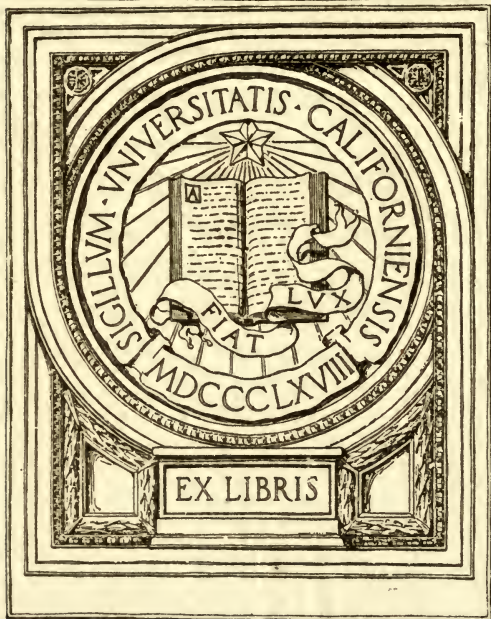


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AND OTHER POEMS

NEW HAVEN

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As one who, strolling on some autumn day
Through woods with summer's life no longer
crowned,
Gathers the treasures fallen from many a spray,
And shows his friends the choicest he has found;
So, little book, do I, in life's decay,
And seeing close at hand its wintry bound,
Bid thee, with silent footstep go around
To those that know me best, and whispering say:
"These leaves, long pressed within the book of
years,
From which the colors may not quite have fled,
Seek private audience from kindly ears,
To tell what thoughts my summer hours once fed.
Receive them with mild silence; scorn them not;
Let him that sends them be not quite forgot."

I thought thy kingdom was in haste to come ;
That whatso'er was good or true or free,
High thought, good life, pure faith, true liberty,
At length had built on earth their lasting home.
But just as this bright dawn I thought to see,
New clouds arose, the sky began to lower,
Doubt strove with faith, religion lost her power,
Freedom grew wild, or brought forth slavery.
" Are these the hopes of man and earth ? " I cried,
" Must good and evil bear alternate sway ?
O let there shine or one perpetual day,
Or one black night fall on earth's hope and pride."
" O fool ! " the sky gave answer, " thus to pray ;
Darkness and light both speed God's glorious way."

The shapes that frowned before the eyes,
Of the early world have fled,
And all the life of earth and skies,
Of streams and seas is dead.

Forgotten is the Titan's fame,
The dread Chimæra now
Is but a mild innocuous flame
Upon a mountain's brow,
Around whose warmth its strawberry red
Th' arbutus hangs, and goat-herds tread.

And now has Typho spent his rage,
The Sirens now no more
Entice the song-struck mariner
To give his voyage o'er.
The sailor past Messina hies,
And scorns the den where Scylla lies.

Leda's twin sons no more are seen
In battle's hottest press,
Nor shine the wind-tost waves between
To seamen in distress.

The muse is but the poet's soul,
That looked towards Helicon,
And for its living thought divine
Raised up a mountain throne.

But ah! is nought save fable slain
In this new realm of thought?
Or has the shaft Primeval Truth
And Truth's great Author sought?

Yes, wisdom now is built on sense;
We measure and we weigh,
We break and join, make rare and dense,
And reason God away.

The wise have probed this wondrous world,
And searched the stars, and find
All curious facts and laws revealed
But no Almighty mind.

From thinking dust we mould the spheres,
And shape earth's wondrous frame :
If God had slept a million years,
All things would be the same.

O give me back a world of life,
Something to love and trust,
Something to quench my inward strife,
And lift me from the dust.

I cannot live with nature dead,
Mid laws and causes blind ;
Powerless on earth, or overhead,
To trace th' all-guiding mind ;

Then boast that I have found the keys
That time and space unlock,
That snatch from heaven its mysteries,
Its fear from the earthquake shock.

Better the instinct of the brute
That feels its God afar,
Than reason, to his praises mute,
Talking with every star.

Better the thousand deities
That swarmed in Greece of yore,
Than thought that scorns all mysteries
And dares all depths to explore.

Better is childhood's thoughtless trust
Than manhood's daring scorn ;
The fear that creeps along the dust
Than doubt in hearts forlorn.

And knowledge, if it cost so dear
If such be reason's day,
I'll lose the pearl without a tear,
And grope my star-lit way.

And be the toils of wisdom curst
If such the meed we earn ;
If freezing pride and doubt are nurst,
And faith forbid to burn.

The age of reason and of truth
 Stands sternly cold before my eyes,
Killing the fancies of my youth,
 Profaning hoary mysteries ;
Until the world has grown so small
 That faith and hope can find no room,
And science makes the mind its thrall,
 And earth becomes a dreary tomb,
Where logic reigns, that cures no sorrow,
 And speaks no promise for to-morrow.
So on we go : The eager joy,
 By wondrous laws and facts supplied,
Can long our serious hours employ,
 Can feed our thoughts and swell our pride.
But to be blest man must be whole ;
 The half no fount of life contains
Head without heart, mind without soul
 Must pine in everlasting pains.

If with unequal, separate pace
Feeling and thought pursue their race,
We curse at length our studious hours,
And curse our lives, and curse our powers,
And own that we have lost our light ;
Or by experience sharp find out
That science deviates into doubt,
And shuts her day in starless night.

But there's a brighter world than this
Where knowledge holds her lamp amiss.
The world of beauty shall be mine,
Whose images of things divine,
Kindled aloft beyond the stars,
Have floated round my prison-bars.
Art shall with no ungrudging hand
Her treasures place at my command.
The poets shall my masters be,
And beauty I abide with thee,
And pluck thy flowers where'er they spring
And listen to thy carolling.

Gilded by thee the earth is fair ;
The olden times new glories wear.
But brightest shines that rocky land
Of Greece, where poets were the kings,
Where every dell and every strand
Some legend sang of beauteous things ;
Where waters gushing from the earth
From life of nymph derived their birth,
And every hill's cloud-piercing crest
Some god's or hero's presence blest.
Here Oeta's wilds the pyre supplied
Where all the man in Hercules died.
There Aegae's beach the king of waves
Held on his path from sailor's graves,
There Delos rose amid the sea
Apollo's place of birth to be,
And Delphi with its serpent slain
Became his oracle and fane.

Yes! I will stand where Ion swept
The temple porch and gaily sung,
And stand where sad Electra wept,
While on her brother's neck she hung
Sharpening his soul to vengeance with her
tongue.

And on Lemnos' silent shore
I will watch the glistening oar,
That sent Laertes' wily son
Where Troy's destructive arrows might be won;
And will bewail that luckless child
Exposed upon Cithæron wild,
Who spilt his father's blood, and sped
By destiny, won his mother's bed;
Till eyeless, cursed, driven away,
To furies of the mind a prey,
To Athens' sacred groves he hies
And near his pious daughters dies.

O, what a daughter, sister she,
That Theban girl Antigone,
Who braved the forms of death most dread
To strew with funeral dust the dead,
Who, when heaven's bolts were falling fast
And all things hid them from the blast,
Law and the sovereign's wrath defied
And for her brother's ashes died.

Ah! those were times when men were free,
And thought flowed easily along,
When faith was boundless as the sea,
And all things yielded fruit for song.

But there where Beauty held her court,
Where the bright Graces loved to sport,
All art and song and every scene
Was consecrate to lust,
Nor star shone out the clouds between
To greet my hope and trust.

Truth hid her face, and fancy drew
A picture earthly and untrue.
And when the spells had lost their power,
The burdens of each active hour
Grew heavier still, and life less fair,
And all my comforts, thinnest air.
So in my discontent I cried—
I need a surer, trustier guide,
Who has, himself, earth's burdens borne
And knows th' unrest of hearts forlorn ;
And has, himself by sin been tried
And in the encounter did not slide ;
And has some balm of truth to apply
Unknown to earth's exploring eye ;
And is not too severely good
To pity erring flesh and blood,
Yet is so pure, that I can draw
From him my wisdom and my law ;

And has some hope, not learnt of earth,
Some promise sure of heavenly birth,
Some opening in the skies, to show
To such as doubt but long to know.
I know him now; once in my pride,
When he stood meekly by my side,
When, without flattery or pretence
He told me truth transcending sense,
I saw no majesty or grace
Amid the furrows of his face.
But I am wiser, though not wise;
The veil is lifted from my eyes.
His form a godlike semblance wears,
His word all fruit of knowledge bears :
His life is beauty, and his love
Has power my deepest heart to move.
I bow, I love, I know, I see,
And my theology shall be
Faith in God's infinite mystery,
And hope serene, O Christ in thee.

O Freedom, oft invoked, and much believed,
But most by those who ne'er have seen thy face,
Is it that thou art false, and we deceived,
Or has some mocking semblance stol'n thy place.
Thee the slave worships, as some unknown God,
Far off, and long, like watchman, for thy day ;
For thee he bleeds and breaks the oppressor's rod,
Then throws thee as some worn-out toy away.

Where thou art seen the soul awakes
And runs, but oft the path mistakes,
Till, humbled by the scoffs of time
Or startled by some hideous crime,
It finds its struggles all in vain,
Its hopes mere fever of the brain.

Thy seed is cast, now by the river's side

That swells and overspreads the vale with sand ;
Now in some soil just opened must it hide,

Where poisonous plants and bushy thickets stand.
When wast thou e'er so blest, that sun and rain,
And air and earth, in right proportions blending,
Helped thee to till thy fields not all in vain,

A ripened harvest to thy labors sending.

Yea, when thy ploughshare breaks the ground,
Earth shakes, and thunders roll around ;

As though no seed of natural birth

Were to be trusted to the earth,

But some dread particle of fire,

Which, grown, should kindle and blaze higher,

And riding on the winds devour

Mountain and plain and city tower.

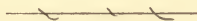
Thou burnest in the bosoms of the good
An airlike flame of health, a gentle breath,
Scarce known, save when thy foe must be subdued,
Or the free mind welcomes a martyr's death.
Where poisonous crime nods proudly in its flower,
And might's strong hand sways down the scales of
truth,
Then burns thy wrath, then comes thine arming hour,
And thou dost gird thee with the mail of youth.
Thy trumpet sounds throughout the land
And calls to war that sacred band,
Gentle or rude, to whom is given,
Beneath the flag of righteous heaven,
A fearless mind abhorring wrong,
And faith that makes the victor strong.

And how shall tyrants boldly fill the throne,
When thou art gently gaining every breast,
Till with a score of tools they stand alone
Against the banded wrath of all th' oppressed.
Can courts and slavish lawyers help them more,
When common men are free, and juries bold?
Can guns and forts drive freedom from the shore
When armies on her covenant are enrolled?

