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The Triumph of Music

AND

Other Lyrics.

—
sub
BY MADISON J. CAWEIN.
—

“THE OAT IS HEARD ABOVE THE LYRE.”—*Swinburne.*

[LIMITED.]

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THE TRIUMPH OF MUSIC.

I

THERE lay in a vale 'twixt lone mountains
A garden entangled with flowers,
Where the whisper of echoing fountains
Stirred softly the musk-breathing bowers.
Where torrents cast down from rock-masses,
From caverns of red-granite steeps,
With thunders sonorous clove passes
And maddened dark gulfs with rash leaps,
With the dolorous foam of their leaps.

II

And, oh, when the sunrays came heaping
The foam of those musical chasms,
With a scintillant dust as of diamonds,
It seemed that white spirits were sweeping

Down, down thro' those voluble chasms,
Wild weeping in resonant spasms.
And the wave from the red-hearted granite
In veins rolled tumbling around ;
Meandered thro' shade-haunted forests
Where many rock barriers did span it
To dash it in froth and in sound :
Where the nights with their great moons could wan it,
Or star its dusk stillness profound.

III

And here in the night would I wander
On woodways where fragrances kissed,
By shadows where murmurings kissed ;
And here would I tarry to ponder
When the moon in blue vales made a mist ;
Dim in forests of rank, rocking cedars,
Whose wildness made glad with their scent,
Whose boughs in the tempests were bent
Like the pennons and plumes of fierce leaders,
In the battle all ragged and rent.

IV

And so when the moonshine was floating
Far up on the mountain's bleak head,
On the uttermost foam of the torrent,
Would I string a wild harp while was gloating
The moon on my blossomy bed.
Or I lay where a fountain of blossoms
Rained rustling from arches aloft,
From the thick-scented arbors aloft,
And I sang as the blossoms' white bosoms
Pressed silk-smooth to mine and lay soft:
I sang as their redolence stung me,
And laughed on my blossomy couch,
Till the fragrance and music had flung me
Into shadows of sleep with their touch,
The magic of exquisite touch. . . .

V

One night as I wondered and wandered
In this my rare Aidenn of flowers,

I saw where I lingered and pondered
A youth cast asleep mid the bowers:
A youth on a mantle of satin,
A poppy-red robe in the flowers.

VI

So I kissed his thin eyelids full tender,
I kissed his high forehead and pale,
I sighed as I kissed his black splendor
Of curls that were kissed of the gale,
That were moved of the balm-breathing gale.
And he woke and cried out as if haunted:—
“Oh God! for one note of that song!
For a sob of that languishing song!
Whose tumult of sorrow enchanted,
And swept my weak spirit along!”

VII

Than I sate me upon the red satin
And plunged a long look in his eyes;
I bowed on the weft of red satin
And kindled his love with my sighs.

With fingers of lightness set sobbing
The chords of my harp in a song,
Till I found that my heart was a-throbbing
And sobbing to sing like a tongue,
Was sobbing to mix with the song.

VIII

Then he cried, and his dark eyes keen glistened,
“Lost! lost! for that perilous music!
Oh God! for that tyrannous strain!
To which in my dreams I have listened,
Ah, wretch! I have listened with pain!”
And he tost on the garment of satin
His deep raven darkness of hair,
And the song at my lips was ungathered,
And I sate there to marvel and stare.

IX

Then I wrenched from my soul a wild glory
Of music delirious with words,
Of music that wailed a soul's story,

And trembled with god-uttered words,
Or fell like the battling of swords.
And in with it mixed all the beauty
Of farewells and ravenous sighs,
The heart that was broken for booty,
Tears, rapture to know that one dies,
Hell, heaven and laughter and cries.

X

In music the heart-ache of passion,
The terror of souls that are lost,
Cold, dizzying anguish of dying,
All torments that beauty could fashion,
Hot manacles of love and their cost.
The bliss and the fury of dashing
A soul into riotous love,
While the smiting of harp-chords and crashing
Of song like the winds were enwove
With the stars that fall sounding above.

XI

Ah! why did the poppy-crowned slumber
Seal up the rare light of his eyes

With its silver of vapory pinions,
The creature that sung in each number,
 To nest in his tired-out eyes,
 Like a bird that is sick of the skies.
Yet he murmured so sad and so thrilling,
 “ Oh God ! for a lifetime of song !
 Oh life ! for a world of such song !
For a heaven or hell and the killing,
 Mad angel or devil of song !
Oh, the rapture engendered in throwing
 On bubbles of music and song
A soul to the anguish of loving,
Until like a flower, full blowing,
 It is lost in a whirlwind most strong,
 It dies in a thunder of song !”

XII

I had flung in my song the emotion
 Triumphant of heart and of soul,
And I recked not the passionate ocean
 That rolled to abysses of dole,
 To infinite torture and dole.

XIII

So I sang and I harped till all weary
I sunk on the red of that robe,
Crouched down at his feet on the satin,
While he slumbered with eyelashes teary
Fringed dark o'er each eye-ball's dark globe.
Then I wondered and said, "It is dreary
To see him so still on this robe.
And I sobbed and I sobbed, "Is he living,
Or have I but slain with my song!"
And it seemed that a demon was striving
To strangle my heart with a thong,
With terror and sorrow of wrong.

XIV

And I rent the wild harp in my madness,
From his ashen brows furrowed the hair;
Soft wafted dark curls from pale temples—
They rustled with death—and the sadness
Of his face so hopelessly fair!
How I wailed to the stars of the heaven

How they scoffed at and answered my grief
In letters of flame, "Unforgiven!
Thou deathless, whose voice is a thief,
Forever and ever grief!"

XV

So I wept on the instrument broken,
The instrument sweet of his death,
The dagger that stabbed not to kill him,
The dagger of song which had spoken,
And ravished away his life's breath.
So I wept, and my curls thick and golden
Stormed entangled and showered 'mid his;
My arms around him were enfolden,
My lips clave to his with a kiss,
With the life and the love of a kiss.

WHAT YOU WILL.

I

WHEN the season was dry and the sun was hot
And the hornet sucked gaunt on the apricot,
And the ripe peach dropped to its seed a-rot,
 With a lean red wasp that stung and clung ;
When the hollyhocks, ranked in the garden-plot,
More seed-pods had than blossoms, I wot,
 A weariness weighed on the tongue,
That the drought of the season begot.

II

When the black grape bulged with the juice that burst
Through its thick blue skin that was cracked with
 thirst,
And the round gold pippins, the summer had nursed,
 In the yellowing leaves o' the orchards hung ;

When the reapers, their lips with whistling pursed,
To their sun-tanned brows in the corn were immersed,
 A lightness came over the tongue,
And one sung as much as one durst.

III

When the skies of December gray dripped and dripped,
And icicles eaves of the big barn tipped,
And loud hens flew over the snow or slipped,
 And the north wind hooted and bit and stung,
And the ears of the milkmaid, Miriam, nipped,
And the chappy cheeks of the farm boy whipped,
 A goddess unloosened the tongue,
And one's mouth with wild honey was lipped.

IN THE SOUTH.

[SERENADE.]

THE dim verbena drugs the dusk
With heavy lemon odors rare ;
Wan heliotropes Arabian musk
Exhale into the dreamy air ;
A sad wind with long wooing husk
Swoons in the roses there.

The jasmine at thy casement flings
Star-censers oozing rich perfumes ;
The clematis, long petaled, swings
Deep clusters of dark purple blooms ;
With flowers like moons or sylphide wings
Magnolias light the glooms.

Awake, awake from sleep!
Thy balmy hair,
Unbounden deep on deep,
Than blossoms fair,
Who sweetest fragrance weep,
Will fill the night with prayer.
Awake, awake from sleep!

And dreaming here it seems to me
Some dryad's bosoms grow confessed
Nude in the dark magnolia tree,
That rustles with the murmurous West,—
Or is it but a dream of thee
That thy white beauty guessed?

In southern heavens above are rolled
A million feverish gems, which burst
From night's deep ebon caskets old,
With inner fires that seem to thirst;
Tall oleanders to their gold
Drift buds where dews are nursed.

Unseal, unseal thine eyes,
Where long her rod
Queen Mab sways o'er their skies
In realms of Nod !
Confessed, such majesties
Will fill the night with God.
Unseal, unseal thine eyes !

PAN.

I

HAUNTER of green intricacies,
Where the sunlight's amber laces
 Depths of darkest violet ;
Where the ugly Satyr chases
Shining Dryads, fair as Graces,
 Whose lithe limbs with dew are wet ;
Piper in hid mountain places,
Where the blue-eyed Oread braces
 Winds which in her sweet cheeks set
Of Aurora rosy traces,
Whiles the Faun from myrtle mazes
 Watcheth with an eye of jet :
What art thou and these dim races,
Thou, O Pan ! of many faces,
 Who art ruler yet ?

2

Tell me, piper, have I ever
Heard thy hollow syrinx quiver
 Trickling music in the trees?
Where dark hazel copses shiver,
Have I heard its dronings sever
 The warm silence, or the bees?
Ripple murmurings, that never
Could be born of fall or river,
 Whisperings and subtleties,
Melodies so very clever,
None can doubt that thou, the giver,
 Master Nature's keys.

3

What glad awes of storm are given
Thy mad power, which has striven,—
 Where the craggy forests glare,—
In wild mockery, when Heaven
Splits with thunder wedges driven

Red through night and rainy air!
What art thou, whose presence, even
While its fear the heart hath riven,
Heals it with a prayer?

PAX VOBISCUM.

1

HER violets in thine eyes
The Springtide stained I know,
Two bits of mystic skies
On which the green turf lies,
Whereon the violets blow.

2

I know the Summer wrought
From thy sweet heart that rose,
With that faint fragrance fraught,
Its sad poetic thought
Of peace and deep repose.

3

That Autumn, like some god,
From thy delicious hair—
Lost sunlight 'neath the sod --
Shot up this golden-rod
To toss it everywhere.

4

That Winter from thy breast
The snowdrop's whiteness stole—
Much kinder than the rest—
Thy innocence confessed,
The pureness of thy soul.

MIRABILE DICTU.

THERE lives a goddess in the West,
An island in death-lonesome seas ;
No towered towns are hers confessed,
No castled forts and palaces,
Hers, simple worshipers at best,
The buds, the birds, the bees.

And she hath wonder-worlds of song
So heavenly beautiful, and shed
So sweetly from her honeyed tongue,
The savage creatures, it is said,
Hark marble-still their wilds among,
And nightingales fall dead.

I know her not, nor have I known ;
I only feel that she is there ;
For when my heart is most alone
There broods communion on the air,
Concedes an influence not its own,
Miraculously fair.

Then fain is it to sing and sing,
And then again to fly and fly
Beyond the flight of cloud or wing,
Far under azure arcs of sky.
Its love at her chaste feet to fling,
Behold her face and die.

QUESTIONINGS.

