, under the sea-city's golden net,
 Ocotelolco's green bird, on the rock,
 In lonely beauty waited for the storm,
 Quick sweeping like a sea loosed from its bounds.

So was Hualco's kingdom repossessed,
 So was the tyrant Maxtala o'ercome.
 Oh! it was piteous when the fight was done,
 And the moon stood, o'er the disastrous field,
 In pale and solemn majesty, as one
 Fresh from the kisses of the dead, to see
 His harmless corse decked out with all the shows
 Befitting the fair form of royalty,
 While all his locks, torn from their net of gems,
 In bloody tangles hung about his eyes,
 Blind, but wide glaring, and his unknit hands
 Clutched at the dust in impotent despair.

And he whose hunger-sunken eyes erewhile
 Burned through the forests, where he wandered once
 Like a lamenting shadow — was a king;
 And the delights and pastimes of a court,
 The expulsive might of absence, and the pride,
 Unfolding and dilating, ring by ring,
 Under the sun of triumph — these, ere long,
 So ministered to soft forgetfulness,
 That the low echo of forsaken love
 Smote on his heart no longer, and the eyes
 That of his praises gathered half their light,
 With sorrowful reproaches vexed no more.
 Cold god, reposing in the northern ice,
 Whose white arms nightly reach along the heavens!
 Search out the stars, malignant, that so oft
 Have crossed the orbit of divinest bliss,
 And draw them, with some pale enchantment, down
 From the good constellations — all their lengths
 Of shining tresses, making them so fair,
 Coiling, like dying serpents, as they sink.

'T is not so much premeditated wrong
 That fills the world with sorrow and dismay,

As influences of demons, mischievous,
Hurrying impassioned impulses to acts
That fast and penance never can undo.
This is my theory, and right or wrong,
'T is surely higher pleasure to believe
That men are better than they seem, than worse.
And he, this prince of whom my story is,
Was a good prince, as princes be, and gave,
On every day, sweet alms and charities,
That made him named of thousands in their prayers;
His reign with deeds of glory was so strewed
That they still shine upon us from the past,
As emeralds and ivory shine along
The sand-track of some perished caravan.
Houses of skulls, that erewhile all the hills
Made ghastly white, he levelled, and, instead,
Walled with tazontli, pinnaced with gold;
And strong with beams of cedar and of fir,
Along the ruins, sacred temples rose;*
About his throne stood lines of palaces
Kissing the clouds, exceeding beautiful
With porphyry columns, and lined curiously
With that white stone dividing into leaves;
And baths and gardens, and soft-flowing streams,
Made all Tezcuco's vale a goodly sight.
Schemes pondering, or infirm or feasible,
To make his subjects happy, still he dwelt
In that unruffled air that may be peace,
But was, nor then, nor ever will be, bliss.
And all his people loved him more than feared,
Nor looked upon his crown with envious eyes:
Shall the small lily, growing in the grass,
Be envious of the aloe's dome of flowers,
That keeps the blowing winds from its sweet home?
Or shall the soft cenzontli hush its song
And pine, in the green shelter of the bough,
For that the eagle, silent on the rock,
Can dip his plumage in the sun at will?

Once, feasting with the lord of Tepechan —
A vassal warrior, whose mighty arm
Had hewn his way to many victories —

* He dedicated his temples, says Prescott, to the unknown God — the Cause of Causes.

To do him honors, with her ministries,
There came a damsel so exceeding fair,
That, with the light of her dark eyes withdrawn,
A shadow over all his kingdom went;
But in his heart, (for love is prophecy,)
He felt that she already was elect
The bride of him whose festive guest he was.
So, to himself, to justify his thought,
He said,* "This old man must not wed this maid,
For that the grave will cover him too soon,
And so, young beauty be made desolate:
And yet, perchance, not absolute for that,
(For all the burdening weight of threescore years
Lies like a silver garland on his brow,)
But that I know he cannot have her love,
Or having, could not keep it: that were false
To all of Nature's unwarpt impulses;
It is as if a budding bough should blush
Out of a sapless trunk; it cannot be—
Else is harsh violence to reason done,
And all true fitness sunken from the noon
Into the twilight of uncertainty.
Can the dull mist, where the swart Autumn hides
His wrinkled front and tawny cheek, wind-shorn,
Be sprinkled with the orange light that binds
Away from her soft lap, o'erbrimmed with flowers,
The dew-wet tresses of the virgin year?
Or can the morning, bridegroomed by the sun,
Turn to the midnight, and be comforted!
So for their larger amplitude of weal,
This vagrant fancy — for 't is nothing more —
Must not or ever shall be consummate.
For this true soldier — ah, a happy thought! —
I'll make an expedition presently;
For now that I bethink me, in the wars
His arm might wield a heavy truncheon yet;
'T were good, I think, he wore his helmet up —
A brow so rounded with grave majesty,
Would strike a sharper terror to the foe
Than all the triple weapons of a host.
This strength of his 't were pity not to show.

* This curious history, so similar to that of David and Uriah, is related by Prescott.

He hath no lack of courage, but alas!
 He does not know his own supremacy;
 Aware of it, I 'll even dare be sworn
 This harmless stratagem were rated right;
 I 'll make a hint of it in some soft way;
 And, for the princess, there may chance to be
 Some vacancy i' the court — some office slight,
 Meet for the gracing of her gentle hands.
 If it so fall — I know not if it will,
 (I think my women a full complement,) —
 She shall not want my kingly privilege
 For any pretty wilfulness she choose
 To wing the hours and make away the grief
 That needs must follow the great embassy,
 (Forced on alone by sharpest exigence,)
 That takes this old man back into the field,
 For he will scarcely hope to come alive,
 I sorely fear, from the encounters fierce
 And perilous offices of bloody war."

When sleep that night came down upon the eyes
 Of the good prince — for he was good, withal,
 And did such acts as are immortalized —
 He saw this famous lord of Tepechan
 Thrust sidelong in a ditch, his white hair stirred
 Under the howlings of a mountain dog,
 That surfeited upon his shrunken corse;
 But the maid came to him in fairer guise —
 He heard her singing through the palace walls,
 Her locks down-flowing from a wreath of pearls.

This was a dream, and when the king awoke
 He said 't was strange, indeed 't was passing strange,
 Nay, quite a miracle, that sleeping thoughts
 Should take no guise or shape of reasoning
 That ever hath possessed our waking hours,
 But balance, rather, on insanity!

If dreams are not the mirrors of the past,
 They sometimes do forerun realities;
 And ere the day, white in the orient then,
 Folded with striped wings the evening star,
 The lord of Tepechan had taken his mace,
 And sadly the fair maiden, in his shield,
 Was weaving feathers for the field of war.
 And if the king had any troubling thought

Of the old love, awakened by the new,
He said, 'T was pity it had ever been —
Unequal loves were never prosperous :
Yet it was scarcely love — the chance caprice
Of hours of indolence — by Tlaära
Doubtless forgotten, for the self-same moons
Had filled and faded over her and him ;
That woman's heart at best was like the stream
Which in its bosom fondly takes the flowers,
Sown idly on its margin by the winds,
Or palely simple, or of gorgeous pride ;
And even if some chance wave of her life
Had closely held his image for a while,
The tender pallor of her transient grief,
Under the summer's golden rustling,
Had long flushed back to beauty. But at worst,
Say that she loved, and of desertion died ;
Why, thousands, perished in the wars, were ne'er
With pious tears lamented : and his realm
Had right to claim a princess for its queen ;
And if long centuries of joyance sprung,
And flourished, from one little profitless life,
Who would dare call the sacrifice unjust ?
And thus he laid the ghost of memory.
So like a very truth a lie may seem
I think the elect might almost be deceived.
Love, that warm passion-flower of the heart,
Nursed into bloom and beauty by a breath,
Even on the utmost verge of human life
Dims the great splendor of eternity.
True, some have trodden it beneath their feet,
Led by that bright curse, Genius, and have gone
On the broad wake of visions wonderful,
And seemed, to the dull mortals far below,
Unravelling the web of fate, at will,
And leaning on their own creative power,
Defiant of its beauty : but, alas !
Along the climbing of their wildering way,
Many have faltered, fallen — some have died,
Still wooing, from across the lapse of years,
The roseate blushing of its virgin pride,
And feeding sorrow with its faded bloom ;
For not the almost-omnipotence of mind

Can from its aching bind the bleeding heart,
Or keep at will its mighty sorrow down.
Our mortal needs ask mortal ministries,
And o'er the lilies in the crown of heaven,
Even in ruins, love's earth-growing flower,
While we are earthy, showeth eminent.

When the calm beating of the pulse of time
That keeps right on, nor for our joys or griefs
Quickens or flags, had measured years, unblest
Or bright, as fate their passage made,
Hualco's fair and gentle servitor,
Faithless and recreant to the veteran chief,
Within the folding arms of royalty
Sheltered the blushing of her crownéd brows.
And Tlaära! Ah, could they only feel,
Who are the ministers of ill to us,
That we are hungry while they keep their feasts;
That in our hearts the blood is warm and bright,
Though our cheeks shrivel, and our feeble steps
Crack up the harvestless ridges where we starve! —
For desolate, wronged Tlaära was left
Only the wretched change of misery.
The imperial triumphs sounded through the hills,
With undertones of the perpetual songs
Of gayety, and splendor, and delights,
Or, right or wrong, that most in palaces
Have had dominion from the earliest time;
And she as one doomed, innocent, to death,
Fast in the shadows of his columns chained,
Saw her brief visions faded to the hues
Of fixed and damnable realities.
Night had shut up her little day of love
With all its leafy whispers; in her sky
The sunset like a wivern winged with fire
Had burned the flowery thickets of the clouds
And left them black and lonesome, and, like eyes
In the wide front of some dead beast, the stars,
Filmy and blank, stared on her out of heaven.
I said she knew the change of misery,
The pain but not the glory of the crew
Of rebel angels, whose undying pride
Like a bruised serpent towers against their doom,
Even while their webbed and flabby wings, once bright,

Lie wrinkling, flat, on waves of liquid fire.

Sometimes she told the unbetraying ghosts
Of her dead joys — the story of her life,
Portraying, phase by phase, from love to hate :

“The day,” she said, “was over: on the hills
The parting light was flitting like a ghost;
And like a trembling lover eve’s sweet star,
In the dim leafy reach of the thick woods,
Stood waiting for the coming down of night.

But it was not the beauty of the time
That thrilled my heart with tempests of such joys
As shake the bosom of a god, new-winged,
When first in his blue pathway up the skies,
He feels the embrace of immortality.

A moment’s bliss, and then the world was changed —
Truth, like a planet striking through the dark,
Shone clear and cold, and I was what I am,
Listening along the wilderness of life
For the faint echoes of lost melody.

The moonlight gathered itself back from me,
And slanted its pale pinions to the dust;
The drowsy gust, bedded in luscious blooms,
Startled, as at the death-throes of all peace,
Down through the darkness moaningly fled off.

God, hide from me the time! for then I knew
Hualco’s shame of me, a low-born maid.

I could, I think, have lifted up my hands,
Though bandaged back with grave-clothes, in that hour,
To cover my hot forehead from his kiss.

And yet, false love! I loved thee — listening close
From the dim hour when twilight’s rosy hedge
Sprang from the field of sunset, till deep night
Swept with her cloud of stars the face of heaven,
For the quick music of thy hurrying step.

And if, without some cold and sunless cave
Thou hadst lain lost and dying, prompted not,
My feet had struck that pathway, and I could,
With the neglected sunshine of my hair,
Thence clasped thee from the hungry jaws of death,
And on my heart, as on a wave of light,
Have lulled thee to the beauty of soft dreams.

“Weak, womanish imaginings, begone!
Let the poor-spirited children of despair

Hang on the sepulchre of buried hope
The fiery garlands of their love-lorn songs.
Though such gift turned on its pearly hinge
Sweet Mercy's gate, I would not so debase me.
Shut out from heaven and all the blessed saints,
I, from the arch-fiend's wing, as from a star,
Would gather yet some splendor to my brows,
And tread the darkness with a step of pride.
For what is love? a pretty transiency,
An unsubstantial cheat, which for a while
Makes glad the commonest way, but like the dew
Which sunbeams reach and take from us, it fades —
Our very smiles do dry and wither it.
What is 't to leave the washing of my cheeks
Out of its flower-cups, and go mateless on
Across the ages to eternity?
Farewell, my prince, my king, a last farewell!
My love is all for fame, and from this hour
Against my bosom with a fonder clasp
Than ever given to thee, I treasure it.
Thy queen is fair — I give thee joy of her,
And in the shadow of thy royal state
Stoop low my knee to say I do not hate her;
She has no measure in herself wherewith
To gauge my nature: she is powerless
To lift her littleness into my scorn;
No thought of hers outreaches a plume's length —
If any time I cross or tread on her,
'T is that I see her not more than the worm
Knotting itself for anger at my feet —
My feet, now planted on the burnt, bare rocks,
Under whose bloodless ribs the river of death
Runs black with mortal sorrow. Vex me not
With your low love; my heart is mated with
The steadfast splendor of the world of fame.
What care have I for daisies or for dew,
The quail's wild whistle or the robin's song,
Or childhood's prattlings, sweeter though they be
Than rainy meadows, blue with violets?
The walls built firm against the massy heights
That stay me up so well, are seamed with gold,
Sparkling like broken granite, and green stalks
Run up the unfrequent paths, lifting their blooms

Into the long still sunshine, where no change
 Shall ever earth them up. It is in vain
 Ye tempt me from my steady footing back
 To the dim level of mortality.

What! think you I would leave this pain-bought place
 For Love's soft beckoning? Nay, ye know me not.
 Though the wild stormy North with fretful wings
 Flew at my fastness till it toppled hard
 Against hell's hollow bosom, even then
 Rocked like the cradle of a baby-god,
 I would not yield my glory a hair's breadth,
 But gathering courage like a mantle up,
 Would smile betwixt the harmless thunderbolts."

So, with a thousand idle vagaries,
 She cooled the fire, slow-burning out her life;
 And when the fit was gone, there came remorse,
 And she would say, "Forgive me, piteous gods!
 I had a maddening fever in my brain
 That made me turn the horny point of hate
 Which should have been bent sharpest on myself,
 Against the heart of my sweet lord, the king.
 Nay, wherefore should I ask to be forgiven?
 A maniac's bitter raving is not prayer —
 That is a hope, concentrate and sincere,
 That reaches up to heaven; words that are lipt
 By the anointed priesthood, day by day,
 May need more to be prayed for than the curse
 Of a profane, unmeditative mood.

"Mine! he is all mine! she may bear his name.
 Or in the golden shadows of his crown
 Strut a brief day; more, call herself his wife,
 If that a sound can give her any joy;
 But if, from the close foldings of my heart,
 She can undo his love and make it hers,
 And me forgotten — then she has more skill
 Than any woman here in Tlascala.
 In some green leafy closet of the woods
 I will go fast, till that the maiden moon,
 Walking serene above her worshippers,
 With some cold angry shaft shall strike me dead.
 My cunning soul shall free my body yet
 From these wild wasting pains, and from the scorn
 Of that bad woman whose most wicked wiles

Have wronged the excellent king, and me have wronged.
 But that is nothing: why should I have said
 That I had any harms? they all are his.
 Else will I go into some ugly cave
 Where vipers lodge, and choke them till they sting
 And make me but a spirit. I will build
 A palace with a window toward the earth,
 And train white flowers — my lord loves best white
 flowers —
 And if there be a language more divine
 Than love knows here, I'll learn it, though it take
 Half the long ages of eternity."

There came into the groves of Tlascala
 An old man from the wars, where he had worn
 Commands and victories, and won such fame
 That with the names of gods his, intertwined,
 Was seen in temples, yet by some great pain
 So bowed, that even the basest pitied him;
 And he, to soothe her grief with other grief,
 Recited all the story of his life:
 How a king's hands unlocked from his gray hairs
 The clasped arms of tenderness, and struck
 His bright hopes into ruins, so that life
 Had lingered on, a sorrowful lament,
 Waking no piteous echo but the grave's.
 "But thou," he said, "fair maiden, thou and I —
 Complaining ill befit the sunset time
 That folds earth's shadow, like a poison flower,
 And leaves life's last waves brokenly along
 The unknown borders of eternity.
 'T is an extremity that warns us back
 From staggering on, alas! we know not what.
 With hatred's damning seal upon our souls,
 How shall we ask for mercy? Shall the gods
 Forgive the unforgiving? or sweet Peace
 The red complexion of the scorner's cheek
 Fold to her quiet bosom? Nay, my child,
 We have not in the world an enemy
 Bad as that pride, which sets its devil strength
 Against the grave, the gods, and everything.
 Then she who was so meekly calm before,
 Half rising out of death, as if that plea
 Tightened the coil of woe about her heart,

Answered, "What demon comes to torture me?
Forgive! The word sounds well enough, in sooth;
But say it to the tigress, when she licks
Their streaky beauty from the smoking blood
That drenches her dead cubs; and will she fawn,
And her fierce eyes grow meekly sorrowful,
And her dilated nostril in the dust
Cower humbly at your feet? I tell you, no!—
That is a word for injury to use
In penitent supplication; not for her,
Whose heartstrings quiver in the torturer's hand.
I know no use for it; nor gods nor men,
Require of us forgiveness of a foe
Till his true grief give warranty to us
That the forgiven may be trusted too.
Dying! thou sayest I 'm dying! yes, 't is true!
I feel the tide outflowing!— and for this
Shall I in womanish weakness falter out,
'See, piteous gods! how I forgive this man,
And lovingly kiss his murderous hand, withal,
And so, sweet Homeyoca, rest my soul!'
Urge me no longer! in the close, cold grave
The heart is done with aching, and the eyes
Are troubled with love's changes never more.
The palace splendors cannot reach me there,
Nor pipes nor dances wake my heavy sleep—
The dead are safe. Look, friend, is that the day
Breaking so white along the cloudy east?
Not since the fading of my lovelit dream
Have I beheld a light so heavenly.
Nature seems all astir; the tree-tops move
As with birds going through them, and the dews
Hang burning, lamp-like, thick among the leaves
All the long year past I have risen betimes,
For sake of morning purples and rich heaps
Of red-brown broideries—shaping in my thought
The gorgeous chamber of a queen, the while
I penned my goats for milking; but till now
The sun streaks have run glistening round the rocks,
Or doubled up the clouds like snakes, dislodged.
Once, I remember, when I staid, alone,
Hunting along the woods—my playfellows
Gone homeward, dragging cherry-boughs and grapes—

A brooding splendor, large about me shone,
As if the queen moon met me in my way,
And in her white hands held me for an hour.
That night my mossy bed was covered bright
With skins of ounces; drowsing into sleep,
I heard the simples simmering at the fire;
Heard my scared housemates whispering each to each
That I was marked and singled out for harm.
Like buds that sprout together on one bough,
Brightening one window, so we grew and bloomed —
I and those merry children; some are gone
To the last refuge — some contented stay
Along the valleys where the hedgerows keep
The summer grass bright longest. When we played
On hill or meadow, oft I left the sports
To climb the rough bare sea-cliffs; when we sung
I mocked the screaming eagle; when we sought
Flowers for our pastimes, I was sure to bring
The brightest and most deadly — 't was the bent
Of my audacious nature. Like the dove,
That foolish sits upon the serpent's eggs,
Nor, till she feels beneath her pretty wings
The stirring of the cold white-bellied brood,
Flies to the shelter of her proper home,
So has it been with me; soft, I untied
The hands that set the pitfall. I am down,
Yet proud Hualco, girt in armor, fears
To leap into the dark with me, and take
The embrace of my weak arms. Erect and free
He dare not mock me, fallen and in bonds;
For who would tempt the hungry lioness
With the fresh look of blood? Though I were dead,
If he were near, my stagnant life would stir,
And I would close upon immortal power
To crack the close grave open and come up,
To scare him whiter than his marriage bed.
It cannot be, if justice be alive,
That he shall hover, ghoulish-like, round my corse,
And blight the simple flowers I change into;
It cannot be that the great lidless eye
Of Truth will never stare into his heart,
And search its sinful secrets, withering off
The leprous scales of perjury wherein

They are peeled up.

“Ye hated, monstrous things,
 Whose trade is torment, in your troughs of fire
 Rock idly, drawing back your ugly heads
 Into their proper caverns: no sharp tooth
 Wounds like the stinging of a conscience roused!
 Leave him to that: he cannot 'scape it long.
 I pray no mercy; beyond mortal strength
 Men may be tempted — I am human, too.
 If, thirsting in a desert, one draw near
 With golden cups of water in his hands,
 How hardly do we fill our mouths with dust;
 If fever parch us, pleasant is the dew
 Of kisses dropping cold against the cheek;
 And brows like mine that the wild rains have wet,
 Take kindly to the shelter of a crown.
 Plead with me as you will: since love is lost,
 I have small care for any blackest storm
 That e'er may mock my gray unhonored hairs.
 Life's unlinked chains, in the quick opening grave,
 May rust together — this is all my hope.
 I scorn thee not, old man! no haunting ghost,
 Born of the darkness of love's perjury,
 Crosses the white tent of thy dreaming now;
 And if thy palsy-shaken years, or death,
 Move thee, in solacing confessional,
 To register forgiveness of all foes —
 I speak not now, my friend, to keep thee back,
 But for myself — I tell thee, I have loved,
 More than I have the gods, this faithless king,
 And feeling that for this my doom was sealed,
 Have I in sorrow cried unto the saved,
 'From the high walls of Mercy lean sometimes,
 And, parting the thick clouds that roof the lost,
 Give me the comfort of some blessed sign
 That tells me he is happy.' That is passed!
 Pray, if thou wilt — my lips are dumb of prayer.”

Struck with the lovely ruin, ebbing life
 Sent for a moment its live currents back,
 Swelling his shrunken veins to knotty blue;
 And a faint hope illumined his old eyes,
 As if the sea of anguish lost a wave;
 And kneeling humbly at her feet, he said —

“Ye gods! reach lovingly across the grave
To the great sorrow of this death-winged prayer,
And for its sake about this sweet soul wrap
Blest immortality! be piteous, Heaven,
For she is murdered by inconstancy!
Bend softly low, and hear her cruel wrongs
Plead for her who will plead not for herself.

“I had a wound erewhile, and now, alas!
It bleeds afresh to see her die so proud;
Yet doth she make pride beautiful, and lies
Drowsing to death in its majestic light,
Like a bee sleeping in a golden flower.
The hot salt waters brim up to my eyes,
To think of her, so fit for life's delights,
Buried down low in the brown heavy earth,
Where the rude beast may tread and nettles grow.
I have seen death in many a fearful form,
For I have been a soldier all my life;
Have pillowed on my breast a thousand times
Some comrade in his last extremity;
But now my heart, unused to such a strait,
Plays the weak woman with me. Fighting once
In the thick front of battle, I beheld
Our grim foe open wide his red-leaved book;
I felt his cold hand touch me; saw him fix
His filmy eyes and write, I thought, my name;
Yet I was calm, and laying down my lance,
Sought to embrace him as a soldier should.
I was young then, and fair luxuriant locks
Hung thick about my brows; life had no chance
I feared to combat with a single hand;
Now I am better spared — old and unfit
For wars or gamesome pastimes — but have lost
The sweet grace of a brave surrendering.
Oh, I have scarce a minute more to live;
I feel the breaking up of human scenes;
Time, block your swiftly moving wheels, I pray,
And make delay, for pity; Evening, keep
Your blushing cheek under the sun awhile,
And give my gray hairs one repentant hour!
My vision cannot fix you, my sweet child;
Undo my helm, and lay it with my bow —
Nay — 't is no matter — lay it anywhere.

So, sit and sing for me some mournful song,
And I will grow immortal, in the dream
That you are that most fair and gentle maid
Who tended once the chief of Tepechan."

I know not if 't is true, they often say
Of this intenser action of the mind,
That it is madness : she of whom I sing,
Lost, loving Tlaära, in realms apart
From joy or sorrow, made herself a world,
Nor sight she saw nor sound she heard they knew
Who followed, pitying, all her wayward steps,
Or added wonder at her strange wild words.