Aye! weave your plots in secret room,
And swear your league for freedom's doom :
But even amid your mysteries curst
The storm you knew not of has burst ;
Your helpers vanish like a cloud,
And silence scares your palace proud ;
Or voices sound along the walls
'That he who tilts with freedom falls.'



But in the bad thou art a noxious flame,
Maddening the brain, and deadly to the heart,
Driving to deeds of rashness and of shame
The embittered soul where mercy has no part.
The old to thee is hateful ; on the new
Thou launchest in thine ignorance without guide ;
Thou deals't thy strokes against the mighty few,
And fill'st the envious throng with deadly pride.
Before thee thrones and priesthoods fall,
And plundering hordes obey thy call
To sack art's choicest treasured stores,
And burn the fane where man adores.
But thou art mother of no arts
To guide and temper human hearts ;
Nor, dread destroyer, dost thou raise
New temples to the God of grace.



Years pass away, and thy tumultuous sea
Has only tossed in vain ; no genial birth
Grows up and waves in wholesome liberty,
But crowds of slaves still crawl upon the earth.
The worn-out nations hug their chains in peace :
The tyrant claims to be thy lawful child :
The woes and servitudes of man increase ;
New burdens on his bending neck are pil'd.
Thee then he curses, robbed, betrayed,
And curses those who drive thy trade,
Whose folly or whose fraud has turned
To gall the sweets his labor earned,
Then desperate plunges in the wave,
And looks for freedom to the grave.

But is it so? Is freedom but a name
For what one age beget, the next shall kill?
Must years of pride give way to years of shame,
And the old drama end with slavery still?
Shall freedom's struggles, shall her painful birth,
Slaughters and triumphs seal no lasting good?
Shall she, scarce seen, expire, as born of earth,
And leave her treasures to a tyrant's brood?
Ah! if men's hopes are restless waves
That rise to fall, let men be slaves.
Better to sleep on power's cold breast,
Than toss and turn in wild unrest.
But if God's will a steady way
Decrees from darkness to bright day,
Then let the cry, "freedom all hail,"
Be heard, where'er she spreads her sail.

MANHOOD.

The dream of youth is now fulfilled;
And life, that strange mysterious thing,
In flight adventurous spreads its wing :
Manhood, full opening, blossoms on the child.
Thou soberer of human joys,
Of hopes too proud the foe,
Reflection, aid me now to trace
The ills and dangers of the race,
And by thy kind persuasive voice
Lay passion's spectres low.
For shall the traveler fear to stray,
And ask at every turn the way,
But I, by chance, at random, driven,
Not knowing whence, nor knowing where,
Float like the down upon the air,
And fail at last of heaven.

First, life is sadder, soberer now,
Its gayer hues are brushed away,
Like wild flowers speedy to decay,
Or like the tints that fade from evening's brow.
Yet hope and passion still are young,
Still put forth poisonous flowers,—
Ten thousand plans and fancies vain,
That fill the breast with care and pain,
And ripen fruit like that which hung
Near Sodom's blasted towers.
If once deceived, why trust them more,
Or waste my days,—a scanty store,—
Learning 't were better not to sin :
Life is too short, too vast the stake
Fruitless experiments to make,
And end where I begin.

Some throw themselves on life, when young,
Hot with desire its fruits to taste,
Nor solid hours in sloth to waste,
Till all be plucked that on its branches hung.
But time! what secrets thou canst tell
Of ruined hopes, of blank despair :
A straw, a moment, turns the scale
From joys assured to hopes that fail.
Fools! thus to drain life's bitter well
For sweets that spring not there.
Or on their path, more sure than they,
Death mows their high grown hopes away.
Death, whom no prayers or tears can bend.
"At life's great banquet sits a crowd,
But many a mirthful guest and loud
Will rise before the end."*

* From Victor Hugo—

Au grand banquet de vie siege une foule avide,
Mais bien des conviés laissent leurs places vides,
Et se levent avant le fin.

But happier they than those who laugh
At right and wrong, at God and man ;
Who dare the heavens to mar their plan,
And guilt's full bowl in drunken madness quaff.
With mingled heaps of wealth their bark
They freight and leave the shore ;
A summer's peace is in their skies,
Across the deep their vessel flies ;
God seems not now their pride to mark,
And weighs their crimes no more.
But look ! the heaven's are overcast,
Shivered the sailyard and the mast,
Into the deep their wealth is thrown.
They cry ; the Just one hears not now,
Till on the rock of right their prow
Strikes, and they sink unknown.*

* The last lines of this verse are imitated from the Furies of Æschylus, vv. 555-565.

Then be the wisdom mine, on earth
To seek no ground to build upon,
Where time can shake the building down,
Or death must drive its short-lived tenant forth.
But I will look beyond the reign
Of change and sin and flesh,
To those blest seats in heaven above,
Where purity of heart and love,
That wither on this sandy plain,
May grow and bloom afresh.
And thou, O Christ, shalt be my guide;
My light, when all is dark beside;
My love, if foes beset me round :
Thou this same path on earth didst try,
Thou to thy pilgrims wilt be nigh,
Till all in heaven are found.

Much I applaud thee, as I hear thee say,
“ O comrade be not indolently good,
For sunlight deeds are virtue’s chosen food,
But shade and silence wear her powers away.”
'Tis true; but when I hear the noisy brood
Of tongue-deep innovators whom the ray
Of heated action spawns in this our day,
Foes of old thought and truth that long has
 stood,
Why, then, the desert and the eremite’s cell
Or cave, the refuge lone of heavenly thought,
Seems fitter by the good man to be sought
Than longer in this deafening crowd to dwell.
There truth by waiting eyelids may be caught,
And lessons learnt, which action cannot spell.

When the loud cries and noises strike my ears,
That rise from action, in this clamorous age,
Like din of armies when they battle wage,
At times they wake my mirth, at times my tears :
For I bethink me of the sun and stars
That steady wheel but noiseless in their spheres,
And think how silently, when spring appears,
The plants and trees burst winter's prison bars.
Good deeds now rise not silent and alone,
But need the scaffolding of vote and speech ;
While brazen trumpets, loud by printers blown,
And platforms thronged their praise to thousands
preach ;
But he who dares for goodness live unknown
Hath gained a height men seek not now to reach.

Deluded age which thinks or seems to think
That naught is action save what can be seen ;
And sets a brand upon the brow serene
Of those, who from the gaze of crowds would
shrink :

And they, who rush not boldest to the brink
Of novelties, seem coward souls and mean ;
And they, who pause and meditate between
Their deeds, at wisdom's well ne'er learned to
drink.

Action is prayer upon the sick man's bed ;
Action is silence, where a word might wound ;
Action is bold rebuke, where crowds are led
To assault the walls which gird old truth around.
Action seeks shelter, when the wind's ahead,
While those who dare the stormy waves are
drowned.

There is one faith where all believers rest ;—
The Father pardoning sinners through the Son,
Bowing their hearts to say “thy will be done,”
And dwelling in them by his presence blest.
This faith it is that makes Christ’s followers one :
This faith all tongues, all centuries attest :
It warms and shines in every humble breast,
Shunning the worldly and the proud alone.
This has cheered ignorant hermits in their cell,
Who groped long time the way to heaven to find.
This lights the Hottentot’s half-human mind ;
This in the Esquimaux’s snow hut can dwell ;
This shall with cords of love join all mankind,
And be the victory o’er the gates of hell.

GALATIANS, VI. 2, 5.

I looked and saw two different companies
Who traveled the same road, but wide apart.
Each pilgrim had a burden at the start,
Which, as he journeyed onwards, grew in size.
These looked not on each other with a heart
Of sympathy, nor felt their sorrows rise
To see the pangs of anguish, that would dart
Through the flushed countenance and bloodshot eyes
Of fellow traveler. None would lay his load
Aside, to help his brother up the hill,
And oft they pushed each other from the road
And ever, as they journeyed, quarreled still:
Their law was, "Each must his own burden bear,"
Therefore their burdens grew to blank despair.

Such was this crew ; how far diverse were they
Who seemed a gloomier band at the first look :
And more had they to do, to watch and pray
And often study o'er a little book,
Besides each other's burden that they took
With gladness on their backs ; and on the way
They yielded each to th' other : none forsook
The tired, or by the fall'n refused to stay.
None was so mean that all did not behold
In him a brother high in rank and place,
Whence the faint-hearted daily grew more bold,
And those who lagged behind revived their pace.
Their law was, " One another's burdens bear,"
Therefore their burdens grew as light as air.

How long hath autumn hung upon the wing,
Nor crossed in flight, like passage bird, our skies,
No fleece of Northern snow, saddening our eyes,
Hath thrown its shroud over the births of spring.
Still lives the earth; nature has time to sing
Her hymn of finished toil, e'er night arise,
Nor yet the smile of clouds grows stern and dies,
Nor wind-tost leaves menace of winter bring.
Still stay, thou season mild with matron charms,
Calmer of summer's fires, queen of the year,
Folding thy ripened offspring in thine arms,
By golden sunsets crowned, and mornings clear.
Still stay, nor dreading winter's wild alarms
Withdraw afar to leave us mourning here.

The time of autumn's ripened leaves comes round;
The woods are blooming since the flowers' decay.
Climb to the naked hilltop and survey
The forest belt that on the slope is bound;
Or from the lake, upon this windless day,
Look yonder on the many-colored shore,
With oaks and crimson maples dappled o'er,
Yellow with ash, with dogwood bright, and say—
Can ruined tower, which legends wait upon,
Where spirits of old time, half visible, hide,
Or all the glories of the Parthenon
Such sober joy for gentler hearts provide,
As these eternal woods, our country's crown,
Where of all lands autumn most loves to abide.

As here I stand, and look upon the spires
Of churches planted o'er this happy plain,
And watch the grazing herds and fields of grain,
And peaceful smoke, wafted from household fires,
And hear the murmuring brook that never tires,
And happy shout of boys, and creaking wain ;
Why longer should my soul wish back again
That antique time so dear to poet's lyres ?
The healthy mind may seek a choice repast
In scenes where freedom and religion dwell :
'Tis true each storied ruin, with its spell
Of sadness, lowly whispered, binds us fast ;
But wherefore should our eyes refuse to taste
Of beauty till we hear its funeral knell.

What here I see of plenty and of peace,
Of quiet labor and domestic joy,
All speaks religion's triumphs and the employ
Of virtuous means to gain earth's happiness.
If but an age or two could so much bless
This plain; if hamlets swarm with girl and boy,
Where whilom Indians waited to destroy,
And chiming bells invade the wilderness;
Why should we fear that all the hopes are told,
That grew so richly on this western shore?
The soil religion breaks kind heavens behold;
The precious seed her hands with weeping bore
Shall wax, while all besides of earth grows old,
And harvests yield, till time shall be no more.