NOW when wan winter sunsets be
Canary-colored down the sky ;
When nights are starless utterly,
And sleeted winds cut moaning by,
One's memory keeps one company,
And conscience puts his "when" and "why."

Such inquisition, when alone,
Wakes superstition in the head,
A Gorgon face of hueless stone
With staring eyes to terror wed,
Stamped on her brow God's words, "Unknown!
Behind the dead, behind the dead."

And, oh! that weariness of soul
That leans upon our dead, the clod
And air have taken as a whole
Through some mysterious period:—
Life! with thy questions of control:
Death! with thy unguessed laws of God.

WAITING.

WERE we in May now, while
Our souls are yearning,
Sad hearts would bound and smile
With red blood burning ;
Around the tedious dial
No slow hands turning.

Were we in May now, say,
What joy to know
Her heart's streams pulse away
In winds that blow,
See graceful limbs of May
Revealed to glow.

Were we in May now, think
What wealth she has ;
The dog-tooth violets pink,
Wind-flowers like glass,
About the wood brook's brink
Dark sassafras.

Nights, which the large stars strew
 Heav'n on heav'n rolled,
Nights, whose feet flash with dew,
 Whose long locks hold
Aromas cool and new,
 A moon's curved gold.

This makes me sad in March ;
 I long and long
To see the red-bud's torch
 Flame far and strong,
Hear on my vine-climbed porch
 The blue-bird's song.

What else then but to sleep
 And cease from such ;
Dream of her and to leap
 At her white touch ?
Ah me ! then wake and weep,
 Weep overmuch.

This is why day by day
 Time lamely crawls,

Feet clogged with winter clay
That never falls,
While the dim month of May
Me far off calls.

IN LATE FALL.

SUCH days as break the wild bird's heart ;
Such days as kill it and its songs ;
A death which knows a sweeter part
Of days to which such death belongs.

And now old eyes are filled with tears,
As with the rain the frozen flowers ;
Time moves so slowly one but fears
The burthen on his wasted powers.

And so he stopped ;—and thou art dead !
And that is found which once was feared :—
A farewell to thy gray, gray head,
A goodnight to thy goodly beard !

MIDWINTER.

THE dew-drop from the rose that slips
Hath not the sparkle of her lips,
My lady's lips.

Than her long braids of yellow hold
The dandelion hath not more gold,
Her braids like gold.

The blue-bell hints not more of skies
Than do the flowers in her eyes,
My lady's eyes.

The sweet-pea blossom doth not wear
More dainty pinkness than her ear,
My lady's ear.

So, heigho! then, tho' skies be gray,
My heart's a garden that is gay
This sorry day.

LONGING.

WHEN rathe wind-flowers many peer
All rain filled at blue April skies,
As on one smiles one's lady dear
With the big tear-drops in her eyes ;

When budded May-apples, I wis,
Be hidden by lone greenwood creeks,
Be bashful as her cheeks we kiss,
Be waxen as her dimpled cheeks ;

Then do I pine for happier skies,
Shy wild-flowers fair by hill and burn ;
As one for one's sweet lady's eyes,
And her white cheeks might pine and yearn.

IN MIDDLE SPRING.

WHEN the fields are rolled into naked gold,
And a ripple of fire and pearl is blent
With the emerald surges of wood and wold
Like a flower-foam bursting violent;
When the dingles and deeps of the woodlands old
Are glad with a sibilant life new sent,
Too rare to be told are the manifold
Sweet fancies that quicken redolent
In the heart that no longer is cold.

How it knows of the wings of the hawk that swings
From the dripped dew scintillant seen;
Why the red-bird hides where it sings and sings
In melodious quiverings of green;
How the wind to the red-bud and dogwood brings
Big pearls of worth and corals of sheen,
Whiles he lisps to the strings of a lute that rings
Of love in the South who is queen,
Where the fountain of poesy springs.

Go seek in the ray for a sworded fay
The chestnut's buds into blooms that rips ;
And look in the brook that runs laughing gay
For the nymph with the laughing lips ;
In the brake for the dryad whose eyes are gray,
From whose bosom the perfume drips ;
The faun hid away where the grasses sway
Thick ivy low down on his hips,
Pursed lips on a syrinx at play.

So ho, for the rose, the Romeo rose,
And the lyric he hides in his heart ;
And ho, for the epic the oak tree knows,
Sonorous and mighty in art.
The lily with woes that her white face shows
Hath a satire she yearns to impart,
But none of those, her hates and her foes,
For a heart that sings but for sport,
And shifts where the song-wind blows.

TYRANNY.

THERE is not aught more merciless
Than such fast lips that will not speak,
That stir not if I curse or bless
A God that made them weak.

More madd'ning to one there is naught,
Than such white eyelids sealed on eyes,
Eyes vacant of the thing named thought,
An exile in the skies.

Ah, silent tongue! ah, ear so dull!
How angel utterances low
Have wooed you! they more beautiful
Than mortal harsh with woe!

VISIONS.

WHEN the snow was deep on the flower-beds,
And the sleet was caked on the brier ;
When the frost was down in the brown bulbs' heads,
And the ways were clogged with mire ;

When the wind to syringa and bare rose-tree
Brought the phantoms of vanished flowers,
And the days were sorry as sorry could be,
And Time limped cursing his fardle of hours :

Heigho! had I not a book and the logs?
And I swear that I was n't mistaken,
But I heard the frogs croaking in far-off bogs,
And the brush-sparrow's song in the braken.

And I strolled by paths which the Springtide knew,
In her mossy dells, by her ferny passes,
Where the ground was holy with flowers and dew,
And the insect life in the grasses.

And I knew the Spring as a lover who knows
His sweetheart, to whom he has given
A kiss on the cheek that warmed its white rose,
In her eyes brought the laughter of heaven.

For a poem I'd read, a simple thing,
A little lyric that had the power
To make the brush-sparrow come and sing,
And the winter woodlands flower.

THE OLD BYWAY

ITS rotting fence one scarcely sees
Through sumach and wild blackberries,
Thick elder and the white wild-rose,
Big ox-eyed daisies where the bees
Hang droning in repose.

The limber lizards glide away
Gray on its moss and lichens gray ;
Warm butterflies float in the sun,
Gay Ariels of the lonesome day ;
And there the ground squirrels run.

The red-bird stays one note to lift ;
High overhead dark swallows drift ;
'Neath sun-soaked clouds of beaten cream,
Through which hot bits of azure sift,
The gray hawks soar and scream.

Among the pungent weeds they fill
Dry grasshoppers pipe with a will ;
 And in the grass-grown ruts, where stirs
The basking snake, mole-crickets shrill ;
 O'er head the locust whirrs.

At evening, when the sad West turns
To dusky Night a cheek that burns,
 The tree-toads in the wild-plum sing,
And ghosts of long-dead flowers and ferns
 The wind wakes whispering.

DIURNAL.

I

A MOLTEN ruby clear as wine
Along the east the dawning swims ;
The morning-glories swing and shine,
The night dews bead their satin rims ;
The bees rob sweets from shrub and vine,
The gold hangs on their limbs.

Sweet morn, the South,
A royal lover,
From his fragrant mouth,
Sweet morn, the South
Breathes on and over
Keen scents of wild honey and rosy clover.

II

Beside the wall the roses blow
Long summer noons the winds forsake ;
Beside the wall the poppies glow
So full of fire their hearts do ache ;

The dipping butterflies come slow,
Half dreaming, half awake.

Sweet noontide, rest,
A slave-girl weary
With her babe at her breast ;
Sweet noontide, rest,
The day grows dreary

As soft limbs that are tired and eyes that are teary.

III

Along lone paths the cricket cries
Sad summer nights that know the dew ;
One mad star thwart the heavens flies
Curved glittering on the glassy blue ;
Now grows the big moon on the skies,
The stars are faint and few.

Sweet night, breathe thou
With a passion taken
From a Romeo's vow ;
Sweet night, breathe thou
Like a beauty shaken
Of amorous dreams that have made her waken.

THE WOOD-PATH.

HERE doth white Spring white violets show,
Broadcast doth white, frail wind-flowers sow
 Through starry mosses amber-fair,
As delicate as ferns that grow,
 Hart's-tongue and maiden-hair.

Here fungus life is beautiful,
White mushroom and the thick toad-stool
 As various colored as wild blooms ;
Existences that love the cool,
 Distinct in rank perfumes.

Here stray the wandering cows to rest,
The calling cat-bird builds her nest
 In spice-wood bushes dark and deep ;
Here raps the woodpecker his best,
 And here young rabbits leap.

Tall butternuts and hickories,
The pawpaw and persimmon trees,

The beech, the chestnut, and the oak,
Wall shadows huge, like ghosts of bees
Through which gold sun-bits soak.

Here to pale melancholy moons,
In haunted nights of dreamy Junes,
Wails wildly the weird whippoorwill,
Whose mournful and demonic tunes
Wild woods with phantoms fill.

DEFICIENCY.

AH, God! were I away, away,
By woodland-belted hills!
There might be more in Thy bright day
Than my poor spirit thrills.

The elder coppice, banks of blooms,
The spice-wood brush, the field
Of tumbled clover, and perfumes
Hot, weedy pastures yield.

The old rail-fence whose angles hold
Bright briar and sassafras,
Sweet priceless wild flowers blue and gold
Starred through the moss and grass.

The ragged path that winds unto
Lone cow-behaunted nooks,
Through brambles to the shade and dew
Of rocks and woody brooks.

To see the minnows turn and gleam
White sparkling bellies, all
Shoot in gray schools adown the stream
Let but a dead leaf fall.

The buoyant pleasure and delight
Of floating feathered seeds,
Capricious wanderers soft and white
Born of silk-bearing weeds.

Ah, God! were I away, away,
Among wild woods and birds!
There were more soul within Thy day
Than one might bless with words.

HE WHO LOVES.

FOR him God's birds each merry morn
 Make of wild throats melodious flutes
To trill such love from brush and thorn
 As might brim eyes of brutes:
Who would believe of such a thing,
That 'tis her heart which makes them sing?

For him the faultless skies of noon
 Grow farther in eternal blue,
As heavens that buoy the balanced moon,
 And sow the stars and dew:
Who would believe that such deep skies
Are miracles only through her eyes?

For him mad sylphs adown domed nights
 Stud golden globules radiant,
Or glass-green transient trails of lights
 Spin from their orbs and slant:
Who would believe a soul were hers
To make for him a universe?

THE MONASTERY CROFT.

I

BIG-STOMACHED, like friars
Who ogle a nun,
Quaff deep to their bellies' desires
From the old abbey's tun,
Grapes fatten with fires
Warm-filtered from moon and from sun.

2

As a novice who muses,—
Lips a rosary tell,
While her thoughts are—a love she refuses?
—Nay! mourns as not well:
The ripe apple looses
Its holding to rot where it fell.

THE DRYAD.

