



Class PR 5550

Book .E71b

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

411
1493







POETICAL WORKS
OF
ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.



T.Y. CROWELL & Co
NEW YORK

LIBRARY
JUL 27 1881
25846W

PR5550
.E912

Copyright,

By THOMAS Y. CROWELL & Co.

1891.



PHOTOGRAVURES BY A. W. ELSON & Co., BOSTON.

T. Y. CROWELL & Co., BOOKBINDERS, BOSTON.

A.M. 23 a.m. 29.

CONTENTS.



	PAGE		PAGE
Achilles over the Trench	591	Dedication, A	190
Adeline	23	Dedicatory Poem to the Princess Alice	572
Alexander. (Early Sonnets.)	28	Defence of Lucknow, The	573
All Things will Die	4	De Profundis	587
Amphion.	118	Deserted House, The	18
Arrival, The. (The Day Dream.)	116	Dirge, A	19
"Ask me no more." (Princess.)	431	Dora	84
As through the land. (Princess.)	390	Dream of Fair Women, A	61
Audley Court	87	Dying Swan, The	19
Aylmer's Field	140		
		Eagle, The	130
Ballad of Oriana, The	20	Early Sonnets	28
Ballads and other Poems	554	Edward Gray	121
Battle of Brunanburh	589	Edwin Morris	91
Beggar Maid, The	130	Eleanore	25
Blackbird, The	66	England and America in 1782	71
Boadicea	190	English Idyls	73
Break, break, break	135	Enoch Arden	463
Bridesmaid, The. (Early Sonnets.)	30	Epic, The	73
Brook, The	136	Epilogue. (Day Dream.)	118
Buonaparte	29	Experiments	190
Captain, The	126	Farewell, A	129
Caress'd or Chidden. (Early Sonnets.)	29	Fatima	42
Character, A	16	First Quarrel, The	552
Charge of the Light Brigade	170	Flower, The.	184
Choric Song. (The Lotos Eaters.)	59		
Circumstance	21	Gardener's Daughter, The	79
City Child, The	185	Gareth and Lynette	208
Claribel	3	Geraint and Enid	235
Columbus	579	Godiva	113
Come down, O maid. (Princess.)	435	Golden Year, The	103
Coming of Arthur, The	198	Go not happy day. (Maud.)	450
Come into the garden. (Maud.)	454	Goose, The	72
Come not when I am dead	130	Grandmother, The	173
		Guinevere	356
Daisy, The	181		
Day Dream, The	114	Hendesyllabics	192
Death of the Old Year, The	67	Hexameters and Pentameters	192

	PAGE		PAGE
Higher Pantheism, The	188	Mermaid, The	22
Holy Grail, The	313	Merman, The	22
Home they brought her warrior. (Prin- cess.)	425	Miller's Daughter, The	39
I come from haunts. (The Brook.)	136	Milton. (Alcaics.)	192
Idyls of the King	197	Mine be the strength. (Early Sonnets.)	28
If I were loved. (Early Sonnets.)	30	Minnie and Winnie.	186
In Memoriam	480	Montenegro	588
In the Children's Hospital	570	Morte d'Arthur	74
In the Garden at Swainston	184	Moral. (Day Dream.)	117
In the Valley of Caunteretz	183	Move eastward, happy earth	130
Isabel	7	My life is full of weary days	27
Islet, The	185	Northern Cobbler, The	557
It is the Miller's Daughter	41	Northern Farmer. (Old Style.)	177
Juvenilia.	3	Northern Farmer. (New Style.)	179
Kraken, The	7	Nothing will die	3
Lady Clare	124	Now sleeps the crimson petal. (Prin- cess.)	435
Lady Clara Vere de Vere	53	Ode on the death of the Duke of Well- ington	165
Lady of Shalott, The	31	Ode sung at Opening of International Exhibition	171
Lancelot and Elaine	287	Ode to memory. Addressed to —	14
Last Tournament, The	2	Enone	43
Late, late, so late. (Guinevere.)	359	Of old sat Freedom on the heights	68
L'Envoi. (Day Dream.)	117	On a mourner	68
Leonine Elegiacs	4	O swallow, swallow, flying. (Princess.)	406
Letters, The	130	Our enemies have fallen. (Princess.)	425
Lilian	7	Palace of Art, The	48
Literary Squabbles	186	Passing of Arthur, The	369
Locksley Hall	107	Pelleas and Ettarre.	330
Lord of Burleigh, The	127	Princess, The	381
Lotos Eaters, The	58	Poet, The	16
Love and Death	20	Poet's Mind, The	17
Love and Duty	101	Poet's Song, The	135
Love that hath us. (Miller's Daughter.)	42	Poland. (Early Sonnets.)	29
Lover's Tale, The	525	Prefatory Sonnet to the "Nineteenth Century"	588
Love thou thy Land	70	Prologue. (Day Dream.)	114
Lucretius	160	Recollections of the Arabian Nights	12
Madeline.	11	Requiescat	184
Margaret.	24	Revenge, The	559
Mariana	8	Revival, The. (Day Dream.)	116
Mariana in the South	9	Rizpah	544
Maud	440	Rosalind	25
May Queen, The	54	Round Table, The	208
Merlin and Vivien	268		

CONTENTS.

v

	PAGE		PAGE
Sailor Boy, The	184	To —, with the following Poem	48
Sea Dreams.	155	To Dante	592
Sea Fairies, The	18	To E. L., on his Travels in Greece	135
Sir Galahad.	120	To J. M. K.	28
Sir John Franklin	592	To J. S.	67
Sir John Oldcastle	575	To Princess Frederica	592
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere	129	To the Queen	1
Sisters, The.	47	To the Queen	378
Sisters, The.	562	To the Rev. F. D. Maurice	182
Sleeping Beauty, The. (Day Dream.)	115	To the Rev. W. H. Brookfield	588
Sleeping Palace, The. (Day Dream.)	115	To Victor Hugo	589
SONG :		Two Voices, The	33
A spirit haunts	15	Ulysses	104
The Owl	11	Victim, The	186
To the same	12	Village Wife, The	567
The winds as at their hour	7	Vision of Sin, The	131
Spiteful Letter, The	186	Voice and the Peak, The	188
St. Agnes' Eve	120	Voyage, The	128
St. Simeon Stylites	94	Voyage of Maeldune, The	583
Supposed Confessions of a Sensitive Mind.	4	Wages	188
Sweet and Low. (Princess.)	398	Walking to the Mail	89
Specimen of Translation Homer's Iliad	192	Wan sculptor, weepst thou. (Early Sonnets.)	30
Talking Oak, The	97	Welcome to Alexandra	172
Tears, idle tears. (Princess.)	405	Welcome to Marie Alexandrovna	172
The form, the form alone. (Early Son- nets.)	30	What does little birdie say?	160
The splendor falls. (Princess.)	404	Will	183
Third of February, The	169	Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue	122
Thy voice is heard. (Princess.)	414	Window, The	193
Tithonus	106	You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease	69
To —, after reading a Life and Letters	134		
To —, "As when with downcast eyes"	28		
To —, "Clearheaded friend"	10		

TO THE QUEEN.



*Revered, beloved — O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brains, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria, — since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;*

*And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there ;*

*Then — while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust*

*In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say,
"She wrought her people lasting good;*

*"Her court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen;*

*"And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*"By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compass'd by the inviolate sea."*

March, 1851.

JUVENILIA.



CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

I.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall:
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone:
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone;
At midnight the moon cometh
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be aweary of
flowing
Under my eye?
When will the wind be aweary of
blowing
Over the sky?

When will the clouds be aweary of
fleeting?
When will the heart be aweary of
beating?
And nature die?
Never, oh! never, nothing will die;
The stream flows,
The wind blows,
The cloud fleets,
The heart beats,
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;
All things will change
Thro' eternity.
'Tis the world's winter;
Autumn and summer
Are gone long ago;
Earth is dry to the centre,
But spring, a new comer,
A spring rich and strange,
Shall make the winds blow
Round and round,
Thro' and thro',
Here and there,
Till the air
And the ground
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made;
It will change, but it will not fade.
So let the wind range;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Thro' eternity.
Nothing was born;
Nothing will die;
All things will change.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its
 flowing
 Under my eye;
 Warmly and broadly the south winds
 are blowing
 Over the sky.

One after another the white clouds are
 fleeting;

Every heart this May morning in joy-
 ance is beating

Full merrily;

Yet all things must die.

The stream will cease to flow;

The wind will cease to blow;

The clouds will cease to fleet;

The heart will cease to beat;

For all things must die.

All things must die.

Spring will come never more.

Oh! vanity!

Death waits at the door.

See! our friends are all forsaking

The wine and the merrymaking.

We are call'd — we must go.

Laid low, very low,

In the dark we must lie.

The merry glees are still;

The voice of the bird

Shall no more be heard,

Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh! misery!

Hark! death is calling

While I speak to ye,

The jaw is falling,

The red cheek paling,

The strong limbs failing;

Ice with the warm blood mixing;

The eyeballs fixing.

Nine times goes the passing bell:

Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago.

And the old earth must die.

So let the warm winds range,

And the blue wave beat the shore;

For even and morn

Ye will never see

Thro' eternity.

All things were born.

Ye will come never more,

For all things must die.

LEONINE ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming
 the broad valley dimm'd in the
 gloaming;

Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only
 the far river shines.

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and
 bowers of rose-blowing bushes,
 Down by the poplar tall rivulets bab-
 ble and fall.

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly; the
 grasshopper carolleteth clearly;

Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly
 the owl halloos;

Winds creep; dewes fall chilly: in her
 first sleep earth breathes stilly:

Over the pools in the burn water-gnats
 murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth: the glim-
 mering water out-floweth:

Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope
 to the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayed between
 the two peaks; but the Naiad

Throbbing in mild unrest holds him
 beneath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth, that Hes-
 perus all things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind: bring
 me my love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning or even; she
 cometh not morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is
 my sweet Rosalind?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND.

O GOD! my God! have mercy now.

I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou

Didst die for me, for such as *me*,

Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,

And that my sin was as a thorn

Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,
Wounding Thy soul. — That even now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumbrous summer
noon

While I do pray to Thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow:
Is not my human pride brought low?
The boastings of my spirit still?
The joy I had in my freewill
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like
grown?

And what is left to me, but Thou
And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;
Christians with happy countenances —
And children all seem full of Thee!
And women smile with saint-like
glances
Like Thine own mother's when she
bow'd

Above Thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And Thou and peace to earth were
born,

Goodwill to me as well as all —
I one of them: my brothers they:
Brothers in Christ — a world of peace
And confidence, day after day;
And trust and hope till things should
cease,
And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!
To hold a common scorn of death!
And at a burial to hear
The creaking cords which wound and
eat

Into my human heart, whene'er
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not
fear,
With hopeful grief, were passing
sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee!
Who lets his rosy fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
They comfort him by night and day;
They light his little life always;

He hath no thought of coming woes;
He hath no care of life or death;
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
Because the Spirit of happiness
And perfect rest so inward is;
And loveth so his innocent heart,
Her temple and her place of birth,
Where she would ever wish to dwell,
Life of the fountain there, beneath
Its salient springs, and far apart,
Hating to wander out on earth,
Or breathe into the hollow air,
Whose chillness would make visible
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,
Which mixing with the infant's blood,
Fulfils him with beatitude.
Oh! sure it is a special care
Of God, to fortify from doubt,
To arm in proof, and guard about
With triple-mailed trust, and clear
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
As thine, my mother, when with brows
Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer —
For me unworthy! — and beheld
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew
The beauty and repose of faith,
And the clear spirit shining thro'.
Oh! wherefore do we grow awry
From roots which strike so deep? why
dare

Paths in the desert? Could not I
Bow myself down, where thou hast
knelt,

To the earth — until the ice would
melt

Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?
What Devil had the heart to scathe
Flowers thou hadst rear'd — to brush
the dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I
So little love for thee? But why
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why
pray

To one who heeds not, who can save
But will not? Great in faith, and
strong

Against the grief of circumstance
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
Unto the death, not sunk! I know
At matins and at evensong,
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,
In deep and daily prayers would'st
strive

To reconcile me with thy God.
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
At heart, thou wouldest murmur
still —

“Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.”
Would'st tell me I must brook the rod
And chastisement of human pride;
That pride, the sin of devils, stood
Betwixt me and the light of God!
That hitherto I had defied
And had rejected God — that grace
Would drop from his o'er-brimming
love,

As manna on my wilderness,
If I would pray — that God would
move

And strike the hard, hard rock, and
thence,
Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
Would issue tears of penitence
Which would keep green hope's life.
Alas!

I think that pride hath now no place
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet
Anchor thy frailty there, where man
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea
At midnight, when the crisp slope
waves

After a tempest, rib and fret
The broad-imbased beach, why he
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?
Wherefore his ridges are not curls
And ripples of an inland mere?
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can
Draw down into his vexed pools
All that blue heaven which hues and
paves

The other? I am too forlorn,
Too shaken: my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt and
fear.

“Yet,” said I in my morn of youth,
The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,
When I went forth in quest of truth,
“It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length,
Truth may stand forth unmoved or
change,

An image with profulgent brows,
And perfect limbs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the Ox
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
The horned vaileys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills
In summer heats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,
And answers to his mother's calls
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,
Of which he wots not, run short pains
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from
whence

He knows not, on his light there falls
A shadow; and his native slope,
Where he was wont to leap and climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
And something in the darkness draws
His forehead earthward, and he dies.
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
Living, but that he shall live on?
Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that
seem,

And things that be, and analyze
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the one,
If one there be?” Ay me! I fear
All may not doubt, but everywhere
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove
Shadow me over, and my sins

Be unremember'd, and Thy love
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet
Somewhat before the heavy clod
Weighs on me, and the busy fret
Of that sharp-headed worm begins
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!
O spirit and heart made desolate!
O damned vacillating state!

THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper
deep;

Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded
sleep

The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sun-
lights flee

About his shadowy sides: above him
swell

Huge sponges of millennial growth
and height;

And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and
secret cell

Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumber-
ing green.

There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battening upon huge seaworms in his
sleep,

Until the latter fire shall heat the
deep;

Then once by man and angels to be
seen,

In roaring he shall rise and on the
surface die.

SONG.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,
Leaning upon the ridged sea,
Breathed low around the rolling earth
With mellow preludes, "We are
free."

The streams through many a liliated row
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
Between the blossoms, "We are
free."

LILIAN.

I.

AIRY, fairy Lihan,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Clasps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,
She, looking thro' and thro' me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks:
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gathered wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughters dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks;
Then away she flies.

III.

Prithee weep, May Lilian!
Gayety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian:
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth:
Prithee weep, May Lilian.

IV.

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL.

I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright,
but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of
chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended
by
Pure vestal thoughts in the trans-
lucent fane

Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dispread,
 Madonna-wise on either side her head ;
 Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
 The summer calm of golden charity,
 Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
 Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
 The stately flower of female fortitude,
 Of perfect wifhood and pure lowlihead.

11.

The intuitive decision of a bright
 And thorough-edged intellect to part
 Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;
 The laws of marriage character'd in gold
 Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;
 A love still burning upward, giving light
 To read those laws ; an accent very low
 In blandishment, but a most silver flow
 Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
 Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
 Winning its way with extreme gentleness
 Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride ;
 A courage to endure and to obey ;
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
 Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
 The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

111.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
 Till in its onward current it absorbs
 With swifter movement and in purer light
 The vexed eddies of its wayward brother :
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,

Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite
 With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other —
 Shadow forth thee : — the world hath not another
 (Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,
 And thou of God in thy great charity)
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA.

“Mariana in the moated grange.”
Measure for Measure.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :
 The rusted nails fell from the knots
 That held the pear to the gable-wall.
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
 Upon the lonely moated grange.
 She only said, “My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,” she said ;
 She said, “I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead !”
 Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,
 Either at morn or eventide.
 After the flitting of the bats,
 When thickest dark did trance the sky,
 She drew her casement-curtain by,
 And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
 She only said, “The night is dreary,
 He cometh not,” she said ;
 She said, “I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead !”
 Upon the middle of the night,
 Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :
 The cock sung out an hour ere light :
 From the dark fen the oxen's low

Came to her : without hope of change,
 In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
 Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed
 morn

About the lonely moated grange.
 She only said, "The day is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
 A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
 And o'er it many, round and small,
 The cluster'd marsh-mosses crept.

Hard by a poplar shook alway,
 All silver-green with gnarled bark :
 For leagues no other tree did mark
 The level waste, the rounding gray.
 She only said, "My life is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
 And the shrill winds were up and
 away,

In the white curtain, to and fro,
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.
 But when the moon was very low,
 And wild winds bound within their
 cell,

The shadow of the poplar fell
 Upon her bed, across her brow.
 She only said, "The night is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd ;
 The blue fly sung in the pane ; the
 mouse
 Behind the mouldering wainscot
 shriek'd,

Or from the crevice peer'd about.
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
 Old voices called her from without.
 She only said, "My life is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!"

The sparrows chirrup on the roof,
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound
 Which to the wooing wind aloof
 The poplar made, did all confound
 Her sense ; but most she loathed the
 hour

When the thick-moated sunbeam lay
 Athwart the chambers, and the day
 Was sloping toward his western bower.
 Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
 He will not come," she said ;
 She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
 Oh, God, that I were dead!"

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,
 The house thro' all the level shines,
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
 And silent in its dusty vines :
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
 An empty river-bed before,
 And shallows on a distant shore,
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.

But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
 And "Ave Mary," night and
 morn,
 And "Ah," she sang, "to be all
 alone,
 To live forgotten, and love for-
 lorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,
 From brow and bosom slowly down
 Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
 Her streaming curls of deepest
 brown

To left and right, and made appear
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
 Her melancholy eyes divine,
 The home of woe without a tear.

And "Ave Mary," was her moan,
 "Madonna, sad is night and
 morn,"
 And "Ah," she sang, "to be all
 alone,
 To live forgotten, and love for-
 lorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,

Low on her knees herself she cast,
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
 Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
 To help me of my weary load."
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd
 The clear perfection of her face.

"Is this the form," she made her
 moan,

"That won his praises night
 and morn?"

And "Ah," she said, "but I wake
 alone,

I sleep forgotten, I wake for-
 lorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would
 bleat,

Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
 But day increased from heat to heat,
 On stony drought and steaming salt;
 Till now at noon she slept again,

And seem'd knee-deep in mountain
 grass,

And heard her native breezes pass,
 And runlets babbling down the glen.

She breathed in sleep a lower
 moan,

And murmuring, as at night and
 morn,

She thought, "My spirit is here
 alone,

Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:

She felt he was and was not there.

She woke: the babble of the stream
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare

Shrank one sick willow sear and small.
 The river-bed was dusty-white;

And all the furnace of the light

Struck up against the blinding wall.

She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
 More inward than at night or
 morn,

"Sweet Mother, let me not here
 alone

Live forgotten, and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,
 For "Love," they said, "must needs
 be true,

To what is loveliest upon earth."
 An image seem'd to pass the door,
 To look at her with slight, and say
 "But now thy beauty flows away,
 So be alone forevermore."

"O cruel heart," she changed her
 tone,

"And cruel love, whose end is
 scorn,

Is this the end to be left alone,
 To live forgotten, and die for-
 lorn?"

But sometimes in the falling day

An image seem'd to pass the door,
 To look into her eyes and say,

"But thou shalt be alone no more."

And flaming downward over all

From heat to heat the day decreased,
 And slowly rounded to the east

The one black shadow from the wall.

"The day to night," she made her
 moan,

"The day to night, the night to
 morn,

And day and night I am left alone
 To live forgotten, and love for-
 lorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,

There came a sound as of the sea;
 Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
 And lean'd upon the balcony.

There all in spaces rosy-bright

Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
 And deepening thro' the silent
 spheres

Heaven over Heaven rose the night.

And weeping then she made her moan,
 "The night comes on that knows
 not morn,

When I shall cease to be all alone,
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

TO —.

I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful
 scorn,
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts
 atwain

The knots that tangle human
creeds,
The wounding cords that bind and
strain
The heart until it bleeds,
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as thine :
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;
Falsehood shall bare her plaited
brow :
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not
now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr - flames, nor trenchant
swords
Can do away that ancient lie ;
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning
words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost
need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,
And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning
speed ;
Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong
night,
And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE.

I.

Thou are not steep'd in golden lan-
guors,
No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thro' light and shadow thou dost
range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites and darling angers,
And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles : but who may know
Whether smile or frown be fleeter ?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know ?
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are
thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother ;
Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momently shot into each other.
All the mystery is thine ;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

III.

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,
About thee breaks and dances :
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown :
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest ;
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile ;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angerly ;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG : THE OWL.

I.

WHEN cats run home and light is come
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,

And the whirring sail goes round,
 And the whirring sail goes round ;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

II.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
 And rarely smells the new-mown
 hay,

And the cock hath sung beneath the
 thatch

Twice or thrice his roundelay,
 Twice or thrice his roundelay ;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

I.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
 Which upon the dark afloat,
 So took echo with delight,
 So took echo with delight,
 That her voice untuneful grown,
 Wears all day a fainter tone.

II.

I would mock thy chant anew ;
 But I cannot mimic it ;
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
 With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-
 o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn
 blew free

In the silken sail of infancy,
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,
 The forward-flowing tide of time ;
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
 High-walled gardens green and old ;
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,

For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and
 clove

The citron-shadows in the blue :
 By garden porches on the brim,
 The costly doors flung open wide,
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
 And broider'd sofas on each side :

In sooth it was a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans
 guard

The outlet, did I turn away
 The boat-head down a broad canal
 From the main river sluiced, where all
 The sloping of the moon-lit sward
 Was damask-work, and deep inlay
 Of braided blooms unmown, which
 crept

Adown to where the water slept.
 A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
 Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
 My shallop thro' the star-strown calm.
 Until another night in night
 I enter'd, from the clearer light,
 Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
 Imprisoning sweets, which, as they
 clomb

Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the
 dome

Of hollow boughs. — A goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal
 Is rounded to as clear a lake.
 From the green rivage many a fall
 Of diamond rillets musical,
 Thro' little crystal arches low
 Down from the central fountain's flow
 Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake
 The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-color'd shells
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odor in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung;
Not he: but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepres'd,
Apart from place, withholding time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were
ranged

Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:
A sudden splendor from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-
green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame.
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-checker'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing
round

The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed visions unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphath.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous
time

To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which

Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of
gold.

Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him — in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO —.

I.

THOU who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire!
Strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight
On the white day; but robed in soft-
en'd light
Of orient state.
Whilom thou camest with the morn-
ing mist,
Even as a maid, whose stately brow
The dew-imppearled winds of dawn
have kiss'd.
When, she, as thou,
Stays on her floating locks the lovely
freight
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest
shoots
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of
fruits,
Which in wintertide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilom thou camest with the morn-
ing mist,
And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my
open breast
(Those peerless flowers which in the
rudest wind

Never grow sear,
When rooted in the garden of the
mind,

Because they are the earliest of the
year).

Nor was the night thy shroud.
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken
rest

Thou leddest by the hand thine infant
Hope.

The eddying of her garments caught
from thee

The light of thy great presence; and
the cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,
Tho' deep not fathomless,
Was cloven with the million stars
which tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless in-
fancy.

Small thought was there of life's dis-
tress;

For sure she deem'd no mist of earth
could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and
beautiful:

Sure she was nigher to heaven's
spheres,

Listening the lordly music flowing
from

The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad
eyes!

Thou comest not with showers of
flaunting vines

Unto mine inner eye,
Divinest Memory!

Thou wert not nursed by the water-
fall

Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light upon the wall

Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:
Come from the woods that belt the
gray hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door,

And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed
sand,

Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,
The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-
land,

O! hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong
bleat

Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wat-
tled folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,

When the first matin-song hath
waken'd loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,

What time the amber morn

Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung
cloud.

v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present

When first she is wed;

And like a bride of old

In triumph led,

With music and sweet showers

Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.

Well hast thou done, great artist
Memory,

In setting round thy first experiment

With royal frame-work of wrought
gold;

Needs must thou dearly love thy first
essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery

Place it, where sweetest sunlight
falls

Upon the storied walls;

For the discovery

And newness of thine art so pleased
thee,

That all which thou hast drawn of
fairest

Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-
like,

Ever retiring thou dost gaze

On the prime labor of thine early days:

No matter what the sketch might be;
Whether the high field on the bush-
less Pike,

Or even a sand-built ridge

Of heaped hills that mound the sea,

Overblown with murmurs harsh,

Or even a lowly cottage whence we see

Stretch'd wide and wild the waste
enormous marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,

Like emblems of infinity,

The trenched waters run from sky to
sky;

Or a garden bower'd close

With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,

Long alleys falling down to twilight

grotts,

Or opening upon level plots

Of crowned lilies, standing near

Purple-spiked lavender:

Whither in after life retired

From brawling storms,

From weary wind,

With youthful fancy fancy re-inspired,

We may hold converse with all
forms

Of the many-sided mind,

And those whom passion hath not
blinded,

Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,

Were how much better than to own

A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG.

I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing
bowers:

To himself he talks;

For at eventide, listening earnestly,

At his work you may hear him sob and
sigh

In the walks;

Earthward he boweth the heavy
stalks

Of the mouldering flowers :
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so
 chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
 As a sick man's room when he taketh
 repose
 An hour before death ;
 My very heart faints and my whole
 soul grieves
 At the moist rich smell of the rotting
 leaves,
 And the breath
 Of the fading edges of box
 beneath,
 And the year's last rose.
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave, i' the earth so
 chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily

A CHARACTER.

With a half-glance upon the sky
 At night he said, "The wanderings
 Of this most intricate Universe
 Teach me the nothingness of things."
 Yet could not all creation pierce
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty ; that the dull
 Saw no divinity in grass,
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;
 Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his
 hair,
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods
 More purely, when they wish to charm
 Pallas and Juno sitting by :
 And with a sweeping of the arm,
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
 He canvass'd human mysteries,
 And trod on silk, as if the winds
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,
 And stood aloof from other minds
 In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
 Himself unto himself he sold :
 Upon himself himself did feed :
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
 And other than his form of creed,
 With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above ;
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the
 scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro'
 good and ill,
 He saw thro' his own soul,
 The marvel of the everlasting will
 An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he
 threaded
 The secretest walks of fame :
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts
 were headed
 And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his sil-
 ver tongue,
 And of so fierce a flight,
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung
 Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which
 bore
 Them earthward till they lit ;
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field
 flower,
 The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing
 forth anew
 Where'er they fell, behold,

Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling

Thy winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,

Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world

Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise

Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes

Sunn'd by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame

Wisdom, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.

And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,

And as the lightning to the thunder

Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.

No sword

Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with his word

She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND.

I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit:

Vex not thou the poet's mind;
For thou canst not fathom it.
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear;
All the place is holy ground;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.

Holy water will I pour
Into every spicy flower
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.

The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.

In your eye there is death,
There is frost in your breath
Which would blight the plants.

Where you stand you cannot hear
From the groves within
The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants.

It would fall to the ground if you came in.

In the middle leaps a fountain
Like sheet lightning,
Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder;
All day and all night it is ever drawn
From the brain of the purple mountain

Which stands in the distance yonder:

It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
And the mountain draws it from
Heaven above,

And it sings a song of undying love ;
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and
 full,
 You never would hear it; your ears
 are so dull;
 So keep where you are: you are foul
 with sin;
 It would shrink to the earth if you
 came in.

THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and
 saw,
 Betwixt the green brink and the run-
 ning foam,
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms
 prest
 To little harps of gold; and while they
 mused
 Whispering to each other half in fear,
 Shrill music reach'd them on the mid-
 dle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither
 away? fly no more.

Whither away from the high green
 field, and the happy blossoming
 shore?

Day and night to the billow the foun-
 tain calls:

Down shower the gambolling water-
 falls

From wandering over the lea:
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells
 They freshen the silvery-crimson
 shells,

And thick with white bells the clover-
 hill swells

High over the full-toned sea:
 O hither, come hither and furl your
 sails,

Come hither to me and to me:
 Hither, come hither and frolic and
 play;

Here it is only the mew that wails;
 We will sing to you all the day:
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
 For here are the blissful downs and
 dales,
 And merrily, merrily carol the gales,

And the spangle dances in bight and
 bay,

And the rainbow forms and flies on
 the land

Over the islands free;

And the rainbow lives in the curve of
 the sand;

Hither, come hither and see;

And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning
 wave,

And sweet is the color of cove and
 cave,

And sweet shall your welcome be:

O hither, come hither, and be our
 lords,

For merry brides are we:

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak
 sweet words:

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 With pleasure and love and jubilee:

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 When the sharp clear twang of the
 golden chords

Runs up the ridged sea.

Who can light on as happy a shore
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er?

Whither away? listen and stay:
 mariner, mariner, fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away
 Side by side,
 Leaving door and windows wide:
 Careless tenants they!

II.

All within is dark as night:
 In the windows is no light;
 And no murmur at the door,
 So frequent on its hinge before.

III.

Close the door, the shutters close,
 Or thro' the windows we shall see
 The nakedness and vacancy
 Of the dark deserted house.

IV.

Come away: no more of mirth
 Is here or merry-making sound.

The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

v.

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious —
A great and distant city — have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have staid with us!

THE DYING SWAN.

I.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did
sigh;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marish green
and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and
yellow.

III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the
soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and
clear;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach
stole

Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and
harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is
roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the
evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clamber-
ing weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and
dank,
And the wavy swell of the souging
reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echo-
ing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that
throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

I.

Now is done thy long day's work,
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave
Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;
Chanteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calunny?
Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;
The woodbine and cglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.
Let them rave.
Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.
Let them rave.
These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine;
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.
Let them rave.
Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII.

Wild words wander here and there:
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused:
But let them rave.
The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was
gathering light
Love paced the thymy plots of Para-
dise,
And all about him roll'd his lustrous
eyes;
When, turning round a cassia, full in
view,
Death, walking all alone beneath a
yew,

And talking to himself, first met his
sight:

"You must begone," said Death,
"these walks are mine."

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans
for flight;

Yet ere he parted said, "This hour is
thine:

Thou art the shadow of life, and as
the tree

Stands in the sun and shadows all
beneath,

So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of
death;

The shadow passeth when the tree
shall fall,

But I shall reign forever over all."

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd
with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds
blow,

Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,
Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,
Oriana:

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,

Oriana;

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,
Oriana,

Ere I rode into the fight,
Oriana,

While blissful tears blinded my sight
By star-shine and by moonlight,

Oriana,

I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
 Oriana:
 She watch'd my crest among them all,
 Oriana:
 She saw me fight, she heard me call,
 When forth there stept a foeman tall,
 Oriana,
 Atween me and the castle wall,
 Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
 Oriana:
 The false, false arrow went aside,
 Oriana:
 The damned arrow glanced aside,
 And pierced thy heart, my love, my
 bride,
 Oriana!
 Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
 Oriana!

Oh! narrow, narrow was the space,
 Oriana.
 Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
 Oriana.
 Oh! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
 The battle deepen'd in its place,
 Oriana;
 But I was down upon my face,
 Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I
 lay,
 Oriana!
 How could I rise and come away,
 Oriana?

How could I look upon the day?
 They should have stabb'd me where I
 lay,
 Oriana —
 They should have trod me into clay,
 Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
 Oriana!
 O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
 Oriana!
 Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
 And then the tears run down my cheek,
 Oriana:
 What wantest thou? whom dost thou
 seek,
 Oriana?

I cry aloud: none hear my cries,
 Oriana.
 Thou comest atween me and the skies,
 Oriana.
 I feel the tears of blood arise
 Up from my heart unto my eyes,
 Oriana.
 Within thy heart my arrow lies,
 Oriana.
 O cursed hand! O cursed blow!
 Oriana!
 O happy thou that liest low,
 Oriana!
 All night the silence seems to flow
 Beside me in my utter woe,
 Oriana.
 A weary, weary way I go,
 Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the
 sea,
 Oriana,
 I walk, I dare not think of thee,
 Oriana.
 Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
 I dare not die and come to thee,
 Oriana.
 I hear the roaring of the sea,
 Oriana.

 CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbor villages
 Playing mad pranks along the heathy-
 leas;
 Two strangers meeting at a festival;
 Two lovers whispering by an orchard
 wall;
 Two lives bound fast in one with
 golden ease;
 Two graves grass-green beside a gray
 church-tower,
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy blos-
 somed;
 Two children in one hamlet born and
 bred;
 So runs the round of life from hour
 to hour.

THE MERMAN.

I.

Who would be
A merman bold,
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne ?

II.

I would be a merman bold,
I would sit and sing the whole of the
day ;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice
of power ;
But at night I would roam abroad and
play
With the mermaids in and out of the
rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-
flower ;
And holding them back by their flow-
ing locks
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd
me
Laughingly, laughingly ;
And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight
and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;
But the wave would make music above
us afar —
Low thunder and light in the magic
night —
Neither moon nor star.
We would call aloud in the dreamy
dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily ;
They would pelt me with starry span-
gles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their hands
between,
All night, merrily, merrily :
But I would throw to them back in
mine

Turkis and agate and almondine :
Then leaping out upon them unseen
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly.
Oh ! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;
We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID.

I.

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne ?

II.

I would be a mermaid fair ;
I would sing to myself the whole of
the day ;
With a comb of pearl I would comb
my hair ;
And still as I comb'd I would sing and
say,
" Who is it loves me ? who loves not
me ? "
I would comb my hair till my ringlets
would fall
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of
gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall ;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central
deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look
in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love
of me.

And all the mermen under the sea
 Would feel their immortality
 Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III.

But at night I would wander away,
 away,
 I would fling on each side my low-
 flowing locks,
 And lightly vault from the throne and
 play
 With the mermen in and out of the
 rocks;
 We would run to and fro, and hide
 and seek,
 On the broad sea-wolds in the crim-
 son shells,
 Whose silvery spikes are nighest the
 sea.
 But if any came near I would call, and
 shriek,
 And adown the steep like a wave I
 would leap
 From the diamond-ledges that jut
 from the dells;
 For I would not be kiss'd by all who
 would list,
 Of the bold merry mermen under the
 sea;
 They would sue me, and woo me, and
 flatter me,
 In the purple twilights under the
 sea;
 But the king of them all would carry
 me,
 Woo me, and win me, and marry
 me,
 In the branching jaspers under the
 sea;
 Then all the dry pied things that be
 In the hueless mosses under the sea
 Would curl round my silver feet
 silently,
 All looking up for the love of me.
 And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
 All things that are forked, and horned,
 and soft
 Would lean out from the hollow sphere
 of the sea,
 All looking down for the love of
 me.

ADELINE.

I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,
 Faintly smiling Adeline,
 Scarce of earth nor all divine,
 Nor unhappy, nor at rest;
 But beyond expression fair
 With thy floating flaxen hair;
 Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
 Take the heart from out my
 breast.
 Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
 Like a lily which the sun
 Looks thro' in his sad decline,
 And a rose-bush leans upon,
 Thou that faintly smilest still,
 As a Naiad in a well,
 Looking at the set of day,
 Or a phantom two hours old
 Of a maiden past away,
 Ere the placid lips be cold?
 Wherefore those faint smiles of
 thine,
 Spiritual Adeline?

III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine?
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline?
 For sure thou art not all alone.
 Do beating hearts of salient
 springs
 Keep measure with thine own?
 Hast thou heard the butterflies
 What they say betwixt their
 wings?
 Or in stillest evenings
 With what voice the violet woos
 To his heart the silver dew?
 Or when little airs arise,
 How the merry bluebell rings
 To the mosses underneath?
 Hast thou look'd upon the breath
 Of the lilies at sunrise?
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
 Shadowy, dreamy Adeline?

IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
 Some spirit of a crimson rose
 In love with thee forgets to close
 His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
 All night long on darkness blind.
 What aileth thee? whom waitest thou
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
 And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

V.

Lovest thou the doleful wind
 When thou gazest at the skies?
 Doth the low-tongued Orient
 Wander from the side of the
 morn,
 Dripping with Sabæan spice
 On thy pillow, lowly bent
 With melodious airs lovelorn,
 Breathing Light against thy face,
 While his locks a-drooping twined
 Round thy neck in subtle ring
 Make a carcanet of rays,
 And ye talk together still,
 In the language wherewith Spring
 Letters cowslips on the hill?
 Hence that look and smile of thine,
 Spiritual Adeline.

MARGARET.

I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
 O rare pale Margaret,
 What lit your eyes with tearful power,
 Like moonlight on a falling shower?
 Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
 Of pensive thought and aspect
 pale,
 Your melancholy sweet and frail
 As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
 From the westward-winding flood,
 From the evening-lighted wood,
 From all things outward you have
 won
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
 Between the rainbow and the sun.
 The very smile before you speak,
 That dimples your transparent
 cheek,

Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
 The senses with a still delight
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,
 Like the tender amber round,
 Which the moon about her spread
 eth,
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II.

You love, remaining peacefully,
 To hear the murmur of the strife,
 But enter not the toil of life.
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.
 You are the evening star, always
 Remaining betwixt dark and
 bright:
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day
 Come to you, gleams of mellow
 light
 Float by you on the verge of
 night.

III.

What can it matter, Margaret,
 What songs below the waning
 stars
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
 Sang looking thro' his prison
 bars?
 Exquisite Margaret, who can
 tell
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,
 Just ere the falling axe did part
 The burning brain from the true
 heart,
 Even in her sight he loved so
 well?

IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made
 And gave you on your natal day.
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
 Keeps real sorrow far away.
 You move not in such solitudes,
 You are not less divine,
 But more human in your moods,
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker
 hue,
 And less aerially blue,

But ever-trembling thro' the dew
Of dainty-woful sympathies.

v.

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
Come down, come down, and hear me
speak :

Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :

The sun is just about to set,
The arching limes are tall and shady,
And faint, rainy lights are seen,
Moving in the leavy beech.

Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
Where all day long you sit
between

Joy and woe, and whisper each.
Or only look across the lawn,

Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes
dawn

Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

ROSALIND.

i.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
Whose free delight, from any height
of rapid flight,

Stoops at all game that wing the skies,
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon
whither,

Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up or down the streaming wind ?

ii.

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd
strains,

The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightning flash among the rains,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.

You care not for another's pains,

Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your
veins,

And flashes off a thousand ways,
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me thro' with pointed light;
But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

iii.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :
Too long you keep the upper skies ;
Too long you roam and wheel at will ;
But we must hood your random eyes,
That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
Some red heath-flower in the dew,
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
And clip your wings, and make you
love :

When we have lured you from above,
And that delight of frolic flight, by
day or night,
From North to South,
We'll bind you fast in silken cords
And kiss away the bitter words
From off your rosy mouth.

ELEÁNORE.

i.

Thy dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to
English air,
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward
brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighborhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer-
morn,

A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
 Thy bounteous forehead was not
 fann'd
 With breezes from our oaken
 glades,
 But thou wert nursed in some delicious
 land
 Of lavish lights, and floating
 shades:
 And flattering thy childish thought
 The oriental fairy brought,
 At the moment of thy birth,
 From old well-heads of haunted rills,
 And the hearts of purple hills,
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny
 shore,
 The choicest wealth of all the
 earth,
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,
 Thro' half-open lattices
 Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy gar-
 dens cull'd —
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding
 down,
 With the hum of swarming bees
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

III.

Who may minister to thee?
 Summer herself should minister
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and
 blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like
 flower
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,
 And the crag that fronts the Even,
 All along the shadowing shore,
 Crimsoned over an inland mere,
 Eleänore!

IV.

How many full-sail'd verse express,
 How many measured words adore
 The full-flowing harmony
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleänore?
 The luxuriant symmetry
 Of thy floating gracefulness,
 Eleänore?
 Every turn and glance of thine,
 Every lineament divine,
 Eleänore,
 And the steady sunset glow,
 That stays upon thee ' For in thee
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single;
 Like two streams of incense free
 From one censer in one shrine,
 Thought and motion mingle,
 Mingle ever. Motions flow
 To one another, even as tho'
 They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
 Who may express thee, Eleänore?

V.

I stand before thee, Eleänore;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
 Daily and hourly, more and more.
 I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes
 Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
 To stand apart, and to adore,
 Gazing on thee forevermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore!

VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity
 Gazing, I seem to see
 Thought folded over thought, smiling
 asleep,
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd
 quite,

I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
 But am as nothing in its light :
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,
 Should slowly round his orb, and
 slowly grow
 To a full face, there like a sun remain
 Fix'd — then as slowly fade again,
 And draw itself to what it was
 before ;
 So full, so deep, so slow,
 Thought seems to come and go
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
 Roof'd the world with doubt and
 fear,
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
 Grow golden all about the sky ;
 In thee all passion becomes passion-
 less,
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
 Losing his fire and active might
 In a silent meditation,
 Falling into a still delight,
 And luxury of contemplation :
 As waves that up a quiet cove
 Rolling slide, and lying still
 Shadow forth the banks at will :
 Or sometimes they swell and move,
 Pressing up against the land,
 With motions of the outer sea :
 And the self-same influence
 Controlleth all the soul and sense
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
 Droops both his wings, regarding
 thee,
 And so would languish evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses
 unconfined,
 While the amorous, odorous wind
 Breathes low between the sunset
 and the moon ;
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,
 On silken cushions half reclined ;

I watch thy grace ; and in its
 place
 My heart a charm'd slumber
 keeps,
 While I muse upon thy face ;
 And a languid fire creeps
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon
 From thy rose-red lips my name
 Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,
 With dinning sound my ears are
 rife,
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,
 I lose my color, I lose my breath,
 I drink the cup of a costly death,
 Brimm'd with delirious draughts of
 warmest life.
 I die with my delight, before
 I hear what I would hear from
 thee ;
 Yet tell my name again to me,
 I *would* be dying evermore,
 So dying ever, Eleänore.

I.

My life is full of weary days,
 But good things have not kept aloof,
 Nor wander'd into other ways :
 I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
 Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink
 Of that deep grave to which I go :
 Shake hands once more : I cannot sink
 So far — far down, but I shall know
 Thy voice, and answer from below.

II.

When in the darkness over me
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,
 Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful
 crape,
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood
 Grow green beneath the showery
 gray,
 And rugged barks begin to bud,

And thro' damp holts new-flush'd
with may,
Ring sudden scritchings of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,
And on my clay her darnel grow ;
Come only, when the days are still,
And at my headstone whisper low,
And tell me if the woodbines blow.

EARLY SONNETS.

I.

TO —.

As when with downcast eyes we muse
and brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in some confused
dream
To states of mystical similitude ;
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his
chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and
more,
So that we say, " All this hath been
before,
All this hath been, I know not when
or where."
So, friend, when first I look'd upon
your face,
Our thought gave answer each to each,
so true —
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—
'That tho' I knew not in what time or
place,
Methought that I had often met with
you,
And either lived in either's heart and
speech.

II.

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou
wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the
master's feast ;
Our dusted velvets have much need
of thee :
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old
saws,

Distill'd from some worm-canker'd
homily ;
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy
cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-
drone
Half God's good sabbath, while the
worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou
from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the
dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and
mark.

III.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full
and free,
Like some broad river rushing down
alone,
With the self-same impulse wherewith
he was thrown
From his loud fount upon the echoing
lea : —
Which with increasing might doth for-
ward flee
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape,
and isle,
And in the middle of the green salt sea
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many
a mile.
Mine be the power which ever to its
sway
Will win the wise at once, and by
degrees
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;
Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of
Florida
Floats far away into the Northern seas
The lavish growths of southern Mex-
ico.

IV.

ALEXANDER.

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right
arm debased
The throne of Persia, when her Satrap
bled
At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled
Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits,
disgraced

Forever — thee (thy pathway sand-
erased)
Gliding with equal crowns two ser-
pents led
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-
fed
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.
There in a silent shade of laurel brown
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine
Shelter'd his unapproach'd mysteries:
High things were spoken there, un-
handed down;
Only they saw thee from the secret
shrine
Returning with hot cheek and kindled
eyes.

v.

BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn
hearts of oak,
Madman! — to chain with chains, and
bind with bands
That island queen who sways the floods
and lands,
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight
woke,
When from her wooden walls, — lit by
sure hands, —
With thunders, and with lightnings,
and with smoke, —
Peal after peal, the British battle
broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic
sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when
Elsinore
Heard the war moan along the distant
sea,
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with
sudden fires
Flamed over: at Trafalgar yet once
more
We taught him: late he learned
humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon
school'd with briers.

vi.

POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden
down,

And trampled under by the last and
least
Of men? The heart of Poland hath
not ceased
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth
drown
The fields, and out of every smoulder-
ing town
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-
creased,
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the
East
Transgress his ample bound to some
new crown: —
Cries to Thee, "Lord, how long shall
these things be?
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region?" Us, O Just and
Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn
in three;
Us, who stand now, when we should
aid the right —
A matter to be wept with tears of
blood!

vii.

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender
hand,
And singing airy trifles this or that,
Light Hope at Beauty's call would
perch and stand,
And run thro' every change of sharp
and flat;
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy
band,
And chased away the still-recurring
gnat,
And woke her with a lay from fairy
land.
But now they live with Beauty less
and less,
For Hope is other Hope and wanders
far,
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious
creeds;
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
Poor Fancy sadder than a single
star,
That sets at twilight in a land of
reeds.

VIII.

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!
 A nobler yearning never broke her
 rest
 Than but to dance and sing, be gayly
 drest,
 And win all eyes with all accomplish-
 ment:
 Yet in the whirling dances as we went,
 My fancy made me for a moment blest
 To find my heart so near the beauteous
 breast
 That once had power to rob it of con-
 tent.
 A moment came the tenderness of
 tears,
 The phantom of a wish that once could
 move,
 A ghost of passion that no smiles re-
 store —
 For ah! the slight coquette, she can-
 not love,
 And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand
 years,
 She still would take the praise, and
 care no more.

IX.

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take
 the cast
 Of those dead lineaments that near
 thee lie?
 O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the
 past,
 In painting some dead friend from
 memory?
 Weep on: beyond his object Love can
 last:
 His object lives: more cause to weep
 have I:
 My tears, no tears of love, are flowing
 fast,
 No tears of love, but tears that Love
 can die.
 I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
 Nor care to sit beside her where she
 sits —
 Ah pity — hint it not in human tones,
 But breathe it into earth and close it
 up

With secret death forever, in the pits
 Which some green Christmas crams
 with weary bones.

X.

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,
 What is there in the great sphere of
 the earth,
 And range of evil between death and
 birth,
 That I should fear, — if I were loved
 by thee?
 All the inner, all the outer world of
 pain
 Clear Love would pierce and cleave,
 if thou wert mine,
 As I have heard that, somewhere in
 the main,
 Fresh-water springs come up through
 bitter brine.
 'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-
 hand with thee,
 To wait for death — mute — careless
 of all ills,
 Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge
 Of some new deluge from a thousand
 hills
 Flung leagues of roaring foam into
 the gorge
 Below us, as far on as eye could see.

XI.

THE BRIDESMAID.

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot
 was tied,
 Thine eyes so wept that they could
 hardly see;
 Thy sister smiled and said, "No tears
 for me!
 A happy bridesmaid makes a happy
 bride."
 And then, the couple standing side by
 side,
 Love lighted down between them full
 of glee,
 And over his left shoulder laugh'd at
 thee,
 "O happy bridesmaid, make a happy
 bride."
 And all at once a pleasant truth I
 learn'd,

Died the sound of royal cheer ;
 And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot :
 But Lancelot mused a little space ;
 He said, "She has a lovely face ;
 God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott."

THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
 "Thou art so full of misery,
 Were it not better not to be ?"

Then to the still small voice I said ;
 "Let me not cast in endless shade
 What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply ;
 "To-day I saw the dragon-fly
 Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil
 Of his old husk : from head to tail
 Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings : like gauze they
 grew ;
 Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
 A living flash of light he flew."

I said, "When first the world began,
 Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
 And in the sixth she moulded man.

"She gave him mind, the lordliest
 Proportion, and, above the rest,
 Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied ;
 "Self-blinded are you by your pride :
 Look up thro'night : the world is wide.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,
 That in a boundless universe
 Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and
 fears
 Could find no statelier than his peers
 In yonder hundred million spheres ?"

It spake, moreover, in my mind :
 "Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
 Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall :
 "No compound of this earthly ball
 Is like another, all in all."

To which he answer'd scoffingly ;
 "Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,
 Who'll weep for thy deficiency ?"

"Or will one beam be less intense,
 When thy peculiar difference
 Is cancell'd in the world of sense ?"

I would have said, "Thou canst not
 know,"
 But my full heart, that work'd below,
 Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :
 "Thou art so steep'd in misery,
 Surely 'twere better not to be.

"Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
 Nor any train of reason keep :
 Thou canst not think, but thou wilt
 weep."

I said, "The years with change ad-
 vance :
 If I make dark my countenance,
 I shut my life from happier chance.

"Some turn this sickness yet might
 take,
 Ev'n yet." But he : "What drug can
 make
 A wither'd palsy cease to shake ?"

I wept, "Tho' I should die, I know
 That all about the thorn will blow
 In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

"And men, thro' novel spheres of
 thought
 Still moving after truth long sought,
 Will learn new things when I am not."

"Yet," said the secret voice, "some
time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

"Not less swift souls that yearn for
light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and
night.

"Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that "all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

"Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power?"

"The highest-mounted mind," he said,
"Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

"Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

"Or make that morn, from his cold
crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and
town?

"Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

"Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

"'Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

"Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought re-
sign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, "When I am gone away,
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,
"To breathe and loathe, to live and
sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou — a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so
bound

To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

"The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

"Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
Hears little of the false or just."

"Hard task, to pluck resolve," I cried,
"From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

"Nay — rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

"When, wide in soul and bold of
tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

"I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

"Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life —

"Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and
love —

"As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb
about —

"To search through all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law :

"At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

"To pass when Life her light with-
draws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause —

"In some good cause, not in mine own
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown ;

"Whose eyes are dim with glorious
tears,
When soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

"Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is rolled in smoke."

"Yea!" said the voice, "thy dream
was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

"If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour ?

"Then comes the check, the change,
the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

"Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
Link'd month to month with such a
chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

"Thou hadst not between death and
birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labor little-worth.

"That men with knowledge merely
play'd,
I told thee — hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade ;

"Much less this dreamer, deaf and
blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to
find,
That bears relation to the mind.

"For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and
soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

"Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

"Cry, faint not, climb: the summits
slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to
cope.

"Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

"I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

"If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou
dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

"And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

"Than angels. Cease to wail and
brawl!
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I,
"Wilt thou make every thing a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

"I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

"I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

"Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream ;

"But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head —

"Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

"He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised
with stones :

"But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

The sullen answer slid betwixt :
"Not that the grounds of hope were
fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd."

I said, "I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

"And that, in seeking to undo,
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new :

"Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

"For I go, weak from suffering here :
Naked I go, and void of cheer :
What is it that I may not fear ?"

"Consider well," the voice replied,
"His face, that two hours since hath
died ;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

"Will he obey when one commands ?
Or answer should one press his hands ?
He answers not, nor understands.

"His palms are folded on his breast :
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

"His lips are very mild and meek :
Tho' one should smite him on the
cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

"His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race —

"His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honor, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

"He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

"High up the vapors fold and swim :
About him broods the twilight dim :
The place he knew forgetteth him."

"If all be dark, vague voice," I said,
"These things are wrapt in doubt and
dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

"The sap dries up : the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

"I found him when my years were few ;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

"From grave to grave the shadow
crept :
In her still place the morning wept :
'Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

"The simple senses crown'd his head :
'Omega! thou art Lord,' they said,
'We find no motion in the dead.'

"Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by
these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

"Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense ?

"He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly :
His heart forebodes a mystery :
He names the name Eternity.

"That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

"He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro' thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end.

"The end and the beginning vex
His reason : many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter-
checks.

"He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something
good,
He may not do the thing he would.

"Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and with-
drawn.

"Ah! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt.

"But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

"The doubt would rest, I dare not
solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve."

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I
fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

"Where wert thou when thy father
play'd
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

"A merry boy they call'd him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

"Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man :

"Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days :

"A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth !"

"These words," I said, "are like the
rest ;
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast :

"But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend —
That to begin implies to end ;

"Yet how should I for certain hold
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould ?

"I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

"As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro' from state to state.

"As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

"So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and
touch.

"But if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

"Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of
night;

"Or if thro' lower lives I came —
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame —

"I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

"And men, whose reason long was
blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory:

"For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

"Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

"Of something felt, like something
here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laugh'd. "I talk,"
said he,
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast missed thy
mark,
Who sought'st to wreck thy mortal
ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

"Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human
breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are
scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want."

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
"Behold, it is the Sabbath morn."

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :
I spoke, but answer came there none :
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, "Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighborhood,
A notice faintly understood,
"I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
"I may not speak of what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seem'd the whisper at my side :
"What is it thou knowest, sweet
voice?" I cried.
"A hidden hope," the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the
shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers :
You scarce could see the grass for
flowers.

I wonder'd while I paced along :
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seem'd no room for sense of
wrong ;

And all so variously wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, "Rejoice! Re-
joice!"

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes ?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead dryly curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world ?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver
cup—

I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest — gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and
whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth ?
I least should breathe a thought of
pain.

Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine—
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy
 Late-left an orphan of the squire,
 Where this old mansion mounted high
 Looks down upon the village spire :
 For even here, where I and you
 Have lived and loved alone so long,
 Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
 By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
 In firry woodlands making moan ;
 But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
 I had no motion of my own.
 For scarce my life with fancy play'd
 Before I dream'd that pleasant
 dream —
 Still hither thither idly sway'd
 Like those long mosses in the
 stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
 The milldam rushing down with
 noise,
 And see the minnows everywhere
 In crystal eddies glance and poise,
 The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
 Below the range of stepping-stones,
 Or those three chestnuts near, that
 hung
 In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
 When after roving in the woods
 ('Twas April then), I came and sat
 Below the chestnuts, when their
 buds
 Were glistening to the breezy blue ;
 And on the slope, an absent fool,
 I cast me down, nor thought of you,
 But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
 An echo from a measured strain,
 Beat time to nothing in my head
 From some odd corner of the brain.
 It haunted me, the morning long,
 With weary sameness in the rhymes,
 The phantom of a silent song,
 That went and came a thousand
 times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
 I watch'd the little circles die ;
 They past into the level flood,
 And there a vision caught my eye
 The reflex of a beauteous form,
 A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
 As when a sunbeam wavers warm
 Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
 That morning, on the casement-edge
 A long green box of mignonette,
 And you were leaning from the
 ledge :
 And when I raised my eyes, above
 They met with two so full and
 bright —
 Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,
 That these have never lost their
 light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
 That I should die an early death :
 For love possess'd the atmosphere,
 And fill'd the breast with purer
 breath.
 My mother thought, What ails the
 boy ?
 For I was alter'd, and began
 To move about the house with joy,
 And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
 Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
 The sleepy pool above the dam,
 The pool beneath it never still,
 The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
 The dark round of the dripping
 wheel,
 The very air about the door
 Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
 When April nights began to blow,
 And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
 I saw the village lights below ;
 I knew your taper far away,
 And full at heart of trembling hope,
 From off the wold I came, and lay
 Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;
And "by that lamp," I thought,
"she sits!"

The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
"O that I were beside her now!
O will she answer if I call?
O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin:
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.

At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white
with may,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your
cheek

Flush'd like the coming of the day;
And so it was — half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little
one!

Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire:
She wish'd me happy, but she thought
I might have look'd a little higher;
And I was young — too young to wed:
"Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here," she said:
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not
please.

I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fall'n in
tears,
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not
see;

She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to
heart.

Ah, well — but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers — that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper
by.

It is the miller's daughter
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles in her ear:
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells —
True love interprets — right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early
rage
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in
one,

Do make a garland for the heart :
 So sing that other song I made,
 Half-anger'd with my happy lot,
 The day, when in the chestnut shade
 I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that bath us in the net
 Can he pass, and we forget?
 Many suns arise and set.
 Many a chance the years beget.
 Love the gift is Love the debt.
 Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.
 Love is made a vague regret.
 Eyes with idle tears are wet.
 Idle habit links us yet.
 What is love? for we forget:
 Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True
 wife,

Round my true heart thine arms in-
 twine

My other dearer life in life,
 Look thro' my very soul with thine!
 Untouch'd with any shade of years,
 May those kind eyes forever dwell!
 They have not shed a many tears,
 Dear eyes, since first I knew them
 well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their
 part

Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
 The still affection of the heart
 Became an outward breathing type,
 That into stillness past again,
 And left a want unknown before;
 Although the loss has brought us pain,
 That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
 The woven arms, seem but to be
 Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
 The comfort, I have found in thee:
 But that God bless thee, dear—who
 wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind—
 With blessings beyond hope or
 thought,
 With blessings which no words can
 find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
 To yon old mill across the wolds;

For look, the sunset, south and north,
 Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
 And fires your narrow casement glass,
 Touching the sullen pool below:
 On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
 Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

O LOVE, Love, Love! O withering
 might!

O sun, that from thy noonday height
 Shudderest when I strain my sight,
 Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
 Lo, falling from my constant mind,
 Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and
 blind,

I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
 Below the city's eastern towers:
 I thirsted for the brooks, the showers:
 I roll'd among the tender flowers:
 I crush'd them on my breast, my
 mouth;
 I look'd athwart the burning drouth
 Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his
 name,
 From my swift blood that went and
 came

A thousand little shafts of flame
 Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
 O Love, O fire! once he drew
 With one long kiss my whole soul
 thro'
 My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
 He cometh quickly: from below
 Sweet gales, as from deep gardens,
 blow

Before him, striking on my brow.
 In my dry brain my spirit soon,
 Down-deepening from swoon to
 swoon,
 Faints like a dazzled morning moon

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
 And from beyond the noon a fire

Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
 The skies stoop down in their desire ;
 And, isled in sudden seas of light,
 My heart, pierced thro' with fierce
 delight,
 Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
 All naked in a sultry sky,
 Droops blinded with his shining eye :
 I will possess him or will die.
 I will grow round him in his place,
 Grow, live, die looking on his face,
 Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

ÆNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
 The swimming vapor slopes athwart
 the glen,
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from
 pine to pine,
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either
 hand
 The lawns and meadow-ledges mid-
 way down
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below
 their roars
 The long brook falling thro' the
 clov'n ravine
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
 Stands up and takes the morning: but
 in front
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
 Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the
 hills.
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round
 her neck
 Floated her hair or seem'd to float in
 rest.
 She, leaning on a fragment twined
 with vine,
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-
 shade
 Sloped downward to her seat from the
 upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
 Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 For now the noonday quiet holds the
 hill:
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass :
 The lizard, with his shadow on the
 stone,
 Rests like a shadow, and the winds
 are dead.
 The purple flower droops: the golder
 bee
 Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
 My eyes are full of tears, my heart of
 love,
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes
 are dim,
 And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
 Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills,
 O Caves
 That house the cold crown'd snake! O
 mountain brooks,
 I am the daughter of a River God,
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build
 up all
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder
 walls
 Rose slowly to a music slowly
 breathed,
 A cloud that gather'd shape: for it
 may be
 That, while I speak of it, a little while
 My heart may wander from its deeper
 woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd
 Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 I waited underneath the dawning hills,
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-
 dark,
 And dewy-dark aloft the mountain
 pine:
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,
 white-hooved,
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Far-off the torrent call'd me from the
 cleft:
 Far up the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With
 down-dropt eyes
 I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
 Fronting the dawn he moved; a leap-
 ard skin
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his
 sunny hair
 Cluster'd about his temples like a
 God's:
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-
 bow brightens
 When the wind blows the foam, and
 all my heart
 Went forth to embrace him coming
 ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-
 white palm
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian
 gold,
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I
 look'd
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of
 speech
 Came down upon my heart.
 "My own CEnone,
 Beautiful-brow'd CEnone, my own soul,
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind
 ingrav'n
 "For the most fair," would seem to
 award it thine,
 As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
 Of movement, and the charm of mar-
 ried brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
 And added 'This was cast upon the
 board,
 When all the full-faced presence of
 the Gods
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus; where-
 upon
 Rose feud, with question unto whom
 'twere due:

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-
 eve,
 Delivering, that to me, by common
 voice
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
 Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within
 the cave
 Behind you whispering tuft of oldest
 pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld,
 unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of
 Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnight: one silvery
 cloud
 Had lost his way between the piney
 sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower
 they came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-
 swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like
 fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
 Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
 And overhead the wandering ivy and
 vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild
 festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled
 boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower thro'
 and thro'.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud,
 and lean'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant
 dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to
 whom
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that
 grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the
 Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris
 made

Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestion'd overflowing revenue
 Wherewith to embellish state, 'from
 many a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed
 with corn,
 Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.
 Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax
 and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven
 large,
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing
 citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest
 towers.'

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake
 of power,
 'Which in all action is the end of all;
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-
 bred
 And throned of wisdom — from all
 neighbor crowns
 Alliance and Allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such
 boon from me,
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to
 thee king-born,
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-
 born,
 Should come most welcome, seeing
 men in power
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss
 In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly
 fruit
 Out at arm's-length, so much the
 thought of power
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where
 she stood
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared
 limbs
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed
 spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
 The while, above, her full and earnest
 eye

Over her snow-cold breast and angry
 cheek
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made
 reply.

" ' Self-reverence, self-knowledge,
 self-control,
 These three alone lead life to sover-
 eign power.
 Yet not for power (power of herself
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live
 by law,
 Acting the law we live by without fear;
 And, because right is right, to follow
 right
 Were wisdom in the scorn of conse-
 quence.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Again she said: 'I woo thee not with
 gifts.

Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I
 am,
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
 If gazing on divinity disrobed
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of
 fair,
 Unbiass'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee
 sure
 That I shall love thee well and cleave
 to thee,
 So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a
 God's,

To push thee forward thro' a life of
 shocks,
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance
 grow
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown
 will,
 Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
 Commeasure perfect freedom.'

"Here she ceas'd,
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O
 Paris,
 Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me
 not,
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is
 me!

“O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Italian Aphroditè beautiful,
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in
 Paphian wells,
 With rosy slender fingers backward
 drew
 From her warm brows and bosom her
 deep hair
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid
 throat
 And shoulder: from the violets her
 light foot
 Shone rosy-white, and o’er her rounded
 form
 Between the shadows of the vine-
 bunches
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she
 moved.

“Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 She with a subtle smile in her mild
 eyes,
 The herald of her triumph, drawing
 nigh
 Half-whisper’d in his ear, ‘I promise
 thee
 The fairest and most loving wife in
 Greece,’
 She spoke and laugh’d: I shut my
 sight for fear:
 But when I look’d, Paris had raised
 his arm,
 And I beheld great Herè’s angry eyes,
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
 And I was left alone within the bower;
 And from that time to this I am alone,
 And I shall be alone until I die.

“Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
 Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not
 fair?
 My love hath told me so a thousand
 times.
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
 When I past by, a wild and wanton
 pard,
 Eyed like the evening star, with play-
 ful tail
 Crouch’d fawning in the weed. Most
 loving is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that
 my arms
 Were wound about thee, and my hot
 lips prest
 Close, close to thine in that quick-
 falling dew
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn
 rains
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 They came, they cut away my tallest
 pines,
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the
 craggy ledge
 High over the blue gorge, and all
 between
 The snowy peak and snow-white cata-
 ract
 Foster’d the callow eaglet — from be-
 neath
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the
 dark morn
 The panther’s roar came muffled, while
 I sat
 Low in the valley. Never, never more
 Shall lone CEnone see the morning
 mist
 Sweep thro’ them; never see them
 overlaid
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver
 cloud,
 Between the loud stream and the trem-
 bling stars.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin’d
 folds,
 Among the fragments tumbled from
 the glens,
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with
 her
 The Abominable, that uninvited came
 Into the fair Pelèïan banquet-hall,
 And cast the golden fruit upon the
 board,
 And bred this change; that I might
 speak my mind,
 And tell her to her face how much I
 hate
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and
 men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand
 times,
 In this green valley, under this green
 hill,
 Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this
 stone?
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with
 tears?
 O happy tears, and how unlike to
 these!
 O happy Heaven, how canst thou see
 my face?
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear
 my weight?
 O death, death, death, thou ever-float-
 ing cloud,
 There are enough unhappy on this
 earth,
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to
 live:
 I pray thee, pass before my light of
 life,
 And shadow all my soul that I may
 die.
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart
 within,
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me
 die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
 Do shape themselves within me, more
 and more,
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
 Dead sounds at night come from the
 inmost hills,
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a
 mother
 Conjectures of the features of her
 child
 Ere it is born: her child! — a shudder
 comes
 Across me: never child be born of me,
 Unblest, to vex me with his father's
 eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come
 to me

Walking the cold and starless road of
 Death
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
 With the Greek woman. I will rise
 and go
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars
 come forth
 Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she
 says
 A fire dances before her, and a sound
 Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
 What this may be I know not, but I
 know
 That, whereso'er I am by night and
 day,
 All earth and air seem only burning
 fire."

THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race:
 She was the fairest in the face:
 The wind is blowing in turret and
 tree.
 They were together, and she fell;
 Therefore revenge became me well.
 O the Earl was fair to see!

She died: she went to burning flame:
 She mix'd her ancient blood with
 shame.

The wind is howling in turret and
 tree.
 Whole weeks and months, and early
 and late,
 To win his love I lay in wait:
 O the Earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bade him come;
 I won his love, I brought him home.
 The wind is roaring in turret and
 tree.

And after supper, on a bed,
 Upon my lap he laid his head:
 O the Earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest:
 His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
 The wind is raging in turret and tree
 I hated him with the hate of hell.
 But I loved his beauty passing well.
 O the Earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night :
I made my dagger sharp and bright.

The wind is raving in turret and tree.
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
He look'd so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.

I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.

O the Earl was fair to see !

TO —.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering
weeds,

A glorious Devil, large in heart and
brain,

That did love Beauty only, (Beauty
seen

In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if

Good,

Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge,

are three sisters

That dote upon each other, friends to
man,

Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without
tears.

And he that shuts Love out, in turn
shall be

Shut out from Love, and on her thresh-
old lie

Howling in outer darkness. Not for
this

Was common clay ta'en from the com-
mon earth

Moulded by God, and temper'd with
the tears

Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-
house,

Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.

I said, "O Soul, make merry and
carouse,

Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as bur-
nish'd brass

I chose. The ranged ramparts
bright

From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or
shelf

The rock rose clear, or winding stair.

My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and
round," I said,

"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,

Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stead-
fast shade

Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer
readily :

"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide

In this great mansion that is built for
me,

So royal-rich and wide."

* * * *
* * * *

Four courts I made, East, West and
South and North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom

The golden gorge of dragons spouted
forth

A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there
ran a row

Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty
woods,

Echoing all night to that sonorous
flow

Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant
lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where
the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in
one swell
Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they
fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue
seem'd
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall
gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the
sun,
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never
fail'd,
And, while day sank or mounted
higher,
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd
and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson
fires
From shadow'd grots of arches inter-
laced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

* * * *
* * * *

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my soul
did pass,
Well-pleas'd, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the
palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole

From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green
and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted
hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract
of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced forever in a glimmering
land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry
waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and
fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellow-
ing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding
low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry
toil.
In front they bound the sheaves.
Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in
oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with
stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the
scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray
twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep — all things in order
stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape
fair,

As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern,
was there

Not less than truth design'd.

* * * *
* * * *

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm.
Beneath branch-work of costly sardo-
nyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St.
Cecily;
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and
eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded
son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian
king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly
sail'd
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew un-
clasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward
borne:
From one hand droop'd a crocus: one
hand grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy
thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was
there,
Not less than life, design'd.

* * * *
* * * *

Then in the towers I placed great bells
that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver
sound;
And with choice paintings of wise men
I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph
strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and
mild;
And there the world-worn Dante
grasp'd his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the
rest;
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his
breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-
set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every
land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden
slow,
Toi'd onward, prick'd with goads
and stings;

Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break
or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick
man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and those
great bells
Began to chime. She took her
throne:
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' colored
flame
Two godlike faces gazed below ;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their
motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of
change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,
emerald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples, and her eyes.
And from her lips, as morn from
Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd
song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible
earth,
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : " All these
are mine,
And let the world have peace or
wars,
'Tis one to me." She — when young
night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious
toils —
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious
oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven ; and clapt her
hands and cried,
" I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and
wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

" O all things fair to sate my various
eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me
well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

" O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening
droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

" In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient
skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and
sleep ;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she
prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd
Fate ;
And at the last she said :

" I take possession of man's mind and
deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.

I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

* * * *
* * * *

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn
mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so
three years

She prosper'd: on the fourth she
fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in
his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she
turn'd her sight

The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, "Mene, mene," and divided
quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her soli-
tude

Fell on her, from which mood was
born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that
mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of
strength," she said,

"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones
were laid
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping
tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of
flame,

And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon
she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without
light

Or power of movement, seem'd my
soul,

'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars
of sand,

Left on the shore; that hears all
night

The plunging seas draw backward
from the land

Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry
dance

Join'd not, but stood, and standing
saw

The hollow orb of moving Circum-
stance

Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had
curl'd.

"No voice," she shriek'd in that
lone hall,

"No voice breaks thro' the stillness
of this world:

One deep, deep silence all!"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's
mouldering sod,

Inwapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,

Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,

But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with
fears,

And ever worse with growing time,

And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt
round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully
sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walk-
ing slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a
sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep
cry
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh,
" I have found
A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, " I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die ?"

So when four years were wholly fin-
ished,
She threw her royal robes away.
" Make me a cottage in the vale," she
said,
" Where I may mourn and pray.

" Yet pull not down my palace towers,
that are
So lightly beautifully built :
Perchance I may return with others
there
When I have purged my guilt."

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown :
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired :
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your
name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I
came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that dotes on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love ;
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my
head.
Not thrice your branching limes have
blown
Since I beheld young Laurence
dead.
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :
A great enchantress you may be ;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's
view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of
you.
Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de
Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall :
The guilt of blood is at your door :
You changed a wholesome heart to
gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest
worth,

And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us
bent

The gardener Adam and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.

Howe'er it be, it seems to me,

'Tis only noble to be good.

Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman
blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
You pine among your halls and
towers :

The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.

In glowing health, with boundless
wealth,

But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks
as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands?
Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline:
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
'They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

'They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be:
'They say his heart is breaking, mother — what is that to me?
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen;

For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers ;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass ;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year :
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind ;
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a merry day ;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May ;
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on the pane :
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high :
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,

Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night ;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now ;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go ;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place ;
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face ;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night forevermore,
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door ;
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green :
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never garden more :
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set
About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother : call me before the day is born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year !
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done !

But still I think it can't be long before I find release ;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair !
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there !
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head !
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in :
Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet :
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call ;
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all ;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear ;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here ;
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me — I know not what was said ;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, " It's not for them : it's mine."
And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret ;
There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.
If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might have been his wife ;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow ;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine —
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
 The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun —
 Forever and forever with those just souls and true —
 And what is life, that we should moan ? why make we such ado ?

Forever and forever, all in a blessed home —
 And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come —
 To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast —
 And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

“COURAGE!” he said, and pointed
 toward the land,
 “This mounting wave will roll us
 shoreward soon.”
 In the afternoon they came unto a
 land
 In which it seemed always afternoon.
 All round the coast the languid air did
 swoon,
 Breathing like one that hath a weary
 dream.
 Full-faced above the valley stood the
 moon ;
 And like a downward smoke, the slender
 stream
 Along the cliff to fall and pause and
 fall did seem.
 A land of streams ! some, like a downward
 smoke,
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn,
 did go ;
 And some thro’ wavering lights and
 shadows broke,
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam
 below.
 They saw the gleaming river seaward
 flow
 From the inner land : far off, three
 mountain-tops,
 Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
 Stood sunset-flush’d ; and, dew’d with
 showery drops,
 Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the
 woven copse.
 The charmed sunset linger’d low
 adown
 In the red West : thro’ mountain clefts
 the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow
 down
 Border’d with palm, and many a winding
 vale
 And meadow, set with slender galin-
 gale ;
 A land where all things always seem’d
 the same !
 And round about the keel with faces
 pale,
 Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-
 eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted
 stem,
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof
 they gave
 To each, but whoso did receive of
 them,
 And taste, to him the gushing of the
 wave
 Far far away did seem to mourn and
 rave
 On alien shores ; and if his fellow
 spake,
 His voice was thin, as voices from the
 grave ;
 And deep-asleep he seem’d, yet all
 awake,
 And music in his ears his beating heart
 did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow
 sand,
 Between the sun and moon upon the
 shore ;
 And sweet it was to dream of Father-
 land,
 Of child and wife, and slave ; but
 evermore

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the
 oar,
 Weary the wandering fields of barren
 foam.
 Then some one said, "We will return
 no more;"
 And all at once they sang, "Our island
 home
 Is far beyond the wave; we will no
 longer roam."

CHORIC SONG.

I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer
 falls
 Than petals from blown roses on the
 grass,
 Or night-dews on still waters between
 walls
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming
 pass;
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
 Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
 Music that brings sweet sleep down
 from the blissful skies.
 Here are cool mosses deep,
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
 And in the stream the long-leaved
 flowers weep,
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy
 hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heavi-
 ness,
 And utterly consumed with sharp dis-
 tress,
 While all things else have rest from
 weariness?
 All things have rest: why should we
 toil alone,
 We only toil, who are the first of
 things,
 And make perpetual moan,
 Still from one sorrow to another
 thrown:
 Nor ever fold our wings,
 And cease from wanderings,
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy
 balm;

Nor hearken what the inner spirit
 sings,
 "There is no joy but calm!"
 Why should we only toil, the roof and
 crown of things?

III.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the
 bud
 With winds upon the branch, and
 there
 Grows green and broad, and takes no
 care,
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
 Falls, and floats adown the air.
 Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-
 mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days,
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath
 no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
 Death is the end of life; ah, why
 Should life all labor be?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward
 fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last?
 All things are taken from us, and be-
 come
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful
 Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we
 have
 To war with evil? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing
 wave?
 All things have rest, and ripen toward
 the grave
 In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
 Give us long rest or death, dark death,
 or dreamful ease.

v.

How sweet it were, hearing the down-
ward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream !
To dream and dream, like yonder
amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush
on the height ;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the
beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy
spray ;
To lend our hearts and spirit wholly
To the influence of mild-minded mel-
ancholy ;
To muse and brood and live again in
memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in
an urn of brass !

vi.

Dear is the memory of our wedded
lives,
And dear the last embraces of our
wives
And their warm tears : but all hath
suffer'd change :
For surely now our household hearths
are cold :
Our sons inherit us : our looks are
strange :
And we should come like ghosts to
trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the min-
strel sings,
Before them of the ten years' war in
Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten
things.
Is there confusion in the little isle ?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile :
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,

Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many
wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on
the pilot-stars.

vii.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and
moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us,
blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river draw-
ing slowly
His waters from the purple hill —
'To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-
twined vine —
To watch the emerald-color'd water
falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath
divine !
Only to hear and see the far-off spar-
kling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out
beneath the pine.

viii.

The Lotos blooms below the barren
peak :
The Lotos blows by every-winding
creek :
All day the wind breathes low with
mellower tone :
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spiey downs the
yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and
of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,
when the surge was seething
free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted
his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with
an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and
lie reclined

On the hills like Gods together, care-
less of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and
the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and
the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled
with the gleaming world :
Where they smile in secret, looking
over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earth-
quake, roaring deeps and fiery
sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns,
and sinking ships, and praying
hands.
But they smile, they find a music cen-
tered in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an
ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the
words are strong ;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men
that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest
with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat,
and wine and oil ;
Till they perish and they suffer—
some, 'tis whisper'd—down in
hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in
Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds
of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet
than toil, the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean,
wind and wave and oar ;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will
not wander more.

—

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their
shade,
“ *The Legend of Good Women,*” long
ago
Sung by the morning-star of song,
who made
His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose
sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that
fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.
And, for a while, the knowledge of
his art
Held me above the subject, as
strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining,
tho' my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,
Charged both mine eyes with tears.
In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in
hand
The downward slope to death.
Those far-renowned brides of ancient
song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burn-
ing stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame,
and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars ;
And clattering flints batter'd with
clanging hoofs ;
And I saw crowds in column'd
sanctuaries ;
And forms that pass'd at windows
and on roofs
Of marble palaces ;
Corpses across the threshold ; heroes
tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;
Lances in ambush set ;
And high shrine-doors burst thro' with
heated blasts
That run before the fluttering
tongues of fire ;
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails
and masts,
And ever climbing higher

Squadrons and squares of men in
brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water,
divers woes,

Ranges of glimmering vaults with
iron grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as,
when to land

Bluster the winds and tides the
self-same way,

Crisp foam-flakes scud along the
level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in
pain,

Resolved on noble things, and
strove to speak,

As when a great thought strikes along
the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew
down

A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd
town;

And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-
lapsing thought

Stream'd onward, lost their edges,
and did creep

Roll'd on each other, rounded,
smooth'd, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wan-
der'd far

In an old wood: fresh-wash'd in
coolest dew

The maiden splendors of the morning
star

Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop
and lean

Upon the dusky brushwood under-
neath

Their broad curved branches, fledged
with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her
journey done,

And with dead lips smiled at the
twilight plain,

Half-fall'n across the threshold of
the sun,

Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb
dead air,

Not any song of bird or sound of
rill;

Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of
jasmine turn'd

Their humid arms festooning tree
to tree,

And at the root thro' lush green
grasses burn'd

The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves,
I knew

The tearful glimmer of the languid
dawn

On those long, rank, dark wood-walks
drench'd in dew,

Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the
green,

Pour'd back into my empty soul
and frame

The times when I remember to have
been

Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-
tone

Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that un-
blissful clime,

"Pass freely thro': the wood is all
thine own,

Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,
 Still than chisell'd marble, stand-
 ing there;
 A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
 And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with
 surprise
 Froze my swift speech: she turning
 on my face
 The star-like sorrows of immortal
 eyes,
 Spoke slowly in her place.

"I had great beauty: ask thou not
 my name:
 No one can be more wise than
 destiny.
 Many drew swords and died.
 Where'er I came
 I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair
 field
 Myself for such a face had boldly
 died,"
 I answer'd free; and turning I ap-
 peal'd
 To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks
 averse,
 To her full height her stately stat-
 ure draws;
 "My youth," she said "was blasted
 with a curse:
 This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad
 place,
 Which men call'd Aulis in those
 iron years:
 My father held his hand upon his face;
 I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to speak: my voice was
 thick with sighs
 As in a dream. Dimly I could
 descry
 The stern black-bearded kings with
 wolfish eyes,
 Waiting to see me die,

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay
 afloat;
 The crowds, the temples, waver'd,
 and the shore;
 The bright death quiver'd at the vic-
 tim's throat;
 Touch'd; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward
 brow:
 "I would the white cold heavy-
 plunging foam,
 Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me
 deep below,
 Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the
 silence drear,
 As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping
 sea:
 Sudden I heard a voice that cried,
 "Come here,
 That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery
 rise,
 One sitting on a crimson scarf un-
 roll'd;
 A queen, with swarthy cheeks and
 bold black eyes,
 Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile,
 began:
 "I govern'd men by change, and
 so I sway'd
 All moods. 'Tis long since I have
 seen a man.
 Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the
 blood
 According to my humor ebb and
 flow.
 I have no men to govern in this wood:
 That makes my only woe.

"Nay — yet it chafes me that I could
 not bend
 One will; nor tame and tutor with
 mine eye

- That dull cold-blooded Cæsar.
Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony?
- “The man, my lover, with whom I
rode sublime
On Fortune’s neck: we sat as God
by God:
The Nilus would have risen before his
time
And flooded at our nod.
- “We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,
and lit
Lamps which out-burn’d Canopus
O my life
In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,
- “And the wild kiss, when fresh from
war’s alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my
arms,
Contented there to die!
- “And there he died: and when I heard
my name
Sigh’d forth with life I would not
brook my fear
Of the other: with a worm I balk’d
his fame.
What else was left? look here!”
- (With that she tore her robe apart,
and half
The polish’d argent of her breast to
sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with
a laugh,
Showing the aspick’s bite.)
- “I died a Queen. The Roman soldier
found
Me lying dead, my crown about my
brows,
A name forever!—lying robed and
crown’d,
Worthy a Roman spouse.”
- Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest
range
Struck by all passion, did fall down
and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro’ all
change
Of liveliest utterance.
- When she made pause I knew not for
delight:
Because with sudden motion from
the ground
She rais’d her piercing orbs, and fill’d
with light
The interval of sound.
- Still with their fires Love tipt his keen-
est darts;
As once they drew into two burning
rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty
hearts
Of captains and of kings.
- Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I
heard
A noise of some one coming thro’
the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested
bird
That claps his wings at dawn.
- “The torrent brooks of hallow’d Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late
and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro’
the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.
- “The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with
beams divine:
All night the splinter’d crags that wall
the dell
With spires of silver shine.”
- As one that museth where broad sun-
shine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro’
the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd
and tied

To where he stands,—so stood I,
when that flow

Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite ;
A maiden pure ; as when she went
along

From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with wel-
come light,

With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : " Heaven heads
the count of crimes

With that wild oath." She render'd
answer high :

" Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand
times

I would be born and die.

" Single I grew, like some green plant,
whose root

Creeps to the garden water-pipes
beneath

Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower
to fruit

Changed, I was ripe for death.

" My God, my land, my father — these
did move

Me from my bliss of life, that Nature
gave,

Lower'd softly with a threefold cord
of love

Down to a silent grave.

" And I went mourning, ' No fair
Hebrew boy

Shall smile away my maiden blame
among

The Hebrew mothers' — emptied of
all joy,

Leaving the dance and song,

" Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal
bower,

The valleys of grape-loaded vines that
glow

Beneath the battled tower.

" The light white cloud swam over us.
Anon

We heard the lion roaring from his
den ;

We saw the large white stars rise one
by one,

Or, from the darken'd glen,

" Saw God divide the night with flying
flame,

And thunder on the everlasting hills.

I heard Him, for He spake, and grief
became

A solemn scorn of ills.

" When the next moon was roll'd into
the sky,

Strength came to me that equal'd
my desire.

How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire !

" It comforts me in this one thought
to dwell,

That I subdued me to my father's
will ;

Because the kiss he gave me, ere I
fell,

Sweetens the spirit still.

" Moreover it is written that my race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from
Aroer

On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her
face

Glow'd as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips : she left me where
I stood :

" Glory to God," she sang, and past
afar,

Thridding the sombre boskage of the
wood,

Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,

As one that from a casement leans
his head,

When midnight bells cease ringing
suddenly,

And the old year is dead.

"Alas! alas!" a low voice, full of
 care,
 Murnur'd beside me: "Turn and
 look on me:
 I am that Rosamond, whom men call
 fair,
 If what I was I be.

"Would I had been some maiden
 coarse and poor!
 O me, that I should ever see the
 light!
 Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
 Do hunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope
 and trust:
 To whom the Egyptian: "O, you
 tamely died!
 You should have clung to Fulvia's
 waist, and thrust
 The dagger thro' her side."

With that sharp sound the white
 dawn's creeping beams,
 Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the
 mystery
 Of folded sleep. The captain of my
 dreams
 Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of
 the dark,
 Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her
 last trance
 Her murder'd father's head, or Joan
 of Arc,
 A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can van-
 quish Death,
 Who kneeling, with one arm about
 her king,
 Drew forth the poison with her balmy
 breath,
 Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labors longer from the
 deep
 Gold-mines of thought to lift the
 hidden ore

That glimpses, moving up, than I from
 sleep
 To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With
 what dull pain
 Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to
 strike
 Into that wondrous track of dreams
 again!
 But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath
 been blest,
 Desiring what is mingled with past
 years,
 In yearnings that can never be express'd
 By sighs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with
 choicest art,
 Failing to give the bitter of the
 sweet,
 Wither beneath the palate, and the
 heart
 Faints, faded by its heat.

THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something
 well:
 While all the neighbors shoot thee
 round,
 I keep smooth plats of fruitful
 ground,
 Where thou may'st warble, eat and
 dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
 Are thine; the range of lawn and
 park:
 The unnetted black-hearts ripen
 dark,
 All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring
 Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
 With that gold dagger of thy bill
 To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
 Cold February loved, is dry:

Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when
young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute notes are changed to
coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are
new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily
sighing:

Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.
Old year, you must not die ;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-
love,

And the New-year will take 'em away.
Old year, you must not go ;
So long as you have been with us
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die ;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my
friend,
And the New-year blithe and bold,
my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro :
The cricket chirps · the light burns
low :

'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :
What is it we can do for you ?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack ! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor,
my friend,
And a new face at the door, my
friend,
A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain,
blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on
most,
Those in whose laps our limbs
are nursed,

Fall into shadow, soonest lost :
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us ; but, when love is
grown

To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !
In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did
pass ;
One went, who never hath re-
turn'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair
is seen

Empty before us. 'That was he'
Without whose life I had not
been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust
I honor and his living worth :
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n
asleep.

Great Nature is more wise than I :
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the
brain,

I will not even preach to you,
" Weep, weeping dulls the inward
pain."

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her
will
Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, " God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind" ;

For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the
night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her
throat

Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth ?
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :
Both are my friends, and my true
breast

Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would
make

Grief more. 'Twere better I
should cease

Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in
peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons in-
crease,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or
strange.

Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of
change.

ON A MOURNER.

I.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,
Imitates God, and turns her face
To every land beneath the skies,

Counts nothing that she meets with
base,
But lives and loves in every place ;

II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,
And makes the purple lilac ripe,
Steps from her airy hill, and greens
The swamp, where hums the drop-
ping snipe,
With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, " Beat quicker, for the time
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
Are pleasant, and the beech and
lime
Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine,
Teach that sick heart the stronger
choice,
Till all thy life one way incline
With one wide Will that closes thine.

V.

And when the zoning eve has died
Where yon dark valleys wind for-
lorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and
bride,
From out the borders of the morn,
With that fair child betwixt them
born.

VI.

And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tombing
sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling stars
Comes Faith from tracts no feet
have trod,
And Virtue, like a household god

VII.

Promising empire ; such as those
Once heard at dead of night to greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that he
rose

With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends
or foes
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens
down
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive
thought
Hath time and space to work and
spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil
crime,
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land
to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden
sand —

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet
Above her shook the starry lights :
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
 Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
 But fragments of her mighty voice
 Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and
 field
 To mingle with the human race,
 And part by part to men reveal'd
 The fulness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,
 From her isle-altar gazing down :
 Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
 And, King-like, wears the crown ;

Her open eyes desire the truth.
 The wisdom of a thousand years
 Is in them. May perpetual youth
 Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and
 shine,
 Make bright our days and light
 our dreams,
 Turning to scorn with lips divine
 The falsehood of extremes !

Love thou thy land, with love far-
 brought .
 From out the storied Past, and
 used

Within the Present, but transfused
 Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
 Love, that endures not sordid ends,
 For English natures, freemen,
 friends,
 Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
 Nor feed with crude imaginings
 The herd, wild hearts and feeble
 wings
 That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
 To weakness, neither hide the ray

From those, not blind, who wait for
 day,
 Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the
 winds ;
 But let her herald, Reverence, fly
 Before her to whatever sky
 Bear seed of men and growth of
 minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the
 years :
 Cut Prejudice against the grain :
 But gentle words are always gain :
 Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
 Of pension, neither count on praise :
 It grows to guerdon after-days :
 Nor deal in watch-words overmuch :

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
 Nor master'd by some modern term ;
 Not swift nor slow to change, but
 firm :
 And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
 With Life, that, working strongly,
 binds —
 Set in all lights by many minds,
 To close the interest of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
 And moist and dry, devising long,
 Thro' many agents making strong,
 Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
 Our being, lest we rust in ease.
 We all are changed by still degrees,
 All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be
 free
 To ingroove itself with that which
 flies,
 And work, a joint of state, that plies
 Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;
 For all the past of Time reveals
 A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
 Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
 A motion toiling in the gloom—
 The Spirit of the years to come
 Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
 Completion in a painful school;
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,
 New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,
 But vague in vapor, hard to mark;
 And round them sea and air are dark
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
 Is bodied forth the second whole.
 Regard gradation, lest the soul
 Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
 And heap their ashes on the head;
 To shame the boast so often made,
 That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
 Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
 To follow flying steps of Truth
 Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
 Must ever shock, like armed foes,
 And this be true, till Time shall close,
 That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
 To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
 But with his hand against the hilt,
 Would pace the troubled land, like
 Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
 Would serve his kind in deed and
 word,

Certain, if knowledge bring the
 sword,
 That knowledge takes the sword
 away —

Would love the gleams of good that
 broke
 From either side, nor veil his eyes:
 And if some dreadful need should
 rise
 Would strike, and firmly, and one
 stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
 As we bear blossom of the dead;
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor
 wed
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA
 IN 1782.

O THOU, that sendest out the man
 To rule by land and sea,
 Strong mother of a Lion-line,
 Be proud of those strong sons of thine
 Who wretch'd their rights from
 thee!

What wonder, if in noble heat
 Those men thine arms withstood,
 Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,
 And in thy spirit with thee fought —
 Who sprang from English blood!

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,
 Lift up thy rocky face.
 And shatter, when the storms are
 black,
 In many a streaming torrent back,
 The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law
 The growing world assume,
 Thy work is thine — The single note
 From that deep chord which Hampden
 smote
 Will vibrate to the doom.

THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He utter'd rhyme and reason,
"Here, take the goose, and keep you
warm,
It is a stormy season."

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose — 'twas no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the
pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbors;
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labors.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied;
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder:
But ah! the more the white goose laid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there;
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle:
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note!"
Then wax'd her anger stronger.
"Go, take the goose, and wring her
throat,
I will not bear it longer."

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the
cat;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather:

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning;
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning."

The wild wind rang from park and
plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder:

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger!"

ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS.



THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-
eve, —
The game of forfeits done — the girls
all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past
away —
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard
Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-
bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we
held a talk,
How all the old honor had from
Christmas gone,
Or gone, or dwindled down to some
odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I,
tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the
pond,
Where, three times slipping from the
outer edge,
I bump'd the ice into three several
stars,
Fell in a doze; and half awake I
heard
The parson taking wide and wider
sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commis-
sioners,
Now hawking at Geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled
down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, "at home was
little left,

And none abroad: there was no
anchor, none,
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt
his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold
by him."
"And I," quoth Everard, "by the
wassail-bowl."
"Why yes," I said, "we knew your
gift that way
At college: but another which you
had,
I mean of verse (for so we held it
then),
What came of that?" "You know,"
said Frank, "he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve
books" —
And then to me demanding why?
"Oh, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said,
or else
Something so said 'twas nothing —
that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the
day:
God knows: he has a mint of reasons:
ask.
It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay,
nay," said Hall,
"Why take the style of those heroic
times?
For nature brings not back the Mas-
todon,
Nor we those times; and why should
any man
Remodel models? these twelve books
of mine

Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-
worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better
burnt." "But I,"
Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh
from this hearth
And have it: keep a thing, its use
will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a
horse
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd
my ears;
For I remember'd Everard's college
fame
When we were Freshmen: then at my
request
He brought it; and the poet little
urged,
But with some prelude of disparage-
ment,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes
and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle
roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter
sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by
man,
Had fallen in Lyonness about their
Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound
was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his
knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the
field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren
land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was
full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all

The goodliest fellowship of famous
knights
Whereof this world holds record.
Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I
think that we
Shall nevermore, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly
deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the
halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I
made, —
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come
again
To rule once more — but let what will
be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till
morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Ex-
calibur,
Which was my pride: for thou re-
memberest how
In those old days, one summer noon,
an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the
lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd
across
And took it, and have worn it like a
king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or
told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle
mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly
bring me word."
To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave
thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded
man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,

Watch what I see, and lightly bring
thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine
he stept

And in the moon athwart the place of
tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of an-
cient men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-
wind sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,
stepping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed
rock,

Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand

Excalibur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter
moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,
ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against
the hilt:

For all the haft twinkled with dia-
mond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-
work

Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as

he stood,

This way and that dividing the swift
mind,

In act to throw: but at the last it
seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the

marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:

"Hast thou perform'd my mission
which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere:

"I heard the ripple washing in the
reeds,

And the wild water lapping on the
crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint
and pale:

"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and
thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as be-
seem'd

Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either

hand,

Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to

lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
again

As thou art lief and dear, and do the
thing

I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring
me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second
time

Across the ridge, and paced beside
the mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in
thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the
hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased,
he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud,
"And if indeed I cast the brand

away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy
note,

Should thus be lost for ever from the
earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes
of many men.

What good should follow this, if this
were done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to
disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey them, if a king

demand

An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what

he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty

breath

And rumors of a doubt? but were
this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of
mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of
arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excali-
bur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in
the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the
aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame
were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own
conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the
wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur, breathing
heavily:

"What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere:

"I heard the water lapping on the
crag,
And the long ripple washing in the
reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur,
much in wrath:

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is
me!

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his
eye

That bow'd the will. I see thee what
thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my
knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the
precious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get
thee hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,

I will arise and slay thee with my
hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and
ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it.
The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of
the moon,

And flashing round and round, and
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern
morn,

Seen where the moving isles of win-
ter shock

By night, with noises of the northern
sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an
arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.

And lightly went the other to the
King.

Then spake King Arthur, drawing
thicker breath:

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is
done.

Speak out: what is it thou hast heard,
or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir
Bedivere:

"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest
the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never
saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I
die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal
men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him,

wheeling him;

But when I look'd again, behold an
arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed

When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
"Quick, quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills. He heard the deep behind him, and a cry

Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves

And barren chasms, and all to left and right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,

Beneath them; and descending they were ware

That all the decks were dense with stately forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold — and from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,

And, as it were one voice an agony Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"

And to the barge they came. There those three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all

And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,

And dropping bitter tears against his brow

Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white

And colorless, and like the wither'd moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the
 springing east;
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
 with drops
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous
 curls—
 That made his forehead like a rising
 sun
 High from the daïs-throne—were
 parch'd with dust;
 Or, clotted into points and hanging
 loose,
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that
 fringed his lips.
 So like a shatter'd column lay the
 King;
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance
 in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of tourna-
 ment,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
 charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
 Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere,
 "Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall
 I go?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and
 my eyes?
 For now I see the true old times are
 dead,
 When every morning brought a noble
 chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble
 knight.
 Such times have been not since the
 light that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is
 dissolved
 Which was an image of the mighty
 world;
 And I, the last, go forth companion-
 less,
 And the days darken round me, and
 the years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other
 minds."
 And slowly answered Arthur from
 the barge:
 'The old order changeth, yielding
 place to new,

And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt
 the world.
 Comfort thyself: what comfort is in
 me?
 I have lived my life, and that which I
 have done
 May He within Himself make pure!
 but thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face
 again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are
 wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Where-
 fore, let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and
 day.
 For what are men better than sheep
 or goats
 That nourish a blind life within the
 brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands
 of prayer
 Both for themselves and those who
 call them friend?
 For so the whole round earth is every
 way
 Bound by gold chains about the feet
 of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a long
 way
 With these thou seest—if indeed I
 go—
 (For all my mind is clouded with a
 doubt)
 To the island-valley of Avilion;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
 snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it
 lies
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with
 orchard-lawns
 And bowery hollows crown'd with
 summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my grievous
 wound."
 So said he, and the barge with oar
 and sail
 Moved from the brink, like some full-
 breasted swan
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her
 death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes
the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir
Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the
hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge
of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died
away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light,
that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness,
flared and fell:
At which the Parson, sent to sleep
with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted
"Good!" but we
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which
he read —
Perhaps some modern touches here
and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of noth-
ingness —
Or else we loved the man, and prized
his work;
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud; as at that time
of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for
dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man
ill-used,
"There now — that's nothing!" drew
a little back,
And drove his heel into the smoul-
der'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the
flue:
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I
seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming
shores,
Point after point; till on to dawn,
when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of
day,
To me, methought, who waited with a
crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing for-
ward, bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentle-
man
Of stateliest port; and all the people
cried,
"Arthur is come again: he cannot
die."
Then those that stood upon the hills
behind
Repeated — "Come again, and thrice
as fair;"
And, further inland, voices echoed —
"Come
With all good things, and war shall
be no more."
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard
indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the
Christmas-morn.

THE GARDENER'S
DAUGHTER;

OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the
day,
When I and Eustace from the city
went
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I
and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so com-
plete
Portion'd in halves between us, that
we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.
My Eustace might have sat for
Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad of
breast.
He, by some law that holds in love,
and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little;—
Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit—
oh, she
To me myself, for some three careless
moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart

Unto the shores of nothing! Know
 you not
 Such touches are but embassies of
 love,
 To tamper with the feelings, ere he
 found
 Empire for life? but Eustace painted
 her,
 And said to me, she sitting with us
 then,
 "When will *you* paint like this?" and
 I replied,
 (My words were half in earnest, half
 in jest,)
 "'Tis not your work, but Love's.
 Love, unperceived,
 A more ideal Artist he than all,
 Came, drew your pencil from you,
 made those eyes
 Darker than dark, st pansies, and that
 hair
 More black than ashbuds in the front
 of March."
 And Juliet answer'd laughing, "Go
 and see
 The Gardener's daughter: trust me,
 after that,
 You scarce can fail to match his master-
 terpiece."
 And up we rose, and on the spur we
 went.
 Not wholly in the busy world, nor
 quite
 Beyond it, blooms the garden that I
 love.
 News from the humming city comes
 to it
 In sound of funeral or of marriage
 bells;
 And, sitting muffled in dark leaves,
 you hear
 The windy clanging of the minster
 clock;
 Although between it and the garden
 lies
 A league of grass, wash'd by a slow
 broad stream,
 That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the
 oar,
 Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
 Barge-laden, to three arches of a
 bridge

Crown'd with the minster-towers.
 The fields between
 Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-
 udder'd kine,
 And all about the large lime feathers
 low,
 The lime a summer home of murmur-
 ous wings.
 In that still place she, hoarded in
 herself,
 Grew, seldom seen; not less among us
 lived
 Her fame from lip to lip. Who had
 not heard
 Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter?
 Where was he,
 So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
 At such a distance from his youth in
 grief,
 That, having seen, forgot? The com-
 mon mouth,
 So gross to express delight, in praise
 of her
 Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
 And Beauty such a mistress of the
 world.
 And if I said that Fancy, led by
 Love,
 Would play with flying forms and
 images,
 Yet this is also true, that, long before
 I look'd upon her, when I heard her
 name
 My heart was like a prophet to my
 heart,
 And told me I should love. A crowd
 of hopes,
 That sought to sow themselves like
 winged seeds,
 Born out of everything I heard and
 saw,
 Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
 And vague desires, like fitful blasts of
 balm
 To one that travels quickly, made the
 air
 Of Life delicious, and all kinds of
 thought,
 That verged upon them, sweeter than
 the dream
 Dream'd by a happy man, when the
 dark East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal
morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory
folds

For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery
squares,

Beneath a broad and equal-blowing
wind, -

Smelt of the coming summer, as one
large cloud

Drew downward: but all else of
heaven was pure

Up to the Sun, and May from verge
to verge,

And May with me from head to heel.
And now,

As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it
were

The hour just flown, that morn with
all its sound,

(For those old Mays had thrice the
life of these,)

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot
to graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts the
pathway, stood,

Leaning his horns into the neighbor
field,

And lowing to his fellows. From the
woods

Came voices of the well-contented
doves.

The lark could scarce get out his notes
for joy,

But shook his song together as he
near'd

His happy home, the ground. To left
and right,

The cuckoo told his name to all the
hills;

The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the night-
ingale

Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of
day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling
said to me,

"Hear how the bushes echo! by my
life,

These birds have joyful thoughts.
Think you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?
Or have they any sense of why they
sing?

And would they praise the heavens
for what they have?"

And I made answer, "Were there
nothing else

For which to praise the heavens but
only love,

That only love were cause enough for
praise."

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read
my thought,

And on we went; but ere an hour had
pass'd,

We reach'd a meadow slanting to the
North;

Down which a well-worn pathway
courted us

To one green wicket in a privet hedge;
This, yielding, gave into a grassy

walk
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly

pruned;
And one warm gust, full-fed with per-
fume, blew

Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In

the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layers
of shade.

The garden-glasses shone, and mo-
mently

The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver
lights.

"Eustace," I said, "this wonder
keeps the house."

He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, "Look! look!" Before he

ceased I turn'd,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her

there.

For up the porch there grew an
Eastern rose,

That, flowering high, the last night's
gale had caught,

And blown across the walk. One arm
aloft —

Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to
the shape —

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she
stood,

A single stream of all her soft brown
 hair
 Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the
 flowers
 Stole all the golden gloss, and, wav-
 ering
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her
 waist —
 Ah, happy shade — and still went
 wavering down,
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might
 have danced
 The greensward into greener circles,
 dipt,
 And mix'd with shadows of the com-
 mon ground!
 But the full day dwelt on her brows,
 and sunn'd
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe
 bloom,
 And doubled his own warmth against
 her lips,
 And on the bounteous wave of such a
 breast
 As never pencil drew. Half light,
 half shade,
 She stood, a sight to make an old
 man young.
 So rapt, we near'd the house; but
 she, a Rose
 In roses, mingled with her fragrant
 toil,
 Nor heard us come, nor from her tend-
 ance turn'd
 Into the world without; till close at
 hand,
 And almost ere I knew mine own in-
 tent,
 This murmur broke the stillness of
 that air
 Which brooded round about her:
 "Ah, one rose,
 One rose, but one, by those fair fingers
 cull'd,
 Were worth a hundred kisses press'd
 on lips
 Less exquisite than thine."
 She look'd: but all
 Suffused with blushes — neither self-
 possess'd
 Nor startled, but betwixt this mood
 and that,

Divided in a graceful quiet — paused,
 And dropt the branch she held, and
 turning, wound
 Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd
 her lips
 For some sweet answer, tho' no answer
 came,
 Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
 And moved away, and left me, statue-
 like,
 In act to render thanks.
 I, that whole day,
 Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd
 there
 Till every daisy slept, and Love's
 white star
 Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in
 the dusk.
 So home we went, and all the live-
 long way
 With solemn gibe did Eustace banter
 me.
 "Now," said he, "will you climb the
 top of Art.
 You cannot fail but work in hues to
 dim
 The Titianic Flora. Will you match
 My Juliet? you, not you, — the Mas-
 ter, Love,
 A more ideal Artist he than all."
 So home I went, but could not sleep
 for joy,
 Reading her perfect features in the
 gloom,
 Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and
 o'er,
 And shaping faithful record of the
 glance
 That graced the giving — such a noise
 of life
 Swarm'd in the golden present, such
 a voice
 Call'd to me from the years to come,
 and such
 A length of bright horizon rimm'd the
 dark.
 And all that night I heard the watch-
 man peal
 The sliding season: all that night I
 heard
 The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy
 hours.