When I behold the strifes and jealousies,
 Within the fold of Christ on every side,
 Which brethren, who in love once walked, divide
For reasons light as air in just men's eyes,
I think how high-souled worldlings must despise
 Such questions vain, so vainly magnified,
 And rather trust to virtues built on pride
Than drink at fountains where such fumes arise.
Woe to the factious ones, who cause the offense :
 And woe to those who blindly misapply
 Their measuring line; and, if they faults espy,
Straightway religion brand as sheer pretense,
 Rather than upward turn to Christ the eye,
And draw the portrait of a Christian thence.

Vain were the longings of the hermit's cell
By fasts and contemplation God to find :
Pride rose and built its throne in th' empty mind,
Which, more divorced from God, with him to dwell
Hoped fondlier, ignorant of its wants and blind ;
Or sensual loves, old bondsmen, would rebel,
And fill the bosom with the flames of hell,
Stripped of its hopes and banished from mankind.
He, who would God enjoy, with him be one,
Needs no high path or from mankind away :
Go to the Father, sinner, through the Son
With lowly mind, and thou canst never stray.
Thy faith shall lock the door to pride, and lay
The chain on lust, and view the Holy One.

Believing sin to be of ills the worst,

And that thy grace that worst of ills can cure,

And that the sinful soul is doubly curst,

When that worst ill least ill it learns to endure;

And by long inward sense of this made sure,

That through this ill's strong smart my heart must
burst,

Unless on heavenly manna it be nurst,

Or numbness next to death all hope obscure;

I look to thee alone: be thou my Lord.

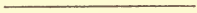
O may those sins that would my soul have slain

Themselves be slain by thine almighty sword;

And may the gentle balsam of thy word,

From which so long I sought relief in vain,

Applied by thine own hand still every pain.



I shut my eyes and saw before my thought,
Just at the portals of the life to come,
The crowds of faithful servants traveling home,
Each with his works before his Master brought.
How various was the good their hands had wrought :
One had borne sorrows meekly; one from pain
Had sucked the sweets of patience; one had sought
In toil for souls to reach their highest gain ;
One was with kindness done to bodies fraught ;
One midst earth's riches had not lived in vain.
Their Lord received them gladly, and decreed
To each his post; and said to each "well done!
Thou wast a faithful servant, duteous son,
Short was thy task, eternal be thy meed."

PSYCHE,

ON A BUTTERFLY WHICH ALIGHTED UPON A VESSEL MANY MILES OUT AT SEA.

Thou light-winged daughter of the sky,
 Poor wanderer, blown so far away
From honied flowers of rival dye,
 To tyrant winds a prey;—
The sunshine knew thee from thy birth,
 The winds, they loved thee still;
And, when thy wing o'er road and field
In countless mazes gaily wheel'd,
Or dropped to rest upon the earth,
 Thou hadst no dream of ill.

But now I see thee blown on high,
 Far, far above thy wonted flight,
And turning that quick-glancing eye
 Towards sheltering hill in sight.
Then, o'er the lonely, boundless sea,
 There, where thy kind are strangers all,
Thy helpless wing is driven :
The blast that stole thee sinks to sleep,
 And wearied, senseless, thou must fall
Down from thy native heaven.

But what is this new hope, that brings
Life's wasted treasure to thine eye,
And fans thy meadow-wandering wings?
'Tis not thy doom to die.
Thou art a painted vessel's guest
That flies upon its way,
The sails, full-swol'n, and cleaving prow
Have swept the path to land, and now
Thou roam'st the air, a freeman blest,
The cup of dainty flower thy rest,
The summer sky thy sway.

Most like to thee the soul appears,
Gay-colored tenant of the earth,
But drawing from the upper spheres
A more mysterious birth.

* * * *

NAPOLEON AND WASHINGTON.

(Rome, 1830.)

How oft has righteous heaven
To earth dread scourges given,—
Stars ris'n in blood, to set in darkness drear ;
But hope waits long in vain
The sight of one to gain
Whose name with reverence coming time shall hear.

Let Europe's blood-stained lord
And he, whose guiltless sword
Our freedom built, in scales of truth be hung ;
Look where their pathways bend,
And mark their different end,
And which was great declare with righteous tongue.

The one saw opening made
For war's adventurous trade,
And reap't the fields where bristle armies brave.
Thrones fall before his sword,
Kingdoms obey his word,
France bows the knee, and Europe is his slave.

His purpose is like light
Shot from the womb of night ;
His deed sweeps onward swifter than the wind :
The wishes of his soul,
In restless billows roll ;
Their rage no fear of man or God can bind.

But swifter was the path
Of God's avenging wrath.
His work once done, he hurled his tool away.
Thou thoughtest thine own hand
Raised thee and made thee stand,
But thou wast lifted up to work thine own decay.

The island of the sea
Thy prison home must be.
Thou'rt nigh forgot, whilst yet men quake for fear :
Of kings no stately race
To thee their line shall trace,
From thy fall'n trunk no royal shoots appear.

Now turn to him whose heart
Ne'er played the warrior's part,
Whom duty summoned to the field of blood.
Thou would'st have shunned the choice,
But loud a people's voice
Called thee to guide their vessel through the flood.

To them and righteous heaven
Thy sword and life were given :
Through good and ill their cause thou mad'st thine
When heart was gone and hope [own.
Thy wisdom was our prop,
Thy patience loosed us from a foreign throne.

Thus from the fiery strife
Sprang up a nation's life :
But who shall freedom's deep foundations lay ?
'Twas thine with healing hand
To unite our broken land,
We called thee first our infant state to sway,

But soon the toils of power
Give way to quiet's hour ;
Too soon thine evening rays forsake our sky ;
Far is the mourning spread
For such a Father dead,
Deep in the western forests ends the cry.

Wide is our home and free :
No land beyond the sea
Had such a dawn, or hoped for such a day.
Oh, who can count the throng
That with the voice of song
Shall bless thy name, who leddest freedom's way.

But he, how curst his lot,
To be or aye forgot,
Or ne'er forgiven, with man's best hopes who play'd.
Ah! down the stream of time
He floats a wreck sublime,
Or sinks amid the ruin he has made.

And when the judge of all
His names in wrath shall call,
AH ! WHO SHALL COVET HIS SUPERIOR PLACE ?
HE MIGHT HAVE BLEST BUT CHOSE
THE WEAL OF MAN TO OPPOSE ;
HENCEFORTH BE RUIN HIS, AND FOUL DISGRACE.

Asleep the wearied mother lay,
Her infant boy fast by her side ;
And thought, its cares all swept away,
Roved through a world of fancy wide.

When lo ! a form all light and grace
Stood o'er her with benignant eye ;
Ne'er had she seen so fair a face,
Such mild and heavenly majesty.

Thus spake the form : “ Daughter of earth,
Thou hast received a gift divine,
Thrice happy in an infant's birth,
Whose soul with heaven's best rays shall shine.

With intellect as clear and bright
As sunbeams fall on mountain snow,
Conceptions like a fount of light,
And judgments piercing where they go,

He shall with ease through every field
Of knowledge whilst a stripling rove;
And wiser men with awe shall yield
To one so gifted from above.

And when the hill of years he gains
Where life's wide prospect spreads before him,
Then will I crown his youthful pains,
And spread my choicest influence o'er him.

In senates heard with deep delight,
The safest counsellor in the land;
Or at the bar by words of might
O'erthrowing all who dare withstand:

Admired and loved, from place to place,
Swiftly and safely shall he rise
Until a nation's voice shall grace
His brow with honor's highest prize.

Nought shall impede his stedfast way :
All fortune's storms and clouds unknown,
In deep old age he sinks away,
And leaves a radiance where he shone.

A nation's idol while alive,
A nation's tears his death shall weep ;
Her poets in his praise shall strive,
And sculptured stone his form shall keep.

But mark ! though patriot, man of worth,
Each high prized name to him belongs,
He wants the stamp of heavenly birth,
He cannot join in angel's songs.

Now turn thee to the other side :
Hear how another destiny
Awaits the boy ; and let thy pride
Or wisdom choose, for choice is free.

In youth unknown to those who praise
Almost o'erlooked by those who love
Obscurely treading virtue's ways,
And sending frequent thoughts above,

He seeks some private, lowly sphere,
Where such as he may act their part,
Where goodness makes companions dear,
And heart finds close approach to heart.

There, not afar from those who mourn,
Nor seldom at the sufferer's bed,
He heals the mind that sin had torn
And lifts the widow's drooping head.

And though to earthly fame unknown,
This record shall be read on high,
That few with brighter virtue shone,
Or found it greater gain to die.

“ Now choose,” the smiling seraph cried,
“ I wait to bear to heaven thy choice,
Nor say that aught has been *denied*,
Or *given* without a mother’s voice.”

He ceased, and earth appeared so fair,
The praise of man so blest a lot,
That she a moment rested there
And all beyond this world forgot.

But when to heaven she raised her mind,
And heard the Judge decree the prize,
She cast all earthly hopes behind
And cried, “ O train him for the skies.”

“ Blest choice,” the seraph cried—“ ’tis thine
Now to fulfill what God has given,
That he with heavenly grace may shine
Thyself must train him up for heaven.”

(This was published many years ago by a friend.)

Tired with long wanderings from my home
In search of empty rest,
Back to thy presence, Lord, I come,—
Thy presence makes me blest.

There never ceasing quiet dwells,
There peace o'erspreads the mind :
The world has broken all her spells,
And lost her power to blind.

Pride, that destroyer of my bliss,
And self, that deadly foe,
Forsake the mount where Jesus is,
And spread their nets below.

Ah, mighty sorcerers of the soul,
They steal our life from God :
One half we wander from the goal,
The rest enquire the road.

Sin and repentance reign by turns,
 Maintaining various fight ;
And still the heart for follies burns,
 And still it loves the right.

Oft stands the soul in doubt to choose
 The world, or choose her prize,
And still its onward way pursues,
 With half averted eyes.

Oh for thy help, my God, my life !
 Force earth and sin to yield ;
Fain would I end my weary strife,
 Fain lay aside my shield.

Fain would I send no thoughts abroad
 In quest of false delight,
But through the desert walk with God,
 Still keeping heaven in sight.

Not half so quick the swift winged fly
Starts from the finger's touch away,
As fleeting moments hasten by
Impatient of delay.

"Abide with me," we cry, "awhile
Thou short-lived hour of joy and love:"
'Tis gone, unheeding, many a mile
Beyond the stars above.