I HAVE seen her limpid eyes
Large with gradual laughter rise
Through wild-roses' nettles,
Like twin blossoms grow and stare,
Then a hating, envious air
Whisked them into petals.

I have seen her hardy cheek
Like a molten coral leak
Through the leafage shaded
Of thick Chickasaws, and then,
When I made more sure, again
To a red plum faded.

I have found her racy lips,
And her graceful finger-tips,
But a haw and berry ;
Glimmers of her there and here,
Just, forsooth, enough to cheer
And to make me merry.

Often on the ferny rocks
Dazzling ripples of loose locks
 At me she hath shaken,
And I've followed—'twas in vain—
They had trickled into rain
 Sun-lit on the braken.

Once her full limbs flashed on me,
Naked where some royal tree
 Powdered all the spaces
With wan sunlight and quaint shade,
Such a haunt romance hath made
 For haunched satyr-races.

There, I wot, hid amorous Pan,
For a sudden pleading ran
 Through the maze of myrtle,
Whiles a rapid violence tossed
All its flowerage,—'twas the lost
 Coings of a turtle.

“THE SWEET O’ THE YEAR.”

I

HOW can I help from laughing while
The daffodilies at me smile ;
The tickled dew winks tipsily
In clusters of the lilac-tree ;
The crocuses and hyacinths
Storm through the grassy labyrinths
A mirth of gold and violet ;
And roses, bud by bud,
Flash from each dainty-lacing net
Red lips of maidenhood ?

II

How can I help from singing when
The swallow and the hawk again
Are noisy in the hyaline
Of happy heavens clear as wine ;
The robin lustily and shrill

Pipes on the timber-bosomed hill ;
And o'er the fallow skim the bold,
 Mad orioles that glow
Like shining shafts of ingot gold
 Shot from the morning's bow ?

III

How can I help from loving, dear,
Since love is of the sweetened year ?
The very vermin feel her power,
And chip and chirrup hour by hour :
It is the grasshopper at noon,
The cricket's at it in the moon,
Whiles lizzards glitter in the dew,
 And bats be on the wing ;
Such days of joy are short and few.
 Grant me thy love this spring.

WITH THE SEASONS.

I

YOU will not love me, sweet,
When this fair year is past ;
Or love now at my feet
At others' feet be cast.
You will not love me, sweet,
When this fair year is past.

II

Now 'tis the Springtide, dear,
The crocus cups hold flame
Brimmed to the pregnant year,
Who crimsons as with shame.
Now 'tis the Springtide, dear,
The crocus cups hold flame.

III

Ah, heart, the Summer's queen,
At her brown throat one rose ;

The poppies now are seen
With seed-pods thrust in rows.
Dear heart, the Summer's queen,
At her brown throat one rose.

IV

Now Autumn reigns, a prince
Fierce, gipsy-dark ; live gold
Weighs down the fruited quince,
The last chilled violet's told.
The Autumn reigns, a prince,
A despot crowned with gold.

V

Alas ! rude Winter's king,
Snow-driven from chin to head ;
No wild birds pipe and sing,
The wild winds sing instead.
Ah me ! rude Winter's king,
Snow-driven from chin to head.

VI

Weep now, you once who smiled,
Sweet hope that had few fears!
And this the end, my child!—
Thyself, my shame and tears!
Weep now, you once who smiled,
Sweet hope, that had few fears!

UNATTAINABLE.

I

WHAT though the soul be tired
For that to which 'twas fired,
The far, dear, still desired,
 Beyond the heaven's scope ;
Beyond us and above us,
The thing we would have love us,
That will know nothing of us,
 But only bids us hope.

II

It still behooves us ever
From loving ne'er to sever,
To love it though it never
 Reciprocate our care ;
For love, when freely given,
Lets in soft hints of heaven
In memories that leaven
 Black humors of despair.

III

For in this life diurnal
All earthly, gross, infernal,
Conflicts with that eternal
 To make its love as lust ;
To rot the fairest flower
Of thought which is a power,
All happiness to sour,
 And burn our eyes with dust.

IV

Believe, some power higher
Breathes in us this desire
With purpose strange as fire,
 And soft though seeming hard ;
Who to such starved endeavor
And wasted love, that never
Seems recompensed, forever
 Gives in His way reward.

BEYOND.

I

HANGS stormed with stars the night,
Deep over deep,
A majesty, a might,
To feel and keep.

2

Ah! what is such and such,
Love, canst thou tell?
That shrinks—though 'tis not much—
To weep farewell.

3

That hates the dawn and lark;
Would have the wail,—
Sobbed through the ceaseless dark,—
O' the nightingale.

4

Yes, earth, thy life were worth
Not much to me,
Were there not after earth
Eternity.

5

God gave thee life to keep—
And what hath life?—
Love, faith, and care, and sleep
Where dreams are rife.

6

Death's sleep, whose shadows start
The tears in eyes
Of love, that fill the heart
That breaks and dies.

7

And faith is never given
Without some care,
That leadeth us to heaven
By ways of prayer.

8

The nightingale and dark
Are thine then here ;
Beyond, the light and lark
Eternal there.

SHADOWS.

I

HA! help!—'twas palpable!
A ghost that thronged
Up from the mind or hell
Of one I wronged!

2

'Tis past and—silence!—naught!—
A vision born
Of the scared mind o'erwrought
With dreams forlorn:

3

The bastard brood of Death
And Sleep that wakes
Grim fancies with its breath,
And reason shakes.

4

Would that the grave *could* rot
Like flesh the soul,
Gnaw through with worms and not
Leave it thus whole,

5

More than it was in earth
Beyond the grave,
Much more in death than birth
To conscience slave !

CHECK AND COUNTER-CHECK.

I

V ENT all your coward's wrath
Upon me so!—
Yes, I have crossed your path
And will not go!

2

Storm at me hate, and name
Me all that's vile,
"Lust," "filth," "disease," and "shame,"
I only smile.

3

Me brute rage can not hurt,
It only flings
In your own eyes blind dirt
That bites and stings.

4

Rave at your like such whine,
Your fellow-men,
This wrath!—great God! and mine!—
What is it then?

5

No words! no oaths! such hate
As devils smile
When raw success cries “wait!”
And “afterwhile!”

6

A woman I and ill,
A courtesan
You wearied of, would kill,
And you—a man!

7

You, you—unnamable!
A thing there's not,
Too base to burn in Hell,
Too vile to rot.

SEMPER IDEM.

1

HOLD up thy head and crush
Thy heart's despair;
From thy wan temples brush
The tear-wet hair.

2

Look on me thus as I
Gaze upon thee;
Nor question how nor why
Such things can be.

3

Thou thought'st it love!—poor fool!
That which was lust!
Which made thee, beautiful,
Vile as the dust!

4

Thy flesh I craved, thy face!--

Love shrinks at this—

Now on thy lips to place

One farewell kiss!—

5

Weep not, but die!—'tis given—

And so—farewell!—

Die!—that which makes death heaven,

Makes life a hell.

TWO LIVES.

I

“**T**HERE is no God,” one said,
And love is lust ;
When I am dead I'm *dead*,
And all is dust.

“ Be merry while you can
Before you're gray ;
With some wild courtesan
Drink care away.”

2

One said, “A God there is,
And God is love ;
Death is not *death*, but bliss,
And life above.

“Above all flesh is mind ;
And faith and truth
God's gifts to poor mankind
That make life youth.”

3

One from a harlot's side
Arose at morn ;
One cursing God had died
That night forlorn.

FOREVERMORE.

I

O HEART that vainly follows
The flight of summer swallows,
Far over holts and hollows,
O'er frozen buds and flowers;
To violet seas and levels,
Where Love Time's locks dishevels
With merry mimes and revels
Of aphrodisiac Hours.

II

O Love who, dreaming, borrows
Dead love from sad to-morrows,
The broken heart that sorrows,
The blighted hopes that weep;
Pale faces pale with sleeping;
Red eyelids red with weeping;
Dead lips dead secrets keeping,
That shake the deeps of sleep!

III

O Memory that showers
About the withered hours
White, ruined, sodden flowers,
 Dead dust and bitter rain ;
Dead loves with faces teary ;
Dead passions wan and dreary ;
The weary, weary, weary,
 Dead heart-ache and the pain !

IV

O give us back the blisses,
Lost madness of moist kisses,
The youth, the joy, the tresses,
 The fragrant limbs of white ;
The high heart like a jewel
Alive with subtle fuel,
Lips beautiful and cruel,
 Eyes' incarnated light !

V

Instead of tears, wild laughter
The old hot passions after,
The houri sweets that dafter
Made flesh and soul a slave!
Enough of tearful sorrows;
Enough of rank to-morrows;
The life that whines and borrows
But memories of the grave!

VI

The grave that breaks no netting
Of care or spint's fretting,
No long, long sweet forgetting
For those who would forget;
And those who stammer by it
Hope of an endless quiet,
Within them voiceless riot
When they and it have met.

VII

And God we pray beseeching,—
But Life with finger reaching,
Stone-stern, remaineth teaching
 Our hearts to turn to stone ;
Then fain are we to follow
The last, lorn, soaring swallow
Past bourns of holt and hollow
 Forevermore alone.

A BLOWN ROSE.

LAY but a finger on
That pallid petal sweet,
It trembles gray and wan
Beneath the passing feet.

But soft! blown rose, we know
A merriment of bloom,
A life of sturdy glow,—
But no such dear perfume.

As some good bard, whose page
Of life with beauty's fraught,
Grays on to ripe old age
Sweet-mellowed through with thought.

So when his hoary head
Is wept into the tomb,
The mind, which is not dead,
Sheds round it rare perfume.

TO-MORROW.

A LORELEI full fair she sits
Throned on the stream that dimly rolls ;
Still, hope-thrilled, with her wild harp knits
To her from year to year men's souls.

They hear her harp, they hear her song,
Led by the wizard beauty high,
Like blind brutes maddened rush along,
Sink at her cold feet, gasp and die.

MNEMOSYNE.

IN classic beauty, cold, immaculate,
A voiceful sculpture, stern and still she stands,
Upon her brow deep chiseled love and hate,
That sorrow o'er dead roses in her hands.

THE SIRENS.

WAIL! wail! and smite your lyres' sonorous
gold,

And beckon naked beauty from the sea
In arms and breasts and hips of godly mold,
Dark, strangling hair carousing to the knee.

In vain! in vain! and dull in unclosed ears
To one loved voice sweet calling o'er the foam,
Which in my heart like some strong hand appears
To gently, firmly draw my vessel home.

THE VINTAGER.

AMONG the fragrant grapes she bows ;
Long, violet clusters heap her hands ;
About her satyr throats and brows
Flush at her smiled commands.

And from her sun-burnt throat at times,
As bubbles burst on new-made wine,
A happy fit of merry rhymes
Rings down the hills of vine.