The drowsy hours, dispensers of all
good,

O'er the mute city stole with folded
wings,

Distilling odors on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and
heir to all,

Made this night thus. Henceforward
squall nor storm

Could keep me from that Eden where
she dwelt.

Light pretexts drew me; sometimes a
Dutch love

For tulips; then for roses, moss or
musk,

To grace my city rooms; or fruits and
cream

Served in the weeping elm; and more
and more

A word could bring the color to my
cheek;

A thought would fill my eyes with
happy dew;

Love trebled life within me, and with
each

The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden
pass'd;

Each garlanded with her peculiar
flower

Danced into light, and died into the
shade;

And each in passing touch'd with some
new grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day
by day,

Like one that never can be wholly
known,

Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought
an hour

For Eustace, when I heard his deep
"I will,"

Breathed, like the covenant of a God,
to hold

From thence thro' all the worlds: but
I rose up

Full of his bliss, and following her
dark eyes

Felt earth as air beneath me, till I
reach'd

The wicket-gate, and found her stand-
ing there.

There sat we down upon a garden
mound,

Two mutually enfolded; Love, the
third,

Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a

range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral

towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,

Reveal'd their shining windows: from
them clash'd

The bells; we listen'd; with the time
we play'd,

We spoke of other things; we coursed
about

The subject most at heart, more near
and near,

Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling
round

The central wish, until we settled there.
Then, in that time and place, I spoke

to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine

own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to

hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,

A woman's heart, the heart of her I
loved;

And in that time and place she an-
swer'd me,

And in the compass of three little
words,

More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken

voice,
Made me most happy, faltering, "I am

thine."

Shall I cease here? Is this enough
to say

That my desire, like all strongest
hopes,

By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion? Would you

learn at full
How passion rose thro' circumstantial

grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and in-
deed

I had not staid so long to tell you all,
 But while I mused came Memory with
 sad eyes,
 Holding the folded annals of my
 youth;
 And while I mused, Love with knit
 brows went by,
 And with a flying finger swept my lips,
 And spake, "Be wise: not easily for-
 given
 Are those, who setting wide the doors
 that bar
 The secret bridal chambers of the
 heart,
 Let in the day." Here, then, my words
 have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of fare-
 wells —
 Of that which came between, more
 sweet than each,
 In whispers, like the whispers of the
 leaves
 That tremble round a nightingale —
 in sighs
 Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for ut-
 terance,
 Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might
 I not tell
 Of difference, reconciliation, pledges
 given,
 And vows, where there was never need
 of vows,
 And kisses, where the heart on one
 wild leap
 Hung tranced from all pulsation, as
 above
 The heavens between their fairy fleeces
 pale
 Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleet-
 ing stars;
 Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-
 lit,
 Spread the light haze along the river-
 shores,
 And in the hollows; or as once we met
 Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering
 rain
 Night slid down one long stream of
 sighing wind,
 And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.
 But this whole hour your eyes have
 been intent

On that veil'd picture — veil'd, fo
 what it holds
 May not be dwelt on by the common
 day.
 This prelude has prepared thee. Raise
 thy soul;
 Make thine heart ready with thine
 eyes: the time
 Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,
 As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
 My first, last love; the idol of my
 youth,
 The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
 Now the most blessed memory of mine
 age.

 DORA.

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode
 William and Dora. William was his
 son,
 And she his niece. He often look'd
 at them,
 And often thought, "I'll make them
 man and wife."
 Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
 And yearn'd towards William; but the
 youth, because
 He had been always with her in the
 house,
 Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day
 When Allan call'd his son, and said,
 "My son:
 I married late, but I would wish to see
 My grandchild on my knees before I
 die:
 And I have set my heart upon a match.
 Now therefore look to Dora; she is
 well
 To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
 She is my brother's daughter: he and I
 Had once hard words, and parted, and
 he died
 In foreign lands; but for his sake I
 bred
 His daughter Dora: take her for your
 wife;
 For I have wish'd this marriage, night
 and day,

For many years." But William answer'd short;
 "I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
 I will not marry Dora." Then the old man
 Was wroth, and doubled up his hands,
 and said:
 "You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
 But in my time a father's word was law,
 And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
 Consider, William: take a month to think,
 And let me have an answer to my wish;
 Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
 And never more darken my doors again."
 But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,
 And broke away. The more he look'd at her
 The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
 But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
 The month was out he left his father's house,
 And hired himself to work within the fields;
 And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
 A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
 Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
 His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;
 But if you speak with him that was my son,
 Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
 My home is none of yours. My will is law."
 And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
 "It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!"
 And days went on, and there was born a boy

To William; then distresses came on him;
 And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
 Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
 But Dora stored what little she could save,
 And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
 Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
 On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
 And look'd with tears upon her boy,
 and thought
 Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:

"I have obey'd my uncle until now,
 And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
 This evil came on William at the first.
 But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
 And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
 And for this orphan, I am come to you:
 You know there has not been for these five years
 So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
 And I will set him in my uncle's eye
 Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
 Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way
 Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
 That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
 Far off the farmer came into the field
 And spied her not; for none of all his men
 Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
 And Dora would have risen and gone to him,

But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;

And made a little wreath of all the flowers

That grew about, and tied it round his hat

To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.

Then when the farmer pass'd into the field

He spied her, and he left his men at work,

And came and said : " Where were you yesterday ?

Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ? "

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, " This is William's child ! "

" And did I not, " said Allan, " did I not

Forbid you, Dora ? " Dora said again :
" Do with me as you will, but take the child,

And bless him for the sake of him that's gone ! "

And Allan said, " I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.

I must be taught my duty, and by you !
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared

To slight it. Well — for I will take the boy ;

But go you hence, and never see me more. "

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud

And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell

At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,

And the boy's cry came to her from the field,

More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,

And all the things that had been. She bow'd down

And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood

Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy

Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise

To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.

And Dora said, " My uncle took the boy ;

But, Mary, let me live and work with you :

He says that he will never see me more. "

Then answer'd Mary, " This shall never be,

That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :

And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,

For he will teach him hardness, and to slight

His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,

And I will have my boy, and bring him home ;

And I will beg of him to take thee back :

But if he will not take thee back again,

Then thou and I will live within one house,

And work for William's child, until he grows

Of age to help us. "

So the women kiss'd
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.

The door was off the latch : they peep'd, and saw

The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,

Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,

And clapt him on the hands and on
 the cheeks,
 Like one that loved him: and the lad
 stretch'd out
 And babbled for the golden seal, that
 hung
 From Allan's watch, and sparkled by
 the fire.
 Then they came in: but when the boy
 beheld
 His mother, he cried out to come to her:
 And Allan set him down, and Mary
 said:
 "O Father!—if you let me call
 you so—
 I never came a-begging for myself,
 Or William, or this child; but now I
 come
 For Dora: take her back; she loves
 you well.
 O Sir, when William died, he died at
 peace
 With all men; for I ask'd him, and he
 said,
 He could not ever rue his marrying
 me—
 I had been a patient wife: but, Sir,
 he said
 That he was wrong to cross his father
 thus:
 God bless him!' he said, 'and may
 he never know
 The troubles I have gone thro'!'
 Then he turn'd
 His face and pass'd—unhappy that I
 am!
 But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for
 you
 Will make him hard, and he will learn
 to slight
 His father's memory; and take Dora
 back,
 And let all this be as it was before."
 So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
 By Mary. There was silence in the
 room;
 And all at once the old man burst in
 sobs:—
 "I have been to blame—to blame.
 I have killed my son.
 I have kill'd him—but I loved him
 —my dear son.

May God forgive me!—I have been
 to blame.
 Kiss me, my children."
 Then they clung about
 The old man's neck, and kiss'd him
 many times.
 And all the man was broken with re-
 morse;
 And all his love came back a hundred-
 fold;
 And for three hours he sobb'd o'er
 William's child
 Thinking of William.
 So those four abode
 Within one house together; and as
 years
 Went forward, Mary took another
 mate;
 But Dora lived unmarried till her
 death.

AUDLEY COURT.

"THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd,
 and not a room
 For love or money. Let us picnic
 there
 At Audley Court."
 I spoke, while Audley feast
 Humm'd like a hive all round the
 narrow quay,
 To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
 To Francis just alighted from the boat,
 And breathing of the sea. "With all
 my heart,"
 Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd
 thro' the swarm,
 And rounded by the stillness of the
 beach
 To where the bay runs up its latest
 horn.
 We left the dying ebb that faintly
 lipp'd
 The flat red granite; so by many a
 sweep
 Of meadow smooth from aftermath
 we reach'd
 The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd
 thro' all
 The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycam-
 ores,

And cross'd the garden to the garden's lodge,
With all its casements bedded, and its walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat
And talk'd old matters over; who was dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and how
The races went, and who would rent the hall:
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was
This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,
The four-field system, and the price of grain;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—
"Oh! who would fight and march and countermarch,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into some bloody trench
Where no one knows? but let me live my life.

"Oh! who would cast and balance at a desk,
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

"Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands;
The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.

"Oh! who would love? I woo'd a woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea; but let me live my life."

He sang his song, and I replied with mine:
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,
His books—the more the pity, so I said—
Came to the hammer here in March—and this—
I set the words, and added names I knew.

"Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

"Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.
"Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast:

Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:

I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.
"I go, but I return: I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream
of me.”
So sang we each to either, Francis
Hale,
The farmer's son, who lived across the
bay,
My friend; and I, that having where-
withal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life
A rolling stone of here and every-
where,
Did what I would; but ere the night
we rose
And saunter'd home beneath a moon,
that, just
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the
leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
The limit of the hills; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the glooming
quay,
The town was hush'd beneath us:
lower down
The bay was oily calm; the harbor
buoy,
A pale star of phosphorescence in the
calm,
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at
heart.

— —

WALKING TO THE MAIL.

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh
the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hill-side was redder than a
fox.
Is your plantation where this byway
joins
The turnpike?
James. Yes.
John. And when does this come by?
James. The mail? At one o'clock.
John. What is it now?
James. A quarter to.
John. Whose house is that I see?
No, not the County Member's with
the vane:
Up higher with the yew-tree by it,
and half

A score of gables.

James. That? Sir Edward Head's:
But he's abroad: the place is to be
sold.

John. Oh, his. He was not broken.
James. No, sir, he,

Vex'd with a morbid devil in his
blood

That veil'd the world with jaundice,
hid his face

From all men, and commercing with
himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily
life —

That keeps us all in order more or
less —

And sick of home went overseas for
change.

John. And whither?

James. Nay, who knows? he's here
and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with
him,

As well as with his tenant, Jocky
Dawes.

John. What's that?

James. You saw the man — on Mon-
day, was it? —

There by the humpback'd willow;
half stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and
made a bridge;

And there he caught the younker
tickling trout —

Caught *in flagrante* — what's the Latin
word? —

Delicto: but his house, for so they
say,

Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that
shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt
at doors,

And rummaged like a rat: no servant
stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds
and chairs,

And all his household stuff; and with
his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the
tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails
him, “What!

You're flitting!" "Yes, we're flitting," says the ghost
(For they had pack'd the thing among
the beds.)

"Oh well," says he, "you flitting with
us too —

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home
again."

John. He left his wife behind; for
so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met my
lady once:

A woman like a butt, and harsh as
crabs.

John. Oh yet but I remember, ten
years back —

'Tis now at least ten years — and then
she was —

You could not light upon a sweeter
thing:

A body slight and round, and like a
pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a
foot

Lessening in perfect cadence, and a
skin

As clean and white as privet when it
flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades,
and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were eat
and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt
shame and pride,

New things and old, himself and her,
she sour'd

To what she is: a nature never
kind!

Like men, like manners: like breeds
like, they say:

Kind nature is the best: those man-
ners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand;
Which are indeed the manners of the
great.

John. But I had heard it was this
bill that past,

And fear of change at home, that
drove him hence.

James. That was the last drop in
the cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff
brought

A Chartist pike. You should have
seen him wince

As from a venomous thing: he thought
himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a
cry

Should break his sleep by night, and
his nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody
thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs, but, sir,
you know

That these two parties still divide the
world —

Of those that want, and those that
have: and still

The same old sore breaks out from
age to age

With much the same result. Now I
myself,

A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I

would.

I was at school — a college in the
South:

There lived a flayflint near; we stole
his fruit,

His hens, his eggs; but there was law
for us;

We paid in person. He had a sow,
sir. She,

With meditative grunts of much con-
tent,

Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun
and mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the col-
lege tower

From her warm bed, and up the cork-
screw stair

With hand and rope we haled the
groaning sow,

And on the leads we kept her till she
pigg'd.

Large range of prospect had the
mother sow,

And but for daily loss of one she loved
As one by one we took them — but for
this —

As never sow was higher in this
world —

Might have been happy : but what lot
is pure ?

We took them all, till she was left
alone

Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her
sty.

John. They found you out ?

James. Not they.

John. Well — after all —

What know we of the secret of a
man ?

His nerves were wrong. What ails
us, who are sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool
the world,

Which charts us all in its coarse
blacks or whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To Pity — more from ignorance than
will.

But put your best foot forward, or
I fear

That we shall miss the mail : and here
it comes

With five at top : as quaint a four-in-
hand

As you shall see — three pyebalds and
a roan.

EDWIN MORRIS;

OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters
of a year,

My one Oasis in the dust and drouth
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :
See here, my doing : curves of moun-
tain, bridge,

Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon a
rock

With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :
And here, new-comers in an ancient
hold,

New-comers from the Mersey, million-
aires,

Here lived the Hills — a Tudor-chim-
nied bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of
bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the
lake

With Edwin Morris and with Edward
Bull

The curate ; he was fatter than his
cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the
names,

Long learned names of agaric, moss
and fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of the
rocks,

Who taught me how to skate, to row,
to swim,

Who read me rhymes elaborately good,
His own — I call'd him Crichton, for
he seem'd

All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early
life,

And his first passion ; and he answer'd
me ;

And well his words became him : was
he not

A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he
spoke.

“ My love for Nature is as old as I ;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to
that,

And three rich sennights more, my love
for her.

My love for Nature and my love for
her,

Of different ages, like twin-sisters
grew,

Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the
sun,

And some full music seem'd to move
and change

With all the varied changes of the
dark,

And either twilight and the day be-
tween ;

For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again

Revolving toward fulfilment, made it
sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to
breathe."

Or this or something like to this he
spoke.

Then said the fat-faced curate Edward
Bull,

"I take it, God made the woman for
the man,
And for the good and increase of the
world.

A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims us
up,

And keeps us tight; but these unreal
ways

Seem but the theme of writers, and
indeed

Worn threadbare. Man is made of
solid stuff.

I say, God made the woman for the
man,

And for the good and increase of the
world."

"Parson," said I, "you pitch the pipe
too low:

But I have sudden touches, and can
run

My faith beyond my practice into his:
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,

I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce have other music: yet say on.

What should one give to light on such
a dream?"

I ask'd him half-sardonically.

"Give?
Give all thou art," he answer'd, and a
light

Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy
cheek;

"I would have hid her needle in my
heart,

To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin: my ears

could hear
Her lightest breath; her least remark

was worth
The experience of the wise. I went

and came;

Her voice fled always thro' the summer
land;

I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy
days!

The flower of each, those moments
when we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no
more."

Were not his words delicious, I a
beast

To take them as I did? but something
jarr'd;

Whether he spoke too largely; that
there seem'd

A touch of something false, some self-
conceit,

Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humor, and I said:

"Friend Edwin, do not think your-
self alone

Of all men happy. Shall not Love to
me,

As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right
and left?

But you can talk: yours is a kindly
vein:

I have, I think, — Heaven knows — as
much within;

Have, or should have, but for a
thought or two,

That like a purple beech among the
greens

Looks out of place: 'tis from no want
in her:

It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern

mind
Dissecting passion. Time will set me
right."

So spoke I knowing not the things
that were.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward
Bull:

"God made the woman for the use of
man,

And for the good and increase of the
world."

And I and Edwin laughed; and now
 we paused
 About the windings of the marge to
 hear
 The soft wind blowing over meadowy
 holms
 And alders, garden-isles; and now we
 left
 The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
 By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,
 Delighted with the freshness and the
 sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on
 their crags,
 My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by
 him
 That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
 The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.
 'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no
 more:
 She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous
 suit*,
 The close, "Your Letty, only yours";
 and this
 Thrice underscored. The friendly
 mist of morn
 Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
 My craft aground, and heard with
 beating heart
 The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelv-
 ing keel;
 And out I stept, and up I crept: she
 moved,
 Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering
 flowers:
 Then low and sweet I whistled thrice;
 and she,
 She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore
 faith, I breathed
 In some new planet: a silent cousin
 stole
 Upon us and departed: "Leave," she
 cried,
 "O leave me!" "Never, dearest,
 never: here
 I brave the worst:" and while we
 stood like fools
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
 And poodles yell'd within, and out
 they came
 Trustees and Aunts and Uncles.

"What, with him!
 Go" (shrill'd the cotton-spinning
 chorus); "him!"
 I choked. Again they shriek'd the
 burthen—"Him!"
 Again with hands of wild rejection
 "Go!—
 Girl, get you in!" She went—and in
 one month
 They wedded her to sixty thousand
 pounds,
 To lands in Kent and messuages in
 York,
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery
 smile
 And educated whisker. But for me,
 They set an ancient creditor to
 work:
 It seems I broke a close with force
 and arms:
 There came a mystic token from the
 king
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!
 I read, and fled by night, and flying
 turn'd:
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake be-
 low:
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to
 the storm;
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor have
 seen
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared
 to hear.
 Nor cared to hear? perhaps: yet
 long ago
 I have pardon'd little Letty; not in-
 deed,
 It may be, for her own dear sake but
 this,
 She seems a part of those fresh days
 to me;
 For in the dust and drouth of Lon-
 don life
 She moves among my visions of the
 lake,
 While the prime swallow dips his
 wing, or then
 While the gold-lily blows, and over-
 head
 The light cloud smoulders on the
 summer crag.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and
crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven,
scarce meet

For troops of devils, mad with blas-
phemy,

I will not cease to grasp the hope I
hold

Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn
and sob,

Battering the gates of heaven with
storms of prayer,

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my
sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty
God,

This not be all in vain, that thrice ten
years,

Thrice multiplied by superhuman
pangs,

In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and
cold,

In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous
throes and cramps,

A sign betwixt the meadow and the
cloud,

Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp,

and sleet, and snow;

And I had hoped that ere this period
closed

Thou wouldst have caught me up into
thy rest,

Denying not these weather-beaten
limbs

The meed of saints, the white robe
and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord: I do not
breathe,

Not whisper, any murmur of com-
plaint.

Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this,
were still

Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to
bear,

Than were those lead-like tons of sin,
that crush'd

My spirit flat before thee.
O Lord, Lord,

Thou knowest I bore this better at
the first,

For I was strong and hale of body
then;

And tho' my teeth, which now are
dropt away,

Would chatter with the cold, and all
my beard

Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the
moon,

I drown'd the whoopings of the owl
with sound

Of pious hymns and psalms, and
sometimes saw

An angel stand and watch me, as I
sang.

Now am I feeble grown; my end
draws nigh;

I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf
I am,

So that I scarce can hear the people
hum

About the column's base, and almost
blind,

And scarce can recognize the fields I
know;

And both my thighs are rotted with
the dew;

Yet cease I not to clamor and to
cry,

While my stiff spine can hold my
weary head,

Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from
the stone,

Have mercy, mercy: take away my
sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my
soul,

Who may be saved? who is it may be
saved?

Who may be made a saint, if I fail
here?

Show me the man hath suffer'd more
than I.

For did not all thy martyrs die one
death?

For either they were stoned, or cruci-
fied,

Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or
sawn

In twain beneath the ribs; but I die
here

To-day, and whole years long, a life
of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a
way
(And heedfully I sifted all my
thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this
home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and
hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.
For not alone this pillar-punish-
ment,
Not this alone I bore: but while I
lived
In the white convent down the valley
there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The robe that haled the buckets from
the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the
noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that
all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More
than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest
all.
Three winters, that my soul might
grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain
side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I
lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged
stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering
mist, and twice
Black'd with thy branding thunder,
and sometimes
Sucking the damp for drink, and
eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those
that came
To touch my body and be heal'd, and
live:
And they say then that I work'd mir-
acles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst
mankind,

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers.
Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.
Then, that I might be more alone
with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar,
high
Six cubits, and three years on one of
twelve;
And twice three years I crouch'd on
one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I
grew
Twice ten long weary weary years to
this,
That numbers forty cubits from the
soil.
I think that I have borne as much
as this —
Or else I dream — and for so long a
time,
If I may measure time by yon slow
light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow
crowns —
So much — even so.
And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and
say,
“Fall down, O Simeon: that hast
suffer'd long
For ages and for ages!” then they
prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I
fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind
lethargies
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time
are choked.
But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and
all the saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men
on earth
House in the shade of comfortable
roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-
some food,
And wear warm clothes, and even
beasts have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of
 the light,
 Bow down one thousand and two hun-
 dred times,
 To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the
 saints ;
 Or in the night, after a little sleep,
 I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am
 wet
 With drenching dews, or stiff with
 crackling frost.
 I wear an undress'd goatskin on my
 back ;
 A grazing iron collar grinds my
 neck ;
 And in my weak, lean arms I lift the
 cross,
 And strive and wrestle with thee till
 I die :
 O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.
 O Lord, thou knowest what a man
 I am ;
 A sinful man, conceived and born in
 sin :
 'Tis their own doing ; this is none of
 mine ;
 Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for
 this,
 That here come those that worship
 me ? Ha ! ha !
 They think that I am somewhat.
 What am I ?
 The silly people take me for a saint,
 And bring me offerings of fruit and
 flowers :
 And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness
 here)
 Have all in all endured as much, and
 more
 Than many just and holy men, whose
 names
 Are register'd and calendar'd for
 saints.
 Good people, you do ill to kneel to
 me.
 What is it I can have done to merit
 this ?
 I am a sinner viler than you all.
 It may be I have wrought some mira-
 cles,
 And cured some halt and maim'd ; but
 what of that ?

It may be, no one, even among the
 saints,
 May match his pains with mine ; but
 what of that ?
 Yet do not rise ; for you may look on
 me,
 And in your looking you may kneel
 to God.
 Speak ! is there any of you halt or
 maim'd ?
 I think you know I have some power
 with Heaven
 From my long penance : let him speak
 his wish.
 Yes, I can heal him. Power goes
 forth from me.
 They say that they are heal'd. Ah,
 hark ! they shout
 "St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
 Can I work miracles and not be saved ?
 This is not told of any. They were
 saints.
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;
 Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,
 "Behold a saint !"
 And lower voices saint me from above.
 Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chry-
 alis
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope
 ere death
 Spreads more and more and more, that
 God hath now
 Sponged and made blank of crimeful
 record all
 My mortal archives.
 O my sons, my sons,
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
 Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,
 The watcher on the column till the end ;
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine
 bakes ;
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours
 become
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
 From my high nest of penance here
 proclaim
 That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
 Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals
 I lay,
 A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath

Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd
 my sleeve,
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
 I smote them with the cross; they
 swarm'd again.
 In bed like monstrous apes they
 crush'd my chest:
 They flapp'd my light out as I read: I
 saw
 Their faces grow between me and my
 book;
 With colt-like whinny and with hog-
 gish whine
 They burst my prayer. Yet this way
 was left,
 And by this way I 'scaped them.
 Mortify
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges
 and with thorns;
 Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it
 may be, fast
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly,
 with slow steps,
 With slow, faint steps, and much
 exceeding pain,
 Have scrambled past those pits of fire,
 that still
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not me
 the praise:
 God only through his bounty hath
 thought fit,
 Among the powers and princes of this
 world,
 To make me an example to mankind,
 Which few can reach to. Yet I do
 not say
 But that a time may come — *yea*, even
 now,
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the
 threshold stairs
 Of life — I say, that time is at the doors
 When you may worship me without
 reproach;
 For I will leave my relics in your land,
 And you may carve a shrine about
 my dust,
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my
 bones,
 When I am gather'd to the glorious
 saints.
 While I spake then, a sting of
 shrewdest pain

Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloud-
 like change,
 In passing, with a grosser film made
 thick
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end!
 the end!
 Surely the end! What's here? a
 shape, a shade,
 A flash of light. Is that the angel
 there
 That holds a crown? Come, blessed
 brother, come.
 I know thy glittering face. I waited
 long;
 My brows are ready. What! deny it
 now?
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I
 clutch it. Christ!
 'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown!
 the crown!
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
 Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm:
 and frankincense.
 Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints:
 I trust
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet
 for Heaven.
 Speak, if there be a priest, a man
 of God,
 Among you there, and let him pres-
 ently
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the
 shaft,
 And climbing up into my airy home,
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
 A quarter before twelve.
 But thou, O Lord,
 Aid all this foolish people; let them
 take
 Example, pattern: lead them to thy
 light.

 THE TALKING OAK.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;
 Once more before my face
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
 That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
 Beneath its drift of smoke;
 And ah! with what delighted eyes
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
 Ere that, which in me burn'd,
 The love, that makes me thrice a man,
 Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field
 I spoke without restraint,
 And with a larger faith appeal'd
 Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
 And told him of my choice,
 Until he plagiarized a heart,
 And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven
 None else could understand;
 I found him garrulously given,
 A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
 Is many a weary hour;
 'Twere well to question him, and try
 If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
 Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
 Whose topmost branches can discern
 The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
 If ever maid or spouse,
 As fair as my Olivia, came
 To rest beneath thy boughs. —

"O Walter, I have shelter'd here
 Whatever maiden grace
 The good old Summers, year by year
 Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

"Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
 And, issuing shorn and sleek,
 Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
 The girls upon the cheek,

"Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
 And number'd bead, and shrift,

Bluff Harry broke into the spence
 And turn'd the cowls adrift:

"And I have seen some score of those
 Fresh faces, that would thrive
 When his man-minded offset rose
 To chase the deer at five;

"And all that from the town would
 stroll,
 Till that wild wind made work
 In which the gloomy brewer's soul
 Went by me, like a stork:

"The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
 And others, passing praise,
 Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
 For puritanic stays:

"And I have shadow'd many a group
 Of beauties, that were born
 In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
 Or while the patch was worn;

"And, leg and arm with love-knots gay
 About me leap'd and laugh'd
 The modish Cupid of the day,
 And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

"I swear (and else may insects prick
 Each leaf into a gall)
 This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
 Is three times worth them all;

"For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
 Have faded long ago;
 But in these latter springs I saw
 Your own Olivia blow,

"From when she gamboll'd on the
 greens
 A baby-germ, to when
 The maiden blossoms of her teens
 Could number five from ten.

"I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
 (And hear me with thine ears,)
 That, tho' I circle in the grain
 Five hundred rings of years —

"Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
 Did never creature pass

So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass :

"For as to fairies, that will fit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace ;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft has heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

"O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town ;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

"And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy .
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

"An hour had past — and, sitting
straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

"But as for her, she stay'd at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come,
She look'd with discontent.

"She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf ;
She left the new piano shut :
She could not please herself.

"Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

"A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chace grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child :

"But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and
rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

"And here she came, and round me
play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my 'giant bole ;'

"And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist :
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

"I wish'd myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

"Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as
sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold."

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace !
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs !

"O yes, she wander'd round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she
found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

"A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

"Then flush'd her cheek with rosy
light,
She glanced across the plain ;

But not a creature was in sight :
She kiss'd me once again.

" Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd :

" And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.

" Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm —
The cushions of whose touch may
press
The maiden's tender palm.

" I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My rapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust :

" For ah! my friend, the days were
brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the
leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

" But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

" She had not found me so remiss ;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto."

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well ;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

" 'Tis little more : the day was warm ;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
And at my feet she lay.

" Her eyelids dropp'd their silken
caves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

" I took the swarming sound of life —
The music from the town —
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lull'd them in my own.

" Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye ;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly ;

" A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine ;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine,

" Then close and dark my arms I
spread,
And shadow'd all her rest —
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

" But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

" And yet it was a graceful gift —
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

" I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

" O kiss him twice and thrice for me.
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
 Look further thro' the chace,
 Spread upward till thy boughs discern
 The front of Summer-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
 That but a moment lay
 Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
 Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
 The warmth it thence shall win
 To riper life may magnetize
 The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
 Or lapse from hand to hand,
 Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
 Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
 Nor wielded axe disjoint,
 That art the fairest-spoken tree
 From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top
 All throats that gurgle sweet!
 All starry culmination drop
 Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow —
 And while he sinks or swells
 The full south-breeze around thee
 blow
 The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
 That under deeply strikes!
 The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
 High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
 But, rolling as in sleep,
 Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
 That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
 That only by thy side
 Will I to Olive plight my troth,
 And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may
 fall,
 She, Dryad-like, shall wear
 Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
 In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
 And praise thee more in both
 Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,
 Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
 And mystic sentence spoke;
 And more than England honors that,
 Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
 Till all the paths were dim,
 And far below the Roundhead rode,
 And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY.

Of love that never found his earthly
 close,

What sequel? Streaming eyes and
 breaking hearts?

Or all the same as if he had not been?
 Not so. Shall Error in the round
 of time

Still father Truth? O shall the brag-
 gart shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom
 work itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to
 law

System and empire? Sin itself be
 found

The cloudy porch oft opening on the
 Sun?

And only he, this wonder, dead, be-
 come

Mere highway dust? or year by year
 alone

Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of
 himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed,
 were all,

Better the narrow brain, the stony
 heart,

The staring eye glazed o'er with sap-
less days,
The long mechanic paeings to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy
love?
O three times less unworthy! likewise
thou
Art more thro' Love, and greater than
thy years
The Sun will run his orbit, and the
Moon
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself
will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge
changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large
in Time,
And that which shapes it to some per-
fect end.
Will some one say, Then why not ill
for good?
Why took ye not your pastime? To
that man
My work shall answer, since I knew
the right
And did it; for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a
man.
— So let me think 'tis well for thee
and me—
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches peace, my
heart so slow
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to
me,
When eyes, love-languid thro' half
tears would dwell
One earnest, earnest moment upon
mine,
Then not to dare to see! when thy low
voice,
Faltering, would break its syllables, to
keep
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in
a leash,
And not leap forth and fall about thy
neck,
And on thy bosom (deep desired
relief!)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that
weigh'd

Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!
For Love himself took part against
himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of
Love—
O this world's curse,—beloved but
hated—came
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace
and mine,
And crying, "Who is this? behold
thy bride,"
She push'd me from thee.
If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:
Hard is my doom and thine: thou
knowest it all.
Could Love part thus? was it not
well to speak,
To have spoken once? It could not
but be well.
The slow sweet hours that bring us all
things good,
The slow sad hours that bring us all
things ill,
And all good things from evil, brought
the night
In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want, that hollow'd all the
heart,
Gave utterance by the yearning of an
eye,
That burn'd upon its object thro' such
tears
As flow but once a life.
The trance gave way
To those caresses, when a hundred
times
In that last kiss, which never was the
last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived
and died.
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and
the words
That make a man feel strong in speak-
ing truth;
Till now the dark was worn, and over-
head
The lights of sunset and of sunrise
mix'd
In that brief night; the summer night,
that paused

Among her stars to hear us; stars
that hung

Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels
of Time

Spun round in station, but the end
had come.

O then like those, who clench their
nerves to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There — closing like an individual
life —

In one blind cry of passion and of
pain,

Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
Caught up the whole of love and
utter'd it,

And bade adieu for ever.

Live — yet live —

Shall sharpest pathos blight us, know-
ing all

Life needs for life is possible to
will —

Live happy; tend thy flowers; be
tended by

My blessing! Should my Shadow
cross thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand it
thou

For calmer hours to Memory's dark-
est hold,

If not to be forgotten — not at
once —

Not all forgotten. Should it cross
thy dreams,

O might it come like one that looks
content,

With quiet eyes unfaithful to the
truth,

And point thee forward to a distant
light,

Or seem to lift a burthen from thy
heart

And leave thee freer, till thou wake
refresh'd

Then when the first low matin-chirp
hath grown

Full quire, and morning driv'n her
plow of pearl

Far furrowing into light the mounded
rack,

Beyond the fair green field and east-
ern sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which
Leonard wrote:

It was last summer on a tour in Wales:
Old James was with me: we that day
had been

Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leon-
ard there,

And found him in Llanberis: then we
crost

Between the lakes, and clamber'd half
way up

The counter side; and that same song
of his

He told me; for I banter'd him, and
swore

They said he lived shut up within
himself,

A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous
days,

That, setting the *how much* before the
how,

Cry, like the daughters of the horse-
leech, "Give,

Cram us with all," but count not me
the herd!

To which "They call me what they
will," he said:

"But I was born too late: the fair new
forms,

That float about the threshold of an
age,

Like truths of Science waiting to be
caught —

Catch me who can, and make the
catcher crown'd —

Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen,

hear
These measured words, my work of
yestermorn.

"We sleep and wake and sleep, but
all things move;

The Sun flies forward to his brother
Sun;

The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her
ellipse;

And human things returning on them-
selves

Move onward, leading up the golden
year.

" Ah, tho' the times, when some new
thought can bud,
Are but as poets' seasons when they
flower,
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the
shore,
Have ebb and flow conditioning their
march,
And slow and sure comes up the
golden year.

" When wealth no more shall rest
in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly
melt

In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be
liker man

Thro' all the season of the golden
year.

" Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens
be wrens?

If all the world were falcons, what of
that?

The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days
Roll onward, leading up the golden
year.

" Fly, happy sails, and bear
the Press;

Fly happy with the mission of the
Cross;

Knit land to land, and blowing haven-
ward

With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear
of toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

" But we grow old. Ah! when shall
all men's good

Be each man's rule, and universal
Peace

Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the
sea,

Thro' all the circle of the golden
year?"

Thus far he flow'd, and ended;
whereupon

" Ah, folly!" in mimic cadence an-
swer'd James —

" Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time, nor in our children's
time,

"Tis like the second world to us that
live;

"Twere all as one to fix our hopes on
Heaven

As on this vision of the golden year."

With that he struck his staff against
the rocks

And broke it, — James, — you know
him, — old, but full

Of force and cholera, and firm upon his
feet,

And like an oaken stock in winter
woods,

O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis:
Then added, all in heat:

" What stuff is this!

Old writers push'd the happy season
back, —

The more fools they, — we forward:
dreamers both:

You most, that in an age, when every
hour

Must sweat her sixty minutes to the
death,

Live on, God love us, as if the seeds-
man, rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not
plunge

His hand into the bag: but well I
know

That unto him who works, and feels
he works,

This same grand year is ever at the
doors."

He spoke; and, high above, I heard
them blast

The steep slate-quarry, and the great
echo flap

And buffet round the hills, from bluff
to bluff.

ULYSSES.

Ir little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these bar-
ren crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and
dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and

know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
 Life to the lees: all times I have en-
 joy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both
 with those
 That loved me, and alone; on shore,
 and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
 Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
 For always roaming with a hungry
 heart
 Much have I seen and known; cities
 of men
 And manners, climates, councils, gov-
 ernments,
 Myself not least, but honor'd of them
 all;
 And drunk delight of battle with my
 peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy
 Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch where-
 thro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose
 margin fades
 For ever and for ever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in
 use!
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life
 piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me
 Little remains: but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something
 more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it
 were
 For some three suns to store and hoard
 myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge like a sinking
 star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human
 thought.
 This is my son, mine own Telema-
 chus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the
 isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labor, by slow prudence to make
 mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the
 good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the
 sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work,
 I mine.
 There lies the port; the vessel puffs
 her sail:
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My
 mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought,
 and thought with me—
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and
 opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads— you and
 I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
 Death closes all: but something ere
 the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be
 done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with
 Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the
 rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon
 climbs: the deep
 Moans round with many voices.
 Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order
 smite
 The sounding furrows; for my pur-
 pose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the
 baths
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us
 down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy
 Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we
 knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and
 tho'
 We are not now that strength which
 in old days

Moved earth and heaven ; that which
 we are, we are ;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but
 strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
 yield.

TITHONUS.

THE woods decay, the woods decay
 and fall,
 The vapors weep their burthen to the
 ground,
 Man comes and tills the field and lies
 beneath,
 And after many a summer dies the
 swan.
 Me only cruel immortality
 Consumes : I wither slowly in thine
 arms,
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a
 dream
 'The ever-silent spaces of the East,
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls
 of morn.

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a
 man —
 So glorious in his beauty and thy
 choice,
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he
 seem'd
 To his great heart none other than a
 God !
 I ask'd thee, " Give me immortality."
 Then didst thou grant mine asking
 with a smile,
 Like wealthy men who care not how
 they give.
 But thy strong Hours indignant
 work'd their wills,
 And beat me down and marr'd and
 wasted me,
 And tho' they could not end me, left
 me maim'd
 To dwell in presence of immortal
 youth,
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,
 And all I was, in ashes. Can thy
 love,

Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even
 now,
 Close over us, the silver star, thy
 guide,
 Shines in those tremulous eyes that
 fill with tears
 To hear me ? Let me go : take back
 thy gift :
 Why should a man desire in any way
 To vary from the kindly race of men,
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
 Where all should pause, as is most
 meet for all ?

A soft air fans the cloud apart ;
 there comes
 A glimpse of that dark world where
 I was born.
 Once more the old mysterious glim-
 mer steals
 From thy pure brows, and from thy
 shoulders pure,
 And bosom beating with a heart re-
 new'd.
 Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the
 gloom,
 Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close
 to mine,
 Ere yet they blind the stars, and the
 wild team
 Which love thee, yearning for thy
 yoke, arise,
 And shake the darkness from their
 loosen'd manes,
 And beat the twilight into flakes of
 fire.

Lo ! ever thus thou growest beauti-
 ful
 In silence, then before thine answer
 given
 Departest, and thy tears are on my
 cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with
 thy tears,
 And make me tremble lest a saying
 learnt,
 In days far-off, on that dark earth, be
 true ?
 "The Gods themselves cannot recall
 their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another
 heart
 In days far-off, and with what other
 eyes
 I used to watch—if I be he that
 watch'd—
 The lucid outline forming round thee;
 saw
 The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
 Changed with thy mystic change, and
 felt my blood
 Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
 Thy presence and thy portals, while I
 lay,
 Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing
 dewy-warm
 With kisses balmier than half-open-
 ing buds
 Of April, and could hear the lips that
 kiss'd
 Whispering I knew not what of wild
 and sweet,
 Like that strange song I heard Apollo
 sing,
 While Ilion like a mist rose into
 towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine
 East:
 How can my nature longer mix with
 thine?
 Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me,
 cold
 Are all thy lights, and cold my
 wrinkled feet
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds,
 when the steam
 Floats up from those dim fields about
 the homes
 Of happy men that have the power
 to die,
 And grassy barrows of the happier
 dead.
 Release me, and restore me to the
 ground;
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my
 grave:
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by
 morn;
 I earth in earth forget these empty
 courts,
 And thee returning on thy silver
 wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
 Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
 Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
 Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
 Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
 With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
 When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be. —

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove ;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd — her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs —
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes —

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong";
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands ;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might,
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper throug'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falsel than all fancy fathoms, falsel than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ? — having known me — to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought :
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand —
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth !
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule !
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool !

Well — 'tis well that I should bluster ! — Hadst thou less unworthy
proved —
Would to God — for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit ?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort ? in division of the records of the mind ?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind ?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak and move :
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore ?
No — she never loved me truly : love is love for evermore.

Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings — she herself was not
exempt —
Truly, she herself had suffer'd" — Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throug'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from thy deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new :
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint :
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's ?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string ?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's pleasure, woman's pain —
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd ;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree —
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing
space ;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun or clime ?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time —

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day :
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun :
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow ;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;
I hung with grooms and porters on the
bridge,*

*To watch the three tall spires ; and there
I shaped*

The city's ancient legend into this : —

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that
prate

Of rights and wrongs, have loved the
people well,

And loathed to see them over-tax'd ;
but she

Did more, and underwent, and over-
came,

The woman of a thousand summers
back,

Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who
ruled

In Coventry : for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers
brought

Their children, clamoring, " If we pay,
we starve ! "

She sought her lord, and found him,
where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his
hair

A yard behind. She told him of their
tears,

And pray'd him, " If they pay this tax,
they starve. "

Whereat he stared, replying, half-
amazed,

" You would not let your little finger
ache

For such as *these* ? " — " But I would
die, " said she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by
Paul :

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her
ear ;

" Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk ! " — " Alas ! "
she said,

" But prove me what it is I would not
do. "

And from a heart as rough as Esau's
hand,

He answer'd, " Ride you naked thro'
the town,

And I repeal it " ; and nodding, as in
scorn,

He parted, with great strides among
his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her
mind,

As winds from all the compass shift
and blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,

And bade him cry, with sound of
trumpet, all

The hard condition ; but that she
would loose

The people : therefore, as they loved
her well,
From then till noon no foot should
pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing ; but
that all
Should keep within, door shut, and
window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower,
and there
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her
belt,
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a
breath
She linger'd, looking like a summer
moon
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook
her head,
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to
her knee ;
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the
stair
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sun-
beam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she
reach'd
The gateway ; there she found her
palfrey trapt
In purple blazon'd with armorial
gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with
chastity :
The deep air listen'd round her as she
rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed
for fear.
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon
the spout
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking
cur
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's
footfall shot
Like horrors thro' her pulses : the
blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes ; and
overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared :
but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till last, she
saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from
the field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the
wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with
chastity :
And one low churl, compact of thank-
less earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had
their will,
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his
head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers,
who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense mis-
used ;
And she, that knew not, pass'd : and
all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound,
the shameless noon
Was clash'd and hammer'd from a
hundred towers,
One after one : but even then she
gain'd
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed
and crown'd,
To meet her lord, she took the tax
away
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :
A pleasant hour has passed away
While, dreaming on your damask
cheek,
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
As by the lattice you reclined,
I went thro' many wayward moods
To see you dreaming — and, behind,
A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dream'd, until at last
Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
And loosely settled into form.
And would you have the thought I
had,
And see the vision that I saw,
Then take the broidery-frame, and add
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest
eye—
The rhymes are dazzled from their
place,
And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

I.

THE varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy
plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows
come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their
eggs:
In these, in those the life is stay'd.
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the
wall.

IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd; and
there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honor blooming fair;
The page has caught her hand in his:
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:

His own are pouted to a kiss:
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble
wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as
blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, burr and brake and
brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace spire.

VII.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of
men?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and
Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has
grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of
pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould
 Languidly ever; and, amid
 Her full black ringlets downward
 roll'd,
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
 With bracelets of the diamond
 bright:
 Her constant beauty doth inform
 Stillness with love, and day with
 light.

III.

She sleeps: her breathings are not
 heard
 In palace chambers far apart.
 The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
 That lie upon her charmed heart.
 She sleeps: on either hand upswells
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly
 prest:
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL.

I.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
 To those that seek them issue forth;
 For love in sequel works with fate,
 And draws the veil from hidden
 worth.
 He travels far from other skies —
 His mantle glitters on the rocks —
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

II.

The bodies and the bones of those
 That strove in other days to pass,
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
 He gazes on the silent dead:
 "They perish'd in their daring
 deeds."
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,
 "The many fail: the one succeeds."

III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he
 seeks:
 He breaks the hedge: he enters
 there:
 The color flies into his cheeks:
 He trusts to light on something fair;
 For all his life the charm did talk
 About his path, and hover near
 With words of promise in his walk,
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV.

More close and close his footsteps
 wind:
 The Magic Music in his heart
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find
 The quiet chamber far apart.
 The spirit flutters like a lark,
 He stoops — to kiss her — on his
 knee.
 "Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
 How dark those hidden eyes must
 be!"

THE REVIVAL.

I.

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
 And barking dogs, and crowing
 cocks;
 A fuller light illumined all,
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
 The butler drank, the steward
 scrawl'd,
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock
 squall'd,
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and
 clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III.

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and
spoke,

"By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV.

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?"
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return'd reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE.

I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond this utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

II.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss;"
"O wake for ever, love," she hears,
"O love, 'twas such as this and this."
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

III.

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep!"
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled!"
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"
"O love, thy kiss would wake the
dead!"
And o'er them many a flowing range

Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

IV.

"A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me
where?"
"O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders
there."
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
'Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL.

I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair.
Oh, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed flower that simply
blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?

II.

But any man that walks the mead,
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
According as his humors lead,
A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI.

I.

You shake your head. A random
string
Your finer female sense offends.
Well — were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends;
To pass with all our social ties
To silence from the paths of men;
And every hundred years to rise

And learn the world, and sleep
again ;
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
As wild as aught of fairy lore ;
And all that else the years will show,
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
The vast Republics that may grow,
The Federations and the Powers ;
Titanic forces taking birth
In divers seasons, divers climes ;
For we are Ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decades new and strange,
Or gay quinqueniads would we reap
The flower and quintessence of
change.

III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !
So much your eyes my fancy take—
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake !
For, am I right, or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not
care ;
You'd have *my* moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there :
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you ;
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
And evermore a costly kiss
The prelude to some brighter world.

IV.

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd
hopes,
What lips, like thine, so sweetly
join'd ?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fulness of the pensive mind ;

Which all too dearly self-involved,
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee neither hear nor see :
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may
give,
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
“What wonder, if he thinks me
fair ?”
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise
That float thro' Heaven, and cannot
light ?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren :
Yet say the neighbors when they call,
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion !
And had I lived when song was great
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation ;

Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
Coquetting with young beeches ;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,
And down the middle, buzz ! she went
With all her bees behind her :
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the
grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended ;
And shepherds from the mountain-
eaves
Look'd down, half-pleas'd, half-
frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure ;
So youthful and so flexible then,
You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the
twigs !

And make her dance attendance ;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhou roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle ;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle ;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading ;
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbor's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro'
there,
And Methods of transplanting trees
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbors clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy ;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation.
I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom :
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
 Are sparkling to the moon:
 My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
 May my soul follow soon!
 The shadows of the convent-towers
 Slant down the snowy sward,
 Still creeping with the creeping hours
 That lead me to my Lord:
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
 As are the frosty skies,
 Or this first snowdrop of the year
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and
 dark,
 To yonder shining ground;
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,
 To yonder argent round;
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,
 My spirit before Thee;
 So in mine earthly house I am,
 To that I hope to be.
 Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
 The flashes come and go;
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,
 And strows her lights below,
 And deepens on and up! the gates
 Roll back, and far within
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom
 waits,

To make me pure of sin.
 The sabbaths of Eternity,
 One sabbath deep and wide —
 A light upon the shining sea —
 The Bridegroom with his bride!

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of
 men,
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,
 My strength is as the strength of ten,
 Because my heart is pure.
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,

The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and
 fly,
 The horse and rider reel:
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
 And when the tide of combat stands—
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
 On whom their favors fall!
 For them I battle till the end,
 To save from shame and thrall:
 But all my heart is drawn above,
 My knees are bow'd in crypt and
 shrine:
 I never felt the kiss of love,
 Nor maiden's hand in mine.
 More bounteous aspects on me beam,
 Me mightier transports move and
 thrill;
 So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
 A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
 A light before me swims,
 Between dark stems the forest glows,
 I hear a noise of hymns:
 Then by some secret shrine I ride;
 I hear a voice but none are there;
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
 And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
 I find a magic bark;
 I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
 I float till all is dark.
 A gentle sound, an awful light!
 Three angels bear the holy Grail:
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
 Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And star-like mingles with the stars

When on my goodly charger borne
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,

The cock crows ere the Christmas
morn,

The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand
and mail;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight — to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and
eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and
pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder
town

Met me walking on yonder way,
"And have you lost your heart?"
she said;

"And are you married yet, Edward
Gray?"

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
"Sweet Emma Moreland, love no
more
Can touch the heart of Edward
Gray.

"Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's
will:
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill

"Shy she was, and I thought her cold;
Thought her proud, and fled over
the sea;
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for
me.

"Cruel, cruel the words I said!
Cruelly came they back to-day:
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,
'To trouble the heart of Edward
Gray.'

"There I put my face in the grass —
Whisper'd, 'Listen to my despair:
I repent me of all I did:
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!'

"Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
And here the heart of Edward
Gray!'

"Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to
tree;
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me

"Bitterly wept I over the stone:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
And there the heart of Edward
Gray!"

WILL WATERPROOF'S
LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port:
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favor'd lips of mine;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days:
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;
The gas-light wavers dimmer;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,

Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them —
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
There must be stormy weather;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
If old things, there are new;
Ten thousand broken lights and
shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;
With fair horizons bound:
This whole wide earth of light and
shade
Comes out a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best
That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place?
Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,
No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
This wheel within my head,
Which bears a season'd brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
 With many kinsmen gay,
 Where long and largely we carouse
 As who shall say me nay :
 Each month, a birth-day coming on,
 We drink defying trouble,
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,
 And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
 Had relish fiery-new,
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
 As old as Waterloo ;
 Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,
 In musty bins and chambers,
 Had cast upon its crusty side
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !
 She answer'd to my call,
 She changes with that mood or this,
 Is all-in-all to all :
 She lit the spark within my throat,
 To make my blood run quicker,
 Used all her fiery will, and smote
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
 The waiter's hands, that reach
 To each his perfect pint of stout,
 His proper chop to each.
 He looks not like the common breed
 That with the napkin dally ;
 I think he came like Ganymede,
 From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
 Than modern poultry drop,
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,
 And cramm'd a plumper crop ;
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
 Crow'd lustier late and early,
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
 And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
 Till in a court he saw
 A something-pottle-bodied boy
 That knuckled at the taw :
 He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and
 good,

Flew over roof and casement :
 His brothers of the weather stood
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorp and spire,
 And follow'd with acclains,
 A sign to many a staring shire
 Came crowing over Thames.
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
 Till, where the street grows straiter,
 One fix'd for ever at the door,
 And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?
 How out of place she makes
 The violet of a legend blow
 Among the chops and steaks !
 'Tis but a steward of the can,
 One shade more plump than com-
 mon ;
 As just and mere a serving-man
 As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me
 down
 Into the common day ?
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,
 Which I shall have to pay ?
 For, something duller than at first,
 Nor wholly comfortable,
 I sit, my empty glass reversed,
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
 I take myself to task ;
 Lest of the fulness of my life
 I leave an empty flask :
 For I had hope, by something rare
 To prove myself a poet :
 But, while I plan and plan, my hair
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
 Till they be gather'd up ;
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,
 Will haunt the vacant cup :
 And others' follies teach us not,
 Nor much their wisdom teaches ;
 And most, of sterling worth, is what
 Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!

We know not what we know.

But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone;

'Tis gone, and let it go.

'Tis gone: a thousand such have slept

Away from my embraces,

And fall'n into the dusty crypt

Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went

Long since, and came no more;

With peals of genial clamor sent

From many a tavern-door,

With twisted quirks and happy hits,

From misty men of letters;

The tavern-hours of mighty wits —

Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and
looks

Had yet their native glow:

Nor yet the fear of little books

Had made him talk for show;

But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,

He flash'd his random speeches,

Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd

His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,

Like all good things on earth!

For should I prize thee, couldst thou
last,

At half thy real worth?

I hold it good, good things should
pass:

With time I will not quarrel:

It is but yonder empty glass

That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,

To which I most resort,

I too must part: I hold thee dear

For this good pint of port.

For this, thou shalt from all things
suck

Marrow of mirth and laughter;

And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck

Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,

The sphere thy fate allots:

Thy latter days increased with pence

Go down among the pots:

Thou battenest by the greasy gleam

In haunts of hungry sinners,

Old boxes, larded with the steam

Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our
skins,

Would quarrel with our lot;

Thy care is, under polish'd tins

To serve the hot-and-hot;

To come and go, and come again,

Returning like the pewit,

And watch'd by silent gentlemen,

That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head

The thick-set hazel dies;

Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread

The corners of thine eyes:

Live long, nor feel in head or chest

Our changeful equinoxes,

Till mellow Death, like some late
guest,

Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt
cease

To pace the gritted floor,

And, laying down an unctuous lease

Of life, shalt earn no more;

No carved cross-bones, the types of
Death,

Shall show thee past to Heaven:

But carved cross-pipes, and, under-
neath,

A pint-pot neatly graven.

LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,

And clouds are highest up in air,

Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe

To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:

Lovers long-betroth'd were they:

They too will wed the morrow morn:

God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair:
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, "Who was this that went from
thee?"

"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thank'd!" said Alice the
nurse,

"That all comes round so just and
fair:

Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,
my nurse?"

Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so
wild?"

"As God's above," said Alice the
nurse,

"I speak the truth. you are my
child.

"The old Earl's daughter died at my
breast;

I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother," she said, "if this be true,

To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the
nurse,

"But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord
Ronald's,

When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,

"I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the
nurse,

"But keep the secret all ye can."
She said, "Not so: but I will know
If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice
the nurse,

"The man will cleave unto his
right."

"And he shall have it," the lady
replied,

"Tho' I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother
dear!

Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."
"O mother, mother, mother," she said.

"So strange it seems to me.

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,

And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare:

She went by dale, and she went by
down,

With a single rose in her air.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had
brought

Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stopt Lord Ronald from his
tower:

"O Lady Clare, you shame your
worth!

Why come you drest like a village
maid,

That are the flower of the earth?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are:

I am a beggar born," she said,
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
 "For I am yours in word and in deed.

Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
 "Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up!
 Her heart within her did not fail:
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
 And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn:
 He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood:

"If you are not the heiress born,
 And I," said he, "the next in blood —

"If you are not the heiress born,
 And I," said he, "the lawful heir,
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,
 And you shall still be Lady Clare."

THE CAPTAIN.

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

HE that only rules by terror
 Doeth grievous wrong.
 Deep as Hell I count his error.
 Let him hear my song.
 Brave the Captain was: the seamen
 Made a gallant crew,
 Gallant sons of English freemen,
 Sailors bold and true.
 But they hated his oppression,
 Stern he was and rash;
 So for every light transgression
 Doom'd them to the lash.
 Day by day more harsh and cruel
 Seem'd the Captain's mood.
 Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
 Burnt in each man's blood.
 Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
 Hoped to make the name
 Of his vessel great in story,
 Wheresoc'er he came.
 So they past by capes and islands,
 Many a harbor-mouth,
 Sailing under palmy highlands
 Far within the South.
 On a day when they were going

O'er the lone expanse,
 In the north, her canvas flowing,
 Rose a ship of France.
 Then the Captain's color heighten'd,
 Joyful came his speech:
 But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
 In the eyes of each.
 "Chase," he said: the ship flew for-
 ward,
 And the wind did blow;
 Stately, lightly, went she Norward,
 Till she near'd the foe.
 Then they look'd at him they hated,
 Had what they desired:
 Mute with folded arms they waited —
 Not a gun was fired.
 But they heard the foeman's thunder
 Roaring out their doom;
 All the air was torn in sunder,
 Crashing went the boom,
 Spars were splinter'd, decks were shat-
 ter'd,
 Bullets fell like rain;
 Over mast and deck were scatter'd
 Blood and brains of men.
 Spars were splinter'd; decks were
 broken:
 Every mother's son —
 Down they dropt — no word was
 spoken —
 Each beside his gun.
 On the decks as they were lying,
 Were their faces grim.
 In their blood, as they lay dying,
 Did they smile on him.
 Those, in whom he had reliance
 For his noble name,
 With one smile of still defiance
 Sold him unto shame.
 Shame and wrath his heart con-
 founded,
 Pale he turn'd and red,
 Till himself was deadly wounded
 Falling on the dead.
 Dismal error! fearful slaughter!
 Years have wander'd by,
 Side by side beneath the water
 Crew and Captain lie;
 There the sunlit ocean tosses
 O'er them mouldering,
 And the lonely seabird crosses
 With one waft of the wing.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gayly,
 "If my heart by signs can tell,
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
 And I think thou lov'st me well."
 She replies, in accents fainter,
 "There is none I love like thee."
 He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
 He to lips, that fondly falter,
 Presses his without reproof:
 Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father's roof.
 "I can make no marriage present:
 Little can I give my wife.
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,
 And I love thee more than life."
 They by parks and lodges going
 See the lordly castles stand:
 Summer woods, about them blowing,
 Made a murmur in the land.
 From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,
 "Let us see these handsome houses
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell."
 So she goes by him attended,
 Hears him lovingly converse,
 Sees whatever fair and splendid
 Lay betwixt his home and hers;
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
 Parks and order'd gardens great,
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,
 Built for pleasure and for state.
 All he shows her makes him dearer:
 Evermore she seems to gaze
 On that cottage growing nearer,
 Where they twain will spend their
 days.
 O but she will love him truly!
 He shall have a cheerful home;
 She will order all things duly,
 When beneath his roof they come.
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
 Till a gateway she discerns
 With armorial bearings stately,
 And beneath the gate she turns;
 Sees a mansion more majestic
 Than all those she saw before:
 Many a gallant gay domestic
 Bows before him at the door.
 And they speak in gentle murmur,
 When they answer to his call,

While he treads with footsteps firmer
 Leading on from hall to hall.
 And, while now she wonders blindly,
 Nor the meaning can divine,
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,
 "All of this is mine and thine."
 Here he lives in state and bounty,
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
 Not a lord in all the county
 Is so great a lord as he.
 All at once the color flushes
 Her sweet face from brow to chin:
 As it were with shame she blushes,
 And her spirit changed within.
 Then her countenance all over
 Pale again as death did prove:
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,
 And he cheer'd her soul with love.
 So she strove against her weakness.
 Tho' at times her spirit sank:
 Shaped her heart with woman's meek-
 ness
 To all duties of her rank:
 And a gentle consort made he,
 And her gentle mind was such
 That she grew a noble lady,
 And the people loved her much.
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,
 With the burthen of an honor
 Unto which she was not born.
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
 And she murmur'd, "Oh, that he
 Were once more that landscape-
 painter,
 Which did win my heart from me!"
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
 Fading slowly from his side:
 Three fair children first she bore him,
 Then before her time she died.
 Weeping, weeping late and early,
 Walking up and pacing down,
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
 And he came to look upon her,
 And he look'd at her and said,
 "Bring the dress and put it on her,
 That she wore when she was wed."
 Then her people, softly treading,
 Bore to earth her body, drest
 In the dress that she was wed in,
 That her spirit might have rest.

THE VOYAGE.

I.

WE left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbor-mouth ;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fled to the South :
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore !
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

II.

Warm broke the breeze against the
brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail :
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd
the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the
keel,
And swept behind ; so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn !

IV.

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view ;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep

Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker
sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering
brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine ;
By sands and steaming flats, and floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly stream'd ye by the
bark !
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;
At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and
fruit,
But we nor paused for fruit nor
flowers.

VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and
night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line ;
But each man murmur'd, "O my
Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine."

IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge
fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd
the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

X.

And only one among us — him
 We pleased not — he was seldom
 pleased:
 He saw not far: his eyes were dim:
 But ours he swore were all diseased.
 "A ship of fools," he shriek'd in spite,
 "A ship of fools," he sneer'd and
 wept.
 And overboard one stormy night
 He cast his body, and on we swept.

XI.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
 Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;
 We lov'd the glories of the world,
 But laws of nature were our scorn.
 For blasts would rise and rave and
 cease,
 But, whence were those that drove
 the sail
 Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
 And to and thro' the counter gale?

XII.

Again to colder climes we came,
 For still we follow'd where she led:
 Now mate is blind and captain lame,
 And half the crew are sick or dead,
 But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
 We follow that which flies before:
 We know the merry world is round,
 And we may sail for evermore.

—

SIR LAUNCELOT AND
 QUEEN GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

Like souls that balance joy and pain,
 With tears and smiles from heaven
 again
 The maiden Spring upon the plain
 Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.
 In crystal vapor everywhere
 Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
 And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
 The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
 Sometimes the throistle whistled
 strong:
 Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd
 along,
 Hush'd all the groves from fear of
 wrong:
 By grassy capes with fuller sound
 In curves the yellowing river ran,
 And drooping chestnut-buds began
 To spread into the perfect fan,
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
 Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
 Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
 With blissful treble ringing clear.
 She seem'd a part of joyous
 Spring:
 A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
 Buckled with golden clasps before;
 A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
 Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
 Now by some tinkling rivulet,
 In mosses mixt with violet
 Her cream-white mule his pastern set.
 And fleeter now she skimm'd the
 plains
 Than she whose elfin prancer springs
 By night to eery warblings,
 When all the glimmering moorland
 rings
 With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
 The happy winds upon her play'd,
 Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
 She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,
 A man had given all other bliss,
 And all his wordly worth for this,
 To waste his whole heart in one kiss
 Upon her perfect lips.

—

A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
 Thy tribute wave deliver:
 No more by thee my steps shall be,
 For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
 A rivulet then a river:
 No where by thee my steps shall be,
 For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
 And here thine aspen shiver;
 And here by thee will hum the bee,
 For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
 A thousand moons will quiver;
 But not by thee my steps shall be,
 For ever and for ever.

THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid;
 She was more fair than words can
 say:

Bare-footed came the beggar maid
 Before the king Cophetua.
 In robe and crown the king stept down,
 To meet and greet her on her way;
 "It is no wonder," said the lords,
 "She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
 She in her poor attire was seen:
 One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
 One her dark hair and lovesome
 mien.

So sweet a face, such angel grace,
 In all that land had never been:
 Cophetua sware a royal oath:
 "This beggar maid shall be my
 queen!"

THE EAGLE.

FRAGMENT.

HE clasps the crag with crooked
 hands;
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,
 Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
 He watches from his mountain walls,
 And like a thunderbolt he falls.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave
 Yon orange sunset waning slow:
 From fringes of the faded eve,
 O, happy planet, eastward go;
 Till over thy dark shoulder glow
 Thy silver sister-world, and rise
 To glass herself in dewy eyes
 That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
 Dip forward under starry light,
 And move me to my marriage-morn,
 And round again to happy night.

COME not, when I am dead,
 To drop thy foolish tears upon my
 grave,
 To trample round my fallen head,
 And vex the unhappy dust thou
 wouldst not save.
 There let the wind sweep and the
 plover cry;
 But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy
 crime
 I care no longer, being all unblest:
 Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick
 of Time,
 And I desire to rest.
 Pass on, weak heart, and leave me
 where I lie:
 Go by, go by.

THE LETTERS.

I.

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant
 air,
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
 And saw the altar cold and bare.
 A clog of lead was round my feet,
 A band of pain across my brow;
 "Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall
 meet
 Before you hear my marriage vow."

II.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
 That mock'd the wholesome human
 heart,

And then we met in wrath and wrong,
 We met, but only meant to part.
 Full cold my greeting was and dry;
 She faintly smiled, she hardly
 moved;
 I saw with half-unconscious eye
 She wore the colors I approved.

III.

She took the little ivory chest,
 With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
 Then raised her head with lips com-
 prest,
 And gave my letters back to me.
 And gave the trinkets and the rings,
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could
 please;
 As looks a father on the things
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

IV.

She told me all her friends had said;
 I raged against the public liar;
 She talk'd as if her love were dead,
 But in my words were seeds of fire.
 "No more of love; your sex is known:
 I never will be twice deceived.
 Henceforth I trust the man alone,
 The woman cannot be believed.

V.

"Thro' slander, meanest spawn of
 Hell —
 And women's slander is the worst,
 And you, whom once I lov'd so well,
 Thro' you, my life will be accurst."
 I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
 I shook her breast with vague
 alarms —
 Like torrents from a mountain source
 We rush'd into each other's arms.

VI.

We parted: sweetly gleam'd the stars,
 And sweet the vapor-braided blue,
 Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
 As homeward by the church I drew.
 The very graves appear'd to smile,
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd
 swells;
 "Dark porch," I said, "and silent
 aisle,
 There comes a sound of marriage
 bells.

THE VISION OF SIN.

I.

I HAD a vision when the night was late:
 A youth came riding toward a palace-
 gate.
 He rode a horse with wings, that would
 have flown,
 But that his heavy rider kept him
 down.
 And from the palace came a child of
 sin,
 And took him by the curls, and led
 him in,
 Where sat a company with heated
 eyes,
 Expecting when a fountain should
 arise:
 A sleepy light upon their brows and
 lips —
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles
 and capes —
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid
 shapes,
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine,
 and piles of grapes.

II.

Then methought I heard a mellow
 sound,
 Gathering up from all the lower
 ground;
 Narrowing in to where they sat assem-
 bled
 Low voluptuous music winding trem-
 bled,
 Wov'n in circles: they that heard it
 sigh'd,
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
 Swung themselves, and in low tones
 replied;
 Till the fountain spouted, showering
 wide
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;
 Then the music touch'd the gates and
 died,
 Rose again from where it seem'd to
 fail,
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing
 gale;

Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
 As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
 The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd
 and palpitated ;
 Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid
 mazes,
 Flung the torrent rainbow round :
 Then they started from their places,
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,
 Half-invisible to the view,
 Wheeling with precipitate paces
 To the melody, till they flew,
 Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
 Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
 Like to Furies, like to Graces,
 Dash'd together in blinding dew :
 Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
 The nerve-dissolving melody
 Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
 That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
 I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
 Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
 Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,
 From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
 A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
 Came floating on for many a month and year,
 Unheeded ; and I thought I would have spoken,
 And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :
 But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
 When that cold vapor touch'd the palace gate,
 And link'd again. I saw within my head

A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean
 as death,
 Who slowly rode across a wither'd
 heath,
 And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

IV.

“ Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !
 Here is custom come your way ;
 Take my brute, and lead him in,
 Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

“ Bitter barmaid, waning fast !
 See that sheets are on my bed ;
 What ! the flower of life is past :
 It is long before you wed.

“ Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
 At the Dragon on the heath !
 Let us have a quiet hour,
 Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

“ I am old, but let me drink ;
 Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
 I remember, when I think,
 That my youth was half divine.

“ Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
 When a blanket wraps the day,
 When the rotten woodland drips,
 And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

“ Sit thee down, and have no shame,
 Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :
 What care I for any name ?
 What for order or degree ?

“ Let me screw thee up a peg :
 Let me loose thy tongue with wine :
 Callest thou that thing a leg ?
 Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

“ Thou shalt not be saved by works :
 Thou hast been a sinner too :
 Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
 Empty scarecrows, I and you !

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :
 Have a rouse before the morn :
 Every moment dies a man,
 Every moment one is born.

' We are men of ruin'd blood ;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

" Name and fame! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the
schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded by the hands of fools.

Friendship! — to be two in one —
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

" Virtue! — to be good and just —
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

" O! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

" Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

" Drink, and let the parties rave :
They are fill'd with idle spleen ;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean

" He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

' Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

" Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gayly doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

" No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house :

And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

" Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

" Drink to lofty hopes that cool —
Visions of a perfect State :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

" Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

" Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;
Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.

" Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

" Tell me tales of thy first love —
April hopes, the fools of chance ;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

" Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

" Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

" You are bones, and what of that ?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

" Death is king, and Vivat Rex !
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam — if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones

"No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye — nor yet your lip:
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo! God's likeness — the ground-
plan —
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor
framed:
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near:
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

"Fill the cup and fill the can:
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man:
Yet we will not die forlorn."

v.

The voice grew faint; there came a
further change:
Once more uprosethemystic mountain-
range.
Below were men and horses pierced
with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower
forms;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum
of dross,
Old splash of rains, and refuse patch'd
with moss.
Then some one spake: "Behold! it
was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore
with time."
Another said: "The crime of sense
became

The crime of malice, and is equal
blame."

And one: "He had not wholly
quench'd his power;
A little grain of conscience made him
sour."

At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, "Is there any
hope?"

To which an answer peal'd from that
high land,

But in a tongue no man could under-
stand;

And on the glimmering limit far with-
drawn

God made Himself an awful rose of
dawn.

TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

"Cursed be he that moves my bones."
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gain'd a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent
doom

Of those that wear the Poet's crown:
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry:

"Proclaim the faults he would not
show:

Break lock and seal: betray the
trust:

Keep nothing sacred: tis but just
The many-headed beast should know."

Ah shameless! for he did but sing
 A song that pleased us from its
 worth;
 No public life was his on earth,
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.
 My Shakespeare's curse on clown
 and knave
 Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
 The little life of bank and brier,
 The bird that pipes his lone desire
 And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
 And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
 For whom the carrion vulture waits
 To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN
 GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
 Of water, sheets of summer glass,
 The long divine Peneïan pass,
 The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
 With such a pencil, such a pen,
 You shadow forth to distant men,
 I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
 And track'd you still on classic
 ground,

I grew in gladness till I found
 My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
 And glisten'd — here and there alone
 The broad-limb'd Gods at random
 thrown
 By fountain-urns; — and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
 Of cavern pillars; on the swell
 The silver lily heaved and fell;
 And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
 By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
 To him who sat upon the rocks,
 And fluted to the morning sea.

BREAK, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
 And I would that my tongue could
 utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
 That he shouts with his sister at
 play!
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill;
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd
 hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is
 still!

Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
 But the tender grace of a day that is
 dead
 Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG.

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
 He pass'd by the town and out of
 the street,
 A light wind blew from the gates of
 the sun,
 And waves of shadow went over the
 wheat,
 And he sat him down in a lonely place,

And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
 That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
 And the lark drop down at his feet.
 The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,
 The snake slipt under a spray,
 The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
 And stared, with his foot on the prey,
 And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs,
 But never a one so gay,
 For he sings of what the world will be
 When the years have died away."

THE BROOK.

HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the East
 And he for Italy — too late — too late :
 One whom the strong sons of the world despise ;
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,
 And mellow metres more than cent for cent ;
 Nor could he understand how money breeds,
 Thought it a dead thing ; yet himself could make
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.
 O had he lived ! In our schoolbooks we say,
 Of those that held their heads above the crowd,
 They flourish'd then or then ; but life in him
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,
 When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
 And nothing perfect : yet the brook he loved,
 For which, in branding summers of Bengal,

Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neil-gerry air
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
 To me that loved him ; for " O brook," he says,
 " O babbling brook," says Edmund in his rhyme,
 " Whence come you ? " and the brook ;
 why not ? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
 I make a sudden sally,
 And sparkle out among the fern,
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
 Or slip between the ridges,
 By twenty thorps, a little town,
 And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

" Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
 It has more ivy ; there the river ; and there
 Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
 In little sharps and trebles,
 I bubble into eddying bays,
 I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
 By many a field and fallow,
 And many a fairy foreland set
 With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

" But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird ;
 Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught
 His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
 High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

“O darling Katie Willows, his one
child!
A maiden of our century, yet most
meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not
coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel
wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit
within.

“Sweet Katie, once I did her a good,
turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and be-
trothed,
James Willows, of one name and
heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years back —
the week
Before I parted with poor Edmund,
crost
By that old bridge which, half in
ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the
gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry —
crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny
Doon,
And push’d at Philip’s garden-gate.
The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding
hinge,
Stuck; and he clamor’d from a case-
ment, ‘Run’
To Katie somewhere in the walks
below,

‘Run, Katie!’ Katie never ran: she
moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine
bowers,
A little flutter’d, with her eyelids
down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a
boon.

“What was it? less of sentiment
than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive
tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth’d philan-
thropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate
the Deed.

“She told me. She and James had
quarrell’d. Why?
What cause of quarrel? None, she
said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I prest
the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering
jealousies
Which anger’d her. Who anger’d
James? I said.
But Katie snatch’d her eyes at once
from mine,
And sketching with her slender pointed
foot
Some figure like a wizard pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim’d, in flushing silence, till I
ask’d
If James were coming. ‘Coming
every day,’
She answer’d, ‘ever longing to explain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and brok
him short;
And James departed vext with him
and her.’
How could I help her? ‘Would I —
was it wrong?’
(Claspt hands and that petitionary
grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere
she spoke)

'O would I take her father for one hour,
 For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!
 And even while she spoke, I saw where James
 Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

"O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!

For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
 To show the farm; full willingly he rose:

He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes

Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.

He praised his land, his horses, his machines;

He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;

He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;

His pigeons, who in session on their roofs

Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:

Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took

Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,

And naming those, his friends, for whom they were:

Then crost the common into Darnley chase

To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.

Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
 He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:

'That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire.'

And there he told a long long-winded tale

Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,

And how he sent the bailiff to the farm

To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,

And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,

But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;

He gave them line: and five days after that

He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
 Who then and there had offer'd something more,

But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;

He knew the man; the colt would fetch its price;

He gave them line: and how by chance at last

(It might be May or April, he forgot,
 The last of April or the first of May)

He found the bailiff riding by the farm,

And, talking from the point, he drew him in,

And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,

Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

"Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,

Poor fellow, could he help it? recommenced,

And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
 Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy,

Tallyho,
 Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the

Jilt,
 Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the

rest,
 Till, not to die a listener, I arose,

And with me Philip, talking still; and so

We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,

And following our own shadows thrice as long

As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,

Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content

Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these
are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Ed-
mund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and
rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and
he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of
words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie
walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other
stars,
And breathes in converse seasons. All
are gone."

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a
stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his
mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er
the brook
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden
a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the
hedge

The fragile hindweed-bells and briony
rings;

And he look'd up. There stood a
maiden near,

Waiting to pass. In much amaze he
stared

On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
the shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit
within:

Then, wondering, ask'd her "Are you
from the farm?"

"Yes," answer'd she. "Pray stay a
little: pardon me;

What do they call you?" "Katie."
"That were strange.

What surname?" "Willows." "No!"
"That is my name."

"Indeed!" and here he look'd so self-
perplexed,

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing
blush'd, till he

Laugh'd also, but as one before he
wakes,

Who feels a glimmering strangeness
in his dream.

Then looking at her; "Too happy,
fresh and fair,

Too fresh and fair in our sad world's
best bloom,

To be the ghost of one who bore your
name

About these meadows, twenty years
ago."

"Have you not heard?" said Katie,
"we came back.

We bought the farm we tenanted be-
fore.

Am I so like her? so they said on
board.

Sir, if you knew her in her English
days,

My mother, as it seems you did, the
days

That most she loves to talk of, come
with me.

My brother James is in the harvest-
field:

But she — you will be welcome — O,
come in!"

AYLMER'S FIELD.

1793.

Dust are our frames ; and, gilded dust,
 our pride
 Looks only for a moment whole and
 sound ;
 Like that long-buried body of the king,
 Found lying with his urns and orna-
 ments,
 Which at a touch of light, an air of
 heaven,
 Slipt into ashes, and was found no
 more.

Here is a story which in rougher
 shape
 Came from a grizzled cripple, whom
 I saw
 Sunning himself in a waste field
 alone —
 Old, and a mine of memories — who
 had served,
 Long since, a bygone Rector of the
 place,
 And been himself a part of what he
 told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that al-
 mighty man,
 The county God — in whose capacious
 hall,
 Hung with a hundred shields, the
 family tree
 Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate
 king —
 Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd
 the spire,
 Stood from his walls and wing'd his
 entry-gates
 And swang besides on many a windy
 sign —
 Whose eyes from under a pyramidal
 head
 Saw from his windows nothing save
 his own —
 What lovelier of his own had he than
 her,
 His only child, his Edith, whom he
 loved
 As heiress and not heir regretfully ?
 But " he that marries her marries her
 name "

This fiat somewhat soothed himself
 and wife,
 His wife a faded beauty of the
 Baths,
 Insipid as the Queen upon a card ;
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly
 more
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled
 corn,
 Little about it stirring save a brook !
 A sleepy land, where under the same
 wheel
 The same old rut would deepen year
 by year ;
 Where almost all the village had one
 name ;
 Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at
 the Hall
 And Averill Averill at the Rectory
 Thrice over ; so that Rectory and
 Hall,
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,
 Were open to each other ; tho' to
 dream
 That Love could bind them closer well
 had made
 The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle
 up
 With horror, worse than had he heard
 his priest
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of
 men
 Daughters of God ; so sleepy was the
 land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd
 it so,
 Somewhere beneath his own low range
 of roofs,
 Have also set his many-shielded tree ?
 There was an Aylmer-Averill mar-
 riage once.
 When the red rose was redder than
 itself,
 And York's white rose as red as Lan-
 caster's,
 With wounded peace which each had
 prick'd to death.
 " Not proven " Averill said, or laugh-
 ingly

"Some other race of Averills"—prov'n
or no,

What cared he? what, if other or the
same?

He lean'd not on his fathers but him-
self.

But Leolin, his brother, living oft
With Averill, and a year or two before
Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away
By one low voice to one dear neigh-
borhood,

Would often, in his walks with Edith,
claim

A distant kinship to the gracious blood
That shook the heart of Edith hearing
him.

Sanguine he was: a but less vivid hue
Than of that islet in the chestnut-
bloom

Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes,
that still

Took joyful note of all things joyful,
beam'd,

Beneath a manelike mass of rolling
gold,

Their best and brightest, when they
dwelt on hers,

Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect
else,

But subject to the season or the mood,
Shone like a mystic star between the
less

And greater glory varying to and fro,
We know not wherefore; bounteously
made,

And yet so finely, that a troublous
touch

Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in
a day,

A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.
And these had been together from the
first.

Leolin's first nurse was, five years
after, hers:

So much the boy foreran: but when
his date

Doubled her own, for want of play-
mates, he

(Since Averill was a decade and a half
His elder, and their parents under-
ground)

Had tost his ball and flown his kite,
and roll'd

His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her
dipt

Against the rush of the air in the
prone swing,

Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, ar-
ranged

Her garden, sow'd her name and kept
it green

In living letters, told her fairy-tales,
Show'd her the fairy footings on the
grass,

The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,
The petty marestail forest, fairy
pines,

Or from the tiny pitted target blew
What look'd a flight of fairy arrows
aim'd

All at one mark, all hitting: make-
believes

For Edith and himself: or else he
forged,

But that was later, boyish histories
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,
wreck,

Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and
true love

Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and
faint,

But where a passion yet unborn per-
haps

Lay hidden as the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightin-
gale.

And thus together, save for college-
times

Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair
As ever painter painted, poet sang,

Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded,
grew.

And more and more, the maiden
woman-grown,

He wasted hours with Averill; there,
when first

The tented winter-field was broken up
Into that phalanx of the summer
spears

That soon should wear the garland;
there again

When burr and bine were gather'd
lastly there

At Christmas; ever welcome at the
Hall,
On whose dull sameness his full tide
of youth
Broke with a phosphorescence charm-
ing even
My lady; and the Baronet yet had
laid
No bar between them: dull and self-
involved,
Tall and erect, but bending from his
height
With half-allowing smiles for all the
world,
And mighty courteous in the main —
his pride
Lay deeper than to wear it as his
ring —
He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,
Would care no more for Leolin's walk-
ing with her
Than for his old Newfoundland's, when
they ran
To loose him at the stables, for he
rose
Two footed at the limit of his chain,
Roaring to make a third: and how
should Love,
Whom the cross-lightnings of four
chance-met eyes
Flash into fiery life from nothing,
follow
Such dear familiarities of dawn?
Seldom, but when he does, Master of
all.

So these young hearts not knowing
that they loved,
Not she at least, nor conscious of a
bar
Between them, nor by plight or broken
ring
Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,
Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied
By Averill: his, a brother's love, that
hung
With wings of brooding shelter o'er
her peace,
Might have been other, save for
Leolin's —
Who knows? but so they wander'd,
hour by hour

Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd,
and drank
The magic cup that filled itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to her-
self.
For out beyond her lodges, where the
brook
Vocal, with here and there a silence,
ran
By sallowy rims, arose the laborers'
homes,
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low
knolls
That dimpling died into each other,
huts
At random scatter'd, each a nest in
bloom.
Her art, her hand, her counsel all had
wrought
About them: here was one that, sum-
mer-blanch'd,
Was parcel-bearded with the trav-
eller's joy
In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden
hearth
Broke from a bower of vine and
honeysuckle:
One look'd all rosetree, and another
wore
A close-set robe of jasmine sown
with stars:
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers
About it; this, a milky-way on earth,
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's
heavens,
A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;
One, almost to the martin-haunted
eaves
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;
Each, its own charm; and Edith's
everywhere;
And Edith ever visitant with him,
He but less loved than Edith, of her
poor:
For she — so lowly-lovely and so
loving,
Queenly responsive when the loyal
hand
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she
past,

Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height
That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice

Of comfort and an open hand of help,
A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs

Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves

To ailing wife or wailing infancy
Or old bedridden palsy, — was adored;
He, loved for her and for himself.

A grasp

Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,

A childly way with children, and a laugh

Ringing like proven golden coinage true,

Were no false passport to that easy realm,

Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,

Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth

The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,

Heard the good mother softly whisper "Bless,

God bless 'em: marriages are made in Heaven."

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.

My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced

With half a score of swarthy faces came.

His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,

Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;

Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,

Tho' seeming boastful: so when first he dash'd

Into the chronicle of a deedful day,
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile

Of patron "Good! my lady's kinsman! good!"

My lady with her fingers interlock'd,
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear
To listen: unawares they flitted off,
Busying themselves about the flowerage

That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,

The meteor of a splendid season, she,
Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days:

But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him

Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life:

Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye,
Hated him with a momentary hate.

Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was he:

I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd

His oriental gifts on everyone

And most on Edith: like a storm he came,

And shook the house, and like a storm he went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return

When others had been tested) there was one,

A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it

Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself

Fine as ice-ferns on January panes

Made by a breath. I know not whence at first,

Nor of what race, the work; but as he told

The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves

He got it; for their captain after fight,
His comrades having fought their last below,

Was climbing up the valley; at whom he shot:

Down from the beetling crag to which he clung

Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,

This dagger with him, which when
now admired
By Edith whom his pleasure was to
please,
At once the costly Sahib yielded to
her.

And Leolin, coming after he was
gone,
Tost over all her presents petulantly:
And when she show'd the wealthy
scabbard, saying
"Look what a lovely piece of work-
manship!"
Slight was his answer "Well — I care
not for it":
Then playing with the blade he
prick'd his hand.
"A gracious gift to give a lady, this!"
"But would it be more gracious"
ask'd the girl
"Were I to give this gift of his to one
That is no lady?" "Gracious? No"
said he.
"Me? — but I cared not for it. O
pardon me,
I seem to be ungraciousness itself."
"Take it" she added sweetly, "tho'
his gift;
For I am more ungracious ev'n than
you,
I care not for it either"; and he said
"Why then I love it": but Sir Aylmer
past,
And neither loved nor liked the thing
he heard.

The next day came a neighbor.
Blues and reds
They talk'd of: blues were sure of it,
he thought:
Then of the latest fox — where started
— kill'd
In such a bottom: "Peter had the
brush,
My Peter, first": and did Sir Aylmer
know
That great pock-pitten fellow had
been caught?
Then made his pleasure echo, hand to
hand,

And rolling as it were the substance
of it
Between his palms a moment up and
down —
"The birds were warm, the birds were
warm upon him:
We have him now" — and had Sir
Aylmer heard —
Nay, but he must — the land was
ringing of it —
This blacksmith border-marriage —
one they knew —
Raw from the nursery — who could
trust a child?
That cursed France with her egalities!
And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially
With nearing chair and lower'd ac-
cent) think —
For people talk'd — that it was wholly
wise
To let that handsome fellow Averill
walk
So freely with his daughter? people
talk'd —
The boy might get a notion into
him;
The girl might be entangled ere she
knew.
Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening
spoke:
"The girl and boy, Sir, know their
differences!"
"Good," said his friend, "but watch!"
and he, "Enough.
More than enough, Sir! I can guard
my own."
They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer
watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the
house
Had fallen first, was Edith that same
night;
Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a
rough piece
Of early rigid color, under which
Withdrawing by the counter door to
that
Which Leolin open'd, she cast back
upon him
A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He,
as one

Caught in a burst of unexpected
 storm,
 And pelted with outrageous epi-
 thets,
 Turning beheld the Powers of the
 House
 On either side the hearth, indignant;
 her,
 Cooling her false cheek with a feather-
 fan,
 Him, glaring, by his own stale devil
 spurr'd,
 And, like a beast hard-riden, breath-
 ing hard.
 "Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,
 Presumptuous! trusted as he was with
 her,
 The sole succeder to their wealth,
 their lands,
 The last remaining pillar of their
 house,
 The one transmitter of their ancient
 name,
 Their child." "Our child!" "Our
 heirless!" "Ours!" for still,
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow,
 came
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said,
 "Boy, mark me! for your fortunes
 are to make.
 I swear you shall not make them out
 of mine.
 Now inasmuch as you have practised
 on her,
 Perplexed her, made her half forget
 herself,
 Swerve from her duty to herself and
 us —
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impos-
 sible.
 Far as we track ourselves — I say
 that this —
 Else I withdraw favor and counte-
 nance
 From you and yours for ever — shall
 you do.
 Sir, when you see her — but you shall
 not see her —
 No, you shall write, and not to her,
 but me:
 And you shall say that having spoken
 with me,

And after look'd into yourself, you
 find
 That you meant nothing — as indeed
 you know
 That you meant nothing. Such a
 match as this!
 "Impossible, prodigious!" These were
 words,
 As meted by his measure of himself,
 Arguing boundless forbearance: after
 which,
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer,
 "I
 So foul a traitor to myself and her,
 Never oh never," for about as long
 As the wind-hover hangs in balance,
 paused
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm
 within,
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and
 crying
 "Boy, should I find you by my doors
 again,
 My men shall lash you from them like
 a dog;
 Hence!" with a sudden execration
 drove
 The footstool from before him, and
 arose;
 So, stammering "scoundrel" out of
 teeth that ground
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin
 still
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old
 man
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel
 stood
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary
 face
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth,
 but now,
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd
 moon,
 Vext with unworthy madness, and
 deform'd.
 Slowly and conscious of the rageful
 eye
 That watch'd him, till he heard the
 ponderous door
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro'
 the land,

Went Leolin; then, his passions all
 in flood
 And masters of his motion, furiously
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his
 brother's ran,
 And foam'd away his heart at Aver-
 ill's ear:
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,
 amazed:
 The man was his, had been his fath-
 er's, friend:
 He must have seen, himself had seen
 it long;
 He must have known, himself had
 known: besides,
 He never yet had set his daughter
 forth
 Here in the woman-markets of the
 west,
 Where our Caucasians let themselves
 be sold.
 Some one, he thought, had slander'd
 Leolin to him.
 "Brother, for I have loved you more
 as son
 Than brother, let me tell you: I my-
 self —
 What is their pretty saying? jilted,
 'is it?
 Jilted I was: I say it for your peace.
 Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the
 shame
 The woman should have borne, humili-
 ated,
 I lived for years a stunted sunless life;
 Till after our good parents past away
 Watching your growth, I seem'd again
 to grow.
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying you:
 The very whitest lamb in all my fold
 Loves you: I know her: the worst
 thought she has
 Is whiter even than her pretty hand:
 She must prove true: for, brother,
 where two fight
 The strongest wins, and truth and love
 are strength,
 And you are happy: let her parents
 be."

But Leolin cried out the more upon
 them —

Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress,
 wealth,
 Their wealth, their heiress! wealth
 enough was theirs
 For twenty matches. Were he lord
 of this,
 Why twenty boys and girls should
 marry on it,
 And forty blest ones bless him, and
 himself
 Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He
 believed
 This filthy marriage-hindering Mam-
 mon made
 The harlot of the cities: nature crost
 Was mother of the foul adulteries
 That saturate soul with body. Name,
 too! name,
 Their ancient name! they *might* be
 proud; its worth
 Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she
 had look'd
 Darling, to-night! they must have
 rated her
 Beyond all tolerance. These old
 pheasant-lords,
 These partridge-breeders of a thou-
 sand years,
 Who had mildew'd in their thousands,
 doing nothing
 Since Egbert — why, the greater their
 disgrace!
 Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in
 that!
 Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler?
 fools,
 With such a vantage-ground for noble-
 ness!
 He had known a man, a quintessence
 of man,
 The life of all — who madly loved —
 and he,
 Thwarted by one of these old father-
 fools,
 Had rioted his life out, and made an
 end.
 He would not do it! her sweet face
 and faith
 Held him from that: but he had pow-
 ers, he knew it:
 Back would he to his studies, make a
 name,

Name, fortune too: the world should
ring of him
To shame these mouldy Aylmers in
their graves:
Chancellor, or what is greatest would
he be —
"O brother, I am grieved to learn
your grief —
Give me my fling, and let me say my
say."

At which, like one that sees his own
excess,
And easily forgives it as his own,
He laugh'd; and then was mute; but
presently
Wept like a storm: and honest Averill
seeing
How low his brother's mood had fallen,
fetch'd
His richest beeswing from a binn re-
served
For banquets, praised the waning red,
and told
The vintage — when *this* Aylmer came
of age —
Then drank and past it; till at length
the two,
Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,
agreed
That much allowance must be made
for men.
After an angry dream this kindlier
glow
Faded with morning, but his purpose
held.

Yet once by night again the lovers
met,
A perilous meeting under the tall pines
That darken'd all the northward of
her Hall.
Him, to her meek and modest bosom
prest
In agony, she promised that no force,
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter
her:
He, passionately hopefuller, would go,
Labor for his own Edith, and return
In such a sunlight of prosperity
He should not be rejected. "Write to
me!

They loved me, and because I love
their child
They hate me: there is war between
us, dear,
Which breaks all bonds but ours; we
must remain
Sacred to one another." So they
talk'd,
Poor children, for their comfort: the
wind blew;
The rain of heaven, and their own
bitter tears,
Tears, and the careless rain of heaven,
mixt
Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each
other
In darkness, and above them roar'd
the pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task our-
selves
To learn a language known but smat-
teringly
In phrases here and there at random,
toil'd
Mastering the lawless science of our
law,
That codeless myriad of precedent,
That wilderness of single instances,
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune
led,
May beat a pathway out to wealth and
fame.
The jests, that flash'd about the plead-
er's room,
Lightning of the hour, the pun, the
scurrilous tale, —
Old scandals buried now seven decades
deep
In other scandals that have lived and
died,
And left the living scandal that shall
die —
Were dead to him already; bent as he
was
To make disproof of scorn, and strong
in hopes,
And prodigal of all brain-labor he,
Charier of sleep, and wine, and exer-
cise,
Except when for a breathing-while at
eve,

Some niggard fraction of an hour, he
 ran
 Beside the river-bank : and then indeed
 Harder the times were, and the hands
 of power
 Were bloodier, and the according
 hearts of men
 Seem'd harder too ; but the soft river-
 breeze,
 Which fann'd the gardens of that rival
 rose
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering
 His former talks with Edith, on him
 breathed
 Far purelier in his rushings to and fro,
 After his books, to flush his blood with
 air,
 Then to his books again. My lady's
 cousin,
 Half-sickening of his pension'd after-
 noon,
 Drove in upon the student once or
 twice,
 Ran a Malayan amuck against the
 times,
 Had golden hopes for France and all
 mankind,
 Answer'd all queries touching those at
 home
 With a heaved shoulder and a saucy
 smile,
 And fain had haled him out into the
 world,
 And air'd him there : his nearer friend
 would say
 "Screw not the chord too sharply lest
 it snap."
 Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger
 forth
 From where his worldless heart had
 kept it warm,
 Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of
 him
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise :
 For heart, I think, help'd head : her
 letters too,
 Tho' far between, and coming fitfully
 Like broken music, written as she
 found
 Or made occasion, being strictly
 watch'd,

Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till
 he saw
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon
 him.

But they that cast her spirit into
 flesh,
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued
 themselves
 To sell her, those good parents, for her
 good.
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or
 wealth
 Might lie within their compass, him
 they lured
 Into their net made pleasant by the
 baits
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.
 So month by month the noise about
 their doors,
 And distant blaze of those dull ban-
 quets, made
 The nightly wirer of their innocent
 hare
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit
 So often, that the folly taking wings
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the
 wind
 With rumor, and became in other fields
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,
 And laughter to their lords : but those
 at home,
 As hunters round a hunted creature
 draw,
 The cordon close and closer toward
 the death,
 Narrow'd her goings out and comings
 in ;
 Forbade her first the house of Averill,
 Then closed her access to the wealthier
 farms,
 Last from her own home-circle of the
 poor
 They barr'd her : yet she bore it : yet
 her cheek
 Kept color : wondrous ! but, O mystery !
 What amulet drew her down to that
 old oak,
 So old, that twenty years before, a
 part

Falling had let appear the brand of
 John —
 Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,
 but now
 The broken base of a black tower, a
 cave
 Of touchwood, with a single flourish-
 ing spray.
 There the manorial lord too curiously
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-
 dust
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-
 trove ;
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and
 read
 Writhing a letter from his child, for
 which
 Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to
 fly,
 But scared with threats of jail and
 halter gave
 To him that fluster'd his poor parish
 wits
 The letter which he brought, and swore
 besides
 To play their go-between as heretofore
 Nor let them know themselves be-
 tray'd ; and then,
 Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,
 went
 Hating his own lean heart and miser-
 able.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot
 dream
 The father panting woke, and oft, as
 dawn
 Aroused the black republic on his elms,
 Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue
 brush'd
 Thro' the dim meadow toward his
 treasure-trove,
 Seized it, took home, and to my lady,
 — who made
 A downward crescent of her minion
 mouth,
 Listless in all despondence, — read ;
 and tore,
 As if the living passion symbol'd there
 Were living nerves to feel the rent ;
 and burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self
 defied,
 Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks
 of scorn
 In babyisms, and dear diminutives
 Scatter'd all over the vocabulary
 Of such a love as like a chidden child,
 After much wailing, hush'd itself at
 last
 Hopeless of answer : then tho' Averill
 wrote
 And bade him with good heart sustain
 himself —
 All would be well — the lover heeded
 not,
 But passionately restless came and
 went,
 And rustling once at night about the
 place,
 There by a keeper shot at, slightly
 hurt,
 Raging return'd : nor was it well for her
 Kept to the garden now, and grove of
 pines,
 Watch'd even there ; and one was set
 to watch
 The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd
 them all,
 Yet bitterer from his readings. once
 indeed,
 Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride
 in her,
 She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her
 tenderly
 Not knowing what possess'd him :
 that one kiss
 Was Leolin's one strong rival upon
 earth ;
 Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,
 Seem'd hope's returning rose : and
 then ensued
 A Martin's summer of his faded love,
 Or ordeal by kindness ; after this
 He seldom crost his child without a
 sneer ;
 The mother flow'd in shallower acrimo-
 nies :
 Never one kindly smile, one kindly
 word :
 So that the gentle creature shut from
 all
 Her charitable use, and face to face

With twenty months of silence, slowly
 lost
 Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on
 life.
 Last, some low fever ranging round
 to spy
 The weakness of a people or a house,
 Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,
 or men,
 Or almost all that is, hurting the
 hurt —
 Save Christ as we believe him — found
 the girl
 And flung her down upon a couch of
 fire,
 Where careless of the household faces
 near,
 And crying upon the name of Leolin,
 She, and with her the race of Aylmer,
 past.

Star to star vibrates light: may
 soul to soul
 Strike thro' a finer element of her
 own?
 So, — from afar, — touch as at once?
 or why
 That night, that moment, when she
 named his name,
 Did the keen shriek "Yes love, yes,
 Edith, yes,"
 Shrill, till the comrade of his cham-
 bers woke,
 And came upon him half-arisen from
 sleep,
 With a weird bright eye, sweating and
 trembling,
 His hair as it were crackling into
 flames,
 His body half flung forward in pursuit,
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp
 a flyer:
 Nor knew he wherefore he had made
 the cry;
 And being much befool'd and idioted
 By the rough amity of the other, sank
 As into sleep again. The second day,
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,
 A breaker of the bitter news from
 home,
 Found a dead man, a letter edged with
 death

Beside him, and the dagger which him-
 self
 Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's
 blood:
 "From Edith" was engraven on the
 blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon
 his death.
 And when he came again, his flock
 believed —
 Beholding how the years which are
 not Time's
 Had blasted him — that many thou-
 sand days
 Were clipt by horror from his term
 of life.
 Yet the sad mother, for the second
 death
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness
 of the first,
 And being used to find her pastor
 texts,
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying
 him
 To speak before the people of her
 child,
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that
 day rose:
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded
 woods
 Was all the life of it; for hard on
 these,
 A breathless burthen of low-folded
 heavens
 Stifed and chill'd at once; but every
 roof
 Sent out a listener: many too had
 known
 Edith among the hamlets round, and
 since
 The parents' harshness and the hap-
 less loves
 And double death were widely mur-
 mur'd, left
 Their own gray tower, or plain-faced
 tabernacle,
 To hear him; all in mourning these,
 and those
 With blots of it about them, ribbon,
 glove

Or kerchief; while the church, — one
 night, except
 For greenish glimmerings thro' the
 lancets, — made
 Still paler the pale head of him, who
 tower'd
 Above them, with his hopes in either
 grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd
 Averill,
 His face magnetic to the hand from
 which
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd
 thro'
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the
 verse "Behold,
 'Our house is left unto you desolate!"
 But lapsed into so long a pause
 again
 As half amazed half frightened all his
 flock:
 Then from his height and loneliness
 of grief
 Bore down in flood, and dash'd his
 angry heart
 Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became
 one sea,
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the
 proud,
 And all but those who knew the liv-
 ing God —
 Eight that were left to make a purer
 world —
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake,
 thunder, wrought
 Such waste and havoc as the idola-
 tries,
 Which from the low light of mortality
 Shot up their shadows to the Heaven
 of Heavens,
 And worshipt their own darkness as
 the Highest?
 'Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy
 brute Baäl,
 And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,
 For with thy worst self hast thou
 clothed thy God.
 Then came a Lord in no wise like to
 Baäl.

The babe shall lead the lion. Surely
 now
 The wilderness shall blossom as the
 rose.
 Crown thyself, worm, and worship
 thine own lusts! —
 No coarse and blockish God of acreage
 Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel
 to —
 Thy God is far diffused in noble groves
 And princely halls, and farms, and
 flowing lawns,
 And heaps of living gold that daily
 grow,
 And title-scrolls and gorgeous heral-
 dries.
 In such a shape dost thou behold thy
 God.
 Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him*;
 for thine
 Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair
 Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while
 The deathless ruler of thy dying house
 Is wounded to the death that cannot
 die;
 And tho' thou numberest with the
 followers
 Of One who cried, 'Leave all and fol-
 low me.'
 Thee therefore with His light about
 thy feet,
 Thee with His message ringing in thine
 ears,
 Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord
 from Heaven,
 Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,
 Wonderful, Prince of peace, the
 Mighty God,
 Count the more base idolater of the
 two;
 Crueller: as not passing thro' the fire
 Bodies, but souls — thy children's —
 thro' the smoke.
 The blight of low desires — darkening
 thine own
 To thine own likeness; or if one of
 these,
 Thy better born unhappily from thee,
 Should, as by miracle, grow straight
 and fair —
 Friends, I was bid to speak of such a
 one

By those who most have cause to sorrow for her —
 Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,
 Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,
 Fair as the angel that said 'Hail!' she seem'd,
 Who entering fill'd the house with sudden light.
 For so mine own was brighten'd: where indeed
 The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven
 Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway? whose the babe
 Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,
 Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child of shame
 The common care whom no one cared for, leapt
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,
 As with the mother he had never known,
 In gambols; for her fresh and innocent eyes
 Had such a star of morning in their blue,
 That all neglected places of the field
 Broke into nature's music when they saw her.
 Low was her voice, but won mysterious way
 Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder one
 Was all but silence — free of alms her hand —
 The hand that robed your cottage-walls with flowers
 Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;
 How often placed upon the sick man's brow
 Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow smooth!
 Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?
 One burthen and she would not lighten it?
 One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?
 Or when some heat of difference sparkled out,

How sweetly would she glide between your wraths,
 And steal you from each other! for she walk'd
 Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love,
 Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!
 And one — of him I was not bid to speak —
 Was always with her, whom you also knew.
 Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.
 And these had been together from the first;
 They might have been together till the last.
 Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely tried,
 May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,
 Without the captain's knowledge: hope with me.
 Whose shame is that, if he went hence with shame?
 Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these
 I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,
 'My house is left unto me desolate.'''
 While thus he spoke, his hearers wept; but some,
 Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than those
 That knit themselves for summer shadow, scowl'd
 At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he saw
 No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but fork'd
 Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,
 Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-like,
 Erect: but when the preacher's cadence flow'd
 Softening thro' all the gentle attributes
 Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his face,

Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron
mouth;
And "O pray God that he hold up"
she thought
"Or surely I shall shame myself and
him."

"Nor yours the blame—for who
beside your hearths
Can take her place—if echoing me
you cry
'Our house is left unto us desolate' ?
But thou, O thou that killest, hadst
thou known,
O thou that stonest, hadst thou under-
stood
The things belonging to thy peace
and ours!
Is there no prophet but the voice that
calls
Doom upon kings, or in the waste
'Repent' ?

Is not our own child on the narrow
way,
Who down to those that saunter in
the broad
Cries 'Come up hither,' as a prophet
to us ?

Is there no stoning save with flint
and rock ?
Yes, as the dead we weep for testify —
No desolation but by sword and fire ?
Yes, as your moanings witness, and
myself

Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my
loss.

Give me your prayers, for he is past
your prayers,
Not past the living fount of pity in
Heaven.

But I that thought myself long-suffer-
ing, meek,
Exceeding 'poor in spirit'—how the
words

Have twisted back upon themselves,
and mean

Vileness, we are grown so proud — I
wish'd my voice

A rushing tempest of the wrath of God
To blow these sacrifices thro' the
world —

Sent like the twelve-divided concubine

To inflame the tribes: but there —
out yonder — earth

Lightens from her own central Hell
— O there

The red fruit of an old idolatry —
The heads of chiefs and princes fall
so fast,

They cling together in the ghastly
sack —

The land all shambles — naked mar-
riages

Flash from the bridge, and ever-mur-
der'd France,

By shores that darken with the gath-
ering wolf,

Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.
Is this a time to madden madness then ?

Was this a time for these to flaunt
their pride ?

May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as
dense as those

Which hid the Holiest from the peo-
ple's eyes

Ere the great death, shroud this great
sin from all !