No turnings back, no looks toward earth
Delay its road to heaven's court;
There, where it took its wondrous birth,
It makes its last report.

O Time, of heaven thou Daughter dread,
Sweet as earth's gladdest moments be,
Help me more glad the sail to spread
For that untraveled sea.

How oft some misty trace comes back
Of what we felt we know not when,
Some sadly happy dream, like rack
That scuds awhile, then fades again.

Oh there is no entire forgetting :
If even a long-lost, transient thought,
A flashing star, whose birth and setting
The self-same point of time has brought,—

If this now fills the memory,
Like things of merry yesterday ;
Oh what within the soul can die,
What dream of childhood pass away.

They lie who sing that man is fleeting,
That time can bury up the past ;
Each thought is but the pulse that's beating
With the soul while heaven shall last.

ABAEIARD AND HELOISE.*

'Twas dusk ; six men with noiseless feet,
Carrying a burden, as they went,
Halted before the Paraclete,
By Cluny's reverend abbot sent.

They bore the corpse of one who knew
What sinning meant and what to rise,
To her, in shame his partner true
Partaker of his penitent sighs.

“Next to my heart through all those years,”
She said, “which tore my heart in twain,
wet/ And ~~met~~ my sins with constant tears,
I see thee, dearest one again ;

A corpse beloved, a chastened friend,
Who, on a steep and rugged road,
From fleshly longings didst ascend
Up to the purity of God.

* (Apr. 21, 1142.)

I have my prayer once more to abide,—
Tempted no more, nor tempting thee,—
Near God and closest to thy side,
Loving and loved in purity.

Hard was thy lot, bright beauteous soul,
All light, all fire, half earth, half heaven :
Yet all is well, reached is the goal,
Peace hast thou now, O much forgiven.

How many sin without a dart
Hurled at them such as pierced thee through ;
How many feel a biting smart,
Then, all forgotten, sin anew.
Thy sin and mine are washed away ;
Our crime,—it was our natal day.

Ah, lower him, daughters, to the cave,
A man beloved of me and God ;
And when I die let the same grave
Cover my body with its sod.
'Tis right, 'tis holy now to love,—
Joined to the soul that rests above."

So spake the Abbess in midlife,—
The penitent who laid no blame
Upon the author of her shame,
But loved him, the unwedded wife,
Even in the convent, with a flame
That rose to heaven, though built on flesh,
Still burning from her heart afresh.

Through twenty years the widowed one
Poured forth her prayers for that dear soul ;
Then, with her heart all calm and whole,
In holy quiet Heloise died
And lay close by Abaelard's side.

DISAPPOINTED HOPES.

A. Seest thou the land, where all our hopes are
placed?

Seest thou its mountains rising o'er the waste?
Mark how the wave puts on a lighter hue;
The air is mild, and fraught with fragrance new.
Knowest thou that point, that forms our bay so
still,

And that white village just below the hill?
Thither, O! thither gladly would I fly
Like yon small bird that tells us land is nigh.

B. I saw it while thou spakest, but mine eye
Is dim, or mist hath overspread the sky.
And yet again I see it: O! how blest
So soon to be of all we love possessed.
But mark that cloud that flies upon the blast,
Grows black and thunders and approaches fast,
The crew are up the sails to reef or lower:
'Tis but a land-shower quickly passing o'er.

A. See how it comes! no sail can stand its force:
The ship nor hears the helm nor keeps its course.
Hark, hark! the mainmast cracks and falls; at
most

'Tis but a chance that we may not be lost.

'Tis cut away! No, no! It hangs: again

To hope to loose it mid the storm is vain.

See, see! There comes a blacker squall. All's
o'er.

Ah me! to die so near my native shore.

B. Seize, seize the boat! *A.* 'Tis washed away.

B. Best friend,

I sink. Farewell. *A.* We part not till the end.

THE LOST VESSEL.

The days move slowly on, for they ere long,—
The sister she, and she the fair betrothed—
Expect his lov'd return. A ship they spy
White in the evening sun, with sails all set
And waving streamers, entering the bay
Whose waters fear no tempest, and whose face
Sleeps tranquil now beneath the laughing sky.
For them the morning dawns with early light,
Awakened by fond hopes; but on the shore
Another crew and other's lov'd ones land.
These had outrun his vessel on the deep,
And soon encountering storms and adverse gales,
But just outlived the perils of the way.

The days pass by, and fear, now ill concealed,
Prompts many a thought which hope as soon repels,
And cooler friends call maiden's love-sick dreams.

The days pass by; and counted as they go
Wake many a secret tear and open sigh
And look of stifled sorrow, that betrays
The darkness of the caverns of the soul.

The days pass by how swiftly! and how sad
Their fast increasing number swells to twice
And thrice the longest voyage: from that same port
Sails joyful many a crew, and many a heart
Leaps towards its long lost friend: no tidings come
Of your beloved. No longer need ye now
Bend down your heads to hide the bitter tear,
For they, who blamed your love's too fond alarms,
Are clad in robes of mourning; but their hearts
Feel not those agonies of deepest love
Which fill your waking hours and fill your nights
With images most cruel: all save one
Believe that he is lost: with constancy
Of hopes not built on argument, and oft
Demolished by her weakened reason's powers,
But by the wand of love built up anew,
Still she distrusts all tales: "Perchance he lives
On some bleak rock, or on some barbarous shore.

Perchance the crew with mutinous resolve
For other climes the canvas spread, and he
Is waiting for a late and blest return.”
Alas the winds and waves and fickle crew,
Seafaring men’s conjectures, news from sea
Of ships that founder on the billowy main—
All—may be false; but thou canst know no change.
For as a bride keeps firm her marriage vow
Until her lord return, who weeks or days
Is absent, so thy plighted faith is kept
As for the living; then may’st thou live with him
Beyond the reach of tempests, safe in heaven.

1826

I knew a man, who once in early youth
Shone with the beams of honor, love and truth.
Wild nature was his bosom friend, and he
With woods and streams kept heartfelt company.
As years around him gathered, in the pride
 Of conscious strength his mind the world surveyed,
And dazzled by the sight for power he sighed,
 And all that were his friends before betrayed.
He sought that path most false where *to appear*
And not *to be* is prized; he plied the ear
Of knaves in office with his specious lies,
And voting fools he duped by promises.
He rose: What could he less; for had he stood
 Amid that quiet deep-discerning band,
Who fear their God, and love their country's good,
 Equals had met his eye on every hand.

But causes that are gained by vulgar arts
Are the best hot-beds for a man of parts :
There nourished by the muck, his growth is fast
Nor rivals on his path their shadows cast.
But is his soul,—that crystal spring—the same,
Which friends believed perpetual? Nay, 'tis dry :
Honor to him is now an empty name,—
Except its form and fame nonentity.
Of love he talks, but practices it not,
By foul expedients all things can be got.
But most his hardened soul in this is changed :
Nature and he once friends are now estranged.
He cannot bear the field, the hill, the stream ;
He cannot walk amid wild woods alone,
For fierce reproaches start him from his dream
Of worldliness, and cry that he's undone.

He cannot bear to know that what he lost
Was innocence, was inward blessedness,
That what he bargained for at such a cost
Is a vile harlot in a spangled dress.
Well! let him join the crew where votes are sold,
Accept the office, pay and take the gold,
Avoid all honest men, mid knaves be bold :
We cast him off from us with tears and say
Woe to his soul ! he flung truth's crown away,
Deserted nature, falsehood's laws t' obey :
Soon must his soul be deadened, or must burn
With shame for paths on which few e'er return.

1834

I stood, methought, fast by heaven's outer gate,
When Plato, blindfold, humbly to the door
Came with weak steps, if he might venture o'er
The threshold doubting, or without must wait.
When he, who in the Master's bosom lay,
And saw the mysteries nearest to the throne,
Drew nigh, and led the mild enthusiast on
Up to th' Eternal Word, Heaven's fount of day.
"There," said th' Apostle to the kindred mind,
"Dwells truth, whose shadows thou wast fain to
trace ;
There beauty, which thy dreams wandered to find ;
There love, which swells beyond the soul's em-
brace."
Then loosed the bandage, and the sage, no more
A sage but saint, beheld and knelt to adore.

* "Plato, who alone of all the Greeks touched the porch of truth."—*Euseb. præp. evangel.*, xiii, 14.

EROS, A PLATONIC MYTH.

A strain was handed down from earliest times,
Repeated o'er the East, when earth was young,
By sacred poets, but well nigh forgot
Amid the strifes of warring tribes:—the strain
Was caught by gentle minstrel, rude in verse
But ripe in goodness. Where he lived or when
I know not. Ruder yet, I lifted up
The lamp, next in the course, and bade it shine.
Therefore ye gentle-hearted hear my song,—
True, 'neath its veil, for truth its veil removed.

Past was that age Saturnian, only known
To song, ere history's duller tales began,
When earth gave more than fruit enough to all,
When every field was free and every wood.
The world had grown diseased; a fever wild

Of lusts raged fearfully; a youthful race
In all its earliest strength, without a guide,
Most like a stripling giant, with a will
Ripened but reason crude, plunged wildly on,
Whatever path allured, and madly warred
With heaven and with each other; whence arose
Fables of Titans that with mighty hands
Piled mountains to the skies. From bad they fell
To worse, until, when arts began to bloom,
And states arose, and science tried its wings,
A generation flourished of such wild
And godless sinners, that 'twas marvellous
Heaven could its eye keep open, and not dash
Mankind, its masterpiece, upon the ground,
To mould new vessels of superior clay.
For human love had fled, and human shame:
They led the blind astray, and starved the poor,
And mocked the stranger's cry, nor knew remorse,
When morn beheld him stiffened on the snow.
They plucked the old man's staff away, and shouts
Rang loud, when with the dust his hoary hairs

Were levelled, and his face with blood defiled ;
Whereat, in fiendish scorn he curst the young,
Wishing them wretched eld, and, if a race
Should flourish from their loins, that parricide
Might snatch their food away and speed their graves.
All purer thoughts were gone ; the mother knew
No sire for her ill gotten son ; the son
Roved thoughtless of the wanton whence he sprang,
And cursed her name. 'Twas nothing thought of then
To kill the infant offspring,—not to hide
The evidence of shame where shame was none,
But lest the child should clog the ready way
To some new lover's board. Nor were the feuds
Of fiendish hate less rife, and fell revenge.
The murderer roved unharmed, no dogs of law
Close following at his heels with hue and cry,
Nor dread avenger, swift to give again
The stroke that felled a brother to the ground :
Or fearful of revenge, he sought the wilds
Familiar with his dagger, like a wolf
Startled by every sound but keen for blood.