From out one heart, remorseless sweet,
She plucked the big-grape passion there ;
Trode in the wine-press of her feet,
It grew into despair :

Until she drained its honeyed must,
Which, tingling inward part by part,
Fierce mounted thro' her glowing bust
And centered in her heart.

A STORMY SUNSET.

1

SOUL of my body! what a death
For such a day of envious gloom,
Unbroken passion of the sky!
As if the pure, kind-hearted breath
Of some soft power, ever nigh,
Had, cleaving in the bitter sheath,
Burst from its grave a gorgeous bloom.

2

The majesty of clouds that swarm,
Expanding in a furious length
Of molten-metal petals, flows
Unutterable, and where the warm,
Full fire is centered, swims and glows
The evening star fresh-faced with strength,
A shimmering rain-drop of the storm.

ON A DIAL.

I

TO-MORROW and to-morrow
Is but to-day:
The world wags but to borrow
Time that grows gray:—
Grammercy! time's but sorrow
And—well away!

2

Since time hales but to sadness
And to decay,
Men needs wax fools for madness,
Laugh, curse, and pray;
Death grapples with their badness—
The Devil's to pay.

UNUTTERABLE.

THERE is a sorrow in the wind to-night
That haunteth me ; she, like a penitent,
Heaps on rent hairs the snow's thin ashes white
And moans and moans, her swaying body bent.

And Superstition gliding softly shakes
With wasted hands, that vainly grope and seek,
The rustling curtains ; of each cranny makes
Cold, ghostly lips that wailing fain would speak.

MIDSUMMER.

THE red blood clings in her cheeks and stings
Through their tan with a fever that lightens,
And the clearness of heaven-born mountain springs
In her dark eyes dusks and brightens.
And her limbs are the limbs of an Atalanta who swings
With the youths in the sinewy games,
When the hot air sings thro' the hair it flings,
And the circus roars hoarse with their names,
As they fly to the goal that flames.

A voice as deep as wan waters that sweep
Thro' the musical reeds of a river ;
A song of red reapers that bind and reap,
With the ring of curved scythes that quiver.
The note-like lisp of the pippins that leap,
Ripe-mellowed to gold, to the ground ;
The murmurous sleep that the cool leaves keep
On close lips that trickle with sound.

And sweet is the beat of her glowing feet,
And her smiles as wide heavens are gracious ;
And the creating might of her hands of heat
As a god's or a goddess's spacious.
The elastic veins thro' her heart that beat
Are rich with a perishless fire,
And her bosoms most sweet are the ardent seat
Of a mother that never will tire.

Wherever she fares her soft voice bears
High powers of being that thicken
In fruits, as the winds made Thessalian mares
Of old mysteriously quicken ;
The apricots' juice and the juice of the pears,
The wine great grape-clusters hold,
These, these are her cares, and her wealth she declares
In her corn's vast billows of gold.

All hail to her lips, and her fruitful hips,
And her motherly thickness of tresses ;
All hail to the sweetness that slips and drips
From her breasts which the light carésses.

A toiler, whose fair arm heaps and whips
Great chariots that heavily creak ;
A worker, who sweats on the groaning ships,
And never grows weary or weak.

A FAIRY CAVALIER.

BY a mushroom in the moon,
White as bud from budded berry,
Silver buckles on my shoon,—
Ho! the moon shines merry.

Here I sit and drink my grog,—
Stocks and tunic ouphen yellow,
Skinned from belly of a frog,—
Quite a fine, fierce fellow.

My good cloak a bat's wing gave,
And a beetle's wings my bonnet,
And a moth's head grew the brave,
Gallant feather on it.

Faith! I have rich jewels rare,
Rings and carcanets all studded
Thick with spiders' eyes, that glare
Like great rubies blooded.

And I swear, sirs, by my blade,
 “Sirrah, a good stabbing hanger!”—
From a hornet’s stinger made,—
 When I am in anger.

Fill the lichen pottles up !
 Honey pressed from hearts of roses ;
Cheek by jowl, up with each cup
 Till we hide our noses.

Good, sirs !—marry !—’tis the cock !
 Hey, away ! the moon’s lost fire !
Ho ! the cock our dial and clock—
 Hide we ’neath this brier.

THE FARMSTEAD.

YES, a lovely homestead ; there
In the Spring your lilacs blew
Plenteous perfume everywhere ;
There your gladiolas grew,
Parallels of scarlet glare.

And the moon-hued primrose cool,
Satin-soft and redolent ;
Honey-suckles beautiful,
Balming all the air with scent ;
Roses red or white as wool.

Roses glorious and lush,
Rich in tender-tinted dyes,
Like a gay, tempestuous rush
Of unnumbered butterflies
Lighting on each bending bush.

Here the fire-bush and the box,
And the wayward violets ;
Clumps of star-enameled phlox,
And the myriad flowery jets
Of the twilight four-o'clocks.

Ah, the beauty of the place
When the June made one great rose
Full of musk and mellow grace,
In the garden's humming close,
Of her comely mother face !

Bubble-like the hollyhocks
Budded, burst and flaunted wide
Gypsy beauty from their stocks.
Morning-glories, bubble-dyed,
Swung in honey-hearted flocks.

Tawny tiger-lilies flung
Doublets slashed with crimson on ;
Graceful slave-girls fair and young,
Like Circassians, in the sun
Alabaster lilies swung.

Ah, the droning of the bee
 In his dusty pantaloons
Tumbling in the fleurs-de-lis ;
 In the drowsy afternoons
Dreaming in the pink sweet-pea.

Ah, the moaning wild-wood dove
 With its throat of amethyst
Ruffled like a shining cove,
 Which a wind to pearl hath kissed,
Moaning, moaning of its love.

And the insects' gossip thin,
 From the summer hotness hid,
In the leafy shadows green,
 Then at eve the katydid
With its hard, unvaried din.

Often from the whispering hills
 Lorn within the golden dusk,—
Gold with gold of daffodils,—
 Thrilled into the garden's musk
The wild wail of whippoorwills.

From the purple tangled trees,
Like the white, full heart of night,
Solemn with majestic peace,
Swam the big moon veined with light,
Like some gorgeous golden fleece.

You were there with me, and you,
In the magic of the hour,
Almost swore that you could view
Beading on each blade and flower
Moony blisters of the dew.

And each Fairy of our home—
Fire-fly—its torch then lit
In the honey-scented gloam,
Dashing down the dusk with it,
Like an instant flaming foam.

And we heard the calling, calling,
Of the wild owl in the brake
Where the trumpet-vine hung crawling ;
Down the ledge into the lake
Heard the sighing streamlet falling.

Then we wandered to the creek,
Where the water-lilies growing,
Like fair maidens white and weak,—
Naked in the brooklet's flowing,—
Stooped to bathe a bashful cheek.

And the moonbeams rippling golden
Fell in saint-sweet aureoles
On chaste bosoms half beholden,
Till, meseemed, the dainty souls
Of pale moon-fays, there enfolden

In such beauty, dimly fainted
Baby-cribbed within each bud,
Till a night wind piney-tainted,
Swooning over field and flood,
Rocked them to a slumber sainted.

Then a low, melodious bell
Of some sleeping heifer tinkled
In some berry-briered dell,
As her satin dewlap wrinkled
With the cud that made it swell.

And returning home we heard
 In a beech tree at the gate
Some brown, dream-behaunted bird
 Singing of its absent mate,
Of the mate that never heard.

And you see, now I am gray,
 Why within the old, old place,
With such memories I stay,
 Fancy out your absent face
Long since passed away.

You were mine—yes, still are mine:
 And this frosty memory
Reels about you as with wine
 Warmed into wild eyes which see
All of you that is divine.

Yes, I love it, and have grown
 Melancholy in that love
And that memory alone
 Of perfection such, whereof
You could sanctify a stone.

And where'er your poppies swing—
 There we walk,—as if a bee
Fanned them with his puny wing,—
 Down your garden shadowy
In the hush the evenings bring.

FIVE FANCIES.

I

THE GLADIOLAS.

AS TALL as the lily, as tall as the rose,
And almost as tall as the hollyhocks,
Ranked breast to breast in sentinel rows
Stand the gladiola stocks.

And some are red as the humming-bird's blood
And some are pied as the butterfly race,
And each is shaped like a velvet hood
Gold-lined with delicate lace.

For you know the goblins that come like musk
To tumble and romp in the flowers' laps,
When you see big fire-fly eyes in the dusk,
Hang there their goblin caps.

II

THE MORNING-GLORIES.

They bloom up the fresh, green trellis
In airy, vigorous ease,
And their fragrant, sensuous honey
Is best beloved of the bees.

Oh! the rose knows the dainty secret
How the morning-glory blows,
For the rose told me the secret,
And the jessamine told the rose.

And the jessamine said at midnight,
Ere the red cock woke and crew,
That the fays of queen Titania
Came there to bathe in the dew.

And the merry moonlight glistened
On wet, long, yellow hair,
And their feet on the flowers drowsy
Trode softer than any air.

And their petticoats, gay as bubbles,
They hung up every one
On the morning-glories' tendrils
Till their moonlight bath were done.

But the red cock crew too early,
And the fays left hurriedly,
And this is why in the morning
Their petticoats there you see.

III

THE TIGER-LILY.

A sultan proud and tawny
At elegant ease he stands,
With his bare throat brown and scrawny,
And his indolent, leaf-like hands.

And the eunuch tulips that listen
In their gaudy turbans so,
With their scimeter leaves that glisten,
Are guards of his seraglio;

Where sultana roses musky,
 Voluptuous in houri charms,
With their bold breasts deep and dusky,
 Impatiently wait his arms.

Tall, beautiful, sad, and slender,
 His Greek-girl dancing slaves,
For the white-limbed lilies tender
 His royal hand he waves.

While he watches them, softly smiling,
 His favorite rose that hour
With a butterfly gallant is willing
 In her attar-scented bower.

IV

VENGEANCE.

I

Let it sink, let it sink
On the pungent-petaled pink
 By those poppy puffs ;

Fairy-fashioned downiness,
Light, weak moth in furry dress
Of white fluffy stuffs.

II

Where the thin light slipping sweet
Dimples prints of Fairy feet
On the white-rose blooms,
One dim blossom delicate
Droops a face all pale with hate,
Dead with sick perfumes.

III

And I read the riddle wove
In this rose's course of love
For the fickle pink:—
Thou the rose's phantom art
Stealing to the pink's false heart
Vampire-like to drink.

V

A DEAD LILY.

I

The South had saluted her mouth
Till her mouth was sweet with the South.

II

And the North with his breathings low
Made the blood in her veins like his snow.

III

And the West with his smiles and his art
Poured his honey of life in her heart.

IV

And the East had in whisperings told
His secrets more precious than gold.

V

So she grew to a beautiful thought
Which a godhead of love had wrought.

VI

As strange how the power begot it
As why—but to kill it and rot it.

MY SUIT.

FAITH! the Dandelion is
To my mind too lowly;
Then the winsome Violet
Is, forsooth, too holy.