Doubtless our narrow world must
canvass it :

O rather pray for those and pity them,
Who, thro' their own desire accom-
plish'd, bring

Their own gray hairs with sorrow to
the grave —

Who broke the bond which they
desired to break,

Which else had link'd their race with
times to come —

Who wove coarse webs to snare her
purity,

Grossly contriving their dear daugh-
ter's good —

Poor souls, and knew not what they
did, but sat

Ignorant, devising their own daugh-
ter's death !

May not that earthly chastisement
suffice ?

Have not our love and reverence left
them bare ?

Will not another take their heritage ?
Will there be children's laughter in
their hall

For ever and for ever, or one stone

Left on another, or is it a light thing
That I, their guest, their host, their
ancient friend,
I made by these the last of all my
race,
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as
cried
Christ ere His agony to those that
swore
Not by the temple but the gold, and
made
Their own traditions God, and slew
the Lord,
And left their memories a world's
curse — 'Behold,
Your house is left unto you deso-
late'?"

Ended he had not, but she brook'd
no more:
Long since her heart had beat remorse-
lessly,
Her cramp't-up sorrow pain'd her, and
a sense
Of meanness in her unresisting life.
Then their eyes vex't her; for on en-
tering
He had cast the curtains of their seat
aside —
Black velvet of the costliest — she
herself
Had seen to that. fain had she closed
them now,
Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd
Her husband inch by inch, but when
she laid,
Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he
veil'd
His face with the other, and at once,
as falls
A creeper when the prop is broken,
fell
The woman shrieking at his feet, and
swoon'd.
Then her own people bore along the
nave
Her pendent hands, and narrow mea-
gre face
Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty
years:
And her the Lord of all the landscape
round

Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd
out
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded
ways
Stumbling across the market to his
death,
Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and
seem'd
Always about to fall, grasping the
pews
And oaken finials till he touch'd the
door;
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot
stood,
Strode from the porch, tall and erect
again.

But nevermore did either pass the
gate
Save under pall with bearers. In one
month,
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier
hours,
The childless mother went to seek her
child;
And when he felt the silence of his
house
About him, and the change and not
the change,
And those fixt eyes of painted ances-
tors
Staring for ever from their gilded
walls
On him their last descendant, his own
head
Began to droop, to fall; the man be-
came
Imbecile; his one word was "deso-
late";
Dead for two years before his death
was he;
But when the second Christmas came,
escaped
His keepers, and the silence which he
felt,
To find a deeper in the narrow
gloom
By wife and child; nor wanted at his
end
The dark retinue reverencing death

At golden thresholds ; nor from tender
 hearts,
 And those who sorrow'd o'er a van-
 ish'd race,
 Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.
 Then the great Hall was wholly broken
 down,
 And the broad woodland parcell'd into
 farms ;
 And where the two contrived their
 daughter's good,
 Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has
 made his run,
 The hedgehog underneath the plan-
 tain bores,
 The rabbit fondles his own harmless
 face,
 The slow-worm creeps, and the thin
 weasel there
 Follows the mouse, and all is open
 field.

SEA DREAMS.

A CITY clerk, but gently born and
 bred ;
 His wife, an unknown artist's orphan
 child —
 One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three
 years old :
 They, thinking that her clear ger-
 mander eye
 Droopt in the giant-factoried city-
 gloom,
 Came, with a month's leave given
 them, to the sea :
 For which his gains were dock'd, how-
 ever small :
 Small were his gains, and hard his
 work ; besides,
 Their slender household fortunes (for
 the man
 Had risk'd his little) like the little
 thrift,
 Trembled in perilous places o'er a
 deep :
 And oft, when sitting all alone, his
 face
 Would darken, as he cursed his credu-
 lousness,
 And that one unctuous mouth which
 lured him, rogue,

To buy strange shares in some Peru-
 vian mine.
 Now seaward-bound for health they
 gain'd a coast,
 All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning
 cave,
 At close of day ; slept, woke, and
 went the next,
 The Sabbath, pious variers from the
 church,
 To chapel ; where a heated pulpiter,
 Not preaching simple Christ to simple
 men,
 Announced the coming doom, and ful-
 minated
 Against the scarlet woman and her
 creed ;
 For sideways up he swung his arms,
 and shriek'd
 " Thus, thus with violence," ev'n as if
 he held
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and him-
 self
 Were that great Angel ; " Thus with
 violence
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ;
 Then comes the close." The gentle-
 hearted wife
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ;
 He at his own : but when the wordy
 storm
 Had ended, forth they came and paced
 the shore,
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing
 caves,
 Drank the large air, and saw, but
 scarce believed
 (The sootflake of so many a summer
 still
 Clung to their fancies) that they saw,
 the sea.
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now
 on cliff,
 Lingering about the thymy promon-
 tories,
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the
 west,
 And rosed in the east : then homeward
 and to bed :
 Where she, who kept a tender Chris-
 tian hope,
 Haunting a holy text, and still to that

Returning, as the bird returns, at night,
 "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,"
 Said, "Love, forgive him:" but he did not speak;
 And silenced by that silence lay the wife,
 Remembering her dear Lord who died for all,
 And musing on the little lives of men,
 And how they mar this little by their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full tide
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on the foremost rocks
 Touching, upjetted in spirts of wild sea-smoke,
 And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and fell
 In vast sea-cataracts — ever and anon
 Dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs
 Heard thro' the living roar. At this the babe,
 Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd and woke
 The mother, and the father suddenly cried,
 "A wreck, a wreck!" then turn'd, and groaning said,

"Forgive! How many will say, 'forgive,' and find
 A sort of absolution in the sound
 To hate a little longer! No; the sin
 That neither God nor man can well forgive,
 Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
 Is it so true that second thoughts are best?
 Not first, and third, which are a riper first?
 Too ripe, too late! they come too late for use.
 Ah love, there surely lives in man and beast
 Something divine to warn them of their foes:

And such a sense, when first I fronted him,
 Said, 'Trust him not;' but after, when I came
 To know him more, I lost it, knew him less;
 Fought with what seem'd my own uncharity;
 Sat at his table; drank his costly wines;
 Made more and more allowance for his talk;
 Went further, fool! and trusted him with all,
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen years
 Of dust and deskwork: there is no such mine,
 None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,
 Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea roars
 Ruin: a fearful night!"

"Not fearful; fair,"
 Said the good wife, "if every star in heaven
 Can make it fair: you do but hear the tide.
 Had you ill dreams?"

"O yes," he said, "I dream'd
 Of such a tide swelling toward the land,
 And I from out the boundless outer deep
 Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one
 Of those dark caves that run beneath the cliffs.
 I thought the motion of the boundless deep
 Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved upon it
 In darkness: then I saw one lovely star
 Larger and larger. 'What a world,' I thought,
 'To live in!' but in moving on I found
 Only the landward exit of the cave,
 Bright with the sun upon the stream beyond:
 And near the light a giant woman sat,
 All over earthy, like a piece of earth,
 A pickaxe in her hand: then out I slipt

Into a land all sun and blossom, trees
As high as heaven, and every bird
that sings:
And here the night-light flickering in
my eyes
Awoke me."

"That was then your dream," she
said,
"Not sad, but sweet."

"So sweet, I lay," said he,
"And mused upon it, drifting up the
stream
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced
The broken vision; for I dream'd that
still
The motion of the great deep bore
me on,
And that the woman walk'd upon
the brink:
I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd
her of it:
'It came,' she said, 'by working in
the mines.'
O then to ask her of my shares, I
thought;
And ask'd; but not a word; she shook
her head.
And then the motion of the current
ceased,
And there was rolling thunder; and
we reach'd
A mountain, like a wall of burs and
thorns;
But she with her strong feet up the
hill
Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at
top
She pointed seaward: there a fleet of
glass,
That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud
That not one moment ceased to thun-
der, past
In sunshine: right across its track
there lay,
Down in the water, a long reef of gold,
Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad
at first
To think that in our often-ransack'd
world

Still so much gold was left; and then
I fear'd
Lest the gay navy there should splin-
ter on it,
And fearing waved my arm to warn
them off;
An idle signal, for the brittle fleet
(I thought I could have died to save
it) near'd,
Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and
vanish'd, and I woke,
I heard the clash so clearly. Now I
see
My dream was Life; the woman hon-
est Work;
And my poor venture but a fleet of
glass
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold."

"Nay," said the kindly wife to com-
fort him,
"You raised your arm, you tumbled
down and broke
The glass with little Margaret's medi-
cine in it;
And, breaking that, you made and
broke your dream:
A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks."

"No trifle," groan'd the husband;
"yesterday
I met him suddenly in the street, and
ask'd
That which I ask'd the woman in my
dream.
Like her, he shook his head. 'Show
me the books!'
He dodged me with a long and loose
account.
'The books, the books!' but he, he
could not wait,
Bound on a matter he of life and
death:
When the great Books (see Daniel
seven and ten)
Were open'd, I should find he meant
me well;
And then began to bloat himself, and
ooze
All over with the fat affectionate smile
That makes the widow lean. 'My
dearest friend,

Have faith, have faith! We live by
 faith,' said he;
 'And all things work together for the
 good
 Of those' — it makes me sick to quote
 him — last
 Gript my hand hard, and with God-
 bless-you went.
 I stood like one that had received a
 blow:
 I found a hard friend in his loose ac-
 counts,
 A loose one in the hard grip of his
 hand,
 A curse in his God-bless-you: then my
 eyes
 Pursued him down the street, and far
 away,
 Among the honest shoulders of the
 crowd,
 Read rascal in the motions of his back,
 And scoundrel in the supple-sliding
 knee."

"Was he so bound, poor soul?"
 said the good wife;
 "So are we all: but do not call him,
 love,
 Before you prove him, rogue, and
 proved, forgive.
 His gain is loss; for he that wrongs
 his friend
 Wrongs himself more, and ever bears
 about
 A silent court of justice in his breast,
 Himself the judge and jury, and him-
 self
 The prisoner at the bar, ever con-
 demn'd:
 And that drags down his life: then
 comes what comes
 Hereafter: and he meant, he said he
 meant,
 Perhaps he meant, or partly meant,
 you well."

"'With all his conscience and one
 eye askew' —
 Love, let me quote these lines, that
 you may learn
 A man is likewise counsel for himself,

Too often, in that silent court of
 yours —
 'With all his conscience and one eye
 askew,
 So false, he partly took himself for
 true;
 Whose pious talk, when most his
 heart was dry,
 Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round
 his eye;
 Who, never naming God except for
 gain,
 So never took that useful name in
 vain,
 Made Him his catspaw and the Cross
 his tool,
 And Christ the bait to trap his dupe
 and fool;
 Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace
 he forged,
 And snake-like slimed his victim ere
 he gorged;
 And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the
 rest
 Arising, did his holy oily best,
 Dropping the too rough H in Hell
 and Heaven,
 To spread the Word by which him-
 self had thriven.'
 How like you this old satire?"

"Nay," she said,
 "I loathe it: he had never kindly
 heart,
 Nor ever cared to better his own kind,
 Who first wrote satire, with no pity
 in it.
 But will you hear *my* dream, for I
 had one
 That altogether went to music? Still
 It awed me."

Then she told it, having dream'd
 Of that same coast.

— But round the North, a light,
 A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor,
 lay,
 And ever in it a low musical note
 Swell'd up and died; and, as it
 swell'd, a ridge

Of breaker issued from the belt, and still
 Grew with the growing note, and when the note
 Had reach'd a thunderous fullness, on those cliffs
 Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as that
 Living within the belt) whereby she saw
 That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no more,
 But huge cathedral fronts of every age,
 Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,
 One after one: and then the great ridge drew,
 Lessening to the lessening music, back,
 And past into the belt and swell'd again
 Slowly to music: ever when it broke
 The statues, king or saint, or founder fell;
 Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin left
 Came men and women in dark clusters round,
 Some crying, "Set them up! they shall not fall!"
 And others, "Let them lie, for they have fall'n."
 And still they strove and wrangled: and she grieved
 In her strange dream, she knew not why, to find
 Their wildest wailings never out of tune
 With that sweet note; and ever as their shrieks
 Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave
 Returning, while none mark'd it, on the crowd
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd their eyes
 Glaring, with passionate looks, and swept away
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of stone,
 To the waste deeps together.

"Then I fixt
 My wistful eyes on two fair images,
 Both crown'd with stars and high among the stars,—
 The Virgin Mother standing with her child
 High up on one of those dark minister-fronts—
 Till she began to totter, and the child
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry
 Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I woke,
 And my dream awed me:—well—but what are dreams?
 Yours came but from the breaking of a glass,
 And mine but from the crying of a child."

"Child? No!" said he, "but this tide's roar, and his,
 Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms
 (Altho' I grant but little music there)
 Went both to make your dream: but if there were
 A music harmonizing our wild cries,
 Sphere-music such as that you dream'd about,
 Why, that would make our passions far too like
 The discords dear to the musician.
 No—
 One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns of heaven:
 True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune
 With nothing but the Devil!"

"True' indeed!
 One out of our town, but later by an hour
 Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the shore;
 While you were running down the sands, and made
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbe-low flap,
 Good man, to please the child. She brought strange news.

Why were you silent when I spoke
to-night?
I had set my heart on your forgiving
him
Before you knew. We *must* forgive
the dead."

"Dead! who is dead?"

"The man your eye pursued.
A little after you had parted with
him,
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-
disease."

"Dead? he? of heart-disease? what
heart had he
To die of? dead?"

"Ah, dearest, if there be
A devil in man, there is an angel too,
And if he did that wrong you charge
him with,
His angel broke his heart. But your
rough voice
(You spoke so loud) has roused the
child again.
Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not
sleep
Without her 'little birdie'? well then,
sleep,
And I will sing you, 'birdie.'"

Saying this,

The woman half turn'd round from
him she loved,
Left him one hand, and reaching
thro' the night
Her other, found (for it was close
beside)
And half-embraced the basket cradle-
head
With one soft arm, which, like the
pliant bough
That moving moves the nest and
nestling, sway'd
The cradle, while she sang this baby
song.

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,

Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
'Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
'Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

"She sleeps: let us too, let all evil,
sleep.
He also sleeps — another sleep than
ours.
He can do no more wrong: forgive
him, dear,
And I shall sleep the sounder!"

Then the man,
"His deeds yet live, the worst is yet
to come.
Yet let your sleep for this one night
be sound:
I do forgive him!"

"Thanks, my love," she said,
"Your own will be the sweeter," and
they slept.

LUCRETIUS.

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold; for when the morn-
ing flush
Of passion and the first embrace had
died
Between them, tho' he lov'd her none
the less,
Yet often when the woman heard his
foot
Return from pacings in the field, and
ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master
took
Small notice, or austere, for — his
mind

Half buried in some weightier argu-
ment,
Or fancy, borne perhaps upon the rise
And long roll of the Hexameter — he
past
To turn and ponder those three hun-
dred scrolls
Left by the Teacher, whom he held
divine.
She brook'd it not ; but wrathful, pet-
ulant,
Dreaming some rival, sought and
found a witch
Who brew'd the philtre which had
power, they said,
To lead an errant passion home again.
And this, at times, she mingled with
his drink,
And this destroy'd him ; for the wicked
broth
Confused the chemic labor of the
blood,
And tickling the brute brain within
the man's
Made havoc among those tender cells,
and check'd
His power to shape : he loathed him-
self ; and once
After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning calm,
and cried :

“ Storm in the night ! for thrice I
heard the rain
Rushing ; and once the flash of a
thunderbolt —
Methought I never saw so fierce a
fork —
Struck out the streaming mountain-
side, and show'd
A riotous confluence of watercourses
Blanching and billowing in a hollow
of it,
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-
dry.

“ Storm, and what dreams, ye holy
Gods, what dreams !
For thrice I waken'd after dreams.
Perchance
We do but recollect the dreams that
come

Just ere the waking : terrible ! for it
seem'd
A void was made in Nature ; all her
bonds
Crack'd ; and I saw the flaring atom-
streams
And torrents of her myriad universe,
Ruining along the illimitable inane,
Fly on to clash together again, and
make
Another and another frame of things
For ever : that was mine, my dream, I
knew it —
Of and belonging to me, as the dog
With inward yelp and restless forefoot
plies
His function of the woodland : but the
next !
I thought that all the blood by Sylla
shed
Came driving rainlike down again on
earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening
meadow, sprang
No dragon warriors from Cadmean
teeth,
For these I thought my dream would
show to me,
But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,
Hired animalisms, vile as those that
made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies
worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet
Gods.
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and
round me drove
In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and
saw —
Was it the first beam of my latest
day ?

“ Then, then, from utter gloom stood
out the breasts,
The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly
a sword
Now over and now under, now direct,
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down
shamed
At all that beauty ; and as I stared, a
fire,

The fire that left a roofless Iliion,
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me
that I woke.

“ Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,
thine,
Because I would not one of thine own
doves,
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee ?
thine,
Forgetful how my rich proœmion
makes
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy Deity ?

“ Deity ? nay, thy worshippers. My
tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of
these
Angers thee most, or angers thee at
all ?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far
aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite
and scorn,
Live the great life which all our great-
est fain
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

“ Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like
ourselves
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I
cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender
arms
Round him, and keep him from the
lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-
house of Rome.

“ Ay, but I meant not thee ; I meant
not her,
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to
see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers,
and tempt
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were
abroad ;
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter
wept
Her Deity false in human-amorous
tears ;

Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse —
Ay, and this Kypris also — did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow
forth
The all-generating powers and genial
heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the
thick blood
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs
are glad
Nosing the mother's udder, and the
bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze
of flowers :
Which things appear the work of
mighty Gods.

“ The Gods ! and if I go, *my* work is
left
Unfinish'd — *if* I go. The Gods, who
haunt
The lucid interspace of world and
world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves
a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of
snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to
mar
Their sacred everlasting calm ! and
such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may
gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods,
the Gods !
If all be atoms, how then should the
Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law ? My master
held
That Gods there are, for all men so
believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and
meant
Surely not miss my Memnius in a train
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
That Gods there are, and deathless.

Meant? I meant?

I have forgotten what I meant: my mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are
lamed.

“Look where another of our Gods,
the Sun,
Apollo, Delius, or of older use
All-seeing Hyperion — what you
will —

Has mounted yonder; since he never
sware,

Except his wrath were wreak'd on
wretched man,

That he would only shine among the
dead

Hereafter; tales! for never yet on
earth

Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roast-
ing ox

Moan round the spit — nor knows he
what he sees;

King of the East altho' he seem, and
girt

With song and flame and fragrance,
slowly lifts

His golden feet on those empurpled
stairs

That climb into the windy halls of
heaven:

And here he glances on an eye new-
born,

And gets for greeting but a wail of
pain;

And here he stays upon a freezing
orb

That fain would gaze upon him to the
last;

And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n
And closed by those who mourn a
friend in vain,

Not thankful that his troubles are no
more.

And me, altho' his fire is on my face
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can
tell

Whether I mean this day to end my-
self,

Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
That men like soldiers may not quit
the post

Allotted by the Gods: but he that
holds

The Gods are careless, wherefore need
he care

Greatly for them, nor rather plunge
at once,

Being troubled, wholly out of sight,
and sink

Past earthquake — ay, and gout and
stone, that break

Body toward death, and palsy, death-
in-life,

And wretched age — and worst disease
of all,

These prodigies of myriad naked-
nesses,

And twisted shapes of lust, unspeak-
able,

Abominable, strangers at my hearth
Not welcome, harpies miring every
dish,

The phantom husks of something
foully done,

And fleeting thro' the boundless uni-
verse,

And blasting the long quiet of my
breast

With animal heat and dire insanity?

“How should the mind, except it
loved them, clasp

These idols to herself? or do they fly
Now thinner, and now thicker, like
the flakes

In a fall of snow, and so press in, per-
force

Of multitude, as crowds that in an
hour

Of civic tumult jam the doors, and
bear

The keepers down, and throng, their
rags and they

The basest, far into that council-hall
Where sit the best and stateliest of
the land?

“Can I not fling this horror off me
again,

Seeing with how great ease Nature
can smile,

Balmier and nobler from her bath of
storm,

At random ravage? and how easily
 The mountain there has cast his
 cloudy slough,
 Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
 A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay,
 and within
 All hollow as the hopes and fears of
 men?

“But who was he, that in the garden
 snared
 Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale
 To laugh at—more to laugh at in
 myself—
 Nor look! what is it? there? yon
 arbutus
 Totters; a noiseless riot underneath
 Strikes through the wood, sets all the
 tops quivering—
 The mountain quickens into Nymph
 and Faun;
 And here an Oread—how the sun
 delights
 To glance and shift about her slippery
 sides,
 And rosy knees and supple rounded-
 ness,
 And budded bosom-peaks— who this
 way runs
 Before the rest— A satyr, a satyr, see,
 Follows; but him I proved impossible;
 Twy-natured is no nature: yet he
 draws
 Nearer and nearer, and I scan him
 now
 Beastlier than any phantom of his
 kind
 That ever butted his rough brother-
 brute
 For lust or lusty blood or provender:
 I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and
 she
 Loathes him as well; such a precipi-
 tate heel,
 Fledged as it were with Mercury's
 ankle-wing,
 Whirls her to me: but will she fling
 herself,
 Shameless upon me? Catch her,
 goat-foot: nay,
 Hide, hide them, million-myrtled
 wilderness,

And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide!
 do I wish—
 What?— that the bush were leafless?
 or to whelm
 All of them in one massacre? O ye
 Gods,
 I know you careless, yet, behold, to
 you
 From childly wont and ancient use I
 call—
 I thought I lived securely as your-
 selves—
 No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-
 spite,
 No madness of ambition, avarice,
 none:
 No larger feast than under plane or
 pine
 With neighbors laid along the grass,
 to take
 Only such cups as left us friendly-
 warm,
 Affirming each his own philosophy—
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
 But now it seems some unseen mon-
 ster lays
 His vast and filthy hands upon my
 will,
 Wrenching it backward into his; and
 spoils
 My bliss in being; and it was not
 great;
 For save when shutting reasons up in
 rhythm,
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,
 To make a truth less harsh, I often
 grew
 Tired of so much within our little life,
 Or of so little in our little life—
 Poor little life that toddles half an
 hour
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and
 there an end—
 And since the nobler pleasure seems
 to fade,
 Why should I, beastlike as I find my-
 self,
 Not manlike end myself?— our privi-
 lege—
 What beast has heart to do it? And
 what man,

What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph thus ?
 Not I ; not he, who bears one name with her
 Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom of kings,
 When, brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,
 She made her blood in sight of Collatine
 And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,
 Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.
 And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which breaks
 As I am breaking now !

“ And therefore now
 Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,
 Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
 Those blind beginnings that have made me man,
 Dash them anew together at her will
 Thro' all her cycles — into man once more,
 Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower :
 But till this cosmic order everywhere
 Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day
 Cracks all to pieces, — and that hour perhaps
 Is not so far when momentary man
 Shall seem no more a something to himself,
 But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,
 And even his bones long laid within the grave,
 The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,
 Into the unseen for ever, — till that hour,
 My golden work in which I told a truth
 That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,
 And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake,
 and plucks

The mortal soul from out immortal hell,
 Shall stand : ay, surely : then it fails at last
 And perishes as I must ; for O Thou,
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art
 Without one pleasure and without one pain,
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
 How roughly men may woo thee so they win —
 Thus — thus : the soul flies out and dies in the air.”

With that he drove the knife into his side :
 She heard him raging, heard him fall ;
 ran in,
 Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon herself
 As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd
 That she but meant to win him back,
 fell on him,
 Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd : he answer'd, “ Care not thou !
 Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare thee well !”

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE
 DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

PUBLISHED IN 1852.

1.

BURY the Great Duke
 With an empire's lamentation,
 Let us bury the Great Duke
 To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
 Mourning when their leaders fall,
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall.
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II.

Where shall we lay the man whom
we deplore?

Here, in streaming London's central
roar.

Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it
grow,
And let the mournful martial music
blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the
Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he
greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the
street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is
mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring
blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, res-
olute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influ-
ence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all
men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of
strength
Which stood four-square to all the
winds that blew!

Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will
be seen no more.

V.

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with its blazon'd
deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a deeper knell in the heart be
knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing an-
them roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his
loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them
boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
When he with those deep voices
wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from
shame;
With those deep voices our dead cap-
tain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an hon-
 or'd guest,
 With banner and with music, with
 soldier and with priest,
 With a nation weeping, and breaking
 on my rest ?
 Mighty Seaman, this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea.
 Thine island loves thee well, thou
 famous man,
 The greatest sailor since our world
 began.
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
 To thee the greatest soldier comes ;
 For this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea ;
 His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;
 O give him welcome, this is he
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
 And worthy to be laid by thee ;
 For this is England's greatest son,
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,
 Nor ever lost an English gun :
 This is he that far away
 Against the myriads of Assaye
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;
 And underneath another sun,
 Warring on a later day,
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew
 The treble works, the vast designs
 Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
 Where he greatly stood at bay,
 Whence he issued forth anew,
 And ever great and greater grew,
 Beating from the wasted vines
 Back to France her banded swarms,
 Back to France with countless blows,
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
 Follow'd up in valley and glen
 With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
 And England pouring on her foes.
 Such a war had such a close.
 Again their ravening eagle rose
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadow-
 ing wings,
 And barking for the thrones of kings ;
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron
 crown

On that loud Sabbath shook the
 spoiler down ;
 A day of onsets of despair !
 Dash'd on every rocky square
 Their surging charges foam'd them-
 selves away ;
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
 Thro' the long-tormented air
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
 And down we swept and charged and
 overthrew.
 So great a soldier taught us there,
 What long-enduring hearts could do
 In that world earthquake, Waterloo !
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
 And pure as he from taint of craven
 guile,
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
 If aught of things that here befall
 Touch a spirit among things divine,
 If love of country move thee there at
 all,
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by
 thine !
 And thro' the centuries let a people's
 voice
 In full acclaim,
 A people's voice,
 The proof and echo of all human
 fame,
 A people's voice, when they rejoice
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 Attest their great commander's claim
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to
 him,
 Eternal honor to his name.

VII.

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams
 forget,
 Confused by brainless mobs and law-
 less Powers ;
 Thank Him who isled us here, and
 roughly set
 His Briton in blown seas and storming
 showers,
 We have a voice, with which to pay
 the debt
 Of boundless love and reverence and
 regret

To those great men who fought, and
 kept it ours.
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute
 control;
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,
 the soul
 Of Europe, keep our noble England
 whole,
 And save the one true seed of free-
 dom sown
 Betwixt a people and their ancient
 throne,
 That sober freedom out of which
 there springs
 Our loyal passion for our temperate
 kings;
 For, saving that, ye help to save man-
 kind
 Fill public wrong be crumbled into
 dust,
 And drill the raw world for the march
 of mind,
 Fill crowds at length be sane and
 crowns be just.
 But wink no more in slothful over-
 trust.
 Remember him who led your hosts;
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward
 wall;
 His voice is silent in your council-hall
 For ever; and whatever tempests lour
 For ever silent; even if they broke
 In thunder, silent; yet remember all
 He spoke among you, and the Man
 who spoke;
 Who never sold the truth to serve the
 hour,
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for
 power;
 Who let the turbid streams of rumor
 flow
 Thro' either babbling world of high
 and low;
 Whose life was work, whose language
 rife
 With rugged maxims hewn from life;
 Who never spoke against a foe;
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one
 rebuke
 All great self-seekers trampling on
 the right:

Truth-teller was our England's Alfred
 named;
 Truth-lover was our English Duke;
 Whatever record leap to light
 He never shall be shamed.

VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
 He, on whom from both her open
 hands
 Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her
 horn.
 Yea, let all good things await
 Him who cares not to be great,
 But as he saves or serves the state.
 Not once or twice in our rough island-
 story,
 The path of duty was the way to glory:
 He that walks it, only thirsting
 For the right, and learns to deaden
 Love of self, before his journey closes,
 He shall find the stubborn thistle
 bursting
 Into glossy purples, which outredden
 All voluptuous garden-roses.
 Not once or twice in our fair island-
 story,
 The path of duty was the way to glory.
 He, that ever following her commands,
 On with toil of heart and knees and
 hands,
 Thro' the long gorge to the far light
 has won
 His path upward, and prevail'd,
 Shall find the toppling crags of Duty
 scaled
 Are close upon the shining table-
 lands
 To which our God Himself is moon
 and sun.
 Such was he: his work is done.
 But while the races of mankind en-
 dure,
 Let his great example stand
 Colossal, seen of every land,
 And keep the soldier firm, the states
 man pure:
 Till in all lands and thro' all human
 story

The path of duty be the way to glory :
 And let the land whose hearts he
 saved from shame
 For many and many an age proclaim
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 And when the long-illumined cities
 flame,
 Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to
 him,
 Eternal honor to his name.

IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
 By some yet un moulded tongue
 Far on in summers that we shall not
 see :

Peace, it is a day of pain
 For one about whose patriarchal knee
 Late the little children clung :
 O peace, it is a day of pain
 For one, upon whose hand and heart
 and brain
 Once the weight and fate of Europe
 hung.

Ours the pain, be his the gain !
 More than is of man's degree
 Must be with us, watching here
 At this, our great solemnity.
 Whom we see not we revere ;
 We revere, and we refrain
 From talk of battles loud and vain,
 And brawling memories all too free
 For such a wise humility
 As befits a solemn fane :
 We revere, and while we hear
 The tides of Music's golden sea
 Setting toward eternity,
 Uplifted high in heart and hope are
 we,
 Until we doubt not that for one so
 true
 There must be other nobler work to
 do
 Than when he fought at Waterloo,
 And Victor he must ever be.
 For tho' the Giant Ages heave the
 hill
 And break the shore, and evermore
 Make and break, and work their will ;
 Tho' world on world in myriad myriads
 roll

Round us, each with different powers,
 And other forms of life than ours,
 What know we greater than the soul ?
 On God and Godlike men we build our
 trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the
 people's ears :

The dark crowd moves, and there are
 sobs and tears :

The black earth yawns : the mortal
 disappears ;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;

He is gone who seem'd so great. —

Gone ; but nothing can bereave him

Of the force he made his own

Being here, and we believe him

Something far advanced in State,

And that he wears a truer crown

Than any wreath that man can weave
 him.

Speak no more of his renown,

Lay your earthly fancies down,

And in the vast cathedral leave him.

God accept him, Christ receive him.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY,

1852.

My Lords, we heard you speak : you
 told us all

That England's honest censure went
 too far ;

That our free press should cease to
 brawl,

Not sting the fiery Frenchman into
 war.

It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,
 To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing,
 into words.

We love not this French God, the
 child of Hell,

Wild War, who breaks the converse
 of the wise ;

But though we love kind Peace so
 well,

We dare not ev'n by silence sanction
 lies.

It might be safe our censures to with-
 draw ;

And yet, my Lords, not well : there is
 a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak
 free,
 Tho' all the storm of Europe on us
 break;
 No little German state are we,
 But the one voice in Europe: we
must speak;
 That if to-night our greatness were
 struck dead,
 There might be left some record of
 the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be
 bold.
 Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant
 o'er.
 Better the waste Atlantic roll'd
 On her and us and ours forevermore.
 What! have we fought for Freedom
 from our prime,
 At last to dodge and palter with a
 public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never
 fear'd.
 From our first Charles by force we
 wrung our claims.
 Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
 We flung the burden of the second
 James.
 I say, we *never* feared! and as for these,
 We broke them on the land, we drove
 them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the
 people muse
 In doubt if you be of our Barons'
 breed —
 Were those your sires who fought at
 Lewes?
 Is this the manly strain of Runny-
 mede?
 O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,
 Would lisp in honey'd whispers of
 this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here
 were sin,
 Not ours the fault if we have feeble
 hosts —
 If easy patrons of their kin

Have left the last free race with
 naked coasts!
 They knew the precious things they
 had to guard:
 For us, we will not spare the tyrant
 one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester
 may bawl,
 What England was, shall her true
 sons forget?
 We are not cotton-spinners all,
 But some love England and her
 honor yet.
 And these in our Thermopylæ shall
 stand,
 And hold against the world this honor
 of the land.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

I.

HALF a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
 "Forward, the Light Brigade!
 Charge for the guns," he said:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

II.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
 Was there a man dismay'd?
 Not tho' the soldier knew
 Some one had blunder'd:
 Theirs not to make reply,
 Theirs not to reason why,
 Theirs but to do and die:
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

III.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volley'd and thunder'd;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of Hell
 Rode the six hundred.

IV.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
 Flash'd as they turn'd in air
 Sabring the gunners there,
 Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd :
 Plunged in the battery-smoke
 Right thro' the line they broke ;
 Cossack and Russian
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
 Then they rode back, but not,
 Not the six hundred.

V.

Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon behind them
 Volley'd and thunder'd ;
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
 While horse and hero fell,
 They that had fought so well
 Came thro' the jaws of Death,
 Back from the mouth of Hell,
 All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

VI.

When can their glory fade ?
 O the wild charge they made !
 All the world wonder'd.
 Honor the charge they made !
 Honor the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred !

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING
 OF THE INTERNATIONAL
 EXHIBITION.

I.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and
 sweet,
 In this wide hall with earth's inven-
 tion stored,
 And praise the invisible universal
 Lord,

Who lets once more in peace the na-
 tions meet,
 Where Science, Art, and Labor
 have outpour'd
 Their myriad horns of plenty at our
 feet.

II.

O silent father of our Kings to be
 Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,
 For this, for all, we weep our thanks
 to thee !

III.

The world-compelling plan was
 thine, —
 And, lo ! the long laborious miles
 Of Palace ; lo ! the giant aisles,
 Rich in model and design ;
 Harvest-tool and husbandry,
 Loom and wheel and enginery,
 Secrets of the sullen mine,
 Steel and gold, and corn and wine,
 Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,
 Sunny tokens of the Line,
 Polar marvels, and a feast
 Of wonder, out of West and East,
 And shapes and hues of Art divine !
 All of beauty, all of use,
 That one fair planet can produce,
 Brought from under every star,
 Blown from over every main,
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,
 The works of peace with works of
 war.

IV.

Is the goal so far away ?
 Far, how far no tongue can say,
 Let us dream our dream to-day.

V.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who
 reign,
 From growing commerce loose her
 latest chain,
 And let the fair white-wing'd peace-
 maker fly
 To happy havens under all the sky,
 And mix the seasons and the golden
 hours ;
 Till each man find his own in all
 men's good,

And all men work in noble brother-
hood,
Breaking their mailed fleets and
armed towers,
And ruling by obeying Nature's
powers,
And gathering all the fruits of earth
and crown'd with all her flow-
ers.

A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA.

MARCH 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the
sea, Alexandra!
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome
of thee, Alexandra!
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of
fleet!
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the
street!
Welcome her, all things youthful and
sweet,
Scatter the blossom under her feet!
Break, happy land, into earlier flow-
ers!
Make music, O bird, in the new-budded
bowers!
Blazon your mottoes of blessing and
prayer!
Welcome her, welcome her, all that is
ours!
Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and
towers!
Flames, on the windy headland flare!
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March
air!
Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and
higher
Melt into stars for the land's desire!
Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,
Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the
strand,
Roar as the sea when he welcomes the
land,
And welcome her, welcome the land's
desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as
fair,
Blissful bride of a blissful heir,
Bride of the heir of the kings of the
sea —
O joy to the people and joy to the
throne,
Come to us, love us and make us your
own:
For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
Tenton or Celt, or whatever we be,
We are each all Dane in our welcome
of thee, Alexandra!

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL
HIGHNESS MARIE ALEX-
ANDROVNA, DUCHESS OF
EDINBURGH.

MARCH 7, 1874.

I.

THE Son of him with whom we strove
for power —
Whose will is lord thro' all his
world-domain —
Who made the serf a man, and burst
his chain —
Has given our Prince his own imperial
Flower,
Alexandrovna.
And welcome, Russian flower, a
people's pride,
To Britain, when her flowers begin
to blow!
From love to love, from home to
home you go,
From mother unto mother, stately
bride,
Marie Alexandrovna!

II.

The golden news along the steppes is
blown,
And at thy name the Tartar tents
are stirr'd;
Elburz and all the Caucasus have
heard;
And all the sultry palms of India
known,
Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea
 On capes of Afric as on cliffs of
 Kent,
 The Maoris and that Isle of Conti-
 nent,
 And loyal pines of Canada murmur
 thee,
 Marie Alexandrovna !

III.

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty
 life! —
 Yet Harold's England fell to Nor-
 man swords;
 Yet thine own land has bow'd to
 Tartar hordes
 Since English Harold gave its throne
 a wife,
 Alexandrovna !
 For thrones and peoples are as waifs
 that swing,
 And float or fall, in endless ebb and
 flow ;
 But who love best have best the
 grace to know
 That Love by right divine is deathless
 king,
 Marie Alexandrovna !

IV.

And Love has led thee to the stranger
 land,

Where men are bold and strongly
 say their say ; —
 See, empire upon empire smiles to-
 day,
 As thou with thy young lover hand in
 hand,
 Alexandrovna !
 So now thy fuller life is in the west,
 Whose hand at home was gracious
 to thy poor :
 Thy name was blest within the nar-
 row door ;
 Here also, Marie, shall thy name be
 blest,
 Marie Alexandrovna !

V.

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame
 again ?
 Or at thy coming, Princess, every-
 where,
 The blue heaven break, and some
 diviner air
 Breathe thro' the world and change
 the hearts of men,
 Alexandrovna !
 But hearts that change not, love that
 cannot cease,
 And peace be yours, the peace of
 soul in soul !
 And howsoever this wild world may
 roll,
 Between your people's truth and man-
 ful peace,
 Alfred — Alexandrovna !

THE GRANDMOTHER.

I.

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne ?
 Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.
 And Willy's wife has written : she never was over-wise,
 Never the wife for Willy : he wouldn't take my advice.

II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,
 Hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.
 Pretty enough, very pretty ! but I was against it for one.
 Eh ! — but he wouldn't hear me — and Willy, you say, is gone.

III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;
 Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.
 "Here's a leg for a babe of a week!" says doctor; and he would be bound,
 There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!
 I ought to have gone before him: I wonder he went so young.
 I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not long to stay;
 Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

V.

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;
 But all my children have gone before me, I am so old:
 I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,
 All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.
 I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost me a world of woe,
 Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well
 That Jenny had tript in her time: I knew, but I would not tell.
 And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!
 But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

VIII.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,
 That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,
 That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
 But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day;
 And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.
 Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been!
 But soiling another, Annie, will never make one's self clean.

X.

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late
 I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.
 The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,
 And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrupt the nightingale.

XI.

All of a sudden he stopt : there past by the gate of the farm,
Willy, — he didn't see me, — and Jenny lung on his arm.
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how ;
Ah, there's no fool like the old one — it makes me angry now.

XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant ;
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtsey and went.
And I said, "Let us part : in a hundred years it'll all be the same,
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name."

XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine :
"Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill ;
But marry me out of hand : we two shall be happy still."

XIV.

"Marry you, Willy !" said I, "but I needs must speak my mind,
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind."
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, "No, love, no ;"
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

XV.

So Willy and I were wedded : I wore a lilac gown ;
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife ;
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain :
I look'd at the still little body — his trouble had all been in vain.
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn :
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay :
Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man, too, would have his way :
Never jealous — not he : we had many a happy year ;
And he died, and I could not weep — my own time seem'd so near.

XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died :
 I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.
 And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget :
 But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,
 Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you :
 Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,
 While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too — they sing to their team :
 Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.
 They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed —
 I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive ;
 For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five :
 And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten ;
 I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve ;
 I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve :
 And the neighbors come and laugh and gossip, and so do I ;
 I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

XXIV.

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad :
 But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had ;
 And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease
 And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,
 And happy has been my life ; but I would not live it again.
 I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest ;
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

XXVI.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower ;
 But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour, —
 Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next ;
 I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vex't ?

XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.
 Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God that I keep my eyes.
 There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.
 But stay with the old woman now : you cannot have long to stay.

NORTHERN FARMER.

OLD STYLE.

I.

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän ?
 Noorse ? thoort nowt o' a noorse : whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän :
 Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle : but I beänt a fool :
 Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-goin' to breäk my rule.

II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true :
 Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.
 I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere,
 An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

III.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' ere o' my bed.
 "The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," a said,
 An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond ;
 I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

IV.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
 But a cast oop, thot a did, 'boot Bessy Marris's barne.
 Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,
 An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

V.

An' I hallus coom'd to's choorch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
 An' 'eerd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock¹ over my 'eäd,
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

VI.

Bessy Marris's barne ! tha knaws she läiid it to meä.
 Mowt a bean, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understand ;
 I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

¹ Cockchafer.

VII.

But Parson a cooms an' a goos, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä
 "The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," says 'eä.
 I weänt säiy men be loiers, thaw summum said it in 'aäste :
 But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste

VIII.

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass ? naw, naw, tha was not born then ;
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd 'um mysen ;
 Moäst loike a butter-bump,¹ fur I 'eerd 'um aboot an' aboot,
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um oot.

IX.

Keäper's it wur ; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
 Doon i' the woild 'enemies² afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.
 Noäks or Thimbleby — toäner 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.
 Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize — but git ma my aäle.

X.

Dubbut look at the waäste : theer warn't not feeäd for a cow ;
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' loook at it now —
 Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäd,
 Fourscoor yows upon it an' some on it doon i' seeäd.

XI.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
 Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
 If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let me aloän,
 Meä, wi' haäte oonderd haäcre o' Squire's an' lond o' my oän.

XII.

Do godamoighty know what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä ?
 I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä ;
 An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear a' dear !
 And I 'a managed for Squire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

XIII.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant nor a 'aäpoth o' sense,
 Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a niver mended a fence :
 But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now
 Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow !

XIV.

Look 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,
 Says to hessén naw doubt "what a man a beä sewer-loy !"
 Fur they knows what I beän to Squire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All ;
 I done moy duty by Squire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

¹ Bittern.² Anemones.

XV.

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
 For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;
 Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
 Naw, nor a moänt to Robins — a niver rembles the stoäns.

XVI.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
 Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Devil's oän teäm.
 Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
 But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

XVII.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the ääle ?
 Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taäle ;
 I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy ;
 Git ma my ääle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

NORTHERN FARMER.

NEW STYLE.

I.

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy ?
 Proputty, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
 Proputty, proputty, proputty — Sam, thou's an ass for thy paaäns :
 Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braaäns.

II.

Woä — theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam : yon's parson's 'ouse —
 Dosn't thou know that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse ?
 Time to think on it then ; for thou'll be twenty to weeäk.¹
 Proputty, proputty — woä then woä — let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee ;
 Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a teälin' it me.
 Thou'll not marry for munny — thou's sweet upo' parson's lass —
 Noä — thou'll marry for luvv — an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

IV.

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by — Saäint's daäy — they was ringing the bells.
 She's a beauty thou thinks — an' soä is scoors o' gells,
 Them as 'as munny an' all — wot's a beauty ? — the flower as blaws.
 But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

¹ This week.

V.

Do'ant be stunt:¹ taäke time: I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.
 Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?
 But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma this:
 "Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!"

VI.

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther coom to 'and,
 Wi' lots o' munny laaïd by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.
 Maäybe she warn't a beauty — I niver giv it a thowt —
 But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

VII.

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,
 Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle² her breäð:
 Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git naw 'igher;
 An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shire.

VIII.

An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
 Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.
 An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shove,
 Woorse nor a far-welter'd³ yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

IX.

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
 Maakin' 'em goä together as they've good right to do.
 Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaïd by?
 Naäy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reäson why.

X.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,
 Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.
 Woä then, proputtu, wiltha? — an ass as near as mays nowt⁴ —
 Woä then, wiltha? dangtha! — the bees is as fell as owt.⁵

XI.

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence!
 Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
 Proputtu, proputtu's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
 If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

XII.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
 Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.
 Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
 Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

¹ Obstinate.² Earn.³ Or fow-welter'd, — said of a sheep lying on its back in the furrow.⁴ Makes nothing.⁵ The flies are as fierce as anything.

XIII.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
 Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.
 Feyther 'ad anmost nowt; leastways 'is munny was 'id.
 But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an 'e died a good un, 'e did.

XIV.

Look thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill
 Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
 An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;
 And if thou marries a good un I'll läve the land to thee.

XV.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;
 But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leave the land to Dick. —
 Coom oop, proputtty, proputtty — that's what I 'ears 'im saäy —
 Proputtty, proputtty, proputtty — canter an' canter awaäy

THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and
 mine,

In lands of palm and southern pine;
 In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
 Of olive, atoe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbìa show'd
 In ruin, by the mountain road;
 How like a gem, beneath, the city
 Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
 The torrent vineyard streaming fell
 To meet the sun and sunny waters,
 That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
 By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;
 Where, here and there, on sandy
 beaches
 A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
 Yet present in his natal grove,
 Now watching high on mountain
 cornice,
 And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
 Till, in a narrow street and dim,
 I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
 And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,
 Not the clipt palm of which they boast;
 But distant color, happy hamlet,
 A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
 A light amid its olives green;
 Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
 Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
 Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
 And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
 Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
 Those niched shapes of noble mould,
 A princely people's awful princes,
 The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
 In those long galleries, were ours;
 What drives about the fresh Cascinè,
 Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
 Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
 Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
 Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
 Remember what a plague of rain ;
 Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;
 At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
 Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;
 Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
 And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
 The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
 The height, the space, the gloom,
 the glory !
 A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;
 Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
 I stood among the silent statues,
 And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
 Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
 A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
 And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
 To Como ; shower and storm and blast
 Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
 And all was flooded ; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
 And in my head, for half the day,
 The rich Virgilian rustic measure
 Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
 As on The Lariano crept
 To that fair port below the castle
 Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
 A cypress in the moonlight shake,
 The moonlight touching o'er a
 terrace
 One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,
 And up the snowy Splügen drew,
 But ere we reach'd the highest
 summit
 I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
 And now it tells of Italy.
 O love, we two shall go no longer
 To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold
 Whose crying is a cry for gold :
 Yet here to-night in this dark city,
 When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
 This nursling of another sky
 Still in the little book you lent me,
 And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
 The gloom that saddens Heaven and
 Earth,
 The bitter east, the misty summer
 And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
 Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
 Perchance, to dream you still be-
 side me,
 My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.
 JANUARY, 1854.

COME, when no graver cares employ,
 Godfather, come and see your boy :
 Your presence will be sun in winter,
 Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
 Who give the Fiend himself his due,
 Should eighty-thousand college-
 councils
 Thunder " Anathema," friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
 At you, so careful of the right,
 Yet one lay-hearth would give you
 welcome
 (Take it and come) to the Isle of
 Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,

watch the twilight falling brown
All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand ;
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin ;
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;
Till you should turn to dearer matters,
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;
How gain in life, as life advances,
Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold as dear ;
Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year.

WILL.

I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong !
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

II.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still !
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle in the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

 IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,

The two and thirty years were a mist
 that rolls away ;
 For all along the valley, down thy
 rocky bed,
 Thy living voice to me was as the
 voice of the dead,
 And all along the valley, by rock and
 cave and tree,
 The voice of the dead was a living
 voice to me.

IN THE GARDEN AT
 SWAINSTON.

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,
 Within was weeping for thee :
 Shadows of three dead men
 Walk'd in the walks with me,
 Shadows of three dead men and
 thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods :
 The Master was far away :
 Nightingales warbled and sang
 Of a passion that lasts but a day ;
 Still in the house in his coffin the
 Prince of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known
 In courtesy like to thee :
 Two dead men have I loved
 With a love that ever will be :
 Three dead men have I loved, and
 thou art last of the three.

THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour
 I cast to earth a seed.
 Up there came a flower,
 The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
 Thro' my garden-bower,
 And muttering discontent
 Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
 It wore a crown of light,
 But thieves from o'er the wall
 Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide
 By every town and tower,
 Till all the people cried,
 " Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable :
 He that runs may read.
 Most can raise the flowers now,
 For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
 And some are poor indeed ;
 And now again the people
 Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT.

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
 Where yon broad water sweetly,
 slowly glides.
 It sees itself from thatch to base
 Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to
 die !
 Her quiet dream of life this hour
 may cease.
 Her peaceful being slowly passes by
 To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR BOY.

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
 Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,
 And reach'd the ship and caught the
 rope,
 And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
 He heard a fierce mermaidén cry,
 " O boy, tho' thou art young and
 proud,
 I see the place where thou wilt lie.

" The sands and yeasty surges mix
 In caves about the dreary bay,
 And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
 And in thy heart the scrawl shall
 play."

"Fool," he answer'd, "death is sure
To those that stay and those that
 roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

"My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, 'Stay for shame;'
My father raves of death and wreck,
They are all to blame, they are all
 to blame.

"God help me! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me."

THE ISLET.

"WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we
 go,
For a score of sweet little summers or
so?"

The sweet little wife of the singer said,
On the day that follow'd the day she
 was wed,

"Whither, O whither, love, shall we
go?"

And the singer shaking his curly head
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys
There at his right with a sudden crash,
Singing, "And shall it be over the seas
With a crew that is neither rude nor
 rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I
 know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairily-delicate palaces shine
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd
With many a rivulet high against the
 Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain
 flash
Above the valleys of palm and pine."

"Thither, O thither, love, let us go."

"No, no, no!
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,
There is but one bird with a musical
 throat,
And his compass is but of a single
 note,
That it makes one weary to hear."

"Mock me not! mock me not! love,
 let us go."

"No, love, no.
For the bud ever breaks into bloom
 on the tree,
And a storm never wakes on the lonely
 sea,
And a worm is there in the lonely
 wood,
That pierces the liver and blackens
 the blood;
And makes it a sorrow to be."

CHILD-SONGS.

I.

THE CITY CHILD.

DAINTY little maiden, whither would
 you wander?

Whither from this pretty home, the
 home where mother dwells?

"Far and far away," said the dainty
 little maiden,

"All among the gardens, ariculas,
 anemones,

Roses and lilies and Canterbury-
 bells."

Dainty little maiden, whither would
 you wander?

Whither from this pretty house,
 this city-house of ours?

"Far and far away," said the dainty
 little maiden,

"All among the meadows, the clover
 and the clematis,

Daisies and kingcups and honey
 suckle-flowers."

II.

MINNIE AND WINNIE.

MINNIE and Winnie
Slept in a shell.
Sleep, little ladies!
And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,
Silver without;
Sounds of the great sea
Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies!
Wake not soon!
Echo on echo
Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars
Peep'd into the shell.
"What are they dreaming of?
Who can tell?"

Started a green linnet
Out of the croft;
Wake, little ladies,
The sun is aloft!

THE SPITEFUL LETTER

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,
And with it a spiteful letter.
My name in song has done him much
wrong,
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,
If men neglect your pages?
I think not much of yours or of mine,
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of
the times!
Are mine for the moment stronger?
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot,
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as
brief;
What room is left for a hater?

Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener
leaf,
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I — is that your cry?
And men will live to see it.
Well — if it be so — so it is, you know;
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,
But this is the time of hollies.
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,
How I hate the spites and the
follies!

LITERARY SQUABBLES.

Alas! God! the petty fools of rhyme
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent stars:

Who hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite
And pinch their brethren in the throng,
And scratch the very dead for spite:

And strain to make an inch of room
For their sweet selves, and cannot
hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs and all things
here:

When one small touch of Charity
Could lift them nearer God-like state
Than if the crowned Orb should cry
Like those who cried Diana great:

And I too, talk, and lose the touch
I talk of. Surely, after all,
The noblest answer unto such
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

THE VICTIM.

I.

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low,
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,

For on them brake the sudden foe ;
So thick they died the people cried,
"The Gods are moved against the
land."

The Priest in horror about his altar
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand -
"Help us from famine
And plague and strife !
What would you have of us ?
Human life ?
Were it our nearest,
Were it our dearest,
(Answer, O answer)
We give you his life."

II.

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,
And cattle died, and deer in wood,
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
And whiten'd all the rolling flood ;
And dead men lay all over the way,
Or down in a furrow scathed with
flame :
And ever and aye the Priesthood
moan'd,
Till at last it seem'd that an answer
came.
"The King is happy
In child and wife ;
Take you his dearest,
Give us a life."

III.

The Priest went out by heath and hill ;
The King was hunting in the wild ;
They found the mother sitting still ;
She cast her arms about the child.
The child was only eight summers old,
His beauty still with his years in-
creased,
His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,
He seem'd a victim due to the priest.
The Priest beheld him,
And cried with joy,
"The Gods have answer'd :
We give them the boy."

IV.

The King return'd from out the wild,
He bore but little game in hand ;

The mother said, "They have taken
the child
To spill his blood and heal the
land :

The land is sick, the people diseased,
And blight and famine on all the
lea :

The holy Gods, they must be appeased,
So I pray you tell the truth to me.
They have taken our son,
They will have his life.
Is *he* your dearest ?
Or I, the wife ? "

V.

The King bent low, with hand on
brow,
He stay'd his arms upon his knee :
"O wife, what use to answer now ?
For now the Priest has judged for
me."

The King was shaken with holy
fear ;

"The Gods," he said, "would have
chosen well ;
Yet both are near, and both are dear,
And which the dearest I cannot tell!"
But the Priest was happy,
His victim won :
"We have his dearest,
His only son !"

VI.

The rites prepared, the victim bared,
The knife uprising toward the
blow

To the altar-stone she sprang alone,

"Me, not my darling, no !"
He caught her away with a sudden
cry ;

Suddenly from him brake his wife,
And shrieking "*I* am his dearest, I—
I am his dearest!" rush'd on the
knife.

And the Priest was happy,
"O, Father Odin,
We give you a life.
Which was his nearest ?
Who was his dearest ?
The Gods have answer'd ;
We give them the wife !"

WAGES.

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea —
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong —
 Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she :
 Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death : if the wages of Virtue be dust,
 Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly ?
 She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
 To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky :
 Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains —
 Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns ?

Is not the Vision He ? tho' He be not that which He seems ?
 Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams ?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
 Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him ?

Dark is the world to thee : thyself art the reason why ;
 For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I" ?

Glory about thee, without thee ; and thou fulfillest thy doom
 Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet —
 Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise ; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
 For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some : no God at all, says the fool ;
 For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool ;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see ;
 But if we could see and hear, this Vision — were it not He ?

THE VOICE AND THE PEAK.

I.

THE voice and the Peak
 Far over summit and lawn,
 The lone glow and long roar
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
 of dawn !

II.

All night have I heard the voice
 Rave over the rocky bar,
 But thou wert silent in heaven,
 Above thee glided the star.

III.

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
That standest high above all?
"I am the voice of the Peak,
I roar and rave for I fall.

IV.

"A thousand voices go
To North, South, East, and West;
They leave the heights and are
troubled,
And moan and sink to their rest.

V.

"The fields are fair beside them,
The chestnut towers in his bloom;
But they — they feel the desire of the
deep —
Fall, and follow their doom.

VI.

"The deep has power on the height,
And the height has power on the
deep;
They are raised for ever and ever,
And sink again into sleep."

VII.

Not raised for ever and ever,
But when their cycle is o'er,
The valley, the voice, the peak, the
star
Pass, and are found no more.

VIII.

The Peak is high and flush'd
At his highest with sunrise fire;
The Peak is high, and the stars are
high,
And the thought of a man is higher.

IX.

A deep below the deep,
And a height beyond the height!
Our hearing is not hearing,
And our seeing is not sight.

X.

The voice and the Peak
Far into heaven withdrawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
of dawn!

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my
hand,
Little flower — but *if* I could under-
stand
What you are, root and all, and all in
all,
I should know what God and man is.

A DEDICATION.

DEAR, near and true — no truer Time
himself
Can prove you, tho' he make you ever-
more
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of
life
Shoots to the fall — take this and pray
that he
Who wrote it, honoring your sweet
faith in him,
May trust himself; and after praise
and scorn,
As one who feels the immeasurable
world,
Attain the wise indifference of the
wise;
And after Autumn past — if left to
pass
His autumn into seeming-leafless
days —
Draw toward the long frost and long-
est night,
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the
fruit
Which in our winter woodland looks
a flower.¹

¹ The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

EXPERIMENTS.

BOÄDICEA.

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,
 Far in the East Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,
 Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Cámulodúne,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

“ They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,
 Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating ?
 Shall I heed them in their anguish ? shall I brook to be supplicated ?
 Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant !
 Must their ever-ravenging eagle's beak and talon annihilate us ?
 Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering ?
 Bark an answer, Britain's raven ! bark and blacken innumerable,
 Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcase a skeleton,
 Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfskin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,
 Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.
 Lo their colony half-defended ! low their colony, Cámulodúne !
 There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.
 There the hive of Roman liars worship a gluttonous emperor-idiot.
 Such is Rome, and this her deity : hear it, Spirit of Cássivëlaún !

“ Hear it, Gods ! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian !
 Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catiuchlanian, Trinobant.
 These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,
 Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aërially,
 Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,
 Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.
 Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men ;
 Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the reflux estuary ;
 Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering —
 There was one who watch'd and told me — down their statue of Victory fell.
 Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony Cámulodúne,
 Shall we teach it a Roman lesson ? shall we care to be pitiful ?
 Shall we deal with it as an infant ? shall we dandle it amorously ?

“ Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant !
 While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,
 There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,
 Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses,
 ‘ Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets !
 Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,
 Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet !

Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,
 Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,
 Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,
 Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God.'
 So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?
 So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

“Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!
 Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the lover of liberty,
 Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,
 Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!
 See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!
 Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.
 Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúne!
 There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,
 Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringed Britoness —
 Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.
 Shout Icenian, Catiuchlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,
 Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously
 Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.
 Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cúnobelíne!
 There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,
 Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.
 There they dwelt and there they rioted; there — there — they dwell no more
 Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,
 Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,
 Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,
 Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us.”

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.
 Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.
 So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,
 Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,
 Then her pulses at the clamoring of her enemy fainted away.
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.
 Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, Cámulodúne.

IN QUANTITY.

ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER.

Hexameters and Pentameters.

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!
 No — but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

MILTON.

Alcaics.

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for ages;
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyræan
 Rings to the roar of an angel on-set —
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean
 isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

Hendecasyllabics.

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
 All composed in a metre of Catullus
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,
 Like the skater on ice that hardly
 bears him,
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,

Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
 They should speak to me not without a welcome,
 All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me
 Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers,
 O blatant Magazines, regard me rather —
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —
 As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-like
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

—
 SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN
 BLANK VERSE.

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd
 applause;
 Then loosed their sweating horses
 from the yoke,
 And each beside his chariot bound his
 own;
 And oxen from the city, and goodly
 sheep

In haste they drove, and honey-hearted
 wine
 And bread from out the houses
 brought, and heap'd
 Their firewood, and the winds from off
 the plain
 Roll'd the rich vapor far into the
 heaven.
 And these all night upon the bridge¹
 of war
 Sat glorying ; many a fire before them
 blazed :
 As when in heaven the stars about the
 moon
 Look beautiful, when all the winds are
 laid,
 And every height comes out, and jut-
 ting peak

¹ Or ridge.

And valley, and the immeasurable
 heavens
 Break open to their highest, and all
 the stars
 Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in
 his heart :
 So many a fire between the ships and
 stream
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers
 of Troy,
 A thousand on the plain ; and close
 by each
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning
 fire ;
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the
 steeds,
 Fixt by their cars, waited the golden
 dawn. *Iliad* VIII. 542-561.

THE WINDOW ;

OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS.

Four years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as "Orpheus with his lute," and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days ; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870.

A. TENNYSON.

THE WINDOW.

ON THE HILL.

THE lights and shadows fly !
 Yonder it brightens and darkens down
 on the plain.
 A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's
 eye !
 Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her
 window pane,
 When the winds are up in the
 morning ?
 Clouds that are racing above,
 And winds and lights and shadows
 that cannot be still,
 All running on one way to the home
 of my love,
 You are all running on, and I stand
 on the slope of the hill,
 And the winds are up in the morn-
 ing !

Follow, follow the chase !
 And my thoughts are as quick and as
 quick, ever on, on, on.
 O lights, are you flying over her
 sweet little face ?
 And my heart is there before you are
 come, and gone,
 When the winds are up in the
 morning !

Follow them down the slope !
 And I follow them down to the window-
 pane of my dear,
 And it brightens and darkens and
 brightens like my hope,
 And it darkens and brightens and
 darkens like my fear,
 And the winds are up in the
 morning.

AT THE WINDOW.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Clasp her window, trail and twine!
Rose, rose and clematis,
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,
Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?
Rose, rose and clematis,
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,
Kiss, kiss — and out of her bower
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,
Dropt, a flower.

GONE.

Gone!
Gone, till the end of the year,
Gone, and the light gone with her, and
left me in shadow here!
Gone — flitted away,
Taken the stars from the night and
the sun from the day!
Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a
storm in the air!
Flown to the east or the west, flitted
I know not where!
Down in the south is a flash and a
groan: she is there! she is
there!

WINTER.

The frost is here,
And fuel is dear,
And woods are sear,
And fires burn clear,
And frost is here
And has bitten the heel of the going
year.

Bite, frost, bite!
You roll up away from the light
The blue wood-louse, and the plump
dormouse,
And the bees are still'd, and the flies
are kill'd,
And you bite far into the heart of the
house,
But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!
The woods are all the searer,
The fuel is all the dearer,
The fires are all the clearer,
My spring is all the nearer,
You have bitten into the heart of the
earth,
But not into mine.

SPRING.

Birds' love and birds' song
Flying here and there,
Birds' song and birds' love,
And you with gold for hair!
Birds' song and birds' love,
Passing with the weather,
Men's song and men's love,
To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,
And women's love and men's!
And you my wren with a crown of
gold,
You my queen of the wrens!
You the queen of the wrens —
We'll be birds of a feather,
I'll be King of the Queen of the
wrens,
And all in a nest together.

THE LETTER.

Where is another sweet as my sweet,
Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?
Fine little hands, fine little feet —
Dewy blue eye.
Shall I write to her? shall I go?
Ask her to marry me by and by?
Somebody said that she'd say no;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!
Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?
Ay or no, from shy of the shy?
Go, little letter, apace, apace,
Fly;
Fly to the light in the valley below —
Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:
Somebody said that she'd say no;
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

NO ANSWER.

The mist and the rain, the mist and
the rain!

Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
And never a glimpse of her window
pane!

And I may die but the grass will
grow,
And the grass will grow when I am
gone,
And the wet west wind and the world
will go on.

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,
No is trouble and cloud and storm,
Ay is life for a hundred years,
No will push me down to the worm,
And when I am there and dead and
gone,
The wet west wind and the world will
go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and
the wet!
Wet west wind how you blow, you
blow!

And never a line from my lady yet!
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,
The wet west wind and the world may
go on.

NO ANSWER.

Winds are loud and you are dumb,
Take my love, for love will come,
Love will come but once a life.
Winds are loud and winds will pass!
Spring is here with leaf and grass:
Take my love and be my wife.
After-loves of maids and men
Are but dainties drest again:
Love me now, you'll love me then:
Love can love but once a life.

THE ANSWER.

Two little hands that meet,
Claspt on her seal, my sweet!
Must I take you and break you,
Two little hands that meet?
I must take you, and break you,
And loving hands must part—
Take, take—break, break—
Break—you may break my heart.
Faint heart never won—
Break, break, and all's done.

AY.

Be merry, all birds, to-day,
Be merry on earth as you never
were merry before,
Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far
away,
And merry for ever and ever, and
one day more.

Why?
For it's easy to find a rhyme.
Look, look, how he flits,
The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,
from out of the pine!
Look how they tumble the blossom,
the mad little tits!
"Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!" was ever a
May so fine?

Why?
For it's easy to find a rhyme.
O merry the linnnet and dove,
And swallow and sparrow and
throstle, and have your desire!
O merry my heart, you have gotten
the wings of love,
And fit like the king of the wrens
with a crown of fire.

Why?
For its ay ay, ay ay.

WHEN.

Sun comes, moon comes,
Time slips away.
Sun sets, moon sets,
Love, fix a day.

"A year hence, a year hence."
"We shall both be gray."
"A month hence, a month hence."
"Far, far away."

"A week hence, a week hence."
"Ah, the long delay."
"Wait a little, wait a little,
You shall fix a day."

"To-morrow, love, to-morrow,
And that's an age away."
Blaze upon her window, sun,
And honor all the day.

MARRIAGE MORNING.

Light, so low upon earth,
 You send a flash to the sun.
 Here is the golden close of love,
 All my wooing is done.
 Oh, the woods and the meadows,
 Woods where we hid from the wet,
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,
 Meadows in which we met!

Light, so low in the vale
 You flash and lighten afar,
 For this is the golden morning of love,

And you are his morning star.
 Flash, I am coming, I come,
 By meadow and stile and wood,
 Oh, lighten into my eyes and my heart,
 Into my heart and my blood!

Heart, are you great enough
 For a love that never tires?
 O heart, are you great enough for love?
 I have heard of thorns and briers.
 Over the thorns and briers,
 Over the meadows and stiles,
 Over the world to the end of it
 Flash for a million miles.



IDYLS OF THE KING.

DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory — since he held them dear,
Perchance as finding there unconsciously
Some image of himself — I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me
Scarce other than my king's ideal
knight,
“ Who revered his conscience as
his king;
Whose glory was, redressing human
wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd
to it;
Who loved one only and who clave to
her — ”
Her — over all whose realms to their
last isle,
Commingled with the gloom of im-
minent war,
The shadow of His loss drew like
eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost
him : he is gone :
We know him now : all narrow jeal-
ousies
Are silent ; and we see him as he
moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,
wise,
With what sublime repression of him-
self,
And in what limits, and how tenderly ;

Not swaying to this faction or to that ;
Not making his high place the lawless
perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-
ground
For pleasure ; but thro' all this tract
of years
Wearing the white flower of a blame-
less life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon
a throne,
And blackens every blot : for where
is he,
Who dares foreshadow for an only son
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than
his ?
Or how should England dreaming of
his sons
Hope more for these than some in-
heritance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her
poor —
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler
day —
Far-sighted summoner of War and
Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of
peace —
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious
gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince
indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household
name,

Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;
Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,
Remembering all the beauty of that star
Which shone so close beside Thee that ye made
One light together, but has past and leaves
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow
Thee,
The love of all Thy sons encompass
Thee,
The love of all Thy daughters cherish
Thee,
The love of all Thy people comfort
Thee,
Till God's love set Thee at his side
again!

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other child;
And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
Each upon other, wasted all the land;
And still from time to time the heathen host
Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was left.
And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less, till Arthur came.

For first Aurelius lived and fought and died,
And after him King Uther fought and died,
But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.
And after these King Arthur for a space,
And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,
Drew all their petty principedoms under him,
Their king and head, and made a realm,
and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,
And none or few to scare or chase the beast;
So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and bear
Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.
And ever and anon the wolf would steal
The children and devour, but now and then,
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat
To human sucklings; and the children, housed
In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,
And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,
Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran
Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,
And Caesar's eagle: then his brother king,
Urien, assail'd him: last a heathen horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood,

And on the spike that split the
mother's heart
Spitting the child, brake on him, till,
amazed,
He knew not whither he should turn
for aid.

But — for he heard of Arthur newly
crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made by
those
Who cried, "He is not Uther's son"
— the King
Sent to him, saying, "Arise, and help
us thou!
For here between the man and beast
we die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed
of arms,
But heard the call, and came: and
Guinevere

Stood by the castle walls to watch him
pass;

But since he neither wore on helm or
shield

The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his
knights,

And many of these in richer arms
than he,

She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she
saw,

One among many, tho' his face was
bare.

But Arthur, looking downward as he
past,

Felt the light of her eyes into his life
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and
pitch'd

His tents beside the forest. Then he
drave

The heathen; after, slew the beast,
and fell'd

The forest, letting in the sun, and
made

Broad pathways for the hunter and
the knight

And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the
hearts

Of those great Lords and Barons of
his realm

Flash'd forth and into war: for most
of these,

Colleagu'ing with a score of petty
kings,

Made head against him, crying, "Who
is he

That he should rule us? who hath
proven him

King Uther's son? for lo! we look at
him,

And find nor face nor bearing, limbs
nor voice,

Are like to those of Uther whom we
knew.

This is the son of Gorlois, not the
King;

This is the son of Anton, not the
King."

And Arthur, passing thence to
battle, felt

Travail, and throes and agonies of the
life,

Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;
And thinking as he rode, "Her father
said

That there between the man and beast
they die.

Shall I not lift her from this land of
beasts

Up to my throne, and side by side
with me?

What happiness to reign a lonely
king,

Vext — O ye stars that shudder over
me,

O earth that soundest hollow under
me,

Vext with waste dreams? for saving
I be join'd

To her that is the fairest under heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,

And cannot will my will, nor work my
work

Wholly, nor make myself in mine own
realm

Victor and lord. But were I join'd
with her,

Then might we live together as one
life,

And reigning with one will in every-
thing
Have power in this dark land to
lighten it,
And power on this dead world to
make it live."

Thereafter — as he speaks who tells
the tale —

When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle
bright

With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the
world

Was all so clear about him, that he
saw

The smallest rock far on the faintest
hill,

And even in high day the morning
star.

So when the King had set his banner
broad,

At once from either side, with trumpet-
blast,

And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto
blood,

The long-lanced battle let their horses
run.

And now the Barons and the kings
prevail'd,

And now the King, as here and there
that war

Went swaying; but the Powers who
walk the world

Made lightnings and great thunders
over him,

And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by
main might,

And mightier of his hands with every
blow,

And leading all his knighthood threw
the kings

Carádos, Urien, Cradle-mont of Wales,
Claudias, and Clariance of Northum-
berland,

The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,

And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a
voice

As dreadful as the shout of one who
sees

To one who sins, and deems himself
alone

And all the world asleep, they swerved
and brake

Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the
brands

That hack'd among the flyers, "Ho!
they yield!"

So like a painted battle the war stood
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,

And in the heart of Arthur joy was
lord.

He laugh'd upon his warrior whom
he loved

And honor'd most. "Thou dost not
doubt me King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for
me to-day."

"Sir and my liege," he cried, "the
fire of God

Descends upon thee in the battle-field:
I know thee for my King!" Whereat

the two,
For each had ward'd either in the

fight,
Sware on the field of death a deathless

love.
And Arthur said, "Man's word is God

in man:
Let chance what will, I trust thee to

the death."

Then quickly from the foughten
field he sent

Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King Leo-

dogran,
Saying, "If I in aught have served

thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to

wife."

Whom when he heard, Leodogran
in heart

Debating — "How should I that am a
king,

However much he help me at my
need,

Give my one daughter saving to a
king,

And a king's son?" — lifted his voice,
and call'd

A hoary man, his chamberlain, to
whom

He trusted all things, and of him
required
His counsel: "Knowest thou aught of
Arthur's birth?"

Then spake the hoary chamberlain
and said,
"Sir King, there be but two old men
that know:
And each is twice as old as I; and one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever
served
King Uther thro' his magic art; and
one
Is Merlin's master (so they call him)
Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the
scholar ran
Before the master, and so far, that
Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and
wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after
years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's
birth."

To whom the King Leodogran
replied,
"O friend, had I been holpen half as
well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-
day,
Then beast and man had had their
share of me:
But summon here before us yet once
more
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere."

Then, when they came before him,
the King said,
"I have seen the cuckoo chased by
lesser fowl,
And reason in the chase: but where-
fore now
Do these your lords stir up the heat
of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye your-
selves,

Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's
son?"

And Ulfus and Brastius answer'd,
"Ay."
Then Bedivere, the first of all his
knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,
spake —
For bold in heart and act and word
was he,
Whenever slander breathed against
the King —

"Sir, there be many rumors on this
head:
For there be those who hate him in
their hearts,
Call him baseborn, and since his ways
are sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him less
than man:
And there be those who deem him
more than man,
And dream he dropt from heaven: but
my belief
In all this matter — so ye care to
learn —
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's
time
The prince and warrior Gorlois, he
that held
Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
Was wedded with a winsome wife,
Ygerne:
And daughters had she borne him, —
one whereof,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
Bellicent,
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
To Arthur, — but a son she had not
borne.
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love:
But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,
So loathed the bright dishonor of his
love,
That Gorlois and King Uther went to
war:
And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.
Then Uther in his wrath and heat
besieged

Ygerne within Tintagil, where her
 men,
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their
 walls,
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd
 in,
 And there was none to call to but him-
 self.
 So, compass'd by the power of the
 King,
 Enforced she was to wed him in her
 tears,
 And with a shameful swiftness: after-
 ward,
 Not many moons, King Uther died
 himself,
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to
 rule
 After him, lest the realm should go to
 wrack.
 And that same night, the night of the
 new year,
 By reason of the bitterness and grief
 That vext his mother, all before his
 time
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as
 born
 Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
 To Merlin, to be holden far apart
 Until his hour should come; because
 the lords
 Of that fierce day were as the lords of
 this,
 Wild beasts, and surely would have
 torn the child
 Piecemeal among them, had they
 known; for each
 But sought to rule for his own self
 and hand,
 And many hated Uther for the sake
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took
 the child,
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old
 knight
 And ancient friend of Uther; and his
 wife
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd
 him with her own;
 And no man knew. And ever since
 the lords
 Have foughten like wild beasts among
 themselves,

So that the realm has gone to wrack:
 but now,
 This year, when Merlin (for his hour
 had come)
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in
 the hall,
 Proclaiming, 'Here is Uther's heir,
 your king,'
 A hundred voices cried, 'Away with
 him!
 No king of ours! a son of Gorlois
 he,
 Or else the child of Anton, and no
 king,
 Or else baseborn.' Yet Merlin thro'
 his craft,
 And while the people clamor'd for a
 king,
 Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the
 great lords
 Banded, and so brake out in open
 war."

Then while the King debated with
 himself
 If Arthur were the child of shameful-
 ness,
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after
 death,
 Or Uther's son, and born before his
 time,
 Or whether there were truth in any-
 thing
 Said by these three, there came to
 Cameliard,
 With Gawain and young Modred, her
 two sons,
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
 Bellicent;
 Whom as he could, not as he would,
 the King
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at
 meat,

"A doubtful throne is ice on sum-
 mer seas.
 Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor
 his men
 Report him! Yea, but ye — think ye
 this king —
 So many those that hate him, and so
 strong,

So few his knights, however brave
they be—
Hath body enow to hold his foemen
down?"

"O King," she cried, "and I will
tell thee: few,
Few, but all brave, all of one mind
with him;
For I was near him when the savage
yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur
sat
Crown'd on the dais, and his warriors
cried,
'Be thou the king, and we will work
thy will
Who love thee.' Then the King in
low deep tones,
And simple words of great authority,
Bound them by so strait vows to his
own self,
That when they rose, knighted from
kneeling, some
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one
who wakes
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

"But when he spake and cheer'd
his Table Round
With large divine and comfortable
words
Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I
beheld
From eye to eye thro' all their Order
flash
A momentary likeness of the King:
And ere it left their faces, thro' the
cross
And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur,
smote
Flame-color, vert and azure, in three
rays,
One falling upon each of three fair
queens,
Who stood in silence near his throne,
the friends
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with
bright

Sweet faces, would all follow him at his
need.

"And there I beheld the Lady of
whose vast
And hundred winters' age were on the
hands
Of loyal vassals' hearts and hands.

"And near the tomb of the Lady of
the Jewry
Who knoweth more of the world than his
own
Clothes of white and gold, mystic, won-
derful,
She gazed on the King his huge cross-
like
Whereby to drive the heathen out: a
mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her
face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster
gloom;
But there was heard among the holy
hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever
storms
May shake the world, and when the
surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like
our Lord.

"There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the
sword
That rose from out the bosom of the
lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it
— rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade
so bright
That men are blinded by it—on one
side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this
world,
'Take me,' but turn the blade and ye
shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak
yourself,

'Cast me away!' And sad was
 Arthur's face
 Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd
 him,
 'Take thou and strike! the time to
 cast away
 Is yet far-off.' So this great brand
 the king
 Took, and by this will beat his foemen
 down."

Thereat Leodogram rejoiced, but
 thought
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and
 ask'd,
 Fixing full eyes of question on her
 face,
 "The swallow and the swift are near
 akin,
 But thou art closer to this noble prince,
 Being his own dear sister;" and she
 said,
 "Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am
 I;"
 "And therefore Arthur's sister?"
 ask'd the King.
 She answer'd, "These besecret things,"
 and sign'd
 To those two sons to pass and let
 them be.
 And Gawain went, and breaking into
 song
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying
 hair
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he
 saw:
 But Modred laid his ear beside the
 doors,
 And there half-heard; the same that
 afterward
 Struck for the throne, and striking
 found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,
 "What know I?
 For dark my mother was in eyes and
 hair,
 And dark in hair and eyes am I; and
 dark
 Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther
 too,

Wellnigh to blackness; but this King
 is fair
 Beyond the race of Britons and of men.
 Moreover, always in my mind I hear
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
 'O that ye had some brother, pretty
 one,
 To guard thee on the rough ways of
 the world.'"

"Ay," said the King, "and hear ye
 such a cry?
 But when did Arthur chance upon
 thee first?"

"O King!" she cried, "and I will
 tell thee true:
 He found me first when yet a little
 maid:
 Beaten I had been for a little fault
 Whereof I was not guilty; and out I
 ran
 And flung myself down on a bank of
 heath,
 And hated this fair world and all
 therein,
 And wept, and wish'd that I were
 dead; and he—
 I know not whether of himself he
 came,
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say,
 can walk
 Unseen at pleasure—he was at my
 side
 And spake sweet words, and comforted
 my heart,
 And dried my tears, being a child with
 me.
 And many a time he came, and ever-
 more
 As I grew greater grew with me; and
 sad
 At times he seem'd, and sad with him
 was I,
 Stern too at times, and then I loved
 him not,
 But sweet again, and then I loved him
 well.
 And now of late I see him less and
 less,

But those first days had golden hours
for me,
For then I surely thought he would
be king.

“But let me tell thee now another
tale;

For Bleys, our Merlin’s master, as
they say,

Died but of late, and sent his cry to
me,

To hear him speak before he left his
life.

Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay
the mage;

And when I enter’d told me that him-
self

And Merlin ever served about the
King,

Uther, before he died; and on the
night

When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the
two

Left the still King, and passing forth
to breathe,

Then from the castle gateway by the
chasm

Descending thro’ the dismal night—
a night

In which the bounds of heaven and
earth were lost—

Beheld, so high upon the dreary
deeps

It seem’d in heaven, a ship, the shape
thereof

A dragon wing’d, and all from stem
to stern

Bright with a shining people on the
decks,

And gone as soon as seen. And then
the two

Dropt to the cove, and watch’d the
great sea fall,

Wave after wave, each mightier than
the last,

Till last, a ninth one, gathering half
the deep

And full of voices, slowly rose and
plunged

Roaring, and all the wave was in a
flame:

And down the wave and in the flame
was borne

A naked babe, and rode to Merlin’s
feet,

Who stoopt and caught the babe, and
cried ‘The King!

Here is an heir for Uther!’ And the
fringe

Of that great breaker, sweeping up
the strand,

Lash’d at the wizard as he spake the
word,

And all at once all round him rose in
fire,

So that the child and he were clothed
in fire.

And presently thereafter follow’d
calm,

Free sky and stars: ‘And this same
child,’ he said,

‘Is he who reigns; nor could I part
in peace

Till this were told.’ And saying this
the seer

Went thro’ the strait and dreadful
pass of death,

Not ever to be question’d any more
Save on the further side; but when I
met

Merlin, and ask’d him if these things
were truth—

The shining dragon and the naked
child

Descending in the glory of the seas—
He laugh’d as is his wont, and an-
swer’d me

In riddling triplets of old time, and
said:

“ ‘Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow
in the sky!

A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man’s wit may wander ere he
die.

Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on
the lea!

And truth is this to me, and that to
thee;

And truth or clothed or naked let it
be.

Rain, sun, and rain! and the free
blossom blows:

Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he
 who knows?
 From the great deep to the great deep
 he goes.'

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me;
 but thou
 Fear not to give this King thine only
 child,
 Guinevere: so great bards of him will
 sing
 Hereafter; and dark sayings from of
 old
 Ranging and ringing thro' the minds
 of men,
 And echo'd by old folk beside their
 fires
 For comfort after their wage-work is
 done,
 Speak of the King; and Merlin in our
 time
 Hath spoken also, not in jest, and
 sworn
 Tho' men may wound him that he will
 not die,
 But pass, again to come; and then or
 now
 Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
 Till these and all men hail him for
 their king."

She spake and King Leodogran
 rejoiced,
 But musing "Shall I answer yea or
 nay?"
 Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and
 slept, and saw,
 Dreaming, a slope of land that ever
 grew,
 Field after field, up to a height, the
 peak
 Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom
 king,
 Now looming, and now lost; and on
 the slope
 The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd
 was driven,
 Fire glimpsed; and all the land from
 roof and rick,
 In drifts of smoke before a rolling
 wind,

Stream'd to the peak, and mingled
 with the haze
 And made it thicker; while the phan-
 tom king
 Sent out at times a voice; and here
 or there
 Stood one who pointed toward the
 voice, the rest
 Slew on and burnt, crying, "No king
 of ours,
 No son of Uther, and no king of ours;"
 Till with a wink his dream was
 changed, the haze
 Descended, and the solid earth be-
 came
 As nothing, but the King stood out
 in heaven,
 Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and
 sent
 Ulfius, and Brastias and Bedivere,
 Back to the court of Arthur answer-
 ing yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior
 whom he loved
 And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to
 ride forth
 And bring the Queen;—and watch'd
 him from the gates:
 And Lancelot past away among the
 flowers,
 (For then was latter April) and
 return'd
 Among the flowers, in May, with
 Guinevere.
 To whom arrived, by Dubric the high
 saint,
 Chief of the church in Britain, and
 before
 The stately of her altar-shrines, the
 King
 That morn was married, while in stain-
 less white,
 The fair beginners of a nobler time,
 And glorying in their vows and him,
 his knights
 Stood round him, and rejoicing in his
 joy.
 Far shone the fields of May thro'
 open door,
 The sacred altar blossom'd white with
 May,

The Sun of May descended on their King,
 They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen,
 Roll'd incense, and there past along the hymns
 A voice as of the waters, while the two Swarc
 at the shrine of Christ a deathless love:
 And Arthur said, "Behold, thy doom is mine.
 Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!"
 To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,
 "King and my lord, I love thee to the death!"
 And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,
 "Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world
 Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,
 And all this Order of thy Table Round
 Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!"

So Dubric said; but when they left the shrine
 Great Lords from Rome before the portal stood,
 In scornful stillness gazing as they past;
 Then while they paced a city all on fire
 With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets blew,
 And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King:—

"Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May;
 Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!
 Blow thro' the living world—'Let the King reign.'

"Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?
 Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon helm,

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

"Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard
 That God hath told the King a secret word.

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

"Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.
 Blow trumpet! live the strength and die the lust!

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,
 The King is King, and ever wills the highest.

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
 Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"The King will follow Christ, and we the King
 In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign."

So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.

There at the banquet those great Lords from Rome,
 The slowly-fading mistress of the world,
 Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as of yore.

But Arthur spake, "Behold, for these have sworn
 To wage my wars, and worship me their King;

The old order changeth, yielding place to new;

And we that fight for our fair father
 Christ,
 Seeing that ye be grown too weak and
 old
 To drive the heathen from your
 Roman wall,
 No tribute will we pay": so those
 great lords
 Drew back in wrath, and Arthur
 strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for
 a space
 Were all one will, and thro' that
 strength the King
 Drew in the petty principdoms under
 him,
 Fought, and in twelve great battles
 overcame
 The heathen hordes, and made a realm
 and reign'd.

THE ROUND TABLE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.
 GERAINT AND ENID.
 MERLIN AND VIVIEN.
 LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

THE HOLY GRAIL.
 PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.
 THE LAST TOURNAMENT.
 GUINEVERE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
 And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful
 spring
 Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted
 Pine
 Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd
 away.
 "How he went down," said Gareth,
 "as a false knight
 Or evil king before my lance if lance
 Were mine to use — O senseless cata-
 ract,
 Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —
 And yet thou art but swollen with
 cold snows
 And mine is living blood: thou dost
 His will,
 The Maker's, and not knowest, and I
 that know,
 Have strength and wit, in my good
 mother's hall
 Linger with vacillating obedience,
 Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and
 whistled to —
 Since the good mother holds me still
 a child!
 Good mother is bad mother unto me!
 A worse were better; yet no worse
 would I.

Heaven yield her for it, but in me put
 force
 To weary her ears with one continuous
 prayer,
 Until she let me fly discharg'd to
 sweep
 In ever-highering eagle-circles up
 To the great Sun of Glory, and thence
 swoop
 Down upon all things base, and dash
 them dead,
 A knight of Arthur, working out his
 will,
 To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain,
 when he came
 With Modred hither in the summer-
 time,
 Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven
 knight.
 Modred for want of worthier was the
 judge.
 Then I so shook him in the saddle, he
 said,
 'Thou hast half prevail'd against me,'
 said so — he —
 Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was
 mute,
 For he is always sullen: what care I?"

And Gareth went, and hovering
 round her chair

Ask'd, "Mother, tho' ye count me still
the child,

Sweet mother, do ye love the child? "
She laugh'd,

"Thou art but a wild-goose to ques-
tion it."

"Then, mother, an ye love the child,"
he said,

"Being a goose and rather tame than
wild,

Hear the child's story." "Yea, my
well-beloved,

An 'twere but of goose and golden
eggs."

And Gareth answer'd her with kind-
ling eyes,

"Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg
of mine

Was finer gold than any goose can
lay;

For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a

palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of
Hours.

And there was ever haunting round
the palm

A lusty youth, but poor, who often
saw

The splendor sparkling from aloft,
and thought

'An I could climb and lay my hand
upon it,

Then were I wealthier than a leash of
kings,'

But ever when he reach'd a hand to
climb,

One, that had loved him from his
childhood, caught

And stay'd him, 'Climb not lest thou
break thy neck,

I charge thee by my love,' and so the
boy,

Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor
brake his neck,

But brake his very heart in pining
for it,

And past away."

To whom the mother said,

"True love, sweet son, had risk'd him-
self and climb'd,

And handed down the golden treasure
to him."

And Gareth answer'd her with kind-
ling eyes,

"Gold? said I gold? — ay then, why
he, or she,

Or whoso'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured — *had* the thing I spake
of been

Mere gold — but this was all of that
true steel,

Whereof they forged the brand Ex-
calibur,

And lightnings play'd about it in the
storm,

And all the little fowl were flurried
at it,

And there were cries and clashings in
the nest,

That sent him from his senses: let me
go."

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself
and said,

"Hast thou no pity upon my loneli-
ness?

Lo, where thy father Lot beside the
hearth

Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd
out!

For ever since when traitor to the
King

He fought against him in the Barons'
war,

And Arthur gave him back his terri-
tory,

His age hath slowly droopt, and now
lies there

A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburia-
ble,

No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor
speaks, nor knows.

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's
hall,

Albeit neither loved with that full
love

I feel for thee, nor worthy such a
love:

Stay therefore thou; red berries charm
the bird,

And thee, mine innocent, the jousts,
the wars,

Who never knewest finger-ache, nor
 pang
 Of wrench'd or broken limb — an often
 chance
 In those brain-stunning shocks, and
 tourney-falls,
 Frights to my heart; but stay: follow
 the deer
 By these tall firs and our fast-falling
 burns;
 So make thy manhood mightier day
 by day;
 Sweet is the chase: and I will seek
 thee out
 Some comfortable bride and fair, to
 grace
 Thy climbing life, and cherish my
 prone year,
 Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
 I know not thee, myself, nor any-
 thing.
 Stay, my best son! ye are yet more
 boy than man."

Then Gareth, "An ye hold me yet
 for child,
 Hear yet once more the story of the
 child.
 For, mother, there was once a King,
 like ours.
 The prince his heir, when tall and
 marriageable,
 Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the
 King
 Set two before him. One was fair,
 strong, arm'd —
 But to be won by force — and many
 men
 Desired her; one, good lack, no man
 desired.
 And these were the conditions of the
 King:
 That save he won the first by force,
 he needs
 Must wed that other, whom no man
 desired,
 A red-faced bride who knew herself
 so vile,
 That evermore she long'd to hide her-
 self,
 Nor fronted man or woman, eye to
 eye —

Yea — some she cleaved to, but they
 died of her.
 And one — they call'd her Fame; and
 one, — O Mother,
 How can ye keep me tether'd to you
 — Shame!
 Man am I grown, a man's work must
 I do.
 Follow the deer? follow the Christ,
 the King,
 Live pure, speak true, right wrong,
 follow the King —
 Else, wherefore born?"

To whom the mother said,
 "Sweet son, for there be many who
 deem him not,
 Or will not deem him, wholly proven
 King —
 Albeit in mine own heart I knew him
 King,
 When I was frequent with him in my
 youth,
 And heard him Kingly speak, and
 doubted him
 No more than he, himself; but felt
 him mine,
 Of closest kin to me: yet — wilt thou
 leave
 Thine easeful bidding here, and risk
 thine all,
 Life, limbs, for one that is not proven
 King?
 Stay, till the cloud that settles round
 his birth
 Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet
 son."

And Gareth answer'd quickly, "Not
 an hour,
 So that ye yield me — I will walk thro'
 fire,
 Mother, to gain it — your full leave to
 go.
 Not proven, who swept the dust of
 ruin'd Rome
 From off the threshold of the realm,
 and crush'd
 The Idolaters, and made the people
 free?
 Who should be King save him who
 makes us free?"

So when the Queen, who long had
sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which
he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly
one,
She answer'd craftily, "Will ye walk
thro' fire?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed
the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one
proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee
knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to
me,
Thy mother, — I demand."

And Gareth cried,
"A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay — quick! the proof to prove me
to the quick!"

But slowly spake the mother look-
ing at him,
"Prince, thou shalt go disguised to
Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats
and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-
knaves,
And those that hand the dish across
the bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any-
one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth
and a day."

For so the Queen believed that when
her son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vas-
salage,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-
proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest
with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of
arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then
replied,

"The thrall in person may be free in
soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son
am I,
And since thou art my mother, must
obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire
myself
To serve with scullions and with
kitchen-knives;
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the
King."

Gareth awhile linger'd. The
mother's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would
go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er
he turn'd,
Perplex'd his outward purpose, till an
hour,
When waken'd by the wind which with
full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on
to dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling
two
That still had tended on him from his
birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him,
went.

The three were clad like tillers of
the soil.
Southward they set their faces. The
birds made
Melody on branch, and melody in mid
air.
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd
into green,
And the live green had kindled into
flowers,
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on
the plain
That broaden'd toward the base of
Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the Royal
mount,

That rose between the forest and the field.
 At times the summit of the high city
 flash'd ;
 At times the spires and turrets half-
 way down
 Prick'd thro' the mist ; at times the
 great gate shone
 Only, that open'd on the field below :
 Anon, the whole fair city had disap-
 pear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth
 were amazed,
 One crying, "Let us go no further,
 lord.
 Here is a city of Enchanters, built
 By fairy kings." The second echo'd
 him,
 "Lord, we have heard from our wise
 man at home
 To Northward, that this King is not
 the King,
 But only changeling out of Fairy-
 land,
 Who drave the heathen hence by
 sorcery
 And Merlin's glamour." Then the first
 again,
 "Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
 But all a vision."

Gareth answer'd them
 With laughter, swearing he had
 glamour enow
 In his own blood, his pryncedom, youth
 and hopes,
 To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian
 sea ;
 So push'd them all unwilling toward
 the gate.
 And there was no gate like it under
 heaven.
 For barefoot on the keystone, which
 was lined
 And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
 The Lady of the Lake stood : all her
 dress
 Wept from her sides as water flowing
 away ;
 But like the cross her great and goodly
 arms

Stretch'd under all the cornice and
 upheld :
 And drops of water fell from either
 hand ;
 And down from one a sword was hung,
 from one
 A censer, either worn with wind and
 storm ;
 And o'er her breast floated the sacred
 fish ;
 And in the space to left of her, and
 right,
 Were Arthur's wars in weird devices
 done,
 New things and old co-twisted, as if
 Time
 Were nothing, so inveterately, that
 men
 Were giddy gazing there ; and over
 all
 High on the top were those three
 Queens, the friends
 Of Arthur, who should help him at
 his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long
 a space
 Stared at the figures, that at last it
 seem'd
 The dragon-boughts and elvish em-
 blemings
 Began to move, seethe, twine and
 curl : they call'd
 To Gareth, "Lord, the gateway is
 alive."

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his
 eyes
 So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd
 to move.
 Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
 Back from the gate started the three,
 to whom
 From out thereunder came an ancient
 man,
 Long-bearded, saying, "Who be ye,
 my sons ?"

Then Gareth, "We be tillers of the
 soil,
 Who leaving share in furrow come to
 see

The glories of our King: but these,
 my men,
 (Your city moved so weirdly in the
 mist)
 Doubt if the King be King at all, or
 come
 From Fairyland; and whether this
 be built
 By magic, and by fairy Kings and
 Queens;
 Or whether there be any city at all,
 Or all a vision: and this music now
 Hath scared them both, but tell thou
 these the truth."

Then that old Seer made answer
 playing on him
 And saying, "Son, I have seen the
 good ship sail
 Keel upward and mast downward in
 the heavens,
 And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:
 And here is truth; but an it please
 thee not,
 Take thou the truth as thou hast told
 it me.
 For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King
 And Fairy Queens have built the city,
 son;
 They came from out a sacred mountain-
 cleft
 Toward the sunrise, each with harp
 in hand,
 And built it to the music of their harps.
 And as thou sayest it is enchanted,
 son,
 For there is nothing in it as it seems
 Saving the King; tho' some there be
 that hold
 The King a shadow, and the city real:
 Yet take thou heed of him, for, so
 thou pass
 Beneath this archway, then wilt thou
 become
 A thrall to his enchantments, for the
 King
 Will bind thee by such vows, as is a
 shame
 A man should not be bound by, yet
 the which
 No man can keep; but, so thou dread
 to swear,

Pass not beneath this gateway, but
 abide
 Without, among the cattle of the field.
 For an ye heard a music, like enow
 They are building still, seeing the city
 is built
 To music, therefore never built at all,
 And therefore built for ever.

Gareth spake

Anger'd, "Old Master, reverence thine
 own beard
 That looks as white as utter truth,
 and seems
 Wellnigh as long as thou art statured
 tall!
 Why mockest thou the stranger that
 hath been
 To thee fair-spoken?"

But the Seer replied,

"Know ye not then the Riddling of
 the Bards?
 'Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
 Elusion, and occasion, and evasion' ?
 I mock thee not but as thou mockest
 me,
 And all that see thee, for thou art not
 who
 Thou seemest, but I know thee who
 thou art.
 And now thou goest up to mock the
 King,
 Who cannot brook the shadow of any
 lie."

Unmockingly the mocker ending
 here

Turn'd to the right, and past along
 the plain;
 Whom Gareth looking after said, "My
 men,
 Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
 Here on the threshold of our enter-
 prise.
 Let love be blamed for it, nor she, nor
 I:
 Well, we will make amends."

With all good cheer

He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd
 with his twain

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
 And stately, rich in emblem and the
 work
 Of ancient kings who did their days in
 stone;
 Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at
 Arthur's court,
 Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and
 everywhere
 At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessen-
 ing peak
 And pinnacle, and had made it spire
 to heaven.
 And ever and anon a knight would pass
 Outward, or inward to the hall: his
 arms
 Clash'd; and the sound was good to
 Gareth's ear.
 And out of bower and casement shyly
 glanced
 Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars
 of love;
 And all about a healthful people stept
 As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending
 heard
 A voice, the voice of Arthur, and be-
 held
 Far over heads in that long-vaulted
 hall
 The splendor of the presence of the
 King
 Throned, and delivering doom — and
 look'd no more —
 But felt his young heart hammering
 in his ears,
 And thought, "For this half-shadow
 of a lie
 The truthful King will doom me when
 I speak."
 Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
 Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
 Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
 Of those tall knights, that ranged
 about the throne,
 Clear honor shining like the dewy star
 Of dawn, and faith in their great King,
 with pure
 Affection, and the light of victory,
 And glory gain'd, and evermore to
 gain.

Then came a widow crying to the
 King,
 "A boon, Sir King! Thy father,
 Uther, reft
 From my dead lord a field with vio-
 lence:
 For howso'er at first he proffer'd gold,
 Yet, for the field was pleasant in our
 eyes,
 We yielded not; and then he reft us
 of it
 Perforce, and left us neither gold nor
 field."

Said Arthur, "Whether would ye?
 gold or field?"
 To whom the woman weeping, "Nay,
 my lord,
 The field was pleasant in my hus-
 band's eye."

And Arthur, "Have thy pleasant
 field again,
 And thrice the gold for Uther's use
 thereof,
 According to the years. No boon is
 here,
 But justice, so thy say be proven
 true.
 Accursed, who from the wrongs his
 father did
 Would shape himself a right!"

And while she past,
 Came yet another widow crying to
 him,
 "A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy,
 King, am I.
 With thine own hand thou slewest my
 dear lord,
 A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,
 When Lot and many another rose and
 fought
 Against thee, saying thou wert basely
 born.
 I held with these, and loathe to ask
 thee aught.
 Yet lo! my husband's brother had my
 son
 Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved
 him dead;
 And standeth seized of that inheritance

Which thou that slewest the sire hast
left the son.
So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for
hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle
for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for
my son."

Then strode a good knight forward,
crying to him,
"A boon, Sir King! I am her kins-
man, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay
the man."

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal,
and cried,
"A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou
grant her none,
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in
full hall—
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve
and gag."

But Arthur, "We sit King, to help
the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves
her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves
and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to
the flames,
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged
thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get
thee hence—
Lest that rough humor of the kings of
old
Return upon me! Thou that art her
kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay
him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge
the right,
According to the justice of the King:
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless
King
Who lived and died for men, the man
shall die."

Then came in hall the messenger of
Mark,

A name of evil savor in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he
bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as
shines
A field of charlock in the sudden sun
Between two showers, a cloth of palest
gold,
Which down he laid before the throne,
and knelt,
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal
king,
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his
grace
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,
knight,
And, for himself was of the greater
state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honor all
the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth
of gold,
In token of true heart and feälty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth,
to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the
hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. "The
goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand
among these?"
For, midway down the side of that long
hall
A stately pile,—whereof along the
front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and
some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony
shields,—
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the
hearth.
And under every shield a knight was
named:
For this was Arthur's custom in his
hall;
When some good knight had done one
noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if
twain

His arms were blazon'd also; but if
 none
 The shield was blank and bare without
 a sign
 Saving the name beneath; and Gareth
 saw
 The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and
 bright,
 And Modred's blank as death; and
 Arthur cried
 To rend the cloth and cast it on the
 hearth.

“More like are we to reave him of
 his crown
 Than make him knight because men
 call him king.
 The kings we found, ye know we
 stay'd their hands
 From war among themselves, but left
 them kings;
 Of whom were any bounteous, merci-
 ful,
 Truth-speaking, brave, good livers,
 them we enroll'd
 Among us, and they sit within our
 hall.
 But Mark hath tarnish'd the great
 name of king,
 As Mark would sully the low state of
 churl:
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of
 gold,
 Return, and meet, and hold him from
 our eyes,
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of
 lead,
 Silenced for ever—craven—a man
 of plots,
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside
 ambushings—
 No fault of thine: let Kay the senes-
 chal
 Look to thy wants, and send thee sat-
 isfied—
 Accursed, who strikes nor lets the
 hand be seen!”

And many another suppliant crying
 came
 With noise of ravage wrought by
 beast and man,

And evermore a knight would ride
 away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands
 heavily
 Down on the shoulders of the twain,
 his men,
 Approach'd between them toward the
 King, and ask'd,
 “A boon, Sir King (his voice was all
 ashamed),
 For see ye not how weak and hunger-
 worn
 I seem—leaning on these? grant me
 to serve
 For meat and drink among thy
 kitchen-knaves
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek
 my name.
 Hereafter I will fight.”

To him the King,
 “A goodly youth and worth a good-
 lier boon!
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then
 must Kay,
 The master of the meats and drinks,
 be thine.”

He rose and past; then Kay, a man
 of mien
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels
 itself
 Root-bitten by white lichen,

“Lo ye now!
 This fellow hath broken from some
 Abbey, where,
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis
 enow,
 However that might chance! but an
 he work,
 Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
 And sleeker shall he shine than any
 hog.”

Then Lancelot standing near, “Sir
 Seneschal,
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,
 and all the hounds;
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost
 not know:

Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair
and fine,
High nose, a nostril large and fine,
and hands
Large, fair and fine!—some young
lad's mystery—
But, or from sheepcot or king's hall,
the boy
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all
grace,
Lest he should come to shame thy
judging of him."

Then Kay, "What murmurest thou
of mystery?
Think ye this fellow will poison the
King's dish?
Nay, for he spake too fool-like:
mystery!
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had
ask'd
For horse and armor: fair and fine,
forsooth!
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see
thou to it
That thine own fineness; Lancelot,
some fine day
Undo thee not—and leave my man
to me."

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;
Ate with young lads his portion by
the door,
And couch'd at night with grimy
kitchen-knives.
And Lancelot ever spake him pleas-
antly,
But Kay the seneschal who loved him
not
Would hustle and harry him, and
labor him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth,
and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or
hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd
himself
With all obedience to the King, and
wrought
All kind of service with a noble
ease

That graced the lowliest act in doing
it.
And when the thralls had talk among
themselves,
And one would praise the love that
linkt the King
And Lancelot—how the King had
saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the
King's—
For Lancelot was the first in Tourna-
ment,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-
field—
Gareth was glad. Or if some other
told,
How once the wandering forester at
dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy
seas,
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the
King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet
spake,
"He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot
die"—
Gareth was glad. But if their talk
were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any
lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so
loud
That first they mock'd, but, after,
reverenced him.
Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale
Of knights, who sliced a red life-bub-
bling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon,
held
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good
mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,
would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden
wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them
all apart.
Or when the thralls had sport among
themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,

He, by two yards in casting bar or
stone
Was counted best; and if there
chanced a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to
go,
Would hurry thither, and when he
saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring
wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse
reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among
the thralls;
But in the weeks that follow'd, the
good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him
swear,
And saddening in her childless castle,
sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-cres-
cent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him from
his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire
of Lot
With whom he used to play at tourney
once,
When both were children, and in
lonely haunts
Would scratch a ragged oval on the
sand,
And each at either dash from either
end —
Shame never made girl redder than
Gareth joy.
He laugh'd; he sprang. "Out of the
smoke, at once
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's
knee —
These news be mine, none other's —
nay, the King's —
Descend into the city:" whereon he
sought
The King alone, and found, and told
him all.

"I have stagger'd thy strong Ga-
wain in a tilt

For pastime; yea, he said it: joust
can I.
Make me thy knight — in secret! let
my name
Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest,
I spring
Like flame from ashes."