Truth in their streets had fallen, their sages hoar,
The mantled doctors of their honored schools,
On wide experience building, and on sense
Common, and consciousness peculiar too,
Held nature's end to be to seek her own,
And man in natural strife engaged with man :
They taught and had no heretics to burn.
Down had the altars fallen, and sacred groves
On mountains nearest to the sky, where once
A simple race, in solemn trains and choirs,
By symbols aided, earliest lore of man,
Drew near the face of God, and told their sins.
The temples felt the sacrilegious fire :
The God of heaven, the holy and the just,
Long had given place to lustful powers, malign
And fond of blood, who yielded in their turn,
As doubt prevailed, to misty, dreadful shapes,
Such as send dreams of ill, and gnaw the mind
With thoughts of bale, and end a laugh in tears,—
Remorse embodied, fear of woe to come
Grown to a God, unchanging, deathless forms,

Unworshiped, save with curses in the room
Of prayers, and incense black of desperate groans.
Only when harm was imminent, and loud
The wrathful thunder, then they vowed to sate
The fearful power with blood of slaughtered men,
Perchance to burn their children to his name.

But here I furl my sails, I will not sing
(Thus the old bard who kept the older tale,
Of feuds most horrible, where murdered men,
Unburied, fed the kites; of hearth-stones marked
With stain of gore, yet visible when all
Around was ruin, and the briars had grown
Rank over cellar and o'er fallen wall.
Of this and more, too horrible for man
To frame a thought of, mingled lust and hate,
Malicious fraud as sleepless as the sea,
And steady as the earth upon its course,—
Of this I may not tell; for peace belongs
To such as me, to sit beside a stream
Of gentlest flow, half sleeping, half awake,
And watch the clouds or hear the distant pipe.

Such toils for me are fitting, all inapt
To explore the maladies of souls divorced
From love of human kind and faith in heaven.

While ruin thus grew rank, and hideous crime
Struck far and wide its roots, a single pair,
Escaping from the sights and sounds of wrong,
Did build their dwelling in a lonely waste—
A goodly spot once peopled, near a lake
Whose margent wide was girt around with hills
Cloud-piercing, whence a hundred torrents poured
And fed the mere. There in the olden times
Floated innumerable ships with costly freights,
Borne from the sea in channel smooth and broad;
There too proud cities revelled, fallen now
Silent and empty—such the fruit of sin.
Here found this virtuous pair the first relief
From that heart-sickness which Titanian crime
And fearful hate had fastened on their souls,
But found not here, nor, as they weigh'd the earth,
Thought to find ease and rest. From day to day
The forest fell, and need was of long war

With nature's wildness. Oft it seemed that they,
Alone of all, must suffer, though alone
God's faithful servants. But their sorrows rose
Highest, what time the lifted hand of heaven
Smote at parental love. Their faithful bed
Was blest, and many a loud and happy voice
Sounded around their board, of daughters fair
And sons in virtue trained and honest toil.
But each, when now full grown, when reason's tide
Was highest, in beauty's brightness, in the wealth
Of feeling, when the clusters of most hopes
Hung on their names,—each strangely drooped away,
Wilted and died by hidden malady ;
As if a venomous curse had lodged its sting
Within the race, or such a wicked earth
Were pestilent to goodness. All expired :
All, all were buried by their parents' hands ;
Whose hearts were rent but meekly still, whene'er
The pillar of the cloud that led their way
Turned on them its dark side, more black than death.
So on they lived alone ; of all their kind

Bereft, in patience and in peace, content
To bear whatever burdens life might bring,
Until a gentle summons from the sky
Should call them on their way—they hoped together—
Girded and ready. But oh! the thoughts of man—
How wide they fly, when wisest, from the mark
Of Providence; and oft our wildest dreams
Are prophecies, our judgments light as smoke.
Long had it ceased to be in woman's way
With that old dame, and hopes were all burnt out
Of offspring, when a new unwonted weight
To press upon her heart began, and life
Moved 'neath her zone as in some ancient grave.
Then might she well have thrown her eyes abroad
Upon the grassy tomb of virgins fair
And many a son, and dreaded birth to give,
To another still for time to snatch away.
But no such fears disturbed her, hope serene
Sat on her brow, and in the strange event
She read sure token that the smile of heaven,
So often hid in frowning thunder clouds,

Would make her sunset glorious. Months went round,
And oh! how marvelous! without a throe,
As gently as the buds their leaves unfold,
She bore a wondrous child, unparagoned
In beauty, with a countenance heavenly mild
And thought set deep within his eye; but most
The wonder, when the eager dame espied
A pair of wings, that down the infant's sides,
Feathered for brisk, celestial flight, did wave.
'T was then a selfish pang of bitter fear,
One bubble in the gush of wondrous joy,
Leapt upward, lest some creature of the sky,
Or shape angelic, should have drawn its life
From her in human semblance, then to leave
On nimble wing its earthly home and sail
Above the clouds, of her regardless quite.
But neither envious winds her treasure stole,
Nor grave, reared up 'mid monuments of woe,
Guarded it ah! too well: it lived and throve;
It hung upon her breast; it watched her eye
Reviving thoughts of buried ones; it lisped

The name long dead of mother; on his knee
The sire caressed it, and its tottering feet
Taught how to move. Love sparkled in its eye,
Love beamed from theirs, and Eros was its name.
So on they lived, rejoicing in the child
Whom signs of wondrous destiny waited on;
And when they died a death, than softest fall
Of snow upon a windless day more soft,
Their bosoms heaved with gladness, as they blest
Eros, and, though his lot was cast alone,
Knew that heaven's cords were round him, and his path
Piloted by a bright and happy star.
But not of joy, e'er yet his parents died
Was he all woven, for amid the round
Of joyful tasks and perfect filial love
Strange thoughts, uncalled for sadness, like the breath
That for a moment clouds the polished steel,
Gathered to vanish—but not vanish quite:
For e'er the years when selfishness, like rust,
Eats on the vulgar growth of men, and shames
Their brows with darkling fear and thoughts malign,

His brow was beautifully sad, his thought
Had ta'en such foretaste of the time to come
That from forebodings sober credence grew
Of singular distress, at which the will
Of heaven should land him, ripening thereby
Its hidden counsel, which, whate'er it were,
Downward did look toward earth; for lo! the wings,
Just used as yet to brush above the fen,
Or skim along the slope, to droop began:
The feathers first are shed, in form entire
But at their roots unfed by moistening oil;
Then falls the penon-bone, leaving a scar
Where with the shoulder hinging, it had drawn
Its aliment from a frame unearthly, now
An earthly burden bearing. Thus his hopes
And toils to earth were tied; and soon there came
In visions of the night, when the soul's eye
Is opened widest, whisperings divine
That he must walk abroad among his kind,
And quit that desert home of heavenly thought.
Not there his task was set; thenceforth his years

Must face the wicked eye to eye, and bear
Perpetual witness for the ways of God.
So towards a world more wild than beasts of prey,
He bent his steps, unripe, without a guide
Save faith, and those celestial visitings
That cheered his nights while cares besieged the day.
And who can tell what struggles tossed his soul
Ere he dared sail on that unsounded sea?
Who, tell what shrinkings from the lifelong war,
Foreseen, with hosts of sin were his; what choice
Of contemplative rest before the toils
Of action; what desire at once to abridge
By some huge effort, if it cost his life,
The weary load of daily fruitless pains;
What flashes of sharp fear, lest in the heat
Of trial, like some lonely sentinel,
He should his trust betray; what heavy sense
Of sins o'ermastering crowds, in strife combined
Against his single arm; what doubts, well nigh
Crazing his brain, of what might be, increased
To such a size that truth in mist was veiled,

And he seemed steering toward a land of dreams.
But, noble heart, cheer up. The mystery
Of life is opening now before thine eye,
That in a world of sin the course of love
Must lie through sufferings; that the gates of hope
For man so weak and low must be unlocked
By virtue's conflict long and bloody death.
Nor comes the triumph 'till some new made soil
Be gathered of fresh hope and high example,
Whereon the plants of virtue sown by heaven
May live the best of lives that earth can yield.
Yes! noble heart, cheer up! A glorious end
Lies near thee, and as thou pursuest thy way,
Be sure that God and nature take thy side.
Heaven gives thee streaks of sunlight, nature smiles
In loving fellowship and calls thee on.

So, fear and doubt o'ercome, he girt himself
In faith for th' untried world, for haunts of men.
'Tis said the beasts were conscious, where he trod,
Of more than earthly presence, that the wild
And ravening natures, deadly foes to man,

Leapt round his steps, or crouched and humbly whined,
Licking his unsuspecting hand: a song
From all the warblers of the air upflew
Filling the woods, but birds of augury,
Hoarse fowl that fly alone, and levy war
On every feebler wing,—all these were gone,
Hid in lone thickets, mindless of their prey.
'Twas sung, new blossoms sprang beneath his feet,
Glad shapes and dyes, the signs of nature's love
For one so lonely! then, 't was told of yore,
The flower hight love-lies-bleeding first was born,
A single stalk that strewed its seeds afar,
In token that the seeds of bleeding love
Should grow and fill the fields towards every wind.

But when his steps approached the halls of men
And trod the streets of busy life, no eye
Of welcome greeted him, no word of peace
Fell soothing on his ear, no brother's heart
Adopted him, or gave him place of rest.
He tried each gentle tone, each graceful act,
Such as pure instinct knows, lending to these

The sweetest help of pity, offering those
Oblations of respect, and mild to all,
Nor pride with pride repaid nor scorn with scorn.
But nought availed, he could not win his way ;
Scowls darted at him, jests pursued his feet,
Ere yet his lips were opened and his words
Bore witness clear to the innocence within.
And when his life was sounded, 'till its depths
All truth and love revealed, all inner stores
Of sanctity beyond the shows of art ;
When nought in him accorded with base jests
Or merry blasphemies, but sorrowing eyes
Told how he shrunk from foulness, how the guilt
Of that base people touched him in the soul ;
Then hate began to stir, each word, each deed
Took a distorted shape : his innocence
Was rustic weakness called ; his truth concealed
A deeper art ; his painted purity
Would soon rub off amid the ways of men :
He was no nobler metal than the rest.
But as the days wore on, and showed to all

A matchless, artless grace of life, and stamped
All that he spoke with seal of honest deeds,
Then wonder, laughter, proud contempt gave way
To fell malignity and lowering hate.
You would have thought they dreaded him, so swift
Were they to escape his presence ; and his speech,
If hear they must, kindled their souls to flame.
Thus was he most alone in crowded ways,
By frowning eyes and angry threats pursued.
Blest was the respite, if in bushy wilds,
Or on the beach by starlight, with no sound
Of cursing or wild uproar in his ear,
Sweet influence he might gather from the world
And God its sovereign, resting in the thought
That something good was great, and that wild sea
Of restless wrong would lay its waves at length,
And Earth a peace behold fairer than dreams.
“ A day, a day ; will quickly be to-morrow ”—
So cried he on the solitary shore—
“ And the long rows of days and years to come
Will shrink it into nothing. Pain is pain

No longer when it takes its flight ; it lies
Upon the surface of a soul that's pure
And strikes no mortal root deep down within ;
But sorrows borne and duties humbly rendered
Will bring around a day that knows no grief."