There's the Touch-me-not—go to!
What! a face that's speckled
Like a buxom milking-maid's
Which the sun hath freckled!

And the Tiger-lily's wild,
Flirts, is fierce and haughty;
And the Sweet-Brier Rose, I swear,
Pricks you and is naughty.

Columbine a fool's cap hath,
Then she is too merry;
Gossip, I would sooner woo
Some plebeian Berry.

There's the shy Anemone,—
Well—her face shows sorrow ;
Pale, goodsooth ! alive to-day,
Dead and gone to-morrow.

And that big-eyed, fair-cheeked wench,
The untoward Daisy,
She's been wooed, aye ! overmuch—
Then she is too lazy.

Pleasant persons are they all,
And their virtues many ;
Faith, I know but good of all,
And naught ill of any.

Marry ! 'tis a May-apple,
Fair-skinned as a Saxon,
Whom I woo, a fragrant thing
Delicate and waxen.

THE FAMILY BURYING-GROUND.

A WALL of crumbling stones doth keep
Watch o'er long barrows where they sleep,
Old chronicled grave-stones of its dead,
On which oblivious mosses creep
And lichens gray as lead.

Warm days the lost cows as they pass
Rest here and browse the juicy grass
That springs about its sun-scorched stones ;
Afar one hears their bells' deep brass
Waft melancholy tones.

Here the wild morning-glory goes
A-rambling as the myrtle grows,
Wild morning-glories pale as pain,
With holy urns, that hint at woes,
The night hath filled with rain.

Here are blackberries largest seen,
Rich, winey dark, whereon the lean
 Black hornet sucks, noons sick with heat,
That bend not to the shadowed green
 The heavy bearded wheat.

At dark, for its forgotten dead,
A requiem, of no known wind said,
 Through ghostly cedars moans and throbs,
While to thin starlight overhead
 The shivering screech-owl sobs.

THE WATER-MAID.

THERE she rose as white as death,
Stars above and stars beneath ;
Where the ripples brake in splendor
To a million, million starlets
Twinkling on lake-lilies tender,
Rocking to the ripple barlets.
She, brow-belted with white lilies,
Rose and oared a shining shoulder
To a downward-purpling boulder :
With slim fingers soft and milky,
Haled her from the spray-sprent lilies
To a ledge, and sitting silky
Sang unto the list'ning lilies,
Sang and sang beneath the heaven,
Belted, wreathed with lilies seven ;
Falsely sang a wild, wild ditty
 To a wool-white moon ;
Till a child both frail and pretty

Found her singing on the boulder,—
Dark locks on a milky shoulder,—
 'Neath the wool-white moon.
And the creature singing there
Strangled him in her long hair.

THE SEA-KING.

I

IN green sea-caverns dim,
Deep down,
A monarch pale and slim,
Whose soul's a frown,
He ruleth cold and grim
In foamy crown :
In green sea-caverns dim,
Deep down.

2

He hears the Mermaid sing
So sad !
Far off like some curs'd thing,
That ne'er is glad,
A vague, wild murmuring,
That drives men mad :
He hears the Mermaid sing
So sad !

3

Strange monster bulks are there,
 That yawn
Or roll huge eyes that glare
 And then are gone ;
Weird foliage passing fair
 Where clings the spawn :
Strange monster bulks are there,
 That yawn.

4

What cares he for wrecked hulls
 These years !
Red gold the water dulls !
 Grim, dead-men jeers
On jaws of a thousand skulls
 Of mariners !
What cares he for wrecked hulls
 These years !

5

Man's tears are loved of him,
 Deep down ;
Set in the foamy rim
 Of his frail crown
To pearls the tear-drops dim
 Freeze at his frown :
Man's tears are loved of him,
 Deep down.

6

Here be the halls of Sleep
 Full mute,
Chill, shadowy, and deep,
 Where hangs no lute
To make the still heart leap
 Of man or brute :
Here be the halls of Sleep
 Full mute.

WHERE AND WHAT?

HER ivied towers tall
Old forests belt and bar,
And oh! the West's dim mountain crests
That line the blue afar.

Her gardens face dark cliffs,
That seeth against a sea
As blue and deep as the eyes of Sleep
With saddening mystery.

Red sands roll leagues on leagues
Ribbed of the wind and wave;
The near warm sky bends from on high
The pale brow of a slave.

And when the morning's beams
Lie crushed on crag and bay,
A wail of flutes and soft-strung lutes
O'er the lone land swoons away.

The woods are 'roused from rest,
A scent of earth and brine,
By brake and lake the wild things wake,
And torrents leap and shine.

But she in one gray tower
White-faced knows how he died,
And a murderous scorn on her lips is born
To curse his heart that lied.

She smiles and sorrows not :
"Ah, death ! to know," she moans,
"The gluttonous grave of the bitter wave
Laughs loud above his bones !"

She laughs and hating yearns
Out toward the surf's far reach,
Like one in sleep, who, wild to weep,
Hath only moans for speech.

And when the sun had set,
And crocus heavens had fed
Their wan fire soon to a thorn-thin moon,
The flocking stars that led,

A breeze set in from sea
Most odorous with spice,
And streamed among big stars that hung
Thin mists as white as ice.

And then her eyes waxed large
With one last hideous hope,
And her throat she bent toward the firmament,
Star-scattered scope on scope.

The haunted night, that felt
The rapture so accursed,
Shook, loosening one green star that spun
Wild down the dusk and burst.

Fair was her face as Sin's ;
"Ah, wretch !" she wailed, "to know
A wormy seat at Death's lean feet
May not undo such woe !

"The devil-wrangling pit
Much dearer than God's deeps
Of serious skies, where thought ne'er dies
And memory never sleeps !

“And dearer far than both,
Than Heaven or Hell, the jest,
The godless lot to rot and rot,
And not be cursed or blessed !”

THE SPRING.

"O Fons Bandusiae!"

PUSH back the brambles, berry-blue,
The hollowed spring is full in view;
Deep tangled with luxuriant fern
Its rock-imbedded crystal urn.

Not for the loneliness that keeps
The coigne wherein its silence sleeps;
Not for wild butterflies that sway
Their pansy pinions all the day
Above its mirror; nor the bee,
Nor dragon-fly which passing see
Themselves reflected in its spar;
Not for the one white, liquid star
That twinkles in its firmament,
Nor moon-shot clouds so slowly sent

Athwart it when the kindly night
Beads all its grasses with the light,
Small jewels of the dimpled dew;
Not for the day's reflected blue,
Nor the quaint, dainty colored stones
That dance within it where it moans;
Not for all these I love to sit
In silence and to gaze in it.
But, know, a nymph with merry eyes
Meets mine within its laughing skies;
A graceful, naked nymph who plays
All the long fragrant summer days
With instant sight of bees and birds,
And speaks with them in water-words.
One for whose nakedness the air
Weaves moony mists, and on whose hair,
Unfilleted, the night will set
That lone star as a coronet.

LILLITA.

CAN I forget how, when you stood
'Mid orchards whence spring bloom had fled,
Stars made the orchards seem a-bud,
And weighed the sighing boughs o'erhead
With shining ghosts of blossoms dead!

Or when you bowed, a lily tall,
Above your August lilies slim,
Transparent pale, that by the wall
Like softest moonlight seemed to swim,
Brimmed with faint fragrance to the brim.

And in the cloud that lingered low—
A silent pallor in the West—
There stirred and beat a golden glow
Of some great heart that could not rest,
A heart of gold within its breast.

Your heart, your life was in the wild,
Your joy to hear the whip-poor-will
Lament its love, when wafted mild
The harvest drifted from the hill:
The deep, deep wildwood where had trod
The red deer o'er the fallen hush
Of Fall's torn leaves, when the low tod
Was frosty 'neath each berried bush.

At dusk the whip-will still complains
Above your lolling lilies, where
Their faces white the moonlight stains,
The dreamy stream flows far and fair
Whisp'ring of rest an easeful air . . .

O music of the falling rain,
At night unto her painless rest
Sound sweet and sad, then is she fain
To see the wild flowers on her breast
Lift moist, pure faces up again
To breathe to God their fragrance blest.

Thick-pleated beeches long have crossed
Old, mighty arms above her tomb
Where oft I watch at night her ghost
Bow to the wild-flower's full-blown bloom
A mist of curls, where Summer lost
Her tangled sunbeams and perfume.

ARTEMIS.

OFT of the hiding Oread wast thou seen
At earliest morn, a tall imperial shape,
High-buskined, dew-dripped, and on close, chaste
curls,

Long blackness of thick hair, the tipsy drops
Caught from the dipping sprays of under bosks,
Kissed of thy cheek and of thy shoulder brushed,
Thy rosy cheek as haughty Hera's fair,
Thy snow-soft shoulder luminous as light.

Oft did the shaggy hills and solitudes
Of Arethusa shout and ring and reel,
Reverberate and echo merrily
With the mad chiding of thy merry hounds,
Big mouthed and musical, that on the stag,
Or bristling wild-boar furious grew in quest,
And thou, as keen, fleet-footed and clean-limbed,

Thou, thou, O goddess, with thy quivered crew,
Most loveliest maids and fit to wed with gods,
Rushed, swinging on the wind free limbs and lithe,
Long as thy radiant locks flung free to blow
And lighten in the wine-sharp air of morn.

Ai me ! their throats, their lusty, dimpled throats,
That made the hills sing and the wood-ways dance
As if to Orphic strains, and gave them life !
Ai me ! their bosoms' deepness and the soft,
Sweet, happy beauty of their delicate limbs,
That stormed the forest vacancies with light,
Swift daylight of their splendor and made blow,
Within the glad sonorous solitudes,
Old germs of flowerets a century cold.

The woodland Naiad whispered by her rock ;
The Hamadryad, limpid-eyed and wild,
Expectant rustled by her usual oak,
And laughed in wonder ; and mad Pan himself
Reeled piping fiercely down the dinged deeps
With rollicking eye that rolled a brutish lust.

And did the unwed maiden, musing where
Her father's well, beyond the god-graced hills
Bubbled and babbled, hear the full, high cry
Of the chaste huntress, while her dripping jar
Unheeded brimmed, vowed with her chastity,
And shorn gold hair to veil her virgin feet.

