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Quiet the lake
Lay. —*The Demon.*

THE CITY OF IS
AND OTHER POEMS

— BY —

FREDERICK MILTON WILLIS

Frontispiece by Ernest C. Piexotto

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DEDICATION.

To California—California the beautiful, California the potentially surpassingly intellectual and spiritual,—does the author, looking with awe into the dim future, lovingly dedicate these his first glimmerings of feelings of beauty and gropings of thoughts of rational interpretation of Outer and Inner.

Would that they might be considered aspiring streamers, however tenuous, however indefinite and unsubstantial, forerunning the coming day—leading in, in company goodlier than themselves, the host of brilliant ones of the great era of light that lieth before this western Greece which shall be more than Greece—
CALIFORNIA.

Berkeley, California.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The City of Is.....	I
Rich as the Falling of Night.....	10
Saloëthe.....	11
To Age	17
The Triumph of Love.....	18
America, Land of the New Age.....	22
Through the Valley of Nil.....	23
Civil Anguish.....	27
The Mystic.....	33
Interpretation, or a Stroll in a Garden.....	34
Man's Proper Element.....	38
The Demon.....	39
Oh, the Free Air's the Mansion to Live in!	56
The Watcher	60
Soul-Blindness.....	65
Excess.....	66
Love-Sonnet.....	67
The Dawn of Hope.....	68
Self Comprehension	71
Fire	72
Supremacy	74
O Father of Light!.....	76
Star Worlds	79
Flee, Flee, O My Soul!.....	81

	PAGE
Mother of the Sky.....	84
The Price	85
Illusion	87
A Vision of Degrees.....	92
Consolation	93
Love.....	94
What Gives the Sufferer Strength?.....	95
The Incomplete.....	96
Sorrow-Laden.....	97
Turn, oh Turn those Eyes upon Me!.....	98
Waltham and Margra.....	99

THE CITY OF IS.*

Within the mystic spirit-sphere,
Where do appear and disappear
Myriad things of space and time,
There's a silent, wondrous clime,
Where every day is almost night—
A clime, at best, of gray twilight.

The lone traveler, traveling here,
Whoe'er he be, has much to fear,
And his must be a snail-like pace,
For 'tis a dismal, dismal place,
A place of never-lifting fogs,
Of gloomy pools with bordering bogs
Drooped o'er by many a venomous tree,
A place of swoon and lethargy,
A place of dire inclemency,
A place of hateful clogs and stresses,—
Oh, woe to him that onward presses
Through its perilous wildernesses!

*Pronounced as if spelled Iss.

But, though the yielding, mossy ground
Oft prove quagmire, seeming sound;
And though the delicate cress-like grasses
Knot, and trip him as he passes;
And though misshapen, dripping trees
Reach out leaf-hidden limbs and seize,
Like tentacles, his shrinking flesh;
And though before, beside him fresh
Impressions form and quickly fade—
Of feet—by nothing mortal made;
And though with dainty, glove-like touch
Many an unseen hand with much
Deliberation stroke his cheek
Or, with persistent pressure, urge
Him to some fearful hollow's verge,
Let not the fainter-hearted shriek,
Let not the firmer heart despair,—
For this humid, lethal air
And this dark, miasmal land
Contain a CITY, rich and grand,
One whose lofty, jealous walls
Enclose the haughtiest kingly halls,
Proud temples, palaces and towers
(Prouder, haughtier far, than ours),
Whose very slightest glistening spire

Doth seem to pierce the sky, in fire
(The gentle sky, in silver fire) ;
Whose golden domes and minarets
And pinnacles and parapets,
From the shade and vapor there,
Seem part of Earth and part of Air.
And thither from the wilds about
Lead many ways, but none without
Its open gold-and-marble gate
Where sphinxes dream and calculate
And, with a calm naught can dispel,
Guard th' Eternal Secret well.

Ere entering, let the Stranger stay
A moment and the prospect weigh :
Beyond, a Karnak-pillared alley
Leads inward far, majestically,
And in broad stretches, either side,
Great temple-archways open wide ;
And darkening columned passageways
Form many an eye-perplexing maze ;
And here and there, aloft, are seen,
Above high roofs that intervene,
Grand porticoes of polished stone—
The blackest, whitest, ever known—

That open into noble halls
And long, curved galleries with walls
Of crystal and light balustrade
Of finest alabaster made.

Now down that deep, dark Karnak-alley
Leading in majestically,
Let the Stranger take his way
And let his feelings have full play
In the solitude sublime
Of this town entombed in time.

O'er its seeming permanence
And wealth of wild magnificence:—
Its mingling of the rich moresque
With the graceful arabesque;
Its marvelous, fine parquetry
And myriad-colored marquetry;
Its multi-figured ornament
From pedestal to pediment;
Its graven writings, signs obscure,
On dado and entablature,
On obelisk and wall and shrine;
Its porphyry-carved reminder there,
'Mid mortal things, of things divine—

The pallid hand, august and grand,
Upon yon solitary column,
Up-pointing in the solemn air;
Yon pillar there, alone before
The gloomy, gaping temple-door,
Whose shaft the spiral horror binds—
Down which the pitch-black serpent winds,
With dangling head of pearl and gold
Deep-worn by votaries' lips untold;
Its marble earyatides;
Its porches and its balconies;
Its pillared aisles and long arcades;
Its void, foot-polished esplanades;
Its many a stairflight, dazzling white,
Ascending to the misty shade
In many a stately colonnade;
Its princely domes of glowing gold,
Mid halls, large, clustering, manifold;
Its great pavilions, gloomy parks,
Silent founts, memorial marks:—
O'er all this wild magnificence,
O'er all this seeming permanence,
There broods a feeling of *suspense*,
As if the silence, though unbroken,
Contained—were bursting with—a token

Of a doom-word to be spoken ;
And on the Stranger will obtrude
The feeling that a multitude
Is moving restlessly, unviewed.

Near the center of the town
Is a gradual sloping-down
To a stone-environed lake,
Mist-laid, dark, and still as death,
So still, no inner stir, no breath
Of air, it seems, could ever break
Upon the raptness of its dreams,
Its chill oblivion of dreams.

Let the Stranger linger there
Upon the marble landing-stair ;
Let him look with sense and soul—
Let him see the incorporate whole.

Far out within the water-gloom
There stands what seems a thing of doom—
The symbol of a mighty power—
A cloud-like, sky-encircled tower,
A place of solemn sovereignty,
Uplifting like another Babel

Its gray, incongruous mass,—unstable
Seeming,—whispering mystery
And sense of hidden prophecy.

A strange place is this lonely tower
Beneath which all else seems to cower,
Which, seeming ever falling, falls not;
This place where silent, *felt* voice dwells,
Which, seeming ever calling, calls not;
This place with Heaven or thousand hells
Within its deep tranquillity.

Lo! listen, Stranger, breathlessly,—
What is that heavenly harmony—
What says that heavenly harmony—
What say those tuneful shadowings
From love-lutes' living silver strings—
What say those potent golden notes,
Like vocal notes from angels' throats?

*Is! Is! beautiful Is!
More beautiful seeming
In thy deep dreaming
Or swoon, it may be,
Thou art eternal,*

*For He, the Supernal,
Hath dwelling in thee!*

*Is! Is! beautiful Is!
Whilst thou art dreaming,
Thy vitals are teeming
With living decay;
Thy breathing is slowing,
Time's end is close growing,
Thy heart-beats delay!*

The space-pervading sounds expire.

What mean the variant lute and lyre?
What means this pulsing tremor here,
This laboring uneasiness,
This mute though evident distress?
Ah, Is, time's end is growing near! . . .
Time's end is here—is here. . . .

The mist upon the moveless lake
Doth in a wave-like motion wake,—
It rolls and rises—spreads and swells.—
It sweeps amain,—it all-includes
The architectural solitudes;

And now,—'mid sound of distant bells
And far-off surges,—settles down
A deepening darkness on the town.

O wildered Stranger standing there
Upon the marble landing-stair,
In vain thou peerest through this night,
In vain, for Is hath vanished quite,
All-heavenly Is hath vanished quite:
Steadfast, fearless, hopeful, stand
And listen to the whispering surges
And the bells on far-off verges
Of the mist-enveloped land;
Possess thy wondering soul in peace,
And wait, and wait; but, pray thee, cease
To peer into this sightless night,
For Is, for thee, hath vanished quite,
Celestial Is hath vanished quite:
Possess thy wondering soul in peace—
And wait.

RICH AS THE FALLING OF NIGHT

Rich as the falling of night—nay, richier—
Were wafted to me from afar
● Glimpses of splendor, of mirth, of sweet madness,
As if through a door ajar.

Now, soft as the coming of dawn—nay, softlier—
Hither there flows from afar
A token of love—ah, me!—and of joy,
As if through a heart ajar.

I

Heavy-hearted, still as death,
 (Just tranced in gloomy, brooding thought;
 In secret, almost overwrought),
 Night, prophetic, stays her breath
 Now, anxiously, for to her saith,
 In confirmation, quite unsought,
 A voice from some Familiar caught:
 "Alas, sad Night, thou dupe of Death,
 Another sorrow followeth!"
 And, too, her now attentive ear
 The phantom of a cry doth hear:

*"Saloethe! Saloethe!
 Drink of Lethe, sweet-watered Lethe.
 Saloethe! Saloethe!
 Oblivion—sin—drink of Lethe—Lethe!"*

2

Uneasy, slowly fevering, Night
 Now casts her mantling gloom profound
 The stately mansion thrice around:
 Eye-fired space it is, despite
 The casement's tiny taper-light,

Which (too slight to reach the ground)
 The little fitful winds have found;—
 It flickers at its lonely height,—
 The little winds have clipped it quite!
 In rustlings soft, the unseen trees
 Release the sad soul of the breeze:

*“Saloethe! Saloethe!
 Sorrow-haunted Saloethe!
 Saloethe! Saloethe!
 Art thou coming, Saloethe?”*

3

The heated winds the half-oped door
 Have caught and fiercely inward hurled:
 Night seeks to stay HER, sorrow-whirled,
 Who braves the crags on Being's shore,
 Unstartled by the wild storm's roar—
 HER, desolate and misery-swirled,
 Who dares the might of the deep-stirred world
 And outward presses. (Ah, heart so sore,
 Canst thou this awful blast explore?—
 Doubt undeserved! daredst thou not sin—
 Insult thyself and God within?)

*“Saloethe! Saloethe!
 Come—come—Saloethe!
 Here’s no heartache, here by Lethe—
 Come—come—Saloethe!”*

4

Outward under thund’rous skies
 She passes, and with step so fleet
 A daimon’s in her dainty feet;
 And by the lightning one descries
 A daimon in her large, wild eyes;
 The wind-rage wrests with wrathful heat
 Her dark hair from its graceful seat;
 Cold rain its vain deterrent tries,
 And hail the gentler rain outvies;—
 Can Night prevent her, if the whole
 Be but the mirror of her soul?