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and check'd, and made him
flush, and bow
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd
him,
"Son, the good mother let me know
thee here,
And sent her wish that I would yield
thee thine.
Make thee my knight? my knights
are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King."

Then Gareth, lightly springing from
his knees,
"My King, for hardihood I can prom-
ise thee.
For uttermost obedience make de-
mand
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and
drinks!
And as for love, God wot, I love not
yet,
But love I shall, God willing."

And the King —
"Make thee my knight in secret? yea,
but he,
Our noblest brother, and our truest
man,
And one with me in all, he needs
must know."

"Let Lancelot know, my King, let
Lancelot know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!"

And the King —
"But wherefore would ye men should
wonder at you?"

Nay, rather for the sake of me, their
King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood
do the deed,
Than to be noised of."

Merrily Gareth ask'd,
"Have I not earn'd my cake in baking
of it?
Let be my name until I make my
name!
My deeds will speak: it is but for a
day."
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's
arm
Smiled the great King, and half-
unwillingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded
to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot
privily,
"I have given him the first quest: he
is not proven.
Look therefore when he calls for this
in hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far
away.
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en
nor slain."

Then that same day there past into
the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-
blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender
nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;
She into hall past with her page and
cried,

"O King, for thou hast driven the
foe without,
See to the foe within! bridge, ford,
beset
By bandits, everyone that owns a
tower
The Lord for half a league. Why sit
ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were
king,

Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as
free
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-
cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to
spill."

"Comfort thyself," said Arthur, "I
nor mine
Rest: so my knighthood keep the
vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm
shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?"

"My name?" she said—
"Lynette my name; noble; my need,
a knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than
myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living-
place;
And o'er it are three passings, and
three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a
fourth
And of that four the mightiest, holds
her stay'd
In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed
with him:
And but delays his purport till thou
send
To do the battle with him, thy chief
man
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to over-
throw,
Then wed, with glory: but she will
not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for
Lancelot."

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth
ask'd,
"Damsel, ye know this Order lives to
crush

All wrongers of the Realm. But say,
 these four,
 Who be they? What the fashion of
 the men?"

"They be of foolish fashion, O Sir
 King,
 The fashion of that old knight-
 errantry
 Who ride abroad and do but what
 they will;
 Courteous or bestial from the moment,
 such
 As have nor law nor king; and three
 of these
 Proud in their fantasy call themselves
 the Day,
 Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and
 Evening-Star,
 Being strong fools; and never a whit
 more wise
 The fourth who alway rideth arm'd
 in black,
 A huge man-beast of boundless sav-
 agery.
 He names himself the Night, and
 oftener Death,
 And wears a helmet mounted with a
 skull,
 And bears a skeleton figured on his
 arms,
 To show that who may slay or scape
 the three
 Slain by himself shall enter endless
 night.
 And all these four be fools, but mighty
 men,
 And therefore am I come for Lance-
 lot."

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where
 he rose,
 A head with kindling eyes above the
 throng,
 "A boon, Sir King — this quest!"
 then — for he mark'd
 Kay near him groaning like a wounded
 bull —
 "Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-
 knave am I,
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks
 am I,

And I can topple over a hundred such.
 Thy promise, King," and Arthur glanc-
 ing at him,
 Brought down a momentary brow.
 "Rough, sudden,
 And pardonable, worthy to be knight—
 Go, therefore," and all hearers were
 amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame,
 pride, wrath
 Slew the May-white: she lifted either
 arm,
 "Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy
 chief knight,
 And thou hast given me but a kitchen-
 knave."
 Then ere a man in hall could stay her,
 turn'd,
 Fled down the lane of access to the
 King,
 Took horse, descended the slope street,
 and past
 The weird white gate, and paused with-
 out, beside
 The field of tourney, murmuring
 "kitchen-knave."

Now two great entries open'd from
 the hall,
 At one end one, that gave upon a
 range
 Of level pavement where the King
 would pace
 At sunrise, gazing over plain and
 wood;
 And down from this a lordly stairway
 sloped
 Till lost in blowing trees and tops of
 towers;
 And out by this main doorway past
 the King.
 But one was counter to the hearth,
 and rose
 High that the highest-crested helm
 could ride
 Therethro' nor graze: and by this entry
 fled
 The damsel in her wrath, and on to
 this
 Sir Gareth strode, and saw without
 the door

King Arthur's gift, the worth of half
 a town,
 A warhorse of the best, and near it
 stood
 The two that out of north had fol-
 low'd him :
 This bare a maiden shield, a casque ;
 that held
 The horse, the spear ; whereat Sir
 Gareth loosed
 A cloak that dropt from collar-bone
 to heel,
 A cloth of roughest web, and cast it
 down,
 And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,
 That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and
 flash'd as those
 Dull-coated things, that making slide
 apart
 Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath
 there burns
 A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and
 fly.
 So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in
 arms.
 Then as he donn'd the helm, and took
 the shield
 And mounted horse and graspt a
 spear, of grain
 Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site,
 and tipt
 With trenchant steel, around him
 slowly prest
 The people, while from out of kitchen
 came
 The thralls in throng, and seeing who
 had work'd
 Lustier than any, and whom they could
 but love,
 Mounted in arms, threw up their caps
 and cried,
 "God bless the King, and all his
 fellowship!"
 And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth
 rode
 Down the slope street, and past with-
 out the gate.

So Gareth past with joy ; but as the
 cur
 Pluckt from the cur he fights with,
 ere his cause

Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being
 named,
 His owner, but remembers all, and
 growls
 Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the
 door
 Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he
 used
 To harry and hustle.

"Bound upon a quest
 With horse and arms — the King hath
 past his time —
 My scullion knave! Thralls to your
 work again,
 For an your fire be low ye kindle
 mine!
 Will there be dawn in West and eve
 in East?
 Begone! — my knave! — belike and
 like enow
 Some old head-blow not heeded in his
 youth
 So shook his wits they wander in his
 prime —
 Crazed! how the villain lifted up his
 voice,
 Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-
 knave.
 Tut: he was tame and meek enow with
 me,
 Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's
 noticing.
 Well — I will after my loud knave,
 and learn
 Whether he know me for his master
 yet.
 Out of the smoke he came, and so my
 lance
 Hold, by God's grace, he shall into
 the mire —
 Thence, if the King awaken from his
 craze,
 Into the smoke again."

But Lancelot said,
 "Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against
 the King,
 For that did never he whereon ye rail,
 But ever meekly served the King in
 thee?
 Abide: take counsel ; for this lad is
 great

And lusty, and knowing both of lance
and sword."

"Tut, tell not me," said Kay, "ye are
overfine

To mar stout knaves with foolish
courtesies :"

Then mounted, on thro' silent faces
rode

Down the slope city, and out beyond
the gate.

But by the field of tourney linger-
ing yet

Mutter'd the damsel, "Wherefore did
the King

Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot
lackt, at least

He might have yielded to me one of
those

Who tilt for lady's love and glory
here,

Rather than — O sweet heaven! O
fie upon him —

His kitchen-knave."

To whom Sir Gareth drew
(And there were none but few goodlier
than he)

Shining in arms, "Damsel, the quest
is mine.

Lead, and I follow." She thereat, as
one

That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the
holt,

And deems it carrion of some wood-
land thing,

Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender
nose

With petulant thumb and finger,
shrilling, "Hence!

Avoid, thou smell'st all of kitchen-
grease.

And look who comes behind," for
there was Kay.

"Knowest thou not me? thy master?
I am Kay.

We lack thee by the hearth."

And Gareth to him,
"Master no more! too well I know
thee, ay —

The most ungentle knight in Arthur's
hall."

"Have at thee then," said Kay: they
shock'd, and Kay

Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried
again,

"Lead, and I follow," and fast away
she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to
fly

Behind her, and the heart of her good
horse

Was nigh to burst with violence of the
beat,

Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken
spoke.

"What doest thou, scullion, in my
fellowship?

Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught
the more

Or love thee better, that by some
device

Full cowardly, or by mere unhappi-
ness,

Thou hast overthrown and slain thy
master — thou! —

Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!
— to me

Thou smell'st all of kitchen as be-
fore."

"Damsel," Sir Gareth answer'd
gently, "say

Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye
say,

I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefore."

"Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he
talks!

The listening rogue hath caught the
manner of it.

But, knave, anon thou shalt be met
with, knave,

And then by such a one that thou for
all

The kitchen brewis that was ever supt
Shalt not once dare to look him in the
face."

“I shall assay,” said Gareth with a smile
That madden’d her, and away she
flash’d again
Down the long avenues of a boundless
wood,
And Gareth following was again be-
knaved.

“Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss’d
the only way
Where Arthur’s men are set along the
wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as
leaves:
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but
yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit
of thine?
Fight, an thou canst: I have miss’d
the only way.”

So till the dusk that follow’d even-
song
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
Then after one long slope was
mounted, saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro’ tops of many thou-
sand pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward — in the deeps whereof
a mere,
Round as the red eye of an Eagle-
owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared;
and shouts
Ascended, and there brake a serving-
man
Flying from out the black wood, and
crying,
“They have bound my lord to cast
him in the mere.”
Then Gareth, “Bound am I to right
the wrong’d,
But straitlier bound am I to bide with
thee.”
And when the damsel spake contempt-
uously,
“Lead, and I follow,” Gareth cried
again,
“Follow, I lead!” so down among the
pines

He plunged; and there, blackshadow’d
nigh the mere,
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and
reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh
along,
A stone about his neck to drown him
in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but
three
Fled thro’ the pines; and Gareth loosed
the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere
beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the
mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on
free feet
Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur’s
friend.

“Well that ye came, or else these
caitiff rogues
Had wreak’d themselves on me; good
cause is theirs
To hate me, for my wont hath ever
been
To catch my thief, and then like ver-
min here
Drown him, and with a stone about
his neck;
And under this wan water many of
them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the
stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly
light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye
have saved a life
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of
this wood.
And fain would I reward thee worship-
fully.
What guerdon will ye?”

Gareth sharply spake,
“None! for the deed’s sake have I
done the deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel har-
borage?”

Whereat the Baron saying, "I well believe
 You be of Arthur's Table," a light laugh
 Broke from Lynette, "Ay, truly of a truth,
 And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave! —
 But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
 Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
 Down on a rout of craven foresters.
 A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
 Nay — for thou smellest of the kitchen still.
 But an this lord will yield us harbor-age,
 Well."

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
 All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
 His towers where that day a feast had been
 Held in high wall, and many a viand left,
 And many a costly cate, received the three.
 And there they placed a peacock in his pride
 Before the damsel, and the Baron set
 Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

"Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
 Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
 Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
 And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot
 To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night —
 The last a monster unsubduable
 Of any save of him for whom I call'd —
 Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,

'The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I.'
 Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
 'Go therefore,' and so gives the quest to him —
 Him — here — a villain fitter to stick swine
 Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,
 Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord
 Now look'd at one and now at other, left
 The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
 And, seating Gareth at another board,
 Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

"Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,
 Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
 And whether she be mad, or else the King,
 Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
 I ask not: but thou strikest a strong stroke,
 For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
 And saver of my life; and therefore now,
 For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh
 Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back
 To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
 Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
 The saver of my life."

And Gareth said,
 "Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
 Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell."

So when, next morn, the lord whose
 life he saved
 Had, some brief space, convey'd them
 on their way
 And left them with God-speed, Sir
 Gareth spake,
 "Lead, and I follow." Haughtily she
 replied,

"I fly no more: I allow thee for an
 hour.
 Lion and stoat have isled together,
 knave,
 In time of flood. Nay, furthermore,
 methinks
 Some ruth is mine for thee. Back
 wilt thou, fool?
 For hard by here is one will overthrow
 And slay thee: then will I to court
 again,
 And shame the King for only yield-
 ing me
 My champion from the ashes of his
 hearth."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd cour-
 teously,
 "Say thou thy say, and I will do my
 deed.
 Allow me for mine hour, and thou
 wilt find
 My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
 Among the ashes and wedded the
 King's son."

Then to the shore of one of those
 long loops
 Where thro' the serpent river coil'd,
 they came.
 Rough-thicketed were the banks and
 steep; the stream
 Full, narrow; this a bridge of single
 arc
 Took at a leap; and on the further
 side
 Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
 In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily
 in hue,
 Save that the dome was purple, and
 above,
 Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.

And therefore the lawless warrior
 paced
 Unarm'd, and calling, "Damsel, is
 this he,
 The champion thou hast brought from
 Arthur's hall?
 For whom we let thee pass." "Nay,
 nay," she said,
 "Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter
 scorn
 Of thee and thy much folly hath sent
 thee here
 His kitchen-knave: and look thou to
 thyself:
 See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
 And slay thee unarm'd: he is not
 knight but knave."

Then at his call, "O daughters of
 the Dawn,
 And servants of the Morning-Star,
 approach,
 Arm me," from out the silken curtain-
 folds
 Bare-footed and bare-headed three
 fair girls
 In gilt and rosy raiment came: their
 feet
 In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the
 hair
 All over glanced with dewdrop or with
 gem
 Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
 These arm'd him in blue arms, and
 gave a shield
 Blue also, and thereon the morning
 star.
 And Gareth silent gazed upon the
 knight,
 Who stood a moment ere his horse
 was brought,
 Glorying; and in the stream beneath
 him, shone
 Immingled with Heaven's azure wav-
 eringly,
 The gay pavilion and the naked
 feet,
 His arms, the rosy raiment, and the
 star.

Then she that watch'd him,
 "Wherefore stare ye so?"

Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is
time:
Flee down the valley before he get to
horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not
knight but knave."

Said Gareth, "Damsel, whether
knave or knight,
Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and re-
vile.
Fair words were best for him who
fights for thee;
But truly foul are better, for they
send
That strength of anger thro' mine
arms, I know
That I shall overthrow him."

And he that bore
The star, being mounted, cried from
o'er the bridge,
"A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn
of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn
with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further
wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his
horse
And arms, and so return him to the
King.
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,
knave.
Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady."

"Dog, thou liest.
I spring from loftier lineage than
thine own."
He spake, and all at fiery speed the
two
Shock'd on the central bridge, and
either spear
Bent but not brake, and either knight
at once,
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a cata-
pult
Beyond his horse's crupper and the
bridge,

Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and
drew,
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his
brand
He drave his enemy backward down
the bridge,
The damsel crying, "Well-stricken,
kitchen-knave!"
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but
one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on
the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, "Take not my
life: I yield."
And Gareth, "So this damsel ask it
of me
Good — I accord it easily as a grace."
She reddening, "Insolent scullion: I
of thee?
I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!"
"Then shall he die." And Gareth
there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she
shriek'd,
"Be not so hardy, scullion, as to
slay
One nobler than thyself." "Damsel,
thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me.
Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command.
Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall,
and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee.
See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his
laws.
Myself, when I return, will plead for
thee.
Thy shield is mine — farewell; and,
damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow."

And fast away she fled.
Then when he came upon her, spake,
"Methought,
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking
on the bridge
The savor of thy kitchen came upon
me

A little faintlier: but the wind hath
changed:

I scent it twenty-fold." And then she
sang,

"'O morning star' (not that tall felon
there

Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully over-
thrown),

'O morning star that smilest in the
blue,

O star, my morning dream hath
proven true,

Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath
smiled on me.'

"But thou begone, take counsel,
and away,
For hard by here is one that guards a
ford—

The second brother in their fool's
parable—

Will pay thee all thy wages, and to
boot.

Care not for shame: thou art not
knight but knave."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd,
laughingly,

"Parables? Hear a parable of the
knave.

When I was kitchen-knave among the
rest

Fierce was the hearth, and one of my
co-mates

Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast
his coat,

'Guard it,' and there was none to
meddle with it.

And such a coat art thou, and thee
the King

Gave me to guard, and such a dog
am I,

To worry, and not to flee—and—
knight or knave—

The knave that doth thee service as
full knight

Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing."

"Ay, Sir Knave!

Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a
knight,

Being but knave, I hate thee all the
more."

"Fair damsel, you should worship
me the more,

That, being but knave, I throw thine
enemies."

"Ay, ay," she said, "but thou shalt
meet thy match."

So when they touch'd the second
river-loop,

Huge on a huge red horse, and all in
mail

Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noon-
day Sun

Beyond a raging shallow. As if the
flower,

That blows a globe of after arrowlets,
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd

the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying

blots
Before them when he turn'd from
watching him.

He from beyond the roaring shallow
roar'd,

"What doest thou, brother, in my
marches here?"

And she athwart the shallow shrill'd
again,

"Here is a kitchen-knave from
Arthur's hall

Hath overthrown thy brother, and
hath his arms."

"Ugh!" cried the Sun, and vizoring
up a red

And cipher face of rounded foolish-
ness,

Push'd horse across the foamings of
the ford,

Whom Gareth met midstream: no
room was there

For lance or tourney-skill: four
strokes they struck

With sword, and these were mighty;
the new knight

Had fear he might be shamed; but as
the Sun

Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike
the fifth,

The hoof of his horse slipt in the
stream, the stream
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd
away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart
the ford ;
So drew him home ; but he that fought
no more,
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
Yielded ; and Gareth sent him to the
King.

" Myself when I return will plead for
thee."

" Lead, and I follow." Quietly she
led.

" Hath not the good wind, damsel,
changed again ? "

" Nay, not a point : nor art thou victor
here.

There lies a ridge of slate across the
ford ;

His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for
I saw it.

" ' O Sun ' (not this strong fool
whom thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappi-
ness),

' O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or
pain,

O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly : twice my love hath
smiled on me.'

" What knowest thou of lovesong
or of love ?

Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly
born,

Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea,
perchance, —

" O dewy flowers that open to the
sun,

O dewy flowers that close when day is
done,

Blow sweetly : twice my love hath
smiled on me.'

" What knowest thou of flowers,
except, belike,

To garnish meats with ? hath not our
good King

Who lent me thee, the flower of
kitchendom,

A foolish love for flowers ? what stick
ye round

The pasty ? wherewithal deck the
boar's head ?

Flowers ? nay, the boar hath rose-
maries and bay.

" O birds, that warble to the morn-
ing sky,

O birds that warble as the day goes
by,

Sing sweetly : twice my love hath
smiled on me.'

" What knowest thou of birds, lark,
mavis, merle,

Linnet ? what dream ye when they
utter forth

May-music growing with the growing
light,

Their sweet sun-worship ? these be for
the snare

(So runs thy fancy) these be for the
spit,

Larding and basting. See thou have
not now

Larded thy last, except thou turn and
fly.

There stands the third fool of their
allegory."

For there beyond a bridge of treble
bow,

All in a rose-red from the west, and
all

Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the
broad

Deep-dimpled current underneath, the
knight,

That named himself the Star of
Evening, stood.

And Gareth, " Wherefore waits the
madman there

Naked in open dayshine ? " " Nay,"
she cried,

" Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd
skins

That fit him like his own; and so ye
 cleave
 His armor off him, these will turn the
 blade."

Then the third brother shouted o'er
 the bridge,
 "O brother-star, why shine ye here so
 low?
 Thy ward is higher up: but have ye
 slain
 The damsel's champion?" and the
 damsel cried,

"No star of thine, but shot from
 Arthur's heaven
 With all disaster unto thine and thee!
 For both thy younger brethren have
 gone down
 Before this youth; and so wilt thou,
 Sir Star;
 Art thou not old?"

"Old, damsel, old and hard,
 Old, with the might and breath of
 twenty boys."
 Said Gareth, "Old, and over-bold in
 brag!
 But that same strength which threw
 the Morning Star
 Can throw the Evening."

Then that other blew
 A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
 "Approach and arm me!" With slow
 steps from out
 An old storm-beaten, russet, many-
 stain'd
 Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel
 came,
 And arm'd him in old arms, and
 brought a helm
 With but a drying evergreen for crest,
 And gave a shield whereon the Star of
 Even
 Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his
 emblem, shone.
 But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-
 bow,
 They madly hurl'd together on the
 bridge;

And Gareth overthrew him, lighted,
 drew,
 There met him drawn, and overthrew
 him again,
 But up like fire he started: and as
 oft
 As Gareth brought him grovelling on
 his knees,
 So many a time he vaulted up again;
 Till Gareth panted hard, and his great
 heart,
 Foredooming all his trouble was in
 vain,
 Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as
 one
 That all in later, sadder age begins
 To war against ill uses of a life,
 But these from all his life arise, and
 cry,
 "Thou hast made us lords, and canst
 not put us down!"
 He half-despairs; so Gareth seem'd to
 strike
 Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the
 while,
 "Well done, knave-knight, well
 stricken, O good knight-
 knave—
 O knave, as noble as any of all the
 knights—
 Shame me not, shame me not. I have
 prophesied—
 Strike, thou art worthy of the Table
 Round—
 His arms are old, he trusts the hard-
 en'd skin—
 Strike—strike—the wind will never
 change again."
 And Gareth hearing ever stronglier
 smote,
 And hew'd great pieces of his armor
 off him,
 But lash'd in vain against the harden'd
 skin,
 And could not wholly bring him
 under, more
 Than loud Southwesterns, rolling
 ridge on ridge,
 The buoy that rides at sea, and dips
 and springs
 For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's
 brand

Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.
 "I have thee now;" but forth that other sprang,
 And, all unknighthlike, writhed his wiry arms
 Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
 Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost
 Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge
 Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
 "Lead, and I follow."

But the damsel said,
 "I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
 Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
 O rainbow with three colors after rain,
 Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled on me."

"Sir, — and, good faith, I fain had added — Knight,
 But that I heard thee call thyself a knave, —
 Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
 Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the King
 Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,
 For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
 And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal
 As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
 Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art.

"Damsel," he said, "you be not all to blame,
 Saving that you mistrusted our good King

Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one
 Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;
 Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold
 He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness. Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me:
 And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks
 There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,
 Hath force to quell me."

Nigh upon that hour
 When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,
 Lets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams
 Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
 Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,
 And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
 Where bread and baken meats and good red wine
 Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
 Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
 Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse
 Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.
 "Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,
 Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock
 The war of Time against the soul of man.
 And you four fools have suck'd their allegory

From these damp walls, and taken
but the form.

Know ye not these ?" and Gareth
lookt and read —

'In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the stream-
ing Gelt —

"PHOSPHORUS," then "MERIDIES" —
"HESPERUS" —

"NOX" — "MORS," beneath five fig-
ures, armed men,

Slab after slab, their faces forward
all,

And running down the Soul, a Shape
that fled

With broken wings, torn raiment and
loose hair,

For help and shelter to the hermit's
cave.

"Follow the faces, and we find it.
Look,

Who comes behind ?"

For one — delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter
chanced,

The damsel's headlong error thro' the
wood —

Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-
loops —

His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly
drew

Behind the twain, and when he saw
the star

Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to
him, cried,

"Stay, felon-knight, I avenge me for
my friend."

And Gareth crying prick'd against the
cry ;

But when they closed — in a moment
— at one touch

Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of
the world —

Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within
his hands

He laugh'd ; the laughter jarr'd upon
Lynette :

Harshly she ask'd him, "Shamed and
overthrown,

And tumbled back into the kitchen-
knave,

Why laugh ye ? that ye blew your
boast in vain ?"

"Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the
son

Of old King Lot and good Queen Bel-
licent,

And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthtur, here lie thrown
by whom

I know not, all thro' mere unhappi-
ness —

Device and sorcery and unhappi-
ness —

Out, sword ; we are thrown !" And
Lancelot answer'd, "Prince,

O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappi-
ness

Of one who came to help thee, not to
harm,

Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee
whole,

As on the day when Arthur knighted
him."

Then Gareth, "Thou — Lancelot !
— thine the hand

That threw me ? An some chance to
mar the boast

Thy brethren of thee make — which
could not chance —

Had sent thee down before a lesser
spear,

Shamed had I been, and sad — O
Lancelot — thou !"

Whereat the maiden, petulant,
"Lancelot,

Why came ye not, when call'd ? and
wherefore now

Come ye, not call'd ? I gloried in my
knave,

Who being still rebuked, would answer
still

Courteous as any knight — but now,
if knight,

The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd
and trick'd,

And only wondering wherefore play'd
upon :

And doubtful whether I and mine be
scorn'd.

Where should be truth if not in
Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight,
knave, prince and fool,
I hate thee and for ever."

And Lancelot said,
"Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight
art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel,
be you wise
To call him shamed, who is but over-
thrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but
many a time.
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the
last,
And overthrower from being over-
thrown.
With sword we have not striven; and
thy good horse
And thou are weary; yet not less I
felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance
of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the
stream is freed,
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on
his foes,
And when reviled, hast answer'd
graciously,
And makest merry when overthrown.
Prince, Knight,
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our
Table Round!"

And then when turning to Lynette
he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she
said,
"Ay well — ay well — for worse than
being fool'd
Of others, is to fool one's self. A
cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats
and drinks
And forage for the horse, and flint for
fire.

But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find." And when they
sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his
life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden
gazed.
"Sound sleep be thine! sound cause
to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! seem I not as tender to
him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her
child,
And vext his day, but blesses him
asleep —
Good lord, how sweetly smells the
honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world
were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentle-
ness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot" — and she
clapt her hands —
"Full merry am I to find my goodly
knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn
have I,
Else yon black felon had not let me
pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle
with him.
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee
first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my
knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accom-
plishment."

Said Lancelot, "Peradventure he,
you name,
May know my shield. Let Gareth,
an he will,
Change his for mine, and take my
charger, fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as
well
As he that rides him." "Lancelot-
like," she said,
"Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as
in all."

Then for a space, and under cloud
 that grew
 To thunder-gloom palling all stars,
 they rode
 In converse till she made her palfrey
 halt,
 Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,
 "There."
 And all the three were silent seeing,
 pitch'd
 Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
 A huge pavilion like a mountain peak
 Sunder the glooming crimson on the
 marge,
 Black, with black banner, and a long
 black horn
 Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth
 graspt,
 And so, before the two could hinder
 him,
 Sent all his heart and breath thro' all
 the horn.
 Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled;
 anon
 Came lights and lights, and once again
 he blew;
 Whereon were hollow tramlings up
 and down
 And muffled voices heard, and shadows
 past;
 Till high above him, circled with her
 maids,
 The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
 Beautiful among lights, and waving to
 him
 White hands, and courtesy; but when
 the Prince
 Three times had blown — after long
 hush — at last —
 The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
 Thro' those black foldings, that which
 housed therein.
 High on a nightblack horse, in night-
 black arms,
 With white breast-bone, and barren
 ribs of Death,
 And crown'd with fleshless laughter —
 some ten steps —
 In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn
 — advanced
 The monster, and then paused, and
 spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indig-
 nantly,
 "Fool, for thou hast, men say, the
 strength of ten,
 Canst thou not trust the limbs thy
 God hath given,
 But must, to make the terror of thee
 more,
 Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
 Of that which Life hath done with,
 and the clod,
 Less dull than thou, will hide with
 mantling flowers
 As if for pity?" But he spake no
 word;
 Which set the horror higher: a maiden
 swoon'd;
 The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands
 and wept,
 As doom'd to be the bride of Night
 and Death;
 Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his
 helm;
 And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm
 blood felt
 Ice strike, and all that mark'd him
 were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger
 fiercely neigh'd,
 And Death's dark war-horse bounded
 forward with him.
 Then those that did not blink the
 terror, saw
 That Death was cast to ground, and
 slowly rose.
 But with one stroke Sir Gareth split
 the skull.
 Half fell to right and half to left and
 lay.
 Then with a stronger buffet he clove
 the helm
 As throughly as the skull; and out
 from this
 Issued the bright face of a blooming
 boy
 Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,
 "Knight,
 Slay me not: my three brethren bade
 me do it,
 To make a horror all about the
 house,

And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.

They never dream'd the passes would be past."

Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one Not many a moon his younger, "My fair child,

What madness made thee challenge the chief knight

Of Arthur's hall?" "Fair Sir, they bade me do it.

They hate the King, and Lancelot, the King's friend,

They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,

They never dream'd the passes could be past."

Then sprang the happier day from underground;

And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance

And revel and song, made merry over Death,

As being after all their foolish fears

And horrors only proven a blooming boy.

So large mirth lived and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times

Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors, But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

GERAINT AND ENID.

I.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,

A tributary prince of Devon, one Of that great Order of the Table

Round, Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,

And loved her, as he loved the light of Heaven.

And as the light of Heaven varies, now At sunrise, now at sunset, now by

night With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint

To make her beauty vary day by day, In crimsons and in purples and in gems.

And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,

Who first had found and loved her in a state

Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him

In some fresh splendor; and the Queen herself,

Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,

Loved her, and often with her own white hands

Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,

Next after her own self, in all the court.

And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart

Adored her, as the stateliest and the best

And loveliest of all women upon earth.

And seeing them so tender and so close,

Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.

But when a rumor rose about the Queen,

Touching her guilty love for Lancelot, Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet

was heard The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,

Not less Geraint believed it; and there fell

A horror on him, lest his gentle wife, Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,

Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint

In nature: wherefore going to the King,

He made this pretext, that his princedom lay

Close on the borders of a territory, Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff

knights,

Assassins, and all flyers from the hand Of Justice, and whatever loathes a

law:

And therefore, till the King himself
 should please
 To cleanse this common sewer of all
 his realm,
 He craved a fair permission to depart,
 And there defend his marches; and
 the King
 Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,
 Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,
 And fifty knights rode with them, to
 the shores
 Of Severn, and they past to their own
 land;
 Where, thinking, that if ever yet was
 wife
 True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,
 He compass'd her with sweet observ-
 ances
 And worship, never leaving her, and
 grew
 Forgetful of his promise to the King,
 Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
 Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
 Forgetful of his glory and his name,
 Forgetful of his principedom and its
 cares.
 And this forgetfulness was hateful to
 her.
 And by and by the people, when they
 met
 In twos and threes, or fuller com-
 panies,
 Began to scoff and jeer and babble of
 him
 As of a prince whose manhood was all
 gone,
 And molten down in mere uxorious-
 ness.
 And this she gather'd from the peo-
 ple's eyes:
 This too the women who attired her
 head,
 To please her, dwelling on his bound-
 less love,
 Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the
 more:
 And day by day she thought to tell
 Geraint,
 But could not out of bashful delicacy;
 While he that watch'd her sadden, was
 the more
 Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer
 morn
 (They sleeping each by either) the
 new sun
 Beat thro' the blindless casement of
 the room,
 And heated the strong warrior in his
 dreams;
 Who, moving, cast the coverlet
 aside,
 And bared the knotted column of his
 throat,
 The massive square of his heroic
 breast,
 And arms on which the standing
 muscle sloped,
 As slopes a wild brook o'er a little
 stone,
 Running too vehemently to break
 upon it.
 And Enid woke and sat beside the
 couch,
 Admiring him, and thought within
 herself,
 Was ever man so grandly made as
 he?
 Then, like a shadow, past the people's
 talk
 And accusation of uxoriousness
 Across her mind, and bowing over
 him,
 Low to her own heart piteously she
 said:
 "O noble breast and all-puissant
 arms,
 Am I the cause, I the poor cause that
 men
 Reproach you, saying all your force
 is gone?
 I *am* the cause, because I dare not
 speak
 And tell him what I think and what
 they say.
 And yet I hate that he should linger
 here;
 I cannot love my lord and not his
 name.
 Far liefer had I gird his harness on
 him,
 And ride with him to battle and stand
 by,

And watch his mightful hand striking
 great blows
 At caitiffs and at wrongers of the
 world.
 Far better were I laid in the dark
 earth,
 Not hearing any more his noble voice,
 Not to be folded more in these dear
 arms,
 And darken'd from the high light in
 his eyes,
 Than that my lord thro' me should
 suffer shame.
 Am I so bold, and could I so stand
 by,
 And see my dear lord wounded in the
 strife,
 Or maybe pierced to death before
 mine eyes,
 And yet not dare to tell him what I
 think,
 And how men slur him, saying all his
 force
 Is melted into mere effeminacy?
 O me, I fear that I am no true wife."

Half inwardly, half audibly she
 spoke,
 And the strong passion in her made
 her weep
 True tears upon his broad and naked
 breast,
 And these awoke him, and by great
 mischance
 He heard but fragments of her later
 words,
 And that she fear'd she was not a true
 wife.
 And then he thought, "In spite of all
 my care,
 For all my pains, poor man, for all
 my pains,
 She is not faithful to me, and I see her
 Weeping for some gay knight in
 Arthur's hall."
 Then tho' he loved and revered
 her too much
 To dream she could be guilty of foul
 act,
 Right thro' his manful breast darted
 the pang

That makes a man, in the sweet face
 of her
 Whom he loves most, lonely and mis-
 erable.
 At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out
 of bed,
 And shook his drowsy squire awake
 and cried,
 "My charger and her palfrey;" then
 to her,
 "I will ride forth into the wilderness;
 For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to
 win,
 I have not fall'n so low as some would
 wish.
 And thou, put on thy worst and mean-
 est dress
 And ride with me." And Enid ask'd,
 amazed,
 "If Enid errs, let Enid learn her
 fault."
 But he, "I charge thee, ask not, but
 obey."
 Then she bethought her of a faded
 silk,
 A faded mantle and a faded veil,
 And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,
 Wherein she kept them folded rever-
 ently
 With sprigs of summer laid between
 the folds,
 She took them, and array'd herself
 therein,
 Remembering when first he came on
 her
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved
 her in it,
 And all her foolish fears about the
 dress,
 And all his journey to her, as himself
 Had told her, and their coming to the
 court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide
 before
 Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.
 There on a day, he sitting high in
 hall,
 Before him came a forester of Dean,
 Wet from the woods, with notice of a
 hart

Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,
 First seen that day: these things he told the King.
 Then the good King gave order to let blow
 His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.
 And when the Queen petition'd for his leave
 To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.
 So with the morning all the court were gone.
 But Guinevere lay late into the morn,
 Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love
 For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt;
 But rose at last, a single maiden with her,
 Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the wood;
 There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd
 Waiting to hear the hounds; but heard instead
 A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,
 Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress
 Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,
 Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow ford
 Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.
 A purple scarf, at either end whereof
 There swung an apple of the purest gold,
 Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up
 To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly
 In summer suit and silks of holiday.
 Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,
 Sweetly and stately, and with all grace
 Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd him:
 "Late, late, Sir Prince," she said,
 "later than we!"

"Yea, noble Queen," he answer'd,
 "and so late
 That I but come like you to see the hunt,
 Not join it." "Therefore wait with me," she said;
 "For on this little knoll, if anywhere,
 There is good chance that we shall hear the hounds:
 Here often they break covert at our feet."

And while they listen'd for the distant hunt,
 And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,
 King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there rode
 Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;
 Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the knight
 Had vizor up, and show'd a youthful face,
 Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.
 And Guinevere, not mindful of his face
 In the King's hall, desired his name, and sent
 Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf;
 Who being vicious, old and irritable,
 And doubling all his master's vice of pride,
 Made answer sharply that she should not know.
 "Then will I ask it of himself," she said.
 "Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not," cried the dwarf;
 "Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him;"
 And when she put her horse toward the knight,
 Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd
 Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint
 Exclaiming, "Surely I will learn the name,"
 Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,

Who answer'd as before; and when
 the Prince
 Had put his horse in motion toward
 the knight,
 Struck at him with his whip, and cut
 his cheek.
 The Prince's blood spirted upon the
 scarf,
 Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive
 hand
 Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:
 But he, from his exceeding manful-
 ness
 And pure nobility of temperament,
 Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,
 refrain'd
 From ev'n a word, and so returning
 said:

"I will avenge this insult, noble
 Queen,
 Done in your maiden's person to your-
 self:
 And I will track this vermin to their
 earths:
 For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt
 To find, at some place I shall come at,
 arms
 On loan, or else for pledge; and, being
 found,
 Then will I fight him, and will break
 his pride,
 And on the third day will again be
 here,
 So that I be not fall'n in fight. Fare-
 well."

"Farewell, fair Prince," answer'd
 the stately Queen.
 "Be prosperous in this journey, as in
 all;
 And may you light on all things that
 you love,
 And live to wed with her whom first
 you love:
 But ere you wed with any, bring your
 bride,
 And I, were she the daughter of a
 king,
 Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the
 hedge,
 Will clothe her for her bridals like
 the sun."

And Prince Geraint, now thinking
 that he heard
 The noble hart at bay, now the far
 horn,
 A little vext at losing of the hunt,
 A little at the vile occasion, rode,
 By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy
 glade
 And valley, with fixt eye following
 the three.
 At last they issued from the world of
 wood,
 And climb'd upon a fair and even
 ridge,
 And show'd themselves against the
 sky, and sank.
 And thither came Geraint, and under-
 neath
 Beheld the long street of a little town
 In a long valley, on one side
 whereof,
 White from the mason's hand, a for-
 tress rose;
 And on one side a castle in decay,
 Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry
 ravine:
 And out of town and valley came a
 noise
 As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed
 Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks
 At distance, ere they settle for the
 night.

And onward to the fortress rode the
 three,
 And enter'd, and were lost behind the
 walls.
 "So," thought Geraint, "I have
 track'd him to his earth."
 And down the long street riding
 wearily,
 Found every hostel full, and every-
 where
 Was hammer laid to hoof, and the
 hot hiss
 And bustling whistle of the youth
 who scour'd
 His master's armor; and of such a
 one
 He ask'd, "What means the tumult
 in the town?"

Who told him, scouring still, "The
sparrow-hawk!"

Then riding close behind an ancient
churl,

Who, smitten by the dusty sloping
beam,

Went sweating underneath a sack of
corn,

Ask'd yet once more what meant the
hubbub here?

Who answer'd gruffly, "Ugh! the
sparrow-hawk."

Then riding further past an armorer's,
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd
above his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,
He put the self-same query, but the
man

Not turning round, nor looking at
him, said:

"Friend, he that labors for the spar-
row-hawk

Has little time for idle questioners."
Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden
spleen:

"A thousand pips eat up your spar-
row-hawk!

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings
peck him dead!

Ye think the rustic cackle of your
bourg

The murmur of the world! What is
it to me?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and
all,

Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-
hawks!

Speak, if ye be not like the rest,
hawk-mad,

Where can I get me harborage for
the night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my
enemy? Speak!"

Whereat the armorer turning all
amazed

And seeing one so gay in purple silks,
Came forward with the helmet yet in
hand

And answer'd, "Pardon me, O stran-
ger knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow
morn,

And there is scanty time for half the
work.

Arms? truth! I know not: all are
wanted here.

Harborage? truth, good truth, I know
not, save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the
bridge

Yonder." He spoke and fell to work
again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleen-
ful yet,

Across the bridge that spann'd the
dry ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed
Earl,

(His dress a suit of fray'd magnifi-
cence,

Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and
said:

"Whither, fair son?" to whom Ger-
aint replied,

"O friend, I seek a harborage for the
night."

Then Yniol, "Enter therefore and
partake

The slender entertainment of a house
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-
door'd."

"Thanks, venerable friend," replied
Geraint;

"So that you do not serve me spar-
row-hawks

For supper, I will enter, I will eat
With all the passion of a twelve
hours' fast."

Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-
headed Earl,

And answer'd, "Graver cause than
yours is mine

To curse this hedgerow thief, the
sparrow-hawk:

But in, go in; for save yourself de-
sire it,

We will not touch upon him ev'n in
jest."

Then rode Geraint into the castle
court,

His charger trampling many a prickly
star

Of sprouted thistle on the broken
stones.
He look'd and saw that all was
ruinous.
Here stood a shatter'd archway
plumed with fern;
And here had fall'n a great part of
a tower,
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from
the cliff,
And like a crag was gay with wilding
flowers:
And high above a piece of turret stair,
Worn by the feet that now were
silent, wound
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-
stems
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-
fibred arms,
And suck'd the joining of the stones,
and look'd
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a
grove.

And while he waited in the castle
court,
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter,
rang
Clear thro' the open casement of the
hall,
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a
bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of bird
it is
That sings so delicately clear, and
make
Conjecture of the plumage and the
form;
So the sweet voice of Enid moved
Geraint;
And made him like a man abroad at
morn
When first the liquid note beloved of
men
Comes flying over many a windy wave
To Britain, and in April suddenly
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with
green and red,
And he suspends his converse with a
friend,
Or it may be the labor of his hands,

To think or say, "There is the night-
ingale";
So fared it with Geraint, who thought
and said,
"Here, by God's grace, is the one
voice for me."

It chanced the song that Enid sang
was one
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid
sang:

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel
and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine,
storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love
nor hate.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel
with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or
down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are
great.

"Smile and we smile, the lords of
many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our
own hands;
For man is man and master of his
fate.

"Turn, turn thy wheel above the
staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in
the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love
nor hate."

"Hark, by the bird's song ye may
learn the nest,"
Said Yniol; "enter quickly." Enter-
ing then,
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen
stones,
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd
hall,
He found an ancient dame in dim
brocade;
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-
white,

That lightly breaks a faded flower-
sheath,
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded
silk,
Her daughter. In a moment thought
Geraint,
"Here by God's rood is the one maid
for me."
But none spake word except the hoary
Earl:
"Enid, the good knight's horse stands
in the court;
Take him to stall, and give him corn,
and then
Go to the town and buy us flesh and
wine;
And we will make us merry as we
may.
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are
great."

He spake: the Prince, as Enid past
him, fain
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol
caught
His purple scarf, and held, and said,
"Forbear!
Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O
my son,
Endures not that her guest should
serve himself."
And reverencing the custom of the
house
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the
stall;
And after went her way across the
bridge,
And reach'd the town, and while the
Prince and Earl
Yet spoke together, came again with
one,
A youth, that following with a costrel
bore
The means of goodly welcome, flesh
and wine.
And Enid brought sweet cakes to
make them cheer,
And in her veil unfolded, manchet
bread.

And then, because their hall must also
serve
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and
spread the board,
And stood behind, and waited on the
three.
And seeing her so sweet and service-
able,
Geraint had longing in him evermore
To stoop and kiss the tender little
thumb,
That crost the trencher as she laid it
down:
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,
For now the wine made summer in his
veins,
Let his eye rove in following, or rest
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,
Now here, now there, about the dusky
hall;
Then suddenly address the hoary
Earl:

"Fair Host and Earl, I pray your
courtesy;
This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell
me of him.
His name? but no, good faith, I will
not have it:
For if he be the knight whom late I
saw
Ride into that new fortress by your
town,
White from the mason's hand, then
have I sworn
From his own lips to have it—I am
Geraint
Of Devon—for this morning when the
Queen
Sent her own maiden to demand the
name,
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen
thing,
Struck at her with his whip, and she
return'd
Indignant to the Queen; and then I
swore
That I would track this caitiff to his
hold,
And fight and break his pride, and
have it of him.

And all unarm'd I rode, and thought
to find
Arms in your town, where all the men
are mad ;
They take the rustic murmur of their
bourg
For the great wave that echoes round
the world ;
They would not hear me speak : but
if ye know
Where I can light on arms, or if your-
self
Should have them, tell me, seeing I
have sworn
That I will break his pride and learn
his name,
Avenging this great insult done the
Queen."

Then cried Earl Yniol, "Art thou
he indeed,
Geraint, a name far-sounded among
men
For noble deeds ? and truly I, when
first
I saw you moving by me on the
bridge,
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by
your state
And presence might have guess'd you
one of those
That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.
Nor speak I now from foolish flat-
tery ;
For this dear child hath often heard
me praise
Your feats of arms, and often when I
paused
Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to
hear ;
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds
To noble hearts who see but acts of
wrong :
O never yet had woman such a pair
Of suitors as this maiden ; first Lim-
ours,
A creature wholly given to brawls and
wine,
Drunk even when he woo'd ; and be
he dead
I know not, but he passed to the wild
land.

The second was your foe, the sparrow
hawk,
My curse, my nephew — I will not let
his name
Slip from my lips if I can help it —
he,
When I that knew him fierce and tur-
bulent
Refused her to him, then his pride
awoke ;
And since the proud man often is the
mean,
He sow'd a slander in the common ear,
Affirming that his father left him
gold,
And in my charge, which was not ren-
der'd to him ;
Bribed with large promises the men
who served
About my person, the more easily
Because my means were somewhat
broken into
Thro' open doors and hospitality ;
Raised my own town against me in
the night
Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my
house ;
From mine own earldom foully ousted
me ;
Built that new fort to overawe my
friends,
For truly there are those who love me
yet ;
And keeps me in this ruinous castle
here,
Where doubtless he would put me
soon to death,
But that his pride too much despises
me :
And I myself sometimes despise my-
self ;
For I have let men be, and have their
way ;
Am much too gentle, have not used
my power :
Nor know I whether I be very base
Or very manful, whether very wise
Or very foolish ; only this I know,
That whatsoever evil happen to me,
I seem to suffer nothing heart or
limb,
But can endure it all most patiently."

"Well said, true heart," replied
Geraint, "but arms,
That if the sparrow-hawk, this
nephew, fight
In next day's tourney I may break
his pride."

And Yniol answer'd, "Arms, indeed,
but old
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince
Geraint,
Are mine, and therefore at thine ask-
ing, thine.
But in this tournament can no man
tilt,
Except the lady he loves best be
there.
Two forks are fixt into the meadow
ground,
And over these is placed a silver
wand,
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,
The prize of beauty for the fairest
there.
And this, what knight soever be in
field
Lays claim to for the lady at his
side,
And tilts with my good nephew there-
upon,
Who being apt at arms and big of
bone
Has ever won it for the lady with
him,
And toppling over all antagonism
Has earn'd himself the name of spar-
row-hawk.
But thou, that hast no lady, canst not
fight."

To whom Geraint with eyes all
bright replied,
Leaning a little toward him, "Thy
leave!
Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,
For this dear child, because I never
saw,
Tho' having seen all beauties of our
time,
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so
fair.
And if I fall her name will yet remain

Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,
So aid me Heaven when at mine ut-
termost,
As I will make her truly my true
wife."

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's
heart
Danced in his bosom, seeing better
days.
And looking round he saw not Enid
there,
(Who hearing her own name had
stol'n away)
But that old dame, to whom full ten-
derly
And fondling all her hand in his he
said,
"Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,
And best by her that bore her under-
stood.
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to
rest
Tell her, and prove her heart toward
the Prince."

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl,
and she
With frequent smile and nod depart-
ing found,
Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl;
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,
and then
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,
And kept her off and gazed upon her
face,
And told her all their converse in the
hall,
Proving her heart: but never light and
shade
Coursed one another more on open
ground
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red
and pale
Across the face of Enid hearing her;
While slowly falling as a scale that
falls,
When weight is added only grain by
grain,
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle
breast;

Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,
 Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it;
 So moving without answer to her rest
 She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw
 The quiet night into her blood, but lay
 Contemplating her own unworthiness;
 And when the pale and bloodless east began
 To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised
 Her mother too, and hand in hand they moved
 Down to the meadow where the jousts were held,
 And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when Geraint
 Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,
 He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,
 Himself beyond the rest pushing could move
 The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms
 Were on his princely person, but thro' these
 Princelike his bearing shone; and errant knights
 And ladies came, and by and by the town
 Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists.
 And there they fixt the forks into the ground,
 And over these they placed the silver wand,
 And over that the golden sparrow-hawk.
 Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,
 Spake to the lady with him and proclaim'd,
 "Advance and take as fairest of the fair,
 For I these two years past have won it for thee,

The prize of beauty." Loudly spake the Prince,
 "Forbear: there is a worthier," and the knight
 With some surprise and thrice as much disdain
 Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face
 Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,
 So burnt he was with passion, crying out,
 "Do battle for it then," no more; and thrice
 They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their spears.
 Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd at each
 So often and with such blows, that all the crowd
 Wonder'd, and now and then from distant walls
 There came a clapping as of phantom hands.
 So twice they fought, and twice they breathed, and still
 The dew of their great labor, and the blood
 Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their force.
 But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry,
 "Remember that great insult done the Queen,"
 Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,
 And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the bone,
 And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,
 And said, "Thy name?" To whom the fallen man
 Made answer, groaning, "Edyrn, son of Nudd!
 Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.
 My pride is broken: men have seen my fall."
 "Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd," replied Geraint,
 "These two things shalt thou do, or else thou diest.

First, thou thyself, with damsel and
 with dwarf,
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and com-
 ing there,
 Crave pardon for that insult done the
 Queen,
 And shalt abide her judgment on it;
 next,
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to
 thy kin.
 These two things shalt thou do, or
 thou shalt die."
 And Edyrn answer'd, "These things
 will I do,
 For I have never yet been overthrown,
 And thou hast overthrown me, and my
 pride
 Is broken down, for Enid sees my
 fall!"
 And rising up, he rode to Arthur's
 court,
 And there the Queen forgave him
 easily.
 And being young, he changed and
 came to loathe
 His crime of traitor, slowly drew him-
 self
 Bright from his old dark life, and fell
 at last
 In the great battle fighting for the
 King.

But when the third day from the
 hunting-morn
 Made a low splendor in the world, and
 wings
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she
 lay
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow
 light,
 Among the dancing shadows of the
 birds,
 Woke and bethought her of her
 promise given
 No later than last eve to Prince
 Geraint—
 So bent he seem'd on going the third
 day,
 He would not leave her, till her prom-
 ise given—
 To ride with him this morning to the
 court,

And there be made known to the
 stately Queen,
 And there be wedded with all cere-
 mony.
 At this she cast her eyes upon her
 dress,
 And thought it never yet had look'd
 so mean.
 For as a leaf in mid-November is
 To what it was in mid-October, seem'd
 The dress that now she look'd on to
 the dress
 She look'd on ere the coming of
 Geraint.
 And still she look'd, and still the
 terror grew
 Of that strange bright and dreadful
 thing, a court,
 All staring at her in her faded silk :
 And softly to her own sweet heart she
 said :

"This noble prince who won our
 earldom back,
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall dis-
 credit him !
 Would he could tarry with us here
 awhile,
 But being so beholden to the Prince,
 It were but little grace in any of us,
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third
 day,
 To seek a second favor at his hands.
 Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,
 Myself would work eye dim, and finger
 lame,
 Far liefer than so much discredit him."

And Enid fell in longing for a dress
 All branch'd and flower'd with gold,
 a costly gift
 Of her good mother, given her on the
 night
 Before her birth day, three sad years
 ago,
 That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd
 their house,
 And scatter'd all they had to all the
 winds :
 For while the mother show'd it, and
 the two

Were turning and admiring it, the
 work
 To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry
 That Edyrn's men were on them, and
 they fled
 With little save the jewels they had
 on,
 Which being sold and sold had bought
 them bread :
 And Edyrn's men had caught them in
 their flight,
 And placed them in this ruin ; and
 she wish'd
 The Prince had found her in her
 ancient home ;
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,
 And roam the goodly places that she
 knew ;
 And last bethought her how she used
 to watch,
 Near that old home, a pool of golden
 carp ;
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and
 lustreless
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the
 pool ;
 And half asleep she made comparison
 Of that and these to her own faded self
 And the gay court, and fell asleep
 again ;
 And dreamt herself was such a faded
 form
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the
 pool ;
 But this was in the garden of a king ;
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she
 knew
 That all was bright ; that all about
 were birds
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;
 That all the turf was rich in plots that
 look'd
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;
 And lords and ladies of the high court
 went
 In silver tissue talking things of state ;
 And children of the King in cloth of
 gold
 Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down
 the walks ;
 And while she thought " They will
 not see me," came

A stately queen whose name was
 Guinevere,
 And all the children in their cloth of
 gold
 Ran to her, crying, " If we have fish
 at all
 Let them be gold ; and charge the
 gardeners now
 To pick the faded creature from the
 pool,
 And cast it on the mixen that it die."
 And therewithal one came and seized
 on her,
 And Enid started waking, with her
 heart
 All overshadow'd by the foolish
 dream,
 And lo ! it was her mother grasping
 her
 To get her well awake ; and in her
 hand
 A suit of bright apparel, which she
 laid
 Flat on the couch, and spoke exult-
 ingly :

" See here, my child, how fresh the
 colors look,
 How fast they hold like colors of a
 shell
 That keeps the wear and polish of the
 wave.
 Why not? It never yet was worn, I
 trow :
 Look on it, child, and tell me if ye
 know it."

And Enid look'd, but all confused
 at first,
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish
 dream :
 Then suddenly she knew it and re-
 joiced,
 And answer'd, " Yea, I know it ; your
 good gift,
 So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;
 Your own good gift ! " " Yea, surely,"
 said the dame,
 " And gladly given again this happy
 morn.
 For when the jousts were ended yes-
 terday,

Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-
 where
 He found the sack and plunder of our
 house
 All scatter'd thro' the houses of the
 town;
 And gave command that all which
 once was ours
 Should now be ours again: and yester-
 eve,
 While ye were talking sweetly with
 your Prince,
 Came one with this and laid it in my
 hand,
 For love or fear, or seeking favor of
 us,
 Because we have our earldom back
 again.
 And yester-eve I would not tell you
 of it,
 But kept it for a sweet surprise at
 morn.
 Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?
 For I myself unwillingly have worn
 My faded suit, as you, my child, have
 yours,
 And howsoever patient, Yniol his.
 Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly
 house,
 With store of rich apparel, sumptuous
 fare,
 And page, and maid, and squire, and
 seneschal,
 And pastime both of hawk and hound,
 and all
 That appertains to noble maintenance.
 Yea, and he brought me to a goodly
 house;
 But since our fortune swerved from
 sun to shade,
 And all thro' that young traitor, cruel
 need
 Constrain'd us, but a better time has
 come;
 So clothe yourself in this, that better
 fits
 Our mended fortunes and a Prince's
 bride:
 For tho' ye won the prize of fairest
 fair,
 And tho' I heard him call you fairest
 fair,

Let never maiden think, however fair,
 She is not fairer in new clothes than
 old.
 And should some great court-lady
 say, the Prince
 Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the
 hedge,
 And like a madman brought her
 to the court,
 Then were ye shamed, and, worse,
 might shame the Prince
 To whom we are beholden; but I
 know,
 When my dear child is set forth at
 her best,
 That neither court nor country, tho'
 they sought
 Thro' all the provinces like those of
 old
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has
 her match."

Here ceased the kindly mother out
 of breath;
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she
 lay;
 Then, as the white and glittering star
 of morn
 Parts from a bank of snow, and by
 and by
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden
 rose,
 And left her maiden couch, and robed
 herself,
 Help'd by the mother's careful hand
 and eye,
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous
 gown;
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter round,
 and said,
 She never yet had seen her half so
 fair;
 And call'd her like that maiden in the
 tale,
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour out
 of flowers,
 And sweeter than the bride of Cas-
 sive-laun,
 Flur, for whose love the Roman
 Cæsar first
 Invaded Britain, "But we beat him
 back,

As this great Prince invaded us, and
we,
Not beat him back, but welcomed him
with joy.
And I can scarcely ride with you to
court,
For old am I, and rough the ways and
wild;
But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall
dream
I see my princess as I see her now,
Clothed with my gift, and gay among
the gay."

But while the women thus rejoiced,
Geraint
Woke where he slept in the high hall,
and call'd
For Enid, and when Yniol made report
Of that good mother making Enid
gay
In such apparel as might well beseem
His princess, or indeed the stately
Queen,
He answer'd: "Earl, entreat her by
my love,
Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
That she ride with me in her faded
silk."
Yniol with that hard message went;
it fell
Like flaws in summer^s laying lusty
corn:
For Enid, all abash'd she knew not
why,
Dared not to glance at her good
mother's face,
But silently, in all obedience,
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,
Laid from her limbs the costly-broid-
er'd gift,
And robed them in her ancient suit
again,
And so descended. Never man re-
joiced
More than Geraint to greet her thus
attired;
And glancing all at once as keenly at
her
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,
Made her cheek burn and either eye-
lid fall,

But rested with her sweet face satis-
fied;
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's
brow,
Her by both hands he caught, and
sweetly said,

"O my new mother, be not wroth
or grieved
At thy new son, for my petition to
her.
When late I left Caerleon, our great
Queen,
In words whose echo lasts, they were
so sweet,
Made promise, that whatever bride I
brought,
Herself would clothe her like the sun
in Heaven.
Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd
hall,
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,
I vow'd that could I gain her, our fair
Queen,
No hand but hers, should make your
Enid burst
Sunlike from cloud — and likewise
thought perhaps,
That service done so graciously would
bind
The two together; fain I would the
two
Should love each other: how can
Enid find
A nobler friend? Another thought
was mine;
I came among you here so suddenly,
That tho' her gentle presence at the
lists
Might well have served for proof that
I was loved,
I doubted whether daughter's tender-
ness,
Or easy nature, might not let itself
Be moulded by your wishes for her
weal;
Or whether some false sense in her
own self
Of my contrasting brightness, over-
bore
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky
hall;

And such a sense might make her
 long for court
 And all its perilous glories: and I
 thought,
 That could I someway prove such
 force in her
 Link'd with such love for me, that at
 a word
 (No reason given her) she could cast
 aside
 A splendor dear to women, new to
 her,
 And therefore dearer; or if not so
 new,
 Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the
 power
 Of intermitted usage; then I felt
 That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and
 flows,
 Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I
 do rest,
 A prophet certain of my prophecy,
 That never shadow of mistrust can
 cross
 Between us. Grant me pardon for
 my thoughts:
 And for my strange petition I will
 make
 Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,
 When your fair child shall wear your
 costly gift
 Beside your own warm hearth, with,
 on her knees,
 Who knows? another gift of the high
 God,
 Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to
 lisp you thanks."

He spoke: the mother smiled, but
 half in tears,
 Then brought a mantle down and
 wrapt her in it,
 And claspt and kiss'd her, and they
 rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere
 had climb'd
 The giant tower, from whose high
 crest, they say,
 Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
 And white sails flying on the yellow
 sea;

But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
 Look'd the fair Queen, but up the
 vale of Usk,
 By the flat meadow, till she saw them
 come;
 And then descending met them at the
 gates,
 Embraced her with all welcome as a
 friend,
 And did her honor as the Prince's
 bride,
 And clothed her for her bridals like
 the sun;
 And all that week was old Caerleon
 gay,
 For by the hands of Dubric, the high
 saint,
 They twain were wedded with all
 ceremony.

And this was on the last year's
 Whitsuntide.
 But Enid ever kept the faded silk,
 Remembering how first he came on
 her,
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved
 her in it,
 And all her foolish fears about the
 dress,
 And all his journey toward her, as
 himself
 Had told her, and their coming to the
 court.

And now this morning when he said
 to her,
 "Put on your worst and meanest
 dress," she found
 And took it, and array'd herself
 therein.

II.

O purblind race of miserable men,
 How many among us at this very hour
 Do forge a life-long trouble for our-
 selves,
 By taking true for false, or false for
 true;
 Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this
 world

Groping, how many, until we pass and reach
That other, where we see as we are seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth

That morning, when they both had got to horse,

Perhaps because he loved her passionately,

And felt that tempest brooding round his heart,

Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce

Upon a head so dear in thunder, said: "Not at my side. I charge thee ride before,

Ever a good way on before; and this I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,

Whatever happens, not to speak to me,

No, not a word!" and Enid was aghast;

And forth they rode, but scarce three paces on,

When crying out, "Effeminate as I am,

I will not fight my way with gilded arms,

All shall be iron;" he loosed a mighty purse,

Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the squire.

So the last sight that Enid had of home

Was all the marble threshold flashing, strown

With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the squire

Chafing his shoulder: then he cried again,

"To the wilds!" and Enid leading down the tracks

Thro' which he bade her lead him on, they past

The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,

Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,

And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode:

Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd soon:

A stranger meeting them had surely thought

They rode so slowly and they look'd so pale,

That each had suffer'd some exceeding wrong.

For he was ever saying to himself, "O I that wasted time to tend upon her,

To compass her with sweet observances,

To dress her beautifully and keep her true" —

And there he broke the sentence in his heart

Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue May break it, when his passion masters him.

And she was ever praying the sweet heavens

To save her dear lord whole from any wound.

And ever in her mind she cast about

For that unnoticed failing in herself, Which made him look so cloudy and

so cold;

Till the great plover's human whistle amazed

Her heart, and glancing round the waste she fear'd

In every wavering brake an ambuscade.

Then thought again, "If there be such in me,

I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,

If he would only speak and tell me of it."

But when the fourth part of the day was gone,

Then Enid was aware of three tall knights

On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock

In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all;

And heard one crying to his fellow, "Look,

Here comes a laggard hanging down
his head,
Who seems no bolder than a beaten
hound;
Come, we will slay him and will have
his horse
And armor, and his damsel shall be
ours."

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart,
and said:
"I will go back a little to my lord,
And I will tell him all their caittiff
talk;
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,
Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,
Than that my lord should suffer loss
or shame."

Then she went back some paces of
return,
Met his full frown timidly firm, and
said;
"My lord, I saw three bandits by the
rock
Waiting to fall on you, and heard
them boast
That they would slay you, and possess
your horse
And armor, and your damsel should
be theirs."

He made a wrathful answer: "Did
I wish
Your warning or your silence? one
command
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,
And thus ye keep it! Well then, look
— for now,
Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,
Long for my life, or hunger for my
death,
Yourself shall see my vigor is not
lost."

Then Enid waited pale and sorrow-
ful,
And down upon him bare the bandit
three.
And at the midmost charging, Prince
Geraint

Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his
breast
And out beyond; and then against his
brace
Of comrades, each of whom had
broken on him
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,
Swung from his brand a windy buffet
out
Once, twice, to right, to left, and
stunn'd the twain
Or slew them, and dismounting like a
man
That skins the wild beast after slaying
him,
Stript from the three dead wolves of
woman born
The three gay suits of armor which
they wore,
And let the bodies lie, but bound the
suits
Of armor on their horses, each on each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the
three
Together, and said to her, "Drive
them on
Before you;" and she drove them
thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer: ruth began to
work
Against his anger in him, while he
watch'd
The being he loved best in all the
world,
With difficulty in mild obedience
Driving them on: he fain had spoken
to her,
And loosed in words of sudden fire the
wrath
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him
all within;
But evermore it seem'd an easier thing
At once without remorse to strike her
dead,
Than to cry "Halt," and to her own
bright face
Accuse her of the least immodesty:
And thus tongue-tied, it made him
wroth the more
That she *could* speak whom his own
ear had heard

Call herself false : and suffering thus
 he made
 Minutes an age : but in scarce longer
 time
 Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,
 Before he turn to fall seaward again,
 Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, be-
 hold
 In the first shallow shade of a deep
 wood,
 Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted
 oaks,
 Three other horsemen waiting, wholly
 arm'd,
 Whereof one seem'd far larger than
 her lord,
 And shook her pulses, crying, "Look,
 a prize!
 Three horses and three goodly suits
 of arms,
 And all in charge of whom? a girl:
 set on."
 "Nay," said the second, "yonder
 comes a knight."
 The third, "A craven; how he hangs
 his head."
 The giant answer'd merrily, "Yea, but
 one?
 Wait here, and when he passes fall
 upon him."

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and
 said,
 "I will abide the coming of my lord,
 And I will tell him all their villany.
 My lord is weary with the fight before,
 And they will fall upon him unawares.
 I needs must disobey him for his
 good;
 How should I dare obey him to his
 harm?
 Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill
 me for it,
 I save a life dearer to me than mine."

And she abode his coming, and said
 to him
 With timid firmness, "Have I leave
 to speak?"
 He said, "Ye take it, speaking," and
 she spoke.

"There lurk three villains yonder
 in the wood,
 And each of them is wholly arm'd,
 and one
 Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they
 say
 That they will fall upon you while ye
 pass."

To which he flung a wrathful an-
 swer back:
 "And if there were an hundred in the
 wood,
 And every man were larger-limb'd
 than I,
 And all at once should sally out upon
 me,
 I swear it would not ruffle me so much
 As you that not obey me. Stand
 aside,
 And if I fall, cleave to the better
 man."

And Enid stood aside to wait the
 event,
 Not dare to watch the combat, only
 breathe
 Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a
 breath.
 And he, she dreaded most, bare down
 upon him.
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd; but
 Geraint's,
 A little in the late encounter strain'd,
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corse-
 let home,
 And then brake short, and down his
 enemy roll'd,
 And there lay still; as he that tells
 the tale
 Saw once a great piece of a promon-
 tory,
 That had a sapling growing on it, slide
 From the long shore-cliff's windy walls
 to the beach,
 And there lie still, and yet the sapling
 grew:
 So lay the man transfixt. His craven
 pair
 Of comrades making slower at the
 Prince,

When now they saw their bulwark
 fallen, stood ;
 On whom the victor, to confound them
 more,
 Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry ; for
 as one,
 That listens near a torrent mountain-
 brook,
 All thro' the crash of the near cataract
 hears
 The drumming thunder of the huger
 fall
 At distance, were the soldiers wont to
 hear
 His voice in battle, and be kindled by
 it,
 And foemen scared, like that false
 pair who turn'd
 Flying, but, overtaken, died the death
 Themselves had wrought on many an
 innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting,
 pick'd the lance
 That pleased him best, and drew from
 those dead wolves
 Their three gay suits of armor, each
 from each,
 And bound them on their horses, each
 on each,
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the
 three
 Together, and said to her, " Drive
 them on
 Before you," and she drove them thro'
 the wood.

He follow'd nearer still: the pain
 she had
 To keep them in the wild ways of the
 wood,
 Two sets of three laden with jingling
 arms,
 Together, served a little to disedge
 The sharpness of that pain about her
 heart :
 And they themselves, like creatures
 gently born
 But into bad hands fall'n, and now so
 long
 By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light
 ears, and felt

Her low firm voice and tender govern-
 ment.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood
 they past,
 And issuing under open heavens be-
 held
 A little town with towers, upon a rock,
 And close beneath, a meadow gemlike
 chased
 In the brown wild, and mowers mow-
 ing in it :
 And down a rocky pathway from the
 place
 There came a fair-hair'd youth, that
 in his hand
 Bare victual for the mowers : and
 Geraint
 Had ruth again on Enid looking pale
 Then, moving downward to the
 meadow ground,
 He, when the fair-hair'd youth came
 by him, said,
 " Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is so
 faint."
 " Yea, willingly," replied the youth ;
 " and thou,
 My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is
 coarse,
 And only meet for mowers ;" then set
 down
 His basket, and dismounting on the
 sward
 They let the horses graze, and ate
 themselves.
 And Enid took a little delicately,
 Less having stomach for it than desire
 To close with her lord's pleasure ; but
 Geraint
 Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,
 And when he found all empty, was
 amazed ;
 And, " Boy," said he, " I have eaten
 all, but take
 A horse and arms for guerdon ; choose
 the best."
 He, reddening in extremity of delight,
 " My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold."
 " Ye will be all the wealthier," cried
 the Prince.
 " I take it as free gift, then," said the
 boy,

“Not guerdon; for myself can easily,
While your good damsel rests, return,
and fetch
Fresh victual for these mowers of our
Earl;
For these are his, and all the field is
his,
And I myself am his; and I will tell
him
How great a man thou art: he loves
to know
When men of mark are in his territory:
And he will have thee to his palace
here,
And serve thee costlier than with
mowers' fare.”

Then said Geraint, “I wish no better
fare:
I never ate with angrier appetite
Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.
And into no Earl's palace will I go.
I know, God knows, too much of
palaces!
And if he want me, let him come to
me.
But hire us some fair chamber for the
night,
And stalling for the horses, and return
With victual for these men, and let
us know.”

“Yea, my kind lord,” said the glad
youth, and went,
Held his head high, and thought himself
a knight,
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,
Leading the horse, and they were left
alone.

But when the Prince had brought
his errant eyes
Home from the rock, sideways he let
them glance
At Enid, where she droopt: his own
false doom,
That shadow of mistrust should never
cross

Betwixt them, came upon him, and he
sigh'd;
Then with another humorous ruth remark'd
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,
And watch'd the sun blaze on the
turning scythe,
And after nodded sleepily in the
heat.
But she, remembering her old ruin'd
hall,
And all the windy clamor of the daws
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the
grass
There growing longest by the meadow's
edge,
And into many a listless annulet,
Now over, now beneath her marriage
ring,
Wove and unwove it, till the boy return'd
And told them of a chamber, and they
went;
Where, after saying to her, “If ye
will,
Call for the woman of the house,” to
which
She answer'd, “Thanks, my lord;”
the two remain'd
Apart by all the chamber's width, and
mute
As creatures voiceless thro' the fault
of birth,
Or two wild men supporters of a
shield,
Painted, who stare at open space, nor
glance
The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along
the street,
And heel against the pavement echoing,
burst
Their drowse; and either started while
the door,
Push'd from without, drave backward
to the wall,
And midst of a rout of roisterers,
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,
Limours.

He moving up with pliant courtli-
ness,
Greeted Geraint full face, but
stealthily,
In the mid-warmth of welcome and
graspt hand,
Found Enid with the corner of his
eye,
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.
Then cried Geraint for wine and
goodly cheer
To feed the sudden guest, and sump-
tuously
According to his fashion, bade the
host
Call in what men soever were his
friends,
And feast with these in honor of their
Earl;
"And care not for the cost; the cost
is mine."

And wine and food were brought,
and Earl Limours
Drank till he jested with all ease, and
told
Free tales, and took the word and
play'd upon it,
And made it of two colors; for his
talk,
When wine and free companions
kindled him,
Was wont to glance and sparkle like
a gem
Of fifty facets; thus he moved the
Prince
To laughter and his comrades to ap-
plause.
Then, when the Prince was merry,
ask'd Limours,
"Your leave, my lord, to cross the
room, and speak
To your good damsel there who sits
apart,
And seems so lonely?" "My free
leave," he said;
"Get her to speak: she doth not speak
to me."
Then rose Limours, and looking at his
feet,
Like him who tries the bridge he fears
may fail,

Croste and came near, lifted adoring
eyes,
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisper-
ingly:

"Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
Enid, my early and my only love,
Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me
wild —
What chance is this? how is it I see
you here?
Ye are in my power at last, are in my
power.
Yet fear me not: I call mine own self
wild,
But keep a touch of sweet civility
Here in the heart of waste and wilder-
ness.
I thought, but that your father came
between,
In former days you saw me favorably.
And if it were so do not keep it back:
Make me a little happier: let me
know it:
Owe you me nothing for a life half-
lost?
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all
you are.
And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy,
Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,
You come with no attendance, page or
maid,
To serve you — doth he love you as of
old?
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know
Tho' men may bicker with the things
they love,
They would not make them laughable
in all eyes,
Not while they loved them; and your
wretched dress,
A wretched insult on you, dumbly
speaks
Your story, that this man loves you
no more.
Your beauty is no beauty to him now:
A common chance — right well I know
it — pall'd —
For I know men: nor will ye win him
back,
For the man's love once gone never
returns.

But here is one who loves you as of old;
With more exceeding passion than of
old:

Good, speak the word: my followers
ring him round:

He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up;
They understand: nay; I do not mean
blood:

Nor need ye look so scared at what I
say:

My malice is no deeper than a moat,
No stronger than a wall: there is the
keep;

He shall not cross us more; speak but
the word:

Or speak it not; but then by Him that
made me

The one true lover whom you ever
own'd,

I will make use of all the power I have.
O pardon me! the madness of that
hour,

When first I parted from thee, moves
me yet."

At this the tender sound of his own
voice

And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd
his eyes,

Moist as they were, wine-heated from
the feast;

And answer'd with such craft as
women use,

Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a
chance

That breaks upon them perilously,
and said:

"Earl, if you love me as in former
years,

And do not practise on me, come with
morn,

And snatch me from him as by
violence;

Leave me to-night: I am weary to the
death."

Low at leave-taking, with his bran-
dish'd plume

Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-
amorous Earl,

And the stout Prince bade him a loud
good-night.

He moving homeward babbled to his
men,

How Enid never loved a man but him,
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her
lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince
Geraint,

Debating his command of silence
given,

And that she now perforce must vio-
late it,

Held commune with herself, and while
she held

He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart
To wake him, but hung o'er him,
wholly pleased

To find him yet unwounded after fight,
And hear him breathing low and
equally.

Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,
heap'd

The pieces of his armor in one place,
All to be there against a sudden need;
Then dozed awhile herself, but over-
toil'd

By that day's grief and travel, ever-
more

Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn,
and then

Went slipping down horrible precip-
ices,

And strongly striking out her limbs
awoke;

Then thought she heard the wild Earl
at the door,

With all his rout of random followers,
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, sum-
moning her;

Which was the red cock shouting to
the light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy
world,

And glimmer'd on his armor in the
room.

And once again she rose to look at it,
But touch'd it unawares: jangling,
the casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at
her.

Then breaking his command of silence
 given,
 She told him all that Earl Limours
 had said,
 Except the passage that he loved her
 not ;
 Nor left untold the craft herself had
 used ;
 But ended with apology so sweet,
 Low-spoken, and of so few words, and
 seem'd

So justified by that necessity,
 That tho' he thought "was it for him
 she wept
 In Devon?" he but gave a wrathful
 groan,
 Saying, "Your sweet faces make good
 fellows fools
 And traitors. Call the host and bid
 him bring
 Charger and palfrey." So she glided
 out

Among the heavy breathings of the
 house,
 And like a household Spirit at the
 walls
 Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and
 return'd :

Then tending her rough lord, tho' all
 unask'd,

In silence, did him service as a squire ;
 Till issuing arm'd he found the host
 and cried,

"Thy reckoning, friend?" and ere he
 learnt it, "Take

Five horses and their armors"; and
 the host

Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,
 "My lord, I scarce have spent the
 worth of one!"

"Ye will be all the wealthier," said
 the Prince,

And then to Enid, "Forward! and
 to-day

I charge you, Enid, more especially,
 What thing soever ye may hear, or see,
 Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use
 To charge you) that ye speak not but
 obey."

And Enid answer'd, "Yea, my lord,
 I know

Your wish, and would obey; but rid-
 ing first,

I hear the violent threats you do not
 hear,

I see the danger which you cannot see:
 Then not to give you warning, that
 seems hard;

Almost beyond me: yet I would
 obey."

"Yea so," said he, "do it: be not
 too wise;

Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,
 Not all mismated with a yawning
 clown,

But one with arms to guard his head
 and yours,

With eyes to find you out however
 far,

And ears to hear you even in his
 dreams."

With that he turn'd and look'd as
 keenly at her

As careful robins eye the delver's
 toil;

And that within her, which a wanton
 fool,

Or hasty judger would have call'd her
 guilt,

Made her cheek burn and either eye-
 lid fall.

And Geraint look'd and was not satis-
 fied.

Then forward by a way which,
 beaten broad,

Led from the territory of false
 Limours

To the waste earldom of another earl,
 Doorn, whom his shaking vassals
 call'd the Bull,

Went Enid with her sullen follower
 on.

Once she look'd back, and when she
 saw him ride

More near by many a rood than yes-
 termorn,

It wellnigh made her cheerful; till
 Geraint

Waving an angry hand as who should
 say

"Ye watch me," sadden'd all her heart
 again.
 But while the sun yet beat a dewy
 blade,
 The sound of many a heavily-gallop-
 ing hoof
 Smote on her ear, and turning round
 she saw
 Dust, and the points of lances bicker
 in it.
 Then not to disobey her lord's behest,
 And yet to give him warning, for he
 rode
 As if he heard not, moving back she
 held
 Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.
 At which the warrior in his obstinacy,
 Because she kept the letter of his
 word,
 Was in a manner pleased, and turning,
 stood.
 And in the moment after, wild
 Limours,
 Borne on a black horse, like a thun-
 der-cloud
 Whose skirts are loosen'd by the
 breaking storm,
 Half ridden off with by the thing he
 rode,
 And all in passion uttering a dry
 shriek,
 Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with
 him, and bore
 Down by the length of lance and arm
 beyond
 The crupper, and so left him stunn'd
 or dead,
 And overthrew the next that follow'd
 him,
 And blindly rush'd on all the rout
 behind.
 But at the flash and motion of the
 man
 They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a
 shoal
 Of darting fish, that on a summer
 morn
 Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot
 Come slipping o'er their shadows on
 the sand,
 But if a man who stands upon the
 brink

But lift a shining hand against the
 sun,
 There is not left the twinkle of a fin
 Betwixt the cressy islets white in
 flower;
 So, scared but at the motion of the
 man,
 Fled all the boon companions of the
 Earl,
 And left him lying in the public way;
 So vanish friendships only made in
 wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled
 Geraint,
 Who saw the chargers of the two that
 fell
 Start from their fallen lords, and
 wildly fly,
 Mixt with the flyers. "Horse and
 man," he said,
 "All of one mind and all right-honest
 friends!
 Not a hoof left: and I methinks till
 now
 Was honest — paid with horses and
 with arms;
 I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg:
 And so what say ye, shall we strip
 him there
 Your lover? has your palfrey heart
 enough
 To bear his armor? shall we fast, or
 dine?
 No? — then do thou, being right hon-
 est, pray
 That we may meet the horsemen of
 Earl Doorm,
 I too would still be honest." Thus
 he said:
 And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,
 And answering not a word, she led the
 way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful
 loss
 Falls in a far land and he knows it
 not,
 But coming back he learns it, and the
 loss
 So pains him that he sickens nigh to
 death;

So fared it with Geraint, who being
 prick'd
 In combat with the follower of
 Limours,
 Bled underneath his armor secretly,
 And so rode on, nor told his gentle
 wife
 What ail'd him, hardly knowing it
 himself,
 Till his eye darken'd and his helmet
 wagg'd ;
 And at a sudden swerving of the road,
 Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,
 The Prince, without a word, from his
 horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his
 fall,
 Suddenly came, and at his side all
 pale
 Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of
 his arms,
 Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue
 eye
 Moisten, till she had lighted on his
 wound,
 And tearing off her veil of faded silk
 Had bared her forehead to the blister-
 ing sun,
 And swathed the hurt that drain'd her
 dear lord's life.
 Then after all was done that hand
 could do,
 She rested, and her desolation came
 Upon her, and she wept beside the
 way.

And many past, but none regarded
 her,
 For in that realm of lawless turbu-
 lence,
 A woman weeping for her murder'd
 mate
 Was cared as much for as a summer
 shower:
 One took him for a victim of Earl
 Doorm,
 Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on
 him:
 Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,
 Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl;

Half whistling and half singing a
 coarse song,
 He drove the dust against her veiless
 eyes:
 Another, flying from the wrath of
 Doorm
 Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
 The long way smoke beneath him in
 his fear;
 At which her palfrey whinnying lifted
 heel
 And scour'd into the coppices and was
 lost,
 While the great charger stood, grieved
 like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge
 Earl Doorm,
 Broad-faced with under-fringe of rus-
 set beard,
 Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of
 prey,
 Came riding with a hundred lances
 up;
 But ere he came, like one that hails a
 ship,
 Cried out with a big voice, "What, is
 he dead?"
 "No, no, not dead!" she answer'd in
 all haste.
 "Would some of your kind people
 take him up,
 And bear him hence out of this cruel
 sun?
 Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not
 dead."

Then said Earl Doorm: "Well, if
 he be not dead,
 Why wail ye for him thus? ye seem a
 child.
 And be he dead, I count you for a
 fool;
 Your wailing will not quicken him:
 dead or not,
 Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.
 Yet, since the face *is* comely — some
 of you,
 Here, take him up, and bear him to
 our hall:
 An if he live, we will have him of our
 band;

And if he die, why earth has earth
 enough
 To hide him. See ye take the charger
 too,
 A noble one."

He spake, and past away,
 But left two brawny spearmen, who
 advanced,
 Each growling like a dog, when his
 good bone
 Seems to be pluck'd at by the village
 boys
 Who love to vex him eating, and he
 fears
 To lose his bone, and lays his foot
 upon it,
 Gnawing and growling: so the ruffians
 growl'd,
 Fearing to lose, and all for a dead
 man,
 Their chance of booty from the morn-
 ing's raid,
 Yet raised and laid him on a litter-
 bier,
 Such as they brought upon their forays
 out
 For those that might be wounded; laid
 him on it
 All in the hollow of his shield, and
 took
 And bore him to the naked hall of
 Doorm,
 (His gentle charger following him
 unled)
 And cast him and the bier in which
 he lay
 Down on an oaken settle in the
 hall,
 And then departed, hot in haste to
 join
 Their luckier mates, but growling as
 before,
 And cursing their lost time, and the
 dead man,
 And their own Earl, and their own
 souls, and her.
 They might as well have blest her:
 she was deaf
 To blessing or to cursing save from
 one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her
 lord,
 There in the naked hall, propping his
 head,
 And chafing his pale hands, and call-
 ing to him.
 Till at the last he waken'd from his
 swoon,
 And found his own dear bride prop-
 ping his head,
 And chafing his faint hands, and
 calling to him;
 And felt the warm tears falling on his
 face;
 And said to his own heart, "She weeps
 for me":
 And yet lay still, and feign'd himself
 as dead,
 That he might prove her to the utter-
 most,
 And say to his own heart, "She weeps
 for me."

But in the falling afternoon return'd
 The huge Earl Doorm with plunder
 to the hall.
 His lusty spearmen follow'd him with
 noise:
 Each hurling down a heap of things
 that rang
 Against the pavement, cast his lance
 aside,
 And doff'd his helm: and then there
 flutter'd in,
 Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated
 eyes,
 A tribe of women, dress'd in many
 hues,
 And mingled with the spearmen: and
 Earl Doorm
 Struck with a knife's haft hard
 against the board,
 And call'd for flesh and wine to feed
 his spears.
 And men brought in whole hogs and
 quarter beeves,
 And all the hall was dim with steam
 of flesh:
 And none spake word, but all sat
 down at once,
 And ate with tumult in the naked
 hall,

Feeding like horses when you hear
them feed;

Till Enid shrank far back into herself,
To shun the wild ways of the lawless
tribe.

But when Earl Doorm had eaten all
he would,

He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and
found

A damsel drooping in a corner of it.
Then he remember'd her, and how she
wept;

And out of her there came a power
upon him;

And rising on the sudden he said,
"Eat!

I never yet beheld a thing so pale.
God's curse, it makes me mad to see
you weep.

Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had
your good man,

For were I dead who is it would
weep for me?

Sweet lady, never since I first drew
breath

Have I beheld a lily like yourself.
And so there lived some color in your
cheek,

There is not one among my gentle-
women

Were fit to wear your slipper for a
glove.

But listen to me, and by me be
ruled,

And I will do the thing I have not
done,

For ye shall share my earldom with
me, girl,

And we will live like two birds in one
nest,

And I will fetch you forage from all
fields,

For I compel all creatures to my will."

He spoke: the brawny spearman
let his cheek

Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and
turning stared;

While some, whose souls the old ser-
pent long had drawn

Down, as the worm draws in the
wither'd leaf

And makes it earth, hiss'd each at
other's ear

What shall not be recorded — women
they,

Women, or what had been those
gracious things,

But now desired the humbling of their
best,

Yea, would have help'd him to it: and
all at once

They hated her, who took no thought
of them,

But answer'd in low voice, her meek
head yet

Drooping, "I pray you of your cour-
tesy,

He being as he is, to let me be."

She spake so low he hardly heard
her speak,

But like a mighty patron, satisfied
With what himself had done so gra-
ciously,

Assumed that she had thank'd him,
adding, "Yea,

Eat and be glad, for I account you
mine."

She answer'd meekly, "How should
I be glad

Henceforth in all the world at any-
thing,

Until my lord arise and look upon
me?"

Here the huge Earl cried out upon
her talk,

As all but empty heart and weariness
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized
on her,

And bare her by main violence to the
board,

And thrust the dish before her, cry-
ing, "Eat."

"No, no," said Enid, vext, "I will
not eat

Till yonder man upon the bier arise,
And eat with me." "Drink, then,"
he answer'd. "Here!"

(And fill'd a horn with wine and held
it to her,)

"Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with
fight, or hot,
God's curse, with anger — often I
myself,
Before I well have drunken, scarce
can eat:
Drink therefore and the wine will
change your will."

"Not so," she cried, "By Heaven, I
will not drink
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do
it,
And drink with me; and if he rise no
more,
I will not look at wine until I die."

At this he turn'd all red and paced
his hall,
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper
lip,
And coming up close to her, said at
last:
"Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,
Take warning: yonder man is surely
dead;
And I compel all creatures to my
will.
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore
wail for one,
Who put your beauty to this flout and
scorn
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am
I,
Beholding how ye butt against my
wish,
That I forbear you thus: cross me
no more.
At least put off to please me this poor
gown,
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's
weed:
I love that beauty should go beauti-
fully:
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,
How gay, how suited to the house of
one
Who loves that beauty should go
beautifully?
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this:
obey."

He spoke, and one among his gentle
women
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign
loom,
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely
blue
Play'd into green, and thicker down
the front
With jewels than the sward with
drops of dew,
When all night long a cloud clings
to the hill,
And with the dawn ascending lets the
day
Strike where it clung: so thickly
shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be
moved
Than hardest tyrants in their day of
power,
With life-long injuries burning un-
avenged,
And now their hour has come; and
Enid said:

"In this poor gown my dear lord
found me first,
And loved me serving in my father's
hall:
In this poor gown I rode with him to
court,
And there the Queen array'd me like
the sun:
In this poor gown he bade me clothe
myself,
When now we rode upon this fatal
quest
Of honor, where no honor can be
gain'd:
And this poor gown I will not cast
aside
Until himself arise a living man,
And bid me cast it. I have griefs
enough:
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me
be:
I never loved, can never love but him:
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentle-
ness,
He being as he is, to let me be."

Then strode the brute Earl up and
down his hall,
And took his russet beard between his
teeth ;
Last, coming up quite close, and in his
mood
Crying, " I count it of no more avail,
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with
you ;
Take my salute," unknightly with flat
hand,
However lightly, smote her on the
cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,
And since she thought, " He had not
dared to do it,
Except he surely knew my lord was
dead,"
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter
cry,
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,
Which sees the trapper coming thro'
the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at
his sword,
(It lay beside him in the hollow
shield),
Made but a single bound, and with a
sweep of it
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like
a ball
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the
floor.
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted
dead.
And all the men and women in the
hall
Rose when they saw the dead man
rise, and fled
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two
Were left alone together, and he said :

" Enid, I have used you worse than
that dead man ;
Done you more wrong : we both have
undergone
That trouble which has left me thrice
your own :
Henceforward I will rather die than
doubt.

And here I lay this penance on my-
self,
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you
yesternorn —
You thought me sleeping, but I heard
you say,
I heard you say, that you were no true
wife :
I swear I will not ask your meaning
in it :
I do believe yourself against yourself,
And will henceforward rather die than
doubt."

And Enid could not say one tender
word,
She felt so blunt and stupid at the
heart :
She only pray'd him, " Fly, they will
return
And slay you ; fly, your charger is
without,
My palfrey lost." " Then, Enid, shall
you ride
Behind me." " Yea," said Enid, " let
us go."
And moving out they found the stately
horse,
Who now no more a vassal to the
thief,
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful
fight,
Neigh'd with all gladness as they
came, and stoop'd
With a low whinny toward the pair :
and she
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble
front,
Glad also ; then Geraint upon the
horse
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on
his foot
She set her own and climb'd ; he turn'd
his face
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast
her arms
About him, and at once they rode
away.

And never yet, since high in Para-
dise
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,

Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind
 Than lived thro' her, who in that per-
 ilous hour
 Put hand to hand beneath her hus-
 band's heart,
 And felt him hers again: she did not
 weep,
 But o'er her meek eyes came a happy
 mist
 Like that which kept the heart of
 Eden green
 Before the useful trouble of the rain:
 Yet not so misty were her meek blue
 eyes
 As not to see before them on the path,
 Right in the gateway of the bandit
 hold,
 A knight of Arthur's court, who laid
 his lance
 In rest, and made as if to fall upon
 him.
 Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of
 blood,
 She, with her mind all full of what
 had chanced,
 Shriek'd to the stranger "Slay not a
 dead man!"
 "The voice of Enid," said the knight;
 but she,
 Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,
 Was moved so much the more, and
 shriek'd again,
 "O cousin, slay not him who gave you
 life."
 And Edyrn moving frankly forward
 spake:
 "My lord Geraint, I greet you with
 all love;
 I took you for a bandit knight of
 Doorn;
 And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon
 him,
 Who love you, Prince, with something
 of the love
 Wherewith we love the Heaven that
 chastens us.
 For once, when I was up so high in
 pride
 That I was half-way down the slope
 to Hell,
 By overthrowing me you threw me
 higher.

Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table
 Round,
 And since I knew this Earl, when I
 myself
 Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,
 I come the mouthpiece of our King to
 Doorn
 (The King is close behind me) bidding
 him
 Disband himself, and scatter all his
 powers,
 Submit, and hear the judgment of the
 King."

"He hears the judgment of the King
 of kings,"
 Cried the wan Prince; "and lo, the
 powers of Doorn
 Are scatter'd," and he pointed to the
 field,
 Where, huddled here and there on
 mound and knoll,
 Were men and women staring and
 aghast,
 While some yet fled; and then he
 plainlier told
 How the huge Earl lay slain within
 his hall.
 But when the knight besought him,
 "Follow me,
 Prince, to the camp, and in the King's
 own ear
 Speak what has chanced; ye surely
 have endured
 Strange chances here alone;" that
 other flush'd,
 And hung his head, and halted in
 reply,
 Fearing the mild face of the blameless
 King,
 And after madness acted question
 ask'd:
 Till Edyrn crying, "If ye will not go
 To Arthur, then will Arthur come to
 you."
 "Enough," he said, "I follow," and
 they went.
 But Enid in their going had two fears,
 One from the bandit scatter'd in the
 field,
 And one from Edyrn. Every now
 and then,

When Edyrn rein'd his charger at
her side,
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,
From which old fires have broken,
men may fear
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving,
said :

“Fair and dear cousin, you that
most had cause
To fear me, fear no longer, I am
changed.
Yourself were first the blameless
cause to make
My nature's prideful sparkle in the
blood
Break into furious flame; being re-
pulsed
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and
wrought
Until I overturn'd him; then set up
(With one main purpose ever at my
heart)
My haughty jousts, and took a para-
mour;
Did her mock-honor as the fairest
fair,
And, toppling over all antagonism,
So wax'd in pride, that I believed
myself
Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh
mad :
And, but for my main purpose in
these jousts,
I should have slain your father, seized
yourself.
I lived in hope that sometime you
would come
To these my lists with him whom best
you loved ;
And there, poor cousin, with your
meek blue eyes,
The truest eyes that ever answer'd
Heaven,
Behold me overturn and trample on
him.
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or
pray'd to me,
I should not less have kill'd him.
And you came, —
But once you came, — and with your
own true eyes

Beheld the man you loved (I speak as
one
Speaks of a service done him) over-
throw
My proud self, and my purpose three
years old,
And set his foot upon me, and give
me life.
There was I broken down; there was
I saved :
Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating
the life
He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.
And all the penance the Queen laid
upon me
Was but to rest awhile within her
court ;
Where first as sullen as a beast new-
caged,
And waiting to be treated like a
wolf,
Because I knew my deeds were known,
I found,
Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a
grace
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began
To glance behind me at my former
life,
And find that it had been the wolf's
indeed :
And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high
saint,
Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,
Subdued me somewhat to that gentle-
ness,
Which, when it weds with manhood,
makes a man.
And you were often there about the
Queen,
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you
saw ;
Nor did I care or dare to speak with
you,
But kept myself aloof till I was
changed ;
And fear not, cousin; I am changed
indeed.”

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,
Like simple noble natures, credulous

Of what they long for, good in friend
 or foe,
 There most in those who most have
 done them ill.
 And when they reach'd the camp the
 King himself
 Advanced to greet them, and behold-
 ing her
 Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a
 word,
 But went apart with Edyrn, whom he
 held
 In converse for a little, and return'd,
 And, gravely smiling, lifted her from
 horse,
 And kiss'd her with all pureness,
 brother-like,
 And show'd an empty tent allotted
 her,
 And glancing for a minute, till he saw
 her
 Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and
 said :

“Prince, when of late ye pray'd me
 for my leave
 To move to your own land, and there
 defend
 Your marches, I was prick'd with
 some reproof,
 As one that let foul wrong stagnate
 and be,
 By having look'd too much thro' alien
 eyes,
 And wrought too long with delegated
 hands,
 Not used mine own: but now behold
 me come
 To cleanse this common sewer of all
 my realm,
 With Edyrn and with others: have
 ye look'd
 At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly
 changed?
 This work of his is great and wonder-
 ful.
 His very face with change of heart is
 changed,
 The world will not believe a man
 repents:
 And this wise world of ours is mainly
 right.

Full seldom doth a man repent, or use
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious
 quitch
 Of blood and custom wholly out of
 him,
 And make all clean, and plant himself
 afresh.
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all his
 heart
 As I will weed this land before I go.
 I, therefore, made him of our Table
 Round,
 Not rashly, but have proved him
 everyway
 One of our noblest, our most valorous,
 Sanest and most obedient: and indeed
 This work of Edyrn wrought upon
 himself
 After a life of violence, seems to me
 A thousand-fold more great and wonder-
 ful
 Than if some knight of mine, risking
 his life,
 My subject with my subjects under
 him,
 Should make an onslaught single on
 a realm
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by
 one,
 And were himself nigh wounded to
 the death.”

So spake the King; low bow'd the
 Prince, and felt
 His work was neither great nor wonder-
 ful,
 And past to Enid's tent; and thither
 came
 The King's own leech to look into his
 hurt;
 And Enid tended on him there; and
 there
 Her constant motion round him, and
 the breath
 Of her sweet tendance hovering over
 him,
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his
 blood
 With deeper and with ever deeper
 love,
 As the south-west that blowing Bala
 lake

Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,
The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes
On each of all whom Uther left in charge
Long since, to guard the justice of the King:
He look'd and found them wanting; and as now
Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills
To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,
He rooted out the slothful officer
Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,
And in their chairs set up a stronger race
With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men
To till the wastes, and moving everywhere
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past
With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,
And clothed her in apparel like the day.
And tho' Geraint could never take again
That comfort from their converse which he took
Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,
He rested well content that all was well.
Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,
And fifty knights rode with them to the shores
Of Severn, and they past to their own land.

And there he kept the justice of the King
So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died:
And being ever foremost in the chase,
And victor at the tilt and tournament,
They call'd him the great Prince and man of men.
But Enid, whom the ladies loved to call
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named
Enid the Good; and in their halls arose
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints
Of times to be; nor did he doubt her more,
But rested in her feälty, till he crown'd
A happy life with a fair death, and fell
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

A STORM was coming, but the winds were still,
And in the wild woods of Broceliande,
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and old
It look'd a tower of ruin'd masonwork,
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

Whence came she? One that bare in bitter grudge
The scorn of Arthur and his Table,
Mark
The Cornish King, had heard a wandering voice,
A minstrel of Caerleon by strong storm
Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say
That out of naked knightlike purity
Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried girl

But the great Queen herself, fought
 in her name,
 Sware by her — vows like theirs, that
 high in heaven
 Love most, but neither marry, nor are
 given
 In marriage, angels of our Lord's re-
 port.

He ceased, and then — for Vivien
 sweetly said
 (She sat beside the banquet nearest
 Mark),
 "And is the fair example follow'd,
 Sir,
 In Arthur's household?" — answer'd
 innocently:

"Ay, by some few — ay, truly —
 youths that hold
 It more beseems the perfect virgin
 knight
 To worship woman as true wife be-
 yond
 All hopes of gaining, than as maiden
 girl.
 They place their pride in Lancelot and
 the Queen.
 So passionate for an utter purity
 Beyond the limit of their bond, are
 these,
 For Arthur bound them not to single-
 ness.
 Brave hearts and clean! and yet —
 God guide them — young."

Then Mark was half in heart to
 hurl his cup
 Straight at the speaker, but forbore:
 he rose
 To leave the hall, and, Vivien follow-
 ing him,
 Turn'd to her: "Here are snakes
 within the grass;
 And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye
 fear
 The monkish manhood, and the mask
 of pure
 Worn by this court, can stir them till
 they sting."

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-
 fully,
 "Why fear? because that foster'd at
 thy court
 I savor of thy — virtues? fear them?
 no.
 As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out
 fear,
 So Hate, if Hate be perfect, casts out
 fear.
 My father died in battle against the
 King,
 My mother on his corpse in open field;
 She bore me there, for born from
 death was I
 Among the dead and sown upon the
 wind —
 And then on thee! and shown the
 truth betimes,
 That old true filth, and bottom of the
 well,
 Where Truth is hidden. Gracious
 lessons thine
 And maxims of the mud! 'This
 Arthur pure!
 Great Nature thro' the flesh herself
 hath made
 Gives him the lie! There is no being
 pure,
 My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the
 same?' —
 If I were Arthur, I would have thy
 blood.
 Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring
 thee back,
 When I have ferreted out their bur-
 rowings,
 The hearts of all this Order in mine
 hand —
 Ay — so that fate and craft and folly
 close,
 Perchance, one curl of Arthur's
 golden beard.
 To me this narrow grizzled fork of
 thine
 Is cleaner-fashion'd — Well, I loved
 thee first,
 That warps the wit."

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.
 But Vivien into Camelot stealing,
 lodged

Low in the city, and on a festal day
 When Guinevere was crossing the
 great hall
 Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,
 and wail'd.

“Why kneel ye there? What evil
 have ye wrought?
 Rise!” and the damsel bidden rise
 arose
 And stood with folded hands and
 downward eyes
 Of glancing corner, and all meekly
 said,
 “None wrought, but suffer'd much,
 an orphan maid!
 My father died in battle for thy King,
 My mother on his corpse—in open
 field,
 The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyon-
 esse—
 Poor wretch—no friend!—and now
 by Mark the King
 For that small charm of feature mine,
 pursued—
 If any such be mine—I fly to thee.
 Save, save me thou—Woman of
 women—thine
 The wreath of beauty, thine the crown
 of power,
 Be thine the balm of pity, O Heaven's
 own white
 Earth-angel, stainless bride of stain-
 less King—
 Help, for he follows! take me to thy-
 self!
 O yield me shelter for mine innocency
 Among thy maidens!”

Here her slow sweet eyes
 Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful,
 rose
 Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen
 who stood
 All glittering like May sunshine on
 May leaves
 In green and gold, and plumed with
 green replied,
 “Peace, child! of overpraise and over-
 blame
 We choose the last. Our noble
 Arthur, him

Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear
 and know.

Nay—we believe all evil of thy
 Mark—

Well, we shall test thee farther; but
 this hour

We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.
 He hath given us a fair falcon which
 he train'd;

We go to prove it. Bide ye here the
 while.”

She past; and Vivien murmur'd
 after “Go!

I bide the while.” Then thro' the
 portal-arch

Peering askance, and muttering
 broken-wise,

As one that labors with an evil dream,
 Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to
 horse.

“Is that the Lancelot? goodly—
 ay, but gaunt:

Courteous—amends for gauntness—
 takes her hand—

That glance of theirs, but for the
 street, had been

A clinging kiss—how hand lingers
 in hand!

Let go at last!—they ride away—
 to hawk

For waterfowl. Royaller game is
 mine.

For such a supersensual sensual bond
 As that gray cricket chirpt of at our
 hearth—

Touch flax with flame—a glance wil^d
 serve—the liars!

Ah little rat that borest in the dyke
 Thy hole by night to let the boundless
 deep

Down upon far-off cities while they
 dance—

Or dream—of thee they dream'd not
 —nor of me

These—ay, but each of either: ride,
 and dream

The mortal dream that never yet was
 mine—

Ride, ride and dream until ye wake—
 to me!

Then, narrow court and lubber King,
farewell!
For Lancelot will be gracious to the
rat,
And our wise Queen, if knowing that
I know,
Will hate, loathe, fear — but honor
me the more."

Yet while they rode together down
the plain,
Their talk was all of training, terms
of art,
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.
"She is too noble" he said "to check
at pies,
Nor will she rake: there is no base-
ness in her."
Here when the Queen demanded as by
chance
"Know ye the stranger woman?"
"Let her be,"
Said Lancelot and unhooded casting
off
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd;
her bells,
Tone under tone, shrill'd; and they
lifted up
Their eager faces, wondering at the
strength,
Boldness and royal knighthood of the
bird
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.
Many a time
As once — of old — among the flowers
— they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the
Queen
Among her damsels broidering sat,
heard, watch'd
And whisper'd: thro' the peaceful
court she crept
And whisper'd: then as Arthur in the
highest
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the
lowest,
Arriving at a time of golden rest,
And sowing one ill hint from ear to
ear,
While all the heathen lay at Arthur's
feet,

And no quest came, but all was joust
and play,
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and
let her be.

Thereafter as an enemy that has left
Death in the living waters, and with-
drawn,
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's
court.

She hated all the knights, and heard
in thought
Their lavish comment when her name
was named.
For once, when Arthur walking all
alone,
Vext at a rumor issued from herself
Of some corruption crept among his
knights,
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted
fair,
Would fain have wrought upon his
cloudy mood
With reverent eyes mock-loyal,
shaken voice,
And flutter'd adoration, and at last
With dark sweet hints of some who
prized him more
Than who should prize him most; at
which the King
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone
by:
But one had watch'd, and had not held
his peace:
It made the laughter of an afternoon
That Vivien should attempt the
blameless King.
And after that, she set herself to gain
Him, the most famous man of all
those times,
Merlin, who knew the range of all
their arts,
Had built the King his havens, ships,
and halls,
Was also Bard, and knew the starry
heavens;
The people call'd him Wizard; whom
at first
She play'd about with slight and
sprightly talk,

And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd
 points
 Of slander, glancing here and grazing
 there ;
 And yielding to his kindlier moods,
 the Seer
 Would watch her at her petulance,
 and play,
 Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable,
 and laugh
 As those that watch a kitten ; thus he
 grew
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,
 and she,
 Perceiving that she was but half dis-
 dain'd,
 Began to break her sports with graver
 fits,
 Turn red or pale, would often when
 they met
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him
 With such a fixt devotion, that the old
 man,
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at
 times
 Would flatter his own wish in age for
 love,
 And half believe her true : for thus at
 times
 He waver'd ; but that other clung to
 him,
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons
 went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melan-
 choly ;
 He walk'd with dreams and darkness,
 and he found
 A doom that ever poised itself to fall,
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist,
 World-war of dying flesh against the
 life,
 Death in all life and lying in all love,
 The meanest having power upon the
 highest,
 And the high purpose broken by the
 worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd
 the beach ;
 There found a little boat, and stept
 into it ;

And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd
 her not.
 She took the helm and he the sail ;
 the boat
 Drave with a sudden wind across the
 deeps,
 And touching Breton sands, they dis-
 embark'd.
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the
 way,
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.
 For Merlin once had told her of a
 charm,
 The which if any wrought on anyone
 With woven paces and with waving
 arms,
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd
 to lie
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow
 tower,
 From which was no escape for ever-
 more ;
 And none could find that man for
 evermore,
 Nor could he see but him who wrought
 the charm
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead
 And lost to life and use and name
 and fame.
 And Vivien ever sought to work the
 charm
 Upon the great Enchanter of the
 Time,
 As fancying that her glory would be
 great
 According to his greatness whom she
 quench'd.