But, ah! not when the saucy daylight swims,
Filling the forests with a glamorous green,
Let me behold thee, goddess! but, when dim
The slow night settles on the haunted wild,
And walks in sober sark, and heatful stars
Shine out intensely and the echoy waste
Far off, far off, in shudders palpitates
Unto the Limnad's song unmerciful,
Unmerciful and mad and bitter sweet!
Then come in all thy godhead, beautiful!
Thou beautiful and gentle, as thou cam'st
To lorn Endymion, who, in Lemnos once,
Lone in the wizard magic of the wild,
Wandered a gentle boy, unfriended, sad.
It grew far off adown the stirring trees,

Thy silent beauty blossoming flowerlike,
Between the tree trunks and the lacing limbs,
Bright in the leaves that kissed for very joy
And drunkenness of glory thus revealed.
He saw it all, the naked brow and limbs,
The polished silver of thy glossy breast,
Alone, unaccompanied of handmaidens ;
Like some full, splendid fruit Hesperian
Not e'en for deities ; thy sweet far voice
Came tinkling on his wistful ear and lisped
Like leaves that cling and slip to cling again.
And on such perilous beauty that must kill,
The poisonous favor of thy godliness,
Feasting his every sense through eyes and ears,
His soul exalted waxed and amorous,—
Like the high gods who quaff deep golden bowls
Of rosy nectar,—with immortal love,—
And what remained, ah, what remained but death !

IN NOVEMBER.

NO windy white of wind-blown clouds is thine,
No windy white but low and sodden gray,
That holds the melancholy skies and kills
The wild song and the wild bird ; yet, ai me !
Thy melancholy skies and mournful woods,
Brown, sighing forests dying that I love !
Thy long thick leaves deep, deep about my feet,
Slow, weary feet that halt or falter on ;
Thy long, sweet, reddened leaves that burn and die
With silent fever of the sickened wold.

I love to hear in all thy windy coigns,
Rain-wet and choked with bleached and rotting weeds,
The baby-babble of the many leaves,
That, fallen on barren ways, like fallen hopes
Once held so high on all the Summer's heart
Of strong majestic trees, now come to such,
Would fainly gossip in hushed undertones,—
Sad weak yet sweet as natures that have known
True tears and hot in bleak remorseless days,—
Of all their whilom glory vanished so.

A CHARACTER.

HE lived beyond us and we stood
As pygmies to his every mood,
Mere pupils at his beck and nod,
That spoke the influence of a god.
And oft we wondered, when his thought
Made our humanity seem naught,
If he, like Uther's mystic son,
Were not a birth for Avalon.

When wand'ring 'neath the sighing trees,
His soul waxed genial with the breeze,
That, voiceful, from the piney glades
Companioned seemed of Oreads;
A Dryad life lived in each oak,
And with its many leaf-tongues spoke,
Glorying the deity whose power
Gave it its life in sun and shower.
By every violet-hallowed brook,

Where every bramble-matted nook
Rippled and laughed with water-sounds,
He walked as one on sainted grounds,
Fearing intrusion on the spell
That kept some fountain-spirit's well,
Or woodland genius sitting where
Brown racy berries kissed his hair.

And when the wind far o'er the hill
Had fall'n and left the wildwood still
As moonlight jets on quiet moss,—
Beneath the pied boughs arched across
Long limpid vistas, brimmed with ripe
Green-swimming sunbeams, heard the pipe
Of some hid follower of Pan
And worshiper, half brute half man ;
Who, hairy-haunched, a savage rhyme
Puffed in his reed to rudest time ;
With swollen jowl and rolling eye
Danced boisterous where the silver sky
Smiled in the forest's broken roof ;
The strident branch beneath his hoof

Snapped on the sod which, interfused
Between black roots, was crushed and bruised.

And often when he wandered through
Old forests at the fall of dew,—
A lone Endymion who sought
A higher beauty yet uncaught,—
Some night, we thought, most surely he
Were favored of her deity,
And in the holy solitude
Her sudden presence, long pursued,
Unto his eyes would be confessed ;
The awful moonlight of her breast
Come high with majesty and hold
His heart's blood till his heart were cold,
Unpulsed, unsinewed, all undone,
And snatch his soul to Avalon.

A MOOD.

BOWED hearts that hold the saddest memories
Are the most beautiful ; and such make sweet
Light happy moods of alien natures which
Their sadness contacts, and so sanctifies.

And such to me is an old, gabled house,
Deserted and neglected and unknown
Within the dreamy hollow of its hills,
Dark, cedared hills and fruitless orchards sear ;
With but its host of shrouded memories
Haunting its low and desolate rooms and halls,
Its roomy hearths and cob-webbed crevices.

Here in dim rainy noons I love to sit,
And hear the running rain along the roof,
The creak and crack of noises that are born
Of unseen and mysterious agencies ;
The dripping footfalls of the wind adown

Lone winding stairways massy-banistered ;
A clapping door and then a sudden hush
That brings a pleasant terror stiffening through
The tingling veins and staring from the eyes.
Then comes the running rain along the roof's
Rain-rotten gables and on rain-stained walls
Invokes vague images and memories
Of all its sometime lords and mistresses,
Until the stale material will assume
All that's cairvoyant, and the fine-strung ear
In quaint far rooms or dusty corridors
Hear wrinkled ladies' all beruffled trail
Long haughty silks "miraculously stiff."

A THOUGHT.

AND I have thought of youth which strains
Nearer its God to rise,—
What were ambition and its pains
Were life a cowardice!

The grander souls that rose above
Thought's noblest heights to tread,
Found their endeavor in their love,
And truth behind the dead.

A secret glory in the tomb,
A night that dawns in light,
An intense presence veiled with gloom,
And not an endless night. . . .

Nepenthe of this struggling world,
Thou who dost stay mad Care
When her fury's scourge above is curled
And we see her writhing hair!

SONG.

I

FAR over the summer sea,
Ere the white-eyed stars wax pale,
From the groves where a nightingale
Wails a mystical melody,
I turn my ghostly sail
 Away, away,
To follow a face I see
Far over the summer sea.

II

Far over the summer sea,
Ere the cliff which highest soars
From the foam re-echoing shores
Reddens all rosily,
Where the witch-white water roars,
 Far on, far on,
Thro' the night I follow thee
Far over the summer sea.

III

Far over the summer sea,
When the great gold moon low lies
In the purple-deepened skies
I drift on tearfully
Till a spirit form doth rise
 Low down, low down,
'Twixt the orbèd moon and me
Far over the summer sea.

IV

Far over the summer sea
With thy foam-cold limbs wound sweet
'Round hair and throat and feet
To slay me utterly;
At each mad, hot heart beat
 A kiss, a kiss,
To drain the soul with thee,
Deep, deep in the summer sea.

FACE TO FACE.

DEAD! and all the haughty fate
Fair on throat and face of wax,
White, calm hands crossed still and lax,
Cold, impassionate!

Dead! and no word whispered low
At the dull ear now could wake
One responsive chord or make
One wan temple glow.

Dead! and no hot tear would stir
All that woman sweet and fair,
Woman soul from feet to hair
Which was once of her.

God! and thus to die! and I—
I must live though life be but
One long, hard, monotonous rut,
There to plod and—die!

Creeds are well in such a case ;
But no sermon could have wrought
More of faith than you have taught
With your pale, dead face.

And I see it as you see—
One mistake, so very small!
Yet so great it mangled all,
Left you this and me !

Oft I pondered saying, "Sure
She could never live such life!"
And the truth stabbed like a knife
When I found you pure.

Pure, so pure ! and me bemoiled,
Loathly as loathed vermin, just
As weak souls are left of lust—
Loveless, low, and soiled.

Nay ! I loved you then and love !—
Grand, great eyes, I see them yet,
Set like luminous gems of jet
In wax lids above.

Lips—O poor, dumb, chideless lips!
Once as red as life could make,
Moist as wan wild roses wake
When the wild dew drips.

Hair—imperial, full, and warm
As a Grace's, where one stone
Precious lay ensnared and shone
Like a star in storm.

Eyes—at parting big with pain:
God! I see them and the tear
In them—big as eyes of deer
Led by lights and slain!

Life so true! I falsely cursed—
Lips that, curled with scorn and pride,
Hurt me though I said *they lied*,
While the true heart burst.

Rest! my heart has suffered too:
And this life had woe enough
For the little dole of love
Given to me and you.

Can you hear me? can you know
What I am and how it came,
You, beyond me like a flame,
You, before me like the snow!

Dead! and all my heart a cup
Hollowed for sad, bitter tears,
Bitter in the bitter years
Slowly brimming up.

Sleep! 'tis well! but might have been
Better!—yes, God knows it might!
Better for me in His sight
And my soul more clean.

Sleep in very peace! but I
With Earth's other fools will stay,
Live 'mid laughter, day by day
Mocking laugh and—die.

You will know me now, I know,
But in life had *never* known
How, indeed, I was alone—
But, 'tis better so.

And I know you what you were,
Faithful and—it were no use,
Only to yourself abuse,—
I shall tell you there.

There beyond the lightning and
The long clouds and utter skies,
Moons and suns and stars that rise,
Where we'll understand.

THE CHANGELING.

I

THERE were Faeries two or three,
And a high moon white as wool,
Or a bloom in Faëry,
Where the star-thick blossoms be
Star-like beautiful.

II

There were Faeries two or three,
And a wind as fragrant as
Spicy wafts from Arcady
Rocked the sleeping honey bee
In the clover grass.

III

There were Faeries two or three,
Wee white caps and red wee shoon,
Buckles at each dainty knee,
“We are come to comfort thee,
With the silver moon.”

IV

There were Faeries two or three,
Buttercups brimmed up with dew,
Winning faces sweet to see,
Then mine eyes closed heavily:
“Faeries, what would you?”

V

There were Faeries two or three,
And my babe was dreaming deep,
White as whitest ivory,
In its crib of ebony
Rocked and crooned on sleep.

VI

There were Faeries two or three
Standing in the mocking moon,
And mine eyes closed drowsily,
Drowsily and suddenly
There my babe was gone.

VII

Now no Faeries two or three
Loitered in the moon alone:
Jesu, Marie, comfort me!
What is this instead I see—
Ugly skin and bone.

VIII

There were Faeries two or three
Stood with buckles on red shoon,
But with evil sorcery
My sweet babe to Faery
They did steal right soon.

ST. JOHN'S EVE.

I

DIZZILY round
On the elf-hills white in the yellow moonlight
To a sweet, unholy, ravishing sound
Of wizard voices from underground,
Their mazy dance the Elle-maids wound
On St. John's Eve.

II

Beautiful white,
Like a wreath of mist by the starbeams kissed;
And frail, sweet faces bloomed out on the night
From floating tresses of glow-worm light,
That puffed like foam to the left and the right
On St. John's Eve.

III

Warily there

They flashed like a rill which the moonbeams fill,
But I saw what a mockery all of them were
With their hollow bodies, when the moonlit air
Rayed out through their eyes with a sudden glare
On St. John's Eve.

IV

Solemnly sweet,

By the river's banks in the rushes' ranks,
The Necks their sorrowful songs repeat:
A music of winds over dipping wheat,
Of moss-dulled cascades seemed to meet
On St. John's Eve.

V

Drowsily swam

The fire-flies fleet in eddies of heat ;
Through the willows a glimmer of gold harps came,

And I saw their hair like a misty flame
Bunched over white brows, too white to name,
On St. John's Eve.