One sunny summer day in Tlascala,
Midway from its warm fields to where its peak,
That slept in songs eternal, calmly shone,
She from a mountain gazed, as set the sun,
Down on the mightiest and the loveliest land
In history seen or in prophetic dreams.
But not Tezcuco Chalco, Xalcotan,
Upon whose waves gay moved the fishers' boats,
Nor towers, nor temples, nor fair palaces,
Nor groves that rose in green magnificence,
One glance could win from her far-looking eyes.
In natural music died the beautiful day,
Grew black the bases of the terraced hills,
And their mid regions, of a slumberous blue,
Faded to roseate silver toward the skies,
Along whose even field the hornéd moon
Walked, turning golden furrows on the clouds.
At last was set the night's most dark eclipse,
And yet she saw, or seemed to see arise
Tezcuco's capital, within whose walls
What maddening scenes her jealous fancy drew !

The midnight passed, and lifting up her eyes,
From that long vigil, she beheld afar
The awful burning of volcanic fires,
Which seemed as if had fled ten thousand stars
From all their orbits, leaving heaven in gloom,
Save where they crashed in terrible fire alone,
Crashed in tumultuous rage ; as if each one,
Fearful of Night, claimed the most central heats.
She saw unmoved, for now was left no more
Or fear or hope — the ultimate secret read

Of that too common but dread history.
She only said, how calmly! "The slim reed
That grows beside the most untraveled road,
With its wild blossoms yet may bless the eyes
Of some chance pilgrim; over the dead tree
Mosses run bright together; in the hedge
The prickles of the thistle's bluish leaves
Hold all day, spike-like, shining globes of dew;
Even from the stoniest crevice, some stray thorn
May crook its knotty body toward the sun,
And give the ant-hill shelter, but my death
Will desolate no homely spot of earth.
No eyes, when I am gone, will seek the ground;
No voice will falter, when the flowers come up—
'If she were only with us! such a time
We were so blest together.' I would leave
(My frailty and my follies all forgot)
A pleasant memory somewhere. As we look
With pining eyes upon the faded year,
Forgetful of the vexing winds, that took
The green tops of the woods down; picking bare
The limbs of shining berries and gay leaves—
So would I leave some friend to think of me.
The wild bird, when its mate dies, stays for grief,
Sad, under lonesome briers; but, mateless, I
Fall like a pillar of the desert dust,
Struck from its barren drifting in the waste—
No twig left wilting, with its root unearthed,
White bleaching in the sun—no insect's wing,
Trembling, uncertain for its lighting, lost.
Like to the star that in night's black abysm
Trails itself out in light, the human heart
Wastes all its life in love—that sacrifice
The consummation of diviner bliss
Than he can feel, who, looking from a dream
Sees palpable, his soul's unchambered thoughts
Moving along the ages, calm and bright,
Like mighty wings, spread level. It is well
Earth's fair things fade so soon, else for their sake
Mortals would slip from their eternity
And pleased, go downward from the hills of heaven,
Hurtled to death like beasts; nay, even they,
Decked for the shambles, impotently shake

The flowers about their foreheads — madly wise.
 Oh, Love, thou art almost omnipotent!
 Thy beauty, more than faith or hope, at last,
 Lights the black offing of the noiseless sea.
 'T is hard to leave thy sweetest company
 And turn our steps into the dark, alone:
 If he were waiting for me I could pass
 Death and the grave — yea, hell itself, unharmed.
 In the gray branches of the starlit oaks,
 I hear the heavy murmurs of the winds,
 Like the low plaints of evil spirits, held
 By drear enchantments from their demon mates.
 Another night-time, and I shall have found
 A refuge from their mournful prophecies.”

Then, as if seeing forms none else could see,
 With deepening melancholy in each word,
 She said, “Come near, and from my forehead smooth
 These long and heavy tresses, still as bright
 As when their wave of beauty bathed the hand
 That unto death betrayed me. Nay, 't is well!
 I pray you do not weep; no other fate
 Were half so fitting for me. On the grave
 Light, from the open gate of Peace, is laid,
 And Faith leans yearningly away to heaven;
 But life hath glooms wherein no light may come.
 There, now I think I have no further need —
 For unto all, at last, there comes a time
 When no sweet care can do us any good!
 Not in my life that I remember of,
 Could my neglect have injured any one,
 And if I have, by my officious love,
 Thrown harmful shadows in the way of some,
 Be piteous to my natural weaknesses —
 I never shall offend you any more!

“And now most melancholy messenger,
 Touch mine eyes gently with Sleep's heavy dew;
 I have no wish to struggle from thy arms,
 Nor is there any hand would hold me back.
 The night is very dismal, yet I see,
 Over yon hill, one bright and steady star
 Divide the darkness with its fiery spear,
 And sprinkle glory on the lap of earth,
 And the winds take the sounds of lullabies.

Fretful of present fortune are we all,
Still to be blest to-morrow; through the boughs
Murmurous and cool with shadows, we reach out
Our naked arms, and when the noontide heat
Consumes us, talk of chance, and fate.
Even from the lap of Love we lean away
Like a sick child from a kind nurse's arms,
And petulantly tease for any toy
A hand-breadth out of reach; and from the way
Where hedge and harvest blend, irregular,
Their bordering of green and gold, we turn
And climb up ledges rough and verdureless.
And when our feet, through weariness and toil,
Have gained the heights that showed so brightly well,
Our blind and dizzied vision sees, too late,
The forks of thickets running in and out
Betwixt their jagged bases, and glad springs,
Wooing the silence with a silver tongue,
And then our feeble hands let slip the staff,
That helpt our fruitless journey, and our cheeks
Shrivel from smiles and roses; so our sun
Goes clouded down, and to the young bold race,
Close treading in our footsteps, we are dust.
Thus ends the last delusion; well — 't is well."

A moment, and as some rough wind that sweeps
The sunshine from the summer, o'er her face
Came the chill shadow, and her grief was done.
Maidens, whose kindling blushes softly burn
Through nut-brown locks, or golden, garlanded,
Bright for the bridal, take with gentlest hands,
Out of your Eden, any simple flowers,
And cover her pale corse from cruel scorn,
Who, claiming in your joy no sisterhood,
Took in her arms the darkness which is peace;
And that the bright-winged ministers of God
Shall, when she wakes in beauty out of dust,
Make kindly restoration, pray sometimes.

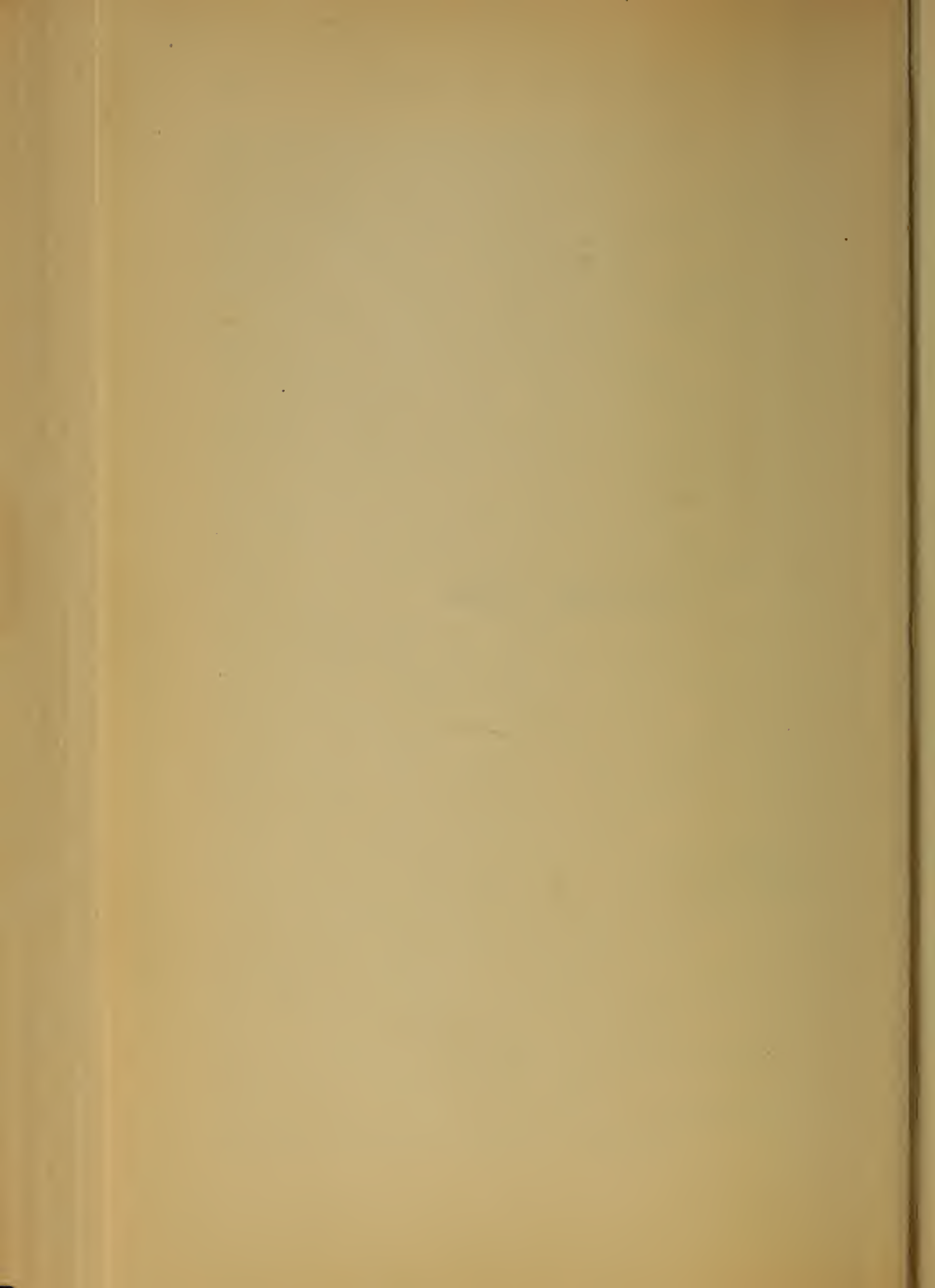
And when that she was dead and in her grave,
A blaming and a mourning melancholy,
Sweetly commending all her buried grace,
Darkened the pleasant chambers of the king,
Till in the ceremony of his prayers,
Often he stopt, for "amen" crying out,

“Oh, Tlaära! best, gentlest Tlaära!”
Yet pain had still vicissitudes of peace,
Until Remorse, with lean and famished lips,
Hung sucking at his heart; then came Despair,
And, from his greatness sorrowfully bowed —
Like to the feathered serpent,* that of old
Went writhing down the blue air, weak and bruised,
To hide beneath the sea the emerald rings
Erewhile uncoiled along the level heavens —
Went he from splendor to the deeps of woe.
No white dove, rustling back the darkness, came,
Raining out lovely music from its wings
Upon his troubled soul, as once there came
To Colhua’s mountain children; he was changed —
Not in his princely presence; not like him,
Who, fasting in the mount of penitence,
Fell in temptation, and was so transformed
To a black scorpion; but his youth of heart
Dropt off, as from the girdled sapling drops
The unripe fruitage; hope was done with him.
With calm, deliberative eyes, he looked
Upon the kingdoms, parceled at his will;
Over his harvests saw the sun go down,
As though his rising on the morrow brought
The issue of a battle; as one lost,
Who, by the tracks of beasts would find his way
To human habitations, so he strayed
Farther and farther from the rest he sought.
From the sweet altar where the lamp of love
Burned through the temple’s twilight, his sad steps
Thenceforward turned aside, and entered in
That dreadful fane, reared sacredly to him
Of the four arrows and blue twisted club,
Whose waist is girdled with a golden snake,
While round his neck a collar of human hearts
Hangs in dread token of his murderous trade.
The green-robed goddess of the fiery wand
That on the manta’s fleeces rides at night
Across the sea-waves, beckoned him sometimes,
And he would fain have gone, but that a hand
Like that which she of Katelolco held
Back from the river of Death what time she heard

* Quetzalcoatl, the god of air.

The dead bones making prophecies of war,
Still held him among mortals; but he saw,
Lovely as life and habited in snow
No youth upon whose forehead shone the cross,
Such as to that pale sleeper gave the power
To lift the cold stone of her sepulchre
And bear her mournful warning to the world.
For his soul's peace he built a rocky bower
And dwelt in banishment perpetual;
Wronging his marriage-bed, for solitude,
Uncomforting and barren. When the morn,
Planting carnations in the hilly east,
Peeped smiling o'er the shoulder of the day,
He set his joined hands before his eyes,
Sighing as one who sees, or thinks he sees,
The likeness of a friend, untimely dead.
Nightly he watched the great unstable sea
Kneel on the brown bare sand and lay his face
In the green lap of Earth — his paramour —
And sobbing, kiss her to forgiving terms,
Then straightway, cruel and incontinent,
Go from her — tracking after the white moon;
Music constrained its sweetest melodies
To please his lonesome listening — all in vain;
Beauty grew hateful, and the voice of love,
Shrill as the sullen bickering of the storm,
Close-neighboring his rocky prison-house.
Under the vaulted ceiling of a tower,
Bright with all fragrant woods and shining stones,
Dwelt priests, in the dim incense, whose clay pipes
And rosy jangling shells, mixing with hymns,
Told to their melancholy king what times
To give his homage to the Invisible.
But from the darkening wake of his lost love,
The wild and desolate echoes evermore
Went crying to the pitying arms of God;
And the crushed strings of his complaining lyre
Under the kissing hands of poesy
Thrilled never with such sweetness, as erewhile,
Beneath the bloomy boughs of Tlascala.

PHOEBE CARY





PHOEBE CARY

POEMS BY PHŒBE CARY.



A STORY.

WHILE silently our vessel glides,
To-night, along the Adrian seas,
And while the lightly-heaving tides
Are scarcely rippled by the breeze —
Thou, who, with cheek of beauty pale,
Seem'st o'er some hidden grief to pine,
If thou wilt listen to a tale
Of sorrow, it may lighten thine.
'T was told me, sadly choked with tears;
My eyes, it may be, too, were wet;
For, through the shadowy lapse of years,
My memory keeps the record yet.
And he who told it long ago,
Though scarcely passed his manhood's prime,
He seemed as one whose heart with woe
Was seared and blighted ere its time.
And as he told his story o'er,
Long vanished years came back to me;
For he had crossed my path before,
Upon the land and on the sea.

When first by chance I saw his form,
'T was on the raging waves at night,
And if at all he saw the storm,
He recked not of its angry might.
For while the dark and troubled skies
Rung with accents of despair,
He never raised his tearful eyes,
Nor lifted up his voice in prayer.
Once, thirsting for the cooling well,
Beneath a fierce and burning sun,

And listening to the camel's bell,
 That music of the desert lone,
 We reached a spot whose fountain made
 An Eden in that barren land ;
 And there, beneath the palm-tree's shade,
 We saw the lonely stranger stand.
 And once, when twilight closed the flowers,
 I marked him on dark Jura's steep,
 And twice amid thy sacred bowers,
 Gethsemane, I saw him weep.

But when I saw the mourner last,
 And heard the story of his woes,
 'T was where the solemn cypress cast
 Its shadow o'er man's last repose.
 The sun had faded from the sky,
 With all his bright and glowing bars,
 And solemn clouds were gliding by,
 In spectral silence o'er the stars.
 And there, beside a grassy mound,
 In agony for words too deep,
 And eyes bent sadly on the ground,
 I saw him clasp his hands and weep.
 Though I had seen him on the sea
 Unmoved, when all beside were pale,
 And weeping in Gethsemane,
 I never asked nor knew his tale.
 But now, beside the tomb, at last,
 By kindly looks and words, I sought
 To learn the story of the past,
 And win him from his troubled thought.
 With lips all breathlessly apart,
 He listened to each soothing word ;
 The chord was touched within his heart, —
 The long untroubled fount was stirred.

“ Companioned only by the dead,
 So many years I've lived alone,
 I hardly thought,” he sadly said,
 “ To hear again a pitying tone.
 But, stranger, friend, thy words are kind,
 And since thou fain wouldst learn my grief,
 It may be that my heart will find,

In utterance of its woes, relief.
 Life's brightest scenes will I recall,
 And those where shade and sunshine blend,
 And, if my lips can speak it all,
 I'll tell it even to the end.
 My childhood! it were more than vain
 To tell thee that was glad as fleet;
 While innocence and youth remain,
 Thou knowest that life's cup is sweet.

“But when the soul of manhood beamed,
 In after years, upon my brow, —
 (I know how darkly it is seamed
 With scars of guilt and sorrow now), —
 When, with the summer stars above,
 And dew-drops shining in the vale,
 I told the story of my love
 To one who did not scorn the tale;
 And when, in happiness and pride,
 Such as I never knew before,
 I bore her to my home a bride,
 The measure of my bliss ran o'er.
 Oh, in that bower of Eden blest,
 I fain would linger with my song;
 It irks me so to tell the rest —
 The serpent did not spare it long.

“It was the eve of such a day
 As on creation dawned of old,
 And all along the heavenly way
 The stars had set their lamps of gold.
 That night I stood amid the throng
 Where banquet flowers were sweetly strown,
 Where wine was poured with mirth and song,
 And where the smile of beauty shone.
 When lost in pleasure's maze, and when
 My heart to reason's voice was steeled,
 I tasted of the WINE-CUP, then —
 I tasted, and my doom was sealed!
 That night the moments passed more fleet
 Than with my bride upon the hills;
 That night I drank a draught more sweet
 Than water from the living rills.

It is a harder task to win
 The feet, at first, from right astray ;
 Yet if but once we yield to sin,
 How easy is the downward way !
 Oh, if the spirit can be won
 In evil ways to enter in,
 That first false step may lead us on
 Through all the labyrinths of sin :
 And I resisted not the power
 That drew me first towards the bowl,
 While firmer every day and hour
 The chains were fastened in my soul.
 I saw hope's sunny fountain fail
 In her young heart who loved me so,
 As day by day, her cheek grew pale
 With vigils and with tears of woe.

“ Oh, if a kind and pitying word,
 If tones so sweet as thine have been,
 My erring spirit could have heard,
 They might have saved me, even then.
 But no ; they named with scorn my name,
 And viewed me with reproachful eyes ;
 For all who saw my guilt and shame
 But looked upon me to despise.
 And so I left my home and hearth,
 For haunts of wickedness and sin,
 And sought, in wine and stronger mirth,
 To hush the voice of God within.
 I have no record in my heart
 Of how my days and weeks went by,
 Save shadowy images that start
 Like spectres still before mine eye.
 As something indistinct and dim
 Of sable hearse and funeral pall,
 Of trailing robes and mournful hymn,
 My memory keeps — and that is all !
 But when, as from a horrid dream,
 I woke, disturbed by nameless fears,
 I sought beside the mountain stream
 My home so dear in earlier years.
 'T was desolate — I called my bride,
 And listened, but no answer came ;

I made the hills and valleys wide
 Re-echo vainly with her name!
 And when I heard a step draw near,
 And met a stranger's wondering gaze,
 I asked, in tones of doubt and fear,
 For that sweet friend of earlier days
 And then I followed where he led;
 And as he left that singing stream,
 I glided near him with a tread
 Like guilty spirits in a dream:
 He brought me to this quiet ground,
 The last repose of woe and care,
 And, pointing to that grassy mound;
 He told me that MY BRIDE WAS THERE!

"I've been, for hopeless years since then,
 A wanderer on the land and sea,
 And little loved the homes of men,
 Or in their busy haunts to be;
 And should not now have turned to tread
 This darkest scene of all my woes,
 But something in my heart has said
 My life is hastening to its close.
 And now I have no wish below,
 And no request for man to keep,
 If thou, who know'st my tale of woe,
 Wilt lay me by my bride to sleep."

He paused, and, blinded by his tears,
 Bowed down with sorrow dark and deep,
 The hoarded agony of years
 Broke forth, and then he ceased to weep;
 But when he raised his eyes again,
 I saw, what was unseen till now,
 That death, in characters too plain,
 Was written on that pallid brow.

Three little days; and then we laid
 That wreck of manhood and of pride
 Beneath the gloomy cypress shade,
 To slumber with his stricken bride.

THE LOVERS.

THOU marvellest why so oft her eyes
 Fill with the heavy dew of tears —
 Have I not told thee that there lies
 A shadow darkly on her years ?
 Life was to her one sunny whole,
 Made up of visions fancy wove,
 Till that the waters of her soul
 Were troubled by the touch of love.
 I knew when first the sudden pause
 Upon her spirit's sunshine fell :
 Alas ! I little guessed the cause,
 'T was hidden in her heart so well.
 Our lives since early infancy
 Had flowed as rills together flow,
 And now to hide her thought from me
 Was bitterer than to tell its woe.

One night, when clouds with anguish black
 A tempest in her bosom woke,
 She crushed the bitter tear-drops back,
 And told me that her heart was broke !
 I learned it when the autumn hours
 With wailing winds around us sighed —
 'T was summer when her love's young flowers
 Burst into glorious life and died :
 No — now I can remember well,
 'T was the soft month of sun and shower ;
 A thousand times I 've heard her tell
 The season, and the very hour :
 For now, whene'er the tear-drops start,
 As if to ease its throbbing pain,
 She leans her head upon my heart
 And tells the very tale again.

'T is something of a moon, that beamed
 Upon her weak and trembling form,
 And one beside, on whom she leaned,
 That scarce had stronger heart or arm —
 Of souls united there until
 Death the last ties of life shall part,

And a fond kiss whose rapturous thrill
Still vibrates softly in her heart.

It is an era strange, yet sweet,
Which every woman's thought has known,
When first her young heart learns to beat
To the soft music of a tone ;
That era when she first begins
To know what love alone can teach,
That there are hidden depths within
Which friendship never yet could reach :
And all earth has of bitter woe
Is light beside her hopeless doom
Who sees love's first sweet star below
Fade slowly till it sets in gloom.
There may be heavier grief to move
The heart that mourns an idol dead,
But one who weeps a living love
Has surely little left to dread.

I cannot tell why love so true
As theirs should only end in gloom ;
Some mystery that I never knew
Was woven darkly with their doom.
I only know their dream was vain,
And that they woke to find it past,
And when by chance they met again,
It was not as they parted last.
His was not faith that lightly dies,
For truth and love as clearly shone
In the blue heaven of his soft eyes,
As the dark midnight of her own :
And therefore Heaven alone can tell
What are his living visions now ;
But hers — the eye can read too well
The language written on her brow.

In the soft twilight, dim and sweet,
Once watching by the lattice pane,
She listened for his coming feet,
For whom she never looked in vain :
Then hope shone brightly on her brow,
That had not learned its after fears —

Alas! she cannot sit there now,
 But that her dark eyes fill with tears!
 And every woodland pathway dim,
 And bower of roses cool and sweet,
 That speak of vanished days and him,
 Are spots forbidden to her feet.
 No thought within her bosom stirs,
 But wakes some feeling dark and dread:
 God keep thee from a doom like hers —
 Of living when the hopes are dead!

OUR HOMESTEAD.*

OUR old brown homestead reared its walls,
 From the way-side dust aloof,
 Where the apple-boughs could almost cast
 Their fruitage on its roof:
 And the cherry-tree so near it grew,
 That when awake I 've lain,
 In the lonesome nights, I 've heard the limbs,
 As they creaked against the pane:
 And those orchard trees, O those orchard trees!
 I 've seen my little brothers rocked
 In their tops by the summer breeze.

The sweet-brier under the window-sill,
 Which the early birds made glad,
 And the damask rose by the garden fence,
 Were all the flowers we had.
 I 've looked at many a flower since then,
 Exotics rich and rare,
 That to other eyes were lovelier,
 But not to me so fair;
 O those roses bright, O those roses bright!
 I have twined them in my sister's locks,
 That are hid in the dust from sight!

We had a well, a deep old well,
 Where the spring was never dry,

* Reprinted in "Poems and Parodies."

And the cool drops down from the mossy stones
 Were falling constantly :
 And there never was water half so sweet
 As that in my little cup,
 Drawn up to the curb by the rude old sweep,
 Which my father's hand set up ;
 And that deep old well, O that deep old well !
 I remember yet the plashing sound
 Of the bucket as it fell.

Our homestead had an ample hearth,
 Where at night we loved to meet ;
 There my mother's voice was always kind,
 And her smile was always sweet ;
 And there I 've sat on my father's knee,
 And watched his thoughtful brow,
 With my childish hand in his raven hair, —
 That hair is silver now !
 But that broad hearth's light, O that broad hearth's
 light !
 And my father's look, and my mother's smile, —
 They are in my heart to-night.

THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST.

WHAT were thy teachings ? Thou who hadst not where
 In all this weary earth to lay thy head ;
 Thou who wert made the sins of men to bear,
 And break with publicans thy daily bread !
 Turning from Nazareth, the despised, aside,
 And dwelling in the cities by the sea,
 What were thy words to those who sat and dried
 Their nets upon the rocks of Galilee ?