*“Saloethe! Saloethe!
 Sorrow-sinking! sweet is Lethe.
 Saloethe! Saloethe!
 Sorrow-sunken! come to Lethe.”*

5

The well-known, neighboring region past,
 By garden-walk, familiar road,

And winding path through sheer abode
 Of shadowy things with movements vast,
 Ghast, spectral in the lightninged blast,
 Breathless, her hastening step she slowed
 (Heavily pressed her worn heart's load);
 A glance up toward the sky she cast—
 She *smiled*—(in splendor unsurpassed
 Sly Night had decked herself)—a wan,
 Sad, glimmering smile, scarce come, when
 gone.

*“Saloethe! Saloethe!
 All's deceit but soothing Lethe;
 Saloethe! Saloethe!
 Sweet oblivion's here by Lethe.”*

6

Ah, foolish Night! Thy burst of light
 Could not the heart's dull ache abate;
 Thou hast the last and unfound gate
 Disclosed to her bewildered sight—
 The narrow path beyond—the flight
 Of stone stairs which doth terminate
 Upon a rock, where, desolate
 Among the trees, and dark, O Night,

As thou when in deep glooms bedight,
 But by stray drops of rain revealed,
 Beneath, a deep pool lies concealed.

*“Saloethe! Saloethe!
 I sigh for thee, sweet Saloethe!
 I cry for thee, O Saloethe!
 Come! Come! Come down to Lethe.”*

7

The gate—the path—the short descent—
 Shadow-like upon the rock:—
 Will she her secret heart unlock?
 A nettle stung her as she went,
 And wild-rose thorns the wounds augment;
 But powerless were earthquake shock
 To wake the dormant feeling. (Knock
 Upon her heart, O God! prevent
 This deed;—or has she Thy consent?)
 A moonbeam her lithe form caresses—
 She moves—throws back her tangled tresses.

*“Saloethe! Saloethe!
 My sad soul's crying Saloethe!
 Saloethe! Saloethe!
 Aye softly sighing, here by Lethe.”*

“My heart’s heart, here I am—poor I!
He asks my love—I cannot feign;
You cold in death—could I remain?
Woe, woe! my guilty heart doth cry!
Where, God, wast Thou? Why wast not nigh
In my dire need—when so in vain
I strove against this joy, this pain?
I thank Thee, none on me rely
For aught. For you, dear heart,—I die.”
A plunge!..an owl hoots—here—then there;
And Night her tears can not forbear.

*I, the Wind, say: Saloethe,
Is there sighing, by sweet Lethe—
Is there crying, Saloethe?
Where’s oblivion? Where is Lethe?*

All honor to thee, calm-eyed Age, aseat
 Upon the throne-like summit of a life,
 With folded hands, and thoughtful temples
 touched

With presage of a more than earthly glory,
 Lost in simple wonder, leaning forward,
 Listening.

 Chaste Initiate, unto thee,
 Baptized by life-fire in the raging cycle
 Of the senses—unto thee, before
 The portal of a grander tabernacle—
 Earth holds out her jealous arms at last
 For thy ennobled tenement, which, though
 Translucent to an alien light out from
 The world's deep heart, she claims as that dull,
 formless

Stuff she gave; and thou, thy self uncinct,
 Thy wondrous sympathies all unconstrained,
 Dost think deep thoughts of immortality
 And hold thyself in passive readiness,
 Nay, dost—with a smile—await the term
 When thou shalt yield thy leasehold up and take
 Thy personal effects unto that statelier
 Mansion which is thine in fee and from
 Whose crystal windows thou mayst far survey
 The glory and the grandeur of God's Nature.

* Published in *Overland Monthly*, Jan., 1900.

I

We walked alone,
And the World's heart throbbed with fever-heat;
And fever-specters rose on their feet
And troubled the night with their groans and
sighs;
And the weirdest winds that ever were known
Sat in the trees and with sob and moan
Grieved with the weeping, delirious skies
For the passing of that which they idolize—
The peace and the beauty they idolize;
But what to me were sigh and groan?
What to me were sob and moan,
And what were the tears of the maudlin skies?
For the whole of *my* world was a garden em-
pearled—

A Paradise purpled and pearled
By the light of Iola's bright eyes—
The glory of light in her eyes.

2

We walked alone,
And calmer the pulse of the World had grown;
But a waning moon through a nebulous rift
Looked down with an envious frown

And the cowering rocks began to uplift
Their dull, pallid faces and sullenly stare,
On seeing the night-like, clustering hair,
The classic head and delicate air

Of my Love and the splendor that stole
So easily forth from her soul—
The illumined rich throne-room, her
soul;

And Iola's soft heart grew sorrowful then,
But (repressing my own growing feelings of
gloom)

I told her how common it is among *men*
To envy and hate e'en the peerlessly great,
Yet proclaim him a god—in the tomb,
And prayed her be hopeful and find in the deed
Or the clearness of conscience the genuine need;
She silently wept, but after a while
Looked up and around with a smile—
A lovely, mysterious smile—

And my feelings of gloom in a moment gave place
To an inflowing favor of grace—
An ecstatic sweet fullness of grace.

3

We walked alone,
And quite calm the pulse of the World had grown;

Though a prevalent malice did poison and blight
The valley a-cold with the moon's cold light :
Though the ogling rocks—emboldened by spite—
Endeavored to bar our way through the night ;
Though the sap-sucking ivy long creepers down-
threw

And tangled us tight in the damps where it grew ;
Though flittering things did others pursue,
And fell shapes wander or lie perdu ;
Though henbanes there did the harebells woo,
And violets shrink from the faint of the rue ;
Though the bitterest breezes that ever blew
Descended and shivered through and through
The delicate, fine-tempered, exquisite few,—

That entrancing sweet fullness of grace
That flowed from Iola's dear face

Soon mystically—musically—

Thrilled through the soul of the valley.

Soon musically—ecstatically—

Throbbled in the heart of the valley.

Then dim lights sauntered aloft toward the skies,
And, soft like the rays from Iola's soft eyes,
Glimmered with presage of glory like theirs—

Of transfiguring glory like theirs,—

Glimmered,—but now in gray mantles bedight,

And filled with swift power and creative delight,
Gorgeously frescoed the dark dome of night;
And gentle and tremulous warm little airs

Arose unawares

And silverly sweetly laughed through the valley
Whisperingly low—harmonically

With the joy in the heart of the valley;
And through *us* laughed the fancies of love that's
requited.

In *us* glowed the feelings of lovers united,
And there seemed to fall o'er us and flow on be-
fore us

A perfume whose richness grew ever intenser—

The largess of many a heavenly censer—

The love-gift of many a spirit there

Afloat in the radiant air—

Of many a spirit there

Afloat in the hallowéd air.

LAND OF THE NEW AGE.

O land of the palmetto and the pine,
Land of the yucca, cactus, brake and sage,
Of flax and cotton, wheat, corn, gold and wine,
Thine, thine the burden of th' oncoming age—
On thee the Spirit of the World hath set His sign!

Land of the mighty reaches, mingling races,
Foster-mother of the nation's' brood,
Rare, patient mistress of the civic graces,
Thine, thine the sure uplifting of the rude,
The raising of the lowly pure to lofty places.

Land of heroic men, and women fair,
Of female virtue and male enterprise,
Of hearts athirst for draughts the gods prepare,
Thine, thine the promise of the larger skies
And all the high activities that center there.

Land of the national spirit like the sea,
As boundless, free, assimilative, vast,
A new age, new race, take their rise in thee;
Thine, thine the fruitage of the ages past,
The blending into one of all humanity.

O land on which great God hath set His sign,
O mighty creature of the higher law,
The generation of the Right is thine,
Eternal Justice without fleck or flaw—
A life responsive to the thrill of Life Divine!

THROUGH THE VALLEY OF NIL,

I

Life smiled on the lovely Child
And led him with delicate finger-tips
Into the Valley of Nil;
And kissing his voluted linger-lips,
Quickened his inchoate will.

2

He shrank from the peopling blank—
Turned back toward the glittering spangles
Of love-living light on the Hill
Just out of the tortuous tangles
Of the solaric Valley of Nil.

3

But the gradient, paved with irradiant,
Vacuous violet light,
Had shrunk to a slender rill
Of fluctuant spirit, to the sight
Of the Child in the Valley of Nil.

4

He trembled, but sweet Life dissembled,
Assumed in soft outlines a seeming
Of splendor like that of the Hill,
And lulled the dear Child into dreaming
Of it, in the Valley of Nil.

5

He awoke, and his wild eyes bespoke
That his spirit was drunken with wonder:
With the shadows that flitted at will
He allied him, and nothing should sunder
Him now from the Valley of Nil.

6

He wandered, and ceaselessly pondered
The alien thoughts and new feelings
He ever encountered, until
The swiftly evolving revealings
Apotheosized the Valley of Nil.

7

Then a stream like a fever-dream
With the demiurgic efflux commingled:
Oh, alas, if its turbidness fill
(Alas for this Being outsingled),
If it fill all the Valley of Nil!

8

But he saw in vague limning a law
Of spiritual chemistry waiting
To cleanse the mad stream of its ill:
It seized on the ill, alienating
It, there in the Valley of Nil.

9

Separated and so alienated,
The ill was a mist, organized,
That did a blind madness distill
Intermittently down, undisguised,
On this Soul in the Valley of Nil.

10

And he grew now to think that the clue
To this tortuous, wildering maze,
The mayavic Valley of Nil,
Was to scatter the thickening haze
Of the ill with a tempest of will.

11

Yet distilled the dark mist, as it willed,
A virulence greater than ever:—
Though visions arose of the Hill,
Alas, could it be they could never
Re-transfigure the Valley of Nil?

12

Overcast and despairing, he passed
(Led by a Rational Doubt)
To denial of aught of the Hill;
Then looked, with calm glances, throughout
The vast, gamutic Valley of Nil.

13

His glancing set gravity dancing
And fixedness furiously spinning:
An interpreting, spiritual thrill
Pervaded all things, from beginning
To end of the Valley of Nil.

14

And leaning then toward the meaning
Of ill and its ultimate trend
(Catalytic, equivocal ill),
In half-glimpses he saw, in the end,
The Hill, from the Valley of Nil.

15

The heightening insight was brightening
To light, when Life—letting sink her lips
Soft on his forehead still—
Led him with delicate finger-tips
Out of the Valley of Nil.

I

With solemn intonation, through the land
Reverberates the saddening note of some
Sublime despair: from fretful murmurings
Of ill impersonal, it rose to this,
The deep heart-outbreak of pent-up, waiting an-
guish,
When hope is o'er, when hope's no more.