VI

Beggarly torn,
A wizen chap in a red-peaked cap,
All gray with the chaff and dust of the corn,
And strong with the pungent scent of the barn,
The Nis scowled under the flowering thorn
On St. John's Eve.

VII

Merrily call
The singing crickets in the twinkling thickets,
And the Troll hill rose on pillars tall,
Crimson pillars that ranked a hall
Where the beak-nosed Trolls were holding a ball
On St. John's Eve.

VIII

Reveling flew
From beakers of gold the wassail old ;
And she reached me a goblet brimmed bright with
 dew—
But her wily witcheries well I knew,
And the philtre over my shoulder threw
 On St. John's Eve.

LALAGE.

WHAT were sweet life without her
Who maketh all things sweet
With smiles that dream about her,
 With dreams that come and fleet !
Soft moods that end in languor ;
 Soft words that end in sighs ;
Curved frownings as of anger ;
 Cold silence of her eyes.

Sweet eyes born but for slaying,
 Deep violet-dark and lost
In dreams of whilom Maying
 In climes unstung of frost.
Wild eyes shot through with fire
 God's light in godless years,
Brimmed wine-dark with desire,
 A birth for dreams and tears.

Dear tears as sweet as laughter,
 Low laughter sweet as love
Unwound in ripples after
 Sad tears we knew not of.
What if the day be lawless,
 What if the heart be dead,
Such tears would make it flawless,
 Such laughter make it red.

Lips that were curled for kisses,
 For loves and hates and scorns,
Brows under gold of tresses,
 Brows beauteous as the Morn's.
Imperial locks and tangled
 Down to the graceful hips ;
Hair where one might be strangled
 Carousing on thy lips.

Rose-lovely lips that hover
 About the honeyed words,
That slip wild bees from clover
 Whose sweets their sweet affords.

Though days be robbed of sunlight,
White teeth make light thereof;
Though nights unknown of onelight,
Thine eyes were stars enough.

Ah, lily-lovely features,
Round temples, throat, and chin,
Sweet gods of godless natures,
Sweet love of loveless men!
Still moods and slumberous fanned on
To dreams that rock to sleep,
Unmerciful abandon,
That haunts or makes one weep.

She walks as if with sorrows
And all unknown of joy;
Eyes fixed on dim to-morrows
That all sad feet decoy.
Yet she, a peer of pleasures,
Tears from Time's taloned hand
The hour-glass he treasures,
And wastes its sullen sand.

Makes of all hours a beaker
 Brimmed full of lordly wine,
Cold gold of Life's mad liquor,
 And quaffs to me and mine.
The love on lips grows fairer,
 Keen lights in eyes make wars,
And throat and breast grow rarer
 Than the white-throated stars.

Fleet smiles come fleet and faster
 And web the willing soul;
Warm breasts of alabaster
 Have snared it as a whole.
What then were hell or heaven,
 The fear of heaven or hell!
Lost in the life thus given
 We well might bid farewell.

To leap against thy bosoms!
 Live at thy ardent throat!
Kiss clinging to its blossoms,
 Die kissing and not know 't!

Wound in tumultuous tresses
Pulse like a naked hair,
Held in long hands for kisses,
And killed and never care.

Clasped limb and marble member,
Long raven hair with gold,
To dream, forget, remember,
Grow slowly still and cold.
Feel earth and hell forever
Remote from thee and me,
Nor strong enough to sever
Through all eternity.

Feel godlike power for evil
High throned within the heart,
Should God and hell's arch devil
Cast dice our souls to part:
Part eyes hot as a jewel,
Part covering deeps of curl,
Sweet lips as sweet as cruel,
And limbs of living pearl.

What if in the hereafter
Our love must weep farewell
'Mid the hoarse, strident laughter
Of devils deep in hell;
We'll know that all infernal,
All cactus-growth of time,
Slays not that hour eternal
That sinned with love to crime.

Love, we could live all tearless,
Remember and have breath,
Of hell and heaven fearless
In love more strong than death.
When hope shall be forgotten
And death be one with both,
Flesh, soul, and spirit rotten
And wrapped with clay in sloth,

Take comfort, love, remember
Love chastened with his rod,
And member torn from member
Would leave him still a god.

Though soul from soul be riven,
God knows we shall regret!
In hell or highest heaven
We never can forget!

MIRIAM.

WHITE clouds and buds and birds and bees,
Low wind-notes piped from southern seas,
Brought thee a rose-white offering,
A flower-like baby with the Spring.

She, as her April, gave to thee
A soul of winsome vagary ;
Large, heavenly eyes, and tender, whence
Shone the sweet mind's soft influence ;
Where all the winning woman, that
Welled up in tears, high sparkling sat.

She, with the dower of her May,
Gave thee a nature that could sway
Wild men with kindness, and a pride
Which all their littleness denied.

Limbs wrought of lilies and a face
Bright as a rose flower's, and a grace,
God-taught, that clings like happiness
In each chaste billow of thy dress.

She, as her heavy June, brought down
Night deeps of hair thy brow to crown ;
A voice so mild and musical
It is as water-notes that fall
O'er bars of pearl, and in thy heart
Stamped like a jewel, that should start
From thy pure face in smiles, and break
Like radiance when it laughed or spake,
Affection that is born of truth
And goodness which make very youth.

THE WIND.

THE ways of the wind are eerie
And I love them all,
The blithe, the mad, and the dreary,
Spring, Winter, and Fall.

When it tells to the waiting crocus
Its beak to show,
And hangs on the wayside locust
Bloom-bunches of snow.

When it comes like a balmy blessing
From the musky wood,
The half-grown roses caressing
Till their cheeks show blood.

When it roars in the Autumn season,
And whines with rain
Or sleet like a mind without reason,
Or a soul in pain.

When the wood-ways once so spicy
With bud and bloom
Are desolate, sear, and icy
As the icy tomb.

When the wild owl crouched and frowsy
In the rotten tree
Wails dolorous, cold, and drowsy,
His shuddering melody.

Then I love to sit in December
Where the big hearth sings,
And dreaming forget and remember
A host of things.

And the wind—I hear how it strangles
And gasps and sighs
On the roof's sharp, shivering angles
That front the skies.

How it groans and romps and tumbles
In attics o'erhead,
In the great-throated chimney rumbles,
Then all at once falls dead;

Till it comes like footsteps slipping
Of a child on the stair,
Or a quaint old gentleman tripping
With heavily powdered hair.

And my soul grows anxious hearted
For those once dear —
The long-lost loves departed
In the wind draw near.

And I seem to see their faces,
Not one estranged,
In their old accustomed places
'Round the wide hearth ranged.

And the wind that waits and poises
Where the shadows sway
Makes their visionary voices
Seem calling me far away.

And I wake in tears to listen
Again to the sobbing wind,
Far out on the lands that glisten,
Like the voice of one who sinned.

MUSIC.

[A NOCTURNE.]

THE soul of love is harmony; as such
All melodies, that with wide pinions beat
Elastic bars, which mew it in the flesh,
Till 't would away to kiss their throats and cling,
Are kindred to the soul, and while they sway,
Lords of its action molding all at will.

Ah! neither was I I, nor knew the clay,
For all my soul lay on full waves of song
Reverberating 'twixt the earth and moon.

O soft complaints, that haunted all the heart
With dreams of love long cherished, love dreams found
On sunset mountains gorgeous toward the West:
Kisses—soft kisses bartered 'mid pale buds
Of bursting Springs; and vows of fondest faith
Kept evermore; and eyes whose witchery

Might lure old saints down to the lowest hell
For one swift glance,—sweet, melancholy eyes
Yet full of hope and dimming o'er with tears,
Stooping and gloating in a silver mist
At Care's thin brow, and growing at his eyes.
Voices of expectation rolling on
To diapason of a mighty choir,
'Mid ever-swooning throbbings beating low,
Wove in hoarse fabric thunders—and O soul!
Wafted to caverns lost by hideous seas,
One with the tumult 'neath o'ercircling tiers
White with strange diamond spars and feathery gems.
O holy music, wailing down long aisles
To lose thyself 'neath archèd welkins dashed
With moons of crystal;—dying, dying down
To passionate sobs, and then a silence vast,
Vast as thy caves, or as the human soul,
Oppressing all this being bulked in flesh
Until it strained to burst its bounds and soar.

Harp-tones! that shaped before the poisèd mind
The home of Sleep far on a moonlit isle.

White Sleep, who from heaped myriad poppies weighed
With baby slumbers, and from violet beds,
Culled whiter dreams to fold against her heart
In dewy clusters sparkling wet with tears;
And on her shadowy pinions soaring high
Winged 'neath the vault into oblivion,
With all the echoes panting at pale feet
To kiss the dreams, and o'er deep, wine-dark waves,
Far, far away, lost—and a sound of stars
Streaming from burning sockets into night
About my soul, about my soul like fire.

Oh, then what agony and bitter woe,
Regret and noise of desolation vast
As when all that one loves is torn away
Forever with "farewell forevermore!"
Oh, strife and panic and the rush of winds,
Moist ashen brows with raven tresses torn
That plunged against the bursting bolts of God,
That ploughed the tempest curst with deepest night;
Ruin and heartache, moans and demon eyes,
Fierce, bestial eyes that cursed at very God;

Then blinding tears that wept for such and prayed,
Tears blistering all the soul in haunting eyes,
Eyes such as Death would fear to ponder on!
Then dolorous bell-beats, battle as for light,
Folds of oblivion, gaspings, silence, death.

TO ———.

*“Lydia, dic, per omnes
Te deos oro!”*

I

WHAT are the subtleties
Which woo me in her eyes
To oaths she deems but lies,
I can not tell, I can not tell,
Nor will she.
They are beyond my thought,
For when I gaze I'm nought,
My senses all unwrought,
It is not well, it is not well,
Now Lily!

II

What is the magic sweet
Which makes hot pulses beat,
A wayward tongue repeat
A name for weeks, a name for weeks
Will, nill he?

Ai me! the pleasant pain
Falls sweetly on the brain
Like some slow sunny rain,
Whene'er she speaks, whene'er she speaks
This Lily.

III

What is the witchery rare
Which snares me in her hair
So deeply that I dare,
I dare not move, I dare not move,—
Lie stilly?
In looks and winning ways
The bloom of love she lays
Like fire on all my days,
And makes me love, and makes me love
This Lily.

YULE.

BEHOLD! it was night; and the wind and the
rushing of snow on the wind,
And the boom of the sea and the moaning of desolate
pines that were thinned.

And the halls of fierce Erick of Sogn with the clamor
of wassail were filled,
With the clash of great beakers of gold and the reek
of the ale that was spilled.

For the Yule was upon them, the Yule, and they quaffed
as from skulls of the slain,
And sware out round oaths in hoarse wit, and long
quaffing sware laughing again.

Unharnessed from each shaggy throat that was hot
with mad lust and with drink,
The burly wild skins and barbaric tossed rent from
their broad golden link.