Didst thou not teach thy followers here below,
 Patience, long-suffering, charity, and love ;
 To be forgiving, and to anger slow,
 And perfect, like our blessed Lord above ?
 And who were they, the called and chosen then,
 Through all the world, teaching thy truth, to go ?

Were they the rulers, and the chiefest men,
The teachers in the synagogue? Not so!
Makers of tents, and fishers by the sea,
These only left their all to follow thee.

And even of the twelve whom thou didst name
Apostles of thy holy word to be,
One was a devil; and the one who came
With loudest boasts of faith and constancy,
He was the first thy warning who forgot,
And said, with curses, that he knew thee not!
Yet were there some who in thy sorrows were
To thee even as a brother and a friend,
And women, seeking out the sepulchre,
Were true and faithful even to the end:
And some there were who kept the living faith
Through persecution even unto death.

But, Saviour, since that dark and awful day
When the dread temple's veil was rent in twain,
And while the noontide brightness fled away,
The gaping earth gave up her dead again;
Tracing the many generations down,
Who have professed to love thy holy ways,
Through the long centuries of the world's renown,
And through the terrors of her darker days —
Where are thy followers, and what deeds of love
Their deep devotion to thy precepts prove?

Turn to the time when o'er the green hills came
Peter the Hermit from the cloister's gloom,
Telling his followers in the Saviour's name
To arm and battle for the sacred tomb;
Not with the Christian armor — perfect faith,
And love which purifies the soul from dross —
But holding in one hand the sword of death,
And in the other lifting up the cross,
He roused the sleeping nations up to feel
All the blind ardor of unholy zeal!

With the bright banner of the cross unfurled,
And chanting sacred hymns, they marched, and yet

They made a pandemonium of the world,
 More dark than that where fallen angels met:
 The singing of their bugles could not drown
 The bitter curses of the hunted down!
 Richard, the lion-hearted, brave in war,
 Tancred, and Godfrey, of the fearless band,
 Though earthly fame had spread their names afar,
 What were they but the scourges of the land?
 And worse than these were men, whose touch would be
 Pollution, vowed to lives of sanctity!

And in thy name did men in other days
 Construct the Inquisition's gloomy cell,
 And kindle persecution to a blaze,
 Likest of all things to the fires of hell!
 Ridley and Latimer — I hear their song
 In calling up each martyr's glorious name,
 And Cranmer, with the praises on his tongue
 When his red hand dropped down amid the flame!
 Merciful God! and have these things been done,
 And in the name of thy most holy Son?

Turning from other lands grown old in crime,
 To this, where Freedom's root is deeply set,
 Surely no stain upon its folds sublime
 Dims the escutcheon of our glory yet?

Hush! came there no sound upon the air
 Like captives moaning from their native shore —
 Woman's deep wail of passionate despair
 For home and kindred seen on earth no more!
 Yes, standing in the market-place, I see
 Our weaker brethren coldly bought and sold,
 To be in hopeless, dull captivity,
 Driven forth to toil like cattle from the fold.
 And hark! the lash, and the despairing cry
 Of the strong man in perilous agony!

And near me I can hear the heavy sound
 Of the dull hammer borne upon the air:
 Is a new city rising from the ground?
 What hath the artisan constructed there?

'T is not a palace, nor an humble shed ;
 'T is not a holy temple reared by hands :
 No! — lifting up its dark and bloody head
 Right in the face of Heaven, the scaffold stands ;
 And men, regardless of "Thou shalt not kill,"
 That plainest lesson in the Book of Light,
 Even from the very altars tell us still
 That evil sanctioned by the law is right !
 And preach in tones of eloquence sublime,
 To teach mankind that murder is not crime !

And is there nothing to redeem mankind ?
 No heart that keeps the love of God within ?
 Is the whole world degraded, weak, and blind,
 And darkened by the leprous scales of sin ?
 No, we will hope that some in meekness sweet,
 Still sit, with trusting Mary, at thy feet.

For there are men of God, who faithful stand
 On the far ramparts of our Zion's wall,
 Planting the cross of Jesus in some land
 That never listened to salvation's call.
 And there are some, led by philanthropy,
 Men of the feeling heart and daring mind,
 Who fain would set the hopeless captive free,
 And raise the weak and fallen of mankind.
 And there are many in life's humblest way,
 Who tread like angels on a path of light,
 Who warn the sinful when they go astray,
 And point the erring to the way of right ;
 And the meek beauty of such lives will teach
 More than the eloquence of man can preach.

And, blessed Saviour ! by thy life of trial,
 And by thy death, to free the world from sin,
 And by the hope that man, though weak and vile,
 Hath something of divinity within —
 Still will we trust, though sin and crime be met,
 To see thy holy precepts triumph yet !

SONNETS.

I.

Down in the cold and noiseless wave of death,
 Oh, pure and beautiful lost one that thou art,
 Clasp the anchor of eternal faith
 Closer and closer to thy trusting heart —
 Didst thou fade from us, while our tearful eyes,
 Here on the shore of sad mortality,
 Gazed sorrowing on that form that ne'er shall rise
 Till sounds the music of eternity.
 Then shalt thou take the Saviour's hand in thine,
 Not with his faith who held it falteringly,
 But in the trustfulness of love divine,
 And with him walk the waters of the sea;
 Till, casting anchor, all thy toils shall cease
 In the still haven of eternal peace.

II.

The beautiful measure of thy trusting love
 Survives the answering faith it knew of old;
 Over the heart thy pleadings cannot move,
 Slowly but sure the closing wave hath rolled:
 The un pitying eyes thou meet'st burn not more bright,
 Though now thy lips with eloquent fervor speak,
 And all thy passionate kisses may not light
 The crimson fires in the unchanging cheek.
 How shall I give thee solace? Had she died,
 With love's sweet sunlight shining in her eyes,
 Then might'st thou, casting selfish grief aside,
 Patiently wait reunion in the skies:
 For better than the living faith estranged,
 The love that goes down to the dead unchanged.

III.

Look once again! yet mourn in holy trust,
 Near the still Presence softly, softly tread,
 Before the dimness of the closing dust
 Soils the yet lingering beauty of the dead.

Look on the silent lip, whence oft hath flowed
 Such living truth as man hath seldom taught,
 And the sereneness of that brow that glowed
 Earnest in life with pure and eloquent thought!
 How silver-white has grown his reverend hair,
 Serving his Master in the way of truth:
 For him, an age of active love and prayer
 Fulfilled the beautiful promise of his youth;
 And what a triumph hour is death to those
 Faithful in life, yet happy in its close!

IV.

Let me not feel thy pitying fingers' grasp,
 Though dewy cool their pressure still may be,
 Since they have learned to thrill within the clasp
 Of passionate love that trembled once for me!
 Sweep back the beautiful tresses from thy brow,
 Nor let them, falling o'er me, blend with mine:
 Dark as the glorious midnight in their flow, —
 My locks are paler in their fall than thine!
 In thy deep eyes are lit the fires divine,
 That made the heart its early love forget;
 So much they mock the softer light of mine
 I cannot calmly meet their glances yet;
 Therefore, until this bitterness shall cease,
 Leave me, that I may win my heart to peace!

SYMPATHY.

In the same beaten channel still have run
 The blessed streams of human sympathy;
 And though I know this ever hath been done,
 The why and wherefore I could never see:
 Why some such sorrow for their griefs have won,
 And some, unpitied, bear their misery,
 Are mysteries, which thinking o'er and o'er
 Has left me nothing wiser than before.

What bitter tears of agony have flowed
 O'er the sad pages of some old romance!

How Beauty's cheek beneath those drops has glowed,
 That dimmed the sparkling lustre of her glance,
 And on some love-sick maiden is bestowed,
 Or some rejected, hapless knight, perchance,
 All her deep sympathies, until her moans
 Stifle the nearer sound of living groans!

Oh, the deep sorrow for their suffering felt,
 Where is found something "better days" to prove!
 What heart above their downfall will not melt,
 Who in a "higher circle" once could move!
 For such, mankind have ever freely dealt
 Out the full measure of their pitying love,
 Because they witnessed, in their wretchedness,
 Their friends grow fewer, and their fortunes less.

But for some humble peasant girl's distress,
 Some real being left to stem the tide,
 Who saw her young heart's wealth of tenderness
 Betrayed, and trampled on, and flung aside —
 Who seeks her out, to make her sorrows less?
 What noble lady o'er her tale hath cried?
 None! for the records of such humble grief
 Obtain not human pity — scarce belief.

And as for their distress, who from the first
 Have had no fortune and no friends to fail —
 Those who in poverty were born and nursed —
 For such, by men, are placed without the pale
 Of sympathy — since they are deemed the worst
 Who are the humblest, and if Want assail
 And bring them harder toil, 't is only said,
 "They have been used to labor for their bread!"

Oh, the unknown, unpitied thousands found
 Huddled together, hid from human sight
 By fell disease or gnawing famine, bound
 To some dim, crowded garret, day and night,
 Or in unwholesome cellars underground,
 With scarce a breath of air, or ray of light!
 Hunger, and rags, and labor ill repaid —
 These are the things that ask our tears and aid.

And these ought not to be; it is not well
 Here in this land of Christian liberty,
 That honest worth in hopeless want should dwell,
 Unaided by our care and sympathy;
 And is it not a burning shame to tell
 We have no means to check such misery,
 When wealth from out our treasury freely flows,
 To wage a deadly warfare with our foes!

It is all wrong; yet men begin to deem
 The days of darkest gloom are nearly done;
 A something, like the first bright golden beam
 That heralds in the coming of the dawn,
 Breaks on the sight. Oh, if it be no dream,
 How shall we haste that blessed era on!
 For there is need that on men's hearts should fall
 A spirit that shall sympathize with all.

MEMORIES.

“She loved me, but she left me.”

MEMORIES on memories! to my soul again
 There come such dreams of vanished love and bliss,
 That my wrung heart, though long inured to pain,
 Sinks with the fulness of its wretchedness.
 Thou dearer far than all the world beside!
 Thou who didst listen to my love's first vow!
 Once I had fondly hoped to call thee bride—
 Is the dream over? comes the awakening now?
 And is this hour of wretchedness and tears
 The only guerdon for my wasted years?

And did I love thee; when by stealth we met
 In the sweet evenings of that summer-time,
 Whose pleasant memory lingers with me yet,
 As the remembrance of a better clime
 Might haunt a fallen angel. And oh! thou,
 Thou who didst turn away and seek to bind
 Thy heart from breaking, thou hast felt ere now
 A heart like thine o'ermastereth the mind;

Affection's power is stronger than thy will ;
 Ah ! thou didst love me, and thou lovest me still.

My heart could never yet be taught to move
 With the calm even pulses that it should,
 Turning away from those that it should love,
 And loving whom it should not ; it hath wooed
 Beauty forbidden — I may not forget —
 And thou, oh ! thou canst never cease to feel ;
 But time, which hath not changed affection, yet
 Hath taught at least one lesson — to conceal ;
 So none, but thou, who see my smiles shall know
 The silent bleeding of the heart below.

MORALIZINGS.

HARK to the triumph for a victory won,
 Shaking the solid earth whereon we stand !
 What noble action hath the Nation done,
 That thus rejoicing echoes through the land ?
 Hath she beheld life's inequality —
 How, still, her stronger sons the weak oppress,
 And, in the spirit of philanthropy,
 Made the deep sum of human anguish less ?
 Or hath she risen up, at last, to free
 The hopeless slave from his captivity ?

No, not for these the shout is heard to-night
 Waking its echoes in each vale and glen,
 Not that the precepts of the Lord of Light
 Have found a dwelling in the hearts of men ;
 'T is that a battle hath been fought and won,
 That the deep cannon's note is heard afar,
 Telling us of the bloody conflict done,
 That Victory hovers o'er our ranks in war,
 And that her soldiery their triumph sing
 In the broad shadow of her starry wing.

And war is here ! Impatient for the fight,
 Our Nation in her majesty arose,

Even as the restless lion in his might

Up from the swelling of the Jordan goes,
And, with a trampling noise that shook each hill,

On to the conflict madly hath she rushed,
Vowing to falter not, nor yield, until

The life from out a Nation's heart is crushed ;
Until her hapless sons are made to feel
The bloody vengeance of her iron heel !

And what will be our gain, though we return

Proudly victorious from each battle plain ?

A weakened Nation will be left to mourn

Her bravest heroes in the conflict slain ;

Her treasury drained ; our broad and goodly land

Filled with the orphan and the widowed wife ;

A soldiery corrupted to disband,

Unfit for useful toil or virtuous life ;

And a long train of evils yet to be

Darkly entailed upon posterity !

And this is glory ! This is what hath been

To ages back the proudest theme of song,

And, dazzled by its glare, man has not seen

Beneath its pageantry the deadly wrong.

Deeming it fame to tread where heroes trod,

In his career he has not paused, or known

That all are children of the self-same God,

And that our brother's interest is our own ;

For man that hardest lesson has to learn,

Still to forgive, and good for ill return.

But oh ! for all will come that solemn hour

When memory calls to mind each deed of sin,

And the world's hollow praise can have no power

To still the voice of conscious guilt within.

And grant, O Lord of Love, that it may be

My lot, when on the brink of death I press,

To think of some slight act of charity,

Some pang of human wretchedness made less,

So, that in numbering o'er life's deeds again,

I then may deem I have not lived in vain !

DREAMING OF HEAVEN.

I SIT where the shadows of twilight steal o'er me,
 While the wildbirds are warbling their last fitful hymn,
 And I think of the loved who have entered before me
 That dwelling whose glory shall never grow dim.

Forever the land of the spirits seems nearer,
 When twilight steals over the earth's quiet breast,
 And the harps of the angels sound sweeter and clearer,
 What time the last day-beams go out in the west.

Oh! if all my dreams were as bright and elysian
 As those which the eve to my spirit still brings,
 I could sit here forever to woo the sweet vision,
 And dream about heaven and heavenly things!

For I long to be up where the seraphim gather
 With the ransomed of Zion whom Jesus has blest,
 And where, in the smile of our heavenly Father,
 Our purified spirits forever shall rest!

 MORNING THOUGHTS.

CROSSING the east with gold and crimson bars,
 Comes the imperial King of day and light,
 And, shaken by his tread, the burning stars
 Drop from the regal diadem of night.
 Surely the dawn was not more fair than this
 When Eden's roses in fresh beauty burst,
 And morning, blushing at her loveliness,
 Looked down upon the young creation first:
 When all below was innocent, and when
 The angels walked in Paradise with man.

How equally the gifts of God come down
 To all the creatures which his hand has made;
 The beams that wake the children of renown,
 Fall softly on the peasant in the glade.
 The dawn that calls the eagle up to fly
 From her proud eyrie to the mountain's height,

Visits the lowly lark as smilingly,
 When from the vale she takes her homeward * flight :
 Morning and life and sunshine, these are things
 That are not meant to be the wealth of kings !

Freedom at least from homeless poverty,
 A soul unbowed by fetters or by pain,
 One heart whose faith has still been true to me,
 These things are mine, and why should I complain ?
 Complain ! when God has been so good to me,
 And when his blessings with my days increase,
 Giving for every day of misery
 A recompense of tranquil days of peace :
 Even as the morning with her smiles and light
 Is over-payment for the weary night.

RESOLVES.†

I HAVE said I would not meet him ;
 Have I said the words in vain ?
 Sunset burns along the hill-tops,
 And I 'm waiting here again.
 But my promise is not broken,
 Though I stand where once we met ;
 When I hear his coming footsteps,
 I can fly him even yet.

We have stood here oft, when evening
 Deepened slowly o'er the plain ;
 But I must not, dare not, meet him
 In the shadows here again ;
 For I could not turn away and leave
 That pleading look and tone,
 And the sorrow of his parting
 Would be bitter as my own.

In the dim and distant ether
 The first star is shining through,
 And another and another
 Tremble softly in the blue :

* Corrected to "heavenward" in Boston Public Library copy.

† Reprinted in "Poems and Parodies."

Should I linger but one moment
 In the shadows where I stand,
 I shall see the vine-leaves parted,
 With a quick, impatient hand.

But I will not wait his coming!
 He will surely come once more;
 Though I said I would not meet him,
 I have told him so before;
 And he knows the stars of evening
 See me standing here again, —
 O, he surely will not leave me
 Now to watch and wait in vain!

'Tis the hour, the time of meeting!
 In one moment 't will be past;
 And last night he stood beside me, —
 Was that blessed time the last?
 I could better bear my sorrow,
 Could I live that parting o'er;
 O, I wish I had not told him
 That I would not come *once* more!

Could that have been the night-wind
 Moved the branches thus apart?
 Did I hear a coming footstep,
 Or the beating of my heart?
 No! I hear him, I can see him,
 And my meek resolves are vain;
 I will fly, — but to his bosom,
 And to leave it not again!

THE MARINER'S BRIDE.

O'ER the dark waters now my bounding bark
 May bear me onward wheresoe'er it will:
 I care not though the angry sky be dark,
 Light of my being! thou art with me still.
 Yes, let the heaving billows lash the deck,
 And the red lightning tremble on the sea;

So that thy faithful arms are round my neck,
 My heart will never tremble ;— for with thee
 I know my soul within would still be brave
 If every gaping billow showed a grave.

Once I had feared the raging of the sea,
 When the wild tempest in its fury burst ;
 But, bride of beauty ! standing thus with thee,
 The angry elements may do their worst.
 And should our vessel founder on a rock,
 Or cast us on some desert shore to die,
 Unshrinkingly my soul will meet the shock,
 If thou with that inspiring brow art nigh :
 For, folding thee, my gentle bride, to sleep,
 Closer, and closer, to this fainting breast,
 We should go down as calmly to the deep
 As a young infant to its cradle-rest.
 And though the water-wraith should stir the sea,
 And the wild tempest move the waves above,
 Securely peaceful would my slumber be
 With thee, my stricken bride of youth and love ;
 For thou wouldst cheer the darkness of the grave,
 As the bright sea-star lights the ocean cave !

THE PRISONER'S LAST NIGHT.

THE last red gold had melted from the sky,
 Where the sweet sunset lingered soft and warm,
 A starry night was gathering silently
 The jewelled mantle round her regal form ;
 While the invisible fingers of the breeze
 Shook the young blossoms lightly from the trees.

Yet were there breaking hearts beneath the stars,
 Though the hushed earth lay smiling in the light,
 And the dull fetters and the prison bars
 Saw bitter tears of agony that night,
 And heard such burning words of love and truth
 As wring the life-drops from the heart of youth.

For he, whom men relentless doomed to die,
 Parted with one who loved him till the last;
 With many a vow of faith and constancy
 The long, long watches of the night were passed;
 Till, heavily and slow, the prison door
 Swung back, and told them that their hour was o'er.

'T was his last night on earth! and God alone
 Can tell the anguish of that stricken one,
 Fettered in darkness to the dungeon stone,
 And doomed to perish with the rising sun;
 And she, whose faith through all was vainly true,
 Her heart was broken — and she perished too!

And will this win an erring brother back
 To the sweet paths of pleasantness and peace?
 "While crimes are punished but by crime more black,"
 Will sin, and wickedness, and sorrow cease?
 No! crime will never cease to scourge the land,
 So long as blood is on her ruler's hand!

And oh! how long will hearts in sin and pride
 Reject His blessed precepts, who of yore
 Taught men forgiveness on the mountain side,
 And spoke of love and mercy by the shore?
 How long will power, with such despotic sway,
 Trample unfriended weakness in its way?

Hasten, O Lord of Light, that glorious time,
 When man no more shall spurn thy wise command,
 Filling the earth with wretchedness and crime,
 And making guilt a plague-spot on the land;
 Hasten the time, that blood no more shall cry
 Unceasingly for vengeance to the sky!

SONG OF THE HEART.

THEY may tell forever of worlds of bloom
 Beyond the skies and beyond the tomb;
 Of the sweet repose, and the rapture there,
 That are not found in a world of care;

But not to me can the present seem
Like a foolish tale or an idle dream.

Oh, I know that the bowers of heaven are fair,
And I know that the waters of life are there;
But I do not long for their happy flow,
While there bursts such fountains of bliss below;
And I would not leave, for the rest above,
The faithful bosom of trusting love!

There are angels here; they are seen the while
In each love-lit brow and each gentle smile;
There are seraph voices, that meet the ear
In a kindly tone and the word of cheer;
And light, such light as they have above,
Beams on us here, from the eyes of love.

Yet, when it cometh my time to die,
I would turn from this wild world willingly;
Though, even then, would the thoughts of this
Tinge every dream of that land of bliss;
And I fain would lean on the loved for aid,
Nor walk alone through the vale and shade.

And if 't is mine, till life's changes end,
To keep the heart of one faithful friend,
Whatever the trials of earth may be, —
On the peaceful shore, or the restless sea,
In a palace home, or the wilderness, —
There is heaven for me in a world like this!

MAN BELIEVES THE STRONG.

OH! in this world, where all is fair and bright,
Save human wickedness and human pride,
Marring what else were lovely to the sight,
It is a truth that may not be denied,
However deeply we deplore the wrong,
Man hath believed, and still believes the strong.

When injured and defenceless woman stands,
Haply the child of innocence or youth,

And lifts to heaven her pleading voice and hands
 In all the moving eloquence of truth,
 Who will believe, in that most trying hour,
 Her words who is not strong in wealth or power?

Or let the slave, of all on earth bereft,
 Stand up to plead before a human bar;
 And though the fetters and the lash have left
 Upon his limbs the deep-attesting scar,
 Who trusts his tale, or who will rise to save
 From wrong and injury the outcast slave?

If a poor, friendless criminal appear,—
 A criminal which men themselves have made,
 By the injustice and oppression here,—
 Who to pronounce him "*guilty*" is afraid?
 But who, if rank or wealth were doomed thereby,
 Would speak that final word as fearlessly?

Oh, where so much of wrong and sorrow are,
 There must be need of an unfaltering trust
 In His all-seeing watchfulness and care,
 Whose ways to man below we know are just;
 In Him, whose love has numbered every tear
 Wrung from his weak, defenceless creatures here.

And there is need of earnest, full belief,
 And patient work, to bring that holier day
 When there shall be redress for humblest grief,
 And equal right and justice shall have sway;
 And we will strive, in trustfulness sublime,
 Hoping our eyes may see the blessed time!

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN.*

O BEAUTIFUL as Morning in those hours
 When, as her pathway lies along the hills,
 Her golden fingers wake the dewy flowers,
 And softly touch the waters of the rills,

* Given here as reprinted, with a few slight verbal changes, in "Poems and Parodies."

Was she who walked more faintly day by day,
Till silently she perished by the way.

It was not hers to know that perfect heaven
Of passionate love returned by love as deep,
Not hers to sing the cradle-song at even,
Watching the beauty of her babe asleep;
"Mother and brethren," — these she had not known,
Save such as do the Father's will alone.

Yet found she something still for which to live, —
Hearths desolate, where angel-like she came;
And "little ones," to whom her hand could give
A cup of water in her Master's name;
And breaking hearts, to bind away from death
With the soft hand of pitying love and faith.

She never won the voice of popular praise,
But counting earthly triumph as but dross,
Seeking to keep her Saviour's perfect ways,
Bearing in quiet paths his blessed cross,
She made her life, while with us here she trod,
A consecration to the will of God.

And she hath lived and labored not in vain:
Through the deep prison-cells her accents thrill,
And the sad slave leans idly on his chain,
And hears the music of her singing still;
While little children, with their innocent praise,
Keep freshly in men's hearts her Christian ways.

And what a beautiful lesson she made known!
The whiteness of her soul sin could not dim;
Ready to lay down on God's altar-stone
The dearest treasure of her life for Him,
Her flame of sacrifice never, never waned;
How could she live and die so self-sustained?

For friends supported not her parting soul,
And whispered words of comfort, kind and sweet,

When treading onward to that final goal,
Where the still Bridegroom waited for her feet ;
Alone she walked, yet with a fearless tread,
Down to Death's chamber and his bridal bed !

THE HOMESICK PEASANT.

OH ! I am sick of cities ; all night long
Orchards and corn-fields waved before my sight,
Till the quick moving of the restless throng
Broke on that pleasant vision of the night
With an unwelcome sound, and called my feet
Back from the meadows to the crowded street.

I grew a child of Nature on the hills,
Learning no lessons from the lips of Art,
And the restraint of cities cramps and chills
The warm, impulsive feelings of my heart ;
Even the ceaseless stir and motion here
Grates with a jarring sound upon my ear.