The very fountainheads of forlorn life
Usurped—the scanty vitalizing rills
Shrunk up by harpy-natured arrogance
Or doled out, garbled, poisoned at their source,
By sleek and specious opulence, till weakening
Members weaken more the weakened will;
Till humanhood, disorganized, forgets
It e'er was man and sinks below the brute;
Till simple life, o'erburdened, sorrow-whirled,
Kind death blots out the world;—
The very fountainheads of forlorn life
Usurped and this deep anguish in the land,
How shall the o'erborne spirit ever shift

*Written in 1895, and being a characterization of, and some reflections upon, affairs in the United States in that terrible year of panic and ruin, poverty and distress, when employers were most selfish and employed most needy.

The weary load of care, assume its true
 Supremacy, thrill with vivifying
 Hope the apathetic nerves and urge
 The faint, parched life up to its lavish sources
 Engrossed thus and corrupted?

Go first to the homes of the yeomanry, the sinews
 And sense of the State, the source of the civil
 health,

The union of hand and brain, the primal impinge-
 ment

Of mind on the matter-world: the sturdy sons
 Of God who glean, in their own right, rich, teem-
 ing

Nature's free, rife bounties;—go thither:—hag-
 gard

Poverty leans 'neath the lintel, trying to think;
 And corpulent Mortgage, in passing, complacently
 nods

And rubs his fat hands.

Go now to the homes of those who, thews of an
 alien

Brain, fashion for others the unwrought gleanings
 From Nature, and tangle their heart-fibers fast in
 their work;—

Go thither:—list to the wasting widow's sob
For him who, at the hands of fellow-craftsmen
Infuriated to a fatal madness
'Neath the grinding heel of advancing greed,
Perished at the post he could not leave
And live;
Peer now through the chilly gloom at her wan,
still face
And staring eyes, as she looks on her feeble babes
And finds their pinched cheeks filled with the
ichor
And curved with the beauty-lines of life—
Their dull eyes bright with the fire of noble pur-
pose—
Their slowly-moving, shrunken limbs alive
With the ecstatic fury which shall touch
And vitalize the old, cold world;—

*While the fever burns her life away,
And her silent babes gaze awestruck
Into her tearless eyes.*

The boy—the girl: too young, too tender-plastic,
For the harried mother's holy care
To have shaped in them, in fixed and lasting lines,

The lineaments of love—shall *he* grow wild,
A noxious weed, as some malign padrone's
Child?—shall *she* by soft, persuasive lure
Lapse all unconsciously in unsuspecting
Maidenhood to woe unutterable,
Or, spirit-stricken, drop doggedly from hideous
Penury to the soul-corrosive horror
Of dark harlotry?

2

At this despondent time, oh could the State
A cherishing mother stand, the source of hope
And self-dependent happiness!

Ah, half-divine analogon of that
Dim God who, having made the world, remains
Aloof in stern, restrictive might alone,
To judge, condemn and punish what his cold
Neglect creates, take to thyself thy real
Domain, the well-spring of thy life; permit
No private seal upon those sanctuaries
Where natural potencies await the mastering
Spirit; conserve from personal caprice
And private greed the alterable or
Destructible factors in common, all-embracing
Benefits; provide the necessary

Means for general needs and trust the best
 Accomplishment to virile individuals
 Instinctively obeying natural laws;
 Be true to thyself and thine; and thou—now a
 Benign and active organism—wilt find
 The wisest eager in thy service and
 Wilt foster as thy most elect and earnest
 The high, creative self-activities,
 Which, closely federated, will make of thee
 A true Republic of Free Spirits, likening
 Thee to what this finite mind believes
 God really is—loving, immanent
 And supereminent.

Wilt thou, in the face of this, thy deep,
 Dynamical ideal, fall from each
 Exalting tendency—forget the living
 Elements whose true well-being's thine—
 Impassively abandon to ambitious
 Knaves that batten on the neediness
 Of honest worth the springs of life and soul-
 Sustaining hope—and direr still, *wilt*
 Thou, Titan of the many million minds,
 Yet blindly tolerate that deeper, dread,
 Evasive and persistent ill—the sad

Unconscious shaping, by insinuating,
Subtle effluences from the dazzling
Spectacle of regnant Selfishness,
Of those in whom the future lies embosomed
And involved?



THE MYSTIC.

Deep in the lonesome watches of the night,
When to the world's far margins down is drawn
With loving care its canopy of light,
Within my soul oft witness I the dawn
Of such a day no eye could bear the golden sight.

And, too, when ravining tempests come, rend wide
The starry canopy, rush howling in
And roar and rage aloft from side to side,
Not e'en the deal of this unholy din
Doth with my blissful, radiant day its claims di-
vide.

O would that when false pleasures softly lure
With cunning semblance of my high delight,
Or when black malice into forms impure
Provokes my peace with its corroding blight—
O would my molten golden day might still endure!

Soft, silly creatures of blind circumstance,
Did we but will it with a constant mind
All things should work for our deliverance,
The Light within no obscuration find,—
Ourselves as gods work freely in the World-ex-
panse!

INTERPRETATION,

OR A STROLL IN A GARDEN.

SHE.

(Moving lightly and happily along the path).

I love the earnest flowers,
They breathe their souls out to me
And from their artless beauty
A gentle thrill runs through me.

HE.

Dear like its like aye liketh well. *(Sighing)*
Ah, Beauty is the master-spell!

SHE.

In this bloomy, perfumed bower,
This natural grouping of leaf and flower,
I hear soft lily-voices, violet-sighs,
And I read a wealth of meaning
In this passion-flower's wild eyes.

HE.

Sweet Interpreter, thy dark, deep eyes are cunning
ears.

(To himself:) Can it be th' exalted sense my in-
most feeling hears?

SHE.

What *faith* hath yonder struggling smilax,
 Clinging to those dying lilaes!
 How doth a steadfast faith upbear
 Yon ivy on the stone wall there!

HE.

(*Almost involuntarily, as he leans upon a garden
 urn.*)

I crave a most full, heart-whole faith:
 It were as if I quaffed the world-wine
 And made the spirit of the world mine,
 And so inspirited, did look about me
 And recognize the world within without me!

SHE.

This morning-glory's opening cup
 Doth say: "The light of love is up,
 When thou dost feel thy heart enlarge
 And warmer life its depths surcharge!"

HE.

Some deep source feeds this frail, symbolic cup.
 (*Half-audibly:*) Ah me! the light of love hath
 long been up.

SHE.

(As they approach a dried-up fountain overgrown
with vines)

That delicate vine—the simple-sweet—
Which, from her pretty, unlaved feet,
Doth there entwine, with perfume laden,
The form of the marble fountain-maiden,
Doth softly say: “My love will shield thee
From all the blows that the years can yield thee.”

HE.

Intangible love has the power of a soul,
And tempers soul to a spirit-whole
In which the most caustic vicissitudes pass
As inert as fire in a mirror-glass.

(Only just audibly and confusedly:)

But the tempering, *dear*, can I—ah, *can* one en-
dure it?

Though reason reveals it, I, *dearest*, renounce and
abjure it—

I know but a sweet fascination, a vacant despair—

SHE.

(Archly)

Yon tiger-lilies' splendor there,
Those dahlias' self-sufficient air,

Bemock the genuine beauty of yon rose
And cheat the credulous air with surface-shows.

HE.

(Seriously)

What 's of the surface integrally
Is of the center mystically:
The spoken word is spirit.

SHE.

(On their entering the conservatory)

And here, too frail for the sun's bare sight,
The Holy Ghost Flower, fainting quite
In the radiant flood of her own rare light,
Doth say, underbreath, to the dove in her heart:
'Who is so true, love, and pure as thou art?
Though I swoon in the excess of love, I will hold
thee
Forever here in my heart,
Forever in ecstasy here will enfold thee!"

HE.

Sweet Psychologist, from flower-soul,
Oh, turn,—interpret my sad human heart:
It is-a scroll
Which none but thee can read—thou, dearest, art
Therefore its most meet guardian;—it is thine—
Translate thy own to me, and make it mine!

Man's proper element is men awake,
 Alive and giving life to thoughts and things,
Enthusiastic, throwing—for the sake
 Of shaping true their deep imaginings—
Their very souls into the tasks they undertake.

Life's not the playtime of a thoughtless child:
 Its worth is measured by the insights gained;
The wisdom of the larger grasp; the mild,
 Free power from some worthy end-attained;
The inner wealth from minutes full and well be-
 guiled.

And, truly, he with vain, conceited pride
 And he who shuns with scorn the vital ways
Are fellow-travelers without a guide
 Upon a plain whose barren face betrays
A lack no knowing eye could view unterrified.

Till we can stand the Light—and not till then—
 The Light that sets us from our self-love free,
We see but shadows as in Plato's den:
 A man's most perfect function is to be
A source of inspiration to his fellowmen.

1.

One night (the night
Most deliriously bright,
The gnomon that measures
The limit of pleasures),
Again by the lake
Where our spirits first spake,
But a few hours before,
Of the love that they bore,
I walked as one seems
To walk in his dreams,
Palpably nought
But the potency of thought,
Though alive to the slightest
Detail and the lightest
Sense-thrill of mild power
Of that memorable hour.

2.

Still was the night,
Yet breathless quite
From the spell SHE had cast
Over all, as we passed
In the dreamy eve-light,

In a fluttering flight
Of mute love, from the manse,
Through the gloomy expanse
Of the park, to the edge
Of the lake, to the path
Through the grasses and sedge
On the edge of the lake,
And uttered I know not
What mutual lavishment
(In words that will flow not
Again) of dear love—
In a heavenly trance—
Of dear love like the love
That comes down from above;
And then in sweet ravishment
Back to the manse.

3.

Quiet the lake
Lay (her little lake),
Silent for sake
Of the love *it* could tell not,
For sake of the love
It could tell not, could tell not,
In fatefully facile
Soft words, as were mine;

But its surface was lit
With a certain soft glow
Transfiguring it—
And thus did it show
What it never could tell
In words that should well
Out so freely as mine,
In words that should flow
Forth so smoothly as mine.

4.

Each bowery cove
And each headland's dark grove
Had least of the light
Of that radiant night,
Yet here I could note,
By the shadowy shore,
Some lilies afloat,
And some tree-tops there
Dissolving in air
Or sprinkled white
With a liquor of light;
And so limpid and rare,
So pellucid, the air,
The stars in their darkling
Purlieus were so sparkling

They appeared all liquescent,
Madly liquescent,
And the silver moon-crescent
(Though ecstatic refulgence,
As if from indulgence
In raptures divine
And all-holy like mine,
So intensely ensouled her
The sky could scarce hold her),
The melting moon-crescent,
I saw was pursued
By a DEMON endued
With desire but to quench her
Soul-fire and to wrench her
Perforce from the sky,
Down out of the sky,—
A shadowy demon
Bane to the eye
Of the credulous seaman.

5.

Oh, why, why that shrinking,
Instinctive deep shrinking
Of spirit, on thinking
Of fancy like that,
Of trifle like that

Of that moon and the demon
Feared by the seaman?