For the Yule was upon them, the Yule, and the "*waes-
heils*" were shouted and roared
By the Berserks, the eaters of fire, and the Jarls round
the ponderous board.

And huge on the hearth, that writhed hissing and
bellied a bullion of gold,
The yule-log, the half of an oak from the mountains,
was royally rolled.

And its warmth was a glory that glared and smote red
through the width of the hall,
To burnish wild-boar skins and swords and great war-
axes hung on the wall.

Till the maidens, who hurried big goblets that bubbled
excessive with barm,
Blushed rose to the gold of thick curls when the shining
steel mirrored each charm.

And Erick's one hundred gray skalds, at the nod and
the beck of the king,
With the stormy rolled music of an hundred wild harps
made the castle re-echoing ring.

For the Yule, for the Yule was upon them, and battle
and rapine were o'er,
And Harold, the viking, the red, and his brother lay
dead on the shore.

For the harrier, Harold the red, and his merciless
brother, black Ulf,
With their men on the shore of the wintery sea were
carrion cold for the wolf.

Behold! for the battle was finished, the battle that
boomed in the day
With the rumble of shields that were shocked and the
shatter of spears that did slay;

With the hewing of swords that fierce lightened hot
smoking with riotous blood,
And the crush of the mace that was crashed through
the helm and the brain that withstood;

And the cursing and shrieking of men at their gods—
at their gods whom they cursed,
Till the caves of the ocean re-bellowed and storm on
their struggling burst.

And they fought in the flying and drifting and silence
of covering snow,

Till the wounded that lay with the dead, with the dead
were stiff frozen in woe.

And they fought; and the mystical flakes that were
clutched of the maniac wind

Drave sharp on the eyes of the kings, made the sight
of their warriors blind.

And they fought; and with leonine wrath were they
met till the battle god, Thor,

From his thunder-wheeled chariot rolled, making end
of destruction and war.

And they fell—like twin rocks of the mountain the ru-
inous whirlwinds have hurled

From their world-rooted crags to the ocean below with
the strength of the world.

And, lo! not in vain their loud vows! on the stern
iron altars of War

Their flesh, their own flesh, yea, the victim, their blood
the libation to Thor. . . .

But a glitter and splendor of arms out of snow and the
foam of the seas,

And the terrible ghosts of the vikings and the gaunt-
leted Valkyries. . . .

Yea, the halls of fierce Erick of Sogn with the turmoil
of wassail are filled,

With the steam of the flesh of the boar and the reek
of the ale that is spilled.

For the Yule and the vict'ry are theirs, and the "*waes-
heils*" are shouted and roared

By the Berserks, the eaters of fire, and the Jarls 'round
the ponderous board.

THE TROUBADOUR.

HE stood where all the rare voluptuous West,
Like some mad Maenad wine-stained to the
breast,

Shot from delirious lips of ruby must
Long, fierce, triumphant smiles wherein hot lust
Swam like a feverish wine exultant tost
High from a golden goblet and so lost.
And all the West, and all the rosy West,
Bathed his frail beauty, hair and throat and breast;
And there he bloomed, a thing of rose and snows,
A passion flower of men of snows and rose
Beneath the casement of her old red tower
Whereat the lady sat, as white a flower
As ever blew in Provence, and the lace,
Mist-like about her hair, half hid her face
And all its moods which his sweet singing raised,
Sad moods that censured it, sweet moods that praised.
And where the white rose climbing over and over

Up to her wide-flung lattice like a lover,
And gladiolas and deep fleurs-de-lis
Held honey-cups up for the violent bee,
Within her garden by the ivied wall,
Where many a fountain falling musical
Flamed fire-fierce in the eve against it flung,
Like some mad nightingale the minstrel sung:—

“The passion, O! of plunging through and through
Lascivious curls star-litten as light dew,
And jeweled thick, as is the bosomed dusk
Dense scintillant with stars! Oh frenzy rare
Of twisting curling fingers in thy hair!
No touch of balm-beat winds from torrid seas
Were half so satin-soft in sorceries!
No god-like life so sweet as lost to lie
Wrapped strand on strand deep in such hair and die,
Ah love, sweet love!

“The mounting madness and the rapturous pain
With fingers wound in thick, cool curls to strain
All the wild sight deep in thy perilous eyes
So agate polished, where the thoughts that rise

Warm in the heart, like on a witch's glass
Must forth in pictures beautiful and pass:
No Siren sweetness wailed to lyres of gold,
No naked beauty that the Greeks of old
God-bosomed thro' the bursting foam did see,
Were potent, love, to tear mine eyes from thee,
Ah love, sweet love!

"Far o'er the sea of old time once a witch,
The fair *Ææan*, Circe, dwelt, so rich
In marvelous magic, cruel as a god,
She made or unmade lovers at a nod;
Ah, bitter love that made all loves but brute!—
Ah, bitterer thou who mak'st my heart a lute
To lie and languish for thee sad and mute,
Strung high for utterance of the sweetest lay,
Such magic music as *Acrasia*
And all her lovers swooned to utter bliss,—
And then not wake it with a single kiss,
Ah! cruel, cruel love!"

Knee-deep within the dew-damp grasses there,
Against the stars, that now were everywhere

Flung thro' the perfumed heav'ns of angel hands,
And, linked in tangled labyrinths of bands
Of soft rose-hearted flame and glimmer, rolled
One vast immensity of mazy gold,
He sang, like some hurt creature desolate,
Heart-aching for the loss of some wild mate
Hounded and speared to death of heartless men
In old romantic Arden waste; and then
Turned to the one white star,—which like a stone
Of precious worth low on the heaven shone,—
A white, sweet, lovely face and passed away
From the warm flowers and the fountains' spray.
And that fair lady in pale drapery,
High in the quaint, red tower, did she sigh
To see him, dimming down the purple night,
Lone with his instrument die out of sight
Far in the rose-pleached, musk-drunk avenues,
Far in, far in amid the gleaming dews,
And, left alone but with the sighing rush
Of the wan fountains and the deep night hush,
Weep to the melancholy stars above
Half the lorn night for the desired love?

Or down the rush-strewn halls, where arras old
Billowed with passage of her fold on fold,
Even to the ponderous iron-studded gate,
That shrieked with rust, steal from her lord and wait
Deep in the dinged hyacinth and rose
For him who sang so sweetly erst?—who knows?

WHY ?

WHY smile high stars the happier after rain ?
Why is strong love the stronger after pain ?
Ai me ! ai me ! thou wotest not nor I !

Why sings the wild swan heavenliest when it dies ?
Why spake the dumb lips sweetest that we prize
For maddening memories ? O why ! O why !

Why are dead kisses dearer when they're dead ?
Why are dead faces lovelier vanishèd ?
And why this heart-ache ? None can answer why !

FROM UNBELIEF TO BELIEF.

WHY come ye here to sigh that I,
Who with crossed wrists so peaceless lie
Before ye, am at rest, at rest !
For that the pistons of my blood
No more in this machinery thud ?
And on these eyes, that once were blest
With magnetism of fire, are prest
Thin, damp, pale eyelids for a sheath,
Whereon the bony claw of Death
Hath set his coins of unseen lead,
Stamped with the image of his head ?

Why come ye here to weep for one,
Who is forgotten when he's gone
From ye and burthened with this rest
Your God hath given him ! unsought
Of any prayers, whiles yet he wrought,—
And with what sacrifices bought !
Low, sweet communion mouth to mouth

Of thoughts that dewed eternal drought
Of Life's bald barrenness,—a jest,
An irony hath grown confessed
When he's at rest! when he's at rest!

Why come ye, fools!—ye lie! ye lie!
Rashly! the grave, for such as I,
Hath naught that lies as near this rest
As your high Heaven lies near your Hell!
I see why now that it is well
That men but know the husk-like shell,
Which like a fruit the being kept,
That swinked and sported, woke and slept;
From which that stern essential step,
That ichor-veined inhabitant
Who makes me all myself, in all
My moods the "I" original,
That holds one orbit like a star,
Distinct, to which a similar
There never was, and be there can't.

And as it is, it is the best
That Death hath my poor body dressed

In such fair semblance of a rest,
Which soothes the hearts of those distressed ;
But, God ! unto the *dead* the jest
Of this his rest, of this his rest !

THE KING.

ABLOWN white bubble buoyed zenith-ward,
Up from the tremulous East the round moon
 swung

Mist-murky, and the unsocial stars that thronged,
Hot with the drought, thick down the empty West,
Winked thirstily; no wind to rouse the leaves,
That o'er the glaring road lolled palpitant,
Withered and whitened of the weary dust
From iron hoofs of that gay fellowship
Of knights which gat at morn the king disguised;
Whose mind was, "in the lists to joust and be
An equal mid unequals, man with man:"
Who from the towers of Edric passed, wherein
Some nights he'd sojourned, till one morn a horn
Sang at dim portals, musical with dew,
Wild echoes of wild woodlands and the hunt,
Clear herald of the staunchest of his knights;
And they to the great jousts at Camelot
Rode pounding off, a noise of steel and steeds.

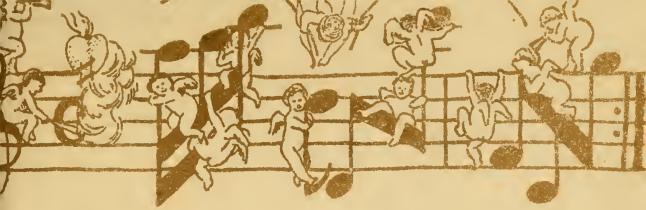
Thick in the stagnant moat the lilies lay
Ghastly and rotting; hoarse with rusty chains
The drawbridge hung before the barbèd grate;
And far above along lone battlements,
His armor moon-drenched, one great sentinel
Clanked drowsily, and it was late in June.
She at her lattice, lawny night-robed, leaned
Dreaming of somewhat dear, and happy smiled
From glorious eyes; a face like gracious nights,
One silent brilliancy of steadfast stars
Innumerable and delicate through the dusk:
Long, loosened loops and coils of sensuous hair
Rolled turbulence down naked neck and throat,
That shamed the moonshine with a rival sheen.

One stooped above her till his nostrils drank
Rich, faint perfumes that blossomed in her hair,
And 'round her waist hooped one strong arm and
drew
Her mightily to him; soft burying deep
In crushed fresh linen warm with flesh his arm,
Searched all her eyes until his own were drugged

Mad with their fire, quick one hungry kiss,
Like anger bruised fierce on her breathless lips,
Whispered, "And lov'st but one? and he?"
"Sweet, sweet my lord, thou wotest well!" and then
From love's stern beauty writhen into hate's
Gnarled hideousness, he haled her sweet, white face
Back, back by its large braids of plenteous hair
Till her full bosom's clamorous speechlessness
Stiff on the moon burst white, low mocked and
 laughed,
"The King, I wot, adulteress!" and a blade
Glanced thin as ice plunged hard, hard in her heart.







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