It is not like my childhood : from the trees,
And from the flowers that grew beneath my feet,
And from the artless whispers of the breeze,
I never learned the lessons of deceit :
They never taught me that my heart should hide
Its thoughts and feelings with a mask of pride.

And therefore with the morning I awake,
To feel a homesick yearning for the hills —
A thirst no water on the earth can slake,
Save the clear gushing of my native rills ;
And I once more upon their banks would stand,
Free as the breezes of my native land.

Give me a sweet home, set among the trees,
With friends whose words are ever kind and true,
And books whose stories should instruct and please,
When round the quiet hearth the household drew ;
For in their pleasant pages I can find
All I would learn of cities and mankind.

HOMES FOR ALL.*

COLUMBIA, fairest nation of the world,
Sitting in queenly beauty in the west,
With all thy banners round about thee furled,
Nursing the cherub Peace upon thy breast;
Never did daughter of a kingly line
Look on a lovelier heritage than thine!

Thou hast deep forests stretching far away,
The giant growth of the long centuries,
From whose dim shadows to the light of day
Come forth the mighty rivers toward the seas,
To walk like happy lovers, hand in hand,
Down through the green vales of our pleasant land.

Thou hast broad prairies, where the lonely flowers
Blossom and perish with the changing year;
Where harvests wave not through the summer hours,
Nor with the autumn ripen in the ear;
And beautiful lakes, that toss their milky spray
Where the strong ship hath never cleaved its way.

And yet with all thy broad and fertile land,
Where hands sow not, nor gather in the grain,
Thy children come and round about thee stand,
Asking the blessing of a home in vain, —
Still lingering, but with feet that long to press
Through the green windings of the wilderness.

In populous cities do men live and die,
That never breathe the pure and liberal air;
Down where the damp and desolate rice-swamps lie,
Wearying the ear of Heaven with constant prayer,
Are souls that never yet have learned to raise
Under God's equal sky the psalm of praise.

Turn not, Columbia! from their pleading eyes;
Give to thy sons that ask of thee a home;
So shall they gather round thee, not with sighs,

* Reprinted in "Poems and Parodies" under the title "Plea for the Homeless."

But as young children to their mother come;
And brightly to the centuries shall go down
The glory that thou wearest like a crown.

HARVEST GATHERING.

THE last days of the summer: bright and clear
Shines the warm sun down on the quiet land,
Where corn-fields, thick and heavy in the ear,
Are slowly ripening for the laborer's hand;
Seed-time and harvest — since the bow was set,
Not vainly has man hoped your coming yet!

To the quick rush of sickles, joyously
The reapers in the yellow wheat-fields sung,
And bound the pale sheaves of the ripened rye,
When the first tassels of the maize were hung;
That precious seed into the furrow cast
Earliest in spring-time, crowns the harvest last.

Ever, when summer's sun burns faint and dim,
And rare and few the pleasant days are given,
When the sweet praise of our thanksgiving hymn
Makes beautiful music in the ear of Heaven,
I think of other harvests whence the sound
Of singing comes not as the sheaves are bound.

Not where the rice-fields whiten in the sun,
And the warm South casts down her yellow fruit,
Shout they the labors of the autumn done —
For there Oppression casts her deadly root,
And they, who sow and gather in that clime,
Share not the treasures of the harvest-time.

God of the seasons! thou who didst ordain
Bread for the eater who shall plant the soil,
How have they heard thee, who have forged the chain
And built the dungeon for the sons of toil?
Burdening their hearts, not with the voice of prayer,
But the dull cries of almost dumb despair.

They who would see that growth of wickedness
 Planted where now the peaceful prairie waves,
 And make the green paths of our wilderness
 Red with the torn and bleeding feet of slaves —
 Forbid it, Heaven! and let the sharp axe be
 Laid at the root of that most poison tree!

Let us behold its deadly leaves begin
 A fainter shadow o'er the world to cast,
 And the long day that nursed its growth of sin
 Wane to a sunset that shall be its last;
 So that the day-star, rising from the sea,
 Shall light a land whose children will be free!

LIFE IS NOT VANITY.

ARE ye not erring teachers
 Who tell us, that below
 There is no sparkling fountain
 Where living waters flow;
 That all earth's well-springs bubble up
 With bitter drops of woe?

That life 's a night of darkness,
 With scarce a cheering star, —
 That we cannot make our trials
 Less bitter than they are, —
 That we should think of Heaven alone,
 And Heaven itself is far.

No marvel earth is dark to you
 Who thus in shadows keep, —
 That you cannot see the day-spring
 When you close your eyes and sleep;
 Or that earth is but a vale of tears
 For you who sit and weep.

You tell us of the happiness
 Of the unchanging sphere,
 Because the loved and loving there
 To bless us will be near;

If that be heaven, what hinders us
To make a heaven here?

Oh, would we rouse from slumber,
Life hath something to be done;
We may lose the prize by faltering,
Which exertion might have won;
And when we strive to help ourselves,
The Lord will aid us on.

And if we be immortal,
As we believe and know,
Then is the life eternal
Begun in life below;
And hath it been ordained by heaven,
That it should be in woe?

No! and though trailing shadows
O'er our pathway sometimes move,
Yet below, as in the life to come,
All things are ruled in love,
And God will bless as willingly
As he will do above!

And if we cheer life's marches,
And smooth the path beneath,
If we labor for advancement
With a true and earnest faith;
We shall stand prepared for lengthened years,
Or for the call of death!

PRAYER.

FATHER! thou didst hear my prayer:
When I plead with thee to spare,
When I asked for length of years,
Thou didst pitying see my tears,
And thy words in answer were,
"Respite from the sepulchre!"

Lo! no more the prayer I raise:
Life hath waned to evil days;

Veiling in the dust my woes,
I would bless the grave's repose ;
Sweeter, sweeter would it be,
Than a lover's dream to me.

Long enough thy child hath been
Struggling in a world of sin,
Long enough have doubts assailed,
Long enough the flesh prevailed,
Long enough hath sorrow tried
One it hath not purified.

In life's hours of rosy dawn,
Hope with white hand led me on,
Showing gorgeous imagery
Of a happier time to be ;
But, in noonday's clearer flame,
Blest fruition never came.

Hastening now towards its close
Is the day that brightly rose,
And the hope that fled its prime
Comes not at the evening time ;
Hear me, pity, and recall,
Ere the midnight shadows fall !

Willing, eager to depart,
Old in years and old in heart,
Waiting but the messenger
To unseal the sepulchre,
Lo ! again to thee I come —
Take me, Father, take me home !

MORNING.*

SADLY, when the day was done,
To his setting waned the sun ;
Heavily the shadows fell,
And the wind with fitful swell,
Echoed through the forest dim
Like a friar's ghostly hymn.

* Reprinted in "Poems and Parodies."

Mournful on the wall, afar,
Walked the evening sentry-star ;
Burning clear, and cold, and lone,
Midnight's constellations shone ;
While the hours, with solemn tread,
Passed like watchers by the dead.

Now at last the Morning wakes,
And the spell of darkness breaks,
On the mountains, dewy sweet,
Standing with her rosy feet,
While her golden fingers fair
Part the soft flow of her hair.

With the dew from flower and leaf
Flies the heavy dew of grief ;
From the darkness of my thought,
Night her solemn aspect caught ;
And the morning's joys begin,
As a morning breaks within.

God's free sunshine on the hills,
Soft mists hanging o'er the rills,
Blushing flowers of loveliness
Trembling with the light wind's kiss, —
O, the soul forgets its care,
Looking on a world so fair !

Morning woos me with her charms,
Like a lover's pleading arms ;
Soft above me bend her skies,
As a lover's tender eyes ;
And my heavy heart of pain,
Trembling, thrills with hope again.

BURIAL HYMN.

EARTH to earth, and dust to dust !
Here, in calm and holy trust,
We have made her quiet bed
With the pale hosts of the dead,

And, with hearts that, stricken, weep,
Come to lay her down to sleep.

From life's weary cares set free,
Mother Earth, she comes to thee!
Hiding from its ills and storms
In the shelter of thine arms :
Peaceful, peaceful be her rest,
Here upon thy faithful breast.

And when sweetly from the dust
Heaven's last summons calls the just,
Saviour! when the nations rise
Up to meet thee in the skies,
Gently, gently, by the hand,
Lead her to the better land!

SONG OF THE REFORMED.

SEEKING its place of rest,
Each in its quiet nest,
All the glad warblers have hushed their last song ;
And the first star of night,
With her faint silver light,
Guideth my homeward steps safely along.

Oh! to that quiet home,
With what delight I come,
When from the cares of the day I am free ;
For with her happy smile,
There my young wife the while
Sits by the lattice pane watching for me.

But when I sought the board
Where the red wine is poured,
Oft has she fled when my footsteps drew near,
And nestling down to rest,
Close to that faithful breast,
Has my young infant turned from me in fear.

Silently then each day
 Passed her sad life away —
 Silently then was our sweet child caressed;
 Now our low cabin rings
 With the glad song she sings,
 Rocking it nightly to sleep on her breast.

There I can see the light
 Where our warm hearth is bright,
 Oh! is there bliss more ecstatic above
 Than this full heart can know,
 Blest with your smiles below,
 Wife of my bosom and child of my love?

 THE COLD WATER ARMY.

FIRMLY they still have stood,
 A true and fearless band,
 For the noble cause of human good
 Hath nerved each heart and hand.
 And they fear not the frowns of earth,
 The mocking sneers of men,
 For they fight for the sacred home and hearth,
 For their trampled rights again.

In their ranks, no longer thin and weak,
 Are men of every age,
 From the stripling slight, with a beardless cheek,
 To the silver-headed sage.
 Oh, their hosts would darken the summer sea,
 Were their banners all outspread,
 And the dens of guilt rock tremblingly
 With their firm and heavy tread.

They come not, an invading band,
 With dreams of high renown,
 To spoil the homes of our happy land,
 And trample her vineyards down;
 But to hunt that monster of sin and crime,
 Which the slaves of the wine-cup know,

Who tracks his way in a path of slime
O'er the fairest flowers below.

For undisturbed has he roamed the earth
Till his serpent brood have come
To nest themselves in the very hearth
Of many a once bright home.
Yet, hearing the widow's and orphan's sigh,
And knowing he wounds to kill,
There are those so deaf to a nation's cry
They would shield the monster still.

But our army follows with noiseless tread
Wherever he winds his way,
As, feeling the bruise on his venomed head,
He shrinks from the light of day;
And ne'er on the unsheathed sword and spear
Will their hand relax its grasp,
Till they pause, and lean on their arms, to hear
The sound of his dying gasp.

COMING HOME.

How long it seems since first we heard
The cry of "Land in sight!"
Our vessel surely never sailed
So slowly till to-night.
When we discerned the distant hills,
The sun was scarcely set,
And now the moon of night is passed,
They seem no nearer yet.

Where the blue Rhine reflected back
Each frowning castle wall,
Where, in the forest of the Hartz,
Eternal shadows fall —
Or where the yellow Tiber flowed
By the old hills of Rome,
I never felt such restlessness,
Such longing for our home.

Dost thou remember, oh! my friend,
 When we beheld it last,
 How shadows from the setting sun
 Upon our cot were cast?
 Three summer-times upon its walls
 Have shone for us in vain;
 But, oh! we're hastening homeward now,
 To leave it not again.

There, as the last star dropped away,
 From Night's imperial brow,
 Did not our vessel "round the point"?
 The land looks nearer now!
 Yes, as the first faint beams of day
 Fall on our native shore,
 They're dropping anchor in the bay —
 We're home, we're home once more!

THE REEFER.

YES, sailor, when the angry deep
 Its war with heaven is waging,
 I'll tell thee why I sit and weep
 When thus the storm is raging.
 Once when the sea, as now, was tossed
 With fierce and wild commotion,
 I stood unheeding on the coast,
 And watched the troubled ocean.

For as the arrowy bolts were hurled
 In fiery wrath from heaven,
 We saw afar, with canvas furled,
 A ship through darkness driven.
 I had a brother then, whose bark
 Upon the sea was riding,
 And when I saw that vessel dark,
 I knew his hand was guiding.

And now, as fiercer came the light,
 And as the storm grew drearer,
 We saw her through the gathering night
 Come near the strand, and nearer!

Already fancy clasped once more
 The form so fondly cherished,
 When, reaching to the fatal shore,
 That vessel struck and perished!

And now, upon the sea, whene'er
 The black clouds o'er us hover,
 I see that frail bark strike, and hear
 The shriek that rose above her!
 No change can lull my thoughts to sleep,
 No time my grief assuages;
 And therefore, sailor, do I weep,
 When thus the tempest rages.

A TIME TO DIE.

LIKE the music deep and solemn
 In some ruined church,
 Floating over crumbling column
 And fallen arch;
 Through the naked branches trailing
 Low on the ground,
 Come the winds of autumn wailing
 With a ghostly sound.

Over all below a feeling
 Of quiet reigns,
 Like a drowsy numbness stealing
 Through the veins.
 Even the sun, in the dim haze mourning,
 Hides his head,
 Like a sickly taper burning
 Beside the dead.

And all day one feeling busy
 In my soul hath wrought,
 Till heart and brain are dizzy
 With the solemn thought.
 In the shadow of deep dejection
 I sit and sigh,
 With but one sad reflection,
 "A TIME TO DIE!"

O God of the soul immortal !
 If death be near,
 Teach me to tread that portal
 And not to fear.
 Keep thou my feet from turning
 Aside to die ;
 Let my lamp be filled and burning
 For the "MIDNIGHT CRY" !

DEATH SCENE. *

DYING, still slowly dying,
 As the hours of night wore by,
 She had lain since the light of sunset
 Was red on the evening sky, —

Till after the middle watches,
 As we softly near her trod,
 When her soul from its prison fetters
 Was loosed by the hand of God.

One moment her pale lips trembled
 With the triumph she might not tell,
 As the light of the life immortal
 On her spirit's vision fell.

Then the look of rapture faded,
 And the beautiful smile waxed faint,
 As that in some convent picture
 On the face of a dying saint.

And we felt in the lonesome midnight,
 As we sat by the silent dead,
 What a light on the path going downward
 The steps of the righteous shed ; —

When we thought how with feet unshrinking
 She came to the Jordan's tide,
 And, taking the hand of the Saviour,
 Went up on the heavenly side !

* Reprinted in "Poems and Parodies."

THE PLACE OF GRAVES.

How often in the summers gone,
I 've stood where these memorials rise,
And every time the spot had grown
Less and less lonely to mine eyes.

The first I ever loved that died
Sleeps here, where these sweet roses wave ;
A maiden, with life's path untried,
She left the sunshine for the grave.

And what a place of desolate gloom
Seemed then to me the realm of death,
Though she I loved went calmly down,
In all the truthfulness of faith.

The next, a sweet lamb of the fold,
An infant, lulled to slumber lay,
With her pale locks of finest gold
Put softly from her brow away.

But when the patient mother prest
To her meek lips the bitter cup,
And came with those she loved to rest,
Till God shall call the sleepers up,

Then the dim pathway grew more clear,
That leads through darkness to the light,
And death has never seemed so drear,
Nor heaven so distant from my sight.

PARTING AND MEETING.

On the casements, closed and lonesome,
Is falling the autumn rain,
And my heart to-night is heavy
With a sense of unquiet pain.

Not that the leaves are dying
In the kiss of the traitor frost,
And not that the summer flowers
On the bitter winds are tossed.

And not that the reaper's singing
The time no longer cheers,
Bringing home through the mellow starlight
The sheaves and the yellow ears.

No, not from these am I sighing,
As the hours pass slow and dull,
For God in his own time maketh
All seasons beautiful.

But one of our household number
Sits not by the hearth-fire's light,
And right on her pathway beating
Is the rain of this autumn night.

And therefore my heart is heavy
With a sense of unquiet pain,
For, but Heaven can tell if the parted
Shall meet in the earth again.

But knowing God's love extendeth
Wherever his children are,
And tenderly round about them
Are the arms of his watchful care ;

With him be the time and the season
Of our meeting again with thee,
Whether here on these earthly borders,
Or the shore of the world to be.

DEATH OF A FRIEND.*

WHERE leaves by bitter winds are heaped
In the deep hollows, damp and cold,
And the light snow-shower, silently,
Is falling on the yellow mould,

* Reprinted in "Poems and Parodies."

Sleeps one who was our friend, below ; —
 With meek hands folded on her breast,
 When the first flowers of summer died,
 We softly laid her down to rest.

By her were blessings freely strewn,
 As roses by the summer's breath ;
 Yet nothing in her perfect life
 Was half so lovely as her death.

In the meek beauty of a faith
 Which few have ever proved like her,
 She shrunk not even when she felt
 The chill breath of the sepulchre.

Heavier, and heavier still, she leaned
 Upon His arm who died to save,
 As step by step He led her down
 To the still chamber of the grave.

'T was at the midnight's solemn watch
 She sunk to slumber, calm and deep :
 The golden fingers of the dawn
 Shall never wake her from that sleep.

From him who was her friend below,
 She turned to meet her Heavenly Guide ;
 And the sweet children of her love,
 She left them sleeping when she died.

Her last of suns went calmly down,
 And when the morn rose bright and clear,
 Hers was a holier Sabbath-day
 Than that which dawned upon us here.

LOVE AT THE GRAVE.

REMEMBRANCER of nature's prime,
 And herald of her fading near,
 The last month of the summer time
 Of leaves and flowers is with us here.

More eloquent than lip can preach
To every heart that hopes and fears,
What solemn lessons does it teach
Of the quick passage of our years!

To me it brings sad thoughts of one,
Who, in the summer's fading bloom,
Bright * from the arms of love went down
To the dim silence of the tomb.

How often since has spring's soft shower
Revived the life in nature's breast,
And the sweet herb and tender flower
Have been renewed above her rest!

How many summer times have told
To mortal hearts their rapid flight,
Since first this heap of yellow mould
Shut out her beauty from my sight!

Since first, to love's sweet promise true,
My feet beside her pillow trod,
Till year by year the pathway grew
Deeper and deeper in the sod!

Now these neglected roses tell
Of no kind hand to tend them nigh;
Oh, God! I have not kept so well
My faith as in the years gone by.

But here to-day my step returns,
And, kneeling where these willows wave,
As the soft flame of sunrise burns
Down through the dim leaves to thy grave,

I cry, Forgive that I should prove
Forgetful of thy memory;
Forgive me, that a living love
Once came between my soul and thee!

* Corrected to "Right" in the Boston Public Library copy.

For the weak heart that faintly * yearned
 For human love its life to cheer,
 Baffled and bleeding has returned
 To stifle down its crying here.

For, steadfast still, thy faith to me
 Was one which earth could not estrange:
 And, lost one! where the angels be
 I know affection may not change.

STRENGTH OF SIN.

How lately and this beautiful earth
 Was shut by darkness from my sight,
 And all the mighty arch of blue
 Was sparkling with its worlds of light.

Waning and waning, one by one
 They vanished as the day-star rose,
 Till, lo! along the distant hills
 The fire of sunrise burns and glows.

And turning from the hosts of heaven
 To the calm beauty of the earth,
 I feel what goodness must be His
 Who spoke its glories into birth.

More than our hearts can comprehend,
 Or our weak, blinded eyes can see,
 The wisdom and the love of God,
 How mighty and how vast they be.

Too fair for us to hate or leave
 This world His hand has placed us in,
 But for the presence and the power
 Of that most fiery serpent, sin —

That first in Eden's peaceful shade
 Uncoiled its bright and deadly folds,
 And living still, and unsubdued,
 Sends its dark poison through our souls.

* Corrected to "vainly" in the Boston Public Library copy.

But from his creatures, blind and lost,
God never wholly turned aside,
As power to save us from the curse
Was sent us when the Saviour died.

All that is left us under heaven,
Hope of the lost and sin-enslaved,
The only Name on earth that 's given,
Whereby the souls of men are saved.

Thanks unto God, that He was sent
A sacred warfare to begin,
That in the end shall surely crush
And bind the infernal strength of sin!

That by Him it shall be at last
Out from this fair creation hurled,
Who gave its death-blow when the cross
Was darkly planted in the world.

And thanks to Him, that when the soul
In agony for mercy calls,
Right in the shadow of that cross
The sunlight of His pardon falls.

THE WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE.

MORN broke on Calvary, and the sun was flinging
The earliest brightness from his locks abroad,
As the meek sisters came in sadness, bringing
Gifts of sweet spices to anoint their Lord.

They who had loved his blessed precepts ever,
And linger'd with him when the earth was gloom,
They were the faithful who reviled him never,
"Last at the cross, and earliest at the tomb!"

I 've sometimes thought I never could inherit
A glorious mansion in the skies above:
For, oh! how weak and faltering is my spirit,
Compared with such undying faith and love!

But, Father, cannot all that heavenly meekness,
 That deathless love which all things could endure,
 Can it not plead before Thee, for the weakness
 Of one whose faith is oft so faint and poor ?

MELODY.

THE beautiful eve, in her sparkling tiara,
 With dew-dropping fingers is closing the flower,
 Where thou, oh ! my white-bosomed bird of the prairie,
 Art watching and waiting for me in our bower.

My heart, beating quick as the pulse of the ocean,
 Outstrips e'en my courser, to see thee again ;
 Though his limbs are as lithe and as fleet in their motion
 As the barb in the desert, or roe on the plain.

My heart feels no presage of evil or danger,
 For thou never wouldst fly, lovely warbler, from me ;
 And I hid thee so well that the spoiler and stranger
 Could track not the windings which lead me to thee.

Yet faster, my steed : for the starlight discloses
 Our bower, but no minstrel its shadows among ; —
 Yes, something is fluttering like wings in the roses,
 And, bird of my bosom ! I hear thy sweet song.

CHANGES.*

UNDER the evening splendor
 Of spring's sweet skies,
 Learned I love's lesson tender,
 From the maiden's eyes.

When the stars, like lovers meeting,
 In the blue appeared,
 And my heart, tumultuous beating,
 Hoped and feared, —

* Reprinted in " Poems and Parodies."

Then the passion, long dissembled,
My lip made known,
And the hand of the maiden trembled
In my own, —

Till the tears that gushed unbidden,
Unrepressed,
And the crimson blush were hidden
On my breast.

And there in that vale elysian,
Through the summer bland,
We walked in a tranced vision,
Hand in hand.

There the evening shadows found us
Side by side,
While the glorious roses round us
Bloomed and died.

And when the bright sun, waning,
Dimly burned, —
When the wind, with sad complaining,
In the valley mourned, —

When the bridal roses faded
In her hair,
And her brow was sweetly shaded
With a thought of care, —

Then with heart still fondly thrilling,
But with calmer bliss,
From the lip no more unwilling
I claimed the kiss.

Then our dreams, with love o'erladen,
Were verified,
And dearer to me than the maiden
Grew the bride.

But when the dead leaves drifted
In that valley low,
And down from the cold sky sifted
The noiseless snow, —

Where the hearts of the faithful moulder
 With the dead,
 They made her a pillow colder
 Than the bridal bed.

And there at the spring's returning,
 With the summer's glow,
 When the autumn sun is burning,
 In the winter's snow, —

With the ghosts of the dim past ever
 Gliding round,
 Walk I in that vale, as a river
 That makes no sound.

FEARS.

FOLD me closer to thy bosom,
 Let me feel thy clasping hand ;
 Wilder grows the night, and drearer —
 Shall we never reach the land ?

Thrice from dreams of broken slumber
 Have I started in affright ;
 On the shore I never trembled
 As I tremble here to-night.

Nay, 't is not the haunting beauty
 Of some lovely vision gone —
 But the watches wear so heavy ;
 Leave me, leave me not alone !

Yes, I know the waves are calmer,
 And the sky has lost its frown,
 But the sharp reefs, ere the morning
 We may strike them, and go down !

Said you that the dawn is breaking,
 With its gray uncertain light ?
 Look ! I dare not trust my vision —
 Are the cliffs of home in sight ?

Hush! I cannot, listening eager,
Hear the heavy billows roar;
We are standing in still water —
We are nearing to the shore!

Yes, above us, streaming seaward,
Shine the red lights of the tower;
We are anchored — we are mooring —
God be praised for such an hour!

THE WATCHER.

'T is the third summer that has gone,
Since first upon that sloping hill,
He listened for the feet of one
Whose coming he is waiting still.