6.

Ah, well, too well,
Did my memory tell!
Ah, well, too well,
Does my memory tell!
I, indeed, might have known,
Before seeking HER love,
That never *alone*
Was to come from above,
To *me*, from above,
The Spirit of Beauty,
The Spirit of Love,
The Spirit of Beauty
And heavenly Love.

7.

In early youth
That, alas, was youth
But in name, and, in truth,
Was a maelstrom of thought,
One day, overwrought
By long and deep pondering,
Listlessly wandering.
Thoughtless and weary,

Out in the hills,
I entered the dreary
Thick woods where the rills
Slidder down
In a series of shocks,
Musical shocks,
Through dark recesses
In the mother-rocks,
And slip through the cresses,
Which curtsy and quiver,
Perhaps to the river
Down by the town.
In the gloom of that place
And its dark counterpart,
The gloom of my heart,
There arose—ah, her grace,
Her glory of face
And the poise of her form!
How lovingly warm,
How subtly alluring,
Intense and enduring!
“O Spirit,” I cried,
“Be my bride, be my bride!
And the sad realms of thought
I will leave to be sought

But by those that can find
All beauty in *mind*."

8.

Her sweet interference
There in my gloom,
Her very appearance,
In roseate bloom,
In my hermetic gloom,
Was warrant that she—
Ah, was only for me!

9.

But, melancholy
Me! O Folly,
Folly, why,
Why mortify
Me thus—entreating
And sadly repeating
"O Spirit of Woe!
Tell me not so,
That *thou* art the maiden
With love overladen,
Endowed with a beauty
It were paramount duty
To aspire to—adore—
And peril all for!"

10.

But, too true, too true!
A Circean spell
In possession doth dwell:—
This spirit perdue
Had lain—*this* shade
Of satiety made—
This inadequate creature
Of imperfect feature—
Beneath the rare
And faultlessly fair
First ravishing sight
Of that creature of light.

11.

Then should *I* not have known
That never *alone*
Came to me from above,
The Spirit of Beauty,
The Spirit of Love,
The Spirit of Beauty
And heavenly Love?

12.

In a subsequent year,
When greater my sphere,

Less passion-whirled
And more of the world,
A seraphic soul,
Nigh merged in the Whole,
Came to incline
Chastely to mine.
I saw in her eyes
The rational skies ;
And her every word
My spirit stirred
To depths unknown
When I groped alone :
I felt all the glory
And grandeur of story ;
The great world was greater ;
And He, the Creator,
I well knew to be
Ever-present in me—
I was my maker
And kindred partaker
In Him who created me
Maker, instated me
Monarch of self,
Disposer of self,
In Him, the container,

Sustainer, restrainer,
The corrector, perfecter.
"O beloved," I cried,
"Be my bride, be my bride!
I see now the meaning
Of life—'tis the gleaning
Of culture (the essence
And true coalescence
Of feeling and thought)—
The gleaning of culture—
The soul being brought
From touch with the sod
To communion wit' God.
O beloved—my bride—
With thee by my side
To interpret, control
My conscience, my soul. . . .
I cannot speak
The feelings that come!
But why should I seek
To be other than dumb
When I certainly know
That my meaning will flow
To completion, in thee?
Oh, there's nothing for me,

Revered one, I find,
But beauty of mind!"

13.

But, melancholy
Me! O Folly,
Folly, why,
Why mortify
Me thus—entreating
And sadly repeating,
"O Spirit of Woe!
Tell me not so,
That *thou* art the maiden
With love chastely laden,
Endowed with a beauty,
Intellectual beauty,
It were paramount duty
To aspire to—adore—
And peril all for!"

14.

But, a Circean spell
In possession doth dwell;
And, alas, in despite
Of the draught I had quaffed
From the Fountain of Light,
Suu-blind grew my sight,

For I searched her blue eyes,
 And, ah, where were their skies,
 Their rational skies?—
 Her lack-lustre eyes.
 Homogeneous thought
 Left nought to be sought,
 And my soul never stirred
 As before, at a word;
 So, palled, and bereft
 Of my love, what was left?

15.

Then should *I* not have known
 That never *alone*
 Came to *me* from above,
 The Spirit of Beauty,
 The Spirit of Love,
 The Spirit of Beauty
 And heavenly Love?

16.

But the shrinking on thinking
 Of fancy like that,
 Of trifle like that,
 Of the moon and the demon,
 The dear moon and the demon
 That night by the lake

Where our spirits first spake
Of their love—ay, *love?*
A dark premonition
Was, sans my volition,
Sans even my thinking,
Indissolubly linking
My soul to the soul,
The virulent soul,
Of the demon,
The pitiless demon!

17.

I hardly am equal
To telling the sequel—
I droop neath the weight
Of *my* fate, of HER fate:
For the demon . . . the demon . . .
Was—I was the demon . . .
It was *I* who pursued . . .
I, the demon endued
With desire to quench her
Soul-fire and wrench her,
My Love, from her sky,
Down out of her sky
Of perfection,—'twas I,
Yes, I, unwilling

Yet forced to, fulfilling
A law of my nature,—
What certainly seemed —
What I sadly misdeemed—
A law of my nature,
That the high legislature
Of love could annul not,
And God even cull not
Clean from the code
And not wholly confound
And raze to the ground
The rule He bestowed.

18.

O melancholy
Me! O Folly,
Folly, why,
Why mortify
Me so—entreating,
Sadly entreating:
“O Spirit of Woe!
Say where is the maiden
With celestial love laden
(With pain *over*laden),
Endowed with a beauty,
Inexpressible beauty,

It were paramount duty
To aspire to—adore—
And peril all for!"

19.

Dark Spirit of Woe,
Wilt thou never forego
Thy false disillusioning,
Mortal confusioning,
Never cease to pursue me,
Thwart and undo me?

20.

But why do I ask,
So needlessly ask?
I who have passed
By degrees to the last
(The uttermost) station,
The full consummation,
Of pain—the pain
Of a heart that hath lain
On the bosom of love,
Sweet, innocent love,
And yet (through a flaw
In the intimate law
Of its nature), self-cursed,
But o'ercome and coerced,

Hath cruelly stricken
And blighted the tender,
Dear soul it would render
Up Heaven, to quicken!

21.

My life is a cloud
And this body a shroud,
Though I still feel the lurking,
Loth heart's labored working,
As the slow blood 'would fain
Relieve the poor brain
And stay the creation,
Painful, unsought,
The sad fabrication
Of feeling and thought,
That I might lie down,
Quietly down,
On the shore of the lake
Where our spirits first spake
Of their love—lie down,
Lie down in the gloom,
Alone in the gloom
Of the tomb—
Away from the laugh,
The chatter and laugh

Of the bigots who doubt
Absolution from stain
By baptism of pain—
Lie at rest in the gloom,
The remedial gloom
Of the peacefullest tomb,
The tomb without
An epitaph.

OH, THE FREE AIR'S THE MANSION TO
LIVE IN!

1.

The glint of the southerly sun on the blades
Of the rank, fresh grass of the year's new life;
The lines, through *these* leafless trees, of light
On the limbs, with a setting of shadow-jet,
And the myriad splashes of mollient flame
Through *that* smooth-faced perennial foliage;
The dreamy blue of the sky through the laey
And complicate canopied frowze of *this* tree.
And the jagged and involute plat on the blue,
Of the cameo-clear and intricate outline
Of *that* tree; the dark-green and light-green and
earth-brown
And shadow below—with a mottling of red-brown
And umber and silver and gray and a hint
Of dark purple—and the hue of the sky-dome
above;
The sight of the various leaf-shapes and plant-
shapes
That spring from a common soil;
The flight of the small birds and butterflies;
The masterful poise of the hawk in the zenith;

OH, THE FREE AIR'S THE MANSION TO LIVE IN

The beauty-lines of the crests of the hills—
The melodious flowing of curve upon curve
Along and adown and across, with the mild
Sensation and pique, for the nonce, at the sharp
Interruption of fire-cracked or stratified rocks,
Which a further and deeper reflection interprets
And feels as the checks that make melody harmony,
As the discord that heightens sweet sameness out
there

To arouse and partake of the spirit's activity
Here, for harmony holds from the spirit;
The suggestion of God in the far-sweeping dis-
tances;

The finding of freedom within and the fixing
Of faith in the infinite reaches of spirit:—
Here's no stifling constraint of the feelings,
No leveling down to alikeness.

Oh, the free air's the mansion to live in!

2.

The sound of the hastening rill down there
In the little ravine;
The hum of the insect;
The song of the bird;
The bark of the squirrel;

OH, THE FREE AIR'S THE MANSION TO LIVE IN

The many uncertain, mysterious sifflings
Of sound from the depth of the tree, the cleft
Of the rock and the midst of the weed-clump:—
 They tell not of weariness, heartache or woe;
 Their burden's not malice nor spite nor conceit.

Oh, the free air's the mansion to live in!

3.

The tingling, magnetic, cool feel of the earth
And the sprinkling of sap-dew lingering still
On the veins of the unshaken leaflets:—
 Here's no clammy, dead hand of deceit,
 No feverish gripe of a fiend.

Oh, the free air's the mansion to live in!

4.

The taste, as if every skin-pore had a tongue,
And the smell, as if function were ended in smelling,
Of a vaporized liquor of life—
Of a sweet and ethereal essence of life —
Till the vitalized being dilates to the point
Where ecstasy turns into tears—
Where the rich, iridescent film-figures of fancy
Flash into tears:—

OH, THE FREE AIR'S THE MANSION TO LIVE IN

Here's no tang of a sympathy, hollow, half-
hearted;

No memorial sad odor of roses, no token
Of roses now faded, no token of vows
That are broken, of love that's departed.

Oh, the free air's the mansion to live in!

THE WATCHER.

O Arline, arise! arise!

The air with an attar-like odor is teeming,
Mild night-light comes down from the skies,
Soft love-light that vies with the light of thy eyes,
The light of love in thy eyes:
Pale starlight comes down, scarce seeming
To fall, ere it faints, ere it dies,
In the opaline moonlight silvering, creaming,
The garden and marble fount, where it lies.

O Arline, arise! I implore.

The Planet of Love 's in the arms of the Moon
('Tis the night of all nights in the year—
'Tis the palmary night of the year),
The sweet garden flowers are lolling aswoon
And the warm airs are kissing the ones they
adore;—
Oh, drive away Sleep from each frail, silken lid.
Pitiless Sleep, from each tyrannized lid
(From my thirsting, sad soul I implore!)
And full to these tantalized purlicus restore
With thy presence, Euterpe, the melody hid
I' the hearts of the trees and the flowers;

With the charm of thy presence bring potency once
more
To the pain-lulling, lyrical, lovely Night-Hours!