There lay she all her length and
 kiss'd his feet,
 As if in deepest reverence and in love.
 A twist of gold was round her hair ; a
 robe
 Of samite without price, that more
 exprest
 Than hid her, clung about her lissome
 limbs,
 In color like the satin-shining palm
 On shallows in the windy gleams of
 March :
 And while she kiss'd them, crying,
 " Trample me,

Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro'
 the world,
 And I will pay you worship; tread
 me down
 And I will kiss you for it;" he was
 mute:
 So dark a forethought roll'd about his
 brain,
 As on a dull day in an Ocean cave
 The blind wave feeling round his long
 sea-hall
 In silence: wherefore, when she lifted
 up
 A face of sad appeal, and spake and
 said,
 "O Merlin, do ye love me?" and
 again,
 "O Merlin, do ye love me?" and once
 more,
 "Great Master, do ye love me?" he
 was mute.
 And lissome Vivien, holding by his
 heel,
 Writhed toward him, slid up his
 knee and sat,
 Behind his ankle twined her hollow
 feet
 Together, curved an arm about his
 neck,
 Clung like a snake; and letting her
 left hand
 Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a
 leaf,
 Made with her right a comb of pearl
 to part
 The lists of such a beard as youth gone
 out
 Had left in ashes: then he spoke and
 said,
 Not looking at her, "Who are wise in
 love
 Love most, say least," and Vivien
 answer'd quick,
 "I saw the little elf-god eyeless once
 In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot:
 But neither eyes nor tongue—O
 stupid child!
 Yet you are wise who say it; let me
 think
 Silence is wisdom: I am silent then,
 And ask no kiss;" then adding all at
 once,

"And lo, I clothe myself with wis-
 dom," drew
 The vast and shaggy mantle of his
 beard
 Across her neck and bosom to her
 knee,
 And call'd herself a gilded summer fly
 Caught in a great old tyrant spider's
 web,
 Who meant to eat her up in that wild
 wood
 Without one word. So Vivien call'd
 herself,
 But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star
 Veil'd in gray vapor; till he sadly
 smiled:
 "To what request for what strange
 boon," he said,
 "Are these your pretty tricks and
 fooleries,
 O Vivien, the preamble? yet my
 thanks,
 For these have broken up my melan-
 choly."

And Vivien answer'd smiling sau-
 cily,
 "What, O my Master, have ye found
 your voice?
 I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks
 at last!
 But yesterday you never open'd lip,
 Except indeed to drink: no cup had
 we:
 In mine own lady palms I cull'd the
 spring
 That gather'd trickling dropwise from
 the cleft,
 And made a pretty cup of both my
 hands
 And offer'd you it kneeling: then you
 drank
 And knew no more, nor gave me one
 poor word;
 O no more thanks than might a goat
 have given
 With no more sign of reverence than
 a beard.
 And when we halted at that other
 well,
 And I was faint to swooning, and you
 lay

Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of those
 Deep meadows we had traversed, did you know
 That Vivien bathed your feet before her own?
 And yet no thanks: and all thro' this wild wood
 And all this morning when I fondled you:
 Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not so strange—
 How had I wrong'd you? surely ye are wise,
 But such a silence is more wise than kind."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and said:
 "O did ye never lie upon the shore,
 And watch the curl'd white of the coming wave
 Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks?
 Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasurable,
 Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,
 Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.
 And then I rose and fled from Arthur's court
 To break the mood. You follow'd me unask'd;
 And when I look'd, and saw you following still,
 My mind involved yourself the nearest thing
 In that mind-mist: for shall I tell you truth?
 You seem'd that wave about to break upon me
 And sweep me from my hold upon the world,
 My use and name and fame. Your pardon, child.
 Your pretty sports have brighten'd all again.
 And ask your boon, for boon I owe you thrice,
 Once for wrong done you by confusion,
 next

For thanks it seems till now neglected,
 last
 For these your dainty gambols:
 wherefore ask;
 And take this boon so strange and not so strange."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully:
 "O not so strange as my long asking it,
 Not yet so strange as you yourself are strange,
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood of yours.
 I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine;
 And see, yourself have own'd ye did me wrong.
 The people call you prophet: let it be:
 But not of those that can expound themselves.
 Take Vivien for expounder; she will call
 That three-days-long presageful gloom of yours
 No presage, but the same mistrustful mood
 That makes you seem less noble than yourself,
 Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,
 Now ask'd again: for see you not, dear love,
 That such a mood as that, which lately gloom'd
 Your fancy when ye saw me following you,
 Must make me fear still more you are not mine,
 Must make me yearn still more to prove you mine,
 And make me wish still more to learn this charm
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,
 As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me.
 The charm so taught will charm us both to rest.
 For, grant me some slight power upon your fate,

I, feeling that you felt me worthy
 trust,
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing
 you mine.
 And therefore be as great as ye are
 named,
 Not muffled round with selfish reti-
 cence.
 How hard you look and how deny-
 ingly!
 O, if you think this wickedness in me,
 That I should prove it on you un-
 awares,
 That makes me passing wrathful; then
 our bond
 Had best be loosed for ever: but
 think or not,
 By Heaven that hears I tell you the
 clean truth,
 As clean as blood of babes, as white
 as milk;
 O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,
 If these unwitty wandering wits of
 mine,
 Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a
 dream,
 Have tript on such conjectural treach-
 ery —
 May this hard earth cleave to the
 Nadir hell
 Down, down, and close again, and nip
 me flat,
 If I be such a traitress. Yield my
 boon,
 Till which I scarce can yield you all
 I am;
 And grant my re-reiterated wish,
 The great proof of your love: because
 I think,
 However wise, ye hardly know me
 yet."

And Merlin loosed his hand from
 hers and said,
 "I never was less wise, however wise,
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of
 trust,
 Than when I told you first of such a
 charm.
 Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,
 Too much I trusted when I told you
 that,

And stirr'd this vice in you which
 ruin'd man
 Thro' woman the first hour; for
 howsoe'er
 In children a great curiousness be
 well,
 Who have to learn themselves and all
 the world,
 In you, that are no child, for still I
 find
 Your face is practised when I spell
 the lines,
 I call it, — well, I will not call it vice:
 But since you name yourself the
 summer fly,
 I well could wish a cobweb for the
 gnat,
 That settles, beaten back, and beaten
 back
 Settles, till one could yield for wear-
 ness:
 But since I will not yield to give you
 power
 Upon my life and use and name and
 fame,
 Why will ye never ask some other
 boon?
 Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too
 much."

And Vivien, like the tenderest-
 hearted maid
 That ever bided tryst at village stile,
 Made answer, either eyelid wet with
 tears:
 "Nay, Master, be not wrathful with
 your maid;
 Caress her: let her feel herself for-
 given
 Who feels no heart to ask another
 boon.
 I think ye hardly know the tender
 rhyme
 Of 'trust me not at all or all in all.'
 I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it
 once,
 And it shall answer for me. Listen
 to it.

'In Love, if Love be Love, if Love
 be ours,

Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal
powers :
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in
all.

' It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music
mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.

' The little rift within the lover's
lute
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
That rotting inward slowly moulders
all.

' It is not worth the keeping: let it
go :
But shall it? answer, darling, answer,
no.
And trust me not at all or all in all.'

O Master, do ye love my tender
rhyme? "

And Merlin look'd and half believed
her true,
So tender was her voice, so fair her
face,
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind
her tears
Like sunlight on the plain behind a
shower :
And yet he answer'd half indignantly :

" Far other was the song that once
I heard
By this huge oak, sung nearly where
we sit :
For here we met, some ten or twelve
of us,
To chase a creature that was current
then
In these wild woods, the hart with
golden horns.
It was the time when first the ques-
tion rose
About the founding of a Table Round,
That was to be, for love of God and
men
And noble deeds, the flower of all the
world.

And each incited each to noble deeds.
And while we waited, one, the young-
est of us,
We could not keep him silent, out he
flash'd,
And into such a song, such fire for
fame,
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming
down
To such a stern and iron-clashing
close,
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl
together,
And should have done it; but the
beauteous beast
Scared by the noise upstarted at our
feet,
And like a silver shadow slipt away
Thro' the dim land; and all day long
we rode
Thro' the dim land against a rushing
wind,
That glorious roundel echoing in our
ears,
And chased the flashes of his golden
horns
Until they vanish'd by the fairy well
That laughs at iron — as our warriors
did —
Where children cast their pins and
nails, and cry,
' Laugh, little well!' but touch it with
a sword,
It buzzes fiercely round the point; and
there
We lost him: such a noble song was
that.
But, Vivien, when you sang me that
sweet rhyme,
I felt as tho' you knew this cursed
charm,
Were proving it on me, and that I
lay
And felt them slowly ebbing, name
and fame."

And Vivien answer'd smiling
mournfully :
" O mine have ebb'd away for ever-
more,
And all thro' following you to this
wild wood,

Because I saw you sad, to comfort
you.

Lo now, what hearts have men! they
never mount

As high as woman in her selfless
mood.

And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn
my song,

Take one verse more — the lady
speaks it — this :

“ My name, once mine, now thine,
is closelier mine,

For fame, could fame be mine, that
fame were thine,

And shame, could shame be thine,
that shame were mine.

So trust me not at all or all in all.’

“ Says she not well ? and there is
more — this rhyme

Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the
Queen,

That burst in dancing, and the pearls
were spilt ;

Some lost, some stolen, some as relics
kept.

But nevermore the same two sister
pearls

Ran down the silken thread to kiss
each other

On her white neck — so is it with this
rhyme :

It lives dispersedly in many hands,
And every minstrel sings it differ-
ently ;

Yet is there one true line, the pearl of
pearls :

‘ Man dreams of Fame while woman
wakes to love.’

Yea ! Love, tho’ Love were of the
grossest, carves

A portion from the solid present, eats
And uses, careless of the rest ; but
Fame,

The Fame that follows death is noth-
ing to us ;

And what is Fame in life but half-
disfame ;

And counterchanged with darkness ?
ye yourself

Know well that Envy calls you Devil’s
son,

And since ye seem the Master of all
Art,

They fain would make you Master of
all vice.”

And Merlin lock’d his hand in hers
and said,

“ I once was looking for a magic weed,
And found a fair young squire who
sat alone,

Had carved himself a knightly shield
of wood,

And then was painting on it fancied
arms,

Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun
In dexter chief ; the scroll ‘ I follow
fame.’

And speaking not, but leaning over
him,

I took his brush and blotted out the
bird,

And made a Gardener putting in
graff,

With this for motto, ‘ Rather use than
fame.’

You should have seen him blush ; but
afterwards

He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,
For you, methinks you think you love
me well ;

For me, I love you somewhat ; rest :

and Love

Should have some rest and pleasure
in himself,

Not ever be too curious for a boon,
Too prurient for a proof against the
grain

Of him ye say ye love : but Fame with
men,

Being but ampler means to serve
mankind,

Should have small rest or pleasure in
herself,

But work as vassal to the larger love,
That dwarfs the petty love of one to
one.

Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame
again

Increasing gave me use. Lo, there
my boon !

What other ? for men sought to prove
 me vile,
 Because I fain had given them greater
 wits :
 And then did Envy call me Devil's
 son :
 The sick weak beast seeking to help
 herself
 By striking at her better miss'd, and
 brought
 Her own claw back, and wounded her
 own heart.
 Sweet were the days when I was all
 unknown,
 But when my name was lifted up, the
 storm
 Brake on the mountain and I cared
 not for it.
 Right well know I that Fame is half-
 disface,
 Yet needs must work my work. That
 other fame,
 To one at least, who hath not children,
 vague,
 The cackle of the unborn about the
 grave,
 I cared not for it : a single misty star,
 Which is the second in a line of stars
 That seem a sword beneath a belt of
 three,
 I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
 Of some vast charm concluded in that
 star
 To make fame nothing. Wherefore,
 if I fear,
 Giving you power upon me thro' this
 charm,
 That you might play me falsely, hav-
 ing power,
 However well ye think ye love me now
 (As sons of kings loving in pupilage
 Have turn'd to tyrants when they
 came to power)
 I rather dread the loss of use than
 fame ;
 If you — and not so much from
 wickedness,
 As some wild turn of anger, or a mood
 Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,
 To keep me all to your own self, — or
 else
 A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy, —

Should try this charm on whom ye say
 ye love."

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in
 wrath :
 "Have I not sworn ? I am not trusted.
 Good !
 Well, hide it, hide it ; I shall find it
 out ;
 And being found take heed of Vivien.
 A woman and not trusted, doubtless I
 Might feel some sudden turn of anger
 born
 Of your misfaith ; and your fine
 epithet
 Is accurate too, for this full love of
 mine
 Without the full heart back may
 merit well
 Your term of overstrain'd. So used
 as I,
 My daily wonder is, I love at all.
 And as to woman's jealousy, O why
 not ?
 O to what end, except a jealous one,
 And one to make me jealous if I love,
 Was this fair charm invented by your-
 self ?
 I well believe that all about this world
 Ye cage a buxom captive here and
 there,
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow
 tower
 From which is no escape for ever-
 more."

Then the great Master merrily an-
 swer'd her :
 "Full many a love in loving youth
 was mine ;
 I needed then no charm to keep them
 mine
 But youth and love ; and that full
 heart of yours
 Whereof ye prattle, may now assure
 you mine ;
 So live uncharm'd. For those who
 wrought it first,
 The wrist is parted from the hand
 that waved,
 The feet unmortised from their ankle-
 bones

Who paced it, ages back: but will ye
hear

The legend as in guerdon for your
rhyme?

“There lived a king in the most
Eastern East,

Less old than I, yet older, for my
blood

Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,

Whose bark had plunder'd twenty
nameless isles;

And passing one, at the high peep of
dawn,

He saw two cities in a thousand boats
All fighting for a woman on the sea.

And pushing his black craft among
them all,

He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought
her off,

With loss of half his people arrow-
slain;

A maid so smooth, so white, so won-
derful,

They said a light came from her when
she moved:

And since the pirate would not yield
her up,

The King impaled him for his piracy;
Then made her Queen: but those isle-
nurtured eyes

Waged such unwilling tho' successful
war

On all the youth, they sicken'd; coun-
cils thinn'd,

And armies waned, for magnet-like
she drew

The rustiest iron of old fighters'
hearts;

And beasts themselves would worship;
camels knelt

Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain
back

That carry kings in castles, bow'd
black knees

Of homage, ringing with their serpent
hands,

To make her smile, her golden ankle-
bells.

What wonder, being jealous, that he
sent

His horns of proclamation out thro'
all

The hundred under-kingdoms that he
sway'd

To find a wizard who might teach the
King

Some charm, which being wrought
upon the Queen

Might keep her all his own: to such a
one

He promised more than ever king has
given,

A league of mountain full of golden
mines,

A province with a hundred miles of
coast,

A palace and a princess, all for
him:

But on all those who tried and fail'd,
the King

Pronounced a dismal sentence, mean-
ing by it

To keep the list low and pretenders
back,

Or like a king, not to be trifled with—
Their heads should moulder on the
city gates.

And many tried and fail'd, because
the charm

Of nature in her overbore their own:
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on
the walls:

And many weeks a troop of carrion
crows

Hung like a cloud above the gateway
towers.”

And Vivien breaking in upon him,
said:

“I sit and gather honey; yet, me-
thinks,

Thy tongue has tript a little: ask thy-
self.

The lady never made *unwilling* war
With those fine eyes: she had her
pleasure in it,

And made her good man jealous with
good cause.

And lived there neither dame nor
damsel then

Wroth at a lover's loss? were all as
tame,

I mean, as noble, as their Queen was
fair?
Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,
Or pinch a murderous dust into her
drink,
Or make her paler with a poison'd
rose?
Well, those were not our days: but
did they find
A wizard? Tell me, was he like to
thee?"

She ceased, and made her lithe arm
round his neck
Tighten, and then drew back, and let
her eyes
Speak for her, glowing on him, like a
bride's
On her new lord, her own, the first of
men.

He answer'd laughing, "Nay, not
like to me.
At last they found — his foragers for
charms —
A little glassy-headed hairless man,
Who lived alone in a great wild on
grass;
Read but one book, and ever reading
grew
So grated down and filed away with
thought,
So lean his eyes were monstrous;
while the skin
Clung but to crate and basket, ribs
and spine.
And since he kept his mind on one
sole aim,
Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted
flesh,
Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the
wall
That sunders ghosts and shadow-cast-
ing men
Became a crystal, and he saw them
thro' it,
And heard their voices talk behind
the wall,
And learnt their elemental secrets,
powers
And forces; often o'er the sun's bright
eye

Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,
And lash'd it at the base with slanting
storm;
Or in the noon of mist and driving
rain,
When the lake whiten'd and the pine-
wood roar'd,
And the cairn'd mountain was a
shadow, sunn'd
The world to peace again: here was
the man.
And so by force they dragg'd him to
the King.
And then he taught the King to
charm the Queen
In such-wise, that no man could see
her more,
Nor saw she save the King, who
wrought the charm,
Coming and going, and she lay as
dead,
And lost all use of life: but when the
King
Made proffer of the league of golden
mines,
The province with a hundred miles of
coast,
The palace and the princess, that old
man
Went back to his old wild, and lived
on grass,
And vanish'd, and his book came
down to me."

And Vivien answer'd smiling sau-
cily:
"Ye have the book: the charm is
written in it:
Good: take my counsel: let me know
it at once:
For keep it like a puzzle chest in
chest,
With each chest lock'd and padlock'd
thirty-fold,
And whelm all this beneath as vast a
mound
As after furious battle turfs the
slain
On some wild down above the windy
deep,
I yet should strike upon a sudden
means

To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm:
Then, if I tried it, who should blame me then?"

And smiling as a master smiles at one
That is not of his school, nor any school
But that where blind and naked Ignorance
Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,
On all things all day long, he answer'd her:

"Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!
O ay, it is but twenty pages long,
But every page having an ample marge,
And every marge enclosing in the midst
A square of text that looks a little blot,
The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;
And every square of text an awful charm,
Writ in a language that has long gone by.
So long, that mountains have arisen since
With cities on their flanks — thou read the book!
And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm'd
With comment, densest condensation, hard
To mind and eye; but the long sleepless nights
Of my long life have made it easy to me.
And none can read the text, not even I;
And none can read the comment but myself;
And in the comment did I find the charm.
O, the results are simple; a mere child
Might use it to the harm of any one,

And never could undo it: ask no more:
For tho' you should not prove it upon me,
But keep that oath ye sware, ye might, perchance,
Assay it on some one of the Table Round,
And all because ye dream they babble of you."

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said:
"What dare the full-fed liars say of me?
They ride abroad redressing human wrongs!
They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn!
They bound to holy vows of chastity!
Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.
But you are man, you well can understand
The shame that cannot be explain'd for shame.
Not one of all the drove should touch me: swine!"

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her words:
"You breathe but accusation vast and vague,
Spleen-born, I think, and proofless.
If ye know,
Set up the charge ye know, to stand or fall!"

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrathfully:
"O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his wife
And two fair babes, and went to distant lands;
Was one year gone, and on returning found
Not two but three? there lay the reckling, one
But one hour old! What said the happy sire?"

A seven-months' babe had been a truer gift.
Those twelve sweet moons confused his fatherhood."

Then answer'd Merlin, "Nay, I know the tale.
Sir Valence wedded with an outland dame :
Some cause had kept him sunder'd from his wife :
One child they had : it lived with her : she died :
His kinsman travelling on his own affair
Was charged by Valence to bring home the child.
He brought, not found it therefore : take the truth."

"O ay," said Vivien, "overtrue a tale.
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagramore,
That ardent man ? 'to pluck the flower in season,'
So says the song, 'I trow it is no treason.'
O Master, shall we call him overquick
To crop his own sweet rose before the hour ?"

And Merlin answer'd, "Overquick art thou
To catch a loathly plume fall'n from the wing
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey
Is man's good name : he never wrong'd his bride.
I know the tale. An angry gust of wind
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-room'd
And many-corridor'd complexities
Of Arthur's palace : then he found a door,
And darkling felt the sculptured ornament
That wreathen round it made it seem his own ;

And wearied out made for the couch and slept,
A stainless man beside a stainless maid ;
And either slept, nor knew of other there ;
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely down,
Blushing upon them blushing, and at once
He rose without a word and parted from her :
But when the thing was blazed about the court,
The brute world howling forced them into bonds,
And as it chanced they are happy, being pure."

"O ay," said Vivien, "that were likely too.
What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ,
Or some black wether of St. Satan's fold.
What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead !"

And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge,
"A sober man is Percivale and pure ;
But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard ;
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught
And meant to stamp him with her master's mark ;
And that he sinn'd is not believable ;
For, look upon his face ! — but if he sinn'd,

The sin that practice burns into the
 blood,
 And not the one dark hour which
 brings remorse,
 Will brand us, after, of whose fold we
 be:
 Or else were he, the holy king, whose
 hymns
 Are chanted in the minster, worse
 than all.
 But is your spleen froth'd out, or have
 ye more ? ”

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet
 in wrath :
 “ O ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot,
 friend
 Traitor or true ? that commerce with
 the Queen,
 I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,
 Or whisper'd in the corner ? do ye
 know it ? ”

To which he answer'd sadly, “ Yea,
 I know it.
 Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at
 first,
 To fetch her, and she watch'd him
 from her walls.
 A rumor runs, she took him for the
 King,
 So fixt her fancy on him : let them be.
 But have ye no one word of loyal
 praise
 For Arthur, blameless King and stain-
 less man ? ”

She answer'd with a low and chuck-
 ling laugh :
 “ Man ! is he man at all, who knows
 and winks ?
 Sees what his fair bride is and does,
 and winks ?
 By which the good King means to
 blind himself,
 And blinds himself and all the Table
 Round
 To all the foulness that they work.
 Myself
 Could call him (were it not for
 womanhood)

The pretty, popular name such man-
 hood earns,
 Could call him the main cause of all
 their crime ;
 Yea, were he not crown'd King,
 coward, and fool.”

Then Merlin to his own heart,
 loathing, said :
 “ O true and tender ! O my liege and
 King !
 O selfless man and stainless gentle-
 man,
 Who wouldst against thine own eye-
 witness fain
 Have all men true and leal, all women
 pure ;
 How, in the mouths of base inter-
 preters,
 From over-fineness not intelligible
 To things with every sense as false
 and foul
 As the poach'd filth that floods the
 middle street,
 Is thy white blamelessness accounted
 blame ! ”

But Vivien, deeming Merlin over-
 borne
 By instance, recommenced, and let
 her tongue
 Rage like a fire among the noblest
 names,
 Polluting, and imputing her whole
 self,
 Defaming and defacing, till she left
 Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad
 clean.

Her words had issue other than she
 will'd.
 He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down,
 and made
 A snowy penthouse for his hollow
 eyes,
 And mutter'd in himself, “ Tell *her* the
 charm !
 So, if she had it, would she rail on me
 To snare the next, and if she have it
 not
 So will she rail. What did the wan-
 ton say ?

'Not mount as high;' we scarce can
 sink as low:
 For men at most differ as Heaven and
 earth,
 But women, worst and best, as Heaven
 and Hell.
 I know the Table Round, my friends
 of old;
 All brave, and many generous, and
 some chaste.
 She cloaks the scar of some repulse
 with lies;
 I well believe she tempted them and
 fail'd,
 Being so bitter: for fine plots may
 fail,
 Tho' harlots paint their talk as well
 as face
 With colors of the heart that are not
 theirs.
 I will not let her know: nine tithes of
 times
 Face-flatterer and backbiter are the
 same.
 And they, sweet soul, that most im-
 pute a crime
 Are pronest to it, and impute them-
 selves,
 Wanting the mental range; or low
 desire
 Not to feel lowest makes them level
 all;
 Yea, they would pare the mountain
 to the plain,
 To leave an equal baseness; and in
 this
 Are harlots like the crowd, that if
 they find
 Some stain or blemish in a name of
 note,
 Not grieving that their greatest are so
 small,
 Inflate themselves with some insane
 delight,
 And judge all nature from her feet of
 clay,
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and
 see
 Her godlike head crown'd with spir-
 itual fire,
 And touching other worlds. I am
 weary of her."

He spoke in words part heard, in
 whispers part,
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat
 and chin.
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of
 his mood,
 And hearing "harlot" mutter'd twice
 or thrice,
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and
 stood
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome
 sight,
 How from the rosy lips of life and
 love,
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of
 death!
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths
 of anger puff'd
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-
 clench'd
 Went faltering sideways downward to
 her belt,
 And feeling; had she found a dagger
 there
 (For in a wink the false love turns
 to hate)
 She would have stabb'd him; but she
 found it not:
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she
 took
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.
 Then her false voice made way, broken
 with sobs:

"O crueller than was ever told in
 tale,
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd
 love!
 O cruel, there was nothing wild or
 strange,
 Or seeming shameful — for what
 shame in love,
 So love be true, and not as yours is —
 nothing
 Poor Vivien had not done to win his
 trust
 Who call'd her what he call'd her —
 all her crime,
 All — all — the wish to prove him
 wholly hers."

She mused a little, and then clapt
 her hands
 Together with a wailing shriek, and
 said:
 "Stabb'd through the heart's affec-
 tions to the heart!
 Seethed like the kid in its own mother's
 milk!
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life
 of blows!
 I thought that he was gentle, being
 great:
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man!
 I should have found in him a greater
 heart.
 O, I, that flattering my true passion,
 saw
 The knights, the court, the King, dark
 in your light,
 Who loved to make men darker than
 they are,
 Because of that high pleasure which
 I had
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal
 Of worship—I am answer'd, and
 henceforth
 The course of life that seem'd so
 flowery to me
 With you for guide and master, only
 you,
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken
 short,
 And ending in a ruin—nothing left,
 But into some low cave to crawl, and
 there,
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life
 away,
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindness."

She paused, she turn'd away, she
 hung her head,
 The snake of gold slid from her hair,
 the braid
 Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept
 afresh,
 And the dark wood grew darker
 toward the storm
 In silence, while his anger slowly died
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go
 For ease of heart, and half believed
 her true:
 Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,

"Come from the storm," and having
 no reply,
 Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and
 the face
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or
 shame;
 Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-
 touching terms,
 To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in
 vain.
 At last she let herself be conquer'd by
 him,
 And as the cageling newly flown re-
 turns,
 The seeming-injured, simple-hearted
 thing
 Came to her old perch back, and set-
 tled there.
 There while she sat, half-falling from
 his knees,
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since he
 saw
 The slow tear creep from her closed
 eye-lid yet,
 About her, more in kindness than in
 love,
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding
 arm.
 But she dislink'd herself at once and
 rose,
 Her arms upon her breast across, and
 stood,
 A virtuous gentlewoman deeply
 wrong'd,
 Upright and flush'd before him: then
 she said:

"There must be now no passages of
 love
 Betwixt us twain henceforward ever-
 more;
 Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,
 What should be granted which your
 own gross heart
 Would reckon worth the taking? I
 will go.
 In truth, but one thing now—better
 have died
 Thrice than have ask'd it once—could
 make me stay—
 That proof of trust—so often ask'd
 in vain!

How justly, after that vile term of
yours,
I find with grief! I might believe you
then,
Who knows? once more. Lo! what
was once to me
Mere matter of the fancy, now hath
grown
The vast necessity of heart and life.
Farewell; think gently of me, for I
fear
My fate or folly, passing gayer youth
For one so old, must be to love thee
still.
But ere I leave thee let me swear once
more
That if I schemed against thy peace
in this,
May you just heaven, that darkens
o'er me, send
One flash, that, missing all things else,
may make
My scheming brain a cinder, if I
lie."

Scarce had she ceased, when out of
heaven a bolt
(For now the storm was close above
them) struck,
Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining
With darted spikes and splinters of
the wood
The dark earth round. He raised his
eyes and saw
The tree that shone white-listed thro'
the gloom.
But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard
her oath,
And dazzled by the livid-flickering
fork,
And deafen'd with the stammering
cracks and claps
That follow'd, flying back and crying
out,
"O Merlin, tho' you do not love me,
save,
Yet save me!" clung to him and
hugg'd him close;
And call'd him dear protector in her
fright,
Nor yet forgot her practice in her
fright,

But wrought upon his mood and
hugg'd him close.
The pale blood of the wizard at her
touch
Took gayer colors, like an opal
warm'd.
She blamed herself for telling hearsay
tales:
She shook from fear, and for her fault
she wept
Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and
liege,
Her seer, her bard, her silver star of
eve,
Her God, her Merlin, the one passion-
ate love
Of her whole life; and ever overhead
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten
branch
Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain
Above them; and in change of glare
and gloom
Her eyes and neck glittering went and
came;
Till now the storm, its burst of passion
spent,
Moaning and calling out of other
lands,
Had left the ravaged woodland yet
once more
To peace; and what should not have
been had been,
For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,
Had yielded, told her all the charm,
and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth
the charm
Of woven paces and of waving hands,
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
And lost to life and use and name and
fame.

Then crying "I have made his glory
mine,"
And shrieking out "O fool!" the har-
lot leapt
Adown the forest, and the thicket
closed
Behind her, and the forest echo'd
"fool."

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
 High in her chamber up a tower to
 the east
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lance-
 lot;
 Which first she placed where morn-
 ing's earliest ray
 Might strike it, and awake her with
 the gleam;
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd
 for it
 A case of silk, and braided thereupon
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield
 In their own tinct, and added, of her
 wit,
 A border fantasy of branch and flower,
 And yellow-throated nestling in the
 nest.
 Nor rested thus content, but day by
 day,
 Leaving her household and good
 father, climb'd
 That eastern tower, and entering
 barr'd her door,
 Stript off the case, and read the naked
 shield,
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his
 arms,
 Now made a pretty history to herself
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in
 it,
 And every scratch a lance had made
 upon it,
 Conjecturing when and where: this
 cut is fresh;
 That ten years back; this dealt him
 at Caerlyle;
 That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
 And ah God's mercy, what a stroke
 was there!
 And here a thrust that might have
 kill'd, but God
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his
 enemy down,
 And saved him: so she lived in fan-
 tasy.

How came the lily maid by that
 good shield

Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n
 his name?
 He left it with her, when he rode to
 tilt
 For the great diamond in the diamond
 jousts,
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by
 that name
 Had named them, since a diamond
 was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they
 crown'd him King,
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyon-
 nesse,
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and
 black tarn.
 A horror lived about the tarn, and
 clave
 Like its own mists to all the mountain
 side:
 For here two brothers, one a king,
 had met
 And fought together; but their names
 were lost;
 And each had slain his brother at a
 blow;
 And down they fell and made the glen
 abhorr'd:
 And there they lay till all their bones
 were bleach'd,
 And lichen'd into color with the crags:
 And he, that once was king, had on a
 crown
 Of diamonds, one in front, and four
 aside.
 And Arthur came, and laboring up the
 pass,
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton,
 and the skull
 Brake from the nape, and from the
 skull the crown
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its
 rims
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the
 tarn:
 And down the slingly scaur he
 plunged, and caught,
 And set it on his head, and in his heart
 Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise
 shalt be King."

Thereafter, when a King, he had the
 gems
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd
 them to his knights,
 Saying "These jewels, whereupon I
 chanced
 Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the
 King's —
 For public use: henceforward let
 there be,
 Once every year, a joust for one of
 these:
 For so by nine years' proof we needs
 must learn
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves
 shall grow
 In use of arms and manhood, till we
 drive
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule
 the land
 Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus
 he spoke:
 And eight years past, eight jousts had
 been, and still
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the
 year,
 With purpose to present them to the
 Queen,
 When all were won; but meaning all
 at once
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon
 Worth half her realm, had never
 spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and
 the last
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his
 court
 Hard on the river nigh the place which
 now
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a
 joust
 At Camelot, and when the time drew
 nigh
 Spake (for she had been sick) to
 Guinevere,
 "Are you so sick, my Queen, you can-
 not move
 To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord,"
 she said, "ye know it."
 "Then will ye miss," he answer'd,
 "the great deeds

Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the
 lists,
 A sight ye love to look on." And the
 Queen
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt lan-
 guidly
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside
 the King.
 He thinking that he read her meaning
 there,
 "Stay with me, I am sick; my love is
 more
 Than many diamonds," yielded; and
 a heart
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen
 (However much he yearn'd to make
 complete
 The tale of diamonds for his destined
 boon)
 Urged him to speak against the truth,
 and say,
 "Sir King, mine ancient wound is
 hardly whole,
 And lets me from the saddle;" and
 the King
 Glanced first at him, then her, and
 went his way.
 No sooner gone than suddenly she
 began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,
 much to blame!
 Why go ye not to these fair jousts?
 the knights
 Are half of them our enemies, and the
 crowd
 Will murmur, 'Lo the shameless
 ones, who take
 Their pastime now the trustful King
 is gone!'"
 Then Lancelot vext at having lied in
 vain:
 "Are ye so wise? ye were not once
 so wise,
 My Queen, that summer, when ye
 loved me first.
 Then of the crowd ye took no more
 account
 Than of the myriad cricket of the
 mead,

When its own voice clings to each
blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to
knights,
Them surely can I silence with all
ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd
Of all men: many a bard, without
offence,
Has link'd our names together in his
lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery,
Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty: and our knights
at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while
the King
Would listen smiling. How then? is
there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would
yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless
lord?"

She broke into a little scornful
laugh:
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the fault-
less King,
That passionate perfection, my good
lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in
heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to
me,
He never had a glimpse of mine un-
truth,
He cares not for me: only here to-day
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his
eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd
with him— else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself: but,
friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at
all:
For who loves me must have a touch
of earth;
The low sun makes the color: I am
yours,

Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by
the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to
the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break
our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin
voices here
May buzz so loud—we scorn them,
but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief
of knights:
"And with what face, after my pre-
text made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot,
I
Before a King who honors his own
work,
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft to
rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to
me,
If I must find you wif: we hear it
said
That men go down before your spear
at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your
great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go
unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our
true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my
knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him
true,
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er
he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than
himself:
They prove to him his work: win and
return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to
horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be
known,

He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
 Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
 And there among the solitary downs,
 Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
 Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
 That all in loops and links among the dales
 Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
 Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
 Thither he made, and blew the gate-way horn.
 Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
 Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
 And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;
 And issuing found the lord of Astolat
 With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
 Moving to meet him in the castle court;
 And close behind them stept the lily maid
 Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house
 There was not: some light jest among them rose
 With laughter dying down as the great knight
 Approach'd them: then the Lord of Astolat:
 "Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
 Livest between the lips? for by thy state
 And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
 After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
 Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
 Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:

"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
 What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
 But since I go to joust as one unknown
 At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,
 Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —
 I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
 Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat,
 "Here is Torre's:
 Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.
 And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
 His ye can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
 "Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it."
 Here laugh'd the father saying, "Fie, Sir Churl,
 Is that an answer for a noble knight?
 Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
 He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
 Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
 And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
 To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay good father, shame me not
 Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,
 "For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:
 He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:
 A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt
 That some one put this diamond in her hand,
 And that it was too slippery to be held,

And slipt and fell into some pool or
stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I
said
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and
won it
(But all was jest and joke among our-
selves)
Then must she keep it safelier. All
was jest.
But, father, give me leave, an if he
will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble
knight:
Win shall I not, but do my best to
win:
Young as I am, yet would I do my
best."

"So ye will grace me," answer'd
Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, "with your fellow-
ship
O'er these waste downs whereon I
lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and
friend:
And you shall win this diamond, —
as I hear
It is a fair large diamond, —if ye
may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye
will."
"A fair large diamond," added plain
Sir Torre,
"Such be for queens, and not for sim-
ple maids."
Then she, who held her eyes upon the
ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tost
about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight dispar-
agement
Before the stranger knight, who, look-
ing at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus
return'd:
"If what is fair be but for what is
fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who
deem this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on
earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid
Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she
look'd,
Lifted her eyes, and read his linca-
ments.
The great and guilty love he bare the
Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his
lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it
ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with
one,
The flower of all the west and all the
world,
Had been the sleeker for it: but in
him
His mood was often like a fiend, and
rose
And drove him into wastes and soli-
tudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the good-
liest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her
eyes.
However marr'd, of more than twice
her years,
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on
the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up
her eyes
And loved him, with that love which
was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling
of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude
hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half
disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his
kind:
Whom they with meats and vintage
of their best

And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
 And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
 And ever well and readily answer'd he:
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
 Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,
 The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
 "He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
 Against my house, and him they caught and main'd;
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
 By the great river in a boatman's hut.
 Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
 The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"O there, great lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt
 By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
 Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.
 O tell us—for we live apart—you know
 Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke
 And answer'd him at full, as having been
 With Arthur in the fight which all day long
 Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
 And in the four loud battles by the shore
 Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
 That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts
 Of Celdon the forest; and again

By castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
 Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
 Carved of one emerald center'd in a sun
 Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
 And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,
 When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse
 Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
 And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
 And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
 Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount
 Of Badon I myself beheld the King
 Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
 And all his legions crying Christ and him,
 And break them; and I saw him, after, stand
 High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
 Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
 And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
 'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,
 However mild he seems at home, nor cares
 For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—
 For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
 Saying, his knights are better men than he—
 Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
 Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives
 No greater leader."

While he utter'd this,
 Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
 "Save your great self, fair lord;"
 and when he fell

From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —
 Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind —
 She still took note that when the living smile
 Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
 Of melancholy severe, from which again,
 Whenever in her hovering to and fro
 The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
 There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
 Of manners and of nature: and she thought
 That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
 And all night long his face before her lived,
 As when a painter, poring on a face,
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
 Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
 The shape and color of a mind and life,
 Lives for his children, ever at its best
 And fullest; so the face before her lived,
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
 Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
 She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
 First as in fear, step after step, she stole
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
 "This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
 Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
 There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd

The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
 Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed
 Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
 The maiden standing in the dewy light.
 He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,
 That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
 "Fair lord, whose name I know not — noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
 My favor at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
 "Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
 Favor of any lady in the lists.
 Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know."
 "Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing mine
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
 That those who know should know you." And he turn'd
 Her counsel up and down within his mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd "True, my child.
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
 What is it?" and she told him "A red sleeve
 Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he bound
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile
 Saying, "I never yet have done so much

For any maiden living," and the blood
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with
 delight;
 But left her all the paler, when
 Lavaine
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd
 shield,
 His brother's; which he gave to
 Lancelot,
 Who parted with his own to fair
 Elaine:
 "Do me this grace, my child, to have
 my shield
 In keeping till I come." "A grace to
 me,"
 She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am
 your squire!"
 Whereat Lavaine said, laughing,
 "Lily maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid
 In earnest, let me bring your color
 back;
 Once, twice, and thrice: now get you
 hence to bed:"
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his
 own hand,
 And thus they moved away: she
 stay'd a minute,
 Then made a sudden step to the gate,
 and there —
 Her bright hair blown about the
 serious face
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's
 kiss —
 Paused by the gateway, standing near
 the shield
 In silence, while she watch'd their
 arms far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the
 downs.
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and
 took the shield,
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions
 past away
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless
 downs,
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there
 lived a knight
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty
 years

A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and
 pray'd,
 And ever laboring had scoop'd him-
 self
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff
 cave,
 And cells and chambers: all were fair
 and dry;
 The green light from the meadows
 underneath
 Struck up and lived along the milky
 roofs;
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-
 trees
 And poplars made a noise of falling
 showers.
 And thither wending there that night
 they bode.

But when the next day broke from
 underground,
 And shot red fire and shadows thro'
 the cave,
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and
 rode away:
 Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but
 hold my name
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the
 Lake."
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant re-
 verence,
 Dearer to true young hearts than their
 own praise,
 But left him leave to stammer, "Is it
 indeed?"
 And after muttering "The great
 Lancelot,"
 At last he got his breath and answer'd,
 "One,
 One have I seen — that other, our
 liege lord,
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's King
 of kings,
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
 He will be there — then were I stricken
 blind
 That minute, I might say that I had
 seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they
 reach'd the lists

By Camelot in the meadow, let his
 eyes
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which
 half round
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the
 grass,
 Until they found the clear-faced King,
 who sat
 Robed in red samite, easily to be
 known,
 Since to his crown the golden dragon
 clung,
 And down his robe the dragon writhed
 in gold,
 And from the carven-work behind
 him crept
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to
 make
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest
 of them
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innum-
 erable
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they
 found
 The new design wherein they lost
 themselves,
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the
 work :
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him
 set,
 Blazed the last diamond of the name-
 less king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young
 Lavaine and said,
 "Me you call great: mine is the
 firmer seat,
 The truer lance: but there is many a
 youth
 Now crescent, who will come to all I
 am
 And overcome it; and in me there
 dwells
 No greatness, save it be some far-off
 touch
 Of greatness to know well I am not
 great:
 There is the man." And Lavaine
 gaped upon him
 As on a thing miraculous, and anon
 The trumpets blew; and then did
 either side,

They that assail'd, and they that held
 the lists,
 Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly
 move,
 Meet in the midst, and there so
 furiously
 Shock, that a man far-off might well
 perceive,
 If any man that day were left afield,
 The hard earth shake, and a low thun-
 der of arms.
 And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
 Which were the weaker; then he
 hurl'd into it
 Against the stronger: little need to
 speak
 Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke,
 earl,
 Count, baron — whom he smote, he
 overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's
 kith and kin,
 Ranged with the Table Round that
 held the lists,
 Strong men, and wrathful that a
 stranger knight
 Should do and almost overdo the
 deeds
 Of Lancelot; and one said to the
 other, "Lo!
 What is he? I do not mean the force
 alone —
 The grace and versatility of the man!
 Is it not Lancelot?" "When has
 Lancelot worn
 Favor of any lady in the lists?
 Not such his wont, as we, that know
 him, know."
 "How then? who then?" a fury
 seized them all,
 A fiery family passion for the name
 Of Lancelot, and a glory one with
 theirs.
 They couch'd their spears and prick'd
 their steeds, and thus,
 Their plumes driv'n backward by the
 wind they made
 In moving, all together down upon
 him
 Bare, as a wild wave in the wide
 North-sea,

Green-glimmering toward the summit,
 bears, with all
 Its stormy crests that smoke against
 the skies,
 Down on a bark, and overbears the
 bark,
 And him that helms it, so they over-
 bore
 Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a
 spear
 Down-glancing lamed the charger, and
 a spear
 Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and
 the head
 Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,
 and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and wor-
 shipfully ;
 He bore a knight of old repute to the
 earth,
 And brought his horse to Lancelot
 where he lay.
 He up the side, sweating with agony,
 got,
 But thought to do while he might yet
 endure,
 And being lustily holpen by the rest,
 His party, — tho' it seem'd half-
 miracle
 To those he fought with, — drave his
 kith and kin,
 And all the Table Round that held
 the lists,
 Back to the barrier ; then the trum-
 pets blew
 Proclaiming his the prize, who wore
 the sleeve
 Of scarlet, and the pearls ; and all the
 knights,
 His party, cried " Advance and take
 thy prize
 The diamond ; " but he answer'd,
 " Diamond me
 No diamonds ! for God's love, a little
 air !
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is
 death !
 Hence will I, and I charge you, follow
 me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly
 from the field

With young Lavaine into the poplar
 grove.
 There from his charger down he slid,
 and sat,
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, " Draw the
 lance-head : "
 " Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said
 Lavaine,
 " I dread me, if I draw it, you will
 die."
 But he, " I die already with it : draw —
 Draw," — and Lavaine drew, and Sir
 Lancelot gave
 A marvellous great shriek and ghostly
 groan,
 And half his blood burst forth, and
 down he sank
 For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd
 away.
 Then came the hermit out and bare
 him in,
 There stanch'd his wound ; and there,
 in daily doubt
 Whether to live or die, for many a
 week
 Hid from the wide world's rumor by
 the grove
 Of poplars with their noise of falling
 showers,
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he
 lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled
 the lists,
 His party, knights of utmost North
 and West,
 Lords of waste marches, kings of des-
 olate isles,
 Came round their great Pendragon,
 saying to him,
 " Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we
 won the day,
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath
 left his prize
 Untaken, crying that his prize is
 death."
 " Heaven hinder," said the King, " that
 such an one,
 So great a knight as we have seen
 to-day —
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot —

Yea, twenty times I thought him
 Lancelot—
 He must not pass uncared for.
 Wherefore, rise,
 O Gawain, and ride forth and find the
 knight.
 Wounded and wearied needs must he
 be near.
 I charge you that you get at once to
 horse.
 And, knights and kings, there breathes
 not one of you
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly
 given:
 His prowess was too wondrous. We
 will do him
 No customary honor: since the knight
 Came not to us, of us to claim the
 prize,
 Ourselves will send it after. Rise and
 take
 This diamond, and deliver it, and
 return,
 And bring us where he is, and how he
 fares,
 And cease not from your quest until
 ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower
 above,
 To which it made a restless heart, he
 took,
 And gave, the diamond: then from
 where he sat
 At Arthur's right, with smiling face
 arose,
 With smiling face and frowning heart,
 a Prince
 In the mid might and flourish of his
 May,
 Gawain, surnamed The Courteous,
 fair and strong,
 And after Lancelot, Tristram, and
 Geraint
 And Gareth, a good knight, but
 therewithal
 Sir Modred's brother, and the child
 of Lot,
 Nor often loyal to his word, and
 now
 Wroth that the King's command to
 sally forth

In quest of whom he knew not, made
 him leave
 The banquet, and concourse of knights
 and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and
 went;
 While Arthur to the banquet, dark in
 mood,
 Past, thinking "Is it Lancelot who
 hath come
 Despite the wound he spake of, all for
 gain
 Of glory, and hath added wound to
 wound,
 And ridd'n away to die?" So fear'd
 the King,
 And, after two days' tarrance there,
 return'd.
 Then when he saw the Queen, em-
 bracing ask'd,
 "Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay,
 lord," she said.
 "And where is Lancelot?" Then the
 Queen amazed,
 "Was he not with you? won he not
 your prize?"
 "Nay, but one like him." "Why that
 like was he."
 And when the King demanded how
 she knew,
 Said, "Lord, no sooner had ye parted
 from us,
 Than Lancelot told me of a common
 talk
 That men went down before his spear
 at a touch,
 But knowing he was Lancelot; his
 great name
 Conquer'd; and therefore would he
 hide his name
 From all men, ev'n the King, and to
 this end
 Had made the pretext of a hindering
 wound,
 That he might joust unknown of all,
 and learn
 If his old prowess were in aught
 decay'd;
 And added, 'Our true Arthur, when
 he learns,

Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory:”

Then replied the King:
“Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it
been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted
thee.
Surely his King and most familiar
friend
Might well have kept his secret. True,
indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter:
now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own
kin —
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love
him, this! —
His kith and kin, not knowing, set
upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from
the field:
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes
are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely
heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his
helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider’d with
great pearls,
Some gentle maiden’s gift.”

“Yea, lord,” she said,
“Thy hopes are mine,” and saying
that, she choked,
And sharply turn’d about to hide her
face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung
herself
Down on the great King’s couch, and
writhed upon it,
And clench’d her fingers till they bit
the palm,
And shriek’d out “Traitor” to the
unhearing wall,
Then flash’d into wild tears, and rose
again,
And moved about her palace, proud
and pale.

Gawain the while thro’ all the region
round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of
the quest,
Touch’d at all points, except the pop-
lar grove,
And came at last, tho’ late, to Astolat:
Whom glittering in enamell’d arms
the maid
Glanced at, and cried, “What news
from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red
sleeve?” “He won.”
“I knew it,” she said. “But parted
from the jousts
Hurt in the side,” whereat she caught
her breath;
Thro’ her own side she felt the sharp
lance go;
Thereon she smote her hand: wellnigh
she swoon’d:
And, while he gazed wonderingly at
her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom
the Prince
Reported who he was, and on what
quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could
not find
The victor, but had ridd’n a random
round
To seek him, and had wearied of the
search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat, “Bide
with us,
And ride no more at random, noble
Prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left
a shield;
This will he send or come for: fur-
thermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear
anon,
Needs must we hear.” To this the
courteous Prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor
in it,
And stay’d; and cast his eyes on fair
Elaine:
Where could be found face daintier?
then her shape

From forehead down to foot, perfect
 — again
 From foot to forehead exquisitely
 turn'd :
 " Well — if I hide, lo ! this wild flower
 for me !"
 And oft they met among the garden
 yews,
 And there he set himself to play upon
 her
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a
 height
 Above her, graces of the court, and
 songs,
 Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden
 eloquence
 And amorous adulation, till the
 maid
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him,
 " Prince,
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,
 Why ask you not to see the shield he
 left,
 Whence you might learn his name ?
 Why slight your King,
 And lose the quest he sent you on,
 and prove
 No surer than our falcon yesterday,
 Who lost the hern we slipt her at,
 and went
 To all the winds ?" " Nay, by mine
 head," said he,
 " I lose it, as we lose the lark in
 heaven,
 O damsel, in the light of your blue
 eyes ;
 But an ye will it let me see the
 shield."
 And when the shield was brought, and
 Gawain saw
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd
 with gold,
 Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,
 and mock'd :
 " Right was the King ! our Lancelot !
 that true man !"
 " And right was I," she answer'd
 merrily, " I,
 Who dream'd my knight the greatest
 knight of all."
 " And if I dream'd," said Gawain,
 " that you love

This greatest knight, your pardon ! lo,
 ye know it !
 Speak therefore : shall I waste myself
 in vain ?"
 Full simple was her answer, " What
 know I ?
 My brethren have been all my fellow-
 ship ;
 And I, when often they have talk'd
 of love,
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for
 they talk'd,
 Meseem'd, of what they knew not ; so
 myself —
 I know not if I know what true love is,
 But if I know, then, if I love not him,
 I know there is none other I can
 love."
 " Yea, by God's death," said he, " ye
 love him well,
 But would not, knew ye what all
 others know,
 And whom he loves." " So be it,"
 cried Elaine,
 And lifted her fair face and moved
 away :
 But he pursued her, calling, " Stay a
 little !
 One golden minute's grace ! he wore
 your sleeve :
 Would he break faith with one I may
 not name ?
 Must our true man change like a leaf
 at last ?
 Nay — like enow : why then, far be it
 from me
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in his
 loves !
 And, damsel, for I deem you know
 full well
 Where your great knight is hidden,
 let me leave
 My quest with you ; the diamond also ;
 here !
 For if you love, it will be sweet to
 give it ;
 And if he love, it will be sweet to have
 it
 From your own hand ; and whether
 he love or not,
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare you
 well

A thousand times!—a thousand times
farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we
two
May meet at court hereafter: there,
I think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the
court,
We two shall know each other.”

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which
he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the
quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he
went,
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there
told the King
What the King knew, “Sir Lancelot
is the knight.”
And added, “Sire, my liege, so much
I learnt;
But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all
round
The region: but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him;
and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest
law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hid-
ing-place.”

The seldom-frowning King frown'd,
and replied,
“Too courteous truly! ye shall go no
more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye for-
get
Obedience is the courtesy due to
kings.”

He spake and parted. Wroth, but
all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, with-
out a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and
buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her
love.

All ears were prick'd at once, all
tongues were loosed:

“The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lance-
lot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Asto-
lat.”

Some read the King's face, some the
Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be,
but most

Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old
dame

Came suddenly on the Queen with the
sharp news.

She, that had heard the noise of it
before,

But sorrowing Lancelot should have
stoop'd so low,

Marr'd her friend's aim with pale
tranquillity.

So ran the tale like fire about the
court,

Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' won-
der flared:

Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice
or thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the
Queen,

And pledging Lancelot and the lily
maid

Smiled at each other, while the Queen,
who sat

With lips severely placid, felt the
knot

Climb in her throat, and with her feet
unseen

Crush'd the wild passion out against
the floor

Beneath the banquet, where the meats
became

As wormwood, and she hated all who
pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever
kept

The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her
heart,

Crept to her father, while he mused
alone,

Sat on his knee, stroked his gray
face and said,

"Father, you call me wilful, and the
 fault
 Is yours who let me have my will, and
 now,
 Sweet father, will you let me lose my
 wits?"
 "Nay," said he, "surely." "Where-
 fore, let me hence,"
 She answer'd, "and find out our dear
 Lavaine."
 "Ye will not lose your wits for dear
 Lavaine:
 Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must
 hear anon
 Of him, and of that other." "Ay,"
 she said,
 "And of that other, for I needs must
 hence
 And find that other, wheresoe'er he
 be,
 And with mine own hand give his dia-
 mond to him,
 Lest I be found as faithless in the
 quest
 As you proud Prince who left the
 quest to me.
 Sweet father, I behold him in my
 dreams
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-
 self,
 Death-pale, for lack of gentle
 maiden's aid.
 The gentler-born the maiden, the
 more bound,
 My father, to be sweet and service-
 able
 To noble knights in sickness, as ye
 know
 When these have worn their tokens:
 let me hence
 I pray you." Then her father nod-
 ding said,
 "Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well,
 my child,
 Right fain were I to learn this knight
 were whole,
 Being our greatest: yea, and you
 must give it—
 And sure I think this fruit is hung
 too high
 For any mouth to gape for save a
 queen's—

Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you
 gone,
 Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt
 away,
 And while she made her ready for
 her ride,
 Her father's latest word humm'd in
 her ear,
 "Being so very wilful you must go,"
 And changed itself and echo'd in her
 heart,
 "Being so very wilful you must die."
 But she was happy enough and shook
 it off,
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes
 at us;
 And in her heart she answer'd it and
 said,
 "What matter, so I help him back to
 life?"
 Then far away with good Sir Torre
 for guide
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bush-
 less downs
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates
 Came on her brother with a happy
 face
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet
 For pleasure all about a field of
 flowers:
 Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she
 cried, "Lavaine,
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?"
 He amazed,
 "Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir
 Lancelot!
 How know ye my lord's name is Lan-
 celot?"
 But when the maid had told him all
 her tale,
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his
 moods
 Left them, and under the strange-
 statued gate,
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd
 mystically,
 Past up the still rich city to his
 kin,
 His own far blood, which dwelt at
 Camelot;

And her, Lavaine across the poplar
 grove
 Led to the caves: there first she saw
 the casque
 Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet
 sleeve,
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the
 pearls away,
 Stream'd from it still; and in her
 heart she laugh'd,
 Because he had not loosed it from his
 helm,
 But meant once more perchance to
 tourney in it.
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein
 he slept,
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty
 hands
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a
 dream
 Of dragging down his enemy made
 them move.
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek,
 unshorn,
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-
 self,
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
 The sound not wonted in a place so
 still
 Woke the sick knight, and while he
 roll'd his eyes
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to
 him, saying,
 "Your prize the diamond sent you by
 the King:"
 His eyes glisten'd: she fancied "Is it
 for me?"
 And when the maid had told him all
 the tale
 Of King and Prince, the diamond sent,
 the quest
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she
 knelt
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
 And laid the diamond in his open
 hand.
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the
 child
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd
 her face.
 At once she slipt like water to the
 floor.

"Alas," he said, "your ride hath
 wearied you.
 Rest must you have." "No rest for
 me," she said;
 "Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at
 rest."
 What might she mean by that? his
 large black eyes,
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt
 upon her,
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed
 itself
 In the heart's colors on her simple
 face;
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplext
 in mind,
 And being weak in body said no more;
 But did not love the color; woman's
 love,
 Save one, he not regarded, and so
 turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he
 slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro'
 the fields,
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculp-
 tured gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
 There bode the night: but woke with
 dawn, and past
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the
 the fields,
 Thence to the cave: so day by day
 she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended
 him,
 And likewise many a night: and
 Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a
 little hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly whole,
 at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony,
 seem
 Uncourteous, even he: but the meek
 maid
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to
 him
 Meeker than any child to a rough
 nurse,

Milder than any mother to a sick child,
 And never woman yet, since man's
 first fall,
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep
 love
 Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in
 all
 The simples and the science of that
 time,
 Told him that her fine care had saved
 his life.
 And the sick man forgot her simple
 blush,
 Would call her friend and sister,
 sweet Elaine,
 Would listen for her coming and
 regret
 Her parting step, and held her ten-
 derly,
 And loved her with all love except
 the love
 Of man and woman when they love
 their best,
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the
 death
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.
 And peradventure had he seen her
 first
 She might have made this and that
 other world
 Another world for the sick man; but
 now
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd
 him,
 His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely
 true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sick-
 ness made
 Full many a holy vow and pure re-
 solve.
 These, as but born of sickness, could
 not live:
 For when the blood ran lustier in him
 again,
 Full often the bright image of one
 face,
 Making a treacherous quiet in his
 heart,
 Dispersed his resolution like a
 cloud. °

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly
 grace
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he
 answer'd not,
 Or short and coldly, and she knew
 right well
 What the rough sickness meant, but
 what this meant
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd
 her sight,
 And drave her ere her time across the
 fields
 Far into the rich city, where alone
 She murmur'd, "Vain, in vain: it
 cannot be.
 He will not love me: how then? must
 I die?"
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
 That has but one plain passage of few
 notes,
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and
 o'er
 For all an April morning, till the ear
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
 Went half the night repeating, "Must
 I die?"
 And now to right she turn'd, and now
 to left,
 And found no ease in turning or in
 rest;
 And "Him or death," she mutter'd,
 "death or him,"
 Again and like a burthen, "Him or
 death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt
 was whole,
 To Astolat returning rode the three.
 There morn by morn, arraying her
 sweet self
 In that wherein she deem'd she look'd
 her best,
 She came before Sir Lancelot, for she
 thought
 "If I be loved, these are my festal
 robes,
 If not, the victim's flowers before he
 fall."
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the
 maid
 That she should ask some goodly gift
 of him

For her own self or hers; "and do not
shun
To speak the wish most near to your
true heart;
Such service have ye done me, that I
make
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord
am I
In mine own land, and what I will I
can."
Then like a ghost she lifted up her
face,
But like a ghost without the power to
speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld
her wish,
And bode among them yet a little
space
Till he should learn it; and one morn
it chanced
He found her in among the garden
yews,
And said, "Delay no longer, speak
your wish,
Seeing I go to-day": then out she
brake:
"Going? and we shall never see you
more.
And I must die for want of one bold
word."
"Speak: that I live to hear," he said,
"is yours."
Then suddenly and passionately she
spoke:
"I have gone mad. I love you: let
me die."
"Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot,
"what is this?"
And innocently extending her white
arms,
"Your love," she said, "your love—
to be your wife."
And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chosen
to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet
Elaine:
But now there never will be wife of
mine."
"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be
wife,
But to be with you still, to see your
face,

To serve you, and to follow you thro'
the world."
And Lancelot answer'd, "Nay, the
world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid
heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a
tongue
To blare its own interpretation — nay,
Full ill then should I quit your
brother's love,
And your good father's kindness."
And she said,
"Not to be with you, not to see your
face—
Alas for me then, my good days are
done."
"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten
times nay!
This is not love: but love's first flash
in youth,
Most common: yea, I know it of mine
own self:
And you yourself will smile at your
own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower
of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice
your age:
And then will I, for true you are and
sweet
Beyond mine old belief in woman-
hood,
More specially should your good
knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and ter-
ritory
Even to the half my realm beyond
the seas,
So that would make you happy:
furthermore,
Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my
blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your
knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your
sake,
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but
deathly-pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then
 replied:
 "Of all this will I nothing;" and so
 fell,
 And thus they bore her swooning to
 her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those
 black walls of yew
 Their talk had pierced, her father:
 "Ay, a flash,
 I fear me, that will strike my blossom
 dead.
 Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lance-
 lot.
 I pray you, use some rough dis-
 courtesy
 To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
 "That were against me: what I can
 I will;"
 And there that day remain'd, and
 toward even
 Sent for his shield: full meekly rose
 the maid,
 Stript off the case, and gave the naked
 shield;
 Then, when she heard his horse upon
 the stones,
 Unclasping flung the casement back,
 and look'd
 Down on his helm, from which her
 sleeve had gone.
 And Lancelot knew the little clinking
 sound;
 And she by tact of love was well aware
 That Lancelot knew that she was look-
 ing at him.
 And yet he glanced not up, nor waved
 his hand,
 Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
 This was the one discourtesy that he
 used.

So in her tower alone the maiden
 sat:
 His very shield was gone; only the
 case,
 Her own poor work, her empty labor,
 left.

But still she heard him, still his picture
 form'd
 And grew between her and the pic-
 tured wall.
 Then came her father, saying in low
 tones,
 "Have comfort," whom she greeted
 quietly.
 Then came her brethren saying,
 "Peace to thee,
 Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with
 all calm.
 But when they left her to herself
 again,
 Death, like a friend's voice from a dis-
 tant field
 Approaching thro' the darkness,
 call'd; the owls
 Wailing had power upon her, and she
 mixt
 Her fancies with the sallow-rifted
 glooms
 Of evening, and the moanings of the
 wind.

And in those days she made a little
 song,
 And call'd her song "The Song of
 Love and Death,"
 And sang it: sweetly could she make
 and sing.

"Sweet is true love tho' given in
 vain, in vain;
 And sweet is death who puts an end
 to pain:
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter
 death must be:
 Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death
 to me.
 O Love, if death be sweeter, let me
 die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made
 to fade away,
 Sweet death, that seems to make us
 loveless clay,
 I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that
could be ;
I needs must follow death, who calls
for me ;
Call and I follow, I follow ! let me
die."

High with the last line scaled her
voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook the tower, the brothers
heard, and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phan-
tom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death,"
and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and
fear
Ran to her, and lo ! the blood-red light
of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let
me die !"

As when we dwell upon a word we
know,
Repeating, till the word we know so
well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not
why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and
thought
"Is this Elaine ?" till back the maiden
fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each,
and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her
eyes.
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yes-
ter-night
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among
the woods,
And when ye used to take me with
the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's
boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the
cape
That has the poplar on it: there ye
fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the
tide,

And yet I cried because ye would not
pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining
flood
Until we found the palace of the
King.
And yet ye would not: but this night
I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have
my will:'
And there I woke, but still the wish
remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at
last
Beyond the poplar and far up the
flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock
at me ;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder
at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse
at me ;
Gawain, who bade a thousand fare-
wells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade
me one :
And there the King will know me and
my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity
me,
And all the gentle court will welcome
me,
And after my long voyage I shall
rest !"

"Peace," said her father, "O my
child, ye seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours
to go
So far, being sick ? and wherefore
would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who
scorns us all ?"

Then the rough Torre began to
heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and
say,

"I never loved him: an I meet with
him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike
him down.
Give me good fortune, I will strike
him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the
house."

To whom the gentle sister made
reply,
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor
be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's
fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to
love
Him of all men who seems to me the
highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd,
echoing "highest?"
(He meant to break the passion in
her) "nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call
the highest;
But this I know, for all the people
know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open
shame:
And she returns his love in open
shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Asto-
lat:
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick
am I
For anger: these are slanders: never
yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made
a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me
pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's
best
And greatest, tho' my love had no
return:

Yet, seeing you desire your child to
live,
Thanks, but you work against your
own desire;
For if I could believe the things you
say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore
cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly
man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean,
and die."

So when the ghostly man had come
and gone,
She with a face, bright as for sin for-
given,
Besought Lavaine to write as she
devised
A letter, word for word; and when he
ask'd
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear
lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;" she re-
plied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all
the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he
wrote
The letter she devised; which being
writ
And folded, "O sweet father, tender
and true,
Deny me not," she said — "ye never
yet
Denied my fancies — this, however
strange,
My latest: lay the letter in my
hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in
death.
And when the heat is gone from out
my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I
died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like
the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the
Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on
it.

And let there be prepared a chariot-
bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the
Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine
own self,
And none of you can speak for me
so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man
alone
Go with me, he can steer and row,
and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the
doors."

She ceased: her father promised;
whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd
her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the
blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and on
the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she
died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from
underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with
bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field,
that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon
the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite,
lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the
house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his
face.
So those two brethren from the chariot
took
And on the black decks laid her in
her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung

The silken case with braided blazon
ings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying
to her
"Sister, farewell for ever," and again
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in
tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and
the dead,
Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with
the flood —
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter — all her bright hair stream-
ing down —
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself
in white
All but her face, and that clear-fea-
tured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as
dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she
smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace
craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly
gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise
and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his
own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds:
for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the
Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen
agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but
that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd
her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong
eye
The shadow of some piece of pointed
lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the
walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly
heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward
 the stream,
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling
 utter'd, "Queen,
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my
 joy,
 Take, what I had not won except for
 you,
 These jewels, and make me happy,
 making them
 An armlet for the roundest arm on
 earth,
 Or necklace for a neck to which the
 swan's
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these
 are words:
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I
 sin
 In speaking, yet O grant my worship
 of it
 Words, as we grant grief tears. Such
 sin in words
 Perchance, we both can pardon: but,
 my Queen,
 I hear of rumors flying thro' your
 court.
 Our bond, as not the bond of man and
 wife,
 Should have in it an absoluter trust
 To make up that defect: let rumors
 be:
 When did not rumors fly? these, as I
 trust
 That you trust me in your own noble-
 ness,
 I may not well believe that you be-
 lieve."

While thus he spoke, half turn'd
 away, the Queen
 Brake from the vast oriel-embowering
 vine
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast
 them off,
 Till all the place whereon she stood
 was green;
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold
 passive hand
 Received at once and laid aside the
 gems
 There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be, I am quicker of belief
 Than you believe me, Lancelot of the
 Lake.
 Our bond is not the bond of man and
 wife.
 This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
 It can be broken easier. I for you
 This many a year have done despite
 and wrong
 To one whom ever in my heart of
 hearts
 I did acknowledge nobler. What are
 these?
 Diamonds for me! they had been
 thrice their worth
 Being your gift, had you not lost your
 own.
 To loyal hearts the value of all
 gifts
 Must vary as the giver's. Not for
 me!
 For her! for your new fancy. Only
 this
 Grant me, I pray you: have your joys
 apart.
 I doubt not that however changed,
 you keep
 So much of what is graceful: and
 myself
 Would shun to break those bounds of
 courtesy
 In which as Arthur's Queen I move
 and rule:
 So cannot speak my mind. An end
 to this!
 A strange one! yet I take it with
 Amen.
 So pray you, add my diamonds to her
 pearls;
 Deck her with these; tell her, she
 shines me down:
 An armlet for an arm to which the
 Queen's
 Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
 O as much fairer — as a faith once fair
 Was richer than these diamonds —
 hers not mine —
 Nay, by the mother of our Lord him-
 self,
 Or hers or mine, mine now to work
 my will —
 She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
 And, thro' the casement standing wide
 for heat,
 Flung them, and down they flash'd,
 and smote the stream.
 Then from the smitten surface flash'd,
 as it were,
 Diamonds to meet them, and they past
 away.
 Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half
 disdain
 At love, life, all things, on the window
 ledge,
 Close underneath his eyes, and right
 across
 Where these had fallen, slowly past
 the barge
 Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
 Lay smiling, like a star in blackest
 night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not,
 burst away
 To weep and wail in secret; and the
 barge,
 On to the palace-doorway sliding,
 paused.
 There two stood arm'd, and kept the
 door; to whom,
 All up the marble stair, tier over
 tier,
 Were added mouths that gaped, and
 eyes that ask'd
 "What is it?" but that oarsman's
 haggard face,
 As hard and still as is the face that
 men
 Shape to their fancy's eye from broken
 rocks
 On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and
 they said,
 "He is enchanted, cannot speak —
 and she,
 Look how she sleeps — the Fairy
 Queen, so fair!
 Yea, but how pale! what are they?
 flesh and blood?
 Or come to take the King to Fairy-
 land?
 For some do hold our Arthur cannot
 die,
 But that he passes into Fairyland."

While thus they babbled of the
 King, the King
 Came girt with knights: then turn'd
 the tongueless man
 From the half-face to the full eye,
 and rose
 And pointed to the damsel, and the
 doors.
 So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
 And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the
 maid;
 And reverently they bore her into
 hall.
 Then came the fine Gawain and won-
 der'd at her,
 And Lancelot later came and mused
 at her,
 And last the Queen herself, and pitied
 her:
 But Arthur spied the letter in her
 hand,
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it;
 this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of
 the Lake,
 I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
 Come, for you left me taking no fare-
 well,
 Hither, to take my last farewell of
 you.
 I loved you, and my love had no
 return,
 And therefore my true love has been
 my death.
 And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
 And to all other ladies, I make moan.
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lan-
 celot,
 As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read;
 And ever in the reading, lords and
 dames
 Wept, looking often from his face who
 read
 To hers which lay so silent, and at
 times,
 So touch'd were they, half-thinking
 that her lips,

Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all :

“ My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,

Know that for this most gentle maiden’s death

Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,

But loved me with a love beyond all love

In women, whomsoever I have known. Yet to be loved makes not to love again;

Not at my years, however it hold in youth.

I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave

No cause, and not willingly, for such a love :

To this I call my friends in testimony, Her brethren, and her father, who himself

Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,

To break her passion, some discourtesy Against my nature: what I could, I did.

I left her and I bade her no farewell; Tho’, had I dreamt the damsel would have died,

I might have put my wits to some rough use,

And help’d her from herself.”

Then said the Queen (Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)

“ Ye might at least have done her so much grace,

Fair lord, as would have help’d her from her death.”

He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,

He adding,

“ Queen, she would not be content Save that I wedded her, which could not be.

Then might she follow me thro’ the world, she ask’d.

It could not be. I told her that her love

Was but the flash of youth, would darken down

To rise hereafter in a stiller flame

Toward one more worthy of her — then would I,

More specially were he, she wedded, poor,

Estate them with large land and territory

In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,

To keep them in all joyance: more than this

I could not; this she would not, and she died.”

He pausing, Arthur answer’d, “ O my knight,

It will be to thy worship, as my knight,

And mine, as head of all our Table Round,

To see that she be buried worshipfully.”

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm

Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went

The marshall’d Order of their Table Round,

And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see,

The maiden buried, not as one unknown,

Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,

And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.

And when the knights had laid her comely head

Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,

Then Arthur spake among them, “ Let her tomb

Be costly, and her image thereupon, And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet

Be carven, and her lily in her hand.

And let the story of her dolorous
 voyage
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on her
 tomb
 In letters gold and azure!" which was
 wrought
 Thereafter; but when now the lords
 and dames
 And people, from the high door
 streaming, brake
 Disorderly, as homeward each, the
 Queen,
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he
 moved apart,
 Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,
 "Lancelot,
 Forgive me; mine was jealousy in
 love."
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the
 ground,
 "That is love's curse; pass on, my
 Queen, forgiven."
 But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy
 brows,
 Approach'd him, and with full affec-
 tion said,

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in
 whom I have
 Most joy and most affianced, for I
 know
 What thou hast been in battle by my
 side,
 And many a time have watch'd thee
 at the tilt
 Strike down the lusty and long practis'd knight,
 And let the younger and unskill'd
 go by
 To win his honor and to make his
 name,
 And loved thy courtesies and thee, a
 man
 Made to be loved; but now I would
 to God,
 Seeing the homeless trouble in thine
 eyes,
 Thou couldst have loved this maiden,
 shaped, it seems,
 By God for thee alone, and from her
 face,

If one may judge the living by the
 dead,
 Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
 Who might have brought thee, now a
 lonely man
 Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
 Born to the glory of thy name and
 fame,
 My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of
 the Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she
 was, my King,
 Pure, as you ever wish your knights
 to be.
 To doubt her fairness were to want an
 eye,
 To doubt her pureness were to want a
 heart —
 Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
 Could bind him, but free love will not
 be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest,"
 said the King.
 "Let love be free; free love is for
 the best:
 And, after heaven, on our dull side of
 death,
 What should be best, if not so pure a
 love
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet
 thee
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I
 think,
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I
 know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but
 he went,
 And at the inrunning of a little brook
 Sat by the river in a cove, and
 watch'd
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his
 eyes
 And saw the barge that brought her
 moving down,
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and
 said
 Low in himself, "Ah simple heart and
 sweet,

Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a
 love
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray
 for thy soul?
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now
 at last —
 Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in
 love?'
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir,
 jealous pride?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of
 love,
 May not your crescent fear for name
 and fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that
 wanes?
 Why did the King dwell on my name
 to me?
 Mine own name shames me, seeming
 a reproach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
 Caught from his mother's arms —
 the wondrous one
 Who passes thro' the vision of the
 night —
 She chanted snatches of mysterious
 hymns
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and
 morn
 She kiss'd me saying, 'Thou art fair,
 my child,
 As a king's son,' and often in her arms
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky
 mere.
 Would she had drown'd me in it,
 where'er it be!
 For what am I? what profits me my
 name
 Of greatest knight? I fought for it,
 and have it:
 Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it,
 pain;
 Now grown a part of me: but what
 use in it?
 To make men worse by making my
 sin known?
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming
 great?
 Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a
 man
 Not after Arthur's heart! I needs
 must break

These bonds that so defame me: not
 without
 She wills it: would I, if she will'd it?
 nay,
 Who knows? but if I would not, then
 may God,
 I pray him, send a sudden Angel down
 To seize me by the hair and bear me
 far,
 And fling me deep in that forgotten
 mere,
 Among the tumbled fragments of the
 hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorse-
 ful pain,
 Not knowing he should die a holy
 man.

 THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of
 prowess done
 In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,
 Whom Arthur and his knighthood
 call'd The Pure,
 Had pass'd into the silent life of
 prayer,
 Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving
 for the cowl
 The helmet in an abbey far away
 From Camelot, there, and not long
 after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among
 the rest,
 Ambrosius, loved him much beyond
 the rest,
 And honor'd him, and wrought into
 his heart
 A way by love that waken'd love
 within,
 To answer that which came: and as
 they sat
 Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darken-
 ing half
 The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
 That puff'd the swaying branches into
 smoke
 Above them, ere the summer when
 he died,

The monk Ambrosius question'd
Percivale :

“O brother, I have seen this yew-
tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hun-
dred years :
For never have I known the world
without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale : but
thee,
When first thou camest — such a
courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the
voice —
I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's
hall ;
For good ye are and bad, and like to
coins,
Some true, some light, but every one
of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King ;
and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the
Table Round,
My brother ? was it earthly passion
crost ?”

“Nay,” said the knight ; “for no
such passion mine
But the sweet vision of the Holy
Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rival-
ries,
And earthly heats that spring and
sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women
watch
Who wins, who falls ; and waste the
spiritual strength
Within us, better offer'd up to
Heaven.”

To whom the monk : “The Holy
Grail ! — I trust
We are green in Heaven's eyes ; but
here too much
We moulder — as to things without I
mean —
Yet one of your own knights, a guest
of ours,

Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so
low
We heard not half of what he said.
What is it ?
The phantom of a cup that comes
and goes ?”

“Nay, monk ! what phantom ?”
answer'd Percivale.
“The cup, the cup itself, from which
our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his
own.
This, from the blessed land of Aro-
mat —
After the day of darkness, when the
dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah — the
good saint
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying
brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter
thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of
our Lord.
And there awhile it bode ; and if a
man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd
at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the
times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to Heaven, and
disappear'd.”

To whom the monk : “From our
old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glaston-
bury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arvi-
ragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to
build ;
And there he built with wattles from
the marsh
A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours,
but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-
day ?”

"A woman," answer'd Percivale,
 "a nun,
 And one no further off in blood from
 me
 Than sister; and if ever holy maid
 With knees of adoration wore the
 stone,
 A holy maid; tho' never maiden
 glow'd,
 But that was in her earlier maiden-
 hood,
 With such a fervent flame of human
 love,
 Which being rudely blunted, glanced
 and shot
 Only to holy things; to prayer and
 praise
 She gave herself, to fast and alms.
 And yet,
 Nun as she was, the scandal of the
 Court,
 Sin against Arthur and the Table
 Round,
 And the strange sound of an adulter-
 ous race,
 Across the iron grating of her cell
 Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all
 the more.

"And he to whom she told her sins,
 or what
 Her all but utter whiteness held for
 sin,
 A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
 Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
 A legend handed down thro' five or six,
 And each of these a hundred winters
 old,
 From our Lord's time. And when
 King Arthur made
 His Table Round, and all men's hearts
 became
 Clean for a season, surely he had
 thought
 That now the Holy Grail would come
 again;
 But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it
 would come,
 And heal the world of all their wicked-
 ness!
 'O Father!' ask'd the maiden, 'might
 it come

To me by prayer and fasting?' 'Nay,'
 said he,
 'I know not, for thy heart is pure as
 snow.'
 And so she pray'd and fasted, till the
 sun
 Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her,
 and I thought
 She might have risen and floated when
 I saw her.

"For on a day she sent to speak
 with me.
 And when she came to speak, behold
 her eyes
 Beyond my knowing of them, beauti-
 ful,
 Beyond all knowing of them, won-
 derful,
 Beautiful in the light of holiness.
 And 'O my brother Percivale,' she
 said,
 'Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy
 Grail:
 For, waked at dead of night, I heard
 a sound
 As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
 Blown, and I thought, "It is not
 Arthur's use
 To hunt by moonlight;" and the slen-
 der sound
 As from a distance beyond distance
 grew
 Coming upon me — O never harp nor
 horn,
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or
 touch with hand,
 Was like that music as it came; and
 then
 Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and
 silver beam,
 And down the long beam stole the
 Holy Grail,
 Rose-red with beatings in it, as if
 alive,
 Till all the white walls of my cell were
 dyed
 With rosy colors leaping on the wall;
 And then the music faded, and the
 Grail
 Past, and the beam decay'd, and from
 the walls

The rosy quiverings died into the night.
 So now the Holy Thing is here again
 Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
 And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
 That so perchance the vision may be seen
 By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd.'

"Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
 To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd
 Always, and many among us many a week
 Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
 Expectant of the wonder that would be.

"And one there was among us, ever moved
 Among us in white armor, Galahad.
 'God make thee good as thou art beautiful,'
 Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight; and none,
 In so young youth, was ever made a knight
 Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
 My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
 His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
 Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

"Sister or brother none had he; but some
 Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said
 Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they,
 Life birds of passage piping up and down,
 That gape for flies — we know not whence they come;
 For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

"But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
 Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
 Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
 And out of this she plaited broad and long
 A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
 And crimson in the belt a strange device,
 A crimson grail within a silver beam;
 And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,
 Saying, 'My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
 O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
 I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
 Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
 And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
 Far in the spiritual city:' and as she spake
 She sent her deathless passion in her eyes
 Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
 On him, and he believed in her belief.

"Then came a year of miracle: O brother,
 In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
 And carven with strange figures; and in and out
 The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
 Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
 And Merlin call'd it 'The Siege perilous.'
 Perilous for good and ill; 'for there,' he said,
 'No man could sit but he should lose himself:'
 And once by misadvertence Merlin sat
 In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,

Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's
doom,
Cried, 'If I lose myself, I save my-
self!'

"Then on a summer night it came
to pass,
While the great banquet lay along the
hall,
That Galahad would sit down in Mer-
lin's chair.

"And all at once, as there we sat,
we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and over-
head
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there smote along the
hall
A beam of light seven times more
clear than day:
And down the long beam stole the
Holy Grail
All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and
it past.
But every knight beheld his fellow's
face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb
men
Stood, till I found a voice and sware
a vow.

"I sware a vow before them all,
that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would
ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of
it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware
the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's
cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many among
the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than
the rest."

Then spake the monk Ambrosius,
asking him,

"What said the King? Did Arthur
take the vow?"

"Nay, for my lord," said Percivale,
"the King,
Was not in hall: for early that same
day,
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit
hold,
An outraged maiden sprang into the
hall
Crying on help: for all her shining
hair
Was smear'd with earth, and either
milky arm
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and
all she wore
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is
torn
In tempest: so the King arose and
went
To smoke the scandalous hive of those
wild bees
That made such honey in his realm.
Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then
began
To darken under Camelot; whence the
King
Look'd up, calling aloud, 'Lo, there!
the roofs
Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-
smoke!
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by
the bolt.'
For dear to Arthur was that hall of
ours,
As having there so oft with all his
knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under
heaven.

"O brother, had you known our
mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long
ago!
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by
roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,

By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
 Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
 And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
 With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:
 And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
 And in the second men are slaying beasts,
 And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
 And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
 And over all one statue in the mould
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
 And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.
 And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
 And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
 At sunrise till the people in far fields,
 Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
 Behold it, crying, 'We have still a King.'

"And, brother, had you known our hall within,
 Broader and higher than any in all the lands!
 Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
 And all the light that falls upon the board
 Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.
 Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
 Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
 Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
 And also one to the west, and counter to it,
 And blank: and who shall blazon it? when and how? —

O there, perchance, when all our wars are done,
 The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

"So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
 In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
 Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt
 In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
 And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
 The golden dragon sparkling over all:
 And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms
 Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke, and sear'd,
 Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
 Full of the vision, prest: and then the King
 Spake to me, being nearest, 'Percivale,'
 (Because the hall was all in tumult — some
 Vowing, and some protesting), 'what is this?'

"O brother, when I told him what had chanced,
 My sister's vision, and the rest, his face
 Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
 When some brave deed seem'd to be done in vain,
 Darken; and 'Woe is me, my knights,' he cried,
 'Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.'
 Bold was mine answer, 'Had thyself been here,
 My King, thou wouldst have sworn.'
 'Yea, yea,' said he,
 'Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?'

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,

But since I did not see the Holy Thing,
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw.'

"Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as one:
'Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows.'

"'Lo now,' said Arthur, 'have ye seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to see?'

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
'But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry —
"O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me."'

"'Ah, Galahad, Galahad,' said the King, 'for such
As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign —
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she —
A sign to maim this Order which I made.
But ye, that follow but the leader's bell'
(Brother, the King was hard upon his knights)
'Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,
And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
Five knights at once, and every younger knight,
Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye,
What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor Percivales'

(For thus it pleased the King to range me close
After Sir Galahad); 'nay,' said he, 'but men
With strength and will to right the wrong'd, of power
To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,
Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd and dyed
The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood —
But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.
Go, since your vows are sacred, being made:
Yet — for ye know the cries of all my realm
Pass thro' this hall — how often, O my knights,
Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come and go
Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires
Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most,
Return no more: ye think I show myself
Too dark a prophet: come now, let us meet
The morrow morn once more in one full field
Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,
Before ye leave him for this Quest, may count
The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which he made.'

"So when the sun broke next from under ground,
All the great table of our Arthur closed
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,
So many lances broken — never yet
Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur came;

And I myself and Galahad, for a
 strength
 Was in us from the vision, overthrew
 So many knights that all the people
 cried,
 And almost burst the barriers in their
 heat,
 Shouting, 'Sir Galahad and Sir Per-
 civalé!'

"But when the next day brake
 from under ground—
 O brother, had you known our Came-
 lot,
 Built by old kings, age after age, so
 old
 The King himself had fears that it
 would fall,
 So strange, and rich, and dim; for
 where the roofs
 Totter'd toward each other in the
 sky,
 Met foreheads all along the street of
 those
 Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and
 where the long
 Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the
 necks
 Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
 Thicker than drops from thunder,
 showers of flowers
 Fell as we past; and men and boys
 astride
 On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
 At all the corners, named us each by
 name,
 Calling 'God speed!' but in the ways
 below
 The knights and ladies wept, and rich
 and poor
 Wept, and the King himself could
 hardly speak
 For grief, and all in middle street the
 Queen,
 Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and
 shriek'd aloud,
 'This madness has come on us for our
 sins.'
 So to the Gate of the three Queens we
 came,
 Where Arthur's wars are render'd
 mystically,

And thence departed every one his
 way.

"And I was lifted up in heart, and
 thought
 Of all my late-shown prowess in the
 lists,
 How my strong lance had beaten down
 the knights,
 So many and famous names; and
 never yet
 Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor
 earth so green,
 For all my blood danced in me, and I
 knew
 That I should light upon the Holy
 Grail.

"Thereafter, the dark warning of
 our King,
 That most of us would follow wander-
 ing fires,
 Came like a driving gloom across my
 mind.
 Then every evil word I had spoken
 once,
 And every evil thought I had thought
 of old,
 And every evil deed I ever did,
 Awoke and cried, 'This Quest is not
 for thee.'
 And lifting up mine eyes, I found my-
 self
 Alone, and in a land of sand and
 thorns,
 And I was thirsty even unto death;
 And I, too, cried, 'This Quest is not
 for thee.'

"And on I rode, and when I thought
 my thirst
 Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and
 then a brook,
 With one sharp rapid, where the crisp-
 ing white
 Play'd ever back upon the sloping
 wave,
 And took both ear and eye; and o'er
 the brook
 Were apple-trees, and apples by the
 brook

Fallen, and on the lawns. 'I will rest here,'
 I said, 'I am not worthy of the Quest ;'
 But even while I drank the brook, and ate
 The goodly apples, all these things at once
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone,
 And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

"And then behold a woman at a door
 Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,
 And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
 And all her bearing gracious; and she rose
 Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,
 'Rest here;' but when I touch'd her, lo! she, too,
 Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
 Became no better than a broken shed.
 And in it a dead babe; and also this
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

"And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
 Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,
 And where it smote the plowshare in the field,
 The plowman left his plowing, and fell down
 Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail,
 The milkmaid left her milking, and fell down
 Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
 'The sun is rising,' tho' the sun had risen.
 Then was I ware of one that on me moved
 In golden armor with a crown of gold
 About a casque all jewels; and his horse
 In golden armor jewel'd everywhere:

And on the splendor came, flashing me blind;
 And seem'd to me the Lord of all the world,
 Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
 To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,
 Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,
 And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone
 And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

"And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
 And on the top, a city wall'd: the spires
 Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
 And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and these
 Cried to me climbing, 'Welcome, Percivale!
 Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!'
 And glad was I and clonib, but found at top
 No man, nor any voice. And thence I past
 Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
 That man had once dwelt there; but there I found
 Only one man of an exceeding age.
 'Where is that goodly company,' said I,
 'That so cried out upon me?' and he had
 Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,
 'Whence and what art thou?' and even as he spoke
 Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I
 Was left alone once more, and cried in grief,
 'Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
 And touch it, it will crumble into dust.'

"And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,

Low as the hill was high, and where
the vale
Was lowest, found a chapel, and
thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he
said :

“O son, thou hast not true humility,
The highest virtue, mother of them all;
For when the Lord of all things made
Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal change,
“Take thou my robe,” she said, “for
all is thine,”
And all her form shone forth with
sudden light
So that the angels were amazed, and
she
Follow’d Him down, and like a flying
star
Led on the gray-hair’d wisdom of the
east ;
But her thou hast not known : for
what is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and
thy sins ?
Thou hast not lost thyself to save
thyself
As Galahad.’ When the hermit made
an end,
In silver armor suddenly Galahad
shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance, and enter’d, and we knelt
in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my burn-
ing thirst,
And at the sacring of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone ; but he,
‘Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad, saw
the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the
shrine :
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread, and
went ;
And hither am I come ; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first
to see,
This Holy Thing, fail’d from my side,
nor come

Cover’d, but moving with me night
and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the black-
en’d marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain
top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere
below
Blood-red. And in the strength of
this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs every-
where,
And past thro’ Pagan realms, and
made them mine,
And clash’d with Pagan hordes, and
bore them down,
And broke thro’ all, and in the strength
of this
Come victor. But my time is hard at
hand,
And hence I go ; and one will crown
me king
Far in the spiritual city ; and come
thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I
go.’

“While thus he spake, his eye,
dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I
grew
One with him, to believe as he be-
lieved.
Then, when the day began to wane,
we went.

“There rose a hill that none but
man could climb,
Scarr’d with a hundred wintry water-
courses —
Storm at the top, and when we gain’d
it, storm
Round us and death ; for every mo-
ment glanced
His silver arms and gloom’d : so quick
and thick
The lightnings here and there to left
and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about
us, dead,

Yea, rotten with a hundred years of
 death,
 Sprang into fire: and at the base we
 found
 On either hand, as far as eye could see,
 A great black swamp and of an evil
 smell,
 Part black, part whiten'd with the
 bones of men,
 Not to be crost, save that some ancient
 king
 Had built a way, where, link'd with
 many a bridge,
 A thousand piers ran into the great
 Sea.
 And Galahad fled along them bridge
 by bridge,
 And every bridge as quickly as he
 crost
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I
 yearn'd
 To follow; and thrice above him all
 the heavens
 Open'd and blazed with thunder such
 as seem'd
 Shoutings of all the sons of God: and
 first
 At once I saw him far on the great
 Sea,
 In silver-shining armor starry-clear;
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
 hung
 Clothed in white samite or a luminous
 cloud.
 And with exceeding swiftness ran the
 boat,
 If boat it were — I saw not whence it
 came.
 And when the heavens open'd and
 blazed again
 Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —
 And had he set the sail, or had the
 boat
 Become a living creature clad with
 wings?
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
 hung
 Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
 For now I knew the veil had been
 withdrawn.
 Then in a moment when they blazed
 again

Opening, I saw the least of little stars
 Down on the waste, and straight
 beyond the star
 I saw the spiritual city and all her
 spires
 And gateways in a glory like one
 pearl —
 No larger, tho' the goal of all the
 saints —
 Strike from the sea; and from the
 star there shot
 A rose-red sparkle to the city, and
 there
 Dwelt, and I know it was the Holy
 Grail,
 Which never eyes on earth again
 shall see.
 Then fell the floods of heaven drown-
 ing the deep.
 And how my feet recrost the death-
 ful ridge
 No memory in me lives; but that I
 touch'd
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know;
 and thence
 Taking my war-horse from the holy
 man,
 Glad that no phantom vex't me more,
 return'd
 To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's
 wars."

"O brother," ask'd Ambrosius, —
 "for in sooth
 These ancient books — and they would
 win thee — teem,
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
 With miracles and marvels like to
 these,
 Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,
 Who read but on my breviary with
 ease,
 Till my head swims; and then go forth
 and pass
 Down to the little thorpe that lies so
 close,
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's
 nest
 To these old walls — and mingle with
 our folk;
 And knowing every honest face of
 theirs

As well as ever shepherd knew his
 sheep,
 And every homely secret in their
 hearts,
 Delight myself with gossip and old
 wives,
 And ills and aches, and teething,
 lyings-in,
 And mirthful sayings, children of the
 place,
 That have no meaning half a league
 away :
 Or lulling random squabbles when
 they rise,
 Chafferings and chatterings at the
 market-cross,
 Rejoice, small man, in this small world
 of mine,
 Yea, even in their hens and in their
 eggs—
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
 Came ye on none but phantoms in
 your quest,
 No man, no woman ?”

Then Sir Percivale :

“ All men, to one so bound by such a
 vow,
 And women were as phantoms. O,
 my brother,
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess
 to thee
 How far I falter'd from my quest and
 vow ?
 For after I had lain so many nights,
 A bedmate of the snail and eft and
 snake,
 In grass and burdock, I was changed
 to win
 And meagre, and the vision had not
 come ;
 And then I chanced upon a goodly
 town
 With one great dwelling in the middle
 of it ;
 Thither I made, and there was I dis-
 arm'd
 By maidens each as fair as my flower :
 But when they led me into hall, be-
 hold,
 The Princess of that castle was the
 one,

Brother, and that one only, who had
 ever
 Made my heart leap ; for when I
 moved of old
 A slender page about her father's hall,
 And she a slender maiden, all my
 heart
 Went after her with longing : yet we
 twain
 Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a
 vow.
 And now I came upon her once again,
 And one had wedded her, and he was
 dead,
 And all his land and wealth and state
 were hers.
 And while I tarried, every day she
 set
 A banquet richer than the day before
 By me ; for all her longing and her
 will
 Was toward me as of old ; till one
 fair morn,
 I walking to and fro beside a stream
 That flash'd across her orchard under-
 neath
 Her castle-walls, she stole upon my
 walk,
 And calling me the greatest of all
 knights,
 Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the
 first time,
 And gave herself and all her wealth
 to me.
 Then I remember'd Arthur's warning
 word,
 That most of us would follow wan-
 dering fires,
 And the Quest faded in my heart.
 Anon,
 The heads of all her people drew to
 me,
 With supplication both of knees and
 tongue :
 ‘ We have heard of thee : thou art
 our greatest knight,
 Our Lady says it, and we well believe :
 Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
 And thou shalt be as Arthur in our
 land.’
 O me, my brother ! but one night my
 vow

Burnt me within, so that I rose and
 fled,
 But wail'd and wept, and hated mine
 own self,
 And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but
 her;
 Then after I was join'd with Galahad
 Cared not for her, nor anything upon
 earth."

Then said the monk, "Poor men,
 when yule is cold,
 Must be content to sit by little fires.
 And this am I, so that ye care for me
 Ever so little; yea, and blest be
 Heaven
 That brought thee here to this poor
 house of ours
 Where all the brethren are so hard,
 to warm
 My cold heart with a friend: but O
 the pity
 To find thine own first love once
 more — to hold,
 Hold her a wealthy bride within thine
 arms,
 Or all but hold, and then — cast her
 aside,
 Foregoing all her sweetness, like a
 weed.
 For we that want the warmth of
 double life,
 We that are plagned with dreams of
 something sweet
 Beyond all sweetness in a life so
 rich, —
 Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-
 wise,
 Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,
 But live like an old badger in his
 earth,
 With earth about him everywhere,
 despite
 All fast and penance. Saw ye none
 beside,
 None of your knights?"

"Yea so," said Percivale:
 "One night my pathway swerving
 east, I saw
 The pelican on the ensque of our Sir
 Bors

All in the middle of the rising moon:
 And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd
 him, and he me,
 And each made joy of either; then
 he ask'd,
 'Where is he? hast thou seen him —
 Lancelot? — Once,'
 Said good Sir Bors, 'he dash'd across
 me — mad,
 And maddening what he rode: and
 when I cried,
 "Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest
 So holy," Lancelot shouted, "Stay
 me not!
 I have been the sluggard, and I ride
 apace,
 For now there is a lion in the way."
 So vanish'd.'

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on
 Softly, and sorrowing for our Lan-
 celot,
 Because his former madness, once the
 talk
 And scandal of our table, had re-
 turn'd;
 For Lancelot's kith and kin so wor-
 ship him
 That ill to him is ill to them; to Bors
 Beyond the rest: he well had been
 content
 Not to have seen, so Lancelot might
 have seen,
 The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,
 Being so clouded with his grief and
 love,
 Small heart was his after the Holy
 Quest:
 If God would send the vision, well:
 if not,
 The Quest and he were in the hands
 of Heaven.

"And then, with small adventure
 met, Sir Bors
 Rode to the loneliest tract of all the
 realm,
 And found a people there among
 their crags,
 Our race and blood, a remnant that
 were left

Paynim amid their circles, and the
 stones
 They pitch up straight to heaven:
 and their wise men
 Were strong in that old magic which
 can trace
 The wandering of the stars, and
 scoff'd at him
 And this high Quest as at a simple
 thing:
 Told him he follow'd — almost Ar-
 thur's words —
 A mocking fire: 'what other fire than
 he,
 Whereby the blood beats, and the
 blossom blows,
 And the sea rolls, and all the world is
 warm'd?'
 And when his answer chafed them,
 the rough crowd,
 Hearing he had a difference with
 their priests,
 Seized him, and bound and plunged
 him into a cell
 Of great piled stones; and lying
 bounden there
 In darkness thro' innumerable
 hours
 He heard the hollow-ringing heavens
 sweep
 Over him till by miracle — what
 else? —
 Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt
 and fell,
 Such as no wind could move: and
 thro' the gap
 Glimmer'd the streaming scud: then
 came a night
 Still as the day was loud; and thro'
 the gap
 The seven clear stars of Arthur's
 Table Round —
 For, brother, so one night, because
 they roll
 Thro' such a round in heaven, we
 named the stars,
 Rejoicing in ourselves and in our
 King —
 And these, like bright eyes of familiar
 friends,
 In on him shone: 'And then to me,
 to me,'

Said good Sir Bors, 'beyond all hopes
 of mine,
 Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for
 myself —
 Across the seven clear stars — O
 grace to me —
 In color like the fingers of a hand
 Before a burning taper, the sweet
 Grail
 Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd
 A sharp quick thunder.' Afterwards,
 a maid,
 Who kept our holy faith among her
 kin
 In secret, entering, loosed and let him
 go."

To whom the monk: "And I re-
 member now
 That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors
 it was
 Who spake so low and sadly at our
 board;
 And mighty reverent at our grace
 was he:
 A square-set man and honest; and his
 eyes,
 An out-door sign of all the warmth
 within,
 Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath
 a cloud,
 But heaven had meant it for a sunny
 one:
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But
 when ye reach'd
 The city, found ye all your knights
 return'd,
 Or was there sooth in Arthur's proph-
 ecy,
 Tell me, and what said each, and
 what the King?"

Then answer'd Percivale: "And
 that can I,
 Brother, and truly; since the living
 words
 Of so great men as Lancelot and our
 King
 Pass not from door to door and out
 again,
 But sit within the house. O, when we
 reach'd

The city, our horses stumbling as
they trode
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cock-
atrices,
And shatter'd talbots, which had left
the stones
Raw, that they fell from, brought us
to the hall.

“And there sat Arthur on the daïs-
throne,
And those that had gone out upon the
Quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of
them,
And those that had not, stood before
the King,
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bade
me hail,
Saying, ‘A welfare in thine eye re-
proves
Our fear of some disastrous chance
for thee
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding
ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of
late
Among the strange devices of our
kings;
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall
of ours,
And from the statue Merlin moulded
for us
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but
now — the Quest,
This vision — hast thou seen the Holy
Cup,
That Joseph brought of old to Glas-
tonbury?’”

“So when I told him all thyself
hast heard,
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt re-
solve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answer'd not, but, sharply turn-
ing, ask'd
Of Gawain, ‘Gawain, was this Quest
for thee?’”

“‘Nay, lord,’ said Gawain, ‘not for
such as I.
Therefore I communed with a saintly
man,
Who made me sure the Quest was not
for me;
For I was much aweared of the
Quest:
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then
this gale
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-
pin,
And blew my merry maidens all
about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for
this,
My twelvemonth and a day were
pleasant to me.’”

“He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to
whom at first
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,
push'd
Athwart the throng to Lancelot,
caught his hand,
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,
stood,
Until the King espied him, saying to
him,
‘Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and
true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail;’
and Bors,
‘Ask me not, for I may not speak of
it:
I saw it;’ and the tears were in his
eyes.

“Then there remain'd but Lance-
lot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the
storm;
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy
Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the
last;
‘Thou, too, my Lancelot,’ ask'd the
King, ‘my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd
for thee?’”

" 'Our mightiest!' answer'd Lance-
 lot, with a groan ;
 'O King!' — and when he paused,
 methought I spied
 A dying fire of madness in his eyes —
 'O King, my friend, if friend of thine
 I be,
 Happier are those that welter in their
 sin,
 Swine in the mud, that cannot see for
 slime,
 Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a
 sin
 So strange, of such a kind, that all of
 pure,
 Noble, and knightly in me twined
 and clung
 Round that one sin, until the whole-
 some flower
 And poisonous grew together, each as
 each,
 Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when
 thy knights
 Sware, I sware with them only in the
 hope
 That could I touch or see the Holy
 Grail
 They might be pluck'd asunder. Then
 I spake
 To one most holy saint, who wept and
 said,
 That save they could be pluck'd
 asunder, all
 My quest were but in vain; to whom
 I vow'd
 That I would work according as he
 will'd.
 And forth I went, and while I yearn'd
 and strove
 To tear the twain asunder in my
 heart,
 My madness came upon me as of old,
 And whipt me into waste fields far
 away ;
 There was I beaten down by little
 men,
 Mean knights, to whom the moving
 of my sword
 And shadow of my spear had been
 enow
 To scare them from me once; and
 then I came

All in my folly to the naked shore,
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse
 grasses grew ;
 But such a blast, my King, began to
 blow,
 So loud a blast along the shore and
 sea,
 Ye could not hear the waters for the
 blast,
 Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all
 the sea
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
 Swept like a river, and the clouded
 heavens
 Were shaken with the motion and the
 sound.
 And blackening in the sea-foam
 sway'd a boat,
 Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a
 chain ;
 And in my madness to myself I said,
 " I will embark and I will lose myself,
 And in the great sea wash away my
 sin."
 I burst the chain, I sprang into the
 boat.
 Seven days I drove along the dreary
 deep,
 And with me drove the moon and all
 the stars ;
 And the wind fell, and on the seventh
 night
 I heard the shingle grinding in the
 surge,
 And felt the boat shock earth, and
 looking up,
 Behold, the enchanted towers of Car-
 bonek,
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,
 With chasm-like portals open to the
 sea,
 And steps that met the breaker! there
 was none
 Stood near it but a lion on each side
 That kept the entry, and the moon
 was full.
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up
 the stairs.
 There drew my sword. With sudden-
 flaring manes
 Those two great beasts rose upright
 like a man,

Each gript a shoulder, and I stood
 between;
 And, when I would have smitten
 them, heard a voice,
 "Doubt not, go forward; if thou
 doubt, the beasts
 Will tear thee piecemeal." Then with
 violence
 The sword was dash'd from out my
 hand, and fell.
 And up into the sounding hall I past;
 But nothing in the sounding hall I
 saw,
 No bench nor table, painting on the
 wall
 Or shield of knight; only the rounded
 moon
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
 But always in the quiet house I heard,
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost
 tower
 To the eastward: up I climb'd a thou-
 sand steps
 With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to
 climb
 For ever: at the last I reach'd a door,
 A light was in the crannies, and I
 heard,
 "Glory and joy and honor to our
 Lord
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail."
 Then in my madness I essay'd the
 door;
 It gave; and thro' a stormy glare, a
 heat
 As from a seventimes-heated furnace,
 I,
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I
 was,
 With such a fierceness that I swoon'd
 away —
 O, yet methought I saw the Holy
 Grail,
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and
 around
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings
 and eyes.
 And but for all my madness and my
 sin,
 And then my swooning, I had sworn
 I saw

That which I saw; but what I saw
 was veil'd
 And cover'd; and this Quest was not
 for me.'

"So speaking, and here ceasing,
 Lancelot left
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain
 — nay,
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish
 words, —
 A reckless and irreverent knight was
 he,
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his
 King, —
 Well, I tell thee: 'O King, my
 liege,' he said,
 'Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of
 thine?
 When have I stinted stroke in fough-
 ten field?
 But as for thine, my good friend
 Percivale,
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven
 men mad,
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than
 our least.
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I
 swear,
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed
 cat,
 And thrice as blind as any noonday
 owl,
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
 Henceforward."