All through the evenings warm and bland,
When the red sunset lights the skies,
Then first we see the watcher stand,
With hope reflected in his eyes:

Still waiting through the tranquil hours,
Till eve with fingers, fair and slight,
Has folded up to sleep the flowers,
And left them with the peaceful night.

But when the stars like fire-sparks glow
In the far pavement of the sky,
Then hope, that lingered on till now,
Fades slowly from his cheek and eye.

And when the still night, wearing on,
Has almost broken into day,
As if he knew she would not come,
He turns with mournful step away.

Oh, heavily, and dull, and slow,
Such hours of anxious vigil wane:
God keep that watcher in his woe,
Who looks for coming feet in vain.

'T was on the morning of a day
Sweet as the night-time ever nursed,
Her white arms filled with flowers of May,
He saw the village maiden first.

Like the last hues of dying day,
Which sunset from his path has rolled,
The roses of the summer lay
Softly among her locks of gold.

Singing a soft and plaintive lay,
She won him with her gentle tone,
And then he stole her heart away
With voice as witching as her own.

And once, when the sweet stars as now
Look calmly down upon that hill,
Their young hearts breathed the tender vow
Which one has kept so faithful still.

And meeting nightly, 't was not strange,
But yet he dreamed not love could wane,
Or thought that human hearts might change,
Until he waited there in vain.

And still, to meet her on that height,
He lingers as in summers gone,
Till evening deepening into night,
He wakes to find himself alone.

For none till now have ever told
That watcher of expectant hours,
How long ago her locks of gold
Were braided with the bridal flowers.

CHALMERS.*

IN the hush of the desolate midnight,
Leaving no brighter behind,
A noble light was stricken
From the galaxy of mind.

* Reprinted in "Poems and Parodies" with the omission of the first and last stanzas.

As the red lights down in the water,
 When a boat shoots into the sea,
 Or a star through the thin blue ether,
 He vanished silently.

Not the counsel of ghostly fathers
 Showed him the way he trod,
 Not the picture of saints and martyrs,
 Nor the smile of the Mother of God ;

Not the love-lighted brows of kindred,
 Nor the words of a faithful friend,
 Opened up the way to his vision,
 And cheered him to the end.

As a God-fearing man, and holy,
 He had passed through the snares beneath,
 And he needed no aid to strengthen
 His soul in the hour of death.

The steps of his faith were planted
 Where the waves in vain might beat,
 While the waters of death rose darkly,
 And closed around his feet.

Not the " Save, or I perish ! " of Peter,
 Was his as he faintly trod,
 But the trust of that first blest martyr,
 Falling asleep in God.

And we may not mourn the brightness
 That is taken from our sky,
 Which shall teach to the unborn ages
 The way to live and die.

SONG.

THE first and loveliest star of even
 Shines on me with its first* sweet light :
 O thou, to whom my heart is given,
 What visions haunt thy soul to-night ?

* Corrected to " faint " in the Boston Public Library copy.

Dost thou, as this soft twilight steals
 So mildly over hill and plain,
 Think of the hour we parted last,
 And wish me by thy side again ?

I ask not that thy love should be
 As deep, as trusting as my own,
 I do not ask that thou shouldst feel
 All that my woman's heart has known :

But if, for every thousand times
 My spirit fondly turns to thee,
 One thought of thine to me is given,
 I doubt not thy fidelity.

For me, when on the hills alone,
 Or treading through the noisy mart,
 There is no time, there is no place,
 But thou art with me in my heart.

I only think upon the past,
 Or dream of happier days to be,
 And every hope and every fear
 Is something hoped or feared for thee.

THE CONFESSION.*

IN the moonlight of the Springtime,
 Trembling, blushing, half afraid,
 Heard I first the fond confession
 From the sweet lips of the maid.

As the roses of the Summer,
 By his warm embraces won,
 Take a fairer, richer color
 From the glances of the sun ; —

So as, gazing, earnest, anxious,
 I besought her but to speak,
 Deep and deeper burned the crimson
 Of the blushes in her cheek ; —

* Reprinted in "Poems and Parodies."

Till at last, with happy impulse,
Impulse that she might not check,
As it softly thrilled and trembled,
Stole her white arm round my neck ; —

And with lips, that, half averted
From the lips that bent above,
Met the kiss of our betrothal,
Told the maiden of her love.

THE ILLS OF LIFE.

How oft, when pursued by evils,
We falter and faint by the way,
But are fearless when, o'ertaken,
We pause, and turn at bay.

When storms in the distance have gathered,
I have trembled their wrath to meet,
Yet stood firm when the arrowy lightning
Has fallen at my feet.

My soul in the shadows of twilight
Has groaned beneath its load,
And felt at the solemn midnight
Secure in the hand of God.

I have been with friends who were cherished
All earthly things above,
Till I deemed the death-pangs lighter
Than the pangs of parting love.

Yet with one fearful struggle,
When at last the dread blow fell,
I have kept my heart from breaking,
And calmly said, Farewell !

I have looked at the grave, and shuddered
For my kindred treading near,
And when their feet had entered,
My soul forgot its fear.

Our ills are not so many
 Nor so hard to bear below,
 But our suffering in dread of the future
 Is more than our present woe.

We see with our vision imperfect
 Such causes of doubt and fear —
 Some yet that are far in the distance,
 And some that may never be near —

When, if we would trust in His wisdom
 Whose purpose we may not see,
 We would find, whatever our trials,
 As our day our strength shall be.

THE BRIDE.

LIKE the music of an arrow,
 Rushing, singing from the string,
 Was the sound in the June roses
 Of each homeward cleaving wing,

Where the leaves were softly parted
 By a hand of snowy grace,
 Letting in a shower of sunlight
 Brightly o'er an eager face;

O'er the young face of a maiden,
 Touched by changing hope and fear,
 As the sound of rapid hoof-strokes,
 Nearing, fell upon the ear,

White robes softly heaving, fluttering,
 O'er her bosom's rise of snow,
 Spoke the strange and soft confession *
 Of the beating heart below.

And the face had sweet revealings,
 Sweeter than the lip may speak,
 For the soft fires of confession
 Lit their crimson in the cheek.

* Corrected to "confusion" in the Boston Public Library copy.

Not for friend, and not for brother,
 Kept she eager vigil there;
 Not for friend, and not for brother,
 Gleamed the roses in her hair.

* * * * *

Myriad frost-sparks fire-like glittered
 In the keen and bitter air,
 And no wild bird, dropping downward,
 Stirred the branches cold and bare.

Flaming in the glorious forehead
 Of the midnight, high and lone,
 Starry constellations, steadfast,
 Yet * like burning jewels shone;

When, from a sick couch uplifted,
 A thin hand, most snowy white,
 Parted back the curtains softly,
 Letting in the pallid light.

Eyes of more than mortal brightness
 Spoke the waiting heart's desire,
 And the hollow cheeks were lighted
 With a quick, consuming fire.

That young watcher in the roses,
 Of the earnest eye and brow,
 Keeps again her anxious vigil;
 Who shall end its moments now?

Lo! the breast is softly trembling,
 But with hope that has no fear:
 By that happy smile the Presence
 She hath waited for is near!

For a bridegroom hath she tarried;
 Bring the roses for her brow;
 Though no human passion answers
 To his icy kisses now.

Bride of earth! here, hoping, fearing,
 Evil were thy days, and vain;
 Bride of heaven! for blest fruition
 Thou shalt never wait again.

REMEMBRANCE.

I HAVE struggled long with weakness,
 But my heart is free at last;
 Never more will it be haunted
 With the phantoms of the past.

Never more, from fairest maiden,
 The light witchery of a word
 Shall thrill my heart with rapture,
 When its magic tones are heard.

And that heart, so long made heavy
 With inquietude and woe,
 From its fetters loosed, is ringing,*
 Like a quick shaft from the bow.

Forgotten be the trusted
 That have lightly broke their trust:
 And the dreams that I have cherished,
 Let them perish in the dust!

Yet there was one fair maiden,
 Sweetest vision of my youth,
 She was lovely when I loved her,
 And her words were like the truth.

And they may have torn her from me;
 She was faithful once, I know —
 No, she smiled beside the altar,
 And 't was not to hide her woe!

And how can she, smiling, meet me
 With that fearless, open brow?
 'T was like heaven, of old, to kiss it,
 'T would be heaven to kiss it now.

* Corrected to "singing" in the Boston Public Library copy.

Pause, remembrance, since forever,
Leila, dreams of thee are sin —
Oh, I thought my heart was stronger
Till I paused and looked within!

ENTERING HEAVEN.

SOFTLY part away the tresses
From her forehead of white clay,
And across her quiet bosom
Let her pale hands lightly lay;
Never idly in her lifetime
Were they folded thus away.

She hath lived a life of labor,
She has done with toil and care,
She hath lived a life of sorrow,
She has nothing more to bear,
And the lips that never murmured
Never more shall move in prayer.

You who watched with me beside her,
As her last of nights went by,
Know how calmly she assured us
That her hour was drawing nigh;
How she told us, sweetly smiling,
She was glad that she could die.

Many times from off the pillow
Lifting up her face to hear,
She had seemed to watch and listen,
Half in hope and half in fear,
Often asking those about her
If the day were drawing near.

Till at last, as one aweary,
To herself she murmured low,
“Could I see him, could I bless him
Only once before I go;
If he knew that I was dying,
He would come to me, I know.”

Drawing then my head down gently,
Till it lay beside her own,
Said she, "Tell him in his anguish,
When he finds that I am gone,
That the bitterness of dying
Was to leave him here alone.

"Leave me now, my dear ones, leave me,
You are wearied now, I know;
You have all been kind and watchful,
You can do no more below,
And if none I love are near me,
'T will be easier to go.

"Let your warm hands chill not slipping
From my fingers' icy tips,
Be there not the touch of kisses
On my uncaressing lips,
Let no kindness see the darkening
Of my eyes' last, long eclipse.

"Never think of me as lying
By the dismal mould o'erspread,
But about the soft white pillow
Folded underneath my head;
And of summer flowers weaving
A rich broidery o'er my bed.

"Think of the immortal spirit
Living up above the sky,
And of how my face, there wearing
Light of immortality,
Looking earthward, is o'erleaning
The white bastions of the sky."

Stilling then, with one last effort,
All her weakness and her woe,
She seemed wrapt in pleasant visions
But to wait her time to go;
For she never after midnight
Spoke of anything below, —

But kept murmuring very softly
 Of cool streams and pleasant bowers,
 Of a pathway going up brightly,
 Where the fields were white with flowers;
 And at daybreak she had entered
 On a better life than ours.

 OUR BABY.

WHEN the morning, half in shadow,
 Ran along the hill and meadow,
 And with milk-white fingers parted
 Crimson roses, golden-hearted;
 Opening over ruins hoary
 Every purple morning-glory,
 And outshaking from the bushes
 Singing larks and pleasant thrushes;—
 That's the time our little baby,
 Strayed from Paradise, it may be,
 Came with eyes like heaven above her:
 O, we could not choose but love her!

Not enough of earth for sinning,
 Always gentle, always winning,
 Never needing our reproving,
 Ever lovely, ever loving;
 Starry eyes and sunset tresses,
 White arms, made for light caresses,
 Lips that knew no word of doubting,
 Often kissing, never pouting;
 Beauty even in completeness,
 Overfull in childish sweetness;—
 That's the way our little baby,
 Far too pure for earth, it may be,
 Seemed to us, who while about her
 Deemed we could not do without her.

When the morning, half in shadow,
 Ran along the hill and meadow,
 And with milk-white fingers parted
 Crimson roses, golden-hearted;

Opening over ruins hoary
 Every purple morning-glory,
 And outshaking from the bushes
 Singing larks and pleasant thrushes : —
 That 's the time our little baby,
 Pining here for heaven, it may be,
 Turning from our bitter weeping,
 Closed her eyes as when in sleeping,
 And her white hands on her bosom
 Folded like a summer blossom.

Now the litter she doth lie on,
 Strewed with roses, bear to Zion ;
 Go, as past a pleasant meadow
 Through the valley of the shadow ;
 Take her softly, holy angels,
 Past the ranks of God's evangels,
 Past the saints and martyrs holy,
 To the Earth-born, meek and lowly ;
 We would have our precious blossom
 Softly laid in Jesus' bosom.

THE OUTCAST.

SHE died at the middle of night :
 And brother nor sister, lover nor friend,
 Came not near her their aid to lend,
 Ere the spirit took its flight.

She died at the middle of night :
 Food and raiment she had no more,
 And the fire had died on the hearth before, —
 'T was a pitiful, pitiful sight.

She died at the middle of night :
 No napkin pressed back the parted lips ;
 No weeper, watching the eyes' eclipse,
 Covered them up from sight.

She died at the middle of night:
 And there was no taper beside the dead,
 But the stars, through the broken roof o'erhead,
 Shone with a solemn light.

She died at the middle of night:
 And the winter snow spread a winding-sheet
 Over the body from head to feet,
 Dainty, and soft, and white.

She died at the middle of night:
 But if she heard, ere her hour was o'er,
 "I have not condemned thee, — sin no more,"
 She lives where the day is bright.

THE LIFE OF TRIAL.

I AM glad her life is over,
 Glad that all her trials are past;
 For her pillow was not softened
 Down with roses to the last.

When sharp thorns choked up the pathway
 Where she wandered sad and worn,
 Never kind hand pressed them backward,
 So her feet were pierced and torn.

And when life's stern course of duty
 Through the fiery furnace ran,
 Never saw she one beside her,
 Like unto the Son of Man.

Ere the holy dew of baptism
 Cooled her aching forehead's heat,
 Heaviest waters of affliction
 Many times had touched her feet.

Long for her deliverance waiting,
 Clung she to the cross in vain;
 With an agonizing birth-cry
 Was her spirit born again.

And her path grew always rougher
Wearier, wearier, still she trod,
Till, through gates of awful anguish,
She went in at last to God!

OUR FRIEND.

WE tried to win her from her grief,
To soothe her great despair ;
We showed her how the starry flowers
Were growing everywhere, —
The starry flowers she used to braid
At evening in her hair.

We told her our hearts, for her,
Beat mournfully and low ;
How lines were deepening, day by day,
Across her father's brow ;
And how her little brother drooped, —
He had no playmate now.

And then she spoke of weary nights,
Of dull and sleepless pain,
And how she grieved that loving friends
Should plead with her in vain ;
And hoped that when the summer came
She should be well again.

Still softly singing to herself
Sad words of plaintive rhyme,
She always watched the sun's soft glow
Fade off at eventime,
As one who nursed a pleasant dream
Of some delicious clime.

Thus, sweetly as the flowers that once
She wore at eventide,
Faded and drooped the gentle girl,
A blossom by our side,
And her young light of life went out
With sunset, when she died !

THE CONVICT'S CHILD.

UNLOCK the still home of the dead ;
Down to its slumber we would lay
One, who, with firm, unshrinking tread,
Drew near and nearer day by day.

For when the morn of life for her
Hid all its beautiful light in tears,
The shadow of the sepulchre
Wore in her soul no human fears.

Even in the spring-time of her youth,
Before that she had wept or striven,
With all its wealth of love and truth,
She gave her young heart up to heaven.

Something prophetic of her doom
Before her vision sadly rose ;
So, ere the evil days had come,
She gathered strength to meet their woes.

Child of a lost and guilty sire,
She felt, what time must darkly prove,
That home and hearth were not for her,
Nor the sweet ministries of love.

And when her trembling heart at last
By maiden hopes and fears was thrilled,
Clasping the sacred cross more fast,
That pleading for the earth was stilled.

Turning from eyes whose tender ray
Burned with affection true and deep,
Love's passionate kisses never lay
Upon her forehead but in sleep.

Yet more than mortal may be tried
Was she who firmly bore that part,
And the meek martyr slowly died
In crushing down the human heart.

Pitying in such a world of storms
 The woes of that unsheltered breast,
 Death kindly took her in his arms,
 And rocked her to eternal rest.

Then softly, softly, down to sleep,
 Lay her where these white blossoms grow,
 And where the Sabbath silence deep
 Is broken by no sound of woe;—

Where near her, the long summer through,
 Will sing this gently lulling stream;
 'T is the first rest she ever knew
 Haunted by no unquiet dream.

AT THE WATER'S EDGE.

THERE are little innocent ones,
 And their love is wondrous strong,
 Clinging about her neck,
 But they may not keep her long.

Father! give her strength
 To loosen their grasp apart,
 And to fold her empty hands
 Calmly over her heart.

And if the mists of doubt
 Fearfully rise and climb
 Up from that river that rolls
 Close by the shore of time,—

Suddenly rend it away,
 Holy and Merciful One!
 As the veil of the temple was rent,
 When the mission of Christ was done.

So she can see the clime
 Where the jasper walls begin,
 And the pearl gates, half unclosed,
 Ready to shut her in.

So she can see the saints,
 As they beckon with shining hand,
 Leaning over the towers,
 Waiting to see her land.

Saviour! we wait thy aid,
 For our human aid were vain;
 We have gone to the water's edge,
 And must turn to the world again.

For she stands where the waves of death
 Fearfully surge and beat,
 And the rock of the shore of life
 Is shelving under her feet.

 DEAD.

DEAD! yet there comes no shriek, no tear, —
 My agony is dumb;
 I've thought, and feared, and known so long
 That such an hour must come:

For when her once sweet household cares
 Grew wearier every day,
 And, dropping from her listless hand,
 Her work was put away,

I knew that all her tasks were done,
 And, though I wept and prayed,
 I always thought of her as one
 For whom the shroud is made.

She talked of growing strong and well,
 To soothe our parting pain:
 I knew it would be well with her
 Before we met again; —

I knew upon that lonesome hill,
 Where winter now is drear,
 They'd have to make another grave
 Before another year.

I hope that they will dig it there :
 I would not have it made
 Between the graves where strangers sleep,
 Under the cypress shade.

I 'd have it where our sisters gone
 Are sleeping side by side,
 And where we weeping orphans laid
 Our mother when she died.

There, too, with beauty scarcely dimmed,
 And curls of shining gold,
 We covered little Ellie's face,
 And hid it in the mould.

So bring her there, and when they rise
 Who in the dust have lain,
 She 'll see her little baby wake,
 And take him up again.

THE WATCHER'S STORY.

SHE has slept since first the firelight
 Mingled with the sun's last ray,—
 If she lives till after midnight
 She may see another day ; —
 Though she then could only number
 A few weary hours, at best,
 And 't were better if her slumber
 Could be deepened into rest.

When about my neck, all night through,
 White arms, softly dimpled, lay,
 Then her face had not a shadow
 That I could not kiss away :
 And I knew the simple measure
 Of her little hopes and fears,
 Shared in all her childish pleasure,
 Pitied all her childish fears.
 But the maiden's deeper yearning
 Taught her maidenhood's disguise,

When a tenderer light came burning
In the soft depths of her eyes.
Then she wandered down the meadows,
Like some restless woodland elf,
Or sat hidden deep in shadows,
Singing softly to herself,
Or repeated dreams elysian
From some poet's touching strain,
As some vague and nameless vision
Were half-formed within the brain.
I had counselled, led, reproved her, —
Now the time for these was o'er.
From a baby I had loved her,
She could be a child no more.

Then she grew a listless weeper,
Scarce her lip might lightly speak,
And the crimson glow was deeper
In the white snow of her cheek.
And sometimes, at midnight waking,
I have heard her bitter sighs,
And have seen the tear-drops breaking
Through the closed lids of her eyes.
Sometimes, like a shaken blossom,
Moved her heart with visions sweet;
With my hand upon her bosom,
I could feel it beat, and beat.
While her young face down the meadows
Kept in childhood's pleasant track,
I could kiss off all the shadows,
Other lips had kissed them back!
Oftener then the tear-dews pearly
Dropped upon her soft white cheek,
Sorrow came to her so early,
And her womanhood was weak.
Life grew weary, very weary:
I had trembled, knowing well
Evermore it must be dreary,
When the first great shadow fell.
It had fallen, — the old, sad story,
Hope deferred, and wearying doubt;
From her youth's first crown of glory
All the roses had dropped out.

Once, when husbandmen were bearing
 To their barns the ripened ear,
 And that sorrow had been wearing
 On her mortal life a year;
 As she sat with me at evening,
 Looking earnestly without,
 Still half hopeful, and half yielding
 To the bitterness of doubt;
 Anxiously towards me leaning,
 Breaking off a lonesome tune,
 She asked, with deepest meaning,
 If the year had worn to June.
 Said I, roses lately blooming
 Have all faded from their prime;
 And she answered, He is coming!
 'T is the season, 't is the time!

Then she looked adown the valley
 Towards the pleasant fields in sight,
 Where the wheat was hanging heavy
 And the rye was growing white;
 And she said, with full heart beating,
 And with earnest, trembling tone,
 "If to-night should be our meeting,
 Let me see him first alone."

So with trust still unabated,
 With affection deep and true,
 She watched, and hoped, and waited,
 All the lonesome summer through,
 Till the autumn wind blew dreary;
 Then she almost ceased to smile,
 And her spirit grew more weary
 Of its burden all the while.
 I remember well of sharing
 The last watch she ever kept,
 Till she turned away despairing,
 Saying sadly while she wept:—

"Shut the window! when 't is lifted
 I can feel the cheerless rain,
 And the yellow leaves are drifted
 O'er me, through the open pane.

Heavy shadows, creeping nigher,
 Darken over all the walk;
 Let us sit beside the fire,
 Where we used to sit and talk.
 Close the shutter, through the gloaming
 My poor eyes can see no more,
 And if any one is coming
 I shall hear them at the door.

“O my friend, but speak, and cheer me,—
 Speak until my heart grow light;
 What if he were very near me,—
 What if he should come to-night!
 It might be so,— ere the morrow
 He might sit there where thou art,
 And the weight of all this sorrow
 Be uplifted from my heart.
 Idle, idle, long endurance
 Changes hope to fear and doubt,
 Saying oft a sweet assurance
 Almost wears its meaning out.
 O, my thoughts are foolish dreaming,
 Fancies of a troubled brain,
 Very like the truth in seeming;
 But he will not come again.
 Never will his hand caress me,
 Pushing back this faded hair,
 Never whisper soft, ‘God bless thee!’
 Half in fondness, half in prayer.
 Well, if he were standing near me,
 Close as thou hast stood to-day,
 Could I make the Father hear me,
 Could I turn from him to pray?”

“O my friend, whose soul was never
 On such waves of passion tost,
 Plead for Heaven’s sweet mercy ever,
 That I be not wholly lost!
 Talk to me of peaceful bosoms,
 Never touched by mortal ills;
 Talk of beds of fragrant blossoms,
 Whitening all the fadeless hills.

Promises of sweet Evangels,
 Blessed hope of life above,
 O eternity, O angels!
 Turn my thoughts from human love!"

DREAMS.

WHATE'ER before my sight appears,
 One vision in my heart is borne,—
 Two sweet, sad faces, wet with tears,
 Seen through the dim, gray light of morn.

And half o'ershadowing them, arise
 Thoughts, which are never lulled to sleep,
 Of one, whose calm, rebuking eyes
 Are sadder that they do not weep.

O friend, whose lot it might not be
 To tread, with me, life's path of ills!
 O friend, who yet shalt walk with me
 The white path of the eternal hills!

Gone are the moments when we planned
 Those sweet, but unsubstantial bowers,
 In some unknown and pleasant land,
 Where all our future wound through flowers.

Into the past eternity
 Have faded all those hopes and schemes;
 That summer island in the sea
 Slept only in our sea of dreams.

I know not if our hope was sin,
 When that fair structure was upbuilt;
 But this I know, that mine has been
 The bitterest recompense of guilt.

And the wild tempest of despair
 Still sweeps my spirit like a blast;
 Tears, penance, agonizing prayer,—
 Could you not save me from the past!

PROPHECIES.

AN urn within her claspéd hands,
Brimful and running o'er with dew
Spring on the green hills smiling stands,
Or walks in pleasant valley-lands,
Through sprouting grass and violets blue.
And but this morn, almost before
The sunshine came its leaves to gild,
In the old elm that shades our door,
There came a timid bird to build.

O time of flowers! O time of song!
How does my heart rejoice again!
For pleasant things to thee belong;
And desolate, and drear, and long,
To me was Winter's lonesome reign:
Since last thou trodd'st the vale and hill,
And nature with delight was rife,
A shadow strange, and dark, and chill,
Has hung above my house of life.

But now I see its blackness drift
Away, away, from out my sky;
And, as its heavy folds uplift,
There shines upon me, through the rift,
A burning star of prophecy:
My heart is singing with the birds,
Life's orb has passed from its eclipse;
And some sweet poet's hopeful words
Are always, always, on my lips.