Sweet, here where the radiant wealth of the night
Illumines as if with an inward light
The form of the marble fountain-maiden,
And the wealth of the garden, perfume-laden,
Responds to the fountain's sonody,
Nods to the murmuring monody,
Till all is in sympathy quite
(For the maiden mourns, I know, for her lover,
And over *my* heart soft, sweetly-sad unisons
hover);

Here, where the elfin shadows crouch
And hide in the grass or sit on the leaves
Or, softer than any wind that blows,
Kiss the rich cheek of a regal rose,
I'll make thee a couch—the daintiest couch;

Here, where the delicate vine interweaves
In her arms the loveliest lily-bell
That ever hath listened to all the woes
That a delicate vine can tell,

I'll make thee a couch—ah, the queenliest couch,—
 Out of flowers each breathing her soul out for thee,
 Out of violets sighing and dying for thee ;

And here thou wilt stay till the love-star goes ;
 And the light on thy clustering hair,
 The light on thy forehead fair,
 The smile on thy lips, the light in thy eyes,
 The joy in my heart, shall declare that he lies
Who saith that a slow bell tolls
And on the night a knell rolls.

Sweet, here where the Spirit of Love
 Hath woven the world in a spell,
 Hath brought down ethereal threads from above
 And woven the world in a spell,
 Here will the heavenly visions of night
 Arise from the soul, where they dwell,
 And, leading us on from delight to delight,
 Make us one—ay, one!—by a marvelous spell ,
 Far out of the confines of night,
 Far out of this very inadequate world,
 Far out of this maladjust world—
Where no bell tolls
And on my heart its knell rolls.

Ah, cloud o'er the moon!
So soon, so soon,
Dost thou wake me
To worldliness, make me
 Alive to my bitterest woe?

Ah, cloud o'er the moon!
Too soon, too soon,
Dost thou wake me
And make me
 Alive to unutterable woe.

But how could I sleep
And leave *them* to keep
Watch o'er *my* dead—
Them only, who kept her—
 Who from damnable pride—
 Kept her from me, till she died!
Lo, the purple pane!
The lamp—the purple pane!
Oh, mockery of my woe!
Come, sheety cloud,
This cold, proud world enshroud;
For all is dead,
All virtue here hath vanishéd:—

Ah, I could weep no tear, no tear,
Upon yon virgin bier—
No burning tear,—
Upon the burthen of yon bier!



Abysmal deeps, engulf me,
 And hidden currents, whirl
 What's worst of me to doubly
 Dire perdition!

 There's little
 Left in me of that
 Divine pure fire which solves
 And unifies in one
 Essential spirit-whole
 The actual passing life
 And the energizing, full,
 Complete ideal, sublime
 And archetypal.

 If conscience,
 Then, be leaving me,
 Be quitting now, when most
 In need,—O weak, unstable
 Me!—O perjured me! —
 There's wreck in the moral world,
 And Antichrist is king!

Bury me deep in a grave, oh,
And cover it over with snow, oh,
For—*a ha, ha, ha, and a ho, ho, ho,—*
This is too merry a world, oh!

Carry me up on a cliff, oh,
And off of it heartily throw, oh,
For—*a ha, ha, ha, and a ho, ho, ho,—*
This is too jolly a life, oh!

Drop me into the sea, oh,
And religiously let me be, oh,
For—*a ha, ha, ha, and a ho, ho, ho,—*
I am too happy entirely, oh!

Build me a funeral pyre, oh,
And burn me up in the fire, oh,
For—*a ha, ha, ha, and a ho, ho, ho,—*
This glee will be *fatal* to me, oh!

* Song from an unpublished romance.

When angry thought-floods seethe within my mind,
Thy presence, Cara, always is to me
An oil (of roses) on this raging sea ;
Thy voice, the wild-birds' warbling, soul-refined,
Or soft, melodious psalm borne by the wind,
In soothing accents breathes sweet sympathy ;
Thy touch, thy glance,—ah, every jot of thee—
Is some glad, bowered avenue, flower-lined,
Down to the genuine heart I so adore ;
And, as a phosphorescent sea when blows
A lively breeze from some night-covered shore,
Thy face now glows with quiet smiles, now shows
An inner nature strangely vague and deep,
Where prophecy and intuition sleep.

* * *

* * * To the unfortunate self-seeking and fate-bound person, the thought that the more fortunate, who seem to have reached their attainments or possessions without effort, may also have limitations, woes and despairs, comes sometimes as a ray of hope indicating undreamt-of possibilities and calling forth from him a free endeavor to rise out of his present enthrallment.

1.

In the shadows of time was a sea,
A symbolic, berylline sea,
Where mist-phantomed crags jutted o'er
Populous stretches of shore
That were thick-peopled reaches of care,
For sodden-eyed Poverty there
Looked up with a self-seeking prayer,
Looked down and around in despair,
And, as ever, its own burden bore.

2.

Yet the people, uplifted at times,
Heard mellifluous, mystical chimes,
Which upfloated airily free
From the cavernous cliffs by that sea;

But the sweetly fantastical tones
Found a sad contrast in the moans,
Found a sore contrast in the groans,
 From the low-lying shore of the sea.

3.

They were mimes, unceasingly mumbling
And sullenly muttering and grumbling,
 Who kept rolling the mellow-toned notes
 From the great bells' eloquent throats;
But their muttering, down-sweeping where wells
The dull-sounding moan, the sound swells,—
While the sonorous wealth of the bells
 Like a seraphic choral o'erfloats.

4.

Still the shore-dwellers oft heard the sound
Of the bells, as they went the old round
 Of the burdens before which they quailed,
 - Of the life they so sorely bewailed;
And they heard, too, back of the chimes,
The sullen complaint of the mimes
And bethought them, at hyaline times,
 It was some like themselves that bewailed.

5.

Such thought in this Fate-governed place
Was a ray from the deific grace ;
 And, in time, to this sad people's eyes
 Hope opened new spheres and new skies :
They walked on a more pliant Earth
And felt in themselves all the worth
They were wont to ascribe but to birth ;
They worked—with a strange touch of mirth—
 And sought not for aught from the skies.

6.

The welkin and deep and weird sea,
It had seemed, were ne'er to be free
 Of the dissonance harbored so long,
 Of the discord deplored as a wrong ;
But now out of the erstwhile despair
And into the heart of the air,
Dispelling the dissonance there,
 A melody welled, and swelled heavenward—
 Thrilled into song !

Dull, thunderous mutterings edged the nether
world,

At last shrank Man aghast—the blasting shrack

Shrieks thought paralytic—hearts crack—

A spastic hour! the spawn shall be outhurled!

But, deep into a secret centre whirled,

Enforming energies, beneath the wrack,

Soft potencies, 'mid swirl demoniac,

Now act, and lo! the Acme of the World:

'Th' organic life—brute, swooning Nature's goal;

The noble form—awakened Nature's quest;

The thought-born speech—bond of the civil whole;

The *Rational Soul*—the master manifest.

Surmounted Nature passed like thunder-sound:

The Soul surveyed itself with glance profound!

God is a living fire, old wisdom taught.

I take this taper, light with it another—
 No change whatever in the first is wrought :
 I spend my spirit on a needy brother,
 Yet is my spirit whole, its diminution naught.

God said, Let there be Light ; and gods awoke
 And lit a world to life with their pure flame,
 And shone there'mid in peace, till Something broke
 The silent spell ; whereon disturbed became
 They all—uneasy for a change ; yet 'twas God
 spoke.

And in the change that thereupon began—
 The lighting of world after world to life—
 They last a dark, gross, spherul world did plan
 And passed down into ways of stress and strife,
 That through all being they might rise free-souled
 to Man.

This darkling globe in which the gods innured
 Themselves in search of being, fuller, higher,
 And which through myriad ages hath endured,
 I find is even yet sustained by Fire—
 Ethereal Principle to ken of sense obscured.

Throughout its seeming dead and formless crust
The Light-born atom-constellations swing;
And shone into by more of Light, and thrust
Forth into form, the crystal—thought and thing
Now one—bears humble witness to the Fire august.

And so the plant, the animal and man—
Successive reaches of the embodied Light—
Bear witness to the richly ordered plan,
Love-kindled, which doth seek to so unite
All things that each in other its own self may scan.

And that before which these do witness bear,
The Light itself, doth see itself in all,
All in itself, and grow with joy aware
That its own generation from the Fall
Is rising free, full-wise, immaculately fair.

1.

What though the sombre sequence of a hostile,
 circumstantial chain of happenings
 (as if a disincorporating world
 flung off upon the centered microcosm
 the ruffraff of disjointed ill)

Assail the sacred precincts of the princely
 soul and press upon the citadel,

Shall the soul quail? Can aught *without*
 confound the regency that rose and holds
 from the calm, high spirit? can aught without
 confound

th' organic fundament and active source
 of fluent, solvent life and the plastic world,—
 the delegate divine of a sovereign power
 that images and interacts with God?

2.

What though the fiercely surging tidal impulse
 of the underlying, turbid source
 of incarnating and evolving soul,
 a sea of germic frenzy,

Aspire vandally—leap like fiend
of direst evil on the quiet soul—
lash it in a devilish rage—and then,
insatiate, lick with rabid passion-tongues
the lambent empyrean spirit-fire;—
Cannot the gentle flame insinuate,
with soft persistence, its fine, dividing and
disintegrating angles—nullify
by essence-communition all the fury
of the limbic and matricial sea—
and, timeless, spaceless, pulse with purest light.
in primal legislative glory?

1.

O Father of Light, thou who art and not wast,
Thou who abidest, with the when and the where in
thy bosom,
Thou who continuest, sublime and ineffable,
Out of space, out of time:
We grope almost in the night, in the night,—
Be with us, O Father, our Father!

2.

Thou thinkest, O Lord, and thy thought is thy will;
Thou willest, O Lord, and thy will is thy love;
Thou lovest, O Lord, and thy love is the birth of
thy creature;
Thou thinkest and willest and lovest, O Lord,
And thou art the life and the light of his spirit:
We stumble, O Father; sustain us!

3.

Forgive us, O Father beloved, if we through the
mist
Of our thinking believe we can pierce to thy wis-
dom.

We feel we are broken and sundered,
Our sight is a seeing at night,
But we cherish a spark of thy spirit—
We feel we are made in thy image—and say we
can *know* :
Forgive us, O Father beloved !

4.

O Father, our Father most truly, to thee doth the
heart
Of thy creature revert with an infinite trust,
Turn back with an infinite faith ; for we know, O
Father,
Our Father, that back of and over our Fall
Shone a glory of spiritual light—thy benison,
Father,—
O Father, our Father most truly !

5.

And though we have fallen, O Father, we know
That the fatal defect arose from thy fostering love ;
We see, through the mist of our thinking,
By the light of thy spirit within us,

That the pathway essential to glory—is pain,—
 O Father, our Father most truly!

6.