"'Deafer,' said the blameless
 King,
 'Gawain, and blinder unto holy
 things
 Hope not to make thyself by idle
 vows,
 Being too blind to have desire to see.
 But if indeed there came a sign from
 heaven,
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Per-
 civale,
 For these have seen according to
 their sight.
 For every fiery prophet in old times,
 And all the sacred madness of the
 bard,

When God make music thro' them,
 could but speak
 His music by the framework and the
 chord;
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken
 truth.

“ ‘Nay — but thou errest, Lancelot :
 never yet
 Could all of true and noble in knight
 and man
 Twine round one sin, whatever it
 might be,
 With such a closeness, but apart there
 grew,
 Save that he were the swine thou
 spakest of,
 Some root of knighthood and pure
 nobleness ;
 Whereto see thou, that it may bear
 its flower.

“ ‘And spake I not too truly, O my
 knights ?
 Was I too dark a prophet when I said
 To those who went upon the Holy
 Quest,
 That most of them would follow
 wandering fires,
 Lost in the quagmire ? — lost to me
 and gone,
 And left me gazing at a barren board,
 And a lean Order — scarce return'd a
 tithé —
 And out of those to whom the vision
 came
 My greatest hardly will believe he
 saw ;
 Another hath beheld it afar off,
 And leaving human wrongs to right
 themselves,
 Cares but to pass into the silent life.
 And one hath had the vision face to
 face,
 And now his chair desires him here
 in vain,
 However they may crown him other-
 where.

“ ‘And some among you held, that
 if the King
 Had seen the sight he would have
 sworn the vow :

Not easily, seeing that the King must
 guard
 That which he rules, and is but as the
 hind
 To whom a space of land is given to
 plow.
 Who may not wander from the allot-
 ted field
 Before his work be done ; but, being
 done,
 Let visions of the night or of the
 day
 Come, as they will ; and many a time
 they come,
 Until this earth he walks on seems
 not earth,
 This light that strikes his eyeball is
 not light,
 This air that smites his forehead is
 not air
 But vision — yea, his very hand and
 foot —
 In moments when he feels he cannot
 die,
 And knows himself no vision to him-
 self,
 Nor the high God a vision, nor that
 One
 Who rose again : ye have seen what
 ye have seen.’

“ So spake the King : I knew not all
 he meant.”

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

KING ARTHUR made new knights to
 fill the gap
 Left by the Holy Quest ; and as he
 sat
 In the hall at old Caerleon, the high
 doors
 Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these
 a youth,
 Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the
 fields
 Past, and the sunshine came along
 with him.

“ Make me thy knight, because I
 know, Sir King,

All that belongs to knighthood, and I
love.”
Such was his cry : for having heard
the King
Had let proclaim a tournament — the
prize
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady
won
The golden circlet, for himself the
sword :
And there were those who knew him
near the King,
And promised for him : and Arthur
made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of
the isles —
But lately come to his inheritance,
And lord of many a barren isle was
he —
Riding at noon, a day or twain be-
fore,
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to
find
Caerleon and the King, had felt the
sun
Beat like a strong knight on his
helm, and reel'd
Almost to falling from his horse ; but
saw
Near him a mound of even-sloping
side,
Whereon a hundred stately beeches
grew,
And here and there great hollies under
them ;
But for a mile all round was open
space,
And fern and heath : and slowly Pel-
leas drew
To that dim day, then binding his
good horse
To a tree, cast himself down ; and as
he lay
At random looking over the brown
earth
Thro' that green-glooming twilight of
the grove,
It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern
without
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,

So that his eyes were dazzled looking
at it.
Then o'er it crost the dimness of a
cloud
Floating, and once the shadow of a
bird
Flying, and then a fawn ; and his
eyes closed.
And since he loved all maidens, but
no maid
In special, half-awake he whisper'd,
“ Where ?
O where ? I love thee, tho' I know
thee not.
For fair thou art and pure as Guine-
vere,
And I will make thee with my spear
and sword
As famous — O my Queen, my Guine-
vere,
For I will be thine Arthur when we
meet.”

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of
talk
And laughter at the limit of the wood,
And glancing thro' the hoary boles,
he saw,
Strange as to some old prophet might
have seem'd
A vision hovering on a sea of fire,
Damsels in divers colors like the cloud
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
On horses, and the horses richly trapt
Breast-high in that bright line of
bracken stood :
And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,
And one was pointing this way, and
one that,
Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,
And loosed his horse, and led him to
the light.
There she that seem'd the chief among
them said,
“ In happy time behold our pilot-star !
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we
ride,
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the
knights

There at Caerleon, but have lost our
way :
To right ? to left ? straight forward ?
back again ?
Which ? tell us quickly."

And Pelleas gazing thought,
"Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?"
For large her violet eyes look'd, and
her bloom
A rosy dawn kindled in stainless
heavens,
And round her limbs, mature in
womanhood;
And slender was her hand and small
her shape;
And but for those large eyes, the haunts
of scorn,
She might have seem'd a toy to trifle
with,
And pass and care no more. But
while he gazed
The beauty of her flesh abash'd the
boy,
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul :
For as the base man, judging of the
good,
Puts his own baseness in him by
default
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend
All the young beauty of his own soul
to hers,
Believing her; and when she spake
to him,
Stammer'd, and could not make her a
reply.
For out of the waste islands had he
come,
Where saving his own sisters he had
known
Scarce any but the women of his isles,
Rough wives, that laugh'd and
scream'd against the gulls,
Makers of nets, and living from the
sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the
lady round
And look'd upon her people; and as
when
A stone is flung into some sleeping
tarn,

The circle widens till it lip the marge,
Spread the slow smile thro' all her
company.

Three knights were thereamong; and
they too smiled,
Scorning him; for the lady was
Ettarre,
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, "O wild and of the
woods,
Knowest thou not the fashion of our
speech?
Or have the Heavens but given thee
a fair face,
Lacking a tongue?"

"O damsel," answer'd he,
"I woke from dreams; and coming
out of gloom
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and
crave
Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I
Go likewise: shall I lead you to the
King?"

"Lead then," she said; and thro'
the woods they went.
And while they rode, the meaning in
his eyes,
His tenderness of manner, and chaste
awe,
His broken utterances and bashful-
ness,
Were all a burthen to her, and in her
heart
She mutter'd, "I have lighted on a
fool,
Raw, yet so stale!" But since her
mind was bent
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her
name
And title, "Queen of Beauty," in the
lists
Cried — and beholding him so strong,
she thought
That peradventure he will fight for
me,
And win the circlet: therefore flatter'd
him,
Being so gracious, that he wellnigh
deem'd

His wish by hers was echo'd; and her knights
 And all her damsels too were gracious
 to him,
 For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
 Caerleon, ere they past to lodging,
 she,
 Taking his hand, "O the strong hand,"
 she said,
 "See! look at mine! but wilt thou
 fight for me,
 And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,
 That I may love thee?"

Then his helpless heart
 Leapt, and he cried, "Ay! wilt thou
 if I win?"
 "Ay, that will I," she answer'd, and
 she laugh'd,
 And straitly nipt the hand, and flung
 it from her;
 Then glanced askew at those three
 knights of hers,
 Till all her ladies laugh'd along with
 her.

"O happy world," thought Pelleas,
 "all, meseems,
 Are happy; I the happiest of them
 all."
 Nor slept that night for pleasure in
 his blood,
 And green wood-ways, and eyes among
 the leaves;
 Then being on the morrow knighted,
 sware
 To love one only. And as he came
 away,
 The men who met him rounded on
 their heels
 And wonder'd after him, because his
 face
 Shone like the countenance of a priest
 of old
 Against the flame about a sacrifice
 Kindled by fire from heaven: so glad
 was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets,
 and strange knights

From the four winds came in: and
 each one sat,
 Tho' served with choice from air, land,
 stream, and sea,
 Oft in mid-banquet measuring with
 his eyes
 His neighbor's make and might: and
 Pelleas look'd
 Noble among the noble, for he dream'd
 His lady loved him, and he knew him-
 self.
 Loved of the King: and him his new-
 made knight
 Worshipt, whose lightest whisper
 moved him more
 Than all the ranged reasons of the
 world.

Then blush'd and brake the morn-
 ing of the jousts,
 And this was call'd "The Tournament
 of Youth:"
 For Arthur, loving his young knight,
 withheld
 His older and his mightier from the
 lists,
 That Pelleas might obtain his lady's
 love,
 According to her promise, and remain
 Lord of the tourney. And Arthur
 had the jousts
 Down in the flat field by the shore of
 Usk
 Holden: the gilded parapets were
 crown'd
 With faces, and the great tower fill'd
 with eyes
 Up to the summit, and the trumpets
 blew.
 There all day long Sir Pelleas kept
 the field
 With honor: so by that strong hand
 of his
 The sword and golden circlet were
 achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved:
 the heat
 Of pride and glory fired her face; her
 eye
 Sparkled; she caught the circlet from
 his lance,

And there before the people crown'd
herself :
So for the last time she was gracious
to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space — her
look
Bright for all others, cloudier on her
knight —
Linger'd Ettarre: and seeing Pelleas
droop,
Said Guinevere, " We marvel at thee
much,
O damsel, wearing this unsunny face
To him who won thee glory!" And
she said,
" Had ye not held your Lancelot in
your bower,
My Queen, he had not won." Where-
at the Queen,
As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and
went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and
herself,
And those three knights all set their
faces home,
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw
him cried,
" Damsels — and yet I should be
shamed to say it —
I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back
Among yourselves. Would rather
that we had
Some rough old knight who knew the
worldly way,
Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride
And jest with: take him to you, keep
him off,
And pamper him with papmeat, if ye
will,
Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,
Such as the wholesome mothers tell
their boys.
Nay, should ye try him with a merry
one
To find his mettle, good: and if he fly
us,
Small matter! let him." This her
damsels heard,

And mindful of her small and cruel
hand,
They, closing round him thro' the
journey home,
Acted her hest, and always from her
side
Restrain'd him with all manner of
device,
So that he could not come to speech
with her.
And when she gain'd her castle, up-
sprang the bridge,
Down rang the grate of iron thro' the
groove,
And he was left alone in open field.

" These be the ways of ladies,"
Pelleas thought,
" To those who love them, trials of
our faith.
Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,
For loyal to the uttermost am I."
So made his moan; and, darkness
falling, sought
A priory not far off, there lodged, but
rose
With morning every day, and, moist
or dry,
Full-arm'd upon his charger all day
long
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to
him.

And this persistence turn'd her
scorn to wrath.
Then calling her three knights, she
charged them, " Out!
And drive him from the walls." And
out they came,
But Pelleas overthrew them as they
dash'd
Against him one by one; and these
return'd,
But still he kept his watch beneath
the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate;
and once,
A week beyond, while walking on the
walls
With her three knights, she pointed
downward, " Look,

He haunts me — I cannot breathe —
 besieges me;
 Down! strike him! put my hate into
 your strokes,
 And drive him from my walls." And
 down they went,
 And Pelleas overthrew them one by
 one;
 And from the tower above him cried
 Ettarre,
 "Bind him, and bring him in."

He heard her voice;
 Then let the strong hand, which had
 overthrown
 Her minion-knights, by those he over-
 threw
 Be bounden straight, and so they
 brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,
 the sight
 Of her rich beauty made him at one
 glance
 More bondsman in his heart than in
 his bonds.
 Yet with good cheer he spake, "Be-
 hold me, Lady,
 A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;
 And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,
 Content am I so that I see thy face
 But once a day: for I have sworn my
 vows,
 And thou hast given thy promise, and
 I know
 That all these pains are trials of my
 faith,
 And that thyself, when thou hast seen
 me strain'd
 And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length
 Yield me thy love and know me for
 thy knight."

Then she began to rail so bitterly,
 With all her damsels, he was stricken
 mute;
 But when she mock'd his vows and
 the great King,
 Lighted on words: "For pity of thine
 own self,
 Peace, Lady, peace: is he not thine
 and mine?"

"Thou fool," she said, "I never heard
 his voice
 But long'd to break away. Unbind
 him now,
 And thrust him out of doors; for save
 he be
 Fool to the midmost marrow of his
 bones,
 He will return no more." And those,
 her three,
 Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him
 from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again
 She call'd them, saying, "There he
 watches yet,
 There like a dog before his master's
 door!
 Kick'd, he returns: do ye not hate
 him, ye?
 Ye know yourselves: how can ye bide
 at peace,
 Affronted with his fulsome innocence?
 Are ye but creatures of the board and
 bed,
 No men to strike? Fall on him all at
 once,
 And if ye slay him I reckon not: if ye fail,
 Give ye the slave mine order to be
 bound,
 Bind him as heretofore, and bring him
 in:
 It may be ye shall slay him in his
 bonds."

She spake; and at her will they
 couch'd their spears,
 Three against one: and Gawain pass-
 ing by,
 Bound upon solitary adventure, saw
 Low down beneath the shadow of
 those towers
 A villany, three to one: and thro' his
 heart
 The fire of honor and all noble deeds
 Flash'd, and he call'd, "I strike upon
 thy side —
 The caitiffs!" "Nay," said Pelleas,
 "but forbear;
 He needs no aid who doth his lady's
 will."

So Gawain, looking at the villany
done,
Forebore, but in his heat and eagerness
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog,
withheld
A moment from the vermin that he
sees
Before him, shivers, ere he springs
and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to
three;
And they rose up, and bound, and
brought him in.
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,
burn'd
Full on her knights in many an evil
name
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten
hound:
"Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit
to touch,
Far less to bind, your victor, and
thrust him out,
And let who will release him from his
bonds.
And if he comes again" — there she
brake short;
And Pelleas answer'd, "Lady, for in-
deed
I loved you and I deem'd you beauti-
ful,
I cannot brook to see your beauty
marr'd
Thro' evil spite: and if ye love me not,
I cannot bear to dream you so for-
sworn:
I had liefer ye were worthy of my
love,
Than to be loved again of you — fare-
well;
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my
love,
Vex not yourself: ye will not see me
more."

While thus he spake, she gazed
upon the man
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds,
and thought,
"Why have I push'd him from me?
this man loves,

If love there be: yet him I loved not.
Why?
I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that
in him
A something — was it nobler than my-
self? —
Seem'd my reproach? He is not of
my kind.
He could not love me, did he know me
well.
Nay, let him go — and quickly." And
her knights
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden
out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed
him from his bonds,
And flung them o'er the walls; and
afterward,
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's
rag,
"Faith of my body," he said, "and
art thou not —
Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur
made
Knight of his table; yea and he that
won
The circlet? wherefore hast thou so
defamed
Thy brotherhood in me and all the
rest,
As let these caitiffs on thee work their
will?"

And Pelleas answer'd, "O, their
wills are hers
For whom I won the circlet; and
mine, hers,
Thus to be bounden, so to see her
face,
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mock-
ery now,
Other than when I found her in the
woods;
And tho' she hath me bounden but in
spite,
And all to flout me, when they bring
me in,
Let me be bounden, I shall see her
face;
Else must I die thro' mine unhappi-
ness."

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho'
 in scorn,
 "Why, let my lady bind me if she
 will,
 And let my lady beat me if she will:
 But an she send her delegate to thrall
 These fighting hands of mine — Christ
 kill me then
 But I will slice him handless by the
 wrist,
 And let my lady sear the stump for
 him,
 Howl as he may. But hold me for
 your friend:
 Come, ye know nothing: here I pledge
 my troth,
 Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,
 I will be leal to thee and work thy
 work,
 And tame thy jailing princess to
 thine hand.
 Lend me thine horse and arms, and I
 will say
 That I have slain thee. She will let
 me in
 To hear the manner of thy fight and
 fall;
 Then, when I come within her coun-
 sels, then
 From prime to vespers will I chant
 thy praise
 As prowest knight and truest lover,
 more
 Than any have sung thee living, till
 she long
 To have thee back in lusty life again,
 Not to be bound, save by white bonds
 and warm,
 Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now
 thy horse
 And armor: let me go: be comforted:
 Give me three days to melt her fancy,
 and hope
 The third night hence will bring thee
 news of gold."

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all
 his arms,
 Saving the goodly sword, his prize,
 and took
 Gawain's, and said, "Betray me not,
 but help —

Art thou not he whom men call light-
 of-love?"

"Ay," said Gawain, "for women be
 so light."
 Then bounded forward to the castle
 walls,
 And raised a bugle hanging from his
 neck,
 And winded it, and that so musically
 That all the old echoes hidden in the
 wall
 Rang out like hollow woods at hunt-
 ing-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the
 tower;
 "Avaunt," they cried, "our lady loves
 thee not."
 But Gawain lifting up his vizor said,
 "Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's
 court,
 And I have slain this Pelleas whom
 ye hate:
 Behold his horse and armor. Open
 gates,
 And I will make you merry."

And down they ran,
 Her damsels, crying to their lady,
 "Lo!
 Pelleas is dead — he told us — he that
 hath
 His horse and armor: will ye let him
 in?
 He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the
 court,
 Sir Gawain — there he waits below the
 wall,
 Blowing his bugle as who should say
 him nay."

And so, leave given, straight on
 thro' open door
 Rode Gawain, whom she greeted cour-
 teously.
 "Dead, is it so?" she ask'd. "Ay,
 ay," said he,
 "And oft in dying cried upon your
 name."
 "Pity on him," she answer'd, "a good
 knight,

But never let me bide one hour at
peace."

"Ay," thought Gawain, "and you be
fair enow :

But I to your dead man have given
my troth,

That whom ye loathe, him will I make
you love."

So those three days, aimless about
the land,

Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering
Waited, until the third night brought
a moon

With promise of large light on woods
and ways.

Hot was the night and silent ; but a
sound

Of Gawain ever coming, and this
lay —

Which Pelleas had heard sung before
the Queen,

And seen her sadden listening — vext
his heart,

And marr'd his rest — "A worm
within the rose."

"A rose, but one, none other rose
had I,

A rose, one rose, and this was won-
drous fair,

One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth
and sky,

One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all
mine air —

I cared not for the thorns ; the thorns
were there.

"One rose, a rose to gather by and
by,

One rose, a rose, to gather and to
wear,

No rose but one — what other rose
had I ?

One rose, my rose ; a rose that will
not die, —

He dies who loves it, — if the worm
be there."

This tender rhyme, and evermore
the doubt,

"Why lingers Gawain with his golden
news ?"

So shook him that he could not rest,
but rode

Ere midnight to her walls, and bound
his horse

Hard by the gates. Wide open were
the gates,

And no watch kept ; and in thro'
these he past,

And heard but his own steps, and his
own heart

Beating, for nothing moved but his
own self,

And his own shadow. Then he crost
the court,

And spied not any light in hall or
bower,

But saw the postern portal also wide
Yawning ; and up a slope of garden, all

Of roses white and red, and brambles
mixt

And overgrowing them, went on, and
found,

Here too, all hush'd below the mellow
moon,

Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave
Came lightening downward, and so
spilt itself

Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavil-
ions rear'd

Above the bushes, gilden-peakt : in one,
Red after revel, droned her lurdane

knights
Slumbering, and their three squires
across their feet :

In one, their malice on the placid lip
Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her

damsels lay :

And in the third, the circlet of the
jousts

Bound on her brow, were Gawain and
Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro'
the leaf

To find a nest and feels a snake, he
drew :

Back, as a coward slinks from what
he fears

To cope with, or a traitor proven, or
hound
Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame
Creep with his shadow thro' the court
again,
Fingering at his sword-handle until he
stood
There on the castle-bridge once more,
and thought,
"I will go back, and slay them where
they lie."

And so went back, and seeing them
yet in sleep
Said, "Ye, that so dishallow the holy
sleep,
Your sleep is death," and drew the
sword, and thought,
"What! slay a sleeping knight? the
King hath bound
And sworn me to this brotherhood;"
again,
"Alas that ever a knight should be
so false."
Then turn'd, and so return'd, and
groaning laid
The naked sword athwart their naked
throats,
There left it, and them sleeping; and
she lay,
The circlet of the tourney round her
brows,
And the sword of the tourney across her
throat.

And forth he past, and mounting
on his horse
Stared at her towers that, larger than
themselves
In their own darkness, throng'd into
the moon.
Then crush'd the saddle with his
thighs, and clench'd
His hands, and madden'd with himself
and moan'd:

"Would they have risen against
me in their blood
At the last day? I might have an-
swer'd them
Even before high God. O towers so
strong,

Huge, solid, would that even while I
gaze
The crack of earthquake shivering to
your base
Split you, and Hell burst up your
harlot roofs
Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and
thro' within,
Black as the harlot's heart — hollow
as a skull!
Let the fierce east scream thro' your
eyelet-holes,
And whirl the dust of harlots round
and round
In dung and nettles! hiss, snake — I
saw him there —
Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell.
Who yells
Here in the still sweet summer night,
but I —
I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd
her fool?
Fool, beast — he, she, or I? myself
most fool;
Beast too, as lacking human wit —
disgraced,
Dishonor'd all for trial of true love —
Love? — we be all alike: only the
King
Hath made us fools and liars. O
noble vows!
O great and sane and simple race of
brutes
That own no lust because they have
no law!
For why should I have loved her to
my shame?
I loathe her, as I loved her to my
shame.
I never loved her, I but lusted for her —
Away —"

He dash'd the rowel into his
horse,
And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'
the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch
on her throat,
Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd
herself

To Gawain: "Liar, for thou hast not
slain
This Pelleas! here he stood, and might
have slain
Me and thyself." And he that tells
the tale
Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on
earth,
And only lover; and thro' her love
her life
Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half
the night,
And over hard and soft, striking the
sod
From out the soft, the spark from off
the hard,
Rode till the star above the wakening
sun,
Beside that tower where Percivale was
cowl'd,
Glanced from the rosy forehead of
the dawn.
For so the words were flash'd into his
heart
He knew not whence or wherefore.
"O sweet star,
Pure on the virgin forehead of the
dawn!"
And there he would have wept, but
felt his eyes
Harder and drier than a fountain
bed
In summer: thither came the village
girls
And linger'd talking, and they come
no more
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it
from the heights
Again with living waters in the change
Of seasons: hard his eyes; harder his
heart
Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs,
that he,
Gasping, "Of Arthur's hall am I, but
here,
Here let me rest and die," cast him-
self down,
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep;
so lay,

Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain
fired
The hall of Merlin, and the morning
star
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame,
and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some
one nigh,
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,
crying,
"False! and I held thee pure as Guin-
evere."

But Percivale stood near him and
replied
"Am I but false as Guinevere is
pure?
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or
being one
Of our free-spoken Table hast not
heard
That Lancelot" — there he check'd
himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as
with one
Who gets a wound in battle, and the
sword
That made it plunges thro' the
wound again,
And pricks it deeper: and he shrank
and wail'd,
"Is the Queen false?" and Percivale
was mute.
"Have any of our Round Table held
their vows?"
And Percivale made answer not a
word.
"Is the King true?" "The King!"
said Percivale.
"Why then let men couple at once
with wolves.
What! art thou mad?"

But Pelleas, leaping up,
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on
his horse
And fled: small pity upon his horse
had he,
Or on himself, or any, and when he
met

A cripple, one that held a hand for
 alms —
 Hunch'd as he was, and like an old
 dwarf-elm
 That turns its back on the salt blast,
 the boy
 Paused not, but overrode him, shout-
 ing, "False,
 And false with Gawain!" and so left
 him bruised
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill
 and wood
 Went ever streaming by him till the
 gloom,
 That follows on the turning of the
 world,
 Darken'd the common path: he
 twitch'd the reins,
 And made his beast that better knew
 it, swerve
 Now off it and now on; but when he
 saw
 High up in heaven the hall that Mer-
 lin built,
 Blackening against the dead-green
 stripes of even,
 "Black nest of rats," he groan'd, "ye
 build too high."

Not long thereafter from the city
 gates
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
 Warm with a gracious parting from
 the Queen,
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a
 star
 And marvelling what it was: on
 whom the boy,
 Across the silent seeded meadow-
 grass
 Borne, clash'd: and Lancelot, saying,
 "What name hast thou
 That ridest here so blindly and so
 hard?"
 "I have no name," he shouted, "a
 scourge am I,
 To lash the treasons of the Table
 Round."
 "Yea, but thy name?" "I have
 many names," he cried:
 "I am wrath and shame and hate
 and evil fame,

And like a poisonous wind I pass to
 blast
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and
 the Queen."
 "First over me," said Lancelot, "shalt
 thou pass."
 "Fight therefore," yell'd the other,
 and either knight
 Drew back a space, and when they
 closed, at once
 The weary steed of Pelleas flounder-
 ing flung
 His rider, who call'd out from the
 dark field,
 "Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I
 have no sword."
 Then Lancelot, "Yea, between thy
 lips — and sharp;
 But here will I disedge it by thy
 death."
 "Slay then," he shriek'd, "my will is
 to be slain,"
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the
 fall'n,
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood,
 then spake:
 "Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say
 thy say."

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-
 horse back
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief
 while
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the
 dark field,
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced
 that both
 Brake into hall together, worn and
 pale.
 There with her knights and dames
 was Guinevere.
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lance-
 lot
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas,
 him
 Who had not greeted her, but cast
 himself
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing
 "Have ye fought?"
 She ask'd of Lancelot. "Ay, m'
 Queen," he said.

"And thou hast overthrown him?"
 "Ay, my Queen."
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, "O
 young knight,
 Hath the great heart of knighthood
 in thee fail'd
 So far thou canst not bide, unfro-
 wardly,
 A fall from him?" Then, for he
 answer'd not,
 "Or hast thou other griefs? If I,
 the Queen,
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and
 let me know."
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce
 She quail'd; and he, hissing "I have
 no sword,"
 Sprang from the door into the dark.
 The Queen
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on
 her;
 And each foresaw the dolorous day
 to be:
 And all talk died, as in a grove all
 song
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of
 prey;
 Then a long silence came upon the
 hall,
 And Modred thought, "The time is
 hard at hand."

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in
 his mood
 Had made mock-knight of Arthur's
 Table Round,
 At Camelot, high above the yellow-
 ing woods,
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the
 hall.
 And toward him from the hall, with
 harp in hand,
 And from the crown thereof a car-
 canet
 Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize
 Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,
 Came Tristram, saying, "Why skip
 ye so, Sir Fool?"

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding
 once
 Far down beneath a winding wall of
 rock
 Heard a child wail. A stump of oak
 half dead,
 From roots like some black coil of
 carven snakes,
 Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro'
 mid air
 Bearing an eagle's nest: and thro'
 the tree
 Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro'
 the wind
 Pierced ever a child's cry: and crag
 and tree
 Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the peril-
 ous nest,
 This ruby necklace thrice around her
 neck,
 And all unscarr'd from beak or talon,
 brought
 A maiden babe; which Arthur pity-
 ing took,
 Then gave it to his Queen to rear:
 the Queen
 But coldly acquiescing, in her white
 arms
 Received, and after loved it tenderly,
 And named it Nestling; so forgot
 herself
 A moment, and her cares; till that
 young life
 Being smitten in mid heaven with
 mortal cold
 Past from her; and in time the carcanet
 Vext her with plaintive memories of
 the child:
 So she, delivering it to Arthur, said
 "Take thou the jewels of this dead
 innocence,
 And make them, an thou wilt, a tour-
 ney-prize."

 To whom the King, "Peace to thine
 eagle-borne
 Dead nestling, and this honor after
 death,
 Following thy will! but, O my Queen,
 I muse
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or
 zone

Those diamonds that I rescued from
the tarn,
And Lancelot won, methought, for
thee to wear."

"Would rather you had let them
fall," she cried,
"Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as
they were,
A bitterness to me! — ye look amazed,
Not knowing they were lost as soon
as given —
Slid from my hands, when I was lean-
ing out
Above the river — that unhappy child
Past in her barge: but rosier luck
will go
With these rich jewels, seeing that
they came
Not from the skeleton of a brother-
slayer,
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.
Perchance — who knows? — the pur-
est of thy knights
May win them for the purest of my
maids."

She ended, and the cry of a great
jousts
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the
ways
From Camelot in among the faded
fields
To furthest towers; and everywhere
the knights
Arm'd for a day of glory before the
King.

But on the hither side of that loud
morn
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage
ribb'd
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals,
his nose
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one
hand off,
And one with shatter'd fingers dan-
gling lame,
A churl, to whom indignantly the
King.

"My churl, for whom Christ died,
what evil beast
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy
face? or fiend?
Man was it who marr'd heaven's
image in thee thus?"

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of
splinter'd teeth,
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with
blunt stump
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said
the maim'd churl,

"He took them and he drave them
to his tower —
Some hold he was a table-knight of
thine —
A hundred goodly ones — the Red
Knight, he —
Lord, I was tending swine, and the
Red Knight
Brake in upon me and drave them to
his tower;
And when I call'd upon thy name as
one
That doest right by gentle and by
churl,
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would
outright have slain,
Save that he sware me to a message,
saying,
'Tell thou the King and all his liars,
that I
Have founded my Round Table in
the North,
And whatsoever his own knights have
sworn
My knights have sworn the counter
to it — and say
My tower is full of harlots, like his
court,
But mine are worthier, seeing they
profess
To be none other than themselves —
and say
My knights are all adulterers like his
own,
But mine are truer, seeing they pro-
fess
To be none other; and say his hour is
come,

The heathen are upon him, his long
 lance
 Broken, and his Excalibur a straw.' "

Then Arthur turned to Kay the
 seneschal,
 "Take thou my churl, and tend him
 curiously
 Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be
 whole.
 The heathen — but that ever-climbing
 wave,
 Hurl'd back again so often in empty
 foam,
 Hath lain for years at rest — and
 renegades,
 Thieves, bandits, leavings of confu-
 sion, whom
 The wholesome realm is purged of
 elsewhere,
 Friends, thro' your manhood and your
 féalty, — now
 Make their last head like Satan in
 the North.
 My younger knights, new-made, in
 whom your flower
 Waits to be solid fruit of golden
 deeds,
 Move with me toward their quelling,
 which achieved,
 The loneliest ways are safe from
 shore to shore.
 But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my
 place
 Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the
 field;
 For wherefore shouldst thou care to
 mingle with it,
 Only to yield my Queen her own
 again?
 Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it
 well?"

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, "It
 is well:
 Yet better if the King abide, and
 leave
 The leading of his younger knights
 to me.
 Else, for the King has will'd it, it is
 well."

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot fol-
 low'd him,
 And while they stood without the
 doors, the King
 Turn'd to him saying, "Is it then so
 well?
 Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he
 Of whom was written, 'A sound is in
 his ears'?"
 The foot that loiters, bidden go, — the
 glance
 That only seems half-loyal to com-
 mand, —
 A manner somewhat fall'n from rev-
 erence —
 Or have I dream'd the bearing of our
 knights
 Tells of a manhood ever less and
 lower?
 Or whence the fear lest this my
 realm, uprear'd,
 Bynoble deeds at one with noble vows,
 From flat confusion and brute vio-
 lences,
 Reel back into the beast, and be no
 more?"

He spoke, and taking all his younger
 knights,
 Down the slope city rode, and sharply
 turn'd
 North by the gate. In her high bower
 the Queen,
 Working a tapestry, lifted up her
 head,
 Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not
 that she sigh'd.
 Then ran across her memory the
 strange rhyme
 Of bygone Merlin, "Where is he who
 knows?
 From the great deep to the great
 deep he goes."

But when the morning of a tourna-
 ment,
 By these in earnest those in mockery
 call'd
 The Tournament of the Dead Inno-
 cence,
 Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lan-
 celot,

Round whose sick head all night, like
birds of prey,
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd,
arose,
And down a streetway hung with folds
of pure
White samite, and by fountains run-
ning wine,
Where children sat in white with cups
of gold,
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow
sad steps
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd
chair.

He glanced and saw the stately gal-
leries,
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of
their Queen
White-robed in honor of the stainless
child,
And some with scatter'd jewels, like
a bank
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks
of fire.
He look'd but once, and vail'd his
eyes again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in
a dream
To ears but half-awaked, then one low
roll
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts
began:
And ever the wind blew, and yellow-
ing leaf
And gloom and gleam, and shower
and shorn plume
Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as
one
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,
When all the goodlier guests are past
away,
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er
the lists.
He saw the laws that ruled the
tournament
Broken, but spake not; once, a knight
cast down
Before his throne of arbitration
cursed

The dead babe and the follies of the
King;
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,
And show'd him, like a vermin in its
hole,
Modred, a narrow face: anon he heard
The voice that billow'd round the
barriers roar
An ocean-sounding welcome to one
knight;
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,
And armor'd all in forest green,
whereon
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
And wearing but a holly-spray for
crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on
shield
A spear, a harp, a bugle — Tristram
— late
From overseas in Brittany return'd,
And marriage with a princess of that
realm,
Isolt the White — Sir Tristram of the
Woods —
Whom Lancelot knew, had held some-
time with pain
His own against him, and now yearn'd
to shake
The burden off his heart in one full
shock
With Tristram ev'n to death: his
strong hands gript
And dinted the gilt dragons right and
left,
Until he groan'd for wrath — so many
of those,
That ware their ladies' colors on the
casque,
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the
bounds,
And there with gibes and flickering
mockeries
Stood, while he mutter'd, "Craven
crests! O shame!
What faith have these in whom they
sware to love?
The glory of our Round Table is no
more."

So Tristram won, and Lancelot
gave, the gems,

Not speaking other word than "Hast thou won?
 Art thou the purest, brother? See, the hand
 Wherewith thou takest this, is red!"
 to whom
 Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's languorous mood,
 Made answer, "Ay, but wherefore toss me this
 Like a dry bone cast to some hungry hound?
 Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength of heart
 And might of limb, but mainly use and skill,
 Are winners in this pastime of our King.
 My hand — belike the lance hath dript upon it —
 No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief knight,
 Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,
 Great brother, thou nor I have made the world;
 Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine."

And Tristram round the gallery made his horse
 Caracole; then bow'd his homage, bluntly saying,
 "Fair damsels, each to him who worships each
 Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold
 This day my Queen of Beauty is not here."
 And most of these were mute, some anger'd, one,
 Murmuring, "All courtesy is dead," and one,
 "The glory of our Round Table is no more."

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and mantle clung,
 And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day
 Went glooming down in wet and weariness:

But under her black brows a swarthy one
 Laugh'd shrilly, crying, "Praise the patient saints,
 Our one white day of Innocence hath past,
 Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt. So be it.
 The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the year,
 Would make the world as blank as Winter-tide.
 Come — let us gladden their sad eyes, our Queen's
 And Lancelot's at this night's solemnity
 With all the kindlier colors of the field."

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the feast
 Variously gay: for he that tells the tale
 Liken'd them, saying, as when an hour of cold
 Falls on the mountain in midsummer snows,
 And all the purple slopes of mountain flowers
 Pass under white, till the warm hour returns
 With veer of wind, and all are flowers again;
 So dame and damsel cast the simple white,
 And glowing in all colors, the live grass,
 Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy, glanced
 About the revels, and with mirth so loud
 Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the Queen,
 And wroth at Tristram and the lawless jousts,
 Brake up their sports, then slowly to her bower
 Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow morn,
 High over all the yellowing Autumn tide,

Danced like a wither'd leaf before the
hall.
Then Tristram saying, "Why skip ye
so, Sir Fool?"
Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet
replied,
"Belike for lack of wiser company;
Or being fool, and seeing too much
wit
Makes the world rotten, why, belike I
skip
To know myself the wisest knight of
all."
"Ay, fool," said Tristram, but 'tis
eating dry
To dance without a catch, a roundelay
To dance to." Then he twangled on
his harp,
And while he twangled little Dagonet
stood
Quiet as any water-sodden log
Stay'd in the wandering warble of a
brook;
But when the twangling ended, skipt
again;
And being ask'd, "Why skip ye not,
Sir Fool?"
Made answer, "I had liefer twenty
years
Skip to the broken music of my brains
Than any broken music thou canst
make."
Then Tristram, waiting for the quip
to come,
"Good now, what music have I
broken, fool?"
And little Dagonet, skipping, "Arthur,
the King's;
For when thou playest that air with
Queen Isolt,
Thou makest broken music with thy
bride,
Her daintier namesake down in Brit-
tany —
And so thou breakest Arthur's music
too."
"Save for that broken music in thy
brains,
Sir Fool," said Tristram, "I would
break thy head.
Fool, I came late, the heathen wars
were o'er,

The life had flown, we sware but by
the shell —
I am but a fool to reason with a fool —
Come, thou art crabb'd and sour:
but lean me down,
Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses'
ears,
And harken if my music be not true.

"Free love — free field — we love
but while we may:
The woods are hush'd, their music is
no more:
The leaf is dead, the yearning past
away:
New leaf, new life — the days of frost
are o'er:
New life, new love, to suit the newer
day:
New loves are sweet as those that went
before:
Free love — free field — we love but
while we may."

"Ye might have moved slow-meas-
ure to my tune,
Not stood stockstill. I made it in the
woods,
And heard it ring as true as tested
gold."

But Dagonet with one foot poised
in his hand,
"Friend, did ye mark that fountain
yesterday
Made to run wine? — but this had run
itself
All out like a long life to a sour
end —
And them that round it sat with gold
en cups
To hand the wine to whosoever came —
The twelve small damosels white as
Innocence,
In honor of poor Innocence the babe,
Who left the gems which Innocence
the Queen
Lent to the King, and Innocence the
King
Gave for a prize — and one of those
white slips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty
 one,
 'Drink, drink, Sir Fool,' and there-
 upon I drank,
 Spat — pish — the cup was gold, the
 draught was mud."

And Tristram, "Was it muddier than
 thy gibes?
 Is all the laughter gone dead out of
 thee? —
 Not marking how the knighthood
 mock thee, fool —
 Fear God: honor the King — his
 one true knight —
 Sole follower of the vows' — for here
 be they
 Who knew thee swine enow before I
 came,
 Smuttier than blasted grain: but
 when the King
 Had made thee fool, thy vanity so
 shot up
 It frightened all free fool from out
 thy heart;
 Which left thee less than fool, and less
 than swine,
 A naked aught — yet swine I hold
 thee still,
 For I have flung thee pearls and find
 thee swine."

And little Dagonet mincing with his
 feet,
 "Knight, an ye fling those rubies
 round my neck
 In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast
 some touch
 Of music, since I care not for thy
 pearls.
 Swine? I have wallow'd, I have
 wash'd — the world
 Is flesh and shadow — I have had my
 day.
 The dirty nurse, Experience, in her
 kind
 Hath foul'd me — an I wallow'd, then
 I wash'd —
 I have had my day and my philoso-
 phies —
 And thank the Lord I am King Ar-
 thur's fool.

Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses,
 rams and geese
 Troop'd round a Paynim harper once,
 who thrumm'd
 On such a wire as musically as thou
 Some such fine song — but never a
 king's fool."

And Tristram, "Then were swine,
 goats, asses, geese
 The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim
 bard
 Had such a mastery of his mystery
 That he could harp his wife up out
 of hell."

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball
 of his foot,
 "And whither harp'st thou thine?
 down! and thyself
 Down! and two more: a helpful harp-
 er thou,
 That harpest downward! Dost thou
 know the star
 We call the harp of Arthur up in
 heaven?"

And Tristram, "Ay, Sir Fool, for
 when our King
 Was victor wellnigh day by day, the
 knights,
 Glorying in each new glory, set his
 name
 High on hills, and in the signs of
 heaven."

And Dagonet answer'd, "Ay, and
 when the land
 Was freed, and the Queen false, ye
 set yourself
 To babble about him, all to show your
 wit —
 And whether he were King by cour-
 tesy,
 Or King by right — and so went harp-
 ing down
 The black king's highway, got so far,
 and grew
 So witty that ye play'd at ducks and
 drakes
 With Arthur's vows on the great lake
 of fire.

Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the star?

“Nay, fool,” said Tristram, “not in open day.”

And Dagonet, “Nay, nor will: I see it and hear.

It makes a silent music up in heaven, And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,

And then we skip.” “Lo, fool,” he said, “ye talk

Fool’s treason: is the King thy brother fool?”

Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and shrill’d,

“Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of fools!

Conceits himself as God that he can make

Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk

From burning spurge, honey from hornet-combs,

And men from beasts — Long live the king of fools!”

And down the city Dagonet danced away;

But thro’ the slowly-mellowing avenues

And solitary passes of the wood Rode Tristram toward Lyonnesse and the west.

Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt With ruby-circled neck, but evermore Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye For all that walk’d, or crept, or perch’d, or flew.

Anon the face, as, when a gust hath blown,

Unruffling waters re-collect the shape Of one that in them sees himself, return’d;

But at the slot or fewmets of a deer, Or ev’n a fall’n feather, vanish’d again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn

Thro’ many a league-long bower he rode. At length

A lodge of intertwisted beechen-boughs

Furze-cramm’d, and bracken-rooft, the which himself

Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt

Against a shower, dark in the golden grove

Appearing, sent his fancy back to where

She lived a moon in that low lodge with him:

Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish King,

With six or seven, when Tristram was away,

And snatch’d her thence; yet dreading worse than shame

Her warrior Tristram, spake not any word,

But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram lookt

So sweet, that halting, in he past, and sank

Down on a drift of foliage random blown;

But could not rest for musing how to smoothe

And sleek his marriage over to the Queen.

Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all

The tonguesters of the court she had not heard.

But then what folly had sent him overseas

After she left him lonely here? a name?

Was it the name of one in Brittany, Isolt, the daughter of the King?

“Isolt

Of the white hands” they call’d her: the sweet name

Allured him first, and then the maid herself,

Who served him well with those white hands of hers,

And loved him well, until himself had thought

He loved her also, wedded easily,
 But left her all as easily and return'd.
 The black-blue Irish hair and Irish
 eyes
 Had drawn him home — what marvel?
 then he laid
 His brows upon the drifted leaf and
 dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of
 Brittany
 Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,
 And show'd them both the ruby-chain,
 and both
 Began to struggle for it, till his
 Queen
 Graspt it so hard, that all her hand
 was red.
 Then cried the Breton, "Look, her
 hand is red!
 These be no rubies, this is frozen
 blood,
 And melts within her hand — her
 hand is hot
 With ill desires, but this I gave thee,
 look,
 Is all as cool and white as any flower."
 Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and
 then
 A whimpering of the spirit of the
 child,
 Because the twain had spoiled her
 carcanet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a
 hundred spears
 Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,
 And many a glancing plash and sal-
 lowy isle,
 The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty
 marsh
 Glared on a huge machicolated tower
 That stood with open doors, where-
 out was roll'd
 A roar of riot, as from men secure
 Amid their marshes, ruffians at their
 ease
 Among their harlot-brides, an evil
 song.
 "Lo there," said one of Arthur's
 youth, for there,

High on a grim dead tree before the
 tower,
 A goodly brother of the Table Round
 Swung by the neck: and on the
 boughs a shield
 Showing a shower of blood in a field
 noir,
 And there beside a horn, inflamed the
 knights
 At that dishonor done the gilded spur,
 Till each would clash the shield, and
 blow the horn.
 But Arthur waved them back. Alone
 he rode.
 Then at the dry harsh roar of the
 great horn,
 That sent the face of all the marsh
 aloft
 An ever upward-rushing storm and
 cloud
 Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight
 heard, and all,
 Even to tipmost lance and top-
 most helm,
 In blood-red armor sallying, howl'd
 to the King,

"The teeth of Hell flay bare and
 gnash thee flat! —
 Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted
 King
 Who fain had clipt free manhood
 from the world —
 The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's
 curse, and I!
 Slain was the brother of my para-
 mour
 By a knight of thine, and I that heard
 her whine
 And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
 Sware by the scorpion-worm that
 twists in hell,
 And stings itself to everlasting death,
 To hang whatever knight of thine I
 fought
 And tumbled. Art thou King? —
 Look to thy life!"

He ended: Arthur knew the voice;
 the face
 Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the
 name

Went wandering somewhere darkling
 in his mind.
 And Arthur deign'd not use of word
 or sword,
 But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd
 from horse
 To strike him, overbalancing his
 bulk,
 Down from the causeway heavily to
 the swamp
 Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching
 wave,
 Heard in dead night along that table-
 shore,
 Drops flat, and after the great waters
 break
 Whitening for half a league, and thin
 themselves,
 Far over sands marbled with moon
 and cloud,
 From less and less to nothing; thus
 he fell
 Head-heavy; then the knights, who
 watch'd him, roar'd
 And shouted and leapt down upon the
 fall'n;
 There trampled out his face from
 being known,
 And sank his head in mire, and slimed
 themselves:
 Nor heard the King for their own
 cries, but sprang
 Thro' open doors, and swording right
 and left
 Men, women, on their sodden faces,
 hurl'd
 The tables over and the wines, and
 slew
 Till all the rafters rang with woman-
 yells,
 And all the pavement stream'd with
 massacre:
 Then, yell with yell echoing, they
 fired the tower,
 Which half that autumn night, like
 the live North,
 Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and
 Alcor,
 Made all above it, and a hundred
 meres
 About it, as the water Moab
 saw

Come round by the East, and out be-
 yond them flush'd
 The long low dune, and lazy-plunging
 sea.

So all the ways were safe from
 shore to shore,
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was
 lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the
 red dream
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge
 return'd,
 Mid-forest, and the wind among the
 boughs.
 He whistled his good warhorse left to
 graze
 Among the forest greens, vaulted
 upon him,
 And rode beneath an ever-showering
 leaf,
 Till one lone woman, weeping near a
 cross,
 Stay'd him. "Why weep ye?"
 "Lord," she said, "my man
 Hath left me or is dead;" whereon he
 thought —
 "What, if she hate me now? I
 would not this.
 "What, if she loves me still? I
 would not that.
 I know not what I would"—but said
 to her,
 "Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate
 return,
 He find thy favor changed and love
 thee not"—
 Then pressing day by day thro'
 Lyonesse
 Last in a rocky hollow, belling, heard
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the
 goodly hounds
 Yelp at his heart, but turning, past
 and gain'd
 Tintagil, half in sea, and high on
 land,
 A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,
 A low sea-sunset glorying round her
 hair

And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the Queen.
 And when she heard the feet of Tristram grind
 The spiring stone that scaled about her tower,
 Flush'd, started, met him at the doors,
 and there
 Belted his body with her white embrace,
 Crying aloud, "Not Mark — not Mark, my soul!
 The footstep flutter'd me at first: not he:
 Catlike thro' his own castle steals my Mark,
 But warrior-wise thou stridest thro' his halls
 Who hates thee, as I him — ev'n to the death.
 My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark
 Quickened within me, and knew that thou wert nigh."
 To whom Sir Tristram smiling, "I am here.
 Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine."

And drawing somewhat backward she replied,
 "Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his own,
 But save for dread of thee had beaten me,
 Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me somehow — Mark?
 What rights are his that dare not strike for them?
 Not lift a hand — not, tho' he found me thus!
 But hearken! have ye met him? hence he went
 To-day for three days' hunting — as he said —
 And so returns belike within an hour.
 Mark's way, my soul! — but eat not thou with Mark,
 Because he hates thee even more than fears;
 Nor drink: and when thou passest any wood

Close vizard, lest an arrow from the bush
 Should leave me all alone with Mark and hell.
 My God, the measure of my hate for Mark
 Is as the measure of my love for thee."

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by love,
 Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and spake
 To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying,
 "O hunter, and O blower of the horn,
 Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,
 For, ere I mated with my shambling king,
 Ye twain had fallen out about the bride
 Of one — his name is out of me — the prize,
 If prize she were — (what marvel — she could see) —
 Thine, friend; and ever since my craven seeks
 To wreck thee villanously: but, O Sir Knight,
 What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last?"

And Tristram, "Last to my Queen Paramount,
 Here now to my Queen Paramount of love
 And loveliness — ay, lovelier than when first
 Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,
 Sailing from Ireland."

Softly laugh'd Isolt;
 "Flatter me not, for hath not our great Queen
 My dole of beauty trebled?" and he said,
 "Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,
 And thine is more to me — soft, gracious, kind —

Save when thy Mark is kindled on
thy lips
Most gracious ; but she, haughty, ev'n
to him,
Lancelot; for I have seen him wan enow
To make one doubt if ever the great
Queen
Have yielded him her love."

To whom Isolt,
" Ah then, false hunter and false har-
per, thou
Who brakest thro' the scruple of my
bond,
Calling me thy white hind, and say-
ing to me
That Guinevere had sinn'd against
the highest,
And I—misyoked with such a want
of man—
That I could hardly sin against the
lowest."

He answer'd, " O my soul, be com-
forted!
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-
strings,
If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,
Crown'd warrant had we for the
crowning sin
That made us happy: but how ye
greet me—fear
And fault and doubt—no word of
that fond tale—
Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet
memories
Of Tristram in that year he was
away."

And, saddening on the sudden, spake
Isolt,
" I had forgotten all in my strong joy
To see thee—yearnings?—ay! for,
hour by hour,
Here in the never-ended afternoon,
O sweeter than all memories of thee,
Deeper than any yearnings after thee
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-
smiling seas,
Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of
Britain dash'd
Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,

Would that have chill'd her bride-
kiss? Wedded her?
Fought in her father's battles?
wounded there?
The King was all fulfill'd with grate-
fulness,
And she, my namesake of the hands,
that heal'd
Thy hurt and heart with unguent and
caress—
Well—can I wish her any huger
wrong
Than having known thee? her too
hast thou left
To pine and waste in those sweet
memories.
O were I not my Mark's, by whom all
men
Are noble, I should hate thee more
than love."

And Tristram, fondling her light
hands, replied,
" Grace, Queen, for being loved: she
loved me well.
Did I love her? the name at least I
loved.
Isolt?—I fought his battles, for Isolt!
The night was dark; the true star set.
Isolt!
The name was ruler of the dark—
Isolt?
Care not for her! patient, and prayer-
ful, meek,
Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to
God."

And Isolt answer'd, " Yea, and why
not I?
Mine is the larger need, who am not
meek,
Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell
thee now.
Here one black, mute midsummer
night I sat,
Lonely, but musing on thee, wonder-
ing where,
Murmuring a light song I had heard
thee sing,
And once or twice I spake thy name
aloud.

Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near
 me stood,
 In fuming sulphur blue and green, a
 fiend —
 Mark's way to steal behind one in the
 dark —
 For there was Mark: ' He has wedded
 her,' he said,
 Not said, but hiss'd it: then this crown
 of towers
 So shook to such a roar of all the
 sky,
 That here in utter dark I swoon'd
 away,
 And woke again in utter dark, and
 cried,
 ' I will flee hence and give myself to
 God' —
 And thou wert lying in thy new
 leman's arms."

Then Tristram, ever dallying with
 her hand,
 " May God be with thee, sweet, when
 old and gray,
 And past desire!" a saying that
 anger'd her.
 " May God be with thee, sweet, when
 thou art old,
 And sweet no more to me!' I need
 Him now.
 For when had Lancelot utter'd aught
 so gross
 Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the
 mast?
 The greater man, the greater courtesy.
 Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's
 knight!
 But thou, thro' ever harrying thy
 wild beasts —
 Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a
 lance
 Becomes thee well — art grown wild
 beast thyself.
 How darest thou, if lover, push me
 even
 In fancy from thy side, and set me
 far
 In the gray distance, half a life away,
 Her to be loved no more? Unsay it,
 unswear!
 Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,

Broken with Mark and hate and soli-
 tude,
 Thy marriage and mine own, that I
 should suck
 Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I
 believe.
 Will ye not lie? not swear, as there
 ye kneel,
 And solemnly as when ye sware to
 him,
 The man of men, our King— My
 God, the power
 Was once in vows when men believed
 the King!
 They lied not then, who sware, and
 thro' their vows
 The King prevailing made his realm:
 — I say,
 Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n
 when old,
 Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in
 despair."

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up
 and down,
 " Vows! did you keep the vow you
 made to Mark
 More than I mine? Lied, say ye?
 Nay, but learnt,
 The vow that binds too strictly snaps
 itself —
 My knighthood taught me this — ay,
 being snapt —
 We run more counter to the soul
 thereof
 Than had we never sworn. I swear
 no more.
 I swore to the great King, and am
 forsworn.
 For once — ev'n to the height — I
 honor'd him.
 ' Man, is he man at all?' methought,
 when first
 I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and
 beheld
 That victor of the Pagan throned in
 hall —
 His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a
 brow
 Like hillsnow high in heaven, the
 steel-blue eyes,

The golden beard that clothed his
lips with light —
Moreover, that weird legend of his
birth,
With Merlin's mystic babble about
his end
Amazed me; then, his foot was on a
stool
Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me
no man,
But Michaël trampling Satan; so I
sware,
Being amazed: but this went by —
The vows!
O ay — the wholesome madness of
an hour —
They served their use, their time; for
every knight
Believed himself a greater than him-
self,
And every follower eyed him as a God;
Till he, being lifted up beyond him-
self,
Did mightier deeds than otherwise he
had done,
And so the realm was made; but
then their vows —
First mainly thro' that sullyng of
our Queen —
Began to gall the knighthood, asking
whence
Had Arthur right to bind them to
himself?
Dropt down from heaven? wash'd
up from out the deep?
They fail'd to trace him thro' the
flesh and blood
Of our old kings: whence then? a
doubtful lord
To bind them by inviolable vows,
Which flesh and blood perforce would
violate:
For feel this arm of mine — the tide
within
Red with free chase and heather-
scented air,
Pulsing full man; can Arthur make
me pure
As any maiden child? lock up my
tongue
From uttering freely what I freely
hear?

Bind me to one? The wide world
laughs at it.
And worldling of the world am I, and
know
The ptermigan that whitens ere his
hour
Woos his own end; we are not angels
here
Nor shall be: vows — I am woodman
of the woods,
And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale
Mock them: my soul, we love but
while we may;
And therefore is my love so large for
thee,
Seeing it is not bounded save by
love."

Here ending, he moved toward her,
and she said,
"Good: an I turn'd away my love for
thee
To some one thrice as courteous as
thyself —
For courtesy wins women all as well
As valor may, but he that closes both
Is perfect, he is Lancelot — taller in-
deed,
Rosier and comelier, thou — but say I
loved
This knightliest of all knights, and
cast thee back
Thine own small saw, 'We love but
while we may,'
Well then, what answer?"

He that while she spake,
Mindful of what he brought to adorn
her with,
The jewels, had let one finger lightly
touch
The warm white apple of her throat,
replied,
"Press this a little closer, sweet,
until —
Come, I am hunger'd and half-an-
ger'd — meat,
Wine, wine — and I will love thee to
the death,
And out beyond into the dream to
come."

So then, when both were brought
to full accord
She rose, and set before him all he
will'd ;
And after these had comforted the
blood
With meats and wines, and satiated
their hearts —
Now talking of their woodland para-
dise,
The deer, the dews, the fern, the
founts, the lawns ;
Now mocking at the much ungainli-
ness,
And craven shifts, and long crane
legs of Mark —
Then Tristram laughing caught the
harp, and sang :

“ Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that
bend the brier !
A star in heaven, a star within the
mere !
Ay, ay, O ay — a star was my desire,
And one was far apart, and one was
near :
Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bow
the grass !
And one was water and one star was
fire,
And one will ever shine and one will
pass.
Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that move
the mere.”

Then in the light's last glimmer
Tristram show'd
And swung the ruby carcanet. She
cried,
“ The collar of some Order, which
our King
Hath newly founded, all for thee, my
soul,
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond
thy peers.”

“ Not so, my Queen,” he said, “ but
the red fruit
Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-
heaven,
And won by Tristram as a tourney-
prize,

And hither brought by Tristram for
his last
Love-offering and peace-offering unto
thee.”

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging
round her neck,
Claspt it, and cried “ Thine Order, O
my Queen ! ”
But, while he bow'd to kiss the jew-
ell'd throat,
Out of the dark, just as the lips had
touch'd,
Behind him rose a shadow and a
shriek —
“ Mark's way,” said Mark, and clove
him thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and
while he climb'd,
All in a death-dumb autumn-drip-
ping gloom,
The stairway to the hall, and look'd
and saw
The great Queen's bowér was dark, —
about his feet
A voice clung sobbing till he ques-
tion'd it,
“ What art thou ? ” and the voice
about his feet
Sent up an answer, sobbing, “ I am
thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile
again.”

GUINEVERE.

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,
and sat
There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little
maid,
A novice : one low light betwixt them
burn'd
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all
abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to
the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land
was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause
of flight
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle
beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the
throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance:
for this
He chill'd the popular praises of the
King
With silent smiles of slow disparage-
ment;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the
White Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left;
and sought
To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
Serving his traitorous end; and all
his aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for
Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when
all the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that
mock'd the may,
Had been, their wont, a-maying and
return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear
and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-
wall
To spy some secret scandal if he might,
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt
her best
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court
The wildest and the worst; and more
than this
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing
by
Spied where he crouch'd, and as the
gardener's hand
Picks from the colewort a green cater-
pillar,
So from the high wall and the flower-
ing grove
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by
the heel,
And cast him as a worm upon the way;
But when he knew the Prince tho'
marr'd with dust,

He, reverencing king's blood in a bac-
man,
Made such excuses as he might, and
these
Full knightly without scorn; for in
those days
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt
in scorn;
But, if a man were halt or hunch'd,
in him
By those whom God had made full-
limb'd and tall,
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,
And he was answer'd softly by the King
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot
help
To raise the Prince, who rising twice
or thrice
Full sharply smote his knees, and
smiled, and went:
But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day
long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she
laugh'd
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,
Then shudder'd, as the village wife
who cries
"I shudder, some one steps across my
grave;"
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for
indeed
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle
beast,
Would track her guilt until he found,
and hers
Would be forevermore a name of scorn.
Henceforward rarely could she front
in hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy
face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persis-
tent eye:
Henceforward too, the Powers that
tend the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot
die,

And save it even in extremes, began
 To vex and plague her. Many a time
 for hours,
 Beside the placid breathings of the
 King,
 In the dead night, grim faces came
 and went
 Before her, or a vague spiritual fear —
 Like to some doubtful noise of creak-
 ing doors,
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted
 house,
 That keeps the rust of murder on the
 walls —
 Held her awake: or if she slept, she
 dream'd
 An awful dream; for then she seem'd
 to stand
 On some vast plain before a setting
 sun,
 And from the sun there swiftly made
 at her
 A ghastly something, and its shadow
 flew
 Before it, till it touch'd her, and she
 turn'd —
 When lo! her own, that broadening
 from her feet,
 And blackening, swallow'd all the
 land, and in it
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she
 woke.
 And all this trouble did not pass but
 grew;
 Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless
 King,
 And trustful courtesies of household
 life,
 Became her bane; and at the last she
 said,
 "O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine
 own land,
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
 And if we meet again, some evil chance
 Will make the smouldering scandal
 break and blaze
 Before the people, and our lord the
 King."
 And Lancelot ever promised, but re-
 main'd,
 And still they met and met. Again
 she said,

"O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee
 hence."
 And then they were agreed upon a
 night
 (When the good King should not be
 there) to meet
 And part for ever. Passion-pale they
 met
 And greeted: hands in hands, and eye
 to eye,
 Low on the border of her couch they
 sat
 Stammering and staring: it was their
 last hour,
 A madness of farewells. And Modred
 brought
 His creatures to the basement of the
 tower
 For testimony; and crying with full
 voice
 "Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at
 last," aroused
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him head-
 long, and he fell
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and
 bare him off,
 And all was still: then she, "The end
 is come,
 And I am shamed for ever;" and he
 said,
 "Mine be the shame; mine was the
 sin: but rise,
 And fly to my strong castle overseas:
 There will I hide thee, till my life
 shall end,
 There hold thee with my life against
 the world."
 She answer'd, "Lancelot, wilt thou
 hold me so?
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our
 farewells.
 Would God that thou couldst hide me
 from myself!
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and
 thou
 Unwedd'd: yet rise now, and let us fly,
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,
 And bide my doom." So Lancelot
 got her horse,
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his
 own,

And then they rode to the divided way,
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping : for
 he past,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen,
 Back to his land ; but she to Almes-
 bury
 Fled all night long by glimmering
 waste and weald,
 And heard the spirits of the waste
 and weald
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard
 them moan :
 And in herself she moan'd "Too late,
 too late!"
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the
 morn,
 A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying
 high,
 Croak'd, and she thought, "He spies
 a field of death ;
 For now the Heathen of the Northern
 Sea,
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of
 the court,
 Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the
 land."

And when she came to Almesbury
 she spake
 There to the nuns, and said, " Mine
 enemies
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
 Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor
 ask
 Her name to whom ye yield it, till her
 time
 To tell you : " and her beauty, grace
 and power,
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and
 they spared
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
 For many a week, unknown, among
 the nuns ;
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her
 name, nor sought,
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for
 shrift,
 But communed only with the little
 maid,

Who pleased her with a babbling
 heedlessness
 Which often lured her from herself ;
 but now,
 This night, a rumor wildly blown
 about
 Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd
 the realm,
 And leagued him with the heathen,
 while the King
 Was waging war on Lancelot : then
 she thought,
 " With what a hate the people and
 the King
 Must hate me," and bow'd down upon
 her hands
 Silent, until the little maid, who
 brook'd
 No silence, brake it, uttering " Late !
 so late !
 What hour, I wonder, now ? " and when
 she drew
 No answer, by and by began to hum
 An air the nuns had taught her ;
 " Late, so late ! "
 Which when she heard, the Queen
 look'd up, and said,
 " O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I may
 weep. "
 Whereat full willingly sang the little
 maid.

" Late, late, so late ! and dark the
 night and chill !
 Late, late, so late ! but we can enter
 still.
 Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter
 now.

" No light had we : for that we do
 repent ;
 And learning this, the bridegroom
 will relent.
 Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter
 now.

" No light : so late ! and dark
 and chill the night !
 O let us in, that we may find the light !
 Too late, too late : ye cannot enter
 now.

“Have we not heard the bridegroom
is so sweet?
O let us in, tho’ late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter
now.”

So sang the novice, while full pas-
sionately,
Her head upon her hands, remember-
ing
Her thought when first she came,
wept the sad Queen.
Then said the little novice prattling
to her,

“O pray you, noble lady, weep no
more;
But let my words, the words of one
so small,
Who knowing nothing knows but to
obey,
And if I do not there is penance giv-
en—
Comfort your sorrows; for they do
not flow
From evil done; right sure I am of
that,
Who see your tender grace and state-
liness.
But weigh your sorrows with our lord
the King’s,
And weighing find them less; for
gone is he
To wage grim war against Sir Lance-
lot there,
Round that strong castle where he
holds the Queen;
And Modred whom he left in charge
of all,
The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the
King’s grief
For his own self, and his own Queen,
and realm,
Must needs be thrice as great as any
of ours.
For me, I thank the saints, I am not
great.
For if there ever come a grief to me
I cry my cry in silence, and have done.
None knows it, and my tears have
brought me good:
But even were the griefs of little ones

As great as those of great ones, yet
this grief
Is added to the griefs the great must
bear,
That howsoever much they may desire
Silence, they cannot weep behind a
cloud:
As even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good King and his wicked
Queen,
And were I such a King with such a
Queen,
Well might I wish to veil her wicked-
ness,
But were I such a King, it could not
be.”

Then to her own sad heart mutter’d
the Queen,
“Will the child kill me with her inno-
cent talk?”
But openly she answer’d, “Must not I,
If this false traitor have displaced his
lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all
the realm?”

“Yea,” said the maid, “this is all
woman’s grief,
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life
Hath wrought confusion in the Table
Round
Which good King Arthur founded,
years ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders,
there
At Camelot, ere the coming of the
Queen.”

Then thought the Queen within her-
self again,
“Will the child kill me with her fool-
ish prate?”
But openly she spake and said to her,
“O little maid, shut in by nunnery
walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and
Tables Round,
Or what of signs and wonders, but the
signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?”

To whom the little novice garrulously,
 "Yea, but I know: the land was full of signs
 And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
 So said my father, and himself was knight
 Of the great Table — at the founding of it;
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he said
 That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
 After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
 Strange music, and he paused, and turning — there,
 All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
 Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
 And with a wild sea-light about his feet,
 He saw them — headland after headland flame
 Far on into the rich heart of the west:
 And in the light the white mermaid swam,
 And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,
 And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,
 To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
 Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
 So said my father — yea, and furthermore,
 Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods,
 Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy
 Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,
 That shook beneath them, as the thistle shakes
 When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed:
 And still at evenings on before his horse
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.
 And when at last he came to Camelot,
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
 Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall;
 And in the hall itself was such a feast
 As never man had dream'd; for every knight
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
 By hands unseen; and even as he said
 Down in the cellars merry bloated things
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts
 While the wine ran: so glad were spirits and men
 Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,
 "Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,
 Spirits and men: could none of them foresee,
 Not even thy wise father with his signs
 And wonders, what has fall'n upon the realm?"

To whom the novice garrulously again,
 "Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father said,
 Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
 Between the steep cliff and the coming wave;
 And many a mystic lay of life and death
 Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,
 When round him bent the spirits of the hills
 With all their dewy hair blown back like flame:
 So said my father — and that night the bard
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King

As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd
 at those
 Who call'd him the false son of Gor-
 lois's :
 For there was no man knew from
 whence he came ;
 But after tempest, when the long
 wave broke
 All down the thundering shores of
 Bude and Bos,
 There came a day as still as heaven,
 and then
 They found a naked child upon the
 sands
 Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea ;
 And that was Arthlur ; and they fos-
 ter'd him
 Till he by miracle was approven King :
 And that his grave should be a mystery
 From all men, like his birth ; and
 could he find
 A woman in her womanhood as great
 As he was in his manhood, then, he
 sang,
 The twain together well might change
 the world.
 But even in the middle of his song
 He falter'd, and his hand fell from the
 harp,
 And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and
 would have fall'n,
 But that they stay'd him up ; nor
 would he tell
 His vision ; but what doubt that he
 foresaw
 This evil work of Lancelot and the
 Queen ? ”

Then thought the Queen, “ Lo !
 they have set her on,
 Our simple-seeming Abbess and her
 nuns,
 To play upon me,” and bow'd her
 head nor spake.
 Whereat the novice crying, with
 clasp'd hands,
 Shame on her own garrulity garru-
 lously,
 Said the good nuns would check her
 gadding tongue
 Full often, “ and, sweet lady, if I seem
 To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,

Unmannerly, with prattling and the
 tales
 Which my good father told me, check
 me too
 Nor let me shame my father's mem-
 ory, one
 Of noblest manners, tho' himself
 would say
 Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he
 died,
 Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five sum-
 mers back,
 And left me ; but of others who remain,
 And of the two first-famed for
 courtesy —
 And pray you check me if I ask
 amiss —
 But pray you, which had noblest,
 while you moved
 Among them, Lancelot or our lord
 the King ? ”

Then the pale Queen look'd up and
 answer'd her,
 “ Sir Lancelot, as became a noble
 knight,
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the
 same
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage, and the
 King
 In open battle or the tilting-field
 Forbore his own advantage, and these
 two
 Were the most nobly-manner'd men
 of all ;
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit
 Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.”

“ Yea,” said the maid, “ be manners
 such fair fruit ?
 Then Lancelot's needs must be a thou-
 sand-fold
 Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
 The most disloyal friend in all the
 world.”

To which a mournful answer made
 the Queen :
 “ O closed about by narrowing nun
 nery-walls,

What knowest thou of the world, and
 all its lights
 And shadows, all the wealth and all
 the woe?
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble
 knight,
 Were for one hour less noble than
 himself,
 Pray for him that he scape the doom
 of fire,
 And weep for her who drew him to
 his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I
 pray for both;
 But I should all as soon believe that
 his,
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the
 King's,
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours
 would be
 Such as they are, were you the sinful
 Queen."

So she, like many another babbler,
 hurt
 Whom she would soothe, and harm'd
 where she would heal;
 For here a sudden flush of wrathful
 heat
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen,
 who cried,
 "Such as thou art be never maiden
 more
 For ever! thou their tool, set on to
 plague
 And play upon, and harry me, petty spy
 And traitress." When that storm of
 anger brake
 From Guinevere, aghast the maiden
 rose,
 White as her veil, and stood before
 the Queen
 As tremulously as foam upon the
 beach
 Stands in a wind, ready to break and
 fly,
 And when the Queen had added "Get
 thee hence,"
 Fled frightened. Then that other left
 alone

Sigh'd, and began to gather heart
 again,
 Saying in herself, "The simple, fear-
 ful child
 Meant nothing, but my own too-fear-
 ful guilt,
 Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
 But help me, heaven, for surely I
 repent.
 For what is true repentance but in
 thought—
 Not ev'n in inmost thought to think
 again
 The sins that made the past so pleasant
 to us:
 And I have sworn never to see him
 more,
 To see him more."

And ev'n in saying this,
 Her memory from old habit of the
 mind
 Went slipping back upon the golden
 days
 In which she saw him first, when
 Lancelot came,
 Reputed the best knight and goodliest
 man,
 Ambassador, to lead her to his lord
 Arthur, and led her forth, and far
 ahead
 Of his and her retinue moving, they,
 Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on
 love
 And sport and tilts and pleasure,
 (for the time
 Was maytime, and as yet no sin was
 dream'd,)
 Rode under groves that look'd a para-
 dise
 Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
 That seem'd the heavens upbreaking
 thro' the earth,
 And on from hill to hill, and every day
 Beheld at noon in some delicious
 dale
 The silk pavilions of King Arthura
 raised
 For brief repast or afternoon repose
 By couriers gone before; and on again,
 Till yet once more ere set of sun they
 saw

'The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship,
'That crown'd the state pavilion of the
King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent
well.

But when the Queen immersed in
such a trance,
And moving thro' the past uncon-
sciously,
Came to that point where first she
saw the King
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd
to find
Her journey done, glanced at him,
thought him cold,
High, self-contain'd, and passionless,
not like him,
"Not like my Lancelot" — while she
brooded thus
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts
again,
There rode an armed warrior to the
doors.
A murmuring whisper thro' the nun-
nery ran,
Then on a sudden a cry "The King."
She sat
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when
armed feet
'Thro' the long gallery from the outer
doors
Rang coming, prone from off her seat
she fell,
And grovell'd with her face against
the floor:
There with her milkwhite arms and
shadowy hair
She made her face a darkness from
the King:
And in the darkness heard his armed
feet
Pause by her; then came silence, then
a voice,
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but tho'
changed, the King's:

"Liest thou here so low, the child
of one

I honor'd, happy, dead before thy
shame?
Well is it that no child is born of
thee.
The children born of thee are sword
and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of
laws,
The craft of kindred and the Godless
hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern
Sea;
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my
right arm
The mightiest of my knights, abode
with me,
Have everywhere about this land of
Christ
In twelve great battles ruining over-
thrown.
And knowest thou now from whence
I come — from him,
From waging bitter war with him:
and he,
That did not shun to smite me in
worse way,
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him
left,
He spared to lift his hand against the
King
Who made him knight: but many a
knight was slain;
And many more, and all his kith and
kin
Clave to him, and abode in his own
land.
And many more when Modred raised
revolt,
Forgetful of their troth and fealty,
clave
To Modred, and a remnant stays with
me.
And of this remnant will I leave a
part,
True men who love me still, for whom
I live,
To guard thee in the wild hour coming
on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be
harm'd.
Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till
my death.

Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet
 my doom.
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet
 to me,
 That I the King should greatly care
 to live;
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of
 my life.
 Bear with me for the last time while
 I show,
 Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou
 hast sinn'd.
 For when the Roman left us, and
 their law
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the
 ways
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and there
 a deed
 Of prowess done redress'd a random
 wrong.
 But I was first of all the kings who
 drew
 The knighthood-errant of this realm
 and all
 The realms together under me, their
 Head,
 In that fair Order of my Table Round,
 A glorious company, the flower of
 men,
 To serve as model for the mighty
 world,
 And be the fair beginning of a time.
 I made them lay their hands in mine
 and swear
 To reverence the King, as if he were
 Their conscience, and their conscience
 as their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold the
 Christ,
 To ride abroad redressing human
 wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to
 it,
 To honor his own word as if his God's,
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to
 her,
 And worship her by years of noble
 deeds,
 Until they won her; for indeed I
 knew

Of no more subtle master under
 heaven
 Than is the maiden passion for a
 maid,
 Not only to keep down the base in
 man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable
 words
 And courtliness, and the desire of
 fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes
 a man.
 And all this throve before I wedded
 thee,
 Believing, 'lo mine helpmate, one to
 feel
 My purpose and rejoicing in my
 joy.
 Then came thy shameful sin with
 Lancelot;
 Then came the sin of Tristram and
 Isolt;
 Then others, following these my
 mightiest knights,
 And drawing foul ensample from fair
 names,
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite
 Of all my heart had destined did ob-
 tain,
 And all thro' thee! so that this life of
 mine
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe
 and wrong,
 Not greatly care to lose; but rather
 think
 How sad it were for Arthur, should he
 live,
 To sit once more within his lonely
 hall,
 And miss the wonted number of my
 knights,
 And miss to hear high talk of noble
 deeds
 As in the golden days before thy sin.
 For which of us, who might be left,
 could speak
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance
 at thee?
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of
 Usk
 Thy shadow still would glide from
 room to room,

And I should evermore be vext with thee
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy lord,
 Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
 I am not made of so slight elements.
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.
 I hold that man the worst of public foes
 Who either for his own or children's sake,
 To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
 Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house:
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
 Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
 She like a new disease, unknown to men,
 Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes,
 and saps
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.
 Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns!
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart
 Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
 The mockery of my people, and their bane."

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
 Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neigh'd
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

"Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on the fierce law,
 The doom of treason and the flaming death,
 (When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.
 The pang — which while I weigh'd thy heart with one
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
 Made my tears burn — is also past — in part.
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
 Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.
 But how to take last leave of all I loved?
 O golden hair, with which I used to play
 Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,
 And beauty such as never woman wore,
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee —
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
 But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the King's.
 I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own flesh,
 Here looking down on thine polluted, cries
 'I loathe thee:' yet not less, O Guinevere,
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
 So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.

Let no man dream but that I love thee
still.

Perchance, and so thou purify thy
soul,

And so thou lean on our fair father
Christ,

Hereafter in that world where all are
pure

We two may meet before high God,
and thou

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine,
and know

I am thine husband — not a smaller
soul,

Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me
that,

I charge thee, my last hope. Now
must I hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the trum-
pet blow :

They summon me their King to lead
mine hosts

Far down to that great battle in the
west,

Where I must strike against the man
they call

My sister's son — no kin of mine, who
leagues

With Lords of the White Horse,
heathen, and knights,

Traitors — and strike him dead, and
meet myself

Death, or I know not what mysterious
doom.

And thou remaining here wilt learn
the event;

But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side; see thee no
more —

Farewell!"

And while she grovell'd at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander o'er
her neck,

And in the darkness o'er her fallen
head,

Perceived the waving of his hands
that blest.

Then, listening till those armed
steps were gone,

Rose the pale Queen, and in her an-
guish found

The casement: "peradventure," so
she thought,

"If I might see his face, and not be
seen."

And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!
And near him the sad nuns with each
a light

Stood, and he gave them charge about
the Queen,

To guard and foster her for evermore.
And while he spake to these his helm
was lower'd,

To which for crest the golden dragon
clung

Of Britain; so she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's, but she
saw,

Wet with the mists and smitten by the
lights,

The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship

Blaze, making all the night a steam
of fire.

And even then he turn'd; and more
and more

The moony vapor rolling round the
King,

Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant
in it,

Enwound him fold by fold, and made
him gray

And grayer, till himself became as mist
Before her, moving ghostlike to his
doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and
cried aloud

"Oh Arthur!" there her voice brake
suddenly,

Then — as a stream that spouting from
a cliff

Fails in mid air, but gathering at the
base

Re-makes itself, and flashes down the
vale —

Went on in passionate utterance :

"Gone — my lord!
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be
slain!

And he forgave me, and I could not
 speak.
 Farewell? I should have answer'd
 his farewell.
 His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord
 the King,
 My own true lord! how dare I call
 him mine?
 The shadow of another cleaves to me,
 And makes me one pollution: he, the
 King,
 Call'd me polluted: shall I kill my-
 self?
 What help in that? I cannot kill my
 sin,
 If soul be soul; nor can I kill my
 shame;
 No, nor by living can I live it down.
 The days will grow to weeks, the weeks
 to months,
 The months will add themselves and
 make the years,
 The years will roll into the centuries,
 And mine will ever be a name of scorn.
 I must not dwell on that defeat of
 fame.
 Let the world be; that is but of the
 world
 What else? what hope? I think there
 was a hope,
 Except he mock'd me when he spake
 of hope;
 His hope he call'd it; but he never
 mocks,
 For mockery is the fume of little
 hearts.
 And blessed be the King, who hath
 forgiven
 My wickedness to him, and left me
 hope
 That in^m mine own heart I can live
 down sin
 And be his mate hereafter in the
 heavens
 Before high God. Ah great and gen-
 tle lord,
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a
 saint
 Among his warring senses, to thy
 knights —
 To whom my false voluptuous pride,
 that took

Full easily all impressions from be-
 low,
 Would not look up, or half-despised
 the height
 To which I would not or I could not
 climb —
 I thought I could not breathe in that
 fine air
 That pure severity of perfect light —
 I wanted warmth and color which I
 found
 In Lancelot — now I see thee what
 thou art,
 Thou art the highest and most human
 too,
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there
 none
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so
 late?
 Now — ere he goes to the great Bat-
 tle? none:
 Myself must tell him in that purer
 life,
 But now it were too daring. Ah my
 God,
 What might I not have made of thy
 fair world,
 Had I but loved thy highest creature
 here?
 It was my duty to have loved the
 highest:
 It surely was my profit had I
 known:
 It would have been my pleasure had
 I seen.
 We needs must love the highest when
 we see it,
 Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand
 Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes: she
 look'd and saw
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and
 said to her,
 "Yea, little maid, for am I not for-
 given?"
 Then glancing up beheld the holy
 nuns
 All round her, weeping; and her heart
 was loosed
 Within her, and she wept with these
 and said,

"Ye know me then, that wicked
 one, who broke
 The vast design and purpose of the
 King.
 O shut me round with narrowing
 nunnery walls,
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying
 'shame.'
 I must not scorn myself: he loves me
 still.
 Let no one dream but that he loves
 me still.
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me,
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with
 you;
 Wear black and white, and be a nun
 like you,
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with
 your feasts;
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving
 at your joys,
 But not rejoicing; mingle with your
 rites;
 Pray and be pray'd for; lie before
 your shrines;
 Do each low office of your holy
 house;
 Walk your dim cloister, and distribute
 dole
 To poor sick people, richer in His eyes

End of "The Round Table."

Who ransom'd us, and haler too than
 I;
 And treat their loathsome hurts and
 heal mine own;
 And so wear out in almsdeed and in
 prayer
 The sombre close of that voluptuous
 day,
 Which wrought the ruin of my lord
 the King."

She said: they took her to them-
 selves; and she
 Still hoping, fearing "is it yet too
 late?"
 Dwelt with them, till in time their
 Abbess died.
 Then she, for her good deeds and her
 pure life,
 And for the power of ministration in
 her,
 And likewise for the high rank she
 had borne,
 Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess,
 lived
 For three brief years, and there, an
 Abbess, past
 To where beyond these voices there
 is peace.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere,
 First made and latest left of all the
 knights,
 Told, when the man was no more than
 a voice
 In the white winter of his age, to
 those
 With whom he dwelt, new faces,
 other minds.

For on their march to westward,
 Bedivere,
 Who slowly paced among the slumber-
 ing host,
 Heard in his tent the moanings of the
 King:

"I found Him in the shining of the
 stars,
 I mark'd Him in the flowering of His
 fields,
 But in His ways with men I find Him
 not.
 I waged His wars, and now I pass and
 die.
 O me! for why is all around us
 here
 As if some lesser god had made the
 world,
 But had not force to shape it as he
 would,
 Till the High God behold it from be-
 yond,
 And enter it, and make it beautiful?

Or else as if the world were wholly
 fair,
 But that these eyes of men are dense
 and dim,
 And have not power to see it as it is :
 Perchance, because we see not to the
 close ; —
 For I, being simple, thought to work
 His will,
 And have but stricken with the sword
 in vain ;
 And all whereon I lean'd in wife and
 friend
 Is traitor to my peace, and all my
 realm
 Reels back into the beast, and is no
 more.
 My God, thou hast forgotten me in
 my death :
 Nay — God my Christ — I pass but
 shall not die."

Then, ere that last weird battle in
 the west,
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Ga-
 wain kill'd
 In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain
 blown
 Along a wandering wind, and past his
 ear
 Went shrilling, "Hollow, hollow all
 delight!
 Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass
 away.
 Farewell! there is an isle of rest for
 thee.
 And I am blown along a wandering
 wind,
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all de-
 light."
 And fainter onward, like wild birds
 that change
 Their season in the night and wail
 their way
 From cloud to cloud, down the long
 wind the dream
 Shril'd; but in going mingled with
 dim cries
 Far in the moonlit haze among the
 hills,
 As of some lonely city sack'd by
 night,

When all is lost, and wife and child
 with wail
 Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke
 and call'd,
 "Who spake? A dream. O light
 upon the wind,
 Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are
 these dim cries
 Thine? or doth all that haunts the
 waste and wild
 Mourn, knowing it will go along with
 me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere
 and spake :
 "O me, my King, let pass whatever
 will,
 Elves, and the harmless glamour of
 the field ;
 But in their stead thy name and glory
 cling
 To all high places like a golden cloud
 For ever : but as yet thou shalt not
 pass.
 Light was Gawain in life, and light in
 death
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the
 man ;
 And care not thou for dreams from
 him, but rise —
 I hear the steps of Modred in the
 west,
 And with him many of thy people,
 and knights
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved,
 but grosser grown
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows
 and thee.
 Right well in heart they know thee
 for the King.
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
 Bedivere :
 "Far other is this battle in the west
 Whereto we move, than when we
 strove in youth,
 And brake the petty kings, and fought
 with Rome,
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman
 wall,

And shook him thro' the north. Ill
doom is mine
To war against my people and my
knights.
The king who fights his people fights
himself.
And they my knights, who loved me
once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death
to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a
way
Thro' this blind haze, which ever
since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the
world."

Then rose the King and moved his
host by night,
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league
by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyon-
nesse —
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again ;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples
dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a
coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no
more,
And he that fled no further fly the
King ;
And there, that day when the great
light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling
year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea
they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a
fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the
west.
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and
sea :
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed
it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart
was cold

With formless fear; and ev'n on
Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he
fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in
the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing
whom he slew ;
And some had visions out of golden
youth,
And some beheld the faces of old
ghosts
Look in upon the battle ; and in the
mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in
single fights,
And ever and anon with host to
host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the
hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of
brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and
shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling
down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw
the mist ;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor
knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous
blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of
the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the
light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the
dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after
wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro'
death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that
shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething
seas,
A dead hush fell ; but when the dolo-
rous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling.
came

A bitter wind, clear from the North,
 and blew
 The mist aside, and with that wind the
 tide
 Rose, and the pale King glanced
 across the field
 Of battle: but no man was moving
 there;
 Nor any cry of Christian heard
 thereon,
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan
 wave
 Brake in among dead faces, to and
 fro
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up
 and down
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the
 fallen,
 And shiver'd brands that once had
 fought with Rome,
 And rolling far along the gloomy
 shores
 The voice of days of old and days to
 be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
 Bedivere,
 And whiter than the mist that all day
 long
 Had held the field of battle was the
 King:

“Hearest thou this great voice that
 shakes the world,
 And wastes the narrow realm whereon
 we move,
 And beats upon the faces of the dead,
 My dead, as tho' they had not died
 for me? —
 O Bedivere, for on my heart hath
 fall'n
 Confusion, till I know not what I am,
 Nor whence I am, nor whether I be
 King.
 Behold, I seem but King among the
 dead.”

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere:
 “My King,
 King everywhere! and so the dead
 have kings,
 There also will I worship thee as King.

Yet still thy life is whole, and still I
 live
 Who love thee; but who hates thee,
 he that brought
 The heathen back among us, yonder
 stands,
 Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine
 house.”

Then spake the King: “My house
 hath been my doom.
 But call not thou this traitor of my
 house
 Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof
 with me.
 My house are rather they who swear
 my vows,
 Yea, even while they brake them,
 own'd me King.
 And well for thee, saying in my dark
 hour,
 When all the purport of my throne
 hath fail'd,
 That quick or dead thou holdest me
 for King.
 King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
 And one last act of kinghood shalt
 thou see
 Yet, ere I pass.” And uttering this
 the King
 Made at the man: then Modred smote
 his liege
 Hard on that helm which many a
 heathen sword
 Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one
 blow,
 Striking the last stroke with Excali-
 bur,
 Slew him, and all but slain himself,
 he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle
 roll'd
 Among the mountains by the winter
 sea;
 Until King Arthur's Table, man by
 man,
 Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their
 lord,
 King Arthur. Then, because his
 wound was deep,
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,

And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land :
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
 " The sequel of to-day unsolders all
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
 Whereof this world holds record.
 Such a sleep
 They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
 Shall never more, at any future time,
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
 Walking about the gardens and the halls
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
 I perish by this people which I made,—
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
 To rule once more ; but, let what will be, be,
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
 That without help I cannot last till morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
 Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how
 In those old days, one summer noon,
 an arm
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
 And took it, and have worn it, like a king ;
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be known :
 But now delay not : take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle mere :

Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :
 " It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm —
 A little thing may harm a wounded man ;
 Yet I thy best will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stopt,
 And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
 By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,
 ran forth
 And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
 Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
 That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
 This way and that dividing the swift mind,
 In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
 There in the many-knotted waterflags.

That whistled stiff and dry about the
marge.
So strode he back slow to the wound-
ed King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bed-
ivere :
" Hast thou perform'd my mission
which I gave ?
What is it thou hast seen ? or what
hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bed-
ivere :
" I heard the ripple washing in the
reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the
crag. "

To whom replied King Arthur, faint
and pale :
" Thou hast betray'd thy nature and
thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as be-
seem'd
Thy féalty, nor like a noble knight :
For surer sign had follow'd, either
hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the
thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring
me word. "

Then went Sir Bedivere the second
time
Across the ridge, and paced beside
the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in
thought ;
But when he saw the wonder of the
hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased,
he smote
His palms together, and he cried
aloud :

" And if indeed I cast the brand
away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy
note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the
earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes
of many men.
What good should follow this, if this
were done ?
What harm, undone ? Deep harm to
disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king
demand
An act unprofitable, against himself ?
The King is sick, and knows not what
he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty
breath
And rumors of a doubt ? But were
this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of
mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of
arms,
Saying, ' King Arthur's sword, Excali-
bur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the
Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in
the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the
aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame
were lost. "

So spake he, clouded with his own
conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wound-
ed King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breath-
ing heavily :
" What is it thou hast seen ? or what
hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
vere :

"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the
reefs."

To whom replied King Arthur,
much in wrath :

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is
me!

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my
knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the pre-
cious hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the
eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get
thee hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my
hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere,
and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged

Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it.
The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of
the moon,

And flashing round and round, and
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern
morn,

Seen where the moving isles of win-
ter shock

By night, with noises of the Northern
Sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Ex-
calibur :

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an
arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.

And lightly went the other to the
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing
thicker breath :

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is
done.

Speak out: what is it thou hast heard,
or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bed-
ivere :

"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest
the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never
saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till
I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal
men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him,
wheeling him ;

But when I look'd again, behold an
arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

That caught him by the hilt, and
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in
the mere."

And answer made King Arthur,
breathing hard :

"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that
I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive
my weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I
fear

My wound hath taken cold, and I
shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he
half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his
arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
 And would have spoken, but he found
 not words ;
 Then took with care, and kneeling on
 one knee,
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
 And rising bore him thro' the place
 of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur
 panted hard,
 Like one that feels a nightmare on
 his bed
 When all the house is mute. So
 sigh'd the King,
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
 "Quick, quick !
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
 But the other swiftly strode from
 ridge to ridge,
 Clothed with his breath, and looking,
 as he walk'd,
 Larger than human on the frozen
 hills.
 He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
 Before. His own thought drove him
 like a goad.
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
 caves
 And barren chasms, and all to left
 and right
 The bare black cliff clang'd round
 him, as he based
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that
 rang
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
 heels —
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
 And the long glories of the winter
 moon.

Then saw they how there hove a
 dusky barge,
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to
 stern,
 Beneath them; and descending they
 were ware

That all the decks were dense with
 stately forms,
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a
 dream — by these
 Three Queens with crowns of gold :
 and from them rose
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
 stars,
 And, as it were one voice, an agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind that
 shrills
 All night in a waste land, where no
 one comes,
 Or hath come, since the making of
 the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me
 in the barge."
 So to the barge they came. There
 those three Queens
 Put forth their hands, and took the
 King, and wept.
 But she, that rose the tallest of them
 all
 And fairest, laid his head upon her
 lap,
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and
 chafed his hands,
 And call'd him by his name, complain-
 ing loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against a
 brow
 Striped with dark blood : for all his
 face was white
 And colorless, and like the wither'd
 moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the
 springing east ;
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
 with drops
 Of onset ; and the light and lustrous
 curls —
 That made his forehead like a rising
 sun
 High from the daïs-throne — were
 parch'd with dust ,
 Or, clotted into points and hanging
 loose,
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that
 fringed his lips.
 So like a shatter'd column lay the
 King ;

Not like that Arthur who, with lance
in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tourna-
ment,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir
Bedivere :
" Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall
I go ?
Where shall I hide my forehead and
my eyes ?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble
chance,
And every chance brought out a noble
knight.
Such times have been not since the
light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of
myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is
dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty
world,
And I, the last, go forth companion-
less,
And the days darken round me, and
the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from
the barge :
" The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt
the world.
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
I have lived my life, and that which
I have done
May He within himself make pure !
but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face
again,
Pray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Where-
fore, let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.
For what are men better than sheep
or goats
That nourish a blind life within the
brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands
of prayer
Both for themselves and those who
call them friend ?
For so the whole round earth is every
way
Bound by gold chains about the feet
of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long
way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a
doubt) —
To the island-valley of Avilion ;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it
lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with or-
chard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with
summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar
and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes
the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir
Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge
of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for
evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's win-
ter dawn
Amazed him, and he groan'd, " The
King is gone."

And therewithal came on him the weird
rhyme,
"From the great deep to the great
deep he goes."

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly
clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron
crag;
Thence mark'd the black hull moving
yet, and cried,
"He passes to be King among the
dead,
And after healing of his grievous
wound
He comes again; but — if he come no
more —
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon
black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three
whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with
living light,
They stood before his throne in si-
lence, friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his
need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there
came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one
voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about,
and clomb
Ev'n to the highest he could climb,
and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of
hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that
bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the
deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on,
and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new
year.

TO THE QUEEN.

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to
thee —
Bear witness, that rememberable day,
When, pale as yet, and fever-worn, the
Prince
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering
life again
From halfway down the shadow of
the grave,
Past with thee thro' thy people and
their love,
And London roll'd one tide of joy
thro' all
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues
of man
And welcome! witness, too, the silent
cry,
The prayer of many a race and creed,
and clime —
Thunderless lightnings striking under
sea

From sunset and sunrise of all thy
realm,
And that true North, whereof we lately
heard
A strain to shame us "keep you to
yourselves;
So loyal is too costly! friends — your
love
Is but a burthen: loose the bond, and
go."
Is this the tone of empire? here the
faith
That made us rulers? this, indeed,
her voice
And meaning, whom the roar of Hou-
goumont
Left mightiest of all peoples under
heaven?
What shock has fool'd her since, that
she should speak
So feebly? wealthier — wealthier —
hour by hour!

The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among
her seas ?

There rang her voice, when the full
city peal'd

Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to
their crown

Are loyal to their own far sons, who
love

Our ocean-empire with her boundless
homes

For ever-broadening England, and her
throne

In our vast Orient, and one isle, one
isle,

That knows not her own greatness : if
she knows

And dreads it we are fall'n. — But
thou, my Queen,

Not for itself, but thro' thy living love
For one to whom I made it o'er his
grave

Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
And shadowing Sense at war
with Soul

More than that gray king, whose
name, a ghost,

As like a cloud, man-shaped,
from mountain peak,

And cleaves to cairn and cromlech
still ; or him

Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malle-
or's, one

Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a
time

That hover'd between war and wan-
tonness,

And crownings and dethronements :
take withal

Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that
Heaven

Will blow the tempest in the distance
back

From thine and ours : for some are
scared, who mark,

Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
Waverings of every vane with every
wind,

And wordy trucklings to the transient
hour,

And fierce or careless looseners of the
faith,

And Softness breeding scorn of simple
life,

Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,
Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,

Or Art with poisonous honey stol'n
from France,

And that which knows, but careful for
itself,

And that which knows not, ruling that
which knows

To its own harm : the goal of this
great world

Lies beyond sight : yet — if our slowly-
grown

And crown'd Republic's crowning
- common-sense,

That saved her many times, not fail —
their fears

Are morning shadows huger than the
shapes

That cast them, not those gloomier
which forego

The darkness of that battle in the
West,

Where all of high and holy dies
away.

THE PRINCESS;

A MEDLEY.

PROLOGUE.

SIR Walter Vivian all a summer's
day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of
sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at
noon
His tenants, wife and child, and
thither half
The neighboring borough with their
Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was
there
From college, visiting the son,— the
son
A Walter too,—with others of our
set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-
place.

And me that morning Walter
show'd the house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in
the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier
than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pave-
ment lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the
park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones
of Time;
And on the tables every clime and
age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava,
fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,

Laborious orient ivory sphere in
sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and
battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on
the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk
and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor
hung.

And "this" he said "was Hugh's at
Agincourt;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at As-
calon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him"—which he
brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt
with knights,
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and
kings
Who laid about them at their wills
and died;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that
arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro'
the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from
her walls.

"O miracle of women," said the
book,
"O noble heart who, being strait-
besieged
By this wild king to force her to his
wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a
soldier's death,

But now when all was lost or seem'd
 as lost —
 Her stature more than mortal in the
 burst
 Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on
 fire —
 Brake with a blast of trumpets from
 the gate,
 And, falling on them like a thunder-
 bolt,
 She trampled some beneath her
 horses' heels,
 And some were whelm'd with missiles
 of the wall,
 And some were push'd with lances
 from the rock,
 And part were drown'd within the
 whirling brook:
 O miracle of noble womanhood!"

So sang the gallant glorious chroni-
 cle;
 And, I all rapt in this, "Come out,"
 he said,
 "To the Abbey: there is Aunt Eliza-
 beth
 And sister Lilia with the rest." We
 went
 (I kept the book and had my finger
 in it)
 Down thro' the park: strange was the
 sight to me;
 For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,
 sown
 With happy faces and with holiday.
 There moved the multitude, a thou-
 sand heads:
 The patient leaders of their Institute
 Taught them with facts. One rear'd
 a font of stone
 And drew, from butts of water on the
 slope,
 The fountain of the moment, playing,
 now
 A twisted snake, and now a rain of
 pearls,
 Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded
 ball
 Danced like a wisp: and somewhat
 lower down
 A man with knobs and wires and vials
 fired

A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep
 From hollow fields: and here were
 telescopes
 For azure views; and there a group
 of girls
 In circle waited, whom the electric
 shock
 Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter:
 round the lake
 A little clock-work steamer paddling
 plied
 And shook the lilies: perch'd about
 the knolls
 A dozen angry models jetted steam:
 A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon
 Rose gem-like up before the dusky
 groves
 And dropt a fairy parachute and
 past:
 And there thro' twenty posts of tele-
 graph
 They flash'd a saucy message to and
 fro
 Between the mimic stations; so that
 sport
 Went hand in hand with Science;
 otherwhere
 Pure sport: a herd of boys with
 clamor bowl'd
 And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd
 about
 Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men
 and maids
 Arranged a country dance, and flew
 thro' light
 And shadow, while the twangling
 violin
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and
 overhead
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty
 lime
 Made noise with bees and breeze from
 end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking
 of the time;
 And long we gazed, but satiated at
 length
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and
 ivy-claspt,
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a
 fire,

Thro' one wide chasm of time and
 frost they gave
 The park, the crowd, the house; but
 all within
 The sward was trim as any garden
 lawn:
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady
 friends
 From neighbor seats: and there was
 Ralph himself,
 A broken statue propt against the wall,
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
 Half child half woman as she was,
 had wound
 A scarf of orange round the stony
 helm,
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
 That made the old warrior from his
 ivied nook
 Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb
 a feast
 Shone, silver-set; about it lay the
 guests,
 And there we join'd them: then the
 maiden Aunt
 Took this fair day for text, and from
 it preach'd
 An universal culture for the crowd,
 And all things great; but we, un-
 worthier, told
 Of college: he had climb'd across the
 spikes,
 And he had squeezed himself betwixt
 the bars,
 And he had breath'd the Proctor's
 dogs; and one
 Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common
 men,
 But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
 And one the Master, as a rogue in
 grain
 Vener'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their
 heads I saw
 The feudal warrior lady-clad; which
 brought
 My book to mind: and opening this I
 read
 Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that
 rang

With tilt and tourney; then the tale
 of her
 That drove her foes with slaughter
 from her walls,
 And much I praised her nobleness,
 and "Where,"
 Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head
 (she lay
 Beside him) "lives there such a
 woman now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are
 thousands now
 Such women, but convention beats
 them down:
 It is but bringing up; no more than
 that:
 You men have done it: how I hate
 you all!
 Ah, were I something great! I wish I
 were
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame
 you then,
 That love to keep us children! O I
 wish
 That I were some great princess, I
 would build
 Far off from men a college like a
 man's,
 And I would teach them all that men
 are taught;
 We are twice as quick!" And here
 she shook aside
 The hand that play'd the patron with
 her curls.

And one said smiling "Pretty were
 the sight
 If our old halls could change their
 sex, and flaunt
 With prudes for proctors, dowagers
 for deans,
 And sweet girl-graduates in their
 golden hair.
 I think they should not wear our rusty
 gowns,
 But move as rich as Emperor-moths,
 or Ralph
 Who shines so in the corner; yet I
 fear,
 If there were many Lilias in the brood,

However deep you might embower the nest,
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:
"That's your light way; but I would
make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself
she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make
her, she:
But Walter hail'd a score of names
upon her,
And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful
Puss,"
And swore he long'd at college,
only long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they
talk'd

At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They lost their weeks; they vex't the
souls of deans;
They rode; they betted; made a hun-
dred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying
terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-
place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus
he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,
"We doubt not that. O yes, you
miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you
did."

She held it out; and as a parrot
turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for
harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she
shriek'd
And wrung it. "Doubt my word
again!" he said.

"Come, listen! here is proof that you
were miss'd:
We seven stay'd at Christmas up to
read;
And there we took one tutor as to
read:
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube
and square
Were out of season: never man, I
think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as
he:
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty
feet,
And our long walks were stript as bare
as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you
all
In wassail; often, like as many girls —
Sick for the hollies and the yews of
home —
As many little trifling Liliacs — play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas
here,
And *what's my thought* and *when* and
where and *how*,
And often told a tale from mouth to
mouth
As here at Christmas."

She remember'd that:
A pleasant game, she thought: she
liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the
rest.
But these — what kind of tales did
men tell men,
She wonder'd by themselves?
A half-disdain
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her
lips:
And Walter nodded at me; "*He*
began,
The rest would follow, each in turn;
and so
We forged a sevenfold story. Kind?
what kind?
Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas sole-
cisms,
Seven-headed monsters only made to
kill
Time by the fire in winter."
"Kill him now,

The tyrant! kill him in the summer
too,"

Said Lilia; "Why not now?" the
maiden Aunt.

"Why not a summer's as a winter's
tale?"

A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit the
place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn!"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I
laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling
mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden
Aunt

(A little sense of wrong had touch'd
her face

With color) turn'd to me with "As
you will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine"
clamor'd he,

"And make her some great Princess,
six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!"

"Then follow me, the Prince,"
I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn!
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a
dream. —

Heroic seems our Princess as re-
quired —

But something made to suit with Time
and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange ex-
periments

For which the good Sir Ralph had
burnt them all —

This were a medley! we should have
him back

Who told the 'Winter's tale' to do it
for us.

No matter: we will ~~do~~ whatever
comes.

And let the ladies sing ~~it~~, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a
song

To give us breathing-space."

So I began,
And the rest follow'd: and the women
sang

Between the rougher voices of the
men,

Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the
songs.

I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in
face,

Of temper amorous, as the first of
May,

With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a
girl,

For on my cradle shone the Northern
star.

There lived an ancient legend in
our house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand-
sire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had fore-
told,

Dying, that none of all our blood
should know

The shadow from the substance, and
that one

Should come to fight with shadows
and to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more
or less,

An old and strange affection of the
house.

Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven
knows what:

On a sudden in the midst of men and
day,

And while I walk'd and talk'd as here-
tofore,

I seem'd to move among a world of
ghosts,

And feel myself the shadow of a
dream.

Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
 And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd
 "catalepsy."
 My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;
 My mother was as mild as any saint,
 Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,
 So gracious was her tact and tenderness:
 But my good father thought a king a king;
 He cared not for the affection of the house;
 He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
 To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
 Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
 For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
 While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
 To one, a neighboring Princess: she to me
 Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
 At eight years old; and still from time to time
 Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
 And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
 And still I wore her picture by my heart,
 And one dark tress; and all around them both
 Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,
 My father sent ambassadors with furs
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back
 A present, a great labor of the loom;
 And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
 Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;

He said there was a compact; that was true:
 But then she had a will; was he to blame?
 And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
 Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:
 The first, a gentleman of broken means (His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
 Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
 And almost my half-self, for still we moved
 Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face
 Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,
 Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
 From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware
 That he would send a hundred thousand men,
 And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd
 The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,
 Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. "My father, let me go.
 It cannot be but some gross error lies
 In this report, this answer of a king,
 Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:
 Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
 Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,

May rue the bargain made." And
Florian said :

"I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she,
you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from
thence :
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land :
Thro' her this matter might be sifted
clean."

And Cyril whisper'd : "Take me with
you too."

Then laughing "what, if these weird
seizures come

Upon you in those lands, and no one
near

To point you out the shadow from the
truth!

Take me : I'll serve you better in a
strait ;

I grate on rusty hinges here : " but
" No ! "

Roar'd the rough king, " you shall not ;
we ourself

Will crush her pretty maiden fancies
dead

In iron gauntlets : break the council
up."

But when the council broke, I rose
and past

Thro' the wild woods that hung about
the town ;

Found a still place, and pluck'd her
likeness out ;

Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it
lying bathed

In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd
trees :

What were those fancies ? wherefore
break her troth ?