O thou who lov'st me! O my friend!
Whate'er thy fears, where'er thou art,
As these soft skies above thee bend,
Does not their pleasant sunshine lend
A gleam of sunshine to thy heart?
Sweet prophecies through all the day
Within my bosom softly thrill,
And, while the night-time wears away,
My sleep with pleasant visions fill.

And I must whisper unto thee,
 Thou, who hast waited long in vain ;
 Though distant still the day may be,
 It shall be in our destiny
 To tread the selfsame path again ;
 And over hills, with blossoms white,
 Or lingering by the singing streams,
 That path shall wander on in light,
 And life be happier than our dreams !

THE POEM.

I AM dreaming o'er a poem
 Of affection's strength sublime ;
 Loved, because that once I read it
 In the dear, dear olden time,
 While you sat and praised my reading
 Of the poet's touching rhyme.

And how often, very gently,
 Did you check my cadence, when
 I read the sweetest verses
 Over to you once again !
 I have read that blessed poem
 Many, many times since then !

Then you softly closed the volume,
 When I paused at the last line,
 While your eyes said sweeter poems, —
 Poems that were more divine ;
 And all Hybla sweets were clustered
 On the lips that dropped to mine.

This is over now, all over, —
 And 't is better thus to be ;
 Yet I often sit and wonder
 Who is reading soft to thee,
 And if any voice is sweeter
 To thy heart than mine would be !

TO ONE WHO SANG OF LOVE.

THOU hast sung of love's confession
Out beneath the starry skies,
Of the rapture of the moment
When the soul is breathed in sighs,
And the maiden's trembling transport
As she blushing replies
To the worship of a lover,
Breathed from speaking lips and eyes.

By the earnest tender pathos
Of thy every witching line,
Such an hour of bliss ecstatic
Has surely once been thine:
And I would that Heaven might answer
This earnest wish of mine,
That thy star of love and beauty
May wane not, nor decline.

Listening to the first confession,
Lingering o'er the first fond kiss, —
What an age of bliss is crowded
In an hour of life like this!
Surely thine at such a moment
Has been perfect happiness,
And the maiden, the fond maiden,
O, I cannot guess her bliss!

Sometimes to my heart in slumber
Thought so like the truth will steal,
That the pressure of sweet kisses
On my brow I almost feel;
And I dream fond lips have uttered
What they might no more conceal;
But I cannot, no, I cannot,
Make such blessed visions real.

ARCHIE.

O to be back in the beautiful shadow
Of that old maple-tree down in the meadow,
Watching the smiles that grew dearer and dearer,
Listening to lips that drew nearer and nearer!
O to be back in the crimson-topped clover,
Sitting again with my Archie, my lover!

O for the time when I felt his caresses
Smoothing away from my forehead the tresses,
When up from my heart to my cheek went the blushes,
As he said that my voice was as sweet as the thrush's, —
When he said that my eyes were bewitchingly jetty,
And I told him 't was only my love made them pretty.

Talk not of maiden reserve and of duty,
Or hide from my vision such wonderful beauty;
Pulses above may beat calmly and even, —
We have been fashioned for earth, and not heaven;
Angels are perfect, — I am but a woman;
Saints may be passionless, — Archie is human.

Talk not of heavenly, down-dropping blisses, —
Can they fall on the brow like the rain of soft kisses?
Preach not the promise of priests and evangels, —
Love-crowned, I ask not the crown of the angels;
All that the wall of pure jasper incloses
Makes not less lovely the white bridal roses.

Tell me that when all this life shall be over,
I shall still love him, and he be my lover, —
That in meadows far sweeter than clover or heather
My Archie and I shall sit always together,
Loving eternally, wed ne'er to sever, —
Then you may tell me of heaven forever!

MAIDEN FEARS.

HE knows that I love him ;
O, how could he tell
What I thought I would keep
In my bosom so well,
By guarding each action,
Each word, I might say !
Yet he knows that I love him, —
O, woe to the day !

To hide it I tried
By each innocent art,
And thought I had kept it
Down deep in my heart :
Yet vain was my effort,
My pride through the past,
Since my weakness, my folly,
Have shown it at last.

'T was last night that he learned it,
When down in the grove
He whispered me something
Of hope and of love ;
'T was not that I faltered,
I dared not to speak, —
But the blood mounted up
From my heart to my cheek.

Not mine was the fault
That such weakness was shown, —
O, he should not have kissed me
By starlight alone !
And I thought, till I saw
How he guessed at my love,
I thought that the shadows
Were deeper above !

Nay, thou canst not console me,
My hopes are undone ;
He will say that too lightly
My heart has been won ;

And this spot on my forehead
 Forever will burn,
 For he knows that I love him, —
 He will not return!

He will say 't was unmaidly
 Thus to reveal
 What I might not, I could not,
 That moment conceal;
 And the heart he has won
 Will cast lightly aside; —
 O, I would, ere he knew it,
 I would I had died!

O thou who hast never
 Been faithless to me,
 Crushed, bleeding, and broken
 My heart turns to thee:
 Friend, counsellor, sister,
 Through all things the same
 Let me hide in thy bosom
 My blushes of shame!

THE UNGUARDED MOMENT.

YES, my lips to-night have spoken
 Words I said they should not speak;
 And I would I could recall them, —
 Would I had not been so weak.
 O that one unguarded moment!
 Were it mine to live again,
 All the strength of its temptation
 Would appeal to me in vain.

True, my lips have only uttered
 What is ever in my heart:
 I am happy when beside him,
 Wretched when we are apart;
 Though I listen to his praises
 Always longer than I should,
 Yet my heart can never hear them
 Half so often as it would!

And I would not, could not, pain him,
 Would not for the world offend, —
 I would have him know I like him,
 As a brother, as a friend;
 But I meant to keep one secret
 In my bosom always hid,
 For I never meant to tell him
 That I loved him, — but I did.

NELLY.

I 'm glad you "don't love him,"
 I really did fear
 (Nay, frown not so terribly,
 Nelly, my dear;)
 His voice was so witching,
 His eyes were so bright,
 Though you did not yet love him,
 I feared that you might!

So you 're candid, now, Nelly,
 You 're telling me true,
 "His voice never sounded
 Bewitching to you."
 Yet I sometimes have thought,
 When you heard his soft tone,
 That a little more tenderness
 Spoke in your own.

And you 're sure you don't care, now,
 My dear little elf,
 "Who else he talks love to,
 So 't is not yourself."
 Sometimes when your forehead
 Such crimson would take,
 I suspected — no matter,
 I 've made a mistake.

Nay, do not now, Nelly,
 O, do not be mad!
 Since you say you don't love him,
 It makes me so glad;

Because I would never
 Have told it, you see,
 But honestly, darling,
 He 's talked love to me!

Are you glad he has done
 What you wished him to do,—
 That he talked about love
 To another than you?
 Yes, you surely must feel
 Quite a sense of relief;—
 But those tears are not joyous,
 That sob is like grief!

He said he had hidden it
 Long in his breast;—
 How you tremble!— nay, listen,
 I 'll tell you the rest.
 He said, just as true
 As I sit here alive,
 That he loved you, dear Nelly,—
 Aha! you revive!

BURNING THE LETTERS.

I SAID that they were valueless,—
 I 'd rather have them not,—
 All that since made them precious
 Was, or should have been, forgot;
 I would do it very willingly,
 And not because I ought,—
 But I did not, somehow, find it
 Quite so easy as I thought.

One was full of pleasant flattery;—
 I do not think I 'm vain,
 And yet I paused a moment
 To read it once again.
 One repeated dear, old phrases
 I had heard a thousand times;
 I had read him once some verses,
 And another praised my rhymes.

One was just exactly like him, —
 Such a pretty little note!
 One was interspersed with poetry
 That lovers always quote.
 I don't know why I read them
 Unless 't was just to know,
 Since they once had been so precious,
 What had ever made them so.

I had told him when we parted,
 To think no more of me;
 And I 'm sure he 's nothing to me, —
 Indeed, why should he be?
 Yet the flame sunk down to ashes,
 And I sat and held them still;
 But I said that I would burn them, —
 And, some other time, I will!

 A LAMENT.

ONCE in the season of childhood's joy,
 Dreaming never of life's great ills,
 Hand in hand with a happy boy,
 I walked about on my native hills, —

Gathering berries ripe and fair,
 Pressing them oft to his smiling lip,
 Braiding flowers in his sunny hair,
 And letting the curls through my fingers slip, —

Watching the clouds of the evening pass
 Over the moon in her home of blue;
 Or chasing fireflies over the grass,
 Till our feet were wet with the summer dew.

Now I walk on the hills alone,
 Dreaming never of hope or joy,
 And over a dungeon's floor of stone
 Sweep the curls of that happy boy.

And every night when a rose-hedge springs
 Up from the ashes of sunset's pyre,
 And the eve-star, folding her golden wings,
 Drops like a bird in the leaves of fire, —

I sit and think how he entered in,
 And farther and farther, every time,
 Followed the downward way of sin,
 Till it led to the awful gates of crime.

I sit and think, till my great despair
 Rises up like a mighty wave,
 How fast the locks of my father's hair
 Are whitening now for the quiet grave.

But never reproach on my lip has been,
 Never one moment can I forget,
 Though bound in prison and lost in sin,
 My brother once is my brother yet.

THE LULLABY.

THROUGH the open summer lattice,
 Half revealed and half in shade,
 Yesternight I saw a mortal
 Whose remembrance will not fade.

Little birds their heads had hidden
 Under wings of gold and brown ;
 Lily bells and luscious blossoms
 Softly had been folded down ;

Fountains with their quiet dropping
 Only lulled the drowsy bees ;
 And the wind was lightly going
 In and out the tops of trees ;

But the pale and restless creature —
 Had she dreamed too much before ? —
 Seemed as one whom sleep would visit
 Never, never, never more.

Rocking by the summer lattice,
Rocking to and fro, she sung,
O, the saddest, saddest music
Ever fell from mortal tongue!

So she strove to hush the crying,
Bitterer that 't was faint and low,
Of the little baby pressing
Close against her heart of woe.

And her words were very mournful,
And so very, very faint;
She was keeping down her anguish,
That no ear might hear her plaint.

“Lullaby, my wretched baby;
Go to sleep and sleep till morn!
Lullaby, my wretched baby;
Would that thou hadst not been born!

“Mock me not with open eyelids,
For thine eyes are soft and blue;
While in mine the midnight blackness
Deepens, looking down on you.

“Time shall bind about your forehead
Sunny hair in golden bands;
Tangle not my raven tresses
With your soft and clinging hands!

“Lullaby, my wretched baby;
O, how long the watches seem!
Lullaby, my wretched baby;
Dream and smile, and smile and dream!

“O the sad eyes of my mother!
O my brother, proud and brave!
O the white hair of my father,
Drooping sadly toward the grave!

“O my sister, pure as heaven,
Here thy head in sleep has lain!
Never on this wretched bosom
Canst thou pillow it again!

“Lullaby, my wretched baby;
 Live I only for thy sake!
 Lullaby, my wretched baby;
 Sleep, and dream, and never wake!”

LEFT ALONE.

SHE 's left me here alone again:
 'T will be a weary lot,
 Through all this cheerless winter time
 To live where she is not;
 To sit, where once we used to sit,
 With smileless lip and dumb;
 To count the moments since she went,
 And know not when she 'll come!

We talked through all the summer time,
 We 'd talked through all the spring,
 Of how upon the winter hearth
 We 'd make a pleasant ring;
 Of how with loving words and looks
 The time should all be sped;—
 The firelight's glow is mournful now,
 The books are all unread.

We never were together long,
 We have not been so blest;
 I might have known this hope of ours
 Would perish like the rest:
 And half I trembled all the while,
 And feared it would be so;—
 The hand of fate would press me back
 From where her feet must go.

If there shall ever be a time,
 When, as in days that were,
 My soul can whisper all its dreams
 And all its thoughts to her,—
 When I can share her heart's sweet hopes,
 Or soothe its bitter pain,—
 I would the hours were past till then,
 And that were come again!

THE RETROSPECT.

As one who sees life's hopes have end,
And cannot hush the bitter cry,
Thou weep'st for that lost vale, my friend,
Where childhood's pleasant places lie;
And looking down the sloping track
Where now our lonesome steps are told,
Wouldst softly roll the seasons back,
And leave us children as of old.

Nay, weave sweet fancies as you will,
Yet what is childish happiness
To such great rapture as can fill
The heart of womanhood with bliss?
And though the trials which years must bring
Have come, and left thee what thou art,
Think what a great and wondrous thing
Is victory o'er the human heart!

Life's sparkling wine for us is dim,
Only the bitter drops remain;
Yet for the brightness on the brim,
Who would not drink the draught of pain?
And not in even ways, my friend,
Attains the soul to regions higher;
If step by step our feet ascend,
Their path must be a path of fire!

ONE SHALL BE TAKEN.

DEAR friend, whose presence always made
Even the dreariest night-time glad, —
Whose lengthening absence darkens o'er
The little sunshine that I had, —
My heart is sad for thee to-night,
And every wretched thought of mine
Reaches across the lonesome hills,
That lie between my home and thine.

O woods, wherein our childish feet,
 Gathering the summer blossoms, strayed!
 O meadows white with clover-blooms!
 O soft, green hollows, where we played!
 Can you not cool that aching brow,
 With all your shadows and your dew;
 And charm the slow and languid step
 Back to the joyous life it knew?

Most loved, most cherished, since that hour
 When, as she blest thee o'er and o'er,
 Our mother put thee from her arms,
 To feel thy kisses never more;
 And I, that scarce were missed, am spared,
 While o'er thy way the shadow lies,
 Infinite Mercy surely knew
 Thou wert the fittest for the skies!

THE BROTHERS.

WE had no home, we only had
 A shelter for our head:
 How poor we were, how scantily
 We all were clothed and fed!
 But though a wretched little child,
 I know not why or how,
 I did not feel it half so much
 As I can feel it now!

When mother sat at night and sewed,
 My rest was calm and deep;
 I did not know that she was tired,
 Or that she needed sleep.
 She wrapped the covering round our bed,
 In many an ample fold;
 She had not half so much herself
 To keep her from the cold.

I know it now, I know it all,—
 They knew it then above,—

Her life of patient sacrifice,
 And never-tiring love.
 I know, for then her tasks seemed done, —
 We all were grown beside, —
 How glad she must have been to go,
 After the baby died !

I do not care to deck me now
 With costly robe or gaud, —
 My mother dressed so plain at home,
 And never went abroad.
 I do not even want a shroud
 Of linen, white and pure, —
 They made our little baby one
 That was so coarse and poor.

I had another brother then,
 I prayed that God would save ;
 I knew not life had darker dooms
 Than lying in the grave.
 I did not know, when o'er the dead
 So bitterly I cried,
 I 'd live to wish a thousand times
 The other, too, had died.

 REMORSE.

O SWEETEST friend I ever had,
 How sinks my heavy heart to know
 That life, which was so bright for thee,
 Has lost its sunshine and its glow !

I cannot think of thee as one
 Sighing for calm repose in vain ;
 Nor of the beauty of thy smile,
 Faded and sadly dim with pain.

Thou surely shouldst not be to-day
 Lying upon the autumn leaves,
 But in the borderfields of hope,
 Binding the blossoms into sheaves.

For, with a shadow on thy way,
 The sunshine of my life is o'er,
 And flowery dell and fresh green holt
 Can charm my footsteps nevermore !

And if I have not always seen
 The beauty of thy deeds aright, —
 If I have failed to make thy path
 As smooth and even as I might, —

Not thine the fault, but mine the sin,
 And I have felt its heaviest curse
 Fall on the heart that aches to-day,
 With vain repentance and remorse, —

A heart that lifts its cry to thee,
 Above this wild and awful blast,
 That sweeping from the hills of home,
 Brings bitterest memories of the past.

O, sweet forgiveness, from thy love,
 Send to me o'er the waste between ;
 Not as thou hop'st to be forgiven,
 For thou hast never bowed to sin.

Pure as thy light of life was given,
 Thou still hast kept its steady flame ;
 And the chaste garment of thy soul
 Is white and spotless as it came.

PROPHECY.

No great sea lifts its angry waves
 Between me and the friend most dear,
 And over all our household graves
 The grass has grown for many a year.

With all that makes the heart rejoice,
 The days of summer go and come ;
 No feeble step, no failing voice,
 Saddens the chambers of our home.

Yet, though I know, and feel, and see,
 God's blessings all about my way,
 The burden of sad prophecy
 Lies heavy on my soul to-day.

These awful words of destiny
 Are sounding in my heart and brain :
 "Not an unbroken family
 Shall summer find us here again !"

O God! if this indeed be so,
 Whose pillow then shall be unprest ?
 Whose heart, that feels life's pleasant glow,
 Shall faint, and beat itself to rest ?

Eternal silence makes reply,
 We may not, cannot, know our doom ;
 No voice comes downward from the sky,
 No voice comes upward from the tomb.

Yet this I would not ask in vain :
 Hide from my wretched eyes the day
 When by our household graves again
 The turf is lightly put away !

First from our home, though all descend
 At last to that one place of rest,
 O solemn Earth! O mighty Friend!
 Take me and hide me in thy breast!

THE DREAMER.

Blow life's most fearful tempest, blow,
 And make the midnight wild and rough ;
 My soul shall battle with you now, —
 I've been a dreamer long enough !

Open, O sea, a darker path,
 Dash to my lips the angry spray ;
 The tenth wave of thy fiercest wrath
 Were nothing to my strength to-day !

Though floating onward listlessly
When pleasant breezes softly blew,
My spirit with the adverse sea
Shall rise, and gather strength anew.

Wake, soul of mine, and be thou strong;
Keep down thy weakness, human heart;
Thou hast unnerved my arm too long,
O foolish dreamer that thou art!

For I have sat and mused for hours
Of havens that I yet should see,
Of winding paths, of pleasant flowers,
And summer islands in the sea, —

Forgetful of the storms that come,
Of winds that dig the ocean grave,
And sharp reefs hidden by the foam
That drifts like blossoms on the wave, —

Forgetful, too, that he who guides
Must have a firm and steadfast hand,
If e'er his vessel safely rides
Through storm and breaker to the land, —

Idly and listless drifting on,
Feeding my fancy all the while,
As lovesick dreamers feed upon
The honeyed sweetness of a smile.

Fool that I was, — ay! Folly's mock, —
To think not, in those pleasant hours,
How barks have foundered on the rock,
And drifted past the isles of flowers!

Yet well it were, if, roused to feel,
I yet avert such fearful fate, —
The quick, sharp grating of the keel
Had been a warning all too late.

But courage still; for whether now
Or rough or smooth life's ocean seems,
To-day my soul records her vow,
Hereafter I am done with dreams!

THE CONSECRATION.

O SOUL, that must survive that hour
 When heart shall fail and flesh decay !
 God, angels, men, are witnesses
 Of vows which thou hast made to-day.
 What solemn fears this hour are born,
 What joyful hopes this hour are given !
 Thought reaches down from heaven to hell,
 And up from farthest hell to heaven.

Before my fearful vision pass
 Those star-like souls, grown darkly dim, —
 The sea of mingled glass and fire,
 The saints and priests with conquering hymn.
 O God! shall I go down with those,
 Wandering through blackness from their place,
 Or up with the redeemed and saved,
 Who stand before their Father's face ?

For now my eyes have seen the truth,
 This is thy sure and just decree :
 " If I shall turn again to sin,
 There is no sacrifice for me ;"
 And the baptismal touch, which lay
 So lightly on the brow beneath,
 Shall be omnipotent in power,
 To press me surely down to death.

Its seal shall be a diadem,
 To shine amid the angel choir,
 Or on my forehead burn in hell,
 An everlasting crown of fire ;
 And all who hear my vows to-day
 Shall hear my final sentence read :
 God, angels, men, are witnesses
 At the great judgment of the dead.

DRAWING WATER.

I HAD drunk, with lip unsated,
 Where the founts of pleasure burst ;
 I had hewn out broken cisterns,
 And they mocked my spirit's thirst :

And I said, life is a desert,
 Hot, and measureless, and dry ;
 And God will not give me water,
 Though I pray, and faint, and die.

Spoke there then a friend and brother,
 " Rise, and roll the stone away ;
 There are founts of life upspringing
 In thy pathway every day."

Then I said my heart was sinful,
 Very sinful was my speech ;
 All the wells of God's salvation
 Are too deep for me to reach.

And he answered, " Rise and labor, —
 Doubt and idleness is death ;
 Shape thee out a goodly vessel
 With the strong hands of thy faith."

So I wrought and shaped the vessel,
 Then knelt lowly, humbly there,
 And I drew up living water
 With the golden chain of prayer.

 SOLEMNITY OF LIFE.

WHETHER are cast our destinies
 In peaceful ways, or ways of strife ;
 A solemn thing to us it is,
 This mystery of human life.

Solemn, when first, unconscious, dumb,
Within an untried world we stand,
Immortal beings that have come
Newly from God's creating hand.

And solemn, even as 't is fleet,
The time when, learning childish fears,
We cross, with scarcely balanced feet,
The threshold of our mortal years.

'T is solemn, when, with parting smiles,
We leave its innocence and truth,
To learn how deeper than the child's
Are all the loves and fears of youth.

It is a solemn thing to snap
The cords of human love apart;
More solemn still to feel them wrap
Their wondrous strength about the heart.

'T is solemn to have ever known
The pleadings of the soul unmoved, —
Solemn to feel ourselves alone;
More solemn still to be beloved.

It is a solemn thing to wear
The roses of the bridal wreath, —
Solemn the words we utter there,
Of faith unchanging until death.

Solemn is life, when God unlocks
The fountain in the soul most deep, —
Solemn the heart-beat, when it rocks
A young immortal to its sleep.

'T is solemn when the Power above
Darkens our being's living spark, —
Solemn to see the friends we love
Going downward from us to the dark.

O human life, when all thy woes
And all thy trials are struggled through,
What can eternity disclose
More wondrous solemn than we knew!

MY BLESSINGS.

GREAT waves of plenty rolling up
Their golden billows to our feet,
Fields where the ungathered rye is white,
Or heavy with the yellow wheat ;

Wealth surging inward from the sea,
And plenty through our land abroad,
With sunshine resting over all,
That everlasting smile of God !

For these, yet not for these alone,
My tongue its gratitude would say :
All the great blessings of my life
Are present in my thought to-day.

For more than all my mortal wants
Have been, O God, thy full supplies ;—
Health, shelter, and my daily bread,
For these my grateful thanks arise.

For ties of faith, whose wondrous strength
Time nor eternity can part ;
For all the words of love that fall
Like living waters on my heart ;

For even that fearful strife, where sin
Was conquered and subdued at length,
Temptations met and overcome,
Whereby my soul has gathered strength ;

For all the warnings that have come
From mortal agony or death ;
For even that bitterest storm of life,
Which drove me on the rock of faith.

For all the past I thank thee, God !
And for the future trust in thee,
Whate'er of trial or blessing yet,
Asked or unasked, thou hast for me.

Yet only this one boon I crave, —
After life's brief and fleeting hour,
Make my beloved thy beloved,
And keep us in thy day of power!

SABBATH THOUGHTS.

I AM sitting all the while
Looking down the solemn aisle,
Toward the saints and martyrs old,
Standing in their niches cold, —
Toward the wings of cherubs fair,
Veiling half their golden hair,
And the painted light that falls
Through the window on the walls.

I can see the revered flow
Of soft garments, white as snow,
And the shade of silver hair
Dropping on the book of prayer.
I can hear the litany,
“ Miserable sinners, we ! ”
And the organ swelling higher,
And the chanting of the choir.

And I marvel if with them,
In the new Jerusalem,
I shall hear the sacred choir
Chant with flaming tongues of fire ;
If I e'er shall find a place
With the ransomed, saved by grace ;
If my feet shall ever tread
Where the just are perfected ?

Not, my soul, as now thou art ;
Not with this rebellious heart ;
Not with nature unsubdued,
Evil overshadowing good ;
Not while I for pardon seek
With a faith so faint and weak ;
Not while tempted thus to sin,
From without and from within !

Thou whom love did once compel
 Down from heaven to sleep in hell;
 Thou whose mercy purged from dross
 Even the thief upon the cross,
 Save me, O thou bleeding Lamb,
 Chief of sinners though I am,
 When, with clouds about thee furled,
 Thou shalt come to judge the world!

NEARER HOME.