To be passive receivers of being, O Father beloved,
 Even from thee, were to render us alien to thee,
 Dependent and hollow and vain; but to be, inde-
 feasibly

Be, we must traverse the pathway of pain, through
 earth-lives

Of error and sin, to knowledge of self—and of
 thee,—

O Father, our Father most truly!

7.

Thus should we, O Father beloved, bear witness
 indeed

To the light that shone o'er the primal beginning
 And will shine o'er thy creature transfigured, thy
 creature self-knowing,

Self-active, self-governing, free, eternally free,
 One-natured with thee, adoring, and grounded in
 thee,

O Father, our Father most truly!

O weird Chaldean star-worlds! ye
To me are more than diamond light
To grace the brow of mankind's night,
More than slavish, drudging spheres
For signs and seasons, days and years.

Unvarying and without haste,
Rolling, rolling, through the eternal,
Space-unbound world-vapor waste,
Without a place, without a date,
Obeying each the word supernal,
Fulfilling each the ordained fate;

To me, who rise but aye to fall,
Ye are high symbols of that Cause
Whence comes the mighty chain of laws
Which makes the fate of the meanest one
A factor in the fate of all;

To me, who rise but aye to fall,
Ye are a universal sun
Illuming all the darkness in my soul,
Scattering all the wild divinings,
Blind demands and vague repinings;

To me, who rise but aye to fall,
Ye are a mighty open scroll
Whereon I read: Be vast, Earth-dweller,
Be thou a circumstance-compeller,
Go grandly onward to the goal.



1.

Flee, flee, O my Soul!
For there's little for thee
In this lurid and turbulent world:
Its feelings and issues
Are alien to thee,
Its idols are spirits downhurled.

2.

Flee, flee, O my Soul!
O flee and be free
From the rancors that ceaselessly pain thee;
For why shouldst thou stay,
When thou couldst be free
From the straits and the fates that constrain
thee?

3.

Flee, flee, O my Soul!
Why an eremite be,
In a life that is void of achievings?
For thy efforts are vain,

And what good can there be
 In these infinite thwartings and grievings?

4.

Flee, flee, O my Soul!
 To the light thou dost see,
 The violet light of yon land;
 For as æther to air
 Is the light thou dost see,
 To the luridness here on this strand.

5.

Flee, flee, O my Soul!
 To the land thou dost see;
 'Tis the land of reliefs and completions,
 And the fair and the rare
 Who are there thou wilt see
 And commune with to sweetest repletions.

6.

Flee, flee, O my Soul!
 What! wilt not be free?

Is there aught in these thwartings and
grievings,
This infinite pain,
It's no gain to be free?
Dear Soul, O reveal thy perceivings!



Beautiful Mother of the Sky, with thy silver light make glad the tired eyes of the poor toilers of the weary days; turn for them the hard aspect of common things into a fairyland of glory where the free thought may flash its way here and there and revel in the ravelings of its loosened texture of despair.

Mother, Mother of the Deep Night-Sky, may thy benignant light sink into the hearts hardened by self-seeking and become there a light of love which shall, like thy light, shine upon all; and so shall the lover of self lose himself, only to find himself seated, enthroned with the truly great, in the world's wide hall.

A tumbled mass of jagged, ragged rocks ;
A wind-swept, dreary plain all round about ;
A youth, new come, with genius' noble air ;—
*Three scrawny, whiskered hags limp mumbling
out!*

The stranger, shocked, would leave the haunted
spot ;—
One whistles shrill between her tongue and
tooth ;—
He turns,—and she in jarring accents screeches :
“Stay ! and love for love I'll give thee, youth !”

He speechless stands and strives to quell his scorn ;
They crouch down in the shelter of a rock ;
One holds him with her rheumy eyes, and croaks :
“And I for wealth will wealth to thee unlock !”

His fierce disgust has now near warped his soul—
He would on them turn back the ills they
wreak ;—
One skewers him with her pointing skinny arm
And hisses : “I for fame the fame you seek !”

A-shudder now at these symbolic words,
His very fear emboldens him to speak;
But speak he cannot—a something seals his lips,—
His very heart has grown a-cold and bleak.

One leering crone now pulls her flabby ears;
One rubs her hanging nose and cackles mocks;
One, grinning, claws the bristles on her chin;—
All mumbling, mowing, vanish 'mid the rocks.

*To a beauteous isle in a southern sea
A restless spirit transported me,
An isle o'ercapped with a pleasure-palace
And lapped in languorous airs from the sea
Full-laden with largess of many a chalice
Lolling, sweet-lipped, in garden and lea
Here terraced, there sloping far off to the sea.*

Ere we had touched the marble pier
Soft music filled the atmosphere,
Foretokening all that isle did hold
Of beauties, radiant, manifold.
I hoped to dwell there evermore,
Yet pensively I stepped ashore,
Pensively, for naught could shake
The sad trend that my thoughts *would* take.
I wandered here and there awhile,
Then sought the summit of the isle.
I passed within the palace doors
And wondering trod the dazzling floors;
I went among the merry crew
Whom Pleasure's witchery thither drew,
And then, at last, in that maze of folly
Tried to lose my melancholy;

But, plagued at length by a haunting doubt,
I searched the enchanting place throughout :

*In air-pitched balcony, flower-scented bower,
Honey-mouthed lover wooed coy, blushing dame ;
In self-centered mood, on a world-scanning tower,
A satisfied willing stood, musing on fame :
In the keep, on a pallet, neglected and cold,
A kin-bereaved graybeard lay driveling in fear,
With eyeballs turned sidewise toward Death at his
ear ;
And a scrimp in the hold was worshiping gold.*

Pondering these few types of what
Was passing in that palace fair,
I slowly left the specious spot
And sought the glorious outer air.
Wandering there, all thoughtful, lonely,
I murmured, " 'Tis illusion only.
When spirit-life doth senseward surge,
Earth greets a dupe or thaumaturge."

On the marble coping of a terrace wall
I sat and gazed upon the sea,
And asked myself if this were all

This lovely isle could hold for *me*—
This thirst for nectar in a dream,
This thirst for things that merely seem.
It may, I mused, foretold clearly
The thirst for springs that deeper lie,
And to their waters lead more nearly
These foolish seekers, by-and-by;
But the love that burns in the finger-tips,
The ambition that yearns at best through the lips,
The desire for life at the soul's expense,
The greed for money, blind, intense,—
Oh, what are these to the soul that's free—
What, what are these poor things to me!
Here, on this terrace wall, I stand,
And on the grandeur of the sea,
The peerless beauty of the land,
The mystery of the infinite sky,
I look with loving eye and cry:
“Oh, Sea, Land, Sky, be part of me,
Sink deep down in the heart of me,
Commingle with my inward dreams,
Displace my longings, lesser lights,
That I may—mid all this that *seems*.
May—from all foreign fetters free—
Return to those rich days and nights

Ere 'gainst your physical delights,
Your grandeur, beauty, mystery,
I learned to set contrastingly
These petty thoughts and doubts of things,
These gropings and these glimmerings.
With you as part of me once more
My spirit knows no bounding shore:
Free! free! I stand, and bend to none
But Him, the All-pervasive One,
Yet in my spirit is there naught
Of pride, but rather is there wrought
That miracle of sympathy,
A tender, calm humility."

I ceased, and in my soul did play
The streamers of a coming day—
I looked again on land, sky, sea
And *knew* them but a part of me;
They—like the illusory palace-life
And objects of desire and strife,
Nay, like the builded faery pile
Itself, or like the lover's smile—
Were but expressions of a being
Deeper, vaster far than they.
From me, me blind but all-foreseeing,

These mighty things that I survey
Did come, shall go, may come again;—
Can I, then, in this pleasure-pen,
This dream within a dream, abide?

No, no, let me be side by side
And *en rapport* with strenuous souls,
High-striving, seeing things by wholes;
Let me be where across the sweep
Of common things deep unto deep
May call and with a tender care
Work out that end beyond compare,
The lighting of the aimless way
Of those who walk in darkness, nay
The adding to the gladdening sum
Of things for those who are to come.

Leaving then the terrace wall,
Unmindful of the hopes and all
That led me to this lovely isle,
And with a long-unwonted smile—
The smile of one whose way is clear—
I sought again the marble pier.

I sailed upon a mystic sea,
And sad-faced beings, marked by doom,
Clutched their bosoms and kept pace
With me within the water-gloom.

Each strove his neighbor to outdo,
Each seemed to look me through and through,
As if he sought to penetrate
The meaning of my kindlier fate.

A pompous figure curled his lip
And looked me loftily in the eye;—
In him no sense of fellowship—
I, hopeless, left him, with a sigh.

No more, my dear, no more, no more,
Shall the prying eyes of saucy day
Our sacred, sweet unrest survey,
On love's deep sea or life's disheartening shore;
No more shall immelodious note
In on our living music float.

There's little leave for loving here,
There's little time for more than tears,
But, now thou'rt gone forever, dear,
However wearily will creep
The lonely, lingering, tedious years,
We'll nightly meet, with faith unfailing, dear,
Down in the silent vale of sleep.

We'll meet beneath the willow there,
The silver willow all alone,
Within the silent vale of sleep;
Beside the slumberous river there,
We'll meet alone, all, all alone,
Down in the blissful vale of sleep.

* Song from an unpublished romance.

Archmaster of the mightiest minds,
Divine attraction, holy rage,
Love rules the world and all its kinds,
Peoples our life-hermitage
With Beauty's forms and shadowings—
Projections of diviner things.

If you have never loved, my friend,
You little know what living means,
You have not looked behind the scenes
And outward shows that constitute
The common lot that living gleans,
You cannot nearly comprehend
The music of that cosmic lute
Which leads us, willing, in pursuit
Of a never-ending end.

WHAT GIVES THE SUFFERER
STRENGTH?

95

Life seems, indeed, as certain poets teach,
A futile wandering in a wilderness;
Yet, from this wretched life of mine upreach
High yearnings which no soul that suffered less
Could feel—no Paradise enspirit into speech.

But ye that suffer and are silent, ye
Forever straining at the thingy mass
That unopposed would your destroyer be,
What brings your fortitude to such a pass
That, cramped and tortured, ye yet stay to struggle free?

If I—despite the fact that my sad lot
Doth bear high yearnings that enkindle me
To rouse their like in those that know them not—
At times but little use in life can see,
What gives the silent sufferer strength,—endurance, what?

In a weird, unnamed and shadowy land
 I walked along a winding strand,
 Slimy strand, thick-strewn with bones
 Half hid within the ooze of years,
 With sunken pomp, with broken thrones,
 Sad relics of men's hopes and fears.

*(Here's matter in plenty to re-arrange,
 But beware of the genii, Chance and Change.)*

I walked there 'neath a grewsome sky
 And gazed out o'er the gloomy water:
 I too had sought Fame—now mused on why
 I had so much desired and sought her;
 Then came a rush like a geyser's gush,—
 I felt a shuddering dizziness,—
 I turned, and there a huddling press
 Of haggard forms, who slowed their pace,
 Stood still and stared me in the face.
 Then wheeled around with a sighing sound
 And hurried back into murky space.