Proud look'd the lips : but while I
meditated

A wind arose and rush'd upon the
South,

And shook the songs, the whispers,
and the shrieks

Of the wild woods together ; and a
Voice

Went with it, " Follow, follow, thou
shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that
month

Became her golden shield, I stole from
court

With Cyril and with Florian, unper-
ceived,

Cat-footed thro' the town and half in
dread

To hear my father's clamor at our
backs

With Ho ! from some bay-window
shake the night ;

But all was quiet : from the bastion'd
walls

Like threaded spiders, one by one, we
dropt,

And flying reach'd the frontier : then
we crost

To a livelier land ; and so by tith
and grange,

And vines, and blowing bosks of wil-
derness,

We gain'd the mother-city thick with
towers,

And in the imperial palace found the
king.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and
small his voice,

But bland the smile that like a wrin-
kling wind

On glassy water drove his cheek in
lines ;

A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king : three days he feasted

us,

And on the fourth I spake of why we
came,

And my betroth'd. " You do us,
Prince," he said,

Airing a snowy hand and signet
gem,

" All honor. We remember love our-
selves

In our sweet youth : there did a com-
pact pass

Long summers back, a kind of cere-
mony —

I think the year in which our olives
fail'd.

I would you had her, prince, with all
my heart,

With my full heart: but there were
 widows here,
 Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady
 Blanche;
 They fed her theories, in and out of
 place
 Maintaining that with equal hus-
 bandry
 The woman were an equal to the man.
 They harp'd on this; with this our
 banquets rang;
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots
 of talk;
 Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
 To hear them: knowledge, so my
 daughter held,
 Was all in all: they had but been, she
 thought,
 As children; they must lose the child,
 assume
 The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she
 wrote,
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated
 of,
 But all she is and does is awful;
 odes
 About this losing of the child; and
 rhymes
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
 Beyond all reason: these the women
 sang;
 And they that know such things — I
 sought but peace;
 No critic I — would call them master-
 pieces:
 They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd
 a boon,
 A certain summer-palace which I
 have
 Hard by your father's frontier: I said
 no,
 Yet being an easy man, gave it: and
 there,
 All wild to found an University
 For maidens, on the spur she fled;
 and more
 We know not, — only this: they see
 no men,
 Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look
 upon her
 As on a kind of paragon; and I

(Pardon me saying it) were much loth
 to breed
 Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but
 since
 (And I confess with right) you think
 me bound
 In some sort, I can give you letters to
 her;
 And yet, to speak the truth, I rate
 your chance
 Almost as naked nothing."

Thus the king;
 And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to
 slur
 With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
 Our formal compact, yet, not less (all
 frets
 But chafing me on fire to find my
 bride)
 Went forth again with both my
 friends. We rode
 Many a long league back to the North.
 At last
 From hills, that look'd across a land
 of hope,
 We dropt with evening on a rustic
 town
 Set in a gleaming river's crescent-
 curve,
 Close at the boundary of the liberties;
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd
 mine host
 To council, plied him with his richest
 wines,
 And show'd the late-writ letters of
 the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared
 As blank as death in marble; then ex-
 claim'd
 Averting it was clear against all rules
 For any man to go: but as his brain
 Began to mellow, "If the king," he
 said,
 "Had given us letters, was he bound
 to speak?
 The king would bear him out;" and
 at the last —
 The summer of the vine in all his
 veins —

"No doubt that we might make it
worth his while.

She once had passed that way; he
heard her speak;

She scared him; life! he never saw
the like;

She look'd as grand as doomsday and
as grave:

And he, he revered his liege-lady
there;

He always made a point to post with
mares;

His daughter and his housemaid were
the boys:

The land, he understood, for miles
about

Was till'd by women; all the swine
were sows,

And all the dogs"—

But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I
clothed in act,

Remembering how we three presented
Maid

Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide
of feast,

In masque or pageant at my father's
court.

We sent mine host to purchase female
gear;

He brought it, and himself, a sight to
shake

The midriff of despair with laughter,
holp

To lace us up, till, each, in maiden
plumes

We rustled: him we gave a costly
bribe

To guerdon silence, mounted our good
steeds,

And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we
rode,

And rode till midnight when the col-
lege lights

Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an
arch,

Whereon a woman-statue rose with
wings

From four wing'd horses dark against
the stars;

And some inscription ran along the
front,

But deep in shadow: further on
we gain'd

A little street half garden and half
house;

But scarce could hear each other
speak for noise

Of clocks and chimes, like silver ham-
mers falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and
stir

Of fountains spouted up and shower-
ing down

In meshes of the jasmine and the
rose:

And all about us peal'd the nightin-
gale,

Rapt in her song, and careless of the
snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a
sign,

By two sphere lamps blazon'd like
Heaven and Earth

With constellation and with con-
tinent,

Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable
wench

Came running at the call, and help'd
us down.

Then stept a buxon hostess forth,
and sail'd,

Full-blown, before us into rooms which
gave

Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and
this,

And who were tutors. "Lady
Blanche," she said,

"And Lady Psyche." "Which was
prettiest,

Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche."
"Hers are we,"

One voice, we cried; and I sat down
and wrote,

In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring
East;

“Three ladies of the Northern empire
 pray
 Your Highness would enroll them with
 your own,
 As Lady Psyche’s pupils.”

This I seal’d :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
 And o’er his head Uranian Venus hung,
 And rais’d the blinding bandage from
 his eyes :

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;
 And then to bed, where half in doze I
 seem’d

To float about a glimmering night,
 and watch

A full sea glazed with muffled moon-
 light, swell

On some dark shore just seen that it
 was rich.

II.

As thro’ the land at eve we went,

And pluck’d the ripen’d ears,

We fell out, my wife and I,

O we fell out I know not why,

And kiss’d again with tears.

And blessings on the falling out

That all the more endears,

When we fall out with those we love

And kiss again with tears!

For when we came where lies the child

We lost in other years,

There above the little grave,

O there above the little grave,

We kiss’d again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress
 came :

She brought us Academic silks, in hue
 The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
 And zoned with gold ; and now when
 these were on,

And we as rich as moths from dusk
 cocoons,

She, courtesying her obeisance, let us
 know

The Princess Ida waited : out we paced,
 I first, and following thro’ the porch
 that sang

All round with laurel, issued in a court
 Compact of lucid marbles, boss’d with
 lengths

Of classic frieze, with ample awnings
 gay

Betwixt the pillars, and with great
 urns of flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group’d in
 threes,

Enring’d a billowing fountain in the
 midst ;

And here and there on lattice edges
 lay

Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,
 And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper
 sat,

With two tame leopards couch’d be-
 side her throne

All beauty compass’d in a female form,
 The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant
 Of some clear planet close upon the
 Sun,

Than our man’s earth ; such eyes were
 in her head,

And so much grace and power, breath-
 ing down

From over her arch’d brows, with
 every turn

Lived thro’ her to the tips of her long
 hands,

And to her feet. She rose her height,
 and said :

“ We give you welcome : not with-
 out redound

Of use and glory to yourselves ye
 come,

The first-fruits of the stranger : after-
 time,

And that full voice which circles round
 the grave,

Will rank you nobly, mingled up with
 me.

What ! are the ladies of your land so
 tall ? ”

“ We of the court ” said Cyril. “ From
 the court ”

She answer’d, “ then ye know the
 Prince ? ” and he :

“ The climax of his age ! as tho’ there
 were

One rose in all the world, your High-
 ness that,

He worships your ideal : ” she replied :

“ We scarcely thought in our own hall
 to hear

This barren verbiage, current among
 men,
 Light coin, the tinsel clink of compli-
 ment.
 Your flight from out your bookless
 wilds would seem
 As arguing love of knowledge and of
 power ;
 Your language proves you still the
 child. Indeed,
 We dream not of him: when we set
 our hand
 To this great work, we purposed with
 ourself
 Never to wed. You likewise will do
 well,
 Ladies, in entering here, to cast and
 fling
 The tricks, which make us toys of
 men, that so,
 Some future time, if so indeed you will,
 You may with those self-styled our
 lords ally
 Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale
 with scale."

At those high words, we conscious
 of ourselves,
 Perused the matting; then an officer
 Rose up, and read the statutes, such
 as these :
 Not for three years to correspond with
 home ;
 Not for three years to cross the liber-
 ties ;
 Not for three years to speak with any
 men ;
 And many more, which hastily sub-
 scribed,
 We enter'd on the boards : and " Now,"
 she cried,
 " Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.
 Look, our hall !
 Our statues ! — not of those that men
 desire,
 Sleek Odaliskes, or oracles of mode,
 Nor stunted squaws of West or East ;
 but she
 That taught the Sabine how to rule,
 and she
 The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
 The Carian Artemisia strong in war,

The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,
 Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
 That fought Aurelian, and the Roman
 brows
 Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and
 lose
 Convention, since to look on noble
 forms
 Makes noble thro' the sensuous organ-
 ism
 That which is higher. O lift your
 natures up :
 Embrace our aims : work out your
 freedom. Girls,
 Knowledge is now no more a fountain
 seal'd :
 Drink deep, until the habits of the
 slave,
 The sins of emptiness, gossip and
 spite
 And slander, die. Better not be at all
 Than not be noble. Leave us: you
 may go :
 To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
 The fresh arrivals of the week before ;
 For they press in from all the prov-
 inces,
 And fill the hive."
 She spoke, and bowing waved
 Dismissal: back again we crost the
 court
 To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,
 There sat along the forms, like morn-
 ing doves
 That sun their milky bosoms on the
 thatch,
 A patient range of pupils ; she herself
 Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
 A quick brunette, well-moulded, fal-
 con-eyed,
 And on the hither side, or so she
 look'd,
 Of twenty summers. At her left, a
 child,
 In shining draperies, headed like a
 star,
 Her maiden babe, a double April
 old,
 Aglaïa slept. We sat: the Lady
 glanced :
 Then Florian, but no livelier than the
 dame

That whisper'd "Asses' ears," among
 the sedge,
 "My sister." "Comely, too, by all
 that's fair,"
 Said Cyril. "O hush, hush!" and she
 began.

"This world was once a fluid haze
 of light,
 Till toward the centre set the starry
 tides,
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling
 cast
 The planets: then the monster, then
 the man;
 Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in
 skins,
 Raw from the prime, and crushing
 down his mate;
 As yet we find in barbarous isles, and
 here
 Among the lowest."

Thercupon she took
 A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious
 past;
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon
 As emblematic of a nobler age;
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke
 of those
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucu-
 mo;
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Ro-
 man lines
 Of empire, and the woman's state in
 each,
 How far from just; till warming with
 her theme
 She salined out her scorn of laws
 Salique
 And little-footed China, touch'd on
 Mahomet
 With much contempt, and came to
 chivalry:
 When some respect, however slight,
 was paid
 To woman, superstition all awry:
 However then commenced the dawn:
 a beam
 Had slanted forward, falling in a
 land
 Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep,
 indeed,

Their debt of thanks to her who first
 had dared
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and
 assert
 None lordlier than themselves but
 that which made
 Woman and man. She had founded;
 they must build.
 Here might they learn whatever men
 were taught:
 Let them not fear: some said their
 heads were less:
 Some men's were small; not they the
 least of men;
 For often fineness compensated size:
 Besides the brain was like the hand,
 and grew
 With using; thence the man's, if more
 was more;
 He took advantage of his strength to
 be
 First in the field: some ages had been
 lost;
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her
 life
 Was longer; and albeit their glorious
 names
 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since
 in truth
 The highest is the measure of the man,
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of
 the glebe,
 But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
 With woman: and in arts of govern-
 ment
 Elizabeth and others; arts of war
 The peasant Joan and others; arts of
 grace
 Sappho and others vied with any man;
 And, last not least, she who had left
 her place,
 And bow'd her state to them, that they
 might grow
 To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from
 the blight
 Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last
 She rose upon a wind of prophecy
 Dilating on the future; "everywhere

Two heads in council, two beside the
 hearth,
 Two in the tangled business of the
 world,
 Two in the liberal offices of life,
 Two plummets dropt for one to sound
 the abyss
 Of science, and the secrets of the
 mind:
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic,
 more:
 And everywhere the broad and boun-
 teous Earth
 Should bear a double growth of those
 rare souls,
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the
 blood of the world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us:
 the rest
 Parted; and, glowing full-faced wel-
 come, she
 Began to address us, and was moving
 on
 In gratulation, till as when a boat
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps,
 all her voice
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat,
 she cried
 "My brother!" "Well, my sister."
 "O," she said,
 "What do you here? and in this
 dress? and these?
 Why who are these? a wolf within
 the fold!
 A pack of wolves! the Lord be gra-
 cious to me!
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!"
 "No plot, no plot," he answer'd.
 "Wretched boy,
 How saw you not the inscription on
 the gate,
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF
 DEATH?"
 "And if I had," he answer'd, "who
 could think
 The softer Adams of your Academe,
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were
 such
 As chanted on the blanching bones of
 men?"

"But you will find it otherwise" she
 said.
 "You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools!
 my vow
 Binds me to speak, and O that iron
 will,
 That axelike edge unturnable, our
 Head,
 The Princess." "Well then, Psyche,
 take my life,
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange
 For warning: bury me beside the
 gate,
 And cut this epitaph above my bones;
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
 All for the common good of womankind.*"
 "Let me die too," said Cyril, "having
 seen
 And heard the Lady Psyche."
 I struck in:
 "Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the
 truth;
 Receive it; and in me behold the
 Prince
 Your countryman, affianced years ago
 To the Lady Ida: here, for here she
 was,
 And thus (what other way was left) I
 came."
 "O Sir, O Prince, I have no country;
 none;
 If any, this; but none. Whate'er I
 was
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
 Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may
 not breathe
 Within this vestal limit, and how
 should I,
 Who am not mine, say, live: the
 thunder-bolt
 Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak;
 it falls."
 "Yet pause," I said: "for that in-
 scription there,
 I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
 Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
 To scare the fowl from fruit: if more
 there be,
 If more and acted on, what follows?
 war;
 Your own work marr'd: for this your
 Academe,

Whichever side be Victor, in the hal-
loo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and
pass
With all fair theories only made to
gild
A stormless summer." "Let the
Princess judge
Of that" she said: "farewell, Sir —
and to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I re-
join'd,
"The fifth in line from that old Flo-
rian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's
hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle
brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he
fell,
And all else fled: we point to it, and
we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not
cold,
But branches current yet in kindred
veins."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian add-
ed: "she
With whom I sang about the morning
hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the
purple fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen?
are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbb-
ing brow,
To smoothe my pillow, mix the foam-
ing draught
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and
read
My sickness down to happy dreams?
are you
That brother-sister Psyche, both in
one?
You were that Psyche, but what are
you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said,
"for whom
I would be that for ever which I seem,

Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
And glean your scatter'd sapience."

Then once more,
"Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,
"That on her bridal morn before she
past
From all her old companions, when
the king
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that
ancient ties
Would still be dear beyond the south-
ern hills;
That were there any of our people
there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them? look! for such are
these and I."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd,
"to whom,
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded
fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the
well?
The creature laid his muzzle on your
lap,
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it,
and the blood
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you
wept.
That was fawn's blood, not brother's,
yet you wept.
O by the bright head of my little
niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are
you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said
again,
"The mother of the sweetest little
maid,
That ever crow'd for kisses."
"Out upon it!"
She answer'd, "peace! and why should
I not play
The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great: he for the com-
mon weal,
The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good
need were,
Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on
whom

The secular emancipation turns
 Of half this world, be swerved from
 right to save
 A prince, a brother? a little will I
 yield.
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well
 for you.
 O hard, when love and duty clash! I
 fear
 My conscience will not count me fleck-
 less; yet —
 Hear my conditions: promise (other-
 wise
 You perish) as you came, to slip away
 To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be
 said,
 These women were too barbarous,
 would not learn;
 They fled, who might have shamed
 us: promise, all."

What could we else, we promised
 each; and she,
 Like some wild creature newly-caged,
 commenced
 A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
 By Florian; holding out her lily
 arms
 Took both his hands, and smiling
 faintly said:
 "I knew you at the first: tho' you
 have grown
 You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and
 glad
 To see you, Florian. I give thee to
 death,
 My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
 My needful seeming harshness, pardon
 it.
 Our mother, is she well?"
 With that she kiss'd
 His forehead, then, a moment after,
 clung
 About him, and betwixt them blos-
 som'd up
 From out a common vein of memory
 Sweet household talk, and phrases of
 the hearth,
 And far allusion, till the gracious
 dews
 Began to glisten and to fall: and
 while

They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came
 a voice,
 "I brought a message here from Lady
 Blanche."
 Back started she, and turning round
 we saw
 The Lady Blanche's daughter where
 she stood,
 Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
 A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
 That clad her like an April daffodilly
 (Her mother's color) with her lips
 apart,
 And all her thoughts as fair within
 her eyes,
 As bottom agates seen to wave and
 float
 In crystal currents of clear morning
 seas.

So stood that same fair creature at
 the door.
 Then Lady Psyche, "Ah — Melissa —
 you!
 You heard us?" and Melissa, "O
 pardon me
 I heard, I could not help it, did not
 wish:
 But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me
 not,
 Nor think I bear that heart within my
 breast,
 To give three gallant gentlemen to
 death."
 "I trust you," said the other, "for
 we two
 Were always friends, none closer, elm
 and vine:
 But yet your mother's jealous tem-
 perament —
 Let not your prudence, dearest,
 drowse, or prove
 The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
 This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
 My honor, these their lives." "Ah,
 fear me not"
 Replied Melissa; "no — I would not
 tell,
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
 No, not to answer, Madam, all those
 hard things
 That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."

"Be it so" the other, "that we still
 may lead
 The new light up, and culminate in
 peace,
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."
 Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest
 man
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in
 halls
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
 (Tho' Madam *you* should answer, *we*
 would ask)
 Less welcome find among us, if you
 came
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
 Myself for something more." He said
 not what,
 But "Thanks," she answer'd "Go:
 we have been too long
 Together: keep your hoods about the
 face;
 They do so that affect abstraction
 here.
 Speak little; mix not with the rest;
 and hold
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet
 be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the
 child,
 And held her round the knees against
 his waist,
 And blew the swoll'n cheek of a
 trumpeter,
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling,
 and the child
 Push'd her flat hand against his face
 and laugh'd;
 And thus our conference closed.
 And then we stroll'd
 For half the day thro' stately theatres
 Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we
 sat, we heard
 The grave Professor. On the lecture
 slate
 The circle rounded under female
 hands
 With flawless demonstration: follow'd
 then
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted
 out

By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-
 words-long
 That on the stretch'd forefinger of all
 Time
 Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,
 The morals, something of the frame,
 the rock,
 The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,
 the flower,
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
 And whatsoever can be taught and
 known;
 Till like three horses that have broken
 fence,
 And glutted all night long breast-
 deep in corn,
 We issued gorged with knowledge,
 and I spoke:
 "Why, Sirs, they do all this as well
 as we."
 "They hunt old trails," said Cyril,
 "very well;
 But when did woman ever yet in-
 vent?"
 "Ungracious!" answer'd Florian;
 "have you learnt
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you
 that talk'd
 The trash that made me sick, and
 almost sad?"
 "O trash," he said, "but with a ker-
 nel in it.
 Should I not call her wise, who made
 me wise?
 And learnt? I learnt more from her
 in a flash,
 Than if my brainpan were an empty
 hull,
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these
 halls,
 And round these halls a thousand
 baby loves
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the
 hearts,
 Whence follows many a vacant pang;
 but O
 With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger
 boy,

The Head of all the golden-shafted
 firm,
 The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche
 too ;
 He cleft me thro' the stomacher ; and
 now
 What think you of it, Florian ? do I
 chase
 The substance or the shadow ? will it
 hold ?
 I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
 No ghostly hauntings like his High-
 ness. I
 Flatter myself that always every-
 where
 I know the substance when I see it.
 Well,
 Are castles shadows ? Three of them ?
 Is she
 The sweet proprietress a shadow ? If
 not,
 Shall those three castles patch my
 tatter'd coat ?
 For dear are those three castles to my
 wants,
 And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
 And two dear things are one of double
 worth,
 And much I might have said, but that
 my zone
 Unmann'd me : then the Doctors ! O
 to hear
 The Doctors ! O to watch the thirsty
 plants
 Imbibing ! once or twice I thought to
 roar,
 To break my chain, to shake my
 mane : but thou,
 Modulate me, Soul of mincing mim-
 icry !
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon,
 my throat ;
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to
 meet
 Star-sisters answering under crescent
 brows ;
 Abate the stride, which speaks of
 man, and loose
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this
 cheek,
 Where they like swallows coming out
 of time

Will wonder why they came : but
 hark the bell
 For dinner, let us go !"
 And in we stream'd
 Among the columns, pacing staid and
 still
 By twos and threes, till all from end
 to end
 With beauties every shade of brown
 and fair
 In colors gayer than the morning mist,
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of
 flowers.
 How might a man not wander from
 his wits
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I
 kept mine own
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious
 dreams,
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,
 Sat compass'd with professors : they,
 the while,
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and
 fro :
 A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost
 terms
 Of art and science : Lady Blanche
 alone
 Of faded form and haughtiest linea-
 ments,
 With all her autumn tresses falsely
 brown,
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
 In act to spring.
 At last a solemn grace
 Concluded, and we sought the gardens :
 there
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and
 one
 In this hand held a volume as to read,
 And smoothed a petted peacock down
 with that :
 Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
 Or under arches of the marble bridge
 Hung, shadow'd from the heat : some
 hid and sought
 In the orange thickets : others tost a
 ball
 Above the fountain-jets, and back
 again
 With laughter : others lay about the
 lawns,

Of the older sort, and murmur'd that
 their May
 Was passing: what was learning unto
 them?
 They wish'd to marry; they could
 rule a house;
 Men hated learned women: but we
 three
 Sat muffled like the Fates; and often
 came
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
 Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
 That harm'd not: then day droopt;
 the chapel bells
 Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt
 with those
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest
 white,
 Before two streams of light from wall
 to wall,
 While the great organ almost burst
 his pipes,
 Groaning for power, and rolling thro'
 the court
 A long melodious thunder to the sound
 Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
 The work of Ida, to call down from
 Heaven
 A blessing on her labors for the world.

III.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!
 Over the rolling waters go,
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me;
 While my little one, while my pretty one,
 sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon:
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
 sleep.

Morn in the white wake of the morn-
 ing star
 Came furrowing all the orient into
 gold.

We rose, and each by other drest with
 care
 Descended to the court that lay three
 parts
 In shadow, but the Muses' heads were
 touch'd
 Above the darkness from their native
 East.

There while we stood beside the fount,
 and watch'd
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bub-
 ble, approach'd
 Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of
 sleep,
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy
 eyes
 The circled Iris of a night of tears;
 "And fly," she cried, "O fly, while
 yet you may!
 My mother knows:" and when I
 ask'd her "how,"
 "My fault," she wept, "my fault! and
 yet not mine;
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon
 me.

My mother, 'tis her wont from night
 to night
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
 She says the Princess should have
 been the Head,
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two
 arms;
 And so it was agreed when first they
 came;
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand
 now,
 And she the left, or not, or seldom
 used;
 Hers more than half the students, all
 the love.
 And so last night she fell to canvass
 you:
Her countrywomen! she did not envy
 her.
 'Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
 Girls? — more like men!' and at these
 words the snake,
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my
 breast;
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my
 cheek

Began to burn and burn, and her lynx
 eye
 To fix and make me hotter, till she
 laugh'd:
 'O marvellously modest maiden, you!
 Men! girls, like men! why, if they
 had been men
 You need not set your thoughts in
 rubric thus
 For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I
 am shamed
 That I must needs repeat for my
 excuse
 What looks so little graceful: 'men'
 (for still
 My mother went revolving on the
 word)
 'And so they are, — very like men
 indeed —
 And with that woman closeted for
 hours!'
 Then came these dreadful words out
 one by one,
 'Why — these — *are* — men:' I shud-
 der'd: 'and you know it.'
 'O ask me nothing,' I said: 'And
 she knows too,
 And she conceals it.' So my mother
 clutch'd
 The truth at once, but with no word
 from me;
 And now thus early risen she goes to
 inform
 The Princess: Lady Psyche will be
 crush'd;
 But you may yet be saved, and there-
 fore fly:
 But heal me with your pardon ere you
 go."

"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a
 blush?"
 Said Cyril: "Pale one, blush again:
 than wear
 Those lilies, better blush our lives
 away.
 Yet let us breathe for one hour more
 in Heaven"
 He added, "lest some classic Angel
 speak
 In scorn of us, 'They mounted, Gany-
 medes,

To tumble, Vulcans, on the second
 morn.'
 But I will melt this marble into wax
 To yield us farther furlough:" and he
 went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls,
 and thought
 He scarce would prosper. "Tell us,"
 Florian ask'd,
 "How grew this feud betwixt the
 right and left."
 "O long ago," she said, "betwixt these
 two
 Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my
 mother,
 Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
 Pent in a crevice: much I bear with
 her:
 I never knew my father, but she says
 (God help her) she was wedded to a
 fool;
 And still she rail'd against the state
 of things.
 She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
 And from the Queen's decease she
 brought her up.
 But when your sister came she won
 the heart
 Of Ida: they were still together, grew
 (For so they said themselves) inoscu-
 lated;
 Consonant chords that shiver to one
 note;
 One mind in all things: yet my mother
 still
 Affirms your Psyche thieved her the-
 ories,
 And angled with them for her pupil's
 love:
 She calls her plagiarist; I know not
 what:
 But I must go: I dare not tarry," and
 light,
 As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after
 her,
 "An open-hearted maiden, true and
 pure.
 If I could love, why this were she:
 how pretty

Her blushing was, and how she blush'd
again,
As if to close with Cyril's random
wish:
Not like your Princess cramm'd with
erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags
in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter
of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove,
but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! true she
errs,
But in her own grand way: being her-
self
Three times more noble than three
score of men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a
crown
To blind the truth and me: for her,
and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but — ah she — whene'er
she moves
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning
Sun."

So saying from the court we paced,
and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the North-
ern front,
And leaning there on those balusters,
high
Above the empurpled champaign,
drank the gale
That blown about the foliage under-
neath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither
came
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task,"
he cried;
"No fighting shadows here! I forced
a way
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and
guarl'd.

Better to clear prime forests, heave
and thump
A league of street in summer solstice
down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentle-
woman.
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found
her there
At point to move, and settled in her
eyes
The green malignant light of coming
storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase
well-oil'd,
As man's could be; yet maiden-mEEK
I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who we
were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing
fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand
and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affi-
ance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd
astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the
gate,
And our three lives. True — we had
limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take
the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well
might harm
The woman's cause. 'Not more than
now,' she said,
'So puddled as it is with favoritism.'
I tried the mother's heart. Shame
might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she
knew:
Her answer was 'Leave me to deal
with that.'
I spoke of war to come and many
deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to
speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I
knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave

May beat admission in a thousand
 years,
 I recommenced; 'Decide not ere you
 pause.
 I find you here but in the second place,
 Some say the third—the authentic
 foundress you.
 I offer boldly: we will seat you high-
 est:
 Wink at our advent: help my prince
 to gain
 His rightful bride, and here I promise
 you
 Some palace in our land, where you
 shall reign
 The head and heart of all our fair she-
 world,
 And your great name flow on with
 broadening time
 For ever.' Well, she balanced this a
 little,
 And told me she would answer us to-
 day,
 Meantime be mute: thus much, nor
 more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from
 the Head.
 "That afternoon the Princess rode to
 take
 The dip of certain strata to the North.
 Would we go with her? we should find
 the land
 Worth seeing; and the river made a
 fall
 Out yonder:" then she pointed on to
 where
 A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
 Beyond the thick-leaved platans of
 the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro'
 all
 Its range of duties to the appointed
 hour.
 Then summon'd to the porch we went.
 She stood
 Among her maidens, higher by the
 head,
 Her back against a pillar, her foot on
 one

Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike
 he roll'd
 And paw'd about her sandal. I drew
 near;
 I gazed. On a sudden my strange
 seizure came
 Upon me, the weird vision of our
 house:
 The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow
 show,
 Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
 Her college and her maidens, empty
 masks,
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,
 For all things were and were not. Yet
 I felt
 My heart beat thick with passion and
 with awe;
 Then from my breast the involuntary
 sigh
 Brake, as she smote me with the light
 of eyes
 That lent my knee desire to kneel, and
 shook
 My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
 Went forth in long retinue following
 up
 The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she
 said:
 "O friend, we trust that you esteem'd
 us not
 Too harsh to your companion yester-
 morn;
 Unwillingly we spake." "No—not
 to her,"
 I answer'd, "but to one of whom we
 spake
 Your Highness might have seem'd the
 thing you say."
 "Again?" she cried, "are you am-
 bassadresses
 From him to me? we give you, being
 strange,
 A license: speak, and let the topic
 die."

I stammer'd that I knew him—
 could have wish'd—
 "Our king expects—was there no
 precontract?

There is no truer-hearted — ah, you
 seem
 All he prefigured, and he could not see
 The bird of passage flying south but
 long'd
 To follow: surely, if your Highness
 keep
 Your purport, you will shock him ev'n
 to death,
 Or baser courses, children of despair."

"Poor boy," she said, "can he not
 read — no books?
 Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor
 deals in that
 Which men delight in, martial exer-
 cise?
 To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
 Methinks he seems no better than a
 girl;
 As girls were once, as we ourself have
 been:
 We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt
 with them:
 We touch on our dead self, nor shun
 to do it,
 Being other — since we learnt our
 meaning here,
 To lift the woman's fall'n divinity
 Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a
 haughtier smile
 "And as to precontracts, we move, my
 friend,
 At no man's beck, but know ourself
 and thee,
 O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd
 out
 She kept her state, and left the
 drunken king
 To brawl at Shushan underneath the
 palms."

"Alas your Highness breathes full
 East," I said,
 "On that which leans to you. I know
 the Prince,
 I prize his truth: and then how vast
 a work
 To assail this gray præminence of
 man!

You grant me license; might I use it?
 think;
 Ere half be done perchance your life
 may fail;
 Then comes the feebler heiress of your
 plan,
 And takes and ruins all; and thus
 your pains
 May only make that footprint upon
 sand
 Which old-recurring waves of preju-
 dice
 Resmooth to nothing: might I dread
 that you,
 With only Fame for spouse and your
 great deeds
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and
 miss,
 Meanwhile, what every woman counts
 her due,
 Love, children, happiness?"

And she exclaim'd,
 "Peace, you young savage of the
 Northern wild!
 What! tho' your Prince's love were
 like a God's,
 Have we not made ourself the sacri-
 fice?
 You are bold indeed: we are not
 talk'd to thus:
 Yet will we say for children, would
 they grew
 Like field-flowers everywhere! we like
 them well:
 But children die; and let me tell you,
 girl,
 Howe'er you babble, great deeds can-
 not die;
 They with the sun and moon renew
 their light
 For ever, blessing those that look on
 them.
 Children — that men may pluck them
 from our hearts,
 Kill us with pity, break us with our-
 selves —
 O — children — there is nothing upon
 earth
 More miserable than she that has a
 son
 And sees him err: nor would we work
 for fame;

Tho' she perhaps might reap the ap-
 plause of Great,
 Who learns the one *rou sto* whence
 after-hands
 May move the world, tho' she herself
 effect
 But little : wherefore up and act, nor
 shrink
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated
 By frail successors. Would, indeed,
 we had been,
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
 Of giants living, each, a thousand
 years,
 That we might see our own work out,
 and watch
 The sandy footprint harden into
 stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in
 myself
 If that strange Poet-princess with her
 grand
 Imaginations might at all be won.
 And she broke out interpreting my
 thoughts :

"No doubt we seem a kind of
 monster to you ;
 We are used to that : for women, up
 till this
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea
 isle taboo,
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
 In high desire, they know not, cannot
 guess
 How much their welfare is a passion
 to us.
 If we could give them surer, quicker
 proof —
 Oh if our end were less achievable
 By slow approaches, than by single
 act
 Of immolation, any phase of death,
 We were as prompt to spring against
 the pikes,
 Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
 To compass our dear sisters' lib-
 erties."

She bow'd as if to veil a noble
 tear ;

And up we came to where the river
 sloped
 To plunge in cataract, shattering on
 black blocks
 A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook
 the woods,
 And danced the color, and, below,
 stuck out
 The bones of some vast bulk that
 lived and roar'd
 Before man was. She gazed awhile
 and said,
 "As these rude bones to us, are we to
 her
 That will be." "Dare we dream of
 that," I ask'd,
 "Which wrought us, as the workman
 and his work,
 That practice betters ?" "How," she
 cried, "you love
 The metaphysics! read and earn
 our prize,
 A golden brooch : beneath an emerald
 plane
 Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
 Of hemlock ; our device ; wrought to
 the life ;
 She rapt upon her subject, he on her :
 For there are schools for all." "And
 yet" I said
 "Methinks I have not found among
 them all
 One anatomic." "Nay, we thought
 of that,"
 She answer'd, "but it pleased us not :
 in truth
 We shudder but to dream our maids
 should ape
 Those monstrous males that carve
 the living hound,
 And cram him with the fragments of
 the grave,
 Or in the dark dissolving human
 heart,
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,
 Dabbling a shameless hand with
 shameful jest,
 Encarnalize their spirits : yet we
 know
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this
 matter hangs :
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,

Nor willing men should come among
 us, learnt,
 For many weary moons before we
 came,
 This craft of healing. Were you
 sick, ourself
 Would tend upon you. To your
 question now,
 Which touches on the workman and
 his work.
 Let there be light and there was
 light: 'tis so:
 For was, and is, and will be, are but
 is;
 And all creation is one act at once,
 The birth of light: but we that are
 not all,
 As parts, can see but parts, now this,
 now that,
 And live, perforce, from thought to
 thought, and make
 One act a phantom of succession:
 thus
 Our weakness somehow shapes the
 shadow, Time;
 But in the shadow will we work, and
 mould
 The woman to the fuller day."

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league
 beyond,
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood cross-
 ing, came
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,
 Full of all beauty. "O how sweet"
 I said
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask)
 "To linger here with one that loved
 us." "Yea,"
 She answer'd, "or with fair philoso-
 phies
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these
 fields
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian
 lawns,
 Where paced the Demigods of old,
 and saw
 The soft white vapor streak the
 crowned towers
 Built to the Sun:" then, turning to
 her maids,

"Pitch our pavilion here upon the
 sward;
 Lay out the viands." At the word,
 they raised
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here
 she stood,
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-
 cheek,
 The woman conqueror; woman-con-
 quer'd there
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand
 hymns,
 And all the men mourn'd at his side:
 but we
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing,
 Cyril kept
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
 With mine affianced. Many a little
 hand
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on
 the rocks,
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel
 set
 In the dark crag: and then we turn'd,
 we wound
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
 Hammering and clinking, chattering
 stony names
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and
 trap and tuff,
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
 Grew broader toward his death and
 fell, and all
 The rosy heights came out above the
 lawns.

IV.

The splendor falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story:
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
 dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
 dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river:
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,

And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
dying.

"There sinks the nebulous star we
call the Sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound."
Said Ida; "let us down and rest;"
and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled
precipices,
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and
cleft,
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to
where below
No bigger than a glow-worm shone
the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she
lean'd on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent
her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport rose and
fell.

But when we planted level feet,
and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down
we sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us
glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine,
and gold.

Then she, "Let some one sing to
us: lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music:"
and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp,
and sang.

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they
mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-
world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one

That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

She ended with such passion that
the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring
pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some
disdain
Answer'd the Princess, "If indeed
there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to
men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears
with wool
And so pace by: but thine are fancies
hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old bygones
be,
While down the streams that float us
each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering
bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on
the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve
their time
Toward that great year of equal
mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in
the end
Found golden: let the past be past;
let be
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough
kex break
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-
blown goat
Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-
tree split

Their monstrous idols, care not while
we hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle,
burns

Above the unrisen morrow :” then to
me ;

“ Know you no song of your own land,”
she said,

“ Not such as moans about the retro-
spect,

But deals with the other distance and
the hues

Of promise ; not a death’s-head at the
wine.”

Then I remember’d one myself had
made,

What time I watch’d the swallow
winging south

From mine own land, part made long
since, and part

Now while I sang, and maidenlike as
far

As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

“ O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

“ O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest
each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

“ O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow,
and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

“ O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

“ Why lingereth she to clothe her heart
with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are
green ?

“ O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is
flown :
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

“ O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

“ O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make
her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.”

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at
each,

Like the Ithacensian suitors in old
time,

Stared with great eyes, and laugh’d
with alien lips,

And knew not what they meant ; for
still my voice

Rang false : but smiling “ Not for
thee,” she said,

“ O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers,
rather, maid,

Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-
crake

Grate her harsh kindred in the grass :
and this

A mere love-poem ! O for such, my
friend,

We hold them slight : they mind us of
the time

When we made bricks in Egypt.
Knives are men,

That lute and flute fantastic tender-
ness,

And dress the victim to the offering up.
And paint the gates of Hell with Par-
adise,

And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honor once ;

She wept her true eyes blind for such
a one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
I loved her. Peace be with her. She
is dead.

So they blaspheme the muse ! But
great is song

Used to great ends : ourself have often
tried

Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm
have dash’d

The passion of the prophetess ; for song
Is drier unto freedom, force and growth
Of spirit than to junketing and love.

Love is it ? Would this same mock-
love, and this

Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter
bats,

Till all men grew to rate us at our
 worth,
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
 To be dandled, no, but living wills,
 and sphered
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none.
 Enough!
 But now to leaven play with profit,
 you,
 Know you no song, the true growth of
 your soil,
 That gives the manners of your country-
 women?

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous
 head with eyes
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
 Then while I dragg'd my brains for
 such a song,
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd
 glass had wrought,
 Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-
 catch
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experi-
 ences
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded
 at him,
 I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd
 and shook;
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;
 "Forbear," the Princess cried; "For-
 bear, Sir," I;
 And heated thro' and thro' with wrath
 and love,
 I smote him on the breast; he started
 up;
 There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
 Melissa clamor'd "Flee the death;"
 "To horse,"
 Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and
 fled, as flies
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the
 dusk,
 When some one batters at the dove-
 cote-doors,
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at
 heart,
 In the pavilion: there like parting
 hopes

I heard them passing from me: hoof
 by hoof,
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,
 Clang'd on the bridge; and then another
 shriek,
 "The Head, the Head, the Princess, O
 the Head!"
 For blind with rage she miss'd the
 plank, and roll'd
 In the river. Out I sprang from glow
 to gloom:
 There whirl'd her white robe like a
 blossom'd branch
 Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I
 gave,
 No more; but woman-vested as I was
 Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I
 caught her; then
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my
 left
 The weight of all the hopes of half
 the world,
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
 Was half-disrooted from his place and
 stoop'd
 To drench his dark locks in the gur-
 gling wave
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove
 and caught,
 And grasping down the boughs I
 gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmer-
 ingly group'd
 In the hollow bank. One reaching
 forward drew
 My burthen from mine arms; they
 cried "she lives:"
 They bore her back into the tent: but
 I,
 So much a kind of shame within me
 wrought,
 Not yet endured to meet her opening
 eyes,
 Nor found my friends; but push'd
 alone on foot
 (For since her horse was lost I left
 her mine)
 Across the woods, and less from
 Indian craft
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found
 at length

The garden portals. Two great
statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were
valves
Of open-work in which the hunter
rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his
brows
Had sprouted, and the branches there-
upon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked
the gates.

A little space was left between the
horns,
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top
with pain,
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden
walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed
from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glowworm, now
the star,
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had
wheel'd
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving thro' the uncer-
tain gloom,
Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this
were she,"
But it was Florian. "Hist O Hist,"
he said,
"They seek us: out so late is out of
rules.
Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the
cry.
How came you here?" I told him:
"I" said he,
"Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half-sick at
heart, return'd.
Arriving all confused among the rest
With hooded brows I crept into the
hall,
And, couch'd behind a Judith, under-
neath
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each

Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last
of all,
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, question'd if she knew us men,
at first
Was silent; closer prest, denied it
not:
And then, demanded if her mother
knew,
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or de-
nied:
From whence the Royal mind, famil-
iar with her,
Easily gather'd either guilt. She
sent
For Psyche, but she was not there;
she call'd
For Psyche's child to cast it from
the doors;
She sent for Blanche to accuse her
face to face;
And I slipt out: but whither will you
now?
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both
are fled:
What, if together? that were not so
well.
Would rather we had never come! I
dread
His wildness, and the chances of the
dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him
more than I
That struck him: this is proper to the
clown,
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled,
still the clown,
To harm the thing that trusts him,
and to shame
That which he says he loves: for
Cyril, how'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night—the
song
Might have been worse and sinn'd in
grosser lips
Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not
he.
He has a solid base of temperament:
But as the waterlily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,

Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is
he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a
tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,
"Names:"
He, standing still, was clutch'd; but
I began
To thrid the musky-circled mazes,
wind
And double in and out the boles, and
race
By all the fountains: fleet I was of
foot:
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes;
behind
I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine
ear
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded
not,
And secret laughter tickled all my
soul.
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught
and known.

They haled us to the Princess
where she sat
High in the hall: above her droop'd
a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her
brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-
head,
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on
each side
Bow'd toward her, combing out her
long black hair
Damp from the river; and close be-
hind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough,
stronger than men,
Huge women blowzed with health,
and wind, and rain,
And labor. Each was like a Druid
rock;
Or like a spire of land that stands
apart
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about
with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd divid-
ing clove
An advent to the throne: and there-
beside,
Half-naked as if caught at once from
bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth,
lay
The lily-shining child; and on the
left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up
from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken with
her sobs,
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche
erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent
orator.

"It was not thus, O Princess, in old
days:
You prized my counsel, lived upon
my lips:
I led you then to all the Castalies;
I fed you with the milk of every
Muse;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you
me
Your second mother: those were
gracious times.
Then came your new friend: you
began to change—
I saw it and grieved—to slacken and
to cool;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all
to her,
To me you froze: this was my need
for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient
love,
And partly that I hoped to win you
back,
And partly conscious of my own
deserts,
And partly that you were my civil
head,
And chiefly you were born for some-
thing great,
In which I might your fellow-worker
be,

When time should serve; and thus a noble scheme
 Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
 We took this palace; but even from the first
 You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
 What student came but that you planed her path
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
 A foreigner, and I your country-woman,
 I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
 But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean;
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
 Then came these wolves: *they* knew her: *they* endured,
 Long-closeted with her the yesternorn,
 To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
 And me none told: not less to an eye like mine
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,
 Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
 Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
 To meet a cold 'We thank you, we shall hear of it
 From Lady Psyche:' you had gone to her,
 She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
 In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
 Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
 Were all miscounted as malignant haste
 To push my rival out of place and power.

But public use required she should be known;
 And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
 I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
 And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
 I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,
 That surely she will speak; if not, then I:
 Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
 According to the coarseness of their kind,
 For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)
 And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
 I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies;
 And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
 I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
 And talent, I — you know it — I will not boast:
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men will say
 We did not know the real light, but chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly, "Good:
 Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)

Our mind is changed: we take it to
ourselves."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture
throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard
smile.

"The plan was mine. I built the
nest" she said

"To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and
stoop'd to updrag

Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her
face, and cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she
hung,

A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven;
and while

We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden
rush'd

Among us, out of breath, as one pur-
sued,

A woman-post in flying raiment.
Fear

Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her
face, and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she
fell

Delivering seal'd dispatches which
the Head

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's
mood

Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over
brow

And cheek and bosom brake the
wrathful bloom

As of some fire against a stormy
cloud,

When the wild peasant rights him-
self, the rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the
heavens;

For anger most it seem'd, while now
her breast,

Beaten with some great passion at
her heart,

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we
heard

In the dead hush the papers that she
held

Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her
feet

Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire;
she crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden
turn

As if to speak, but, utterance failing
her,

She whirl'd them on to me, as who
should say

"Read," and I read—two letters—
one her sire's.

"Fair daughter, when we sent the
Prince your way

We knew not your ungracious laws,
which learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you
are built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong,
but fell

Into his father's hands, who has this
night,

You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the dark invested

you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his
son."

The second was my father's running
thus:

"You have our son: touch not a hair
of his head:

Render him up unscathed: give him
your hand:

Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed
we hear

You hold the woman is the better man;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread

Would make all women kick against
their Lords

Thro' all the world, and which might
well deserve

That we this night should pluck your
palace down;

And we will do it, unless you send us
back

Our son, on the instant, whole"

So far I read;
And then stood up and spoke impetu-
ously.

“O not to pry and peer on your
reserve,
But led by golden wishes, and a hope
The child of regal compact, did I
break

Your precinct; not a scorner of your
sex

But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be: hear me, for I
bear,

Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er
your wrongs,

From the flaxen curl to the gray lock
a life

Less mine than yours: my nurse
would tell me of you;

I babbled for you, as babies for the
moon,

Vague brightness; when a boy, you
stoop'd to me

From all high places, lived in all fair
lights,

Came in long breezes rapt from in-
most south

And blown to inmost north; at eve
and dawn

With Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
The leader wildswan in among the
stars

Would elang it, and lapt in wreaths
of glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida.
Now,

Because I would have reach'd you,
had you been

Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the
enthroned

Persephonè in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,
A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
Not in this frequency can I lend full
tongue,

O noble Ida, to those thoughts that
wait

On you, their centre: let me say but
this,

That many a famous man and woman,
town

And landskip, have I heard of, after
seen

The dwarfs of presage: tho' when
known, there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing; but in
you I found

My boyish dream involved and daz-
zled down

And master'd, while that after-beauty
makes

Such head from act to act, from hour
to hour,

Within me, that except you slay me
here,

According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say

The seal does music; who desire you
more

Than growing boys their manhood;
dying lips,

With many thousand matters left to
do,

The breath of life; O more than poor
men wealth,

Than sick men health — yours, yours,
not mine — but half

Without you; with you, whole; and
of those halves

You worthiest; and howe'er you block
and bar

Your heart with system out from mine,
I hold

That it becomes no man to nurse
despair,

But in the teeth of clench'd antago-
nisms

To follow up the worthiest till he die:
Yet that I came not all unauthorized

Behold your father's letter.”

On one knee
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,
and dash'd

Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
Invective seem'd to wait behind her
lips,

As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world
with foam:

And so she would have spoken, but
there rose

A hubbub in the court of half the
 maids
 Gather'd together: from the illumined
 hall
 Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a
 press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded
 ewes,
 And rainbow robes, and gems and
 gemlike eyes,
 And gold and golden heads; they to
 and fro
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some
 red, some pale,
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the
 light,
 Some crying there was an army in the
 land,
 And some that men were in the very
 walls,
 And some they cared not; till a
 clamor grew
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-
 built,
 And worse-confounded: high above
 them stood
 The placid marble Muses, looking
 peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head:
 but rising up
 Robed in the long night of her deep
 hair, so
 To the open window moved, remaining
 there
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above the
 waves
 Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling
 eye
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the
 light
 Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd
 her arms and call'd
 Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

“What fear ye, brawlers? am not
 I your Head?
 On me, me, me, the storm first breaks:
 I dare
 All these male thunderbolts: what is
 it ye fear?”

Peace! there are those to avenge us
 and they come:
 If not, — myself were like enough, O
 girls,
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our
 rights,
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of
 war,
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
 Die: yet I blame you not so much for
 fear;
 Six thousand years of fear have made
 you that
 From which I would redeem you: but
 for those
 That stir this hubbub — you and you
 — I know
 Your faces there in the crowd — to-
 morrow morn
 We hold a great convention: then
 shall they
 That love their voices more than duty,
 learn
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in
 shame to live
 No wiser than their mothers, house-
 hold stuff,
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's
 fame,
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the
 clown,
 The drunkard's football, laughing-
 stocks of Time,
 Whose brains are in their hands and
 in their heels,
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to
 thrum,
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and
 to scour,
 For ever slaves at home and fools
 abroad.”

She, ending, waved her hands:
 thereat the crowd
 Muttering, dissolved: then with a
 smile, that look'd
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the
 cliff,
 When all the glens are drown'd in
 azure gloom
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us
 and said:

"You have done well and like a gentleman,
 And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:
 And you look well too in your woman's dress:
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.
 You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:
 Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—
 Then men had said—but now—What hinders me
 To take such bloody vengeance on you both?—
 Yet since our father—Wasps in our good hive,
 You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
 Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—
 O would I had his sceptre for one hour!
 You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us—
 I wed with thee! I bound by precontract
 Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold
 That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,
 And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:
 I trample on your offers and on you: Begone: we will not look upon you more.
 Here, push them out at gates."
 In wrath she spake.
 Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
 Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd
 Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause,
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
 The weight of destiny: so from her face

They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,
 And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
 The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came
 On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:
 I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;
 The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,
 The jest and earnest working side by side,
 The cataract and the tumult and the kings
 Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
 With all its doings had and had not been,
 And all things were and were not.

 This went by
 As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
 Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;
 Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
 And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
 To whom the touch of all mischance but came
 As night to him that sitting on a hill
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
 Set into sunrise; then we moved away:

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
 That beat to battle where he stands;
 Thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands:
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,
 He sees his brood about thy knee;
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-possess'd,
 She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;

And, after, feigning pique at what she
call'd
The raillery, or grotesque, or false
sublime—
Like one that wishes at a dance to
change
The music—clapt her hands and
cried for war,
Or some grand fight to kill and make
an end :
And he that next inherited the tale
Half turning to the broken statue, said,
"Sir Ralph has got your colors: if I
prove
Your knight, and fight your battle,
what for me?"
It chanced, her empty glove upon the
tomb
Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. "Fight,"
she said,
"And make us all we would be, great
and good."
He knightlike in his cap instead of
casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
Arranged the favor, and assumed the
Prince.

v.

Now, scarce three paces measured
from the mound,
We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And "Stand, who goes?" "Two
from the palace" I.
"The second two: they wait," he said,
"pass on ;
His Highness wakes:" and one, that
clash'd in arms,
By glimmering lanes and walls of
canvass led
Threading the soldier-city, till we
heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign
shake
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial
tent
Whispers of war.
Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and
seem'd to hear,

As in a poplar grove when a light
wind wakes
A lisp of the innumerable leaf and
dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear ;
and then
A strangled titter, out of which there
brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to
death,
Unmeasured mirth ; while now the two
old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and
down,
The fresh young captains flash'd their
glittering teeth,
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved
and blew,
And slain with laughter roll'd the
gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek
wet with tears,
Panted from weary sides "King, you
are free !
We did but keep you surety for our
son,
If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin,
thou,
That tends her bristled grunTERS in
the sludge:"
For I was drench'd with ooze, and
torn with briers,
More crumpled than a poppy from the
sheath,
And all one rag, disprinc'd from head
to heel.
Then some one sent beneath his
vaulted palm
A whisper'd jest to some one near
him, "Look,
He has been among his shadows."
"Satan take
The old women and their shadows !
(thus the King
Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight
with men.
Go : Cyril told us all."
As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding
eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice

From what was left of faded woman-
slough
To sheathing splendors and the golden
scale
Of harness, issued in the sun, that
now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the
Earth,
And hit the Northern hills. Here
Cyril met us.

A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd
and given

For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,
whereon

Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled
away

Thro' the dark land, and later in the
night

Had came on Psyche weeping: "then
we fell

Into your father's hand, and there she
lies,

But will not speak, nor stir."

He show'd a tent
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and
there

Among piled arms and rough ac-
countrements,

Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's
cloak,

Like some sweet sculpture draped
from head to foot,

And push'd by rude hands from its
pedestal,

All her fair length upon the ground
she lay:

And at her head a follower of the
camp,

A charr'd and wrinkled piece of wo-
manhood,

Sat watching like a watcher by the
dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come"
he whisper'd to her,

"Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie
not thus.

What have you done but right? you
could not slay

Me, nor your prince: look up: be
comforted:

Sweet is it to have done the thing one
ought,

When fallen in darker ways." And
likewise I:

"Be comforted: have I not lost her
too,

In whose least act abides the nameless
charm

That none has else for me?" She
heard, she moved,

She moan'd, a folded voice; and up
she sat,

And raised the cloak from brows as
pale and smooth

As those that mourn half-shrouded
over death

In deathless marble. "Her," she
said, "my friend—

Parted from her—betray'd her cause
and mine—

Where shall I breathe? why kept ye
not your faith?

O base and bad! what comfort? none
for me!"

To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your
child!"

At which she lifted up her voice and
cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah,
my child,

My one sweet child, whom I shall see
no more!

For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
And either she will die from want of
care,

Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
The child is hers—for every little
fault,

The child is hers; and they will beat
my girl

Remembering her mother: O my
flower!

Or they will take her, they will make
her hard,

And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than
were she dead.

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry
they made,

The horror of the shame among them
all :

But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and
day,

Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one
child :

And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her :
Ah ! what might that man not deserve
of me

Who gave me back my child ? ” “ Be
comforted,”

Said Cyril, “ you shall have it : ” but
again

She veil'd her brows, and prone she
sank, and so

Like tender things that being caught
feign death,

Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp and inward raced
the scouts

With rumor of Prince Arac hard at
hand.

We left her by the woman, and with-
out

Found the gray kings at parle : and
“ Look you ” cried

My father “ that our compact be ful-
fill'd :

You have spoilt this child ; she laughs
at you and man :

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me,
and him :

But red-faced war has rods of steel
and fire ;

She yields, or war.”

Then Gama turn'd to me :
“ We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy
time

With our strange girl : and yet they
say that still

You love her. Give us, then, your
mind at large :

How say you, war or not ? ”

“ Not war, if possible,
O king,” I said, “ lest from the abuse
of war,

The desecrated shrine, the trampled
year,

The smouldering homestead, and the
household flower

Torn from the lintel — all the com-
mon wrong —

A smoke go up thro' which I loom to
her

Three times a monster : now she
lightens scorn

At him that mars her plan, but then
would hate

(And every voice she talk'd with
ratify it,

And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this
knot,

By gentleness than war. I want her
love.

What were I nigher this altho' we
dash'd

Your cities into shards with catapults,
She would not love ; — or brought her
chain'd, a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
Not ever would she love ; but brood-
ing turn

The book of scorn, till all my fitting
chance

Were caught within the record of her
wrongs,

And crush'd to death : and rather,
Sire, than this

I would the old God of war himself
were dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs
of wreck,

Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd
in ice,

Not to be molten out.”

And roughly spake
My father, “ Tut, you know them not,
the girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost
think

That idiot legend credible. Look you,
Sir !

Man is the hunter ; woman is his
game :

The sleek and shining creatures of the
chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of their
 skins ;
 They love us for it, and we ride them
 down.
 Wheedling and siding with them!
 Out! for shame!
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear
 to them
 As he that does the thing they dare
 not do,
 Breathing and sounding beauteous
 battle, comes
 With the air of the trumpet round
 him, and leaps in
 Among the women, snares them by
 the score
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho'
 dash'd with death
 He reddens what he kisses: thus I won
 Your mother, a good mother, a good
 wife,
 Worth winning; but this firebrand—
 gentleness
 To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
 Were wisdom to it."
 "Yea but Sire," I cried,
 "Wild natures need wise curbs. The
 soldier? No:
 What dares not Ida do that she should
 prize
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she
 rose
 The yesternight, and storming in ex-
 tremes,
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance
 down
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd
 the death,
 No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her,
 king,
 True woman: but you clash them all
 in one,
 That have as many differences as we.
 The violet varies from the lily as far
 As oak from elm: one loves the sol-
 dier, one
 The silken priest of peace, one this,
 one that,
 And some unworthily; their sinless
 faith,

A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence
 they need
 More breadth of culture: is not Ida
 right?
 They worth it? truer to the law with-
 in?
 Severer in the logic of a life?
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
 Of earth and heaven? and she of
 whom you speak,
 My mother, looks as whole as some
 serene
 Creation minted in the golden moods
 Of sovereign artists; not a thought,
 a touch,
 But pure as lines of green that streak
 the white
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves;
 I say,
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
 Bursts of great heart and slips in
 sensual mire,
 But whole and one: and take them
 all-in-all,
 Were we ourselves but half as good,
 as kind,
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as
 right
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly
 theirs
 As dues of Nature. To our point:
 not war:
 Lest I lose all."
 "Nay, nay, you spake but sense,"
 Said Gama. "We remember love
 ourself
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate
 him then
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with
 blows.
 You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk;
 And there is something in it as you
 say:
 But you talk kindlier: we esteem you
 for it.—
 He seems a gracious and a gallant
 Prince,
 I would he had our daughter: for the
 rest,
 Our own detention, why, the causes
 weigh'd,

Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —
 We would do much to gratify your Prince —
 We pardon it; and for your ingress here
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
 You did but come as goblins in the night,
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
 And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
 As ours with Ida: something may be done —
 I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
 Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan
 Foursquare to opposition.”
 Here he reach'd
 White hands of farewell to my sire,
 who growl'd
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king
 across the lawns
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings
 of Spring
 In every bole, a song on every spray
 Of birds that piped their Valentines,
 and woke
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
 In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
 All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode

And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dew
 Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
 On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than Peace
 Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,
 And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
 With clamor: for among them rose a cry
 As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
 The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum
 Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;
 And in the blast and bray of the long horn
 And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
 The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced
 Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
 Such thews of men: the midmost and the highest
 Was Arac: all about his motion clung
 The shadow of his sister, as the beam
 Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
 Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,
 That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
 And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
 And bickers into red and emerald, shone
 Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
 War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of force,
 Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
 Stir in me as to strike: then took the king
 His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand

And now a pointed finger, told them all :
 A common light of smiles at our dis-
 guise
 Broke from their lips, and, ere the
 windy jest
 Had labor'd down within his ample
 lungs,
 The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
 Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in
 words.

“Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he
 himself
 Your captive, yet my father wills not
 war:
 And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I,
 war or no?
 But then this question of your troth
 remains:
 And there's a downright honest mean-
 ing in her;
 She flies too high, she flies too high!
 and yet
 She ask'd but space and fairplay for
 her scheme;
 She prest and prest it on me — I my-
 self,
 What know I of these things? but,
 life and soul!
 I thought her half-right talking of her
 wrongs;
 I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what
 of that?
 I take her for the flower of woman-
 kind,
 And so I often told her, right or wrong,
 And, Prince, she can be sweet to those
 she loves,
 And, right or wrong, I care not: this
 is all,
 I stand upon her side: she made me
 swear it —
 'Sdeath — and with solemn rites by
 candlelight —
 Swear by St. something — I forget
 her name —
 Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest
 men;
 She was a princess too; and so I
 swore.
 Come, this is all; she will not: waive
 your claim.

If not, the foughten field, what else,
 at once
 Decides it, 'sdeath! against my
 father's will.”

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up
 My precontract, and loth by brainless
 war
 To cleave the rift of difference deeper
 yet;
 Till one of those two brothers, half
 aside
 And fingering at the hair about his
 lip,
 To prick us on to combat “Like to
 like!
 The woman's garment hid the
 woman's heart.”
 A taunt that clenched his purpose
 like a blow!
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-
 scoff,
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon
 the point
 Where idle boys are cowards to their
 shame,
 “Decide it here: why not? we are
 three to three.”

Then spake the third “But three to
 three? no more?
 No more, and in our noble sister's
 cause?
 More, more, for honor: every captain
 waits
 Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
 More, more, some fifty on a side, that
 each
 May breathe himself, and quick! by
 overthrow
 Of these or those, the question set-
 tled die.”

“Yea,” answer'd I, “for this wild
 wreath of air,
 This flake of rainbow flying on the
 highest
 Foam of men's deeds — this honor, if
 ye will.
 It needs must be for honor if at all:
 Since, what decision? if we fail, we
 fail,

And if we win, we fail: she would not
 keep
 Her compact." " 'Sdeath! but we
 will send to her,"
 Said Arac, "worthy reasons why she
 should
 Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',
 And you shall have her answer by
 the word."

"Boys!" shriek'd the old king, but
 vainlier than a hen
 To her false daughters in the pool;
 for none
 Regarded; neither seem'd there more
 to say:
 Back rode we to my father's camp,
 and found
 He thrice had sent a herald to the
 gates,
 To learn if Ida yet would cede our
 claim,
 Or by denial flush her babbling wells
 With her own people's life: three
 times he went:
 The first, he blew and blew, but none
 appear'd:
 He batter'd at the doors; none came:
 the next,
 An awful voice within had warn'd
 him thence:
 The third, and those eight daughters
 of the plough
 Came sallying thro' the gates, and
 caught his hair,
 And so belabor'd him on rib and
 cheek
 They made him wild: not less one
 glance he caught
 Thro' open doors of Ida station'd
 there
 Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,
 firm
 Tho' compass'd by two armies and
 the noise
 Of arms; and standing like a stately
 Pine
 Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
 When storm is on the heights, and
 right and left
 Suck'd from the dark heart of the
 long hills roll

The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and
 yet her will
 Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I
 was pledged
 To fight in tourney for my bride, he
 clash'd
 His iron palms together with a cry;
 Himself would tilt it out among the
 lads:
 But overborne by all his bearded
 lords
 With reasons drawn from age and
 state, perforce
 He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce
 demur:
 And many a bold knight started up in
 heat,
 And sware to combat for my claim
 till death.

All on this side the palace ran the
 field
 Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise
 here,
 Above the garden's glowing blossom-
 belts,
 A column'd entry shone and marble
 stairs,
 And great bronze valves, emboss'd
 with Tomyris
 And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
 But now fast barr'd: so here upon
 the flat
 All that long morn the lists were
 hammer'd up,
 And all that morn the heralds to and
 fro,
 With message and defiance, went and
 came;
 Last, Ida's answer, in royal hand,
 But shaken here and there, and rol-
 ling words
 Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

"O brother, you have known the
 pangs we felt,
 What heats of indignation when we
 heard
 Of those that iron-cramp'd their
 women's feet;

Of lands in which at the altar the
 poor bride
 Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift
 a scourge;
 Of living hearts that crack within the
 fire
 Where smoulder their dead despots;
 and of those, —
 Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity,
 fling
 Their pretty maids in the running
 flood, and swoops
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the
 heart
 Made for all noble motion: and I saw
 That equal baseness lived in sleeker
 times
 With smoother men: the old leaven
 leaven'd all:
 Millions of throats would bawl for
 civil rights,
 No woman named: therefore I set
 my face
 Against all men, and lived but for
 mine own.
 Far off from men I built a fold for
 them:
 I stored it full of rich memorial:
 I fenced it round with gallant insti-
 tutes,
 And biting laws to scare the beasts
 of prey
 And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy
 boys
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd
 our peace,
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I
 know not what
 Of insolence and love, some pretext
 held
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my
 will
 Seal'd not the bond — the striplings!
 — for their sport! —
 I tamed my leopards: shall I not
 tame these?
 Or you? or I? for since you think me
 touch'd
 In honor — what, I would not aught
 of false —
 Is not our cause pure? and whereas I
 know

Your prowess, Arac, and what
 mother's blood
 You draw from, fight; you failing, I
 abide
 What end soever: fail you will not.
 Still
 Take not his life: he risk'd it for my
 own;
 His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you
 do,
 Fight and fight well; strike and strike
 home. O dear
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards
 you, you
 The sole men to be mingled with our
 cause,
 The sole men we shall prize in the
 aftertime,
 Your very armor hallow'd, and your
 statues
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly
 brush'd aside,
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,
 And mould a generation strong to
 move
 With claim on claim from right to
 right, till she
 Whose name is yoked with children's,
 know herself;
 And Knowledge in our own land
 make her free,
 And, ever following those two crowned
 twins,
 Commerce and conquest, shower the
 fiery grain
 Of freedom broadcast over all that
 orbs
 Between the Northern and the Southern
 morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd
 across the rest.
 "See that there be no traitors in your
 camp:
 We seem a nest of traitors — none to
 trust
 Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt-
 plague of men!
 Almost our maids were better at their
 homes,
 Than thus man-girled here: indeed I
 think

Our chiefest comfort is the little child
Of one unworthy mother; which she
left:
She shall not have it back: the child
shall grow
To prize the authentic mother of her
mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed
This morning: there the tender orphan
hands
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm
from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world
farewell."

I ceased; he said, "Stubborn, but
she may sit
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-
storms,
And breed up warriors! See now, tho'
yourself
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to
sloughs
That swallow common sense, the
spindling king,
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
When the man wants weight, the
woman takes it up,
And topples down the scales; but this
is fixt
As are the roots of earth and base of
all;
Man for the field and woman for the
hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle
she:
Man with the head and woman with
heart:
Man to command and woman to
obey;
All else confusion. Look you! the
gray mare
Is ill to live with, when her whinny
shrills
From tile to scullery, and her small
goodman
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the
fires of Hell
Mix with his hearth: but you — she's
yet a colt —
Take, break her: strongly groom'd and
straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those detest-
able
That let the bantling scald at home,
and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs
in the street.
They say she's comely; there's the
fairer chance:
I like her none the less for rating at
her!
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty
brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly.
Boy,
The bearing and training of a child
Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king:
I took my leave, for it was nearly
noon:
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause "take not his
life:"
I mused on that wild morning in the
woods,
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt
win:"
I thought on all the wrathful king had
said,
And how the strange betrothment
was to end:
Then I remember'd that burnt sor-
cerer's curse
That one should fight with shadows
and should fall;
And like a flash the weird affection
came:
King, camp and college turn'd to hol-
low shows;
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten
ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a
dream:
And ere I woke it was the point of
noon,
The lists were ready. Empanoplied
and plumed
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet
blared

At the barrier like a wild horn in a
land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once
more
The trumpet, and again: at which the
storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge
of spears
And riders front to front, until they
closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering
points,
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,
I dream'd
Of fighting. On his haunches rose
the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the
lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang
the fire.
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but
kept their seats:
Part roll'd on the earth and rose
again and drew:
Part stumbled mixt with floundering
horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac's side,
and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's
flail,
The large blows rain'd, as here and
everywhere
He rode the mellay, lord of the ring-
ing lists,
And all the plain, — brand, mace, and
shaft, and shield —
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil
bang'd
With hammers; till I thought, can
this be he
From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this
be so,
The mother makes us most — and in
my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-
front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'
eyes,
And highest, among the statues,
statue-like,
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a
Jael,

With Psyche's babe, was Ida watch-
ing us,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven. but
she
No saint — inexorable — no tender-
ness —
Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me
fight,
Yea, let her see me fall! with that I
drave
Among the thickest and bore down a
Prince,
And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make
my dream
All that I would. But that large-
moulded man,
His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me thro' the press, and, stag-
gering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and
horseman, came
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the
drains,
And shadowing down the champaign
till it strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and
cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a roar
that Earth
Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for
everything
Gave way before him: only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own
right eye,
Thrust in between; but Arac rode
him down:
And Cyril seeing it, push'd against
the Prince,
With Psyche's color round his helmet,
tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at
arms;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that
smote
And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt
my veins
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment
hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to
horse we hung,

Till I struck out and shouted; the
blade glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream
and truth
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me;
and I fell.

VI.

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

My dream had never died or lived
again.

As in some mystic middle state I lay;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me
all

So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to
me,
That all things grew more tragic and
more strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd
and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great
cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard
and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my
casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after
him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on
the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she
sang.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the
seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless grith, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they
came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears:
they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand:
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fall'n
themselves.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they
came,
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and
floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they
struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves,
nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder
blade.

"Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall
grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and
roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the
fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

"And now, O maids, behold our
sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we
not
To break them more in their behoof,
whose arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with
a day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual
feast,
When dames and heroines of the
golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of
Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three:
but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights
are won.

Let them not lie in the tents with
 coarse mankind,
 Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer
 these
 The brethren of our blood and cause,
 that there
 Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender
 ministries
 Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet
 in her arms,
 Descending, burst the great bronze
 valves, and led
 A hundred maids in train across the
 Park.
 Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed,
 on they came,
 Their feet in flowers, her loveliest :
 by them went
 The enamor'd air sighing, and on
 their curls
 From the high tree the blossom waver-
 ing fell,
 And over them the tremulous isles of
 light
 Slided, they moving under shade : but
 Blanche
 At distance follow'd : so they came :
 anon
 Thro' open field into the lists they
 wound
 Timorously ; and as the leader of the
 herd
 That holds a stately fretwork to the
 Sun,
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy
 does,
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on
 air,
 The lovely, lordly creature floated
 on
 To where her wounded brethren lay ;
 there stay'd ;
 Knelt on one knee, — the child on one,
 — and prest
 Their hands, and call'd them dear
 deliverers,
 And happy warriors, and immortal
 names,
 And said "You shall not lie in the
 tents but here,

And nursed by those for whom you
 fought, and served
 With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whether moved by this, or
 was it chance,
 She past my way. Up started from
 my side
 The old lion, glaring with his whelp-
 less eye,
 Silent ; but when she saw me lying
 stark,
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly
 pale,
 Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and when
 she saw
 The haggard father's face and rever-
 end beard
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the
 blood
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of
 pain
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her
 forehead past
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and
 she said :
 "He saved my life : my brother slew
 him for it."
 No more : at which the king in bitter
 scorn
 Drew from my neck the painting and
 the tress,
 And held them up : she saw them,
 and a day
 Rose from the distance on her memory,
 When the good Queen, her mother,
 shore the tress
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady
 Blanche :
 And then once more she look'd at my
 pale face :
 Till understanding all the foolish
 work
 Of fancy, and the bitter close of all,
 Her iron will was broken in her
 mind ;
 Her noble heart was molten in her
 breast ;
 She bow'd, she set the child on the
 earth ; she laid
 A feeling finger on my brows, and
 presently

‘O Sire,” she said, “he lives: he is
not dead:
O let me have him with my brethren
here
In our own palace: we will tend on
him
Like one of these: if so, by any
means,
To lighten this great clog of thanks,
that make
Our progress falter to the woman’s
goal.”

She said: but at the happy word
“he lives”
My father stoop’d, re-father’d o’er my
wounds.
So those two foes above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and
evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche
ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by
us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden
brede,
Lay like a new-fall’n meteor on the
grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother and
began
A blind and babbling laughter, and
to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling inno-
cent arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the
appeal
Brook’d not, but clamoring out “Mine
— mine — not yours,
It is not yours, but mine: give me the
child”
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was
the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-
mouth’d,
And turn’d each face her way: wan
was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming
mantle torn,
Red grief and mother’s hunger in her
eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls,
and half

The sacred mother’s bosom, panting,
burst
The laces toward her babe; but she
nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida
heard,
Look’d up, and rising slowly from me,
stood
Erect and silent, striking with her
glance
The mother, me, the child; but he
that lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter’d as he was,
Trail’d himself up on one knee: then
he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down
she look’d
At the arm’d man sideways, pitying
as it seem’d,
Or self-involved; but when she learnt
his face,
Remembering his ill-omen’d song,
arose
Once more thro’ all her height, and
o’er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen’d on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and
he said:
“O fair and strong and terrible!
Lioness
That with your long locks play the
Lion’s mane!
But Love and Nature, these are two
more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on
our necks,
We vanquish’d, you the Victor of
your will.
What would you more? give her the
child! remain
Orb’d in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you
be:
Win you the hearts of women; and
beware
Lest, where you seek the common
love of these,
The common hate with the revolving
wheel
Should drag you down, and some
great Nemesis

Break from a darken'd future, crown'd
with fire,
And tread you out for ever : but how-
soe'er
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own
arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to
her,
Give her the child! O if, I say, you
keep
One pulse that beats true woman, if
you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dan-
dled you,
Or own one port of sense not flint to
prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn
to lay it,
Yourself, in hands so lately claspt
with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her
one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could
not kill,
Give *me* it: *I will give it her.*"

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation
roll'd
Dry flame, she listening; after sank
and sank
And, into mournful twilight mellow-
ing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it:
"Pretty bud!
Lily of the vale! half open'd bell of
the woods!
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when
a world
Of traitorous friend and broken sys-
tem made
No purple in the distance, mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine,
farewell;
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part: and yet how fain
was I
To dream thy cause embraced in
mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I
felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren
breast

In the dead prime: but may thy
mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to
me!
And, if thou needs must bear the
yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom" — here she kiss'd
it: then —
"All good go with thee! take it, Sir,"
and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed
hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as
she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in
thanks;
Then felt it sound and whole from
head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close
enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and mum-
bled it,
And hid her bosom with it; after that
Put on more calm and added suppli-
antly:

"We two were friends: I go to
mine own land
For ever: find some other: as for me
I scarce am fit for your great plans:
yet speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part
forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the
child.
Then Arac. "Ida — 'sdeath! you
blame the man;
You wrong yourselves — the woman
is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to
me!
I am your warrior: I and mine have
fought
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand,
she weeps:
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice
o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the
ground,

And reddening in the furrows of his
chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama
said :

“ I’ve heard that there is iron in the
blood,
And I believe it. Not one word ? not
one ?

Whence drew you this steel temper ?
not from me,

Not from your mother, now a saint
with saints.

She said you had a heart — I heard
her say it —

‘ Our Ida has a heart ’ — just ere she
died —

‘ But see that some one with authority
Be near her still ’ and I — I sought
for one —

All people said she had authority —
The Lady Blanche : much profit !
Not one word ;

No ! tho’ your father sues : see how
you stand

Stiff as Lot’s wife, and all the good
knights maim’d,

I trust that there is no one hurt to
death,

For your wild whim : and was it then
for this,

Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer
heats and state,

And had our wine and chess beneath
the planes,

And many a pleasant hour with her
that’s gone,

Ere you were born to vex us ? Is it
kind ?

Speak to her I say : is this not she of
whom,

When first she came, all flush’d you
said to me

Now had you got a friend of your
own age,

Now could you share your thought ;
now should men see

Two women faster welded in one
love

Than pairs of wedlock ; she you
walk’d with, she

You talk’d with, whole nights long, up
in the tower,

Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows
what ; and now

A word, but one, one little kindly
word,

Not one to spare her : out upon you,
flint !

You love nor her, nor me, nor any ;
nay,

You shame your mother’s judgment
too. Not one ?

You will not ? well — no heart have
you, or such

As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitter-
ness.”

So said the small king moved beyond
his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain’d of
her force

By many a varying influence and so
long.

Down thro’ her limbs a drooping lan-
guor wept :

Her head a little bent ; and on her
mouth

A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded
moon

In a still water : then brake out my
sire,

Lifting his grim head from my
wounds. “ O you,

Woman, whom we thought woman
even now,

And were half fool’d to let you tend
our son,

Because he might have wish’d it —
but we see

The accomplice of your madness un-
forgiven,

And think that you might mix his
draught with death,

When your skies change again : the
rougher hand

Is safer : on to the tents : take up the
Prince.”

He rose, and while each ear was
prick’d to attend

A tempest, thro' the cloud that
dimm'd her broke
A genial warmth and light once
more, and shone
Thro' glittering drops on her sad
friend.

“Come hither,
O Psyche,” she cried out, “embrace
me, come

Quick while I melt; make reconcile-
ment sure

With one that cannot keep her mind
an hour:

Come to the hollow heart they slander
so!

Kiss and be friends, like children
being chid!

I seem no more: I want forgiveness
too:

I should have had to do with none
but maids,

That have no links with men. Ah
false but dear,

Dear traitor, too much loved, why? —
why? — Yet see,

Before these kings we embrace you
yet once more

With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait
upon him,

Like mine own brother. For my debt
to him,

This nightmare weight of gratitude, I
know it;

Taunt me no more: yourself and
yours shall have

Free adit; we will scatter all our
maids

Till happier times each to her proper
hearth:

What use to keep them here — now?
grant my prayer.

Help, father, brother, help; speak to
the king:

Thaw this male nature to some touch
of that

Which kills me with myself, and
drags me down

From my fixt height to mob me up
with all

The soft and milky rabble of woman-
kind,
Poor weakling ev'n as they are.”

Passionate tears
Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril
said:

“Your brother, Lady — Florian, —
ask for him

Of your great head — for he is
wounded too —

That you may tend upon him with the
prince.”

“Ay so,” said Ida with a bitter smile,
“Our laws are broken: let him enter
too.”

Then Violet, she that sang the mourn-
ful song,

And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. “Ay so,” she
said,

“I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling
hour:

We break our laws with ease, but let
it be.”

“Ay so?” said Blanche: “Amazed
am I to hear

Your Highness: but your Highness
breaks with ease

The law your Highness did not make:
'twas I.

I had been wedded wife, I knew man-
kind,

And block'd them out; but these men
came to woo

Your Highness — verily I think to
win.”

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry
eye:

But Ida with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling
tower,

Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and
scorn.

“Fling our doors wide! all, all, not
one, but all,

Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend
or foe,

Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls
flit,
Till the storm die ! but had you stood
by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from
his base
Had left us rock. She fain would
sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with
your likes.
We brook no further insult but are
gone."

She turn'd ; the very nape of her
white neck
Was rosed with indignation : but the
Prince
Her brother came ; the king her father
charm'd
Her wounded soul with words : nor
did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his
hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead
weights, and bare
Straight to the doors : to them the
doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry
shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels :
And on they moved and gain'd the
hall, and there
Rested. but great the crush was, and
each base,
To left and right, of those tall columns
drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers : at the further
end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great
cats
Close by her, like supporters on a
shield,
Bow-back'd with fear : but in the cen-
tre stood
The common men with rolling eyes ;
amazed
They glared upon the women, and
aghast
The women stared at these, all silent,
save

When armor clash'd or jingled,
while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall,
and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and
steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from head
to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the
helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on
flame,
And now and then an echo started
up,
And shuddering fled from room to
room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :
And me they bore up the broad stairs,
and thro'
The long-laid galleries past a hundred
doors
To one deep chamber shut from
sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness ; left
me in it ;
And others elsewhere they laid ; and
all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing
home
Till happier times ; but some were left
of those
Held sagest, and the great lords out
and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside
the walls,
Walked at their will, and everything
was chang'd.

VII.

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the
sea ;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and
take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee ?
Ask me no more.
Ask me no more : what answer should I
give ?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die !
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are
seal'd:

I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hos-
pital;

At first with all confusion: by and
by

Sweet order lived again with other
laws:

A kindlier influence reign'd; and
everywhere

Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick: the maidens
came, they talk'd,

They sang, they read: till she not fair
began

To gather light, and she that was, be-
came

Her former beauty treble; and to and
fro

With books, with flowers, with Angel
offices,

Like creatures native unto gracious
act,

And in their own clear element, they
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent
with shame.

Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke:
but oft

Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone
for hours

On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of
men

Darkening her female field: void was
her use,

And she as one that climbs a peak to
gaze

O'er land and main, and sees a great
black cloud

Drag inward from the deeps, a wall
of night,

Blot out the slope of sea from verge
to shore,

And suck the blinding splendor from
the sand,

And quenching lake by lake and tarn
by tarn

Expunge the world: so fared she gaz-
ing there;

So blacken'd all her world in secret,
blank

And waste it seem'd and vain; till
down she came,

And found fair peace once more among
the sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by
morn the lark

Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,
but I

Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:
And twilight gloom'd; and broader-
grown the bowers

Drew the great night into themselves,
and Heaven,

Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could
reach me, lay

Quite sunder'd from the moving Uni-
verse,

Nor knew what eye was on me, nor
the hand

That nursed me, more than infants in
their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with
her oft,

Melissa came; for Blanche had gone,
but left

Her child among us, willing she should
keep

Court-favor: here and there the small
bright head,

A light of healing, glanced about the
couch,

Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded
man

With blush and smile, a medicine in
themselves

To wile the length from languorous
hours, and draw

The sting from pain; nor seem'd it
strange that soon

He rose up whole, and those fair
charities

Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd
 that hearts
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close
 in love,
 Than when two dewdrops on the petal
 shake
 To the same sweet air, and tremble
 deeper down,
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit
 obtain'd
 At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche
 had sworn
 That after that dark night among the
 fields
 She needs must wed him for her own
 good name ;
 Not tho' he built upon the babe re-
 stored ;
 Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she,
 but fear'd
 To incense the Head once more ; till
 on a day
 When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
 Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she
 hung
 A moment, and she heard, at which
 her face
 A little flush'd, and she past on ; but
 each
 Assumed from thence a half-consent
 involved
 In stillness, plighted troth, and were
 at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred
 halls
 Held carnival at will, and flying struck
 With showers of random sweet on
 maid and man.
 Nor did her father cease to press my
 claim,
 Nor did mine own now reconciled ; nor
 yet
 Did those twin brothers, risen again
 and whole ;
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she
 sat :

Then came a change ; for sometimes
 I would catch
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
 And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
 "You are not Ida ;" clasp it once again,
 And call her Ida, tho' I know her not,
 And call her sweet, as if in irony,
 And call her hard and cold which
 seem'd a truth :
 And still she fear'd that I should lose
 my mind,
 And often she believed that I should
 die :
 Till out of long frustration of her care,
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary
 noons,
 And watches in the dead, the dark,
 when clocks
 Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace
 floors, or call'd
 On flying Time from all their silver
 tongues —
 And out of memories of her kindlier
 days,
 And sidelong glances at my father's
 grief,
 And at the happy lovers heart in
 heart —
 And out of hauntings of my spoken
 love,
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd
 dream,
 And often feeling of the helpless
 hands,
 And wordless broodings on the wasted
 cheek —
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last,
 to these,
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung
 with tears
 By some cold morning glacier ; frail
 at first
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
 But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close
 to death
 For weakness : it was evening : silent
 light
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein
 were wrought

Two grand designs; for on one side
 arose
 The women up in wild revolt, and
 storm'd
 At the Opian law. Titanic shapes,
 they cramm'd
 The forum, and half-crush'd among
 the rest
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the
 other side
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; be-
 hind,
 A train of dames: by axe and eagle
 sat,
 With all their foreheads drawn in
 Roman scowls,
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in
 their veins,
 The fierce triumvirs; and before them
 paused
 Hortensia pleading: angry was her
 face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where
 I was:
 They did but look like hollow shows;
 nor more
 Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the
 dew
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her
 shape
 And rounder seem'd: I moved: I
 sigh'd: a touch
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon
 my hand:
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran
 Mine down my face, and with what
 life I had,
 And like a flower that cannot all un-
 fold,
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the
 sun,
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on
 her
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whis-
 peringly:

"If you be, what I think you, some
 sweet dream,
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,

I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die
 to-night.
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I
 die."

I could no more, but lay like one in
 trance,
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his
 friends,
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor
 make one sign,
 But lies and dreads his doom. She
 turn'd; she paused;
 She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt
 a cry;
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of
 death;
 And I believed that in the living world
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms
 she rose
 Glowing all over noble shame; and all
 Her falsèr self slipt from her like a
 robe,
 And left her woman, lovelier in her
 mood
 Than in her mould that other, when
 she came
 From barren deeps to conquer all
 with love;
 And down the streaming crystal
 dropt; and she
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
 Naked, a double light in air and wàve,
 To meet her Graces, where they
 deck'd her out
 For worship without end; nor end of
 mine,
 Stateliest, for thee! but mute she
 glided forth,
 Nor glanced behind her, and I sank
 and slept,
 Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a
 happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near
 me, held
 A volume of the Poets of her land:
 There to herself, all in low tones, she
 read.

“Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

I heard her turn the page; she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low,
she read:

“Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)

In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:

But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill

Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.”

So she low-toned; while with shut
eyes I lay

Listening; then look'd. Pale was the
perfect face;

The bosom with long sighs labor'd;
and meek

Seem'd the full lips, and mild the
luminous eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand.
She said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had
fail'd

In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
That all her labor was but as a block

Left in the quarry; but she still were
loth,

She still were loth to yield herself to
one

That wholly scorn'd to help their
equal rights

Against the sons of men, and barbarous
laws.

She pray'd me not to judge their
cause from her

That wrong'd it; sought far less for
truth than power

In knowledge: something wild within
her breast,

A greater than all knowledge, beat
her down.

And she had nursed me there from
week to week:

Much had she learnt in little time.
In part

It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a
girl—

“Ah fool, and made myself a Queen
of farce!

When comes another such? never, I
think,

Till the Sun drop, dead, from the
signs.”

Her voice

Choked, and her forehead sank upon
her hands,

And her great heart thro' all the
faultful Past

Went sorrowing in a pause I dared
not break;

Till notice of a change in the dark
world

Was hispt about the acacias, and a
bird,

That early woke to feed her little ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for
light :
She moved, and at her feet the volume
fell.

“Blame not thyself too much,” I
said, “nor blame
Too much the sons of men and bar-
barous laws ;
These were the rough ways of the
world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me,
that know
The woman’s cause is man’s: they
rise or sink
Together, dwarf’d or godlike, bond or
free :
For she that out of Lethe scales with
man
The shining steps of Nature, shares
with man
His nights, his days, moves with him
to one goal,
Stays all the fair young planet in her
hands —
If she be small, slight-natured, miser-
able,
How shall men grow ? but work no
more alone !
Our place is much : as far as in us lies
We two will serve them both in aid-
ing her —
Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up but drag
her down —
Will leave her space to burgeon out
of all
Within her — let her make herself
her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and
be
All that not harms distinctive woman-
hood.
For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse: could we make her as
the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest
bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they
grow ;

The man be more of woman, she of
man ;
He gain in sweetness and in moral
height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that
throw the world ;
She mental breadth, nor fail in child-
ward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger
mind ;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words ;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of
Time,
Sit side by side, full-summ’d in all
their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing
each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other ev’n as those who
love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back
to men :
Then reign the world’s great bridal,
chaste and calm :
Then springs the crowning race of
human-kind.
May these things be !”
Sighing she spoke “I fear
They will not.”
“Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud
watchword rest
Of equal ; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought
in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they
grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell’d heart beating, with one
full stroke,
Life.”
And again sighing she spoke: “A
dream
That once was mine! what woman
taught you this ?”
“Alone,” I said, “from earlier than
I know,

Immersed in rich foreshadowings of
 the world,
 I loved the woman : he, that doth not,
 lives
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet
 self,
 Or pines in sad experience worse than
 death,
 Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt
 with crime :
 Yet was there one thro' whom I loved
 her, one
 Not learned, save in gracious house-
 hold ways,
 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender
 wants,
 No Angel, but a dearer being, all
 dipt
 In Angel instincts, breathing Para-
 dise,
 Interpreter between the Gods and
 men,
 Who look'd all native to her place,
 and yet
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a
 sphere
 Too gross to tread, and all male
 minds perforce
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as
 they moved,
 And girdled her with music. Happy
 he
 With such a mother ! faith in woman-
 kind
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all
 things high
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip
 and fall
 He shall not blind his soul with clay."
 "But I,"
 Said Ida, tremulously, "so all un-
 like —
 It seems you love to cheat yourself
 with words :
 This mother is your model. I have
 heard
 Of your strange doubts : they well
 might be : I seem
 A mockery to my own self. Never,
 Prince ;
 You cannot love me."

"Nay but thee," I said

"From yearlong poring on thy pic-
 tured eyes,
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,
 and saw
 Thee woman thro' the crust of iron
 moods
 That mask'd thee from men's rever-
 ence up, and forced
 Sweet love on pranks of saucy boy-
 hood : now,
 Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro'
 thee,
 Indeed I love : the new day comes, the
 light
 Dearer for night, as dearer thou for
 faults
 Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my doubts
 are dead,
 My haunting sense of hollow shows :
 the change,
 This truthful change in thee has kill'd
 it. Dear,
 Look up, and let thy nature strike on
 mine,
 Like yonder morning on the blind
 half-world ;
 Approach and fear not ; breathe upon
 my brows ;
 In that fine air I tremble, all the past
 Melts mist-like into this bright hour,
 and this
 Is morn to more, and all the rich to-
 come
 Reels, as the golden Autumn wood-
 land reels
 Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.
 Forgive me,
 I waste my heart in signs : let be. My
 bride,
 My wife, my life. O we will walk this
 world,
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
 And so thro' those dark gates across
 the wild
 That no man knows. Indeed I love
 thee : come,
 Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine
 are one :
 Accomplish thou my manhood and
 thyself ;
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and
 trust to me."

CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give
 you all
 The random scheme as wildly as it
 rose :
 The words are mostly mine ; for when
 we ceased
 There came a minute's pause, and
 Walter said,
 " I wish she had not yielded ! " then to
 me,
 " What, if you drest it up poetically ! "
 So pray'd the men, the women : I gave
 assent :
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme
 of seven
 Together in one sheaf ? What style
 could suit ?
 The men required that I should give
 throughout
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
 With which we banter'd little Lilia
 first :
 The women — and perhaps they felt
 their power,
 For something in the ballads which
 they sang,
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with bur-
 lesque,
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn
 close —
 They hated banter, wish'd for some-
 thing real,
 A gallant fight, a noble princess —
 why
 Not make her true-heroic — true-
 sublime ?
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the
 close ?
 Which yet with such a framework
 scarce could be.
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the
 two,
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists :
 And I, betwixt them both, to please
 them both,
 And yet to give the story as it rose,
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,
 And maybe neither pleased myself
 nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took
 no part
 In our dispute : the sequel of the tale
 Had touch'd her ; and she sat, she
 pluck'd the grass,
 She flung it from her, thinking : last,
 she fixt
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and
 said,
 " You — tell us what we are " who
 might have told,
 For she was cramm'd with theories
 out of books,
 But that there rose a shout : the gates
 were closed
 At sunset, and the crowd were swarm-
 ing now,
 To take their leave, about the garden
 rails.

So I and some went out to these :
 we climb'd
 The slope to Vivian-place, and turn-
 ing saw
 The happy valleys, half in light, and
 half
 Far-shadowing from the west, a land
 of peace ;
 Gray halls alone among their massive
 groves ;
 Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic
 tower
 Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths
 of wheat ;
 The shimmering glimpses of a stream :
 the seas ;
 A red sail, or a white ; and far be-
 yond,
 Imagined more than seen, the skirts
 of France.

" Look there, a garden ! " said my
 college friend,
 The Tory member's elder son, " and
 there !
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps
 her off,
 And keeps our Britain, whole within
 herself,
 A nation yet, the rulers and the
 ruled —
 Some sense of duty, something of a
 faith,

Some reverence for the laws ourselves
 have made,
 Some patient force to change them
 when we will,
 Some civic manhood firm against the
 crowd —
 But yonder, whiff! there comes a sud-
 den heat,
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his
 head,
 The king is scared, the soldier will
 not fight,
 The little boys begin to shoot and
 stab,
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek
 Like an old woman, and down rolls
 the world
 In mock heroics stranger than our
 own;
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring
 out;
 Too comic for the solemn things they
 are,
 Too solemn for the comic touches in
 them,
 Like our wild Princess with as wise
 a dream
 As some of theirs — God bless the
 narrow seas!
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic
 broad.”

“Have patience,” I replied, “our-
 selves are full
 Of social wrong; and maybe wildest
 dreams
 Are but the needful preludes of the
 truth:
 For me, the genial day, the happy
 crowd,
 The sport half-science, fill me with a
 faith,
 This fine old world of ours is but a
 child
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give
 it time
 To learn its limbs: there is a hand
 that guides.”

In such discourse we gain'd the
 garden rails,

And there we saw Sir Walter where
 he stood,
 Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
 Among six boys, head under head,
 and look'd
 No little lily-handed Baronet he,
 A great broad-shoulder'd genial Eng-
 lishman,
 A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
 A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
 A patron of some thirty charities,
 A pamphleteer on guano and on
 grain,
 A quarter-sessions chairman, abler
 none;
 Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy
 morn;
 Now shaking hands with him, now
 him, of those
 That stood the nearest — now ad-
 dress'd to speech —
 Who spoke few words and pithy, such
 as closed
 Welcome, farewell, and welcome for
 the year
 To follow: a shout rose again, and
 made
 The long line of the approaching
 rookery swerve
 From the broad elms, and shook the
 branches of the deer
 From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,
 and rang
 Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a
 shout
 More joyful than the city-roar that
 hails
 Premier or king! Why should not
 these great Sirs
 Give up their parks some dozen times
 a year
 To let the people breathe? So thrice
 they cried,
 I likewise, and in groups they stream'd
 away.

But we went back to the Abbey,
 and sat on,
 So much the gathering darkness
 charm'd: we sat
 But spoke not, rapt in nameless
 reverie,

Perchance upon the future man: the
 walls
 Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and
 owls whoop'd,
 And gradually the powers of the
 night,
 That range above the region of the
 wind,
 Deepening the courts of twilight
 broke them up

Thro' all the silent spaces of the
 worlds,
 Beyond all thought into the Heaven
 of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
 Disrobed the glimmering statue of
 Sir Ralph
 From those rich silks, and home well-
 pleased we went.

MAUD ; A MONODRAMA.

PART I.

I.

I.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
 Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
 The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
 And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers "Death."

II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
 His who had given me life — O father ! O God ! was it well ? —
 Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dented into the ground :
 There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

III.

Did he fling himself down ? who knows ? for a vast speculation had fail'd,
 And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,
 And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd
 By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,
 And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
 The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

V.

Villany somewhere ! whose ? One says, we are villains all.
 Not he : his honest fame should at least by me be maintained :
 But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
 Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace ? we have made them a curse,
 Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own ;
 And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
 Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone ?

VII.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
 When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word ?
 Is it peace or war ? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
 The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
 Of the golden age — why not ? I have neither hope nor trust ;
 May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
 Cheat and be cheated, and die : who knows ? we are ashes and dust.

IX.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
 When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,
 When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie ;
 Peace in her vineyard — yes ! — but a company forges the wine.

X.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
 Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
 And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
 And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

XI.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villanous centre-bits
 Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
 While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
 To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

XII.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
 And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
 Is it peace or war ? better, war ! loud war by land and by sea,
 War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

XIII.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
 And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
 That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
 And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home. —

XIV.

What ! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood ?
 Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
 Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
 On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie ?

XV.

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love* in the passionate shriek,
 Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave —
 Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
 And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
 Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
 O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
 Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

XVII.

Workmen up at the Hall! — they are coming back from abroad;
 The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire:
 I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
 I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

XVIII.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
 Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
 Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
 Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all, —

XIX.

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
 No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
 Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
 I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!
 It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savor nor salt,
 But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
 Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?
 All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
 Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before

Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

IV.

I.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
 In the little grove where I sit — ah, wherefore cannot I be
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land ?

II.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small !
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite ;
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar ;
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall ;
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light ;
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star !

III.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race ?
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd :
 I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor ;
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud ;
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

IV.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal ;
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way :
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal ;
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

V.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower ;
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
 That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed ?
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour ;
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame ;
 However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

VI.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
 And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
 As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
 So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:
 He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

VII

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
 An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;
 The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.
 I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;
 For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
 Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

VIII.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
 Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
 Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
 Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?
 I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

IX.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
 Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
 From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise
 Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
 Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

X.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
 The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
 Ah Maud, you milk-white fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
 Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
 Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;
 You have but fed on the roses and linn in the lilies of life.

V.

I.

A voice by the cedar tree
 In the meadow under the Hall!
 She is singing an air that is known to
 me,

A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
 A martial song like a trumpet's call!
 Singing alone in the morning of life,

In the happy morning of life and of May,
 Singing of men that in battle array,
 Ready in heart and ready in hand,
 March with banner and bugle and fife
 To the death, for their native land.

II.

Maud with her exquisite face,
 And wild voice pealing up to the
 sunny sky,

And feet like sunny gems on an Eng-
lish green,
Maud in the light of her youth and
her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that
cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so
sordid and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

III.

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the
mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me
a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall
before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and
adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor
kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI.

I.

Morning arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are
bow'd
Caught and cuff'd by the gale:
I had fancied it would be fair.

II.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile
so sweet,
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

III.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark

Kept itself warm in the heart of my
dreams,
Ready to burst in a color'd flame;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

IV.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

V.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VI.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yesternorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings
shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

VII.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch
and ward,

Or thou wilt prove their tool.
 Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
 For often a man's own angry pride
 Is cap and bells for a fool.

VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
 Came out of her pitying womanhood,
 For am I not, am I not, here alone
 So many a summer since she died,
 My mother, who was so gentle and
 good?

Living alone in an empty house,
 Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
 Where I hear the dead at midday
 moan,

And the shrieking rush of the wainscot
 mouse,

And my own sad name in corners
 cried,

When the shiver of dancing leaves is
 thrown

About its echoing chambers wide,
 Till a morbid hate and horror have
 grown

Of a world in which I have hardly
 mixt,

And a morbid eating lichen fixt
 On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and
 caught

By that you swore to withstand?
 For what was it else within me wrought
 But, I fear, the new strong wine of
 love,

That made my tongue so stammer and
 trip

When I saw the treasured splendor,
 her hand,

Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
 And the sunlight broke from her lip?

X.

I have play'd with her when a child;
 She remembers it now we meet.

Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled
 By some coquettish deceit.

Yet, if she were not a cheat,

If Maud were all that she seem'd,
 And her smile had all that I dream'd,
 Then the world were not so bitter
 But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

I.

Did I hear it half in a doze
 Long since, I know not where?
 Did I dream it an hour ago,
 When asleep in this arm-chair?

II.

Men were drinking together,
 Drinking and talking of me;
 "Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
 Will have plenty: so let it be."

III.

Is it an echo of something
 Read with a boy's delight,
 Viziers nodding together
 In some Arabian night?

IV.

Strange, that I hear two men,
 Somewhere, talking of me;
 "Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
 Will have plenty; so let it be."

VIII.

She came to the village church,
 And sat by a pillar alone;
 An angel watching an urn
 Wept over her, carved in stone;
 And once, but once, she lifted her
 eyes,
 And suddenly, sweetly, strangely
 blush'd

To find they were met by my own;
 And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat
 stronger

And thicker, until I heard no longer
 The snowy-banded, dilettante,
 Delicate-handed priest intone;
 And thought, is it pride, and mused
 and sigh'd

"No surely, now it cannot be pride."

IX.

I was walking a mile,
 More than a mile from the shore,
 The sun look'd out with a smile
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor,
 And riding at set of day
 Over the dark moor land,
 Rapidly riding far away,
 She waved to me with her hand.
 There were two at her side,
 Something flash'd in the sun,
 Down by the hill I saw them ride,
 In a moment they were gone :
 Like a sudden spark
 Struck vainly in the night,
 Then returns the dark
 With no more hope of light.

X.

I.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ?
 Was not one of the two at her side
 This new-made lord, whose splendor
 plucks
 The slavish hat from the villager's
 head ?
 Whose old grandfather has lately died,
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
 Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
 And laying his trams in a poison'd
 gloom
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted
 mine
 Master of half a servile shire,
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold
 To a grandson, first of his noble line,
 Rich in the grace all women desire,
 Strong in the power that all men
 adore,
 And simper and set their voices lower,
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
 New as his title, built last year,
 There amid perky larches and pine,
 And over the sullen-purple moor
 (Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

II.

What, has he found my jewel out ?
 For one of the two that rode at her
 side

Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he :
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a
 bride.

Blithe would her brother's acceptance
 be.

Maud could be gracious too, no doubt
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
 A bought commission, a waxen face,
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape —
 Bought ? what is it he cannot buy ?

And therefore splenetic, personal,
 base,

A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
 At war with myself and a wretched
 race,

Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III.

Last week came one to the county
 town,

To preach our poor little army down,
 And play the game of the despot kings,
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice
 as well :

This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy
 things,

Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton,
 and rings

Even in dreams to the chink of his
 pence,

This huckster put down war ! can he
 tell

Whether war be a cause or a conse-
 quence ?

Put down the passions that make
 earth Hell !

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
 Jealousy, down ! cut off from the mind
 The bitter springs of anger and fear ;
 Down too, down at your own fireside,
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
 For each is at war with mankind.

IV.

I wish I could hear again
 The chivalrous battle-song
 That she warbled alone in her joy !
 I might persuade myself then
 She would not do herself this great
 wrong,

To take a wanton dissolute boy
 For a man and leader of men.

V.

Al! God, for a man with heart, head,
hand,
Like some of the simple great ones
gone
For ever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat — one
Who can rule and dare not lie.

VI.

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be!

XI.

I.

O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII.

I.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

II.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

III.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

V.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor!
O Maud were sure of Heaven
If lowliness could save her.

VI.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
One is come to woo her.

VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charley snarling,
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII.

I.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I
scorn,

Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vex't with his pride!
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red
and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his
hands.

II.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;

But while I past he was humming an
air,
Stopt, and then with a riding whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:
Shall I believe him ashamed to be
seen?

For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his
face,

A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a
cheat;

For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.

And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin:
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

IV.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
Has not his sister smiled on me?

XIV.

I.

Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

II.

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone

Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:
And I thought as I stood, if a hand,
as white

As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my
Delight

Had a sudden desire, like a glorious
ghost, to glide,

Like a beam of the seventh Heaven,
down to my side,

There were but a step to be made.

III.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for me.
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

IV.

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as
it swell'd

Now and then in the dim-gray dawn,
But I look'd, and round, all round the
house I beheld

The death-white curtain drawn,
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain
meant but sleep,

Yet I shudder'd and thought like a
fool of the sleep of death.

XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if *I* be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much
to fear;

But if *I* be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more
dear.

Shall I not take care of all that I think,
 Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
 If I be dear,
 If I be dear to some one else.

XVI.

I.

This lump of earth has left his estate
 The lighter by the loss of his weight ;
 And so that he find what he went to
 seek,
 And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and
 drown
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of
 town,
 He may stay for a year who has gone
 for a week :
 But this is the day when I must speak,
 And I see my Oread coming down,
 O this is the day !
 O beautiful creature, what am I
 That I dare to look her way ;
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her
 breast,
 And dream of her beauty with tender
 dread,
 From the delicate Arab arch of her
 feet
 To the grace that, bright and light as
 the crest
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
 And she knows it not : O, if she knew it,
 To know her beauty might half undo it.
 I know it the one bright thing to save
 My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from
 crime,
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

II.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool
 lord,
 Dare I bid her abide by her word ?
 Should I love her so well if she
 Had given her word to a thing so low ?
 Shall I love her as well if she
 Can break her word were it even for
 me ?
 I trust that it is not so.

III.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous
 heart,
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my
 eye,
 For I must tell her before we part,
 I must tell her, or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
 From the shining fields,
 Go not, happy day,
 Till the maiden yields.
 Rosy is the West,
 Rosy is the South,
 Roses are her cheeks,
 And a rose her mouth
 When the happy Yes
 Falters from her lips,
 Pass and blush the news
 Over glowing ships ;
 Over blowing seas,
 Over seas at rest,
 Pass the happy news,
 Blush it thro' the West ;
 Till the red man dance
 By his red cedar-tree,
 And the red man's babe
 Leap, beyond the sea.
 Blush from West to East,
 Blush from East to West,
 'Till the West is East,
 Blush it thro' the West.
 Rosy is the West,
 Rosy is the South,
 Roses are her cheeks,
 And a rose her mouth.