ONE sweetly solemn thought
 Comes to me o'er and o'er, —
 I am nearer home to-day
 Than I ever have been before; —

Nearer my Father's house
 Where the many mansions be;
 Nearer the great white throne,
 Nearer the jasper sea; —

Nearer the bound of life
 Where we lay our burdens down;
 Nearer leaving the cross,
 Nearer gaining the crown.

But lying darkly between,
 Winding down through the night,
 Is the dim and unknown stream
 That leads at last to the light.

Closer and closer my steps
 Come to the dark abysm;
 Closer death to my lips
 Presses the awful chrysm.

Father, perfect my trust;
 Strengthen the might of my faith;
 Let me feel as I would when I stand
 On the rock of the shore of death, —

Feel as I would when my feet
 Are slipping o'er the brink;
 For it may be I'm nearer home, —
 Nearer now than I think.

HYMN.

God of the Sabbath, calm and still,
 Father, in whom we live and move,
 How do our trembling bosoms thrill
 With words which tell us of thy love!

Thine heralds, speaking of the tomb,
 The organ's voice, the censor's flame,
 The solemn minister's shadowy gloom,
 Awe us, and make us fear thy name.

The earthquake, opening deep its graves,
 The lightning, running down the sky,
 The great sea, lifting up its waves
 Speak of thine awful majesty!

But once thou camest in Eden's prime,
 Lord of the soul, to talk with men,
 And in the cool of eventime
 Thou seemest with us, now as then.

For when our trembling souls draw near,
 And silence keeps the earth and sea,
 Thou speak'st, with no interpreter
 To stand between our hearts and thee!

SOWING SEED.

Go and sow beside all waters,
 In the morning of thy youth,
 In the evening scatter broadcast
 Precious seeds of living truth.

For though much may sink and perish
In the rocky, barren mould,
And the harvest of thy labor
May be less than thirty-fold,

Let thy hand be not withholden,
Still beside all waters sow,
For thou know'st not which shall prosper,
Whether this or that will grow,

While some precious portion, scattered,
Germinating, taking root,
Shall spring up, and grow, and ripen
Into never-dying fruit.

Therefore, sow beside all waters,
Trusting, hoping, toiling on;
When the fields are white for harvest,
God will send his angels down.

And thy soul may see the value
Of its patient morns and eves,
When the everlasting garner
Shall be filled with precious sheaves.

THE BAPTISM.

FROM the waters of affliction,
From her baptism of dark woe,
With her sweet eyes very mournful,
And her forehead like the snow,

Came she up; and, O, how many
In such hours of trial are seen,
When they faint with mortal weakness,
Knowing not whereon to lean!

With her face upon my bosom,
Said she then in accent sad,
As she wound her arms about me,
I was all the friend she had.

And I told her — pushing backward
From her forehead like the snow,
All her tear-wet tresses, dripping
With that baptism of dark woe —

How, in all that great affliction,
Loving hands had led her on,
When she came up from the waters,
Led her when her feet went down, —

And that only the good Father,
He who thus her faith had tried,
Could have brought her through the billows
Safely to the other side.

And I told her how life's pilgrims
Crossed that solemn stream beneath,
To a brighter pathway leading,
Up the living hills of faith.

Lifting upward from my bosom
Then her forehead like the snow,
I will weep, she said, no longer,
Therefore rise and let us go!

And, as one who walks untroubled
By no mortal doubt or fear,
Oft we heard her far above us,
Singing hymns of lofty cheer, —

Till with feet that firmly balanced
On faith's summit-rock she trod,
And beheld the shining bastions
Of the city of our God.

Then her voice was tenderer, holier,
She grew gentler all the while;
It was like a benediction
But to see her patient smile.

As she walked with cheerful spirit
Where her daily duties led,
"Father, keep me from temptation,"
Was the only prayer she said.

Often made she earnest pleading,
As she went from us apart,
To be saved through all her lifetime
From the weakness of her heart.

And she prayed that she might never,
Never in her trials below,
Bring her soul before the altar,
Wailing in unchastened woe.

So her hands of faith were strengthened,
And when clouds about her lay,
From her bosom all the darkness
She could softly put away.

Smilingly she went unaided,
When we would have led her on,
Saying always to our pleading,
Better that I go alone.

Turned she from the faces dearest
When her feet more feebly trod,
That she might not then be tempted
By a mortal love from God.

So the Father, for her pleading,
Kept her safe through all life's hours,
And her path went brightly upward
To eternity through flowers.

THE HOSTS OF THOUGHT.

How heavy fall the evening shades,
Making the earth more dark and drear,
As to its sunset sadly fades
This, the last Sabbath of the year!

Oft, when the light has softly burned
Among the clouds, as day was done,
I've watched their golden furrows turned
By the red plowshare of the sun.

To-night, no track of billowy gold
Is softly slanting down the skies ;
But dull-gray bastions, dark and cold,
Shut all the glory from my eyes.

And in the plain that lies below,
What cheerless prospect meets my eye !
One long and level reach of snow,
Stretching to meet the western sky !

While far across these lonesome vales,
Like a lost soul, and unconfined,
Down through the mountain gorges wails
The awful spirit of the wind.

When, yester-eve, the twilight stilled,
With soft, caressing hand, the day,
Upon my heart, that joyous thrilled,
A sweet, tumultuous vision lay.

To-night, in sorrow's arms enwound,
I think of broken faith and trust,
And tresses, from their flowers unbound,
Hid in the dimness of the dust.

And hopes that took their heavenward flight,
As fancy lately gave them birth,
Slow through the solemn air to-night
Are beating backward to the earth.

O memory, if the shadowy hand
Lock all thy death-crypts close and fast,
Call not my spirit back to stand
In the dark chamber of the past !

For trembling fear, and mortal doubt,
About me all day long have been ;
So even the dreary world without
Is brighter than the world within.

Pale hosts of thought before me start :
O for that needed power I lack,
To guard the fortress of my heart,
And press their awful columns back !

O for a soul to meet their gaze,
And grapple fearless with its woe!
As the wild *athlete*, of old days,
In the embraces of the foe!

Thoughts of the many lost and loved, —
Each unfulfilled and noble plan, —
Memories of Sabbaths unimproved, —
Duty undone to God or man; —

They come, with solemn, warning frown,
Like ghosts about some haunted tent;
And courage silently goes down,
Before their dreadful armament.

O friend of mine, in years ago,
Where'er, at this dark hour, thou art,
Why hast thou left me here alone,
To fight the battles of the heart?

Alone? A soft eye's tender light
Is turned to meet my anxious glance;
And, struggling upward from the night,
My soul hath broken from the trance.

Love is omnipotent to check
Such 'wilderer' fancies of the brain;
A soft hand trembles on my neck,
And lo, I sit with hope again!

Even the sky no longer seems
Like a dull barrier, built afar;
And through its crumbling wall there gleams
The sweet flame of one burning star.

The winds, that from the mountain's brow
Came down the dreary plains to sweep,
Back, in the cavernous hollow, now
Have softly sung themselves to sleep.

Come, thou, whose love no waning knows,
And put thy gentle hand in mine,
For strong in faith my spirit grows,
Leaning confidingly on thine.

And in the calm, or in the strife,
If side by side with thee I move,
Hereafter I will live a life
That shall not shame thy trusting love.

Memory and fear, with all their powers,
No more my soul shall crush or bend;
For the great future still is ours,
And thou art with me, O my friend!

THE BOOK OF POEMS.

ON the pages whose rhymed music
So oft has charmed thine ears,
I have gazed till my heart is filling
With memories of vanished years;
And, leaving the lines of the poet,
Has sadly turned to roam
Away to that beautiful valley
In the sunset land of home!

O land of the greenest pastures,
O land of the coolest streams,
Shall I only again be near you
In the shadowy light of dreams?
Shall I only sit in visions
By the hearth in the lattice-pane,
And my friend of the past, my brother,
Shall we meet not there again?

As a sweet memorial ever
This book to my heart will be;
But I never can read its pages
So far from home and thee;
For the words grow dim before me,
Or tremble on my lips,
And the disc of life's orb of beauty,
Is darkened with woe's eclipse.

So forever closed and clasped
Shall the volume lie unread,

As might in some ancient cloister
The gift of the saintly dead,
Till our hands shall open its pages
Once more beneath that dome
That hangs over the beautiful valley.
In the sunset land of home!

TO FRANK.

'T is three years and something over
Since I looked upon you last,
But I only think about you
As I saw you in the past.

And when memory recalls you,
As she has done to-day,
You're just as young, and just as small,
As when you went away.

I can see you hunt for flowers
In the meadows green and sweet,
Or go wading through the hollows,
With your little naked feet; —

Or peeping through the bushes
That hedged the garden round,
To see if any little birds
Were in the nest you'd found.

And I know how in the clover,
Where the bees were used to come,
You held them down beneath your hat,
To hear their pleasant hum.

And how in summer evenings,
Through the door-yard wet with dew,
The watch-dog led you many a chase, —
He's growing older too!

I know when on the dear old porch
We coaxed you first to walk,
And treasured every word you said
When you began to talk.

We asked you what you meant to be,
And laughed at your replies,
Because you said, when you grew up
To manhood, you 'd be wise.

And may you pray the God of love,
And I will pray him too,
To make you wise in every thing
That makes man good and true !

DAWN.

THE sunken moon was down an hour ago ; —
And now the little silver cloud, that leant
So lovingly above her as she went,
Is changing with the touches of the dawn :
For from the clasped arms of the sweet night,
Lo ! the young Dawn has gently stolen away
And stars, that late burned with an intense ray,
Fade to a wannish, melancholy light.
A moment, smiling on the hills she stands,
Parting the curtains of the East away ;
Then lightly, with her white caressing hands,
Touches the trembling eyelids of the Day ;
And, leaning o'er his couch of rosy beams,
Wooes him with kisses softly from his dreams.

PARODIES.



MARTHA HOPKINS.*

A BALLAD OF INDIANA.

FROM the kitchen, Martha Hopkins, as she stands there
 making pies,
 Southward looks, along the turnpike, with her hand
 above her eyes ;
 Where, along the distant hill-side, her yearling heifer
 feeds,
 And a little grass is growing in a mighty sight of weeds.

All the air is full of noises, for there is n't any school,
 And boys, with turned-up pantaloons, are wading in the
 pool ;
 Blithely frisk unnumbered chickens, cackling, for they
 cannot laugh :
 Where the airy summits brighten, nimbly leaps the little
 calf.

Gentle eyes of Martha Hopkins ! tell me wherefore do
 ye gaze
 On the ground that 's being furrowed for the planting of
 the maize ?
 Tell me wherefore down the valley ye have traced the
 turnpike's way,
 Far beyond the cattle-pasture, and the brickyard, with
 its clay ?

Ah ! the dog-wood tree may blossom, and the door-yard
 grass may shine,
 With the tears of amber dropping from the washing on
 the line,
 And the morning's breath of balsam lightly brush her
 freckled cheek, —
 Little recketh Martha Hopkins of the tales of spring
 they speak.

* Parodied from Bayard Taylor's "Manuela, a Ballad of California."

When the summer's burning solstice on the scanty harvest glowed,
She had watched a man on horseback riding down the turnpike-road;
Many times she saw him turning, looking backward quite forlorn,
Till amid her tears she lost him, in the shadow of the barn.

Ere the supper-time was over, he had passed the kiln of brick,
Crossed the rushing Yellow River, and had forded quite a creek,
And his flatboat load was taken, at the time for pork and beans,
With the traders of the Wabash, to the wharf at New Orleans.

Therefore watches Martha Hopkins, holding in her hand the pans,
When a sound of distant footsteps seems exactly like a man's;
Not a wind the stove-pipe rattles, nor a door behind her jars,
But she seems to hear the rattle of his letting down the bars.

Often sees she men on horseback, coming down the turnpike rough,
But they come not as John Jackson, she can see it well enough;
Well she knows the sober trotting of the sorrel horse he keeps,
As he jogs along at leisure, with his head down like a sheep's.

She would know him 'mid a thousand, by his home-made coat and vest;
By his socks, which were blue woollen, such as farmers wear out west;
By the color of his trousers, and his saddle, which was spread,
By a blanket which was taken for that purpose from the bed.

None like he the yoke of hickory on the unbroken ox can
throw,
None amid his father's cornfields use like him the spade
and hoe;
And at all the apple-cuttings, few indeed the men are
seen
That can dance with him the Polka, touch with him the
violin.

He has said to Martha Hopkins, and she thinks she hears
him now,
For she knows as well as can be, that he meant to keep
his vow,
When the buckeye tree has blossomed, and your uncle
plants his corn,
Shall the bells of Indiana usher in the wedding morn.

He has pictured his relations, each in Sunday hat and
gown,
And he thinks he 'll get a carriage, and they 'll spend a
day in town;
That their love will newly kindle, and what comfort it
will give,
To sit down to the first breakfast, in the cabin where
they 'll live.

Tender eyes of Martha Hopkins! what has got you in
such scrape?
'T is a tear that falls to glitter on the ruffle of her cape.
Ah! the eye of love may brighten, to be certain what it
sees,
One man looks much like another, when half hidden by
the trees.

But her eager eyes rekindle, she forgets the pies and
bread,
As she sees a man on horseback, round the corner of the
shed.
Now tie on another apron, get the comb and smooth your
hair,
'T is the sorrel horse that gallops, 't is John Jackson's
self that 's there!

WORSER MOMENTS.*

THAT fellow's voice! how often steals
 Its cadence o'er my lonely days!
 Like something sent on wagon-wheels,
 Or packed in an unconscious chaise.
 I might forget the words he said
 When all the children fret and cry,
 But when I get them off to bed,
 His gentle tone comes stealing by,
 And years of matrimony flee,
 And leave me sitting on his knee.

The times he came to court a spell,
 The tender things he said to me,
 Make me remember mighty well
 My hopes that he'd propose to me.
 My face is uglier, and perhaps
 Time and the comb have thinned my hair,
 And plain and common are the caps
 And dresses that I have to wear;
 But memory is ever yet
 With all that fellow's flatteries writ.

I have been out at milking-time
 Beneath a dull and rainy sky,
 When in the barn 't was time to feed,
 And calves were bawling lustily,—
 When scattered hay, and sheaves of oats,
 And yellow corn-ears, sound and hard,
 And all that makes the cattle pass
 With wilder fleetness through the yard,—
 When all was hateful, then have I,
 With friends who had to help me milk,
 Talked of his wife most spitefully,
 And how he kept her dressed in silk;
 And when the cattle, running there,
 Threw over me a shower of mud,
 That fellow's voice came on the air,
 Like the light chewing of the cud,
 And resting near some speckled cow,
 The spirit of a woman's spite,

* Parodied from N. P. Willis's "Better Moments."

I 've poured a low and fervent vow
 To make him, if I had the might,
 Live all his lifetime just as hard,
 And milk his cows in such a yard.

I have been out to pick up wood,
 When night was stealing from the dawn,
 Before the fire was burning good,
 Or I had put the kettle on
 The little stove, — when babes were waking
 With a low murmur in the beds,
 And melody by fits was breaking
 Above their little yellow heads, —
 And this when I was up perhaps
 From a few short and troubled naps, —
 And when the sun sprang scorchingly
 And freely up, and made us stifle,
 And fell upon each hill and tree
 The bullets from his subtle rifle, —
 I say a voice has thrilled me then,
 Hard by that solemn pile of wood,
 Or creeping from the silent glen,
 Like something on the unfledged brood,
 Hath stricken me, and I have pressed
 Close in my arms my load of chips,
 And pouring forth the hatefulest
 Of words that ever passed my lips,
 Have felt my woman's spirit rush
 On me, as on that milking night,
 And, yielding to the blessed gush
 Of my ungovernable spite,
 Have risen up, the red, the old,
 Scolding as hard as I could scold.

THE ANNOYER.*

“Common as light is love,
 And its familiar voice wearies not ever.” — *SHELLEY*.

Love knoweth everybody's house,
 And every human haunt,
 And comes unbidden everywhere,
 Like people we don't want.

* Parodied from a poem by N. P. Willis with the same title and same motto.

The turnpike-roads and little creeks
Are written with love's words,
And you hear his voice like a thousand bricks
In the lowing of the herds.

He peeps into the teamster's heart,
From his Buena Vista's rim,
And the cracking whips of many men
Can never frighten him.
He 'll come to his cart in the weary night,
When he 's dreaming of his craft;
And he 'll float to his eye in the morning light
Like a man on a river raft.

He hears the sound of the cooper's adze,
And makes him, too, his dupe,
For he sighs in his ear from the shaving pile,
As he hammers on the hoop.
The little girl, the beardless boy,
The men that walk or stand,
He will get them all in his mighty arms,
Like the grasp of your very hand.

The shoemaker bangs above his bench,
And ponders his shining awl,
For love is under the lapstone hid,
And a spell is on the wall.
It heaves the sole where he drives the pegs,
And speaks in every blow,
Till the last is dropped from his crafty hand
And his foot hangs bare below.

He blurs the prints which the shopmen sell,
And intrudes on the hatter's trade,
And profanes the hostler's stable-yard
In the shape of the chamber-maid.
In the darkest night and the bright daylight,
Knowing that he can win,
In every home of good-looking folks
Will human love come in.

SAMUEL BROWN.*

It was many and many a year ago,
In a dwelling down in town,
That a fellow there lived whom you may know,
By the name of Samuel Brown ;
And this fellow lived with no other thought
Than to our house to come down.

I was a child, and he was a child,
In that dwelling down in town,
But we loved with a love that was more than love,
I and my Samuel Brown,
With a love that the ladies coveted
Me and Samuel Brown.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
To that dwelling down in town,
A girl came out of her carriage, courting
My beautiful Samuel Brown ;—
So that her high-bred kinsman came
And bore away Samuel Brown,
And shut him up in a dwelling-house,
In a street quite up in town.

The ladies not half so happy up there,
Went envying me and Brown ;
Yes! that was the reason, (as all men know,
In this dwelling down in town),
That the girl came out of the carriage by night,
Coquetting and getting my Samuel Brown.

But our love is more artful by far than the love
Of those who are older than we, —
Of many far wiser than we,
And neither the girls that are living above,
Nor the girls that are down in town,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Samuel Brown.

* Parodied from Poe's "Annabel Lee."

For the morn never shines without bringing me lines
 From my beautiful Samuel Brown ;
 And the night 's never dark, but I sit in the park
 With my beautiful Samuel Brown.
 And often by day, I walk down in Broadway,
 With my darling, my darling, my life and my stay
 To our dwelling down in town,
 To our house in the street down town.

 GRANNY'S HOUSE.*

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early
 morn,
 Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the
 dinner-horn.
 'T is the place, and all about it, as of old, the rat and
 mouse
 Very loudly squeak and nibble, running over Granny's
 house ; —
 Granny's house, with all its cupboards, and its rooms as
 neat as wax,
 And its chairs of wood unpainted, where the old cats
 rubbed their backs,
 Many a night from yonder garret window, ere I went to
 rest,
 Did I see the cows and horses come in slowly from the
 west ;
 Many a night I saw the chickens, flying upward through
 the trees,
 Roosting on the sleety branches, when I thought their
 feet would freeze ;
 Here about the garden wandered, nourishing a youth
 sublime
 With the beans, and sweet potatoes, and the melons
 which were prime ;
 When the pumpkin-vines behind me with their precious
 fruit reposed,
 When I clung about the pear-tree, for the promise that it
 closed,

* Parodied from Tennyson's "Locksley Hall."

When I dipt into the dinner far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the pie, and all the dessert that would be.
In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's
breast;
In the spring the noisy pullet gets herself another nest;
In the spring a livelier spirit makes the ladies' tongues
more glib;
In the spring a young boy's fancy lightly hatches up a
fib.
Then her cheek was plump and fatter than should be for
one so old,
And she eyed my every motion, with a mute intent to
scold.
And I said, My worthy Granny, now I speak the truth to
thee, —
Better believe it, — I have eaten all the apples from one
tree.
On her kindling cheek and forehead came a color and a
light,
As I have seen the rosy red flashing in the northern
night;
And she turned, — her fist was shaken at the coolness of
the lie;
She was mad, and I could see it, by the snapping of her
eye,
Saying I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do
thee wrong, —
Saying, "I shall whip you, Sammy, whipping, I shall go
it strong!"
She took me up and turned me pretty roughly, when
she 'd done,
And every time she shook me, I tried to jerk and run;
She took off my little coat, and struck again with all her
might,
And before another minute I was free and out of sight.
Many a morning, just to tease her, did I tell her stories
yet,
Though her whisper made me tingle, when she told me
what I 'd get;
Many an evening did I see her where the willow sprouts
grew thick,
And I rushed away from Granny at the touching of her
stick.

O my Granny, old and ugly, O my Granny's hateful
deeds,
O the empty, empty garret, O the garden gone to weeds,
Crosser than all fancy fathoms, crosser than all songs
have sung,
I was puppet to your threat, and servile to your shrewish
tongue,
Is it well to wish thee happy, having seen thy whip
decline
On a boy with lower shoulders, and a narrower back, than
mine?
Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the din-
ner-horn, —
They to whom my Granny's whippings were a target for
their scorn;
Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a mouldered
string?
I am shamed through all my nature to have loved the
mean old thing;
Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure,
woman's spite,
Nature made them quicker motions, a considerable sight.
Woman is the lesser man, and all thy whippings matched
with mine
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine.
Here at least when I was little, something. O, for some
retreat
Deep in yonder crowded city where my life began to beat,
Where one winter fell my father, slipping off a keg of
lard;
I was left a trampled orphan, and my case was pretty
hard,
Or to burst all links of habit, and to wander far and fleet,
On from farm-house unto farm-house till I found my
Uncle Pete,
Larger sheds and barns, and newer, and a better neigh-
borhood,
Greater breadth of field and woodland, and an orchard
just as good.
Never comes my Granny, never cuts her willow switches
there;
Boys are safe at Uncle Peter's, I'll bet you what you
dare.

Hangs the heavy fruited pear-tree: you may eat just
what you like;
'T is a sort of little Eden, about two miles off the pike.
There, methinks, would be enjoyment, more than being
quite so near
To the place where even in manhood I almost shake with
fear.
There the passions, cramped no longer, shall have scope
and breathing space.
I will 'scape that savage woman, she shall never rear my
race;
Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive and they
shall run;
She has caught me like a wild goat, but she shall not
catch my son.
He shall whistle to the dog, and get the books from off
the shelf,
Not, with blinded eyesight, cutting ugly whips to whip
himself.
Fool again, the dream of fancy! no, I don't believe it's
bliss,
But I'm certain Uncle Peter's is a better place than this.
Let them herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of all glo-
rious gains,
Like the horses in the stables, like the sheep that crop
the lanes;
Let them mate with dirty cousins,— what to me were
style or rank,
I the heir of twenty acres, and some money in the bank?
Not in vain the distance beckons, forward let us urge our
load,
Let our cart-wheels spin till sundown, ringing down the
grooves of road;
Through the white dust of the turnpike she can't see to
give us chase:
Better seven years at uncle's, than fourteen at Granny's
place.
O, I see the blessed promise of my spirit hath not set!
If we once get in the wagon, we will circumvent her yet.
Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Granny's
farm:
Not for me she'll cut the willows, not at me she'll shake
her arm.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath
 and holt,
 Cramming all the blast before it, — guess it holds a thun-
 derbolt:
 Wish 't would fall on Granny's house, with rain, or hail,
 or fire, or snow,
 Let me get my horses started Uncle Peteward, and
 I'll go.

 THE DAY IS DONE.*

THE day is done, and darkness
 From the wing of night is loosed,
 As a feather is wafted downward
 From a chicken going to roost.

I see the lights of the baker
 Gleam through the rain and mist,
 And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me,
 That I cannot well resist.

A feeling of sadness and *longing*,
 That is not like being sick,
 And resembles sorrow only
 As a brick-bat resembles a brick.

Come, get for me some supper, —
 A good and regular meal,
 That shall soothe this restless feeling,
 And banish the pain I feel.

Not from the pastry baker's,
 Not from the shops for cake,
 I would n't give a farthing
 For all that they can make.

For, like the soup at dinner,
 Such things would but suggest
 Some dishes more substantial,
 And to-night I want the best.

* Parodied from Longfellow's "The Day is Done."

Go to some honest butcher,
 Whose beef is fresh and nice
 As any they have in the city,
 And get a liberal slice.

Such things through days of labor,
 And nights devoid of ease,
 For sad and desperate feelings
 Are wonderful remedies.