*(Where, in the feverish, fruitless quest,
 Where the nepenthe for haunting unrest?)*

Alone upon that mystic shore
 I stayed to muse, and more and more
 Upon my sorrowing soul did beat
 The sadness of the Incomplete:
 The pain intolerable grown,
 I then did from that strand retreat
 And leave to grief and gloom their own.

“Oh, where is the heart that is sorrow-laden?”

“Here,” said the maiden, forlorn, forlorn,

“Here is the heart that is sorrow-laden:

Oh, woe is me! that I ever was born.”

“Is there naught that can lighten the load of thy
sorrow?”

“Ah, no; ah, no,” cried the maiden forlorn,

“There’s naught that can lighten the load of my
sorrow:

Oh, woe is me! that I ever was born.”

“But there’s peace in the world God’s will to ful-
fill.”

“Ah, yes; ah, yes,” cried the maiden forlorn,—

“The cliff it is steep, and the wave it is still:

Oh, woe is me! that I ever was born.”

* Song from an unpublished romance.

Turn, oh turn, those eyes upon me,
Search my soul's dark, lonesome night—
This is I, my love, my light!

Do but deign to smile upon me,
And I straight am star-bedight—
This is I, my love, my light!

* From an uncompleted drama

PART I.

Scene:—*A Deserted Mansion and the Remains of a Magnificent Garden on the Outskirts of a University Town.*

Persons:—*Waltham, a young instructor in Philosophy. Margra, his betrothed.*

WALTHAM.

(*Entering the garden, for his customary afternoon walk and meditation.*)

A puppet I?—a mere machine?—a thing
 Without inherent power—without the spring
 Of free, autonomous action; here and there
 Compelled my aspirations to forswear;
 In cold and staring silence forced to find
 The full refulgence of th' ecstasie mind
 Abate unto the heavy light of day
 Or e'en the pale death-light upon decay;
 Constrained, through some tenacious race-persistence
 In some narrow, dull, material groove,
 To feel and think and act and onward move,
 In general, on that line of least resistance?
 In crystal periods, when some burst of power
 Crowds archangelic vision in an hour,
 And from the summit of a flight sublime

I fling my winged soul, through vague out-places,
Off into arcane, nascent spaces,
In ageless, alphan time,
Just as the unfolding spirit doth begin
To solve the mystery of the origin
Of things, and with unbounded joy I burn,—
Constrainedly I turn—
And there, in hard outlines, a hideous thing—
Stone still, or passing backward, beckoning!
The rearward glance hath cost the angelic sight!
A soft illumination stays, whose light
Reveals a something not myself which ever
Beckons onward, outward, starry bright,
Adding beauty unto beauty,
Pausing never,
Waiting for me never;
And yet, it seems, the farther out I chase
This beauteous phantom in the world-light in me,
The stronger rise retarding-things to win me
Back—to stare that monster in the face!

(He turns and sees Margra by the dilapidated fountain where, slightly obscured by the rank plants, she has been standing since he entered the enclosure and began to walk, with folded arms, thoughtfully and sadly to and fro on the

short path tangent to the circular basin, before unburdening his troubled mind in this impassioned soliloquy.)

Ah! Margra, thou here?

(He hastens to her and takes her hand.)

I little thought to see thee here to-day—

And thou so near!

How was't no subtle sympathies did course
From those dark eyes, no potent, speaking force
From this superb embodiment, and say:

“Thy Margra’s here?”

MARGRA.

I came to walk with thee and talk with thee—
I knew I’d find thee here.

WALTHAM.

Some sister angel told thee so;
Or, perchance, last night our souls did meet
And rapturously read the rapid come-and-go
Of fire-emblazoned thoughts that voiceless rose
Within the radiant soul-sphere, and in the sweet
Discourse to one another did disclose
Our mingled destinies from day to day,
And these prophetic visions, dark to me,
Still shine in thee with undiminished ray.
My Margra, oft I’ve thought that thou and I,

Discarding this earth-treading mask of clay
 Which plummet-like down from an archal sky
 Hath plunged, the God-born spirit's tenement,
 Have drifted out into the boundless deep,
 And there the clouds about our souls have rifted,
 And in the burst of glory o'er us sprent
 We have awaked as from an age-long sleep,
 And vision after vision then exalting
 Us until once more we left behind
 Our forms, our shadow-forms, the Deep o'ervault-
 ing
 Us evanished:—a spirit unconfined
 I was—thou wast— and thou and I, my love,
 Apart no more, were one.

MARGRA.

You're too ideal, Henry; you see in me
 Not what I am, but what you'd have me be.

WALTHAM.

Turn not from me, Margra, listen to me:—
 I see things as they are, not as they seem;
 The world-supporting potencies pass through me
 From Being's Fountainhead; the calm, still stream
 My soul impedes but slightly in its course—
 It does not strike against me as a wall
 And pile up with its full, majestic force

Great airy nothingness which, when the wall
Hath crumbled, once again must formless fall
Into the ever-flowing fountain-stream.

MARGRA.

How *can* you love?—they say that love's a *dream*.

WALTHAM.

Dost thou not know how I can love—
I who before thy first sweet whisperings
Of love for me, had touched no book
And shunned a lecture for a look
From thee, until my pupils, restless grown,
Were leaving me and drabbling angel-wings
In mire of logic, atom, flesh and bone?
How can *I* love?—ah, this from thee?
They say that love's a dream—a dream—
A mere lip-worthy, poetaster theme?—
Thy beauty, Margra, is to me
As real as is thy soul to thee,
As real as is that perfect thing
Of which thou art a shadowing—
That shining Form which silent lies
Out of sight of human eyes;
Thy grace and beauty are a part
Of my own make-up—what thou art
Am I; and Beauty, Grace and Love

Are *one*; then what more real can be,
My Margra, than the love I feel for thee?

MARGRA.

I understand you not—I understand you not!
(*Moves slowly away.*)

WALTHAM.

O Margra! what can I say—
O dearest one, I bid thee stay!

MARGRA.

Why stay? To hear you talk—"a mere machine"—
Because you *must*?

WALTHAM.

What would you have? This pains me to the heart.

MARGRA.

I'd have you "stare that monster in the face"
And learn by contrast human woman's grace!

WALTHAM.

A tear? a tear in that dark eye?
Tell me, dearest, why, oh why!

MARGRA.

I tell thee, Henry, woman's heart is deep—

WALTHAM.

Yea, the heart's the well-spring of a world.

MARGRA.

And woman's love can life-long watches keep,

With patient, circled eyes and broken sleep—

WALTHAM.

Yea, love's the mute word of a mighty will.

MARGRA.

And woman's brain can throb with fever-fire,
 To grant an underbreath of love's desire—
 And woman's mind is as a lyre love-strung,
 Tense and instinct with wealth of songs unsung—
 Nay, Henry, she can give up all God gave
 And lay her down for love's sake in the grave.

WALTHAM.

But can she fan to flame the glowing thought
 And lead the inward-centered mind to aught
 That's everlasting, true, eternal—
 Can she light her lamp at fire supernal
 And set it in that reflex, gloomy den :
 Far down within the immortal hearts of men?

MARGRA.

Woman cannot understand, and would not,
 A love that calls on logic to defend it;
 And what a woman's love could do, or could not,
 'Tis sure, an act like that is apt to end it.

WALTHAM.

Can woman understand, or take a part
 In the proud interests of a poet's heart?

Can woman understand the art that tells
 Of the wondrous realms of Form and Thought—
 Can she feel its grandeur, recks she aught
 Of the god-like power that in it dwells?

MARGRA.

If that art find a root in my own life,
 And draw not, like the air-plant, from the air—
 If I could feel it living, growing, there,—
 Then could I, Henry, be your loving wife;
 But though you scale the highest heights of art,
 And send no living rootlet to my heart,
 Then would that lofty art a barrier be
 Between the sweetening light of love and me:
 Should I in shadow, like a fungus, grow,
 I'd grow as bitter as the bitter sloe.

WALTHAM.

The poet needs a wealth of sympathy
 Wherewith to shape his flitting, vague creations;
 And his a tranquil, quiet life must be,
 His soul to hear the faint reverberations
 Of the Word from sphere to sphere.

MARGRA.

The one I wed no voice but mine shall hear.

WALTHAM.

Self-will's a power in this proud world alone;

The world of perfect form and angel thought
Doth hold our earthly will or will-not naught:
The Perfect Form can haunt a soul downthrown;
The still, small Voice can reach a heart of stone;
Then can the poet himself in self ensphere
And say, I will not see, I will not hear?

MARGRA.

Oh, these voices, visions, Henry dear!
Thy hateful books have made thee sick, I fear.

WALTHAM.

No, no, no, my Margra, no, not sick;—
Something incongruous pricks me to the quick.
There's canker here, and stinging nettles there,
And ugly weeds and misgrowths everywhere,
Corruption-marks, upon this Garden's face—
Sad obsession of a beauteous place
Of regal landscape-form and flower-grace!
And in yon warping mansion blind decay
Doth lurk, and wear the weary years away.
The canted chimneys—loosened clapboards—
Sagged verandas—broken railings—
The displaced steps and blistered door—
Yon shutter hanging downward by one hinge—
Great dripping stains from rusted nail-heads,
Shutter-hooks and shutter-hinges,

Like marks of senile tears upon the livid
Visage of a hag—

Is *this* not irritation?

Is not *this* vexation?

MARGRA.

What means this gloomy, nervous mood to-day?

WALTHAM.

Evil beings all about us lurk
To catch us at a nadir-time
And trip us in their murk and slime.

MARGRA.

(With tears in her eyes)

Am I an evil being, Henry?

WALTHAM.

(Steps to her and takes her hand)

Forgive me, Margra; pain me not with tears
In those soft eyes of thine.

If in my spirit rise dark, wildering fears,
Grim, elemental shadows, beckoning-things,
Eidolons, proffering wings and magic rings
And pointing backward through chaotic years,
They're exorcised by this dear self of thine;
And if there's aught of clogging, earth-commingl-
ing

Humour in any vein or nerve of mine,
 'Tis quickly scattered by the best-outsingling,
 Subtile aura from this sweet hand of thine.

MARGRA.

Thou'rt now thyself, my Henry; why, say why
 Such thoughts? Thou mad'st me sigh, thou mad'st
 me cry—

And were it not of all grave acts the gravest,
 I should have given thee back the ring thou gavest.

WALTHAM.

'Twas but my Reason's mad intensity
 Contemplating Love's immensity:
 The Universal Life my self subverting,
 'Twas but my self her freedom still asserting.

MARGRA.