So to his work from sight of friends unseen
Faithful and bold returning, Eros preached
Of God, from morning prime till weary eve ;
Where'er a throng could gather, through the roads
Or at the market booths, or on the steps
Of festal hall, or where the altar smoked
For gods obscene. To high he spake and low ;
To those that mocked and those that darkly frowned,
And those that wrote him crazed ; but if, perchance,
Some soul he could discover not advanced
Through all the grades of shame, but borne along
Passive upon the swelling tide of sin,
There hovered he the longest with his arts
Of love, his snares of truth, readiest to save.
But few or none gave heed ; nor could the work
Of patient months, summed up, or profit past

Report, or carry hope to coming time.
'Twas faith alone and duty propped his life,
Else it had fallen a ruin, and his name
Had stood among the crowd of faithless ones
By men forgot or scorned, and fallen from God.
But years brought boldness with them, and a weight
Of sorrow for the tragedy of souls
Given o'er to evil, and, with stronger trust,
A longing for the sacrament of blood.
So grew he mighty, now no more a jest,
No more a marvel, but a dread portent
And harbinger of woe, God's doomster, who
These men of sin condemned and read their fate.
Loud grew his oracles, where mingled wrath
And love confirmed each other,—wrath the voice
Of injured righteousness, love close behind,
Waiting to save when fear had cleared the path.
Oft too, by love inspired, his high discourse
Did blossom into song; and beauteous forms
Of thought stood near him, servants of the soul,
Imaginings so high, that whoso heard,

Though they as arrows pierced, was forced to hear.
Therefore he should not live—this daring youth
Who claimed a place so high, flinging rebukes
Even at the princes, turning sport to gall,
Hater of merriment, foe of mankind,
Reviler of the gods. Had not their sires
Lived as they would, grown gray and slept in peace,
Whose ways this stranger blackened? Such as he,
Hating their fellows would divide the State.
Need was of vengeance quick. The man must die.

And so he died foreboding all, but fixed
Like some lone sentinel between the rocks,
Who fills the narrow path, forcing the throng
Of armed foes to halt 'till he be slain,
But saving all behind. So Eros died.
Against his life they forged a foul report;
And advocates for pay, who plead whate'er,
Or true or false was needed, generous now
From malice as the servants of the state,
Threw slanders on his life, conducting down
The bolts of public hate upon his head.

But justice moves too tardy, if its voice
Must wait the speediest verdict, if his word
Of bold rebuke shall sound through judgment halls,
And awe to righteousness the listening throng.
Therefore, as through the streets he took his way
Upon the morn of trial, men of blood
Block up the passage; fearful shouts arise;
A blow is struck behind that fells him down.
They drag him in the dust; those eyes of love
That brow serene, those uncomplaining lips,
Those locks of youthful beauty, that had drawn
Compassion from a tiger, all defiled,
Begrimed and bloodstained, lose similitude
To humankind; he lies a naked corse
Upon a dunghill for the dogs to tear.
So Eros died. The sun as brightly shone,
The voice of revelry rose up as loud,
Earth's flowers still decked her breast though Eros
So Eros died; but as the earth looked on [died.
And saw that her own soul outlived the shock,
A hope began to dawn that he might be

Immortal also, and might live again,
As the fair flowers that die upon her breast.
That hope spake true; for by the hidden laws,
Born in the sky, that flashed upon his birth,
No human steel could part his soul from sense,
Such was its love of fellowship and life.
And still another law from highest heaven
Descended, where it saw the throne of God,
That if he died for men, torn by their rage,
Each separate part an Eros then should be,
Both multiform and one. That was a law
That would have silenced half of nature's groans,
To all unknown but God; for until then
Evil had seemed immortal, and when slain
Straight rose with brisker life, and multiplied
By every blow that felled it down; but good
Had ever languished, of its own dim light
Not sure, and burning faintlier as it burned.
But that it had the power to spread itself,
That, by a fatal mystery of heaven,
With sin's own weapon, Pain, the life of sin

It could destroy, then break the spear in two,—
Oh! this had not been dreamed; philosophy
Had died without the thought in blank despair.

But though earth's eye was blind, angelic powers
Guarding their bastions 'gainst the hosts of sin
Beheld with tears of joy how Eros died,
For half they guessed the sequel. From themselves
They knew love's living strength, and knew that God
No seeds of goodness, ripening in the sun,
Would spend for nought. And so from trust in him
They augured true of what no oracles
Divine had uttered. Breathless they behold
How, after loss of sense and swift decay,
Made glorious by suffering, Eros rose,
One soul in several bodies, conquering thus
The chains that tie us in a narrow house
Of heavy earth, and wandering far abroad,
Where'er the honied flowers of promise grew
For him to light upon. But first he appeared
Afar from that vile nation, where he died.
They were beyond experiment, given o'er

To mutual slaughter and the slow decay
Of cureless lust, until their fields
Had grown a desert undefiled by men.
Thus did the soil, for some more vigorous race
Slumber in Sabbath stillness, till it lost,
The memory of that age; but fables lived
Of giants, who the power of heaven defied,
And perished by lanced thunder-bolts and fire.
They too, who afterward those forests felled
And plowed those fields, or heard or seemed to hear
Groans in the air and shrieks; wood demons too
Of loathly forms, malicious, in the dales
Did haunt, half-man half-goat with lion's mane,
Lustful and cannibal: the simple folk
Of better times that came did deem the souls
Of wild transgressors in such shapes were caged,
And feared by night in mountain dells to roam,
Save with armed guards of doughty champions.
Such was this people's fate; but Eros, far
From where he fell, like some winged butterfly,
Wandered to barbarous coasts, but wheresoe'er

He wandered, brands of sin on earth and man
Aroused his pity; Earth was scarred and old;
Her plants were noxious weeds; base reptiles crawled
With hissing fire, and eyes of flame abroad.
Marish and fen, lengthening their ancient bounds,
Devoured the meadow land, and seeds of plague
Flew forth on every wind. The running floods
Had strown the vales with stones, or stagnant slept
Where once rank herbage nodded. O'er the hills
Wild woods impervious stretched, and beasts of prey,
Now lords of earth, in fearless freedom stalked,
By night and day alike thoughtless of man.
The tribes of men, by pathless wastes divorced,
Dwelling in islands banished from the world,
Grew wild; and every stranger was a foe.
Oh! what a world for Eros still to love,
Still to brood piteous o'er; when, winged again,
'T was free for him to haunt the upper sky,
And rest within th' immortal palace there.
But rest from toil he sought not; his reward
Lay in that marvelous gift of heavenly powers

That his own soul could use the ministry
Of bodies manifold. Thus multiplied
He climbed the mountain ridge and pierced the vale,
Armed with love-glancing eyes and lips of peace.
He taught them arts; he melted into one
Their jarring brotherhoods, until their league
Stretched over hills and into plains afar.
'T was then that music's heavenly voice again
After long silence woke, and waked the sense
Of slumbering beauty by the close accord
Of strings and human voice, best instrument.
'T was he that taught them all the harmonies
Of starry movements, and the wondrous laws
Whereby the strife of elements, at last,
In glad consent, like some loud-sounding hymn,
Closes and calms the soul for voiceless praise,
He built the fabric of their polities
On human brotherhood, and the holy league
Of kindred tribes enforced by rites Divine.
Nor least, the soul, from harmony with heaven
Severed, he guided back, to see God's face,

Long hidden while foul demons held the throne.
The reign of hatred—so he taught—had borne,
Fruit deadly long enough, 'till in man's breast
The sense of beauty, and of holiness
Divine, was nigh extinguished. But that time
Was ended, lest the race of man should die.
Now God revealed himself anew, and shone
On men in love and pity, swift to hear
Their penitent groans, and slow to give them up
To justice and themselves. So Eros preached.
If heard, a chosen few in solemn league
Gathering to be a fountain of new life
For better times; but if repelled with scorn
And slain by hands malicious, in new forms
Returning, till a troop, in spirit one,
Of bodies wherein Eros dwelt enthroned,
Long-suffering and indestructible,
Wore evil out, and forced it to confess
That goodness cannot die. But evil fled,
Presaging speedy doom, to caves and wilds;
While swarming hamlets, rich with waving fields

Gathered around the throne of Godlike law
In wide-spread peace. Earth felt the change at heart,
And gave a thousand signs of sympathy
With conquering Eros : now she ceased to heave
And quake in dread convulsions ; creeping pest
Forbore to attack a race reformed ; the gales
From sea or mountain on their wings bore health ;
Nor mildew crept o'er fields redeemed from sin.
Forthwith, 'tis sung, another race of flowers
New born, or sprung of slumbering seeds that lay
Locked in the soil through all those years of crime,
Vermeil'd the mead, and o'er the rivulet's flow
Nodded their stainless bells : the lurid weed
And tangled briar with swart and poisonous fruit
Yielded to earth's first daughters, to the pure
And bright-eyed plants that bloomed in Saturn's reign,
The beasts, that once prowled dreadless, near the haunt,
Of men, whilst mutual hatred ruled the world,
Fled to the thick, whence still by fear pursued
They harbour nigh the swamp, or in the cave
Of mountain forest shelter, conscious still

That man is sovereign, when they hear his tread
Among the rocks, or when the woodman's axe
Below sends tidings of him through the hills.