They have an astonishing power
 To aid and reinforce,
 And come like the "Finally, brethren,"
 That follows a long discourse.

Then get me a tender sirloin
 From off the bench or hook,
 And lend to its sterling goodness
 The science of the cook.

And the night shall be filled with comfort,
 And the cares with which it begun
 Shall fold up their blankets like Indians,
 And silently cut and run.

JOHN THOMPSON'S DAUGHTER.*

A FELLOW near Kentucky's clime
 Cries, "Boatman, do not tarry,
 And I'll give thee a silver dime
 To row us o'er the ferry."

"Now, who would cross the Ohio,
 This dark and stormy water?"
 "O, I am this young lady's beau,
 And she John Thompson's daughter.

"We've fled before her father's spite
 With great precipitation,
 And should he find us here to-night,
 I'd lose my reputation.

* Parodied from Campbell's "Lord Ullin's Daughter."

“They’ve missed the girl and purse beside,
His horsemen hard have pressed me,
And who will cheer my bonny bride,
If yet they shall arrest me?”

Out spoke the boatman then in time,
“You shall not fail, don’t fear it;
I’ll go, not for your silver dime,
But for your manly spirit.

“And by my word, the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry;
For though a storm is coming on,
I’ll row you o’er the ferry.”

By this the wind more fiercely rose,
The boat was at the landing,
And with the drenching rain their clothes
Grew wet where they were standing.

But still, as wilder rose the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Just back a piece came the police,
Their tramping sounded nearer.

“O, haste thee, haste!” the lady cries,
“It’s anything but funny;
I’ll leave the light of loving eyes,
But not my father’s money!”

And still they hurried in the face
Of wind and rain unsparing;
John Thompson reached the landing-place,
His wrath was turned to swearing.

For by the lightning’s angry flash,
His child he did discover;
One lovely hand held all the cash,
And one was round her lover!

“Come back, come back,” he cried in woe,
Across the stormy water;
“But leave the purse, and you may go,
My daughter, O my daughter!”

'T was vain; they reached the other shore,
 (Such dooms the Fates assign us,)
 The gold he piled went with his child,
 And he was left there, *minus*.

GIRLS WERE MADE TO MOURN.*

WHEN chill November's surly blast
 Made everybody shiver,
 One evening as I wandered forth,
 Along the Wabash River,
 I spied a woman past her prime,
 Yet with a youthful air,
 Her face was covered o'er with curls
 Of *well selected* hair!

Young woman, whither wanderest thou?
 Began the prim old maid;
 Are visions of a home to be,
 In all thy dreams displayed?
 Or haply wanting but a mate,
 Too soon thou hast began
 To wander forth with me to mourn
 The indifference of man!

The sun that overhangs yon fields,
 Outspreading far and wide,
 Where thousands by their own hearth sit,
 Or in their carriage ride,—
 I've seen yon weary winter sun
 Just forty times return;
 And every time has added proofs,
 That girls were made to mourn!

O girls! when in your early years,
 How prodigal of time!
 Misspending all your precious hours,
 Your glorious youthful prime!

* Parodied from Burns's "Man was Made to Mourn."

Thinking to wed just when you please,
From beau to beau you turn,
Which tenfold force gives nature's law,
That girls were made to mourn !

Look not on them in youthful prime,
Ere life's best years are spent !
Man will be gallant to them then,
And give encouragement !
But see them when they cease to speak
Of each birthday's return ;
Then want and single-blessedness
Show girls were made to mourn !

A few seem favorites of fate,
By husband's hands caressed,
But think not all the married folks
Are likewise truly blest.
For, oh ! what crowds, whose lords are out,
That stay to patch and darn,
Through weary life this lesson learn,
That girls were made to mourn !

Many and sharp and numerous ills,
Inwoven with our frame !
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame !
And man, whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of love adorn, —
Man's cold indifference to us
Makes countless thousands mourn !

If I'm designed to live alone, —
By nature's law designed, —
Why was this constant wish to wed
E'er planted in my mind ?
If not, why am I subject to
Man's cruelty or scorn ?
Or why has he the will and power
To make me for him mourn ?

See yonder young, accomplished girl,
Whose words are smooth as oil,

Who 'd marry almost any one
 To keep her hands from toil ;
 But see, the lordly gentleman
 Her favors don't return,
 Unmindful though a weeping ma
 And bankrupt father mourn !

Yet let not this, my hopeful girl,
 Disturb thy youthful breast ;
 This awful view of woman's fate
 Is surely not the best !
 The poor, despiséd, plain old maid
 Had never sure been born,
 Had there not been some recompense
 To comfort those who mourn !

O death ! the poor girl's dearest friend,
 The kindest and the best !
 Welcome the hour my weary limbs
 Are laid with thee to rest !
 The young, the married, fear thy blow
 From hope or husbands torn ;
 But oh ! a blest relief to those
 In single life who mourn !

TO INEZ.*

NAY, smile not at my garments now ;
 Alas ! *I* cannot smile again :
 Yet Heaven avert that ever thou
 Shouldst dress, and haply dress so plain.

And dost thou ask, Why should I be
 The jest of every foe and friend ?
 And wilt thou vainly seek to see
 A garb, even thou must fail to mend ?

It is not love, it is not hate,
 Nor low Ambition's honors lost,
 That bids me loathe my present state,
 And fly from all I loved the most.

* Parodied from Byron's " To Inez."

It is the contrast which will spring
 From all I meet, or hear, or see :
 To me no garment tailors bring, —
 Their shops have scarce a charm for me.

It is a something all who rub
 Would know the owner long had wore ;
 That may not look beyond the tub,
 And cannot hope for help before.

What fellow from himself can flee ?
 To zones, though more and more remote,
 Still, still pursues, where'er I be,
 The blight of life, — the ragged Coat.

Yet others wrapt in broadcloth seem,
 And taste of all that I forsake !
 O, may they still of transport dream,
 And ne'er, at least like me, awake !

Through many a clime 't is mine to go,
 With many a retrospection curst ;
 And all my solace is to know,
 Whate'er I wear, I 've worn the worst.

What is the worst ? Nay, do not ask, —
 In pity from the search forbear :
 Smile on, — nor venture to unclasp
 My Vest, and view the Shirt that 's there.

TO MARY.*

WELL ! thou art happy, and I say
 That I should thus be happy too ;
 For still I hate to go away
 As badly as I used to do.

Thy husband 's blest, — and 't will impart
 Some pangs to view his happier lot ;
 But let them pass, — O, how my heart
 Would hate him, if he clothed thee not !

* Parodied from Byron's " Well ! Thou art Happy."

When late I saw thy favorite child,
 I thought, like Dutchmen, "I 'd go dead,"
 But when I saw its breakfast piled,
 I thought how much 't would take for bread.

I saw it and repressed my groans
 Its father in its face to see,
 Because I knew my scanty funds
 Were scarce enough for you and me.

Mary, adieu! I must away ;
 While thou art blest, to grieve were sin,
 But near thee I can never stay,
 Because I 'd get in love again.

I deemed that time, I deemed that pride,
 My boyish feeling had subdued,
 Nor knew, till seated by thy side,
 I 'd try to get you, if I could.

Yet was I calm : I recollect,
 My hand had once sought yours again,
 But now your husband might object,
 And so I kept it on my cane.

I saw thee gaze upon my face,
 Yet meet with neither woe nor scoff ;
 One only feeling couldst thou trace,
 A disposition to be off.

Away ! away, my early dream,
 Remembrance never must awake ;
 O, where is Mississippi's stream ?
 My foolish heart, be still, or break !

THE CHANGE.*

IN sunset's light o'er Boston thrown,
 A young man proudly stood
 Beside a girl, the only one
 He thought was fair or good ;

* Parodied from Mrs. Hemans's "The Traveller at the Source of the Nile."

The one on whom his heart was set,
The one he tried so long to get.

He heard his wife's first loving sound,
A low, mysterious tone,
A music sought, but never found,
By beaux and gallants gone ;
He listened and his heart beat high, —
That was the song of victory !

The rapture of the conqueror's mood
Rushed burning through his frame,
And all the folks that round him stood
Its torrents could not tame,
Though stillness lay with eve's last smile
Round Boston Common all the while.

Years came with care ; across his life
There swept a sudden change,
E'en with the one he called his wife,
A shadow dark and strange,
Breathed from the thought so swift to fall
O'er triumph's hour, — and is this all ?

No, more than this ! what seemed it *now*
Right by that one to stand ?
A thousand girls of fairer brow
Walked his own mountain land ;
Whence, far o'er matrimony's track,
Their wild, sweet voices called him back.

They called him back to many a glade
Where once he joyed to rove,
Where often in the beechen shade
He sat and talked of love ;
They called him with their mocking sport
Back to the times he used to court.

But, darkly mingling with the thought
Of each remembered scene,
Rose up a fearful vision, fraught
With all that lay between, —

His wrinkled face, his altered lot,
His children's wants, the wife he 'd got!

Where was the value of that bride
He likened once to pearls?
His weary heart within him died
With yearning for the girls, —
All vainly struggling to repress
That gush of painful tenderness.

He wept; the wife that made his bread
Beheld the sad reverse,
Even on the spot where he had said
"For better or for worse."
O happiness! how far we flee
Thine own sweet path in search of thee

HE NEVER WROTE AGAIN.*

His hope of publishing went down,
The sweeping press rolled on;
But what was any other crown
To him who had n't one?
He lived, — for long may man bewail
When thus he writes in vain:
Why comes not death to those who fail: —
He never wrote again!

Books were put out, and "had a run,"
Like coinage from the mint;
But which could fill the place of one,
That one they would n't print?
Before him passed, in calf and sheep,
The thoughts of many a brain;
His lay with the rejected heap: —
He never wrote again!

He sat where men who wrote went round,
And heard the rhymes they built;

* Parodied from Mrs. Hemans's "He Never Smiled Again."

He saw their works most richly bound,
 With portraits and in gilt.
 Dreams of a volume all forgot
 Were blent in every strain :
 A thought of one they issued not : —
 He never wrote again !

Minds in that time closed o'er the trace
 Of books once fondly read,
 And others came to fill their place,
 And were perused instead.
 Tales which young girls had bathed in tears
 Back on the shelves were lain :
 Fresh ones came out for other years : —
 He never wrote again !

THE SOIREE.*

THIS is the Soiree: from grate to entrance,
 Like milliner's figures, stand the lovely girls ;
 But from their silent lips no merry sentence
 Disturbs the smoothness of their shining curls.

Ah! what will rise, how will they rally,
 When shall arrive the "gentlemen of ease" !
 What brilliant repartee, what witty sally,
 Will mingle with their pleasant symphonies !

I hear even now the infinite sweet chorus,
 The laugh of ecstasy, the merry tone,
 That through the evenings that have gone before us
 In long reverberations reach our own.

From round-faced Germans come the guttural voices,
 Through curling *moustache* steals the Italian clang,
 And, loud amidst their universal noises,
 From distant corners sounds the Yankee twang.

* Parodied from Longfellow's "The Arsenal at Springfield."

I hear the editor, who from his office
 Sends out his paper, filled with praise and puff,
 And holy priests, who, when they warn the scoffers,
 Beat the fine pulpit, lined with velvet stuff.

The tumult of each *sagued*, and charming maiden,
 The idle talk that sense and reason drowns,
 The ancient dames with jewelry o'erladen,
 And trains depending from the brocade gowns, —

The pleasant tone, whose sweetness makes us wonder,
 The laugh of gentlemen, and ladies too,
 And ever and anon, in tones of thunder,
 The diapason of some lady *blue*, —

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,
 With pastimes so ridiculous as these,
 Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices,
 And jarrest the celestial harmonies ?

Were half the wealth that fills the world with ladies,
 Were half the time bestowed on caps and lace,
 Given to the home, the husbands, and the babies,
 There were no time to visit such a place.

THE CITY LIFE.*

How shall I know thee in that sphere that keeps
 The country youth that to the city goes,
 When all of thee, that change can wither, sleeps
 And perishes among your cast-off clothes ?

For I shall feel the sting of ceaseless pain,
 If there I meet thy one-horse carriage not ;
 Nor see the hat I love, nor ride again,
 When thou art driving on a gentle trot.

Wilt thou not for me in the city seek,
 And turn to note each passing shawl and gown ?
 You used to come and see me once a week, —
 Shall I be banished from your thought in town ?

* Parodied from Bryant's "The Future Life."

In that great street I don't know how to find,
In the resplendence of that glorious sphere,
And larger movements of the unfettered mind,
Wilt thou forget the love that joined us here ?

The love that lived through all the simple past,
And meekly with my country training bore,
And deeper grew, and tenderer to the last,
Shall it expire in town, and be no more ?

A happier lot than mine, and greater praise,
Await thee there ; for thou, with skill and tact,
Hast learnt the wisdom of the world's just ways,
And dressest well, and knowest how to act.

For me, the country place in which I dwell
Has made me one of a proscribed band ;
And work hath left its scar — that fire of hell
Has left its frightful scar upon my hand.

Yet though thou wear'st the glory of the town,
Wilt thou not keep the same belovéd name,
The same black-satin vest, and morning-gown,
Lovelier in New York city, yet the same ?

Shalt thou not teach me, in that grander home,
The wisdom that I learned so ill in this, —
The wisdom which is fine, — till I become
Thy fit companion in that place of bliss ?

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR JOHN SMITH.*

Not a sigh was heard, nor a funeral tone,
As the man to his bridal we hurried ;
Not a woman discharged her farewell groan,
On the spot where the fellow was married.

We married him just about eight at night,
Our faces paler turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the gas-lamp's steady burning.

* Parodied from Wolfe's "The Burial of Sir John Moore."

No useless watch-chain covered his vest,
 Nor over-dressed we found him ;
 But he looked like a gentleman wearing his best,
 With a few of his friends around him.

Few and short were the things we said,
 And we spoke not a word of sorrow,
 But we silently gazed on the man that was wed,
 And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we silently stood about,
 With spite and anger dying,
 How the merest stranger had cut us out,
 With only half our trying.

Lightly we 'll talk of the fellow that 's gone,
 And oft for the past upbraid him ;
 But little he 'll reck if we let him live on,
 In the house where his wife conveyed him.

But our heavy task at length was done,
 When the clock struck the hour for retiring ;
 And we heard the spiteful squib and pun
 The girls were sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we turned to go, —
 We had struggled, and we were human ;
 We shed not a tear, and we spoke not our woe,
 But we left him alone with his woman.

BALLAD OF THE CANAL.*

WE were crowded in the cabin,
 Not a soul had room to sleep ;
 It was midnight on the waters,
 And the banks were very steep.

'T is a fearful thing when sleeping
 To be startled by the shock,

* Parodied from James T. Fields's "The Tempest."

And to hear the rattling trumpet
Thunder, "Coming to a lock!"

So we shuddered there in silence,
For the stoutest berth was shook,
While the wooden gates were opened
And the mate talked with the cook.

As thus we lay in darkness,
Each one wishing we were there,
"We are through!" the captain shouted,
And he sat down on a chair.

And his little daughter whispered,
Thinking that he ought to know,
"Is n't travelling by canal-boats
Just as safe as it is slow?"

Then he kissed the little maiden,
And with better cheer we spoke,
And we trotted into Pittsburg
When the morn looked through the smoke.

*I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.**

I REMEMBER, I remember,
The house where I was wed,
And the little room from which, that night,
My smiling bride was led;
She did n't come a wink too soon,
Nor make too long a stay;
But now I often wish her folks
Had kept the girl away!

I remember, I remember,
Her dresses, red and white,
Her bonnets and her caps and cloaks, —
They cost an awful sight!

* Parodied from Hood's lyric of the same title.

The "corner lot" on which I built,
 And where my brother met
 At first my wife, one washing-day, —
 That man is single yet!

I remember, I remember,
 Where I was used to court,
 And thought that all of married life
 Was just such pleasant sport:
 My spirit flew in feathers then,
 No care was on my brow;
 I scarce could wait to shut the gate, —
 I 'm not so anxious now!

I remember, I remember,
 My dear one's smile and sigh;
 I used to think her tender heart
 Was close against the sky;
 It was a childish ignorance,
 But now it soothes me not
 To know I 'm farther off from heaven
 Than when she was n't got!

JACOB.*

HE dwelt among "apartments let,"
 About five stories high;
 A man I thought that none would get,
 And very few would try.

A boulder, by a larger stone
 Half hidden in the mud,
 Fair as a man when only one
 Is in the neighborhood.

He lived unknown, and few could tell
 When Jacob was not free;
 But he has got a wife, — and O!
 The difference to me!

* Parodied from Wordsworth's "Lucy."

THE WIFE.*

HER washing ended with the day,
 Yet lived she at its close,
 And passed the long, long night away,
 In darning ragged hose.

But when the sun in all his state
 Illumed the eastern skies,
 She passed about the kitchen grate,
 And went to making pies.

A PSALM OF LIFE.†

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG WOMAN SAID TO THE
 OLD MAID.

TELL me not, in idle jingle,
 Marriage is an empty dream,
 For the girl is dead that 's single,
 And things are not what they seem.

Married life is real, earnest;
 Single blessedness a fib;
 Taken from man, to man returnest,
 Has been spoken of the rib.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
 Is our destined end or way;
 But to act, that each to-morrow
 Nearer brings the wedding-day.

Life is long, and youth is fleeting,
 And our hearts, if there we search,
 Still like steady drums are beating
 Anxious marches to the church.

* Parodied from James Aldrich's "A Death-Bed."

† Parodied from Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life."

In the world's broad field of battle,
 In the bivouac of life,
 Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
 Be a woman, be a wife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
 Let the dead Past bury its dead!
 Act,—act in the living Present;
 Heart within, and MAN ahead!

Lives of married folks remind us
 We can live our lives as well,
 And, departing, leave behind us
 Such examples as will tell;—

Such examples, that another,
 Sailing far from Hymen's port,
 A forlorn, unmarried brother,
 Seeing, shall take heart, and court.

Let us then be up and doing,
 With the heart and head begin;
 Still achieving, still pursuing,
 Learn to labor, and to win!

THERE'S A BOWER OF BEAN-VINES.*

THERE'S a bower of bean-vines in Benjamin's yard,
 And the cabbages grow round it, planted for greens;
 In the time of my childhood 't was terribly hard
 To bend down the bean-poles, and pick off the beans.

That bower and its products I never forget,
 But oft, when my landlady presses me hard,
 I think, are the cabbages growing there yet,
 Are the bean-vines still bearing in Benjamin's yard?

* Parodied from a song in Moore's "Lalla Rookh": "There's a Bower of Roses
 by Bendemeen's Stream."

No, the bean-vines soon withered that once used to wave,
 But some beans had been gathered, the last that
 hung on,
 And a soup was distilled in a kettle, that gave
 All the fragrance of summer when summer was gone.

Thus memory draws from delight, ere it dies,
 An essence that breathes of it awfully hard :
 And thus good to my taste as 't was then to my eyes,
 Is that bower of bean-vines in Benjamin's yard.

WHEN LOVELY WOMAN.*

WHEN lovely woman wants a favor,
 And finds, too late, that man won't bend,
 What earthly circumstance can save her
 From disappointment in the end ?

The only way to bring him over,
 The last experiment to try,
 Whether a husband or a lover,
 If he have feeling, is, to cry !

SHAKESPERIAN READINGS.†

OH, but to fade, and live we know not where,
 To be a cold obstruction and to groan !
 This sensible, warm woman to become
 A prudish clod ; and the delighted spirit
 To live and die alone, or to reside
 With married sisters, and to have the care
 Of half a dozen children, not your own ;
 And driven, for no one wants you,
 Round about the pendant world ; or worse than worst

* Parodied from Goldsmith's stanzas of the same title.

† The first is parodied from "Measure for Measure," III. 1, 116-131 ; the second from "A Midsummer Night's Dream," II. 1, 152-161 ; the third from "Twelfth Night," II. 4, 107-115.

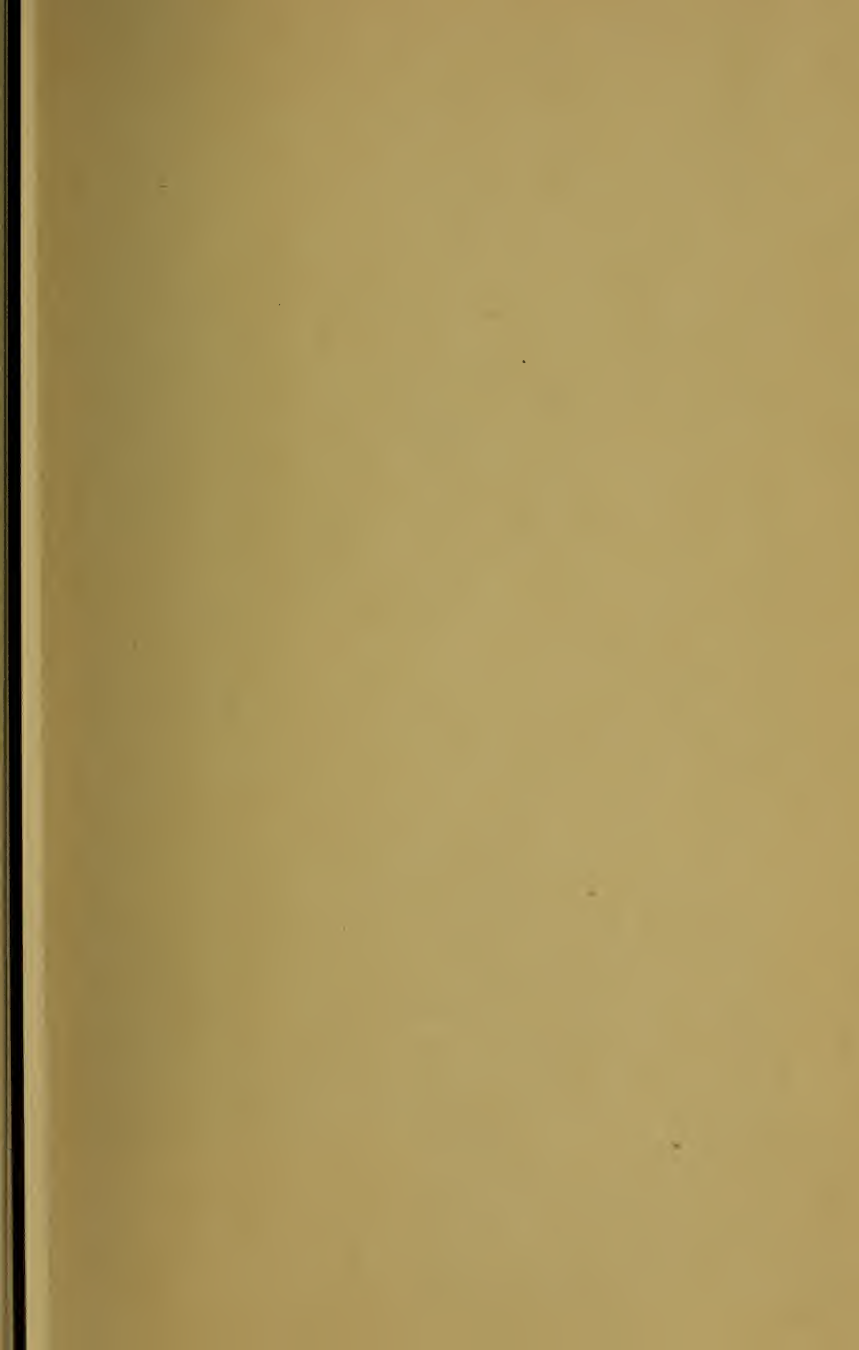
Of those that disappointment and pure spite
Have driven to madness : 'T is too horrible !
The weariest and most troubled married life
That age, ache, penury, or jealousy
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To being an old maid.

That very time I saw, (but thou couldst not,)
Walking between the garden and the barn,
Reuben, all armed ; a certain aim he took
At a young chicken standing by a post,
And loosed his bullet smartly from his gun,
As he would kill a hundred thousand hens.
But I might see young Reuben's fiery shot
Lodged in the chaste board of the garden fence,
And the domesticated fowl passed on,
In henly meditation, bullet free.

My father had a daughter got a man,
As it might be, perhaps, were I good-looking,
I should, your lordship.
And what 's her residence ?
A hut, my lord, she never owned a house,
But let her husband, like a graceless scamp,
Spend all her little means, — she thought she ought, —
And in a wretched chamber, on an alley,
She worked like masons on a monument,
Earning their bread. Was not this love indeed ?







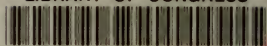
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