Thou lov'st me, Henry? Canst thou of that per-
 suade me,

I'll store thy honey-words within my heart,—
 I'll live, a queen, within thy jealous Art.

WALTHAM.

I,-Margra, am what love and thought have made
 me.

What gives my thoughts their spirit-wings?
 What teaches me deep, world-old things

First taught in angel-visittings?
'Tis but my love and that repaid me.

Dearest, oft to me it seems
That my soul-stirrings, flashings, dreams,
Do augur that the underlying,
Universal Mind is trying
To assert with force its own,
Place an Isis on the throne
Of my being and reveal
What my intellect alone
Must disfigure or conceal.

At times, it seems I pass the pale
Of mere incarnate spirit's sphere;
At times, it seems I pierce the veil
Which hides the Real from dwellers here.
I've scoured the Ptolemaic skies,
I've risen to the empyrean,
I've been where great Archaeus lies,
I've listened to a heavenly pæan.

But, when o'er our love doth fall
Fate's misty darkness, like a pall;
Or as Mnemosyne's starbright night,

With its suns and planets and thou its moon
 Eclipsed by the counterfeit-death of a swoon:
 Then, it seems that I grope and crawl
 Through a murky world, with a glow-worm's
 light;
 Or the hideous gloom seems to cover all,
 And I feel my way in a slow-worm's night.

So, thinking often a sibyl-thought,
 And thinking often that life is nought,
 Unsunned by thy love, uncrowned with thy crest,
 I've longed—in a maddening, maelstrom whirl,
 In a frantic, dizzying spirit-swirl—
 I've longed for the ever-less'ning unrest,
 I've longed for the ever-deepening thought,
 Out of the Earth-sphere, on with the best.

MARGRA.

O Henry, canst thou these things feel and see,
 Then turn thyself again to only me?

WALTHAM.

Only thee! I tell thee, Margra, thou to me
 Art as the unrun orbit of the Galaxy:
 With thee, I feel a something grand, but incom-
 plete—

A bounded power—ah, sweetly sad—ah, sadly
sweet!
Before I knew thee, dear one (was there e'er such
time?),
When, on the low lake-marge or mountain-top
sublime,
Within my silent chamber or some cold cleft of
Earth,
I pondered on the grave, the mystery of birth,
And the wondrous scheme of Nature and what it
meant to me,
I felt a selfish silence the wisest course would be;
For, to crystallize my thought in written line
Or clothe it, even, in fleeting speech, alive, divine,
I felt would be acknowledging my nature bound-
ed—
In time, would sign with signified become con-
founded,
And I, with every thinking and unthinking clod,
Should come to pass a judgment on my Spiritual
God.

Was I but man as man is now, daft, reasoning-
mad,—
Puny groper, clay-clad and reasoning-mad—

Creeping clerk-like here with many a measuring-
thing,
'Mid fleeting shadows, labeling, inventorying;
Then, by summation, involution, evolution,
Deft transposing, elimination, substitution,
Reasoning on (fond mind-and-matter diplomat)
To some final, universal this-is-that
Which he the Cosmic Formula doth grandly call,
The very soul and life-source of the each and all,—
Was I but man as man is now, thus reasoning-
mad?

'Twas then arose the thoughts that would not
then be spoken,
'Twas then my heart, the immortal part of me,
gave token
Of a potential, demiurgic, world-deep power,
A bursting power to *know*, awaiting but the hour:
I would rise from weary reasoning's limitation,
Imperil selfhood in demonic inspiration,
'And thus uncinct, recall and live each several
part,
Once more, of life within the old worlds in my
heart;
And thus, and only thus, should I know all.

Then did my soul an inward strife endure:
 My intellect—the egoist, slow but sure—
 Would creep along for ages to the goal;
 My young-old heart would time itself transcend
 And in a selfless act of alien strength
 Would unfold all things in a dream's length;
 And so, betwixt the two, my perplexed will
 Unstable grew, and more unstable still.

Then often, night and day, wishing, fearing
 Bounds, I cried, at times when in the inward
 Strife my *heart* was victor:
 “Oh, would my nature had but bounds!
 I am not happy—why is it so?
 Man-child of the Infinite am I—
 Nought obstructs my range of thought,—
 My soul is wearied with her ceaseless choosing,
 Ceaseless chasing of the phantom
 Out into the mystic spaces,—
 Influences from the two spheres
 Pour into me from every side—
 They come I know not wherefore, I know not
 how—
 Influences of good,
 Influences of evil—

I absorb them—I sympathize with all—
I am the human race,
The low and the divine!”
I was then most miserable, Margra,
But in my altruistic, powerless state
Did I conceive a most strange view of things—
The moral phase then forced itself upon me:
I felt a loving check and knew the power
Which held me, as a part of my own self,
Yet more, beyond expression, than myself;
And I named the august, cherishing one
Divine Augocides, my Guardian Angel.
Oh, I were at that time golden-tongued,
Were introspective thought not all of me!
I could not act, for too-deep heart-thought
Had rived my world from that of living men.

And when my *intellect* was uppermost,
I cried from out my heart: “Oh, why this dark-
ness,
-This impenetrable, blinding mist;
Why this sudden wall impeding, piling
Up, with many a huge froth-mass, and turning
Backward on myself, the flood of action?”
But in those moments when my heart was still

I was most happy in the consciousness
 Of feeling, acting and of being that
 Which I most felt myself to be—a man,
 A warm, substantial, hedonistic man:
 I was myself, blood-full, self willed and centered.

At this dismembered, analytic time
 Of introspective thought and thirsty life;
 This time of non-commingling elements,—
 Antipathetic molecules—with frantic,
 Centre-fleeing movement—clashing—driven
 Centrewards,—with fiery spicula
 Of passion shooting meteor-like from nowhere
 Across the all-containing soul's night:
 At this disordered, disincorporate time,
 Into the dark and limitless alembic
 Of my soul there flowed all-solvent love,
 Essential aqua-regia, seeking one-ness.
 Dost know the source, superb one?

MARGRA.

Thy Margra's heart—thy Margra's love.

WALTHAM.

Yes, dear; it was; and 'twas most opportune

(Spellbound, I knew my Guardian Angel's
boon,)—

For, as some comet with elliptic course,
Thrown into perturbations wild, perforce
Doth seek along a hyperbolic path
An issue from the sun-fear that it hath,
So I (but for that chance-sweet sight of thee
Whence rose the subtile force that centered me)
Should soon have quit the orbit of all use,
Cut myself from all enthrallment loose,
And sped along my freakish, self-willed way
In unfree freedom, thinking thus to stay
That fatal time when, something higher told me,
Self should fall, the great One Life enfold me.

I felt an awful pause, and then the growing
Centeredness; it was a silent, selective,
Germinative time, and soon I felt
With joy a spirit presence hovering near,
And turned me here and turned me there at times
To catch a glimpse of that I felt beside me.

“Augoeides divine,” I one time cried
Out from my heart, “unseal my sodden eyes;
Reveal to me thy grandeur and thy glory;
Teach me the mystery of reason, faith

And love; and say what meaneth this sweet peace.”
The spirit spoke from deep within my soul:
“I am not form—seek me in aiding others
To a knowledge of themselves.
Strive to perfect thyself,
And I will interpenetrate,
Become incorporate in,
The web of things
And make them of a mind with thee,
So that thy wishing shall be their fulfillment.”

Now, beloved, unperturbed except
By small, eccentric moments from unknown,
Incalculable gravities which draw
At times my life from thine, thou love-adept,
Thou heart of my heart, queen I there enthrone;
Now, know I the law engrounding law,
And realize the sacred depths of grace:
The life within, the life in placeless place—
Beautiful repose—the gift divine—
The wondrous solving of the mine and thine—
The love no object for its love demanding—
The peace of God, that passeth understanding.
The concord of my intellect and heart
Doth seem the fountain of a living Art;

I think with heart, see with prophetic eyes,
And to my lips rich thoughts and feelings rise,
Demanding for their fullness speech-expression
And for their quickening spirit world-possession:
I would set free, imprinted with my seal,
The imprisoned spirit of the world I feel;
And for the culture in my heart I'm storing
(Ineffable essence of the things inpouring)
I would make, as I go, my reckoning
And thus avoid *That*, backward beckoning;
For every living, deep, expanding soul,
In strict return for each new thought or feeling
Its hidden powers and attributes revealing,
Part of itself must give unto the Whole.

MARGRA.

Sometimes I cannot understand thee, dear,
Yet I believe in thee: in thy soul's sphere
(To use thy words) I find for all my strange,
Vague woman's fancies, freaks, free scope and
range;
Of all my wealth of love, in thy dear heart
I feel an everlasting counterpart;
But what I am and what can be to thee
Cannot exceed thy worth,
For thou art all the world to me.

PART II.

Scene:—*The same. Waltham; Margra, his wife;
and their child, seated beside the old fountain.*

WALTHAM.

*(Almost to himself, reviewing the time when he
had first met Margra, five years before.)*

I walked here sadly once—a bright, glad day,
A lingering sense did often afterward say;
But quite oblivious was I then of all
The Nature-pulsing spells which here do fall
On delicate ear and natural, sensitive eye:—
The meadow-lark's rich, melancholy call,
The wild canary's wealth of note on note,
The treasures of our mocking-bird's full throat,
Could nothing to my thought-turned ear supply;
The flowers and wingéd things that overflow,
This plant-grown fount, the rustic seats, the
walks,
The warping mansion, the stately trees, the hawks,
And even that, our Californian sky,
Could not lure out my inward-centered eye.
I mind me now that nought to me could flow
From things but some harsh theme of carping
crow;

The very pattern of the period lay
In the restless, squalling blue-jay.
I walked here sadly, when, on yonder path
Where sight strains all the virtue that it hath
On this strange place, beneath the oak-tree there
Which bids the sun at-noon but warm the air
About its gnarl-made, natural seat,
Two soft eyes—dark, wild-clustering hair—
A mouth so sweet
That Art must look, throb and despair—
And in love-pencilled curves, a form complete,—
Rebuked the sluggish outward sense
And bade it feel, with reverence,
Our glorious world's magnificence;
And thereupon, relaxed the tense-drawn
Nerves of thought;
Th' expanding pupil, larging nare,
The quickened ear,—heard music rare,
Breathed Nature in—saw strange, new colors
In the genial air;
And tingling sympathy revealed
Deep natural unisons,
To outer sense concealed.
Things came closer, through their comprehension,
And each glanceful, quick with rapt attention,

Partook, Art-like, of the mind divine.
There was no glamour in these eyes of mine!
Things came closer and the world was nearer,
Th' All-harmony centered all, the end was clearer.
That genuine soul-shaped outward self of thine
First called the world-soul to these eyes of mine;
And then, thy whole self, in relation dearer,—
Thou dearest mother of this child of mine,—
Thou epitome of the spherul world-design,—
Evolved a world-soul from that soul of mine.

THE END.



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