Thus earth grew young again, and man was blest,
Nor ceased he through long ages to exalt
Celestial Eros, from whose frequent deaths
Had risen a better life. But cycles came
When sinister conjunctions in the heavens,
And baleful comets, did an end foretell
Of bliss for earth too weighty. Then the form
Eat out the spirit, symbols buried truth,
Rites heathenish invaded sacred fanes,
All things relapsed, treading the smoother path
Crooked and downward, 'till the hand of Love
Grew weary, and the heavenly powers recalled
The wanderer from the skies who died for man.
All this th' oblivious world forgot, and dreamed
Of Eros nought; but some faint streaks were spread,
Like sunbeams piercing clouds, through eastern lands.
The poets caught the glimpses, in their hymns
Uranian Venus lauding and her son,

The good Cupido, not that wanton child,
But heavenly Eros clothed in earthly form.
To him was Psyche married, from the dross
Of vulgar loves divorced, a perfect birth
Shaped with all nature's care, in whom there dwelt
Some faint remembrance of the things on high.
And this his spouse, Psyche the beautiful,
Was dearer to him than Olympus' top;
Whence self-exiled he trod the lower plains
For Psyche's company, her nightly Lord,
Unseen celestial one: the happier she,
If, trusting in his love and to his will
Answering, she had driven blind desire away,
Nor fed her eyes on manna for the soul.
But wrong was wrong, nor could be wiped away:
So wrath celestial doomed her to conflict
With toils where Hercules himself had fallen.
She wandered lonely, but not quite alone;
For on the edge of danger, when the cup
Of fear was brimming, then her husband God,
Alighting from the skies in altered form,

His righteous wrath forgotten, bore her toils,
Wedded again amid her heaviest woes.
Till when heaven's just decree had reached its end,
And she by trials sharp had paid her debt
Due to the majesty of law divine,
The path was free for her, and barred no more—
Not to the glitterand house, where all was cold
Till night restored th' unseen one to her arms,
But—to his proper dwelling place, where light
Garlands his brow, and she fast by his side
Eyeing his form divine, fears no divorce
Nor trial longer, though she feed her sight
Upon his face forever; for her home
Is here and heavenly Eros with her dwells.

NOTE.—In Apuleius it is not Cupido who assists Psyche in the toils imposed by Venus—although Venus is represented as suspecting him of it—but objects in nature which were friendly to him. That author also makes the vulgar Venus and Cupido the actors in the beautiful allegory.



THE POET'S ISLAND, A VISION.*

A gentle wind was blowing off the shore ;
The little boat lay floating near the land.
The boatman, as he raised and trimmed his oar,
Cried come away, the parting hour's at hand.
I looked toward my native soil once more
And pressed one tearful kiss upon the strand,
A moment, and we gained the ship that lay
Under the cliffs, riding within the bay.

The sun had set, and evening's brightest star
Gleamed o'er the ripples, e'er we reached the sail.
The lofty side we climb, and soon afar
We leave the land, sped by the western gale ;
Till by the rocking and the angry jar
Of sailors' voices tired, my spirits fail :
'T was hard, I felt, to break the chain of home,
Nor knew I where my lot was cast to roam.

* This piece, long ago begun and laid aside, was ended after 1871 on another plan, and as the reader will perceive, is but a fragment.

The night was fairest daughter of the year ;
A breeze so silent and so steady blew,
That sound of flapping rope or sail to hear
Was hard, and yet the ship like eagles flew.
The moon was mounting upward, now all clear
Of clouds and now her mantle round she drew.
So soft the peace that thoughts diseased might find
Their medicine there and vanish from the mind.

And oft a star, amid the clouds, awhile
Imprisoned seemed to float, then sink again,
Then risen as from its grave anew to smile,
And launch abroad upon the airy main.
And oft the clouds in many a mountainous pile
Gathered and darkly frowned, prophets of rain ;
Then all at once they broke and took their flight,
As loth to hide the face of that fair night.

Such forms on high or sent from every wave
 Held me long time, nor could I bid farewell ;
But nature fails at last, forced rest to crave
 Even from the sight of friends she loves so well.
My wearied body to the couch I gave,
 And o'er my senses soon light slumber fell.
Yet still I heard the vessel's steady glide
And heard the dash of waves upon the side.

Long so I slept : it seemed as if the way
 From home might half be measured o'er the deep,
Whilst yet entranced in dreamy sleep I lay,
 And still the ship seemed on its course to keep.
Now broke the eastern light, now rose the day,
 Before I scattered that soft cloud of sleep.
I woke and—wonder strange—the crew was gone,
And I was left to take my path alone.

Awestruck awhile I stood, but as I saw

How steady was the breeze, the sails how straight,
“What ship is this,” I cried, “that knows no awe
Of helm or pilot, and with instinct fraught,
Steering its path unreined, or to the law
Obedient of some spirit’s whispering thought.
What yestern seemed its crew—no earthly forms—
Guided its path for no insidious storms.”

“Perhaps a mortal’s word can reach its ear,
Or airy shapes stand nigh its wish to obey.
Then turn thee on thy course, good ship, and here
Show that thou markest what thy voyagers say.”
It turned, but dropped its sails, an argument clear
That it was loth to leave th’ appointed way :
By this I knew that Heaven the voyage bade,
And gathering heart with cheerful voice I said :

“Since Heaven, good ship hath willed it should be so,
Turn thee again whe'er thy course was bent ;
God and good angels call fair winds to blow,
No wave the deck o'erflow nor sail be rent.
Whether the shores feel the sun's hottest glow
To which thou runnest, or with snow be sprent,
I know that he who sends me is on high
Nor would I choose, self-willed, some other sky.”

Three days and starry nights, as on some lake
Embosomed in the silent hills or hid
In summer's leafy woods, the way we take,—
The gallant ship and I—where she was bid.
Ne'er did her wing its earlier course forsake ;
Steady and noiseless through the waves she glid.
I slept in calm repose and waked to find
The sails still swol'n by prospering breaths of wind.

The fourth day was not spent ere something dim,
Or mist or land or else a mocking cloud,
Showed like a speck upon the horizon's rim
Just on our course. And now a fluttering crowd
Of little land birds near the vessel skim,
And tired alight upon each bellying shroud.
The signs grew thick ; nor had the evening star
Arisen, before some isle appeared afar.

E'er it had dawned, upon the deck I stood,
And by the moon's weak beams, which now began
To pale before the day, appeared a wood
And mountain rising darkly in the van.
Soon rippling waves spoke of a shoaler flood,
And soon a coast my straining eye could scan,
Which bent on either hand, and clasped around
A harbor calm with sheltering woodlands crowned.

Onward I pass, until the faithful prow,
Like some small wherry's, grazes on the sand,
Then, knowing that the task is ended now,
It reins its course, that I may safely land.
Straight I obeyed: and ere day's golden brow
Had looked abroad above the horizon's band,
My footsteps fall upon the even shore,
Glad that they touch their mother earth once more.

The beach was sprinkled o'er with wondrous hues
Of rarest gems and shells not elsewhere seen.
Jacinth and beryl here their light confuse
With prase's golden flash, and emerald's green;
And hollow balls lie thick with crystal blues
Of amethyst lined, 'mid conchs of silvery sheen.
On such a strand by lady's prowess fell
The nymph-born knight, who followed Florimel.

Long strayed I here with wonder for my guide,
Pleased, like a child, with jewels sparkling bright,
Until the morning fogs ascending, hide
The sun's new beams, and steal the hills from sight.
Then sharing in the common gloom, I cried,
"Sad augury this that day has turned to night :
A dreary land is here, to which is given
With hills and coasts unmatched a murky heaven.

Why have I wandered from those skies of gold
That cheer my country's plains and gem her floods,
And from those autumn sunsets that behold,
With rival colors shining, clouds and woods ;
Such is the mist, as travellers oft have told,
That over Scotland's choicest landscapes broods,
Where peaks are climbed to look abroad in vain,
And lakes that laugh in verse are sad with rain."

Thus in my foolish haste I spake, nor knew
As yet the nature of that holy isle;
That he who mysteries so high would view
With awe must venture near the solemn pile;
In darkness cross the threshold, with his shoe
Plucked from his foot, withouten word or smile.
Then all, whose day with prayerful awe begins,
To them the darkness yields, and morning shines.

Meanwhile the mist broods o'er the forest thick,
And thunders 'gin to bellow from the hills.
The lightnings smite the ground with flashes quick,
And roaring wind the beasts with terror fills.
It was not now the time my way to pick,
With dainty step crossing the swollen rills
Mid pouring rains: some shelter must be found,
Some grot or coppice next this holy ground.

I looked abroad, and at my left, not far
From where I stood, a hill, unseen before,
Rose o'er the cloud, its peak, bright as a star,
Crowned with white rock ; its slope a grassy floor
Through openings in the mist descried ; but where,
Touching the plain, its base approached me more,
Dark woods of oak and pine their circle drew
Around the mount, and shelving rocks gleamed
through.

In haste the woods I seek, but sought in vain
Shelter beneath the branching oaks to find,
When every leaf let fall its load of rain ;
Nor could I hide some giant trunk behind
From blasts that blew o'er mountain and o'er plain,
Nor crouch unwet beneath some thicket blind.
So for the rocks I steer whose shelving side
Showed like a harbor with a peaceful tide.

There what I sought I found ; nor needed long
 To search, nor far, for bordering all the wood,
Just where the light was neither dim nor strong,
 High overhanging rocks in order stood.
The floor was smooth, with no sharp edge or prong,
 Nor wind nor rain could reach that refuge good.
So slept I soon, and when I woke, the sun
Told, through the clouds, that half his course was run.

There stayed I long : I knew not where to go,
 Nor did I wish to leave so strange a spot ;
And much I mused and much I sought to know
 Why thither I was led, but guessed it not.
But fear disturbed me not of lurking foe,
 And hunger's stern demands were all forgot ;
For some deep charm, guarding the place around,
Bade me explore that hidden holy ground.

Amid the ledges many a cavern wild
Its dusky chamber for retirement made,
Across whose mouths the fallen rocks were piled,
In shapes grotesque; and hemlock's* thoughtful
Its silence threw around, for fancy's child [shade
A harbor blest; where, as he laid his head,
Religious dreams fell softly to the earth,
Shedding a trembling light, like moonbeams, forth.

There whoso was not made of sterner mould,
Nor wrapped around with mantle thick of sense,
With lighter footstep treading entered bold,
Nor could a vulgar business call him thence.
There the fair shapes of things that none behold
Who love not beauty with a love intense
So bright appeared and manifest, that all
Seemed gathered like the guests in festal hall.

*The *abies canadensis*, or hemlock spruce is often so called.

Whether I stayed there day or week or year,
I know not, for all sense of time had fled ;
But so it was, one morn there caught my ear
A sound of steps treading on branches dead,
Far off at first ; but as they hastened near
An evident human shape my eyelids fed.
No woodman wild he seemed and armed with bow,
But poet crowned, in mantle falling low.

Something now told my thought that this was he
Who, led by Roman bard, the land of pain
Explored, and next the mountain in the sea
Where souls were purged from every earthly stain ;
Last climbed the heights, where God's felicity
Angels do taste and Jesu's ransomed train.
Oh! blessed one, to whom such visions bright
Were shown beyond the reach of mortal sight.

Then bowing low, I cried, "O Europe's boast
And much revered beyond th' Atlantic's wave,
Once stood I in th' old town on th' eastern coast
Of Italy, beside thine honored grave.
And doth my eye behold thee? If thou know'st
Tell me the secrets of this wondrous cave,
Why hither was I brought? Why art thou here
A spirit from some high celestial sphere?

A smile arose upon his serious brow
As there my rapid questionings met his ear.
"Son, I will tell thee all," he said,—“for thou
Wast brought on that enchanted ship to hear
The secrets of this sacred isle—e'en now
The pilgrim poets come from far and near.
The day draws nigh, when Phœbus holds his court
And we his ministers must make report.

With them a few like thee who ne'er have sought
To bind a crown of laurel on their head
Are summoned hither : therefore wast thou brought
To this enchanted island, to be fed
With sight and speech of poets high who taught
Wisdom in song, and thy young fancy led
To choose before the painted forms of art
High thought, in native verse, fresh from the heart."

Master, I said, fain would I follow thee
Where'er thou leadest o'er this wondrous shore ;
For thou wast aye a reverend name to me ;
And thy divine *Commedia*, just before
My charmed voyage o'er the unknown sea,
Guided my feet the world unseen to explore.
But gladlier now I see thee face to face,
And hear thy speech, and thy wise footsteps trace.

So thither, in the dewy morning tide,
He led me from the enchanted caves away
Until, when noon was past, my eye descried
An ample plain, washed by the ocean spray
Where the sun rests at even; on either side
Begirt with hills; but towards the opening day
A wooded mountain climbed the heavens on high
Above the loftiest clouds that sail the sky.

And where that king of mountains rests his feet,
—His lower hills and ridges,—on the plain,
Innumerable rivulets, descending, meet
In one broad stream; which, ere it finds the main,
Prolongs its path in many a winding sweet
As were it loth its destined end to attain.
There trees of every leaf, its path along,
A shelter yield for birds of every song.

Nearer we drew, and lo! o'er all the ground,
From mountain slopes and from the wave-washed
Full many a choir of men with laurel crowned [shore,
Were pressing toward some dome, unseen before
Now glistening through the forest; some we found
In grave procession joined like priests of yore;
Others with voices loud to stringed lyre
Sang hymns of joy breathing celestial fire.

“Here we have reached the goal;” thus spake my
“For this the mystic ledges did prepare: [guide;
My work now calls me hence to leave thy side,
And thou henceforth my further aid canst spare
Until the feast is o'er: for eventide,
Hunger and rest and sleep thou need'st not care.
One calm and gladsome day thine hours will seem,
Or, whether night or day, a peaceful dream.

But mark thou this, it is a mystery
Which here the chosen poets celebrate,
Not to be laid before the common eye
Nor given to favored witness to relate :
And whoso cometh in base treachery
To publish what he sees, it is his fate
That on his soul oblivion deep must fall,
Nor can he aught he hears or sees recall.

But they, who, hither brought by one who knows
The inner secrets of this wondrous place,
Shall hide them in their hearts, nor aught disclose
Save outward forms of things,—to them a grace
And sweetness shall be given and blest repose ;
And song shall drive away all passions base.
What in those caves and here they learn shall live
Within their souls and lasting solace give.”

He left me now, and to the temple bound
Seemed to my eye the first to reach the hall,
And enter; while the throng that swarmed around,
Following his steps, seemed into ranks to fall.
Admonished by imperious trumpets' sound
Glad they obey the far-resounding call,
And soon they climb the steps; but I below
Waited, observant of the goodly show.

And some there were, who seemed a merry throng,
Obedient to no law, no company
Of poets wise, but singing each his song
Of love and wine and wanton revelry;
They sung discordant notes, but in the song
Was that which could have charmed both earth and
If they had played the sacred poet's part, [sky,
Nor shamed by lays obscene the heavenly art.

These sought a place within the goodly band
Whom earth and time in constant reverence hold ;
But some grave priest of song, with lifted hand
And sternest voice repelled their claim too bold ;
“Ye who with lays obscene defile the land
Or drunkard’s songs indite, or, lured by gold,
Flatter the vice of courts, or basely sneer
At simple faith, ye find no entrance here.”

So they were driven from those halls in shame,
And I was left alone, when one drew nigh,
—A servant of the place,—who spoke my name
And bade me follow through the portals high.
“Sit, stand or walk,” he said, “’tis all the same,
Stay through the feast or seek the outer sky,
Only obey the Master and conceal
Within thy bosom what these halls reveal.”

I entered, and throughout the feast I stayed,
I saw those worthies honored by all time ;
I heard their high discourse ; each reverent shade
(If shades they were), I watched ; their hymns sublime
To music wedded all my cares allayed.

Nought from their lips that fell, in prose or rhyme,
My ear escaped ; fixed to the place I stand,
All else forgotten save that laureate band.

But I must put a lock upon my tongue,
And hide in silence what lip may not tell.
So, when the last of those glad odes was sung,
And the last sounds from each resounding shell
Trembled, and those high courts with plaudits rung,
And those guild-brothers spake the last farewell,
They chose their paths toward hilltop and toward sea,
And none remained of all the company.

Amazed I stood awhile, and then I said

“Why am I here, and what were those who sought
This hall of song, and vanished, as if made
By fancy, or from spirit-dwellings brought?
And what was he—a human form or shape,
Who found me and my ignorant footsteps taught?
And all these wonders—are they what they seem,
Or naught save airy clouds and empty dream?”

While thus I spake, the Master at my side

Apparent flesh and blood, with smiling eye
Stood manifest, and “I am here” he cried,

“To guide thee from the land of mystery
Back to the uncertain barriers that divide

This isle from lands where human dwellings lie.”
So led he, and I followed, filled with awe.
Dazed by the marvels that I heard and saw.

Oft looked I back upon that golden dome,
Oft turned to greet that mountain and that sea;
Then on my journey reached my former home,
Those rocks and caves that waked my soul to see
The glories of the earth, and bade me roam
Through all the realm of thought with spirit free
Then toward the strand within the peaceful bay
He led me where the enchanted vessel lay.

And all along, while we pursued our road,
His high discourse did purge my listening ear.
The minstrel's craft he extolled, and sternly chode
Those that will sing whate'er men wish to hear.
Poets, said he "are priests of highest God;
His sacred seers, who by no faithless fear,
Nor love of praise, nor sneer, nor lash of scorn
From truth's most holy law can e'er be torn."

Then spake he of the argument of song,—
That it should come unbidden to the heart,
And bear the mind on willing wing along
Drawing from springs beyond the reach of art.
Next careful toil must lay foundations strong,
And patient thought must act the judge's part.
And, though its knife impartial taste employ,
Smoothly the work must run and full of joy.

“Master,” said I, “there are who gravely teach
That poets' words are nought and thought is all :
There are, again, who hold that polished speech,
Gilding mean thought, for loudest praise should call.
Others maintain that these have failed to reach
The mark, and from the path of truth do fall.
The thought, they say, and word from birth are one ;
Nor poet's thought nor word can walk alone.”

“The word,” said he, “and thought, of equal birth
Born, and in equal nuptials joined, must be
Of heavenly strain alike, or from the earth :

Thought doth not wait on words a soul unfree,
But shapes a body like itself in worth ;

High thought in dress of glorious majesty
Unconscious clothes itself, and vulgar thought
Puts on a texture mean itself hath wrought.”

“They are not poets who with words begin,
Nor they who naked thought first bring to light,
Then hide its baseness by the glittering sin
Of studied words that thought conceal from sight.
There is no style that poet’s art can spin,
Unless his soul be swayed by visions bright.
Taste, like a light-winged genius from the sky,
Will choose our words for us, we know not why.”

7

In such discourse we reached th' enchanted caves,
And rested there a while in silence sweet :
Then end our journey where the sparkling waves
The jewel-sprinkled shore with gladness greet.
The ship is there, her prow the water laves
Her stern upon the strand finds safe retreat :
The hour has come to bid farewell, it seems,
To my kind guide and to this home of dreams.

“Farewell,” said he, “and may this dreamy land
Dwell in thy thought with joys that will not fade.”
A reverent kiss I printed on his hand,
Then vanished he from sight. The southern gale
Slowly our bark was pushing from the strand ;
My hour had come her magic side to scale ;
The sails are swollen, the airy shapes are here,
Ready as erst, my homeward course to steer.

Forthwith asleep I fell, and all the way

A cloud of poets seemed my voyage to attend,—
The old world's bards with those of yesterday,

Grave, beauteous forms but joyous, such as send
Pure peace into the soul, and cares allay

And heavenly hues to all that charms us lend.
No strangers did they seem, I talked with all,
And every honored name at once could call.

As in those caves, where erst the heavens and earth

Offered their beauties to my inward eye,
Rousing my fancy to a second birth

By all the glories of the outer sky;
So here th' elect ones poured their treasures forth
Of thoughts which, once received, can never die.
Here learned I first that mortal thought can weave
Words that through thousand centuries can live.

But all things have an end ; those guests so sweet
 (How long their stay I knew not, nor how short)
At last, my voyage o'er, on airy feet
 Rejoined the herd of dreams, who make report
Of human cares and loves and fancies fleet,
 And fill our hours of rest with mocking sport.
Yet all was not a false or idle dream,
Nor of mean birth, nor on a vulgar theme.

For, in the evening hours, while night drew nigh,
 The steps of two beloved ones I had led
Where Dante climbed the mountain, steep and high,
 Ascending from the prisons of the dead.
Then through night's hours the visions from the sky
 Poured clouds of softest light around my head.
At morn the bark, so seemed it, on the strand,
Struck, and I woke to see my native land.

And so all is not real that is true ;

Nor is all true that takes an outward form.

The poet's words to truth give colors new,

The wise man's words may juggling tricks perform.

Truth near us lies ; yet, hidden from our view,

Sends flashes brief from o'er the cloud and storm.

Blest are those thoughts that vision-like unfold

What science ne'er hath taught nor sense hath told.

But ah ! our noblest visions cannot stay :

And more,—our loved ones leave their homes to die ;

For those two dear ones, speeding on their way

O'er seas and peopled plains and mountains high,

Entered the mystic East, and lands that lay,

Old in renown, beneath the Syrian sky.

Then, where their dearest Lord was crucified,

Smit by disease a common death they died.

They found a brighter world, if aught be true
That seers divined, or rapt apostles told,
Or saintly ones have hoped, or Christ foreknew :
They saw those gates of pearl and streets of gold.
And Him who said "Lo, I make all things new,"
Purged from earth's blindness, did their eyes behold.
O may I see their spotless forms again
In that true land, where visions are not vain.





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