XVIII.

I.

I have led her home, my love, my
 only friend.
 There is none like her, none.
 And never yet so warmly ran my
 blood
 And sweetly, on and on
 Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for
 end,
 Full to the banks, close on the prom-
 ised good.

II.

None like her, none.
 Just now the dry-tongued laurels'
 pattering talk
 Seem'd her light foot along the
 garden walk,
 And shook my heart to think she
 comes once more;
 But even then I heard her close the
 door,
 The gates of Heaven are closed, and
 she is gone.

III.

There is none like her, none.
 Nor will be when our summers have
 deceased.
 O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
 In the long breeze that streams to thy
 delicious East,
 Sighing for Lebanon,
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here
 increased,
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
 And looking to the South, and fed
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,
 And haunted by the starry head
 Of her whose gentle will has changed
 my fate,
 And made my life a perfumed altar-
 flame;
 And over whom thy darkness must
 have spread
 With such delight as theirs of old,
 thy great
 Forefathers of the thornless garden,
 there
 Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from
 whom she came.

IV.

Here will I lie, while these long
 branches sway,
 And you fair stars that crown a
 happy day
 Go in and out as if at merry play,
 Who am no more so all forlorn,
 As when it seem'd far better to be
 born
 To labor and the mattock-harden'd
 hand,

Than nursed at ease and brought to
 understand
 A sad astrology, the boundless plan
 That makes you tyrants in your iron
 skies,
 Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
 Cold fires, yet with power to burn and
 brand
 His nothingness into man.

V.

But now shine on, and what care I,
 Who in this stormy gulf have found a
 pearl
 The countercharm of space and hol-
 low sky,
 And do accept my madness, and would
 die
 To save from some slight shame one
 simple girl.

VI.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death
 may give
 More life to Love than is or ever was
 In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet
 to live.
 Let no one ask me how it came to
 pass;
 It seems that I am happy, that to me
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the
 grass,
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII.

Not die; but live a life of truest
 breath,
 And teach true life to fight with
 mortal wrongs.
 O, why should Love, like men in
 drinking-songs,
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust
 of death?
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,
 Maud made my Maud by that long
 loving kiss,
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer
 this?
 "The dusky strand of Death inwoven
 here
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love
 himself more dear."

VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the
swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder
bay ?
And hark the clock within, the silver
knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in
bridal white,
And died to live, long as my pulses
play ;
But now by this my love has closed
her sight
And given false death her hand, and
stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless
fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden
day.
May nothing there her maiden grace
affright !
Dear heart, I feel with thee the
drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own,
farewell ;
It is but for a little space I go :
And ye meanwhile far over moor and
fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the
night !
Has our whole earth gone nearer to
the glow
Of your soft splendors that you look
so bright ?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely
Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things
below,
Beat with my heart more blest than
heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent
woe
That seems to draw — but it shall not
be so :
Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

I.

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

II.

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and
mine :
For who was left to watch her but I ?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

III.

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk
(For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless
things)
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin :
I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin,
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with
debt :
For how often I caught her with eyes
all wet,
Shaking her head at her son and sigh-
ing
A world of trouble within !

IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share
her heart,
And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with
blood
By which our houses are torn :
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed —
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born ;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet
breath.

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death.
 Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn.

v.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
 To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
 That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet:
 And none of us thought of a something beyond,
 A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,
 As it were a duty done to the tomb,
 To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled;
 And I was cursing them and my doom,
 And letting a dangerous thought run wild
 While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
 Of foreign churches — I see her there,
 Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
 To be friends, to be reconciled!

vi.

But then what a flint is he!
 Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
 I find whenever she touch'd on me
 This brother had laugh'd her down,
 And at last, when each came home,
 He had darken'd into a frown,
 Chid her, and forbid her to speak
 To me, her friend of the years before;
 And this was what had redden'd her cheek
 When I bow'd to her on the moor.

vii.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
 To the faults of his heart and mind,
 I see she cannot but love him,
 And says he is rough but kind,
 And wishes me to approve him,
 And tells me, when she lay

Sick once, with a fear of worse,
 Then he left his wine and horses and play,
 Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
 And tended her like a nurse.

viii.

Kind? but the deathbed desire
 Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —
 Rough but kind? yet I know
 He has plotted against me in this,
 That he plots against me still.
 Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
 Well, rough but kind; why let it be
 so:
 For shall not Maud have her will?

ix.

For, Maud, so tender and true,
 As long as my life endures
 I feel I shall owe you a debt,
 That I never can hope to pay;
 And if ever I should forget
 That I owe this debt to you
 And for your sweet sake to yours;
 O then, what then shall I say? —
 If ever I *should* forget,
 May God make me more wretched
 Than ever I have been yet!

x.

So now I have sworn to bury
 All this dead body of hate,
 I feel so free and so clear
 By the loss of that dead weight,
 That I should grow light-headed, I
 fear,
 Fantastically merry;
 But that her brother comes, like a blight
 On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

xx.

i.

Strange, that I felt so gay,
 Strange, that I tried to-day
 To beguile her melancholy;
 The Sultan, as we name him,—

She did not wish to blame him —
 But he vexed her and perplexed her
 With his worldly talk and folly :
 Was it gentle to reprove her
 For stealing out of view
 From a little lazy lover
 Who but claims her as his due ?
 Or for chilling his caresses
 By the coldness of her manners,
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?
 Now I know her but in two,
 Nor can pronounce upon it
 If one should ask me whether
 The habit, hat, and feather,
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
 Be the neater and completer ;
 For nothing can be sweeter
 Than maiden Maud in either.

II.

But to-morrow, if we live,
 Our ponderous squire will give
 A grand political dinner
 To half the squirelings near ;
 And Maud will wear her jewels,
 And the bird of prey will hover,
 And the titmouse hope to win her
 With his chirrup at her ear.

III.

A grand political dinner
 To the men of many acres,
 A gathering of the Tory,
 A dinner and then a dance
 For the maids and marriage-makers,
 And every eye but mine will glance
 At Maud in all her glory.

IV.

For I am not invited,
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,
 I am all as well delighted,
 For I know her own rose-garden,
 And mean to linger in it
 Till the dancing will be over ;
 And then, oh then, come out to me
 For a minute, but for a minute,
 Come out to your own true lover,
 That your true lover may see
 Your glory also, and render
 All homage to his own darling,
 Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,
 And bringing me down from the
 Hall

This garden-rose that I found,
 Forgetful of Maud and me,
 And lost in trouble and moving round
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
 And trying to pass to the sea ;
 O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
 My Maud has sent it by thee
 (If I read her sweet will right)
 On a blushing mission to me,
 Saying in odor and color, " Ah, be
 Among the roses to-night."

XXII.

I.

Come into the garden, Maud,
 For the black bat, night, has flown,
 Come into the garden, Maud,
 I am here at the gate alone ;
 And the woodbine spices are wafted
 abroad,
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

II.

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that
 she loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
 To faint in the light of the sun she
 loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die.

III.

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon ;
 All night has the casement jessamine
 stirr'd
 To the dancers dancing in tune ;
 Till a silence fell with the waking
 bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

IV.

I said to the lily, " There is but one
 With whom she has heart to be gay.
 When will the dancers leave her
 alone ?

She is weary of dance and play."
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,
 And half to the rising day;
 Low on the sand and loud on the
 stone
 The last wheel echoes away.

v.

I said to the rose, "The brief night
 goes
 In babble and revel and wine.
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are
 those,
 For one that will never be thine?
 But mine, but mine," so I swear to
 the rose,
 "For ever and ever, mine."

vi.

And the soul of the rose went into
 my blood,
 As the music clash'd in the hall;
 And long by the garden lake I stood,
 For I heard your rivulet fall
 From the lake to the meadow and on
 to the wood,
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

vii.

From the meadow your walks have
 left so sweet
 That whenever a March-wind sighs
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet
 In violets blue as your eyes,
 To the woody hollows in which we
 meet
 And the valleys of Paradise.

viii.

The slender acacia would not shake
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;
 The white lake-blossom fell into the
 lake
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
 But the rose was awake all night for
 your sake,
 Knowing your promise to me;
 The lilies and roses were all awake,
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

ix.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of
 girls,
 Come hither, the dances are done,

In gloss of satin and glimmer of
 pearls,
 Queen lily and rose in one;
 Shine out, little head, sunning over
 with curls,
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

x.

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate
 She is coming, my dove, my dear;
 She is coming, my life, my fate;
 The red rose cries, "She is near, she
 is near;"
 And the white rose weeps, "She is
 late;"
 The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
 And the lily whispers, "I wait."

xi.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
 Were it ever so airy a tread,
 My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;
 My dust would hear her and beat,
 Had I lain for a century dead;
 Would start and tremble under her
 feet,
 And blossom in purple and red.

PART II.

I.

i.

"THE fault was mine, the fault was
 mine" —
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and
 still,
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on
 the hill? —
 It is this guilty hand! —
 And there rises ever a passionate cry
 From underneath in the darkening
 land —
 What is it, that has been done?
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth
 and sky,
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy
 rising sun,
 The fires of Hell and of Hate;
 For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken
 a word,

When her brother ran in his rage to
the gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord ;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to
be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the
face,

Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by :
Struck for himself an evil stroke ;
Wrought for his house an irredeem-
able woe ;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing
echoes broke
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind
the wood,
And thunder'd up into Heaven the
Christless code,
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to
grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?
"The fault was mine," he whisper'd,
"fly !"
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I
know ;
And there rang on a sudden a pas-
sionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood :
It will ring in my heart and my ears,
till I die, till I die.

II.

Is it gone ? my pulses beat —
What was it ? a lying trick of the
brain ?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a
gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown
with deluging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger
and lust,
The little hearts that know not how
to forgive :

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold
Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of
venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust ;
We are not worthy to live.

II.

I.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design !

II.

What is it ? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world ?

IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

V.

Breton, not Briton ; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear —

Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
 A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
 That never came from on high
 Nor ever arose from below,
 But only moves with the moving eye,
 Flying along the land and the main —
 Why should it look like Maud ?
 Am I to be overawed
 By what I cannot but know
 Is a juggle born of the brain ?

VI.

Back from the Breton coast,
 Sick of a nameless fear,
 Back to the dark sea-line
 Looking, thinking of all I have lost ;
 An old song vexes my ear ;
 But that of Lamech is mine.

VII.

For years, a measureless ill,
 For years, for ever, to part —
 But she, she would love me still ;
 And as long, O God, as she
 Have a grain of love for me,
 So long, no doubt, no doubt,
 Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
 However weary, a spark of will
 Not to be trampled out.

VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
 With a passion so intense
 One would think that it well
 Might drown all life in the eye, —
 That it should, by being so over-
 wrought,
 Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
 For a shell, or a flower, little things
 Which else would have been past by !
 And now I remember, I,
 When he lay dying there,
 I noticed one of his many rings
 (For he had many, poor worm) and
 thought
 It is his mother's hair.

IX.

Who knows if he be dead ?
 Whether I need have fled ?
 Am I guilty of blood ?

However this may be,
 Comfort her, comfort her, all things
 good,
 While I am over the sea !
 Let me and my passionate love go by,
 But speak to her all things holy and
 high,
 Whatever happen to me !
 Me and my harmful love go by ;
 But come to her waking, find her
 asleep,
 Powers of the height, Powers of the
 deep,
 And comfort her tho' I die.

III.

Courage, poor heart of stone !
 I will not ask thee why
 Thou canst not understand
 That thou art left for ever alone :
 Courage, poor stupid heart of stone. —
 Or if I ask thee why,
 Care not thou to reply :
 She is but dead, and the time is at
 hand
 When thou shalt more than die.

IV.

I.

O that 'twere possible
 After long grief and pain
 To find the arms of my true love
 Round me once again !

II.

When I was wont to meet her
 In the silent woody places
 By the home that gave me birth,
 We stood tranced in long embraces
 Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
 Than anything on earth.

III.

A shadow flits before me,
 Not thou, but like to thee :
 Ah Christ, that it were possible
 For one short hour to see
 The souls we loved, that they might
 tell us
 What and where they be.

IV.

It leads me forth at evening,
 It lightly winds and steals
 In a cold white robe before me,
 When all my spirit reels
 At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
 And the roaring of the wheels.

V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
 Half in dreams I sorrow after
 The delight of early skies ;
 In a wakeful doze I sorrow
 For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
 For the meeting of the morrow,
 The delight of happy laughter,
 The delight of low replies.

VI.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
 And a dewy splendor falls
 On the little flower that clings
 To the turrets and the walls ;
 'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
 And the light and shadow fleet ;
 She is walking in the meadow,
 And the woodland echo rings ;
 In a moment we shall meet ;
 She is singing in the meadow
 And the rivulet at her feet
 Ripples on in light and shadow
 To the ballad that she sings.

VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
 My bird with the shining head,
 My own dove with the tender eye ?
 But there rings on a sudden a pas-
 sionate cry,
 There is some one dying or dead,
 And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;
 For a tumult shakes the city,
 And I wake, my dream is fled ;
 In the shuddering dawn, behold,
 Without knowledge, without pity,
 By the curtains of my bed
 That abiding phantom cold.

VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,

Mix not memory with doubt,
 Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
 Pass and cease to move about !
 'Tis the blot upon the brain
 That *will* show itself without.

IX.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
 And the yellow vapors choke
 The great city sounding wide ;
 The day comes, a dull red ball
 Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
 On the misty river-tide.

X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
 I steal, a wasted frame,
 It crosses here, it crosses there,
 Thro' all that crowd confused and
 loud,
 The shadow still the same ;
 And on my heavy eyelids
 My anguish hangs like shame.

XI.

Alas for her that met me,
 That heard me softly call,
 Came glimmering thro' the laurels
 At the quiet evenfall,
 In the garden by the turrets
 Of the old manorial hall.

XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,
 From the realms of light and song,
 In the chamber or the street,
 As she looks among the blest,
 Should I fear to greet my friend
 Or to say "Forgive the wrong,"
 Or to ask her, "Take me, sweet,
 To the regions of thy rest" ?

XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,
 And the shadow flits and fleets
 And will not let me be ;
 And I loathe the squares and streets.
 And the faces that one meets,
 Hearts with no love for me :
 Always I long to creep

Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

V.

I.

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are
thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat,
beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of
passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and
clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but
it is not so;
To have no peace in the grave, is that
not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

II.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the
days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was
read;
It is that which makes us loud in the
world of the dead;
There is none that does his work, not
one;
A touch of their office might have
sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill
their church,
As the churches have kill'd their
Christ.

III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress;
And another, a lord of all things,
praying
To his own great self, as I guess;
And another, a statesman there, be-
traying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for
what?
To tickle the maggot born in an
empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him
not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble!
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold;
Not let any man think for the public
good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from
the top of the house;
Everything came to be known.
Who told *him* we were there?

V.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came
not back
From the wilderness, full of wolves,
where he used to lie;
He has gather'd the bones for his
o'ergrown whelp to crack;
Crack them now for yourself, and
howl, and die.

VI.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the
rat;
I know not whether he came in the
Hanover ship,

But I know that he lies and listens
 mute
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and
 holes :
 Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
 Except that now we poison our babes,
 poor souls !
 It is all used up for that.

VII.

Tell him now : she is standing here at
 my head ;
 Not beautiful now, not even kind ;
 He may take her now ; for she never
 . speaks her mind,
 But is ever the one thing silent here.
 She is not *of* us, as I divine ;
 She comes from another stiller world
 of the dead,
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

VIII.

But I know where a garden grows,
 Fairer than aught in the world be-
 side,
 All made up of the lily and rose
 That blow by night, when the season
 is good,
 To the sound of dancing music and
 flutes :
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
 And I almost fear they are not roses,
 but blood ;
 For the keeper was one, so full of
 pride,
 He linkt a dead man there to a spec-
 tral bride ;
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of
 brutes,
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

IX.

But what will the old man say ?
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy
 day ;
 Yet now I could even weep to think
 of it ;
 For what will the old man say
 When he comes to the second corpse
 in the pit ?

X.

Friend, to be struck by the public
 foe,
 Then to strike him and lay him low,
 That were a public merit, far,
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from
 sin ;
 But the red life spilt for a private
 blow —
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless
 war
 Are scarcely even akin.

XI.

O me, why have they not buried me
 deep enough ?
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so
 rough,
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?
 Maybe still I am but half-dead ;
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;
 I will cry to the steps above my head
 And somebody, surely, some kind
 heart will come
 To bury me, bury me
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

PART III.

VI.

I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
 That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing :
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
 When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,

And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
 That like a silent lightning under the stars
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
 And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars —
 "And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
 Knowing I tarry for thee," and pointed to Mars
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,
 That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;
 And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair
 When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

III.

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
 "It is time, it is time, O passionate heart," said I
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
 "It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
 That old hysterical mock-disease should die."
 And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
 With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
 Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
 And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
 And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;
 And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire;

For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

v.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

ENOCH ARDEN

AND OTHER POEMS.



ENOCH ARDEN.

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left
a chasm ;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow
sands ;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow
wharf
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church ;
and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd
mill ;
And high in heaven behind it a gray
down
With Danish barrows ; and a hazel-
wood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the
down.

Here on this beach a hundred years
ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie
Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,
play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the
shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fish-
ing-nets,
Anchors of rusty-fluke, and boats up-
drawn ;

And built their castles of dissolving
sand
To watch them overflow'd, or follow-
ing up
And flying the white breaker, daily
left
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the
cliff :
In this the children play'd at keeping
house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the
next,
While Annie still was mistress ; but
at times
Enoch would hold possession for a
week :
" This is my house and this my little
wife."
" Mine too " said Philip " turn and
turn about " :
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch
stronger-made
Was master : then would Philip, his
blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of
tears,
Shriek out " I hate you, Enoch," and
at this
The little wife would weep for com-
pany,
And pray them not to quarrel for her
sake,
And say she would be little wife to
both.

But when the dawn of rosy child-
hood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascend-
ing sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his
heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke
his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the
girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to
him;
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew
it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch
set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make
a home
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at
last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten
coast
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served
a year
On board a merchantman, and made
himself
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd
a life
From the dread sweep of the down-
streaming seas:
And all men look'd upon him favora-
bly:
And ere he touch'd his one-and-
twentieth May,
He purchased his own boat, and made
a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway
up
The narrow street that clamber'd
toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn even-
tide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great
and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip
stay'd

(His father lying sick and needing
him)
An hour behind; but as he climb'd
the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the
wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the
pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-
hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-
beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip
look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his
doom;
Then, as their faces drew together,
groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded
life
Crept down into the hollows of the
wood;
There, while the rest were loud in
merrymaking,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose
and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily
rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven
happy years,
Seven happy years of health and
competence,
And mutual love and honorable toil;
With children; first a daughter. In
him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the
noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish
renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful
seas,
Or often journeying landward; for in
truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's
ocean-spoil

In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
 Rough-redden'd with a thousand win-
 ter gales,
 Not only to the market-cross were
 known,
 But in the leafy lanes behind the
 down,
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
 And peacock-yewtree of the lonely
 Hall,
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's min-
 istering.

Then came a change, as all things
 human change.
 Ten miles to northward of the narrow
 port
 Open'd a larger haven: thither used
 Enoch at times to go by land or
 sea;
 And once when there, and clambering
 on a mast
 In harbor, by mischance he slipt and
 fell:
 A limb was broken when they lifted
 him;
 And while he lay recovering there,
 his wife
 Bore him another son, a sickly one:
 Another hand crept too across his
 trade
 Taking her bread and theirs: and on
 him fell,
 Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing
 man,
 Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and
 gloom.
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the
 night,
 To see his children leading evermore
 Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
 And her, he loved, a beggar: then he
 pray'd
 "Save them from this, whatever
 comes to me."
 And while he pray'd, the master of
 that ship
 Enoch had served in, hearing his mis-
 chance,
 Came, for he knew the man and
 valued him,
 Reporting of his vessel China-bound,

And wanting yet a boatswain. Would
 he go?
 There yet were many weeks before she
 sail'd,
 Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch
 have the place?
 And Enoch all at once assented to it,
 Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance
 appear'd
 No graver than as when some little
 cloud
 Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
 And isles a light in the offing: yet the
 wife —
 When he was gone — the children —
 what to do?
 Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his
 plans;
 To sell the boat — and yet he loved
 her well —
 How many a rough sea had he weath-
 er'd in her!
 He knew her, as a horseman knows his
 horse —
 And yet to sell her — then with what
 she brought
 Buy goods and stores — set Annie forth
 in trade
 With all that seamen needed or their
 wives —
 So might she keep the house while he
 was gone.
 Should he not trade himself out yon-
 der? go
 This voyage more than once? yea twice
 or thrice —
 As oft as needed — last, returning rich,
 Become the master of a larger craft,
 With fuller profits lead an easier life,
 Have all his pretty young ones edu-
 cated,
 And pass his days in peace among his
 own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined
 all:
 Then moving homeward came on Annie
 pale,
 Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.
 Forward she started with a happy cry,

And laid the feeble infant in his arms ;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his
limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled
fatherlike,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he
spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring
had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his
will :

Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night re-
new'd

(Sure that all evil would come out of
it)

Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in
vain ;

So grieving held his will, and bore it
thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-
friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and
set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-
room

With shelf and corner for the goods
and stores.

So all day long till Enoch's last at
home,

Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer
and axe,

Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to
hear

Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd
and rang,

Till this was ended, and his careful
hand, —

The space was narrow, — having or-
der'd all

Almost as neat and close as Nature
packs

Her blossom or her seedling, paused ;
and he,

Who needs would work for Annie to
the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of
farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's
fears,
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter
to him.

Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mys-
tery

Where God-in-man is one with man-
in-God,

Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and
babes

Whatever came to him : and then he
said

“ Annie, this voyage by the grace of
God

Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for
me,

For I'll be back, my girl, before you
know it.”

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle
“ and he,

This pretty, puny, weakly little one, —
Nay — for I love him all the better for
it —

God bless him, he shall sit upon my
knees

And I will tell him tales of foreign
parts,

And make him merry, when I come
home again.

Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I
go.”

Him running on thus hopefully she
heard,

And almost hoped herself ; but when
he turn'd

The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing

On providence and trust in Heaven,
she heard,

Heard and not heard him ; as the vil-
lage girl,

Who sets her pitcher underneath the
spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it for
her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it over-
flow.

At length she spoke "O Enoch, you
are wise;
And yet for all your wisdom well
know I
That I shall look upon your face no
more."

"Well then," said Enoch, "I shall
look on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here
(He named the day) get you a seaman's
glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your
fears."

But when the last of those last mo-
ments came,
"Annie, my girl, cheer up, be com-
forted,
Look to the babes, and till I come
again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must
go.
And fear no more for me; or if you
fear
Cast all your cares on God; that an-
chor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His: He made it."

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his droop-
ing wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little
ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who
slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him
Enoch said
"Wake him not; let him sleep; how
should the child
Remember this?" and kiss'd him in
his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead
clipt

A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept
Thro' all his future; but now hastily
caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went
his way.

She, when the day that Enoch
mention'd, came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain:
perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her
eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand trem-
ulous;
She saw him not: and while he stood
on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel
past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing
sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping
for him;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as
his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with
his,
But throve not in her trade, not being
bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding "what would
Enoch say?"
For more than once, in days of diffi-
culty
And pressure, had she sold her wares
for less
Than what she gave in buying what
she sold:
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it;
and thus,
Expectant of that news which never
came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty suste-
nance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born
and grew
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for
it

With all a mother's care: nevertheless,
 Whether her business often call'd her
 from it,
 Or thro' the want of what it needed
 most,
 Or means to pay the voice who best
 could tell
 What most it needed — howsoe'er it
 was,
 After a lingering, — ere she was
 aware, —
 Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
 The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie
 buried it,
 Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for
 her peace
 (Since Enoch left he had not look'd
 upon her),
 Smote him, as having kept aloof so
 long.
 "Surely," said Philip, "I may see her
 now,
 May be some little comfort"; there-
 fore went,
 Past thro' the solitary room in front,
 Paused for a moment at an inner door,
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one
 opening,
 Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her
 grief,
 Fresh from the burial of her little one,
 Cared not to look on any human face,
 But turn'd her own toward the wall
 and wept.
 Then Philip standing up said falter-
 ingly
 "Annie, I came to ask a favor of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd
 reply
 "Favor from one so sad and so forlorn
 As I am!" half abash'd him; yet
 unask'd,
 His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
 He set himself beside her, saying to
 her:

"I came to speak to you of what he
 wish'd,

Enoch, your husband: I have ever
 said
 You chose the best among us — a
 strong man:
 For where he fixt his heart he set his
 hand
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore it
 thro'.
 And therefore did he go this weary
 way,
 And leave you lonely? not to see the
 world —
 For pleasure? — nay, but for the
 wherewithal
 To give his babes a better bringing-up
 Than his had been, or yours: that was
 his wish.
 And if he come again, vext will he be
 To find the precious morning hours
 were lost.
 And it would vex him even in his
 grave,
 If he could know his babes were run-
 ning wild
 Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,
 now —
 Have we not known each other all our
 lives?
 I do beseech you by the love you
 bear
 Him and his children not to say me
 nay —
 For, if you will, when Enoch comes
 again
 Why then he shall repay me — if you
 will,
 Annie — for I am rich and well-to-do.
 Now let me put the boy and girl to
 school:
 This is the favor that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against
 the wall
 Answer'd "I cannot look you in the
 face;
 I seem so foolish and so broken down.
 When you came in my sorrow broke
 me down;
 And now I think your kindness breaks
 me down;
 But Enoch lives; that is borne in on
 me:

He will repay you: money can be repaid;
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd
"Then you will let me, Annie?"

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes
upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly
face,
Then calling down a blessing on his
head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it pas-
sionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to
school,
And bought them needful books, and
everyway,
Like one who does his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for
Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest
wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet
he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs
and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and
then,
With some pretext of fineness in the
meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the
waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's
mind:
Scarce could the woman when he came
upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless grati-
tude
Light on a broken word to thank him
with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-
all;

From distant corners of the street they
ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were
they;
Worried his passive ear with petty
wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd
with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip
gain'd
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to
them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where: and so ten
years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native
land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch
came.

It chanced one evening Annie's chil-
dren long'd
To go with others, nutting to the wood,
And Annie would go with them; then
they begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him)
too:
Him, like the working bee in blossom-
dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found;
and saying to him
"Come with us Father Philip" he
denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him
to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to
their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and
they went.

But after scaling half the weary
down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood
began
To feather toward the hollow, all her
force
Fail'd her; and sighing, "Let me rest"
she said:
So Philip rested with her well-content;

While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
 Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
 Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
 To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
 The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
 Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
 And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
 Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
 Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
 He crept into the shadow: at last he said,
 Lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie,
 How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
 Tired, Annie?" for she did not speak a word.
 "Tired?" but her face had fall'n upon her hands;
 At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
 "The ship was lost," he said, "the ship was lost!
 No more of that! why should you kill yourself
 And make them orphans quite?" And Annie said
 "I thought not of it: but — I know not why —
 Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
 "Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
 And it has been upon my mind so long,
 That tho' I know not when it first came there,
 I know that it will out at last. O Annie,

It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
 That he who left you ten long years ago
 Should still be living; well then — let me speak:
 I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:
 I cannot help you as I wish to do
 Unless — they say that women are so quick —
 Perhaps you know what I would have you know —
 I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
 A father to your children: I do think
 They love me as a father: I am sure
 That I love them as if they were mine own;
 And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
 That after all these sad uncertain years,
 We might be still as happy as God grants
 To any of his creatures. Think upon it:
 For I am well-to-do — no kin, no care,
 No burthen, save my care for you and yours:
 And we have know'n each other all our lives,
 And I have loved you longer than you know."

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:
 "You have been as God's good angel in our house.
 God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
 Philip, with something happier than myself.
 Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
 As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?"
 "I am content" he answer'd "to be loved
 A little after Enoch." "O" she cried,

Scared as it were, "dear Philip, wait
a while :

If Enoch comes — but Enoch will not
come —

Yet wait a year, a year is not so long :
Surely I shall be wiser in a year :

O wait a little!" Philip sadly said
"Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little." "Nay" she
cried

"I am bound: you have my promise
— in a year :

Will you not bide your year as I bide
mine ? "

And Philip answer'd " I will bide my
year."

Here both were mute, till Philip
glancing up

Beheld the dead flame of the fallen
day

Pass from the Danish barrow over-
head ;

Then fearing night and chill for
Annie, rose

And sent his voice beneath him thro'
the wood.

Up came the children laden with their
spoil ;

Then all descended to the port, and
there

At Annie's door he paused and gave
his hand,

Saying gently "Annie, when I spoke
to you,

That was your hour of weakness. I
was wrong,

I am always bound to you, but you
are free."

Then Annie weeping answer'd " I am
bound."

She spoke ; and in one moment as
it were,

While yet she went about her house-
hold ways,

Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest
words,

That he had loved her longer than she
knew,

That autumn into autumn flash'd
again,

And there he stood once more before
her face,

Claiming her promise. "Is it a year?"
she ask'd.

"Yes, if the nuts" he said "be ripe
again :

Come out and see." But she — she
put him off —

So much to look to — such a change
— a month —

Give her a month — she knew that
she was bound —

A month — no more. Then Philip
with his eyes

Full of that lifelong hunger, and his
voice

Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
"Take your own time, Annie, take
your own time."

And Annie could have wept for pity
of him ;

And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,

Trying his truth and his long-suffer-
ance,

Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,

Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but

trifle with her ;

Some that she but held off to draw
him on ;

And others laugh'd at her and Philip
too,

As simple folk that knew not their
own minds,

And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either. Her
own son

Was silent, tho' he often look'd his
wish ;

But evermore the daughter prest upon
her

To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty ;

And Philip's rosy face contracting
grew

Careworn and wan ; and all these
things fell on her

Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but ear-
nestly
Pray'd for a sign "my Enoch is he
gone?"

Then compass'd round by the blind
wall of night

Brook'd not the expectant terror of
her heart,

Started from bed, and struck herself
a light,

Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the text,
"Under the palm-tree." That was
nothing to her:

No meaning there: she closed the
Book and slept:

When lo! her Enoch sitting on a
height,

Under a palm-tree, over him the
Sun:

"He is gone," she thought, "he is
happy, he is singing

Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these
be palms

Whereof the happy people strowing
cried

'Hosanna in the highest!'" Here
she woke,

Resolved, sent for him and said wildly
to him

"There is no reason why we should
not wed."

"Then for God's sake," he answer'd,
"both our sakes,

So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang
the bells,

Merrily rang the bells and they were
wed.

But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her
path,

She knew not whence; a whisper on
her ear,

She knew not what; nor loved she to
be left

Alone at home, nor ventured out
alone.

What ail'd her then, that ere she
enter'd, often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the
latch,

Fearing to enter: Philip thought he
knew:

Such doubts and fears were common
to her state,

Being with child: but when her child
was born,

Then her new child was as herself
renew'd,

Then the new mother came about her
heart,

Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly

died.

And where was Enoch? prosper-
ously sail'd

The ship "Good Fortune," tho' at
setting forth

The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,
shook

And almost overwhelm'd her, yet
unvext

She slipt across the summer of the
world,

Then after a long tumble about the
Cape

And frequent interchange of foul and
fair,

She passing thro' the summer world
again,

The breath of heaven came continu-
ally

And sent her sweetly by the golden
isles,

Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself.
and bought

Quaint monsters for the market of
those times,

A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at
first indeed

Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by
day,

Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
 Stared o'er the ripple feathering from
 her bows :
 Then follow'd calms, and then winds
 variable,
 Then baffling, a long course of them ;
 and last
 Storm, such as drove her under moon-
 less heavens
 Till hard upon the cry of " breakers " came
 The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
 But Enoch and two others. Half the
 night,
 Buoy'd upon floating tackle and
 broken spars,
 These drifted, stranding on an isle at
 morn
 Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human suste-
 nance,
 Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nour-
 ishing roots ;
 Nor save for pity was it hard to take
 The helpless life so wild that it was
 tame.
 There in a seaward-gazing mountain-
 gorge
 They built, and thatch'd with leaves
 of palm, a hut,
 Half hut, half native cavern. So the
 three,
 Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
 Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-
 content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more
 than boy,
 Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and
 wreck,
 Lay lingering out a five-years' death-
 in-life.
 They could not leave him. After he
 was gone,
 The two remaining found a fallen
 stem ;
 And Enoch's comrade, careless of
 himself,
 Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion,
 fell

Sun-stricken, and that other lived
 alone.
 In those two deaths he read God's
 warning " wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak,
 the lawns
 And winding glades high up like ways
 to Heaven,
 The slender coco's drooping crown of
 plumes,
 The lightning flash of insect and of
 bird,
 The lustre of the long convolvuluses
 That coil'd around the stately stems,
 and ran
 Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
 And glories of the broad belt of the
 world,
 All these he saw ; but what he fain
 had seen
 He could not see, the kindly human
 face,
 Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
 The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-
 fowl,
 The league-long roller thundering on
 the reef,
 The moving whisper of huge trees
 that branch'd
 And blossom'd in the zenith, or the
 sweep
 Of some precipitous rivulet to the
 wave,
 As down the shore he ranged, or all
 day long
 Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
 A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a
 sail :
 No sail from day to day, but every day
 The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
 Among the palms and ferns and
 precipices ;
 The blaze upon the waters to the east ;
 The blaze upon his island overhead ;
 The blaze upon the waters to the west ;
 Then the great stars that globed
 themselves in Heaven,
 The hollower-bellowing ocean, and
 again
 The scarlet shafts of sunrise — but no
 sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd
to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him
paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms
moved
Before him haunting him, or he him-
self
Moved haunting people, things and
places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the line ;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the
small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the
leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely
Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold,
the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming
downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying
leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-color'd
seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his
ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily — far and far
away —
He heard the pealing of his parish
bells ;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore,
started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous
hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor
heart
Spoken with That, which being every-
where
Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem
all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering
head
The sunny and rainy seasons came
and went
Year after year. His hopes to see
his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar
fields,

Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely
doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another
ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling
winds,
Like the Good Fortune, from her
destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where
she lay :
For since the mate had seen at early
dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen
isle
The silent water slipping from the
hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst
away
In search of stream or fount, and
fill'd the shores
With clamor. Downward from his
mountain gorge
Stept the long-hair'd, long-bearded
solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human,
strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it
seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making
signs
They knew not what : and yet he led
the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water
ran ;
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-
bounden tongue
Was loosen'd, till he made them
understand ;
Whom, when their casks were fill'd
they took aboard :
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce-credited at first but more and
more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd
to it :
And clothes they gave him and free
passage home ;
But oft he work'd among the rest and
shook
His isolation from him. None of
these

from his country, or could answer him,
 question'd, aught of what he cared
 to know.
 The lull the voyage was with long
 delays,
 The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but
 evermore
 they fled before the lazy wind
 returning, till beneath a clouded
 moon
 He like a lover down thro' all his
 blood
 Drove in the dewy meadowy morning-
 breath
 Of England, blown across her ghostly
 wall:
 And that same morning officers and
 men
 Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
 Pitying the lonely man, and gave him
 it:
 Then moving up the coast they landed
 him,
 Ev'n in that harbor whence he sail'd
 before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any
 one,
 But homeward — home — what home?
 had he a home?
 His home, he walk'd. Bright was that
 afternoon,
 Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either
 chasm,
 Where either haven open'd on the
 deeps,
 Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the
 world in gray;
 Cut off the length of highway on be-
 fore,
 And left but narrow breadth to left
 and right
 Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
 On the nigh-naked tree the robin
 piped
 Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping
 haze
 The dead weight of the dead leaf bore
 it down:
 Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the
 gloom;

Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted
 light
 Flared on him, and he came upon the
 place.

Then down the long street having
 slowly stolen,
 His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
 His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd
 the home
 Where Annie lived and loved him, and
 his babes
 In those far-off seven happy years were
 born;
 But finding neither light nor murmur
 there
 (A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle)
 crept
 Still downward thinking "dead or
 dead to me!"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf
 he went,
 Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
 A front of timber-crost antiquity,
 So propt, worm eaten, ruinously old,
 He thought it must have gone; but he
 was gone
 Who kept it; and his widow Miriam
 Lane,
 With daily-dwindling profits held the
 house;
 A haunt of brawling seamen once, but
 now
 Still, with yet a bed for wandering
 men.
 There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and
 garrulous,
 Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
 Told him, with other annals of the
 port,
 Not knowing — Enoch was so brown,
 so bow'd,
 So broken — all the story of his house.
 His baby's death, her growing poverty,
 How Philip put her little ones to
 school,
 And kept them in it, his long wooing
 her,

Her slow consent, and marriage, and
 the birth
 Of Philip's child: and o'er his coun-
 tenance
 No shadow past, nor motion: any one,
 Regarding, well had deem'd he felt
 the tale
 Less than the teller: only when she
 closed
 "Enoch, poor man, was cast away and
 lost"
 He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
 Repeated muttering "cast away and
 lost";
 Again in deeper inward whispers
 "lost!"

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face
 again;
 "If I might look on her sweet face
 again
 And know that she is happy." So the
 thought
 Haunted and harass'd him, and drove
 him forth,
 At evening when the dull November
 day
 Was growing duller twilight, to the
 hill.
 There he sat down gazing on all below;
 There did a thousand memories roll
 upon him,
 Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
 The ruddy square of comfortable light,
 Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's
 house,
 Allured him, as the beacon-blaze al-
 lures
 The bird of passage, till he madly
 strikes
 Against it, and beats out his weary
 life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the
 street,
 The latest house to landward; but be-
 hind,
 With one small gate that open'd on
 the waste,
 Flourish'd a little garden square and
 wall'd:

And in it throve an ancient evergreen.
 A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
 Of shingle, and a walk divided it:
 But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk
 and stole
 Up by the wall, behind the yew; and
 thence
 That which he better might have
 shunn'd, if griefs
 Like his have worse or better, Enoch
 saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd
 board
 Sparkled and shone; so genial was the
 hearth:
 And on the right hand of the hearth
 he saw
 Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
 Stout, rosy, with his babe across his
 knees;
 And o'er her second father stoopt a
 girl,
 A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
 Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her
 lifted hand
 Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
 To tempt the babe, who rear'd his
 creasy arms,
 Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they
 laugh'd;
 And on the left hand of the hearth he
 saw
 The mother glancing often toward her
 babe,
 But turning now and then to speak
 with him,
 Her son, who stood beside her tall and
 strong,
 And saying that which pleased him,
 for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life
 beheld
 His wife his wife no more, and saw the
 babe
 Hers, yet not his, upon the father's
 knee,
 And all the warmth, the peace, the
 happiness,
 And his own children tall and beauti-
 ful,

And him, that other, reigning in his
place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's
love, —
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told
him all,
Because things seen are mightier than
things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the
branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible
cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast
of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a
thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate
underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and
be found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and
closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-
door,
Behind him, and came out upon the
waste.

And there he would have knelt, but
that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he
dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and
pray'd.

"Too hard to bear! why did they
take me thence?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour,
Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely
isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
A little longer! aid me, give me
strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her
peace.
My children too! must I not speak to
these?"

They know me not. I should betray
myself.
Never: No father's kiss for me — the
girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my
son."

There speech and thought and na-
ture fail'd a little,
And he lay tranced; but when he rose
and paced
Back toward his solitary home again,
All down the long and narrow street
he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
"Not to tell her, never to let her
know."

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
Upbore him, and firm faith, and ever-
more
Prayer from a living source within the
will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter
world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the
sea,
Kept him a living soul. "This mil-
ler's wife"
He said to Miriam "that you spoke
about,
Has she no fear that her first husband
lives?"
"Ay, ay, poor soul" said Miriam,
"fear enow!
If you could tell her you had seen him
dead,
Why, that would be her comfort;"
and he thought
"After the Lord has call'd me she
shall know,
I wait His time," and Enoch set him-
self,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby
to live.
Almost to all things could he turn his
hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and
wrought
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or
help'd

At lading and unlading the tall barks,
That brought the stinted commerce
of those days;
Thus earn'd a scanty living for him-
self:
Yet since he did but labor for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life
in it
Whereby the man could live; and as
the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the
day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor
came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do
no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last
his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheer-
fully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded
wreck
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting
squall
The boat that bears the hope of life
approach
To save the life despair'd of, than he
saw
Death dawning on him, and the close
of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a
kindlier hope
On Enoch thinking "after I am
gone,
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the
last."
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and
said
"Woman, I have a secret — only swear,
Before I tell you — swear upon the
book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."
"Dead," clamor'd the good woman,
"hear him talk!
I warrant, man, that we shall bring
you round."
"Swear" added Enoch sternly "on
the book."
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam
swore.

Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon
her,
"Did you know Enoch Arden of this
town?"
"Know him?" she said "I knew him
far away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the
street;
Held his head high, and cared for no
man, he."
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd
her;
"His head is low, and no man cares
for him.
I think I have not three days more to
live;
I am the man." At which the woman
gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical
cry.
"You Arden, you! nay, — sure he was
a foot
Higher than you be." Enoch said
again
"My God has bow'd me down to what
I am;
My grief and solitude have broken
me;
Nevertheless, know you that I am he
Who married — but that name has
twice been changed —
I married her who married Philip
Ray.
Sit, listen." Then he told her of his
voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming
back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
And how he kept it. As the woman
heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy
tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd inces-
santly
To rush abroad all round the little
haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his
woes;
But awed and promise-bounden she
forbore,
Saying only "See your bairns before
you go!

Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and
arose

Eager to bring them down, for Enoch
hung

A moment on her words, but then
replied:

"Woman, disturb me not now at the
last,

But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and under-
stand,

While I have power to speak. I
charge you now,

When you shall see her, tell her that
I died

Blessing her, praying for her, loving
her;

Save for the bar between us, loving
her

As when she laid her head beside my
own.

And tell my daughter Annie, whom I
saw

So like her mother, that my latest
breath

Was spent in blessing her and pray-
ing for her.

And tell my son that I died blessing
him.

And say to Philip that I blest him
too;

He never meant us any thing but good.
But if my children care to see me
dead,

Who hardly knew me living, let them
come,

I am their father; but she must not
come,

For my dead face would vex her after-
life.

And now there is but one of all my
blood

Who will embrace me in the world-to-
be:

This hair is his: she cut it off and
gave it,

And I have borne it with me all these
years.

And thought to bear it with me to my
grave;

But now my mind is changed, for I
shall see him,

My babe in bliss: wherefore when I
am gone,

Take, give her this, for it may comfort
her:

It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he."

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promis-
ing all,

That once again he roll'd his eyes up-
on her

Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless
and pale,

And Miriam watch'd and dozed at
intervals,

There came so loud a calling of the sea,
That all the houses in the haven rang.

He woke, he rose, he spread his arms
abroad

Crying with a loud voice "A sail! a
sail!

I am saved;" and so fell back and
spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little
port

Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy
face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and
shade;
Thou madest Life in man and
brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy
foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not
why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art
just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood,
thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not
how;
Our wills are ours, to make them
thine.

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease
to be:
They are but broken lights of
thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from
thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to
more,
But more of reverence in us
dwell;

That mind and soul, according
well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not
fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I
began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so
fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering
cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in
truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.
1849.

I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-
stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to
catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be
drown'd,

Let darkness keep her raven
gloss :

Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the
ground,

Than that the victor Hours should
scorn

The long result of love, and
boast,

“Behold the man that loved and
lost,

But all he was is overworn.”

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the
flock;

And in the dusk of thee, the
clock

Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of
gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

“The stars,” she whispers, “blindly
run;

A web is wov’n across the sky;

From out waste places comes a
cry,

And murmurs from the dying sun:

“And all the phantom, Nature,
stands—

With all the music in her tone,

A hollow echo of my own,—

A hollow form with empty hands.”

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou should’st fail from thy
desire,

Who scarcely darest to inquire,
“What is it makes me beat so low?”

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early
years.

Break, thou deep vase of chilling
tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken’d
eyes;

With morning wakes the will, and
cries,

“Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.”

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel.
For words, like Nature, half re-
veal

And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I’ll wrap me o’er,
Like coarsest clothes against the
cold:

But that large grief which these
enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes, that "Other friends remain,"
That "Loss is common to the
race" —

And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning
wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgedst now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be
done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor, — while thy head is
bow'd
His heavy-shotted hammock-
shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him
well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something
thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, "here to-
day,"
Or "here to-morrow will he come."

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;

And thinking "this will please
him best,"
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color
burns;
And, having left the glass, she
turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the
ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII.

Dark house, by which once more I
stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used
to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more —
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling
rain
On the bald street breaks the blank
day.

VIII.

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gate-
way bell,
And learns her gone and far from
home;

He saddens, all the magic light

Dies off at once from bower and
hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to
meet,
The field, the chamber and the
street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying, there at least may die.

IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sail'st the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved re-
mains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him
o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain ; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,
bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the
prow ;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps
now,
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run ;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X.

I hear the noise about thy keel ;
I hear the bell struck in the night :
I see the cabin-window bright ;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign
lands ;
And letters unto trembling hands ;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the
rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet
drains
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in
brine ;
And hands so often clasp'd in
mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI.

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench
the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn
bowers,

And crowded farms and lessening
towers,
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the
fall ;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves
in rest,
And dead calm in that noble
breast
Which heaves but with the heaving
deep.

XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern
skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; " Comes he thus, my
friend ?
Is this the end of all my care ? "
And circle moaning in the air :
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ? "

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms,
and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart re-
posed ;
And, where warm hands have
prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my
choice,
An awful thought, a life re-
moved,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many
years,
I do not suffer in a dream :
For now so strange do these
things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their
tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approach-
ing sails,
As tho' they brought but mer-
chants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land
to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with
woe,
Should see thy passengers in
rank
Come stepping lightly down the
plank,
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine ;
Should strike a sudden hand in
mine,
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,
 And how my life had droop'd of
 late,
 And he should sorrow o'er my
 state
 And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
 No hint of death in all his frame,
 But found him all in all the
 same,
 I should not feel it to be strange.

xv.

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping
 day:
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
 The cattle huddled on the lea;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and
 tree
 The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,
 I scarce could brook the strain and
 stir

That makes the barren branches
 loud;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a laboring
 breast,
 And topples round the dreary
 west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

xvi.

What words are these have fall'n
 from me?
 Can calm despair and wild unrest
 Be tenants of a single breast,
 Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
 The touch of change in calm or
 storm;
 But knows no more of transient
 form
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
 Or has the shock, so harshly
 given,
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
 And staggers blindly ere she
 sink?
 And stunn'd me from my power
 to think
 And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,
 And flashes into false and true,
 And mingles all without a plan?

xvii.

Thou comest, much wept for: such a
 breeze
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my
 prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
 Thro' circles of the bounding
 sky,
 Week after week: the days go
 by:
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st
 roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light,
 Is on the waters day and night,
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
 Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred
 bark;
 And balmy drops in summer
 dark
 Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by
thee;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII.

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may
stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the
head
That sleeps or wears the mask of
sleep,
And come, whatever loves to
weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips
impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer
mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot
find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no
more;
They laid him by the pleasant
shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling
Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of
all,
When fill'd with tears that can-
not fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender
vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the
mind:
"It will be hard," they say, "to
find
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort
win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain
freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of
Death,
And scarce endure to draw the
breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and
think,
"How good! how kind! and he is
gone."

XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me
wave,

I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to
blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he
speak :
“ This fellow would make weak-
ness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.”

Another answers, “ Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.”

A third is wroth : “ Is this an hour
For private sorrow’s barren song,
When more and more the people
throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

“ A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her
arms
To feel from world to world, and
charms
Her secret from the latest moon ? ”

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :
Ye never knew the sacred dust :
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have
ranged ;
And one is sad ; her note is
changed,
Because her brood is stol’n away.

XXII.

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased
us well,
Thro’ four sweet years arose and
fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to
snow :

And we with singing cheer’d the way,
And, crown’d with all the season
lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk’d began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear’d of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and
cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the
fold,
And dull’d the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho’ I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in the
waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak’d from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I
came,
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where
it ran
Thro’ lands where not a leaf was
dumb ;
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy
caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed
with Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with
Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,
 And all was good that Time could
 bring,
 And all the secret of the Spring
 Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
 On Argive heights divinely sang,
 And round us all the thicket rang
 To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV.

And was the day of my delight
 As pure and perfect as I say?
 The very source and fount of Day
 Is dash'd with wandering isles of
 night.

If all was good and fair we met,
 This earth had been the Paradise
 It never look'd to human eyes
 Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
 Makes former gladness loom so
 great?
 The lowness of the present state,
 That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
 A glory from its being far;
 And orb into the perfect star
 We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV.

I know that this was life, — the track
 Whereon with equal feet we
 fared;
 And then, as now, the day pre-
 pared
 The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
 As light as carrier-birds in air;
 I loved the weight I had to bear,
 Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
 When mighty Love would cleave
 in twain
 The lading of a single pain,
 And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

Still onward winds the dreary way;
 I with it; for I long to prove
 No lapse of moons can canker
 Love,
 Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
 And goodness, and hath power
 to see
 Within the green the moulder'd
 tree,
 And towers fall'n as soon as built —

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
 Or see (in Him is no before)
 In more of life true life no more
 And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,
 That shadow waiting with the
 keys,
 To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I envy not in any moods
 The captive void of noble rage,
 The linnet born within the cage,
 That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
 His license in the field of time,
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
 To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
 The heart that never plighted
 troth
 But stagnates in the weeds of
 sloth;
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, what'er befall;
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;
 'Tis better to have loved and lost
 Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of
 Christ:
 The moon is hid; the night is still;

The Christmas bells from hill to hill
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
 From far and near, on mead and moor,

Swell out and fail, as if a door
 Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease,

Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
 I almost wish'd no more to wake,
 And that my hold on life would break

Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,
 For they controll'd me when a boy;
 They bring me sorrow touch'd
 with joy,

The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
 As daily vexes household peace,
 And chains regret to his decease,
 How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest
 To enrich the threshold of the night
 With shower'd largess of delight
 In dance and song and game and jest ?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
 Entwine the cold baptismal font,
 Make one wreath more for Use
 and Wont,

That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;
 Why should they miss their
 yearly due

Before their time ? They too will die.

XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas
 hearth ;
 A rainy cloud possess'd the earth.
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
 We gambol'd, making vain pre-
 tence
 Of gladness, with an awful sense
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the
 beech:
 We heard them sweep the winter
 land ;
 And in a circle hand-in-hand
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;
 We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
 A merry song we sang with him
 Last year: impetuously we sang :

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us: surely rest is meet:
 "They rest," we said, "their sleep
 is sweet,"
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;
 Once more we sang: "They do
 not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they
 change ;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail
 With gather'd power, yet the
 same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from
 night:
 O Father, touch the east, and
 light
 The light that shone when Hope was
 born.

XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house re-
turn'd,

Was this demanded — if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave ?

“ Where wert thou, brother, those
four days ? ”

There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful
sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;
He told it not ; or something
seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind ad-
mits

But, he was dead, and there he
sits,
And he that brought him back is
there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's
face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so com-
plete,
She bows, she bathes the
Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
prayers,
Whose loves in higher love en-
dure ;

What souls possess themselves so
pure,
Or is their blessedness like theirs ?

XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a
purer air,
Whose faith has centre every-
where,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy
views ;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint con-
fuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good :
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me
this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?
'Twere hardly worth my while to
choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die ;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent
draws,

To drop head-foremost in the
jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV.

Yet if some voice that man could
trust
Should murmur from the narrow
house,
"The cheeks drop in; the body
bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:"

Might I not say? "Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive:"
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift
or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and
sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
"The sound of that forgetful
shore
Will change my sweetness more
and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were
seen
At first as Death, Love had not
been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd
the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall
fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and
wrought
With human hands the creed of
creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the
sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the
grave,
And those wild eyes that watch
the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:
"Thou pratest here where thou
art least;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
"I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said),

"I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth re-
veal'd;
And loiter'd in the master's field,
And darken'd sanctities with song."

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Tho' always under alter'd skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
 The herald melodies of spring,
 But in the songs I love to sing
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits render'd free,
 Then are these songs I sing of
 thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

Old warder of these buried bones,
 And answering now my random
 stroke
 With fruitful cloud and living
 smoke,
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless
 head,
 To thee too comes the golden hour
 When flower is feeling after
 flower;
 But Sorrow — fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of
 men, —
 What whisper'd from her lying
 lips?
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
 And passes into gloom again.

XL.

Could we forget the widow'd hour —
 And look on Spirits breathed
 away,
 As on a maiden in the day
 When first she wears her orange-
 flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth
 rise
 To take her latest leave of home,

And hopes and light regrets that
 come
 Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
 And tears are on the mother's
 face,
 As parting with a long embrace
 She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
 Becoming as is meet and fit
 A link among the days, to knit
 The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
 A life that bears immortal fruit
 In those great offices that suit
 The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
 How often shall her old fireside
 Be cheer'd with tidings of the
 bride,
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have
 told,
 And bring her babe, and make
 her boast,
 Till even those that miss'd her
 most
 Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
 Till growing winters lay me low;
 My paths are in the fields I know,
 And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
 Did ever rise from high to higher;
 As mounts the heavenward altar-
 fire,
 As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something
 strange,
 And I have lost the links that
 bound

Thy changes; here upon the
ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—
That I could wing my will with
might
To leap the grades of life and
light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in
death;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me
cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to
thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII.

I vex my heart with fancies dim:
He still outstript me in the race;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with
him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows
not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and
knows?

XLIII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom

Thro' all its intervital gloom
Some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in
Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead?
For here the man is more and
more;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding
sense
Gives out at times (he knows not
whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean
springs),
May some dim touch of earthly
things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the
doubt;
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV.

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I:"

But as he grows he gathers much,
 And learns the use of "I," and
 "me,"
 And finds "I am not what I see,
 And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
 From whence clear memory may
 begin,
 As thro' the frame that binds him
 in
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
 Which else were fruitless of their
 due,
 Had man to learn himself anew
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI.

We ranging down this lower track,
 The path we came by, thorn and
 flower,
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
 In that deep dawn behind the
 tomb,
 But clear from marge to marge
 shall bloom
 The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
 The fruitful hours of still increase;
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
 A bounded field, nor stretching
 far;
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII.

That each, who seems a separate
 whole,
 Should move his rounds, and fus-
 ing all
 The skirts of self again, should
 fall
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
 Eternal form shall still divide
 The eternal soul from all beside;
 And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
 Enjoying each the other's good:
 What vaster dream can hit the
 mood
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
 Before the spirits fade away,
 Some landing-place, to clasp and
 say,
 "Farewell! We lose ourselves in
 light."

XLVIII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
 Were taken to be such as closed
 Grave doubts and answers here
 proposed,
 Then these were such as men might
 scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
 She takes, when harsher moods
 remit,
 What slender shade of doubt may
 flit,
 And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with
 words,
 But better serves a wholesome
 law,
 And holds it sin and shame to
 draw
 The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
 But rather loosens from the lip
 Short swallow-flights of song, that
 dip
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX.

From art, from nature, from the
 schools,
 Let random influences glance,

Like light in many a shiver'd lance
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy
wreathe,
The slightest air of song shall
breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that
make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly
drown
The bases of my life in tears.

L.

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the
nerves prick
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer
trust ;
And Time, a maniac scattering
dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting
and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side ?

Is there no baseness we would
hide ?
No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his
blame,
See with clear eye some hidden
shame
And I be lessen'd in his love ?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :
Shall love be blamed for want of
faith ?
There must be wisdom with great
Death :
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :
Ye watch, like God, the rolling
hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing be-
loved ;
My words are only words, and
moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

" Yet blame not thou my plaintive
song,"
The Spirit of true love replied ;
" Thou canst not move me from
thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

" What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears ?
What record ? not the sinless
years
That breathed beneath the Syrian
blue :

" So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of
sin.
Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath sunder'd shell from
pearl."

LIII.

How many a father have I seen,
 A sober man, among his boys,
 Whose youth was full of foolish
 noise,
 Who wears his manhood hale and
 green :

And dare we to this fancy give,
 That had the wild oat not been
 sown,
 The soil, left barren, scarce had
 grown
 The grain by which a man may live ?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
 For life outliving heats of youth,
 Yet who would preach it as a
 truth
 To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good : define it well :
 For fear divine Philosophy
 Should push beyond her mark,
 and be
 Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
 That not one life shall be de-
 stroy'd,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile com-
 plete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
 That not a moth with vain desire
 Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;
 I can but trust that good shall
 fall
 At last — far off — at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream . but what am I ?
 An infant crying in the night :
 An infant crying for the light :
 And with no language but a cry.

LV.

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
 That Nature lends such evil
 dreams ?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of
 cares
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and
 grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and
 call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI.

“So careful of the type ?” but no.
 From scarp'd cliff and quarried
 stone
 She cries, “A thousand types are
 gone :
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

“Thou makest thine appeal to me :
 I bring to life, I bring to death :
 The spirit does but mean the
 breath :
 I know no more.” And he, shall he,
 Man, her last work, who seem'd so
 fair,

Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
 Who roll'd the psalm to wintry
 skies,
 Who built him fanes of fruitless
 prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
 And love Creation's final law —
 Tho' Nature, red in tooth and
 claw
 With ravine, shriek'd against his
 creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the
 Just,
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster then, a dream,
 A discord. Dragons of the
 prime,
 That tare each other in their
 slime,
 Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !
 O for thy voice to soothe and
 bless !
 What hope of answer, or redress ?
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII.

Peace ; come away : the song of woe
 Is after all an earthly song ;
 Peace ; come away : we do him
 wrong
 To sing so wildly : let us go.

Come ; let us go : your cheeks are
 pale ;
 But half my life I leave behind ;
 Methinks my friend is richly
 shrined ;
 But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
 One set slow bell will seem to toll
 The passing of the sweetest soul
 That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
 Eternal greetings to the dead ;
 And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
 "Adieu, adieu" for evermore.

LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell :
 Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
 As drop by drop the water falls
 In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
 Of hearts that beat from day to
 day,
 Half-conscious of their dying
 clay,
 And those cold crypts where they
 shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd : "Wherefore
 grieve
 Thy brethren with a fruitless
 tear ?
 Abide a little longer here,
 And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LIX.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
 No casual mistress, but a wife,
 My bosom-friend and half of
 life ;
 As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
 And put thy harsher moods aside,
 If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
 Nor will it lessen from to-day ;
 But I'll have leave at times to
 play
 As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
 With so much hope for years to
 come,
 That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
 Could hardly tell what name were
 thine.

LX.

Life past; a soul of nobler tone:
 My spirit loved and loves him
 yet,
 Like some poor girl whose heart
 is set
 On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
 She finds the baseness of her lot,
 Half jealous of she knows not
 what,
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
 She sighs amid her narrow days,
 Moving about the household
 ways,
 In that dark house where she was
 born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
 And tease her till the day draws
 by:
 At night she weeps, "How vain
 am I!
 How should he love a thing so low?"

LXI.

If, in thy second state sublime,
 Thy ransom'd reason change
 replies
 With all the circle of the wise,
 The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
 How dimly character'd and slight,
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and
 night,
 How blanch'd with darkness must I
 grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
 Where thy first form was made a
 man;
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor
 can
 'The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat blench
 or fail,
 Then be my love an idle tale,
 And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than boy,
 On some unworthy heart with joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies,
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
 Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
 And love in which my hound has
 part,
 Can hang no weight upon my
 heart
 In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
 As thou, perchance, art more than
 I,
 And yet I spare them sympathy,
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
 As, unto vaster motions bound,
 The circuits of thine orbit round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath
 been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
 And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy
 chance,
 And breasts the blows of circum-
 stance,
 And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
 And lives to clutch the golden
 keys,
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning
 slope
 The pillar of a people's hope,
 The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are
 still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs
 He play'd at counsellors and kings,
 With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
 And reaps the labor of his hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands ;
 " Does my old friend remember me ? "

LXV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt ;
 I lull a fancy trouble-tost
 With " Love's too precious to be
 lost,
 A little grain shall not be spilt. "

And in that solace can I sing,
 Till out of painful phases wrought
 There flutters up a happy thought,
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,
 And thine effect so lives in me,
 A part of mine may live in thee
 And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI.

You thought my heart too far diseased ;
 You wonder when my fancies play
 To find me gay among the gay,
 Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
 Which makes a desert in the mind,
 Has made me kindly with my kind,
 And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
 Whose jest among his friends is
 free,
 Who takes the children on his
 knee,
 And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his
 chair
 For pastime, dreaming of the sky,
 His inner day can never die,
 His night of loss is always there.

LXVII.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
 I know that in thy place of rest
 By that broad water of the west,
 There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
 As slowly steals a silver flame
 Along the letters of thy name,
 And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;
 From off my bed the moonlight
 dies ;
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes
 I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn
 A lucid veil from coast to coast,
 And in the dark church like a
 ghost
 Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVIII.

When in the down I sink my head,
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times
 my breath ;
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, know-
 not Death,
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
 When all our path was fresh with
 dew,

And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this ? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not
why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth ;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX.

I dream'd there would be Spring no
more,
That Nature's ancient power was
lost :
The streets were black with smoke
and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny
boughs :
I took the thorns to bind my
brows,
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary
hairs :
They call'd me in the public
squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me
child :
I found an angel of the night ;
The voice was low, the look was
bright ;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :
The voice was not the voice of
grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX.

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to
paint
The face I know ; the hues are
faint
And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons
wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled
shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawn-
ing doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces
drive ;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and
trance
And madness, thou hast forged
at last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer
France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul !
Then bring an opiate trebly
strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of
wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of
change,
The days that grow to something
strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
 The fortress, and the mountain
 ridge,
 The cataract flashing from the
 bridge,
 The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 And howlest, issuing out of night,
 With blasts that blow the poplar
 white,
 And lash with storm the streaming
 pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
 To pine in that reverse of doom,
 Which sicken'd every living
 bloom,
 And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
 With thy quick tears that make
 the rose
 Pull sideways, and the daisy close
 Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless
 flame
 Up the deep East, or, whispering,
 play'd
 A chequer-work of beam and
 shade
 Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
 Day, mark'd as with some hideous
 crime,
 When the dark hand struck down
 thro' time,
 And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd
 brows
 Thro' clouds that drench the
 morning star,
 And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf
 afar,
 And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
 Climb thy thick noon, disastrous
 day;
 Touch thy dull goal of joyless
 gray,
 And hide thy shame beneath the
 ground.

LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
 So little done, such things to be,
 How know I what had need of
 thee,
 For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
 The head hath miss'd an earthly
 wreath:
 I curse not nature, no, nor death;
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
 Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:
 What fame is left for human deeds
 In endless age! It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
 Fade wholly, while the soul
 exults,
 And self-infolds the large results
 Of force that would have forged a
 name.

LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
 To those that watch it more and
 more,
 A likeness, hardly seen before,
 Comes out — to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
 I see thee what thou art, and
 know
 Thy likeness to the wise below,
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
 And what I see I leave unsaid,
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has
 made
 His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
 In verse that brings myself relief,
 And by the measure of my grief
 I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoe'er expert
 In fitting aptest words to things,
 Or voice the richest-toned that
 sings,
 Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days
 To raise a cry that lasts not long,
 And round thee with the breeze
 of song
 To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
 And, while we breathe beneath the
 sun,
 The world which credits what is
 done
 Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;
 But somewhere, out of human
 view,
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
 And in a moment set thy face
 Where all the starry heavens of
 space
 Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'
 The secular abyss to come,
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
 Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke
 The darkness of our planet, last,
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy
 bowers
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are
 vain ;

And what are they when these
 remain
 The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

LXXVII.

What hope is here for modern rhyme
 To him, who turns a musing eye
 On songs, and deeds, and lives,
 that lie
 Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain
 May bind a book, may line a box,
 May serve to curl a maiden's
 locks ;
 Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
 And, passing, turn the page that
 tells
 A grief, then changed to some-
 thing else,
 Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways
 Shall ring with music all the same ;
 To breathe my loss is more than
 fame,
 To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII.

Again at Christmas did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas
 hearth ;
 The silent snow possess'd the
 earth,
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
 No wing of wind the region swept,
 But over all things brooding slept
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
 Again our ancient games had
 place,
 The mimic picture's breathing
 grace,
 And dance and song and hoodman-
 blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ?
 No single tear, no mark of pain :
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?
 O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can die !
 No — mixt with all this mystic
 frame,
 Her deep relations are the same,
 But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX.

“ More than my brothers are to me, ” —
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart !
 I know thee of what force thou
 art
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
 As moulded like in Nature's mint;
 And hill and wood and field did
 print
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
 Thro' all his eddying coves ; the
 same
 All winds that roam the twilight
 came
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
 One lesson from one book we
 learn'd,
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet
 turn'd
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
 But he was rich where I was poor,
 And he supplied my want the more
 As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,
 That holy Death ere Arthur died
 Had moved me kindly from his
 side,
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
 The grief my loss in him had
 wrought,
 A grief as deep as life or thought,
 But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;
 I hear the sentence that he speaks :
 He bears the burthen of the weeks
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;
 And, influence-rich to soothe and
 save,
 Unused example from the grave
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI.

Could I have said while he was here,
 “ My love shall now no further
 range ;
 There cannot come a mellow
 change,
 For now is love mature in ear.”

Love, then, had hope of richer store :
 What end is here to my com-
 plaint ?
 This haunting whisper makes me
 faint,
 “ More years had made me love thee
 more.”

But Death returns an answer sweet :
 “ My sudden frost was sudden
 gain,
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,
 It might have drawn from after-heat.”

LXXXII.

I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and
 face ;
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him, can fright my
 faith.

Eternal process moving on,
 From state to state the spirit
 walks ;

And these are but the shatter'd
stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth :
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my
heart ;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long ;
Thou doest expectant nature
wrong ;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded
noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper
place ?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the
glow
To which thy crescent would have
grown ;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp
and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou should'st link thy life
with one

Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee :
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them
mine.

I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;
And all the train of bounteous
hours
Conduct by paths of growing
powers,
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly
wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the
globe ;

What time mine own might also flee.
As link'd with thine in love and
fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous
strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining
hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant ?
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore
 wake
 The old bitterness again, and
 break
 The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV.

This truth came borne with bier and
 pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common
 grief,

What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;
 And whether love for him have
 drain'd

My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws
 A faithful answer from the
 breast,
 Thro' light reproaches, half ex-
 press,

And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message
 falls,

That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal
 state,

In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome
 there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
 And show'd him in the fountain
 fresh

All knowledge that the sons of
 flesh
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were
 little worth,
 To wander on a darken'd earth,
 Where all things round me breathed
 of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion
 warm,
 O sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,
 How much of act at human hands
 The sense of human will demands
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
 The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
 With gifts of grace, that might
 express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilizing intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual
 strife,
 Diffused the shock thro' all my
 life,
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I met ;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch ;
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
 Eternal, separate from fears :
 The all-assuming months and
 years
 Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,
 And Spring that swells the nar-
 row brooks,
 And Autumn, with a noise of
 rooks,
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
 Recalls, in change of light or
 gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb,
 And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,
 A part of stillness, yearns to
 speak :
 " Arise, and get thee forth and
 seek
 A friendship for the years to come.

" I watch thee from the quiet shore ;
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;
 But in dear words of human
 speech
 We two communicate no more."

And I, " Can clouds of nature stain
 The starry clearness of the free ?
 How is it ? Canst thou feel for
 me
 Some painless sympathy with pain ? "

And lightly does the whisper fall ;
 " 'Tis hard for thee to fathom
 this ;
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,
 And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead ;
 Or so methinks the dead would
 say ;
 Or so shall grief with symbols
 play
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
 That these things pass, and I shall
 prove
 A meeting somewhere, love with
 love,
 I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver
 I could not, if I would, transfer
 The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
 The promise of the golden hours ?
 First love, first friendship, equal
 powers,
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
 That beats within a lonely place,
 That yet remembers his embrace,
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
 Quite in the love of what is gone,
 But seeks to beat in time with one
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
 The primrose of the later year,
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous
 gloom
 Of evening over brake and bloom
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
 And shadowing down the horned
 flood
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy
 breath
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt
 and Death,
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odor streaming far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

LXXXVII.

I past beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the gown;
 I roved at random thro' the town,
 And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
 The storm their high-built organs
 make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
 The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant
 shout,
 The measured pulse of racing
 oars
 Among the willows; paced the
 shores
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same; and
 last
 Up that long walk of limes I past
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door
 I linger'd; all within was noise
 Of songs, and clapping hands,
 and boys
 That crash'd the glass and beat the
 floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
 Of youthful friends, on mind and
 art,
 And labor, and the changing mart,
 And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
 But send it slackly from the
 string;
 And one would pierce an outer
 ring,
 And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
 Would cleave the mark. A wil-
 ling ear
 We lent him. Who, but hung to
 hear
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and
 grace
 And music in the bounds of law,
 To those conclusions when we
 saw

The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
 And over those ethereal eyes
 The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
 Rings Eden thro' the budded
 quicks,
 O tell me where the senses mix,
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate fierce extremes em-
 ploy
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
 And in the midmost heart of
 grief
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy.

And I — my harp would prelude
 woe —
 I cannot all command the strings;
 The glory of the sum of things
 Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX.

Witch-elms that counterchange the
 floor
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and
 bright;
 And thou, with all thy breadth
 and height
 Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
 My Arthur found your shadows
 fair,

And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;
He mixt in all our simple sports ;
They pleased him, fresh from
brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning
dew,
The gust that round the garden
flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing
pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and
flung
A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the lifelong summer
day
With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to
theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or
hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the
state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream ,

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For "ground in yonder social
mill
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge" he said "in form and
gloss

The picturesque of man and
man."

We talk'd : the stream beneath
us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss.

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers ,
We heard behind the woodbine
veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

XC.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate
spring
Where nighest heaven, who first
could fling
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying
eyes
Were closed with wail, resume
their life,
They would but find in child and
wife
An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with
wine,
To pledge them with a kindly
tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them
here,
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other
hands ;
The hard heir strides about their
lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of
these,

Not less the yet-loved sire would
make
Confusion worse than death, and
shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:
Whatever change the years have
wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted
thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;
Come, wear the form by which I
know
Thy spirit in time among thy
peers;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing
change
May breathe, with many roses
sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of
wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;
Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth
warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after
form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it
vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;
And tho' the months, revolving
near,
Should prove the phantom-warning
true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native
land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in
clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may
come
Where all the nerve of sense is
numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in un conjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to
name;
That in this blindness of the
frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought
would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst
say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
 Imaginations calm and fair,
 The memory like a cloudless air,
 The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,
 And doubt beside the portal waits,
 They can but listen at the gates,
 And hear the household jar within.

xcv.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
 For underfoot the herb was dry ;
 And genial warmth ; and o'er the
 sky
 The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn
 Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :
 The brook alone far-off was heard,
 And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy
 shapes
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine
 capes
 And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that
 peal'd
 From knoll to knoll, where,
 couch'd at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and
 the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me
 and night,
 And in the house light after light
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
 Of that glad year which once had
 been,
 In those fall'n leaves which kept
 their green,
 The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and
 strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying
 change

To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward
 back,
 And keen thro' wordy snares to
 track

Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from
 the past,
 And all at once it seem'd at last
 The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and
 whirl'd
 About empyreal heights of
 thought,
 And came on that which is, and
 caught

The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
 The steps of Time — the shocks
 of Chance —

The blows of Death. At length
 my trance
 Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with
 doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to
 frame

In matter-moulded forms of
 speech,
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach
 Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
 The knolls once more where,
 couch'd at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and
 the trees

Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycamore.
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms,
 and swung
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung
 The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn," and died
 away ;
 And East and West, without a
 breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life
 and death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-
 blue eyes
 Are tender over drowning flies,
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew
 In many a subtle question versed,
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
 But ever strove to make it true :

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
 At last he beat his music out.
 There lives more faith in honest
 doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd
 strength,
 He would not make his judgment
 blind,
 He faced the spectres of the mind
 And laid them : thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;
 And Power was with him in the
 night,
 Which makes the darkness and
 the light,
 And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,
 While Israel made their gods of
 gold,
 Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII.

My love has talk'd with rocks and
 trees ;
 He finds on misty mountain-
 ground
 His own vast shadow glory-
 crown'd ;
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —
 I look'd on these and thought of
 thee
 In vastness and in mystery,
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on
 eye,
 Their hearts of old have beat in
 tune,
 Their meetings made December
 June,
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away ;
 The days she never can forget
 Are earnest that he loves her yet,
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,
 Tho' rapt in matters dark and
 deep
 He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
 He reads the secret of the star,
 He seems so near and yet so far,
 He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
 A wither'd violet is her bliss :
 She knows not what his great-
 ness is,
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
 Of early faith and plighted vows ;
 She knows but matters of the
 house,
 And he, he knows a thousand things

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
 She darkly feels him great and
 wise,
 She dwells on him with faithful
 eyes,
 "I cannot understand: I love."

XCVIII.

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
 And those fair hills I sail'd below,
 When I was there with him; and
 go
 By summer belts of wheat and vine
 To where he breathed his latest breath,
 That City. All her splendor
 seems
 No livelier than the wisp that
 gleams
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
 Enwind her isles, unmark'd of
 me:
 I have not seen, I will not see
 Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
 The birth, the bridal; friend from
 friend
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend
 Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
 By each cold hearth, and sad-
 ness flings
 Her shadow on the blaze of
 kings:
 And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
 With statelier progress to and
 fro
 The double tides of chariots flow
 By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
 He told me, lives in any crowd,
 When all is gay with lamps, and
 loud
 With sport and song, in booth and
 tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
 And wheels the circled dance, and
 breaks
 The rocket molten into flakes
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX.

Rise, st thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 So loud with voices of the birds,
 So thick with lowings of the
 herds,
 Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
 On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles
 fast
 By meadows breathing of the
 past,
 And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
 A song that slights the coming
 care,
 And Autumn laying here and
 there
 A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
 To myriads on the genial earth,
 Memories of bridal, or of birth,
 And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
 To-day they count as kindred
 souls;
 They know me not, but mourn with
 me.

C.

I climb the hill: from end to end
 Of all the landscape underneath,
 I find no place that does not
 breathe
 Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
 Or low morass and whispering
 reed,
 Or simple stile from mead to
 mead,
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
 That hears the latest linnet trill,
 Nor quarry trench'd along the
 hill
 And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;
 Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
 To left and right thro' meadowy
 curves,
 That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
 And each reflects a kindlier day ;
 And, leaving these, to pass away,
 I think once more he seems to die.

CI.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall
 sway,
 The tender blossom flutter down,
 Unloved, that beech will gather
 brown,
 This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
 Ray round with flames her disk
 of seed,
 And many a rose-carnation feed
 With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
 The brook shall babble down the
 plain,
 At noon or when the lesser wain
 Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
 And flood the haunts of hern and
 crake ;
 Or into silver arrows break
 The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild
 A fresh association blow,
 And year by year the landscape
 grow
 Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the laborer tills
 His wonted glebe, or lops the
 glades ,

And year by year our memory
 fades
 From all the circle of the hills.

CII.

We leave the well-beloved place
 Where first we gazed upon the
 sky ;
 The roofs, that heard our earliest
 cry,
 Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
 As down the garden-walks I
 move,
 Two spirits of a diverse love
 Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood
 sung
 Long since its matin song, and
 heard
 The low love-language of the bird
 In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here
 Thy feet have stray'd in after
 hours
 With thy lost friend among the
 bowers,
 And this hath made them trebly
 dear."

These two have striven half the day,
 And each prefers his separate
 claim,
 Poor rivals in a losing game,
 That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set
 To leave the pleasant fields and
 farms ;
 They mix in one another's arms
 To one pure image of regret.

CIII.

On that last night before we went
 From out the doors where I was
 bred,
 I dream'd a vision of the dead,
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
 And maidens with me : distant
 hills
 From hidden summits fed with
 rills
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
 They sang of what is wise and
 good
 And graceful. In the centre
 stood
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to
 me,
 The shape of him I loved, and
 love
 For ever : then flew in a dove
 And brought a summons from the
 sea :

And when they learnt that I must go
 They wept and wail'd, but led the
 way
 To where a little shallop lay
 At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,
 And shadowing bluff that made
 the banks,
 We glided winding under ranks
 Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore
 And roll'd the floods in grander
 space,
 The maidens gather'd strength
 and grace
 And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart
 And watch'd them, wax'd in every
 limb ;
 I felt the thews of Anakim,
 The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,
 And one would chant the history
 Of that great race, which is to
 be,
 And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides
 Began to foam, and we to draw
 From deep to deep, to where we
 saw
 A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
 But thrice as large as man he bent
 To greet us. Up the side I went,
 And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind
 Bewail'd their lot ; I did them
 wrong :
 " We served thee here," they said,
 " so long,
 And wilt thou leave us now behind ? "

So rapt I was, they could not win
 An answer from my lips, but he
 Replying, " Enter likewise ye
 And go with us : " they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 We steer'd her toward a crimson
 cloud
 That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV.

The time draws near the birth of
 Christ ;
 The moon is hid, the night is still ;
 A single church below the hill
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
 That wakens at this hour of rest
 A single murmur in the breast,
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
 In lands where not a memory
 strays,
 Nor landmark breathes of other
 days,
 But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV.

To-night ungather'd let us leave
 This laurel, let this holly stand :
 We live within the stranger's land,
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve

Our father's dust is left alone
 And silent under other snows :
 There in due time the woodbine
 blows,
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
 The genial hour with mask and
 mime ;
 For change of place, like growth
 of time,
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly
 proved,
 A little spare the night I loved,
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;
 For who would keep an ancient
 form
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no
 more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be
 blown ;
 No dance, no motion, save alone
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
 Long sleeps the summer in the
 seed ;
 Run out your measured arcs, and
 lead
 The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light :
 The year is dying in the night ;
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the
 snow :
 The year is going, let him go ;
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no
 more ;
 Ring out the feud of rich and
 poor,
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
 And ancient forms of party strife ;
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the
 times ;
 Ring out, ring out my mournful
 rhymes,
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and
 blood,
 The civic slander and the spite ;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of
 gold ;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier
 hand ;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII.

It is the day when he was born,
 A bitter day that early sank
 Behind a purple-frosty bank
 Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely
 flies
 The blast of North and East, and
 ice
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs

Above the wood which grides and
clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch
the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat ;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII.

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with
might
To scale the heaven's highest
height,
Or dive below the wells of Death ?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting
hymns ?
And on the depths of death there
swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies :
'Tis held that sorrow makes us
wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never
dry ;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of
man ;
Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic
gloom ;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England ; not the schoolboy
heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would
twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine
eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd
in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years :
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of
pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen
fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;

And loved them more, that they
 were thine,
 The graceful tact, the Christian art ;
 Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
 But mine the love that will not
 tire,
 And, born of love, the vague
 desire
 That spurs an imitative will.

CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
 To him who grasps a golden ball,
 By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
 His want in forms for fashion's
 sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories
 call,
 Not being less but more than all
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and
 join'd
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower
 And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,
 Drew in the expression of an eye,
 Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse
 The grand old name of gentleman,
 Defamed by every charlatan,
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
 That I, who gaze with temperate
 eyes
 On glorious insufficiencies,
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
 Of all my love, art reason why
 I seem to cast a careless eye
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel
 power
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,
 And hope could never hope too
 much,
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
 And tracts of calm from tempest
 made,
 And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
 In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps
 with thee
 Which not alone had guided me,
 But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
 In intellect, with force and skill
 To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have
 been :

A life in civic action warm,
 A soul on highest mission sent,
 A potent voice of Parliament,
 A pillar steadfast in the storm ;

Should licensed boldness gather force,
 Becoming, when the time has
 birth,
 A lever to uplift the earth
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and
 go,
 With agonies, with energies,
 With overthrowings, and with
 cries,
 And undulations to and fro.

CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge ? Who
 shall rail

Against her beauty? May she
 mix
 With men and prosper! Who
 shall fix
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
 She sets her forward countenance
 And leaps into the future chance,
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —
 She cannot fight the fear of death.
 What is she, cut from love and
 faith,
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
 All barriers in her onward race
 For power. Let her know her
 place;
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
 If all be not in vain; and guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by side
 With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
 O, friend, who camest to thy goal
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and
 hour
 In reverence and in charity.

CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of
 quick
 About the flowering squares, and
 thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the
 vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change
 their sky
 To build and brood; that live their
 lives

From land to land; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too; and my re-
 gret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
 That keenlier in sweet April
 wakes,
 And meets the year, and gives
 and takes
 The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
 The life re-orient out of dust,
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten
 trust
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
 Upon me, while I muse alone;
 And that dear voice, I once have
 known,
 Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune
 dead;
 Less yearning for the friendship
 fled,
 Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII.

O days and hours, your work is this
 To hold me from my proper place,
 A little while from his embrace,
 For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
 And unto meeting when we meet,
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
 And every span of shade that
 steals,
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,
 And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,
 The giant laboring in his youth;
 Nor dream of human love and
 truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They say,
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random
 forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic
 storms,
 Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime
 to clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course,
 and show
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning
 fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual
 feast;

Move upward, working out the
 beast,
 And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX.

Doors, where my heart was used to
 beat
 So quickly, not as one that weeps
 I come once more; the city sleeps;
 I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
 Betwixt the black fronts long-
 withdrawn
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
 And bright the friendship of
 thine eye;
 And in my thoughts with scarce
 a sigh
 I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:
 I think we are not wholly brain,
 Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with
 Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
 Let Science prove we are, and
 then
 What matters Science unto men,
 At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
 Hereafter, up from childhood
 shape
 His action like the greater ape,
 But I was *born* to other things.

CXXI.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
 And ready, thou, to die with him,
 Thou watchest all things ever
 dim
 And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
 The boat is drawn upon the shore ;
 Thou listenest to the closing door,
 And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
 By thee the world's great work is
 heard
 Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;
 Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,
 And voices hail it from the
 brink ;
 Thou hear'st the village hammer
 clink,
 And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
 For what is one, the first, the last,
 Thou, like my present and my
 past,
 Thy place is changed ; thou art the
 same.

CXXII.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
 While I rose up against my doom,
 And yearn'd to burst the folded
 gloom,
 To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
 The strong imagination roll
 A sphere of stars about my soul,
 In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
 Divide us not, be with me now,
 And enter in at breast and brow,
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
 And like an inconsiderate boy,
 As in the former flash of joy,
 I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
 And every dew-drop paints a bow,
 The wizard lightnings deeply
 glow,
 And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII.

There rolls the deep where grew the
 tree.

O earth, what changes hast thou
 seen !

There where the long street roars,
 hath been

The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
 From form to form, and nothing
 stands ;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,
 Like clouds they shape themselves
 and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
 And dream my dream, and hold
 it true ;

For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
 I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV.

That which we dare invoke to bless ;
 Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest
 doubt ;

He, They, One, All ; within, with-
 out ;

The Power in darkness whom we
 guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;
 Nor thro' the questions men may
 try,

The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
 I heard a voice "believe no more"
 And heard an ever-breaking shore
 That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would
 melt

The freezing reason's colder part,
 And like a man in wrath the
 heart

Stood up and answer'd " I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear :
 But that blind clamor made me
 wise ;

Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands ;
And out of darkness came the
hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding
men.

CXXV.

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would
give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to
live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;
She did but look through dimmer
eyes ;
Or Love but play'd with gracious
lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song ;
And if the words were sweet and
strong
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI.

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and
sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to
place,

And whispers to the worlds of
space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII.

And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;
Well roars the storm to those that
hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags :
They tremble, the sustaining
crags ;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the
sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;
While thou, dear spirit, happy
star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with
Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade ;
Yet O ye mysteries of god,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and
Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like
new ;
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
 To fool the crowd with glorious
 lies,
 To cleave a creed in sects and
 cries,
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old bareness picturesque
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend
 On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal ;
 O loved the most, when most I feel
 There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human, divine ;
 Sweet human hand and lips and
 eye ;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst
 not die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be ;
 Loved deeper, darker under-
 stood ;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;
 I hear thee where the waters run ;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;
 My love is vaster passion now ;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature
 thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice ;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice ;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI.

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer
 shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them
 pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquer'd years
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
 The truths that never can be
 proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
 Demand not thou a marriage lay ;
 In that it is thy marriage day
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
 Since first he told me that he
 loved
 A daughter of our house ; nor
 proved
 Since that dark day a day like this ;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
 Some thrice three years : they went
 and came,
 Remade the blood and changed
 the fame,
 And yet is love not less, but more ;

No longer caring to embalm
 In dying songs a dead regret,
 But like a statue solid-set,
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
 Than in the summers that are
 flown,

For I myself with these have
grown
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I
made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere
noon ?

She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee ; they meet thy
look
And brighten like the star that
shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she
grows
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;
As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent ; wearing all that
weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride ;
She fears not, or with thee
beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's
arm,
That shielded all her life from
harm
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;
Their pensive tablets round her
head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The " wilt thou " answer'd, and
again
The " wilt thou " ask'd, till out of
twain
Her sweet " I will " has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be
read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn ;
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering
breeze ;
The blind wall rocks, and on the
trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them — maidens of the
place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I
gave.
They leave the porch, they pass
the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life in-
creased,
Who stay to share the morning
feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;
My drooping memory will not
shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces
bloom,
As drinking health to bride and
groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,
 Perchance, perchance, among the
 rest,
 And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
 And those white-favor'd horses
 wait;
 They rise, but linger; it is late;
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
 From little cloudlets on the grass,
 But sweeps away as out we pass
 To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
 And talk of others that are wed,
 And how she look'd, and what he
 said,
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
 The shade of passing thought,
 the wealth
 Of words and wit, the double
 health,
 The crowning cup, the three-times-
 three,

And last the dance;— till I retire:
 Dumb is that tower which spake
 so loud,
 And high in heaven the stream-
 ing cloud,
 And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapor sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing
 rills,

And catch at every mountain
 head,
 And o'er the friths that branch
 and spread
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors
 With tender gloom the roof, the
 wall;
 And breaking let the splendor fall
 To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the
 vast
 And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, a closer link
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge; under whose com-
 mand
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their
 hand
 Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
 For all we thought and loved and
 did,
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but
 seed
 Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
 This planet, was a noble type
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,
 That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation moves.

THE LOVER'S TALE.



THE original Preface to "The Lover's Tale" states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends however who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light—accompanied with a reprint of the sequel—a work of my mature life—"The Golden Supper"?

May, 1879.

ARGUMENT.

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

I.

HERE far away, seen from the top-
most cliff,
Filling with purple gloom the vacan-
cies
Between the tufted hills, the sloping
seas
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way
down rare sails,
White as white clouds, floated from
sky to sky.
Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet
bay,
Like to a quiet mind in the loud
world,
Where the chafed breakers of the
outer sea
Sank powerless, as anger falls aside
And withers on the breast of peaceful
love;
Thou didst receive the growth of pines
that fledged
The hills that watch'd thee, as Love
watcheth Love,
In thine own essence, and delight thy-
self

To make it wholly thine on sunny
days.
Keep thou thy name of "Lover's
Bay." See, sirs,
Even now the Goddess of the Past,
that takes
The heart, and sometimes touches but
one string
That quivers, and is silent, and some-
times
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd
chords
To some old melody, begins to play
That air which pleased her first. I
feel thy breath;
I come, great Mistress of the ear and
eye:
Thy breath is of the pinewood; and
tho' years
Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy
strait
Betwixt the native land of Love and
me,
Breathe but a little on me, and the
sail
Will draw me to the rising of the
sun,

The lucid chambers of the morning
 star,
 And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,
 To pass my hand across my brows,
 and muse

On those dear hills, that never more
 will meet

The sight that throbs and aches be-
 neath my touch,

As tho' there beat a heart in either
 eye;

For when the outer lights are darken'd
 thus,

The memory's vision hath a keener
 edge.

It grows upon me now — the semi-
 circle

Of dark-blue waters and the narrow
 fringe

Of curving beach — its wreaths of
 dripping green —

Its pale pink shells — the summer-
 house aloft

That open'd on the pines with doors
 of glass,

A mountain nest — the pleasure-boat
 that rock'd,

Light-green with its own shadow, keel
 to keel,

Upon the dappled dimplings of the
 wave,

That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!

They come, they crowd upon me all
 at once —

Moved from the cloud of unforgetten
 things,

That sometimes on the horizon of the
 mind

Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in
 storm —

Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me
 — days

Of dewy dawning and the amber
 eyes

When thou and I, Camilla, thou and
 I

Were borne about the bay or safely
 moor'd

Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where
 the tide

Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all
 without

The slowly-riding rollers on the
 cliffs

Clash'd, calling to each other, and
 thro' the arch

Down those loud waters, like a setting
 star,

Mixt with the gorgeous west the light-
 house shone,

And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell
 Would often loiter in her balmy

blue,
 To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love

Waver'd at anchor with me, when day
 hung

From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy
 halls;

Gleams of the water-circles as they
 broke,

Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about
 her lips,

Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,
 Leapt like a passing thought across

her eyes;

And mine with one that will not pass,
 till earth

And heaven pass too, dwelt on my
 heaven, a face

Most starry-fair, but kindled from
 within

As 'twere with dawn. She was dark-
 hair'd, dark-eyed:

Oh, such dark eyes! a single glance
 of them

Will govern a whole life from birth
 to death,

Careless of all things else, led on
 with light

In trances and in visions: look at
 them,

You lose yourself in utter ignorance;
 You cannot find their depth; for they

go back,
 And farther back, and still withdraw
 themselves

Quite into the deep soul, that ever-
 more

Fresh springing from her fountains in
the brain,
Still pouring thro', floods with redun-
dant life
Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago
I should have died, if it were possible
To die in gazing on that perfectness
Which I do bear within me: I had
died,
But from my farthest lapse, my latest
ebb,
Thine image, like a charm of light
and strength
Upon the waters, push'd me back
again
On these deserted sands of barren
life.
Tho' from the deep vault where the
heart of Hope
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the
dark —
Forgetting how to render beautiful
Her countenance with quick and
healthful blood —
Thou didst not sway me upward;
could I perish
While thou, a meteor of the sepul-
chre,
Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's
quiet urn
For ever? He, that saith it, hath
o'er-stept
The slippery footing of his narrow
wit,
And fall'n away from judgment.
Thou art light,
To which my spirit leaneth all her
flowers,
And length of days, and immortality
Of thought, and freshness ever self-
renew'd.
For Time and Grief abode too long
with Life,
And, like all other friends i' the world,
at last
They grew weary of her fellowship:
So Time and Grief did beckon unto
Death,
And Death drew nigh and beat the
doors of Life;

But thou didst sit alone in the inner
house,
A wakeful portress, and didst parle
with Death, —
“This is a charmed dwelling which I
hold;”
So Death gave back, and would no
further come.
Yet is my life nor in the present time,
Nor in the present place. To me
alone,
Push'd from his chair of regal heri-
tage,
The Present is the vassal of the Past:
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,
And cannot die, and am, in having
been —
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,
Thrust forward on to-day and out of
place;
A body journeying onward, sick with
toil,
The weight as if of age upon my
limbs,
The grasp of hopeless grief about my
heart,
And all the senses weaken'd, save in
that,
Which long ago they had glean'd and
garner'd up
Into the granaries of memory —
The clear brow, bulwark of the
precious brain,
Chink'd as you see, and seam'd — and
all the while
The light soul twines and mingles
with the growths
Of vigorous early days, attracted,
won,
Married, made one with, molten into
all
The beautiful in Past of act or place,
And like the all-enduring camel,
driven
Far from the diamond fountain by the
palms,
Who toils across the middle moonlit
nights,
Or when the white heats of the blind-
ing noons
Beat from the concave sand; yet in
him keeps

A draught of that sweet fountain that
 he loves,
 To stay his feet from falling, and his
 spirit
 From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,
 When I began to love. How should
 I tell you ?
 Or from the after-fulness of my heart,
 Flow back again unto my slender
 spring
 And first of love, tho' every turn and
 depth
 Between is clearer in my life than all
 Its present flow. Ye know not what
 ye ask.
 How should the broad and open flower
 tell
 What sort of bud it was, when, prest
 together
 In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken
 folds,
 It seem'd to keep its sweetness to it-
 self,
 Yet was not the less sweet for that it
 seem'd ?
 For young Life knows not when young
 Life was born,
 But takes it all for granted: neither
 Love,
 Warm in the heart, his cradle, can
 remember
 Love in the womb, but resteth satis-
 fied,
 Looking on her that brought him to
 the light:
 Or as men know not when they fall
 asleep
 Into delicious dreams, our other life,
 So know I not when I began to love.
 This is my sum of knowledge — that
 my love
 Grew with myself — say rather, was
 my growth,
 My inward sap, the hold I have on
 earth,
 My outward circling air wherewith I
 breathe,
 Which yet upholds my life, and ever-
 more
 Is to me daily life and daily death :

For how should I have lived and not
 have loved ?
 Can ye take off the sweetness from
 the flower,
 The color and the sweetness from the
 rose,
 And place them by themselves; or set
 apart
 Their motions and their brightness
 from the stars,
 And then point out the flower or the
 star ?
 Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,
 And tell me where I am ? 'Tis even
 thus:
 In that I live I love; because I love
 I live: whate'er is fountain to the one
 Is fountain to the other; and whene'er
 Our God unknits the riddle of the
 one,
 There is no shade or fold of mystery
 Swathing the other.

Many, many years,
 (For they seem many and my most of
 life,
 And well I could have linger'd in that
 porch,
 So unproportion'd to the dwelling-
 place,)
 In the Maydews of childhood, opposite
 The flush and dawn of youth, we lived
 together,
 Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father
 died,
 And he was happy that he saw it not;
 But I and the first daisy on his grave
 From the same clay came into light
 at once.
 As Love and I do number equal years,
 So she, my love, is of an age with me.
 How like each other was the birth of
 each !
 On the same morning, almost the same
 hour,
 Under the selfsame aspect of the stars,
 (Oh falsehood of all starcraft!) we
 were born.
 How like each other was the birth of
 each !

The sister of my mother — she that bore
 Camilla close beneath her beating heart,
 Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,
 With its true-touched pulses in the flow
 And hourly visitation of the blood,
 Sent notes of preparation manifold,
 And mellow'd echoes of the outer world —
 My mother's sister, mother of my love,
 Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,
 One twofold mightier than the other was,
 In giving so much beauty to the world,
 And so much wealth as God had charged her with —
 Loathing to put it from herself for ever,
 Left her own life with it; and dying thus,
 Crown'd with her highest act the placid face
 And breathless body of her good deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She was motherless
 And I without a father. So from each
 Of those two pillars which from earth uphold
 Our childhood, one had fallen away, and all
 The careful burthen of our tender years
 Trembled upon the other. He that gave
 Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd
 All lovingkindnesses, all offices
 Of watchful care and trembling tenderness.
 He waked for both: he pray'd for both: he slept
 Dreaming of both: nor was his love the less
 Because it was divided, and shot forth

Boughs on each side, laden with wholesome shade,
 Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,
 And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister: on one arm
 The flaxen ringlets of our infancies
 Wander'd, the while we rested: one soft lap
 Pillow'd us both: a common light of eyes
 Was on us as we lay: our baby lips,
 Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence
 The stream of life, one stream, one life, one blood,
 One sustenance, which, still as thought
 Grew large,
 Still larger moulding all the house of thought,
 Made all our tastes and fancies like, perhaps —
 All — all but one; and strange to me, and sweet,
 Sweet thro' strange years to know that whatsoe'er
 Our general mother meant for me alone,
 Our mutual mother dealt to both of us:
 So what was earliest mine in earliest life,
 I shared with her in whom myself remains.
 As was our childhood, so our infancy,
 They tell me, was a very miracle
 Of fellow-feeling and communion.
 They tell me that we would not be alone, —
 We cried when we were parted; when I wept,
 Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,
 Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we loved
 The sound of one-another's voices more
 Than the gray cuckoo loves his name, and learn'd
 To lisp in tune together; that we slept

In the same cradle always, face to face.
 Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing
 ing lip,
 Folding each other, breathing on each
 other,
 Dreaming together (dreaming of each
 other
 They should have added), till the
 morning light
 Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy
 pane
 Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we
 woke
 To gaze upon each other. If this be
 true,
 At thought of which my whole soul
 languishes
 And faints, and hath no pulse, no
 breath — as tho'
 A man in some still garden should in-
 fuse
 Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,
 Till, drunk with its own wine, and
 overfull
 Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,
 It fall on its own thorns — if this be
 true —
 And that way my wish leads me ever-
 more
 Still to believe it — 'tis so sweet a
 thought,
 Why in the utter stillness of the
 soul
 Doth question'd memory answer not,
 nor tell
 Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,
 Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest har-
 mony?
 O blossom'd portal of the lonely
 house,
 Green prelude, April promise, glad
 new year
 Of Being, which with earliest violets
 And lavish carol of clear-throated larks
 Fill'd all the March of life! — I will
 not speak of thee.
 These have not seen thee, these can
 never know thee,
 They cannot understand me. Pass
 we then
 A term of eighteen years. Ye would
 but laugh,

If I should tell you how I hoard in
 thought
 The faded rhymes and scraps of an-
 cient cronos,
 Gray relics of the nurseries of the
 world,
 Which are as gems set in my memory,
 Because she learnt them with me; or
 what use
 To know her father left us just before
 The daffodil was blown? or how we
 found
 The dead man cast upon the shore?
 All this
 Seems to the quiet daylight of your
 minds
 But cloud and smoke, and in the dark
 of mine
 Is traced with flame. Move with me
 to the event.

There came a glorious morning,
 such a one
 As dawns but once a season. Mercury
 On such a morning would have flung
 himself
 From cloud to cloud, and swum with
 balanced wings
 To some tall mountain: when I said
 to her,
 "A day for Gods to stoop," she an-
 swered. "Ay,
 And men to soar:" for as that other
 gazed,
 Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,
 The prophet and the chariot and the
 steeds,
 Suck'd into oneness like a little star
 Were drunk into the inmost blue, we
 stood,
 When first we came from out the
 pines at noon,
 With hands for eaves, uplooking and
 almost
 Waiting to see some blessed shape in
 heaven,
 So bathed we were in brilliance.
 Never yet
 Before or after have I known the
 spring
 Pour with such sudden deluges of
 light

Into the middle summer; for that day
 Love, rising, shook his wings, and
 charged the winds
 With spiced May-sweets from bound
 to bound, and blew
 Fresh fire into the sun, and from
 within
 Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent
 his soul
 Into the songs of birds, and touch'd
 far-off
 His mountain-altars, his high hills,
 with flame
 Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound:
 The great pine shook with lonely
 sounds of joy
 That came on the sea-wind. As
 mountain streams
 Our blood ran free: the sunshine
 seem'd to brood
 More warmly on the heart than on
 the brow.
 We often paused, and, looking back,
 we saw
 The clefts and openings in the moun-
 tains fill'd
 With the blue valley and the glisten-
 ing brooks,
 And all the low dark groves, a land
 of love!
 A land of promise, a land of memory,
 A land of promise flowing with the
 milk
 And honey of delicious memories!
 And down to sea, and far as eye could
 ken,
 Each way from verge to verge a Holy
 Land,
 Still growing holier as you near'd the
 bay,
 For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd
 The grassy platform on some hill, I
 stoop'd,
 I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her
 brows
 And mine made garlands of the self-
 same flower,
 Which she took smiling, and with my
 work thus

Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or
 twice she told me
 (For I remember all things) to let grow
 The flowers that run poison in their
 veins.
 She said, "The evil flourish in the
 world."
 Then playfully she gave herself the
 lie—
 "Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;
 So, brother, pluck and spare not."
 So I wove
 Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem,
 "whose flower,
 Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sun-
 rise,
 Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,
 Is without sweetness, but who crowns
 himself
 Above the naked poisons of his heart
 In his old age." A graceful thought
 of hers
 Grav'n on my fancy! And oh, how
 like a nymph,
 A stately mountain nymph she look'd!
 how native
 Unto the hills she trod on! While I
 gazed
 My coronal slowly disentwined itself
 And fell between us both; tho' while
 I gazed
 My spirit leap'd as with those thrills
 of bliss
 That strike across the soul in prayer,
 and show us
 That we are surely heard. Methought
 a light
 Burst from the garland I had wov'n,
 and stood
 A solid glory on her bright black hair;
 A light methought broke from her
 dark, dark eyes,
 And shot itself into the singing winds;
 A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her
 white robe
 As from a glass in the sun, and fell
 about
 My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came
 To what our people call "The Hill of
 Woe."

A bridge is there, that, look'd at from
 beneath
 Seems but a cobweb filament to link
 The yawning of an earthquake-cloven
 chasm.
 And thence one night, when all the
 winds were loud,
 A woful man (for so the story went)
 Had thrust his wife and child and
 dash'd himself
 Into the dizzy depth below. Below,
 Fierce in the strength of far descent,
 a stream
 Flies with a shatter'd foam along the
 chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown
 with crags:
 We mounted slowly; yet to both
 there came
 The joy of life in steepness overcome,
 And victories of ascent, and looking
 down
 On all that had look'd down on us;
 and joy
 In breathing nearer heaven; and joy
 to me,
 High over all the azure-circled earth,
 To breath with her as if in heaven it-
 self;
 And more than joy that I to her be-
 came
 Her guardian and her angel, raising her
 Still higher, past all peril, until she saw
 Beneath her feet the region far away,
 Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky
 brows,
 Arise in open prospect—heath and hill,
 And hollow lined and woodèd to the
 lips,
 And deep-down walls of battlemented
 rock
 Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into
 spires,
 And glory of broad waters interfused,
 Whence rose as it were breath and
 steam of gold,
 And over all the great wood rioting
 And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at
 intervals
 With falling brook or blossom'd bush
 — and last,

Framing the mighty landscape to the
 west,
 A purple range of mountain-cones,
 between
 Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding
 bursts
 The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length
 Descending from the point and stand-
 ing both,
 There on the tremulous bridge, that
 from beneath
 Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in
 air,
 We paused amid the splendor. All
 the west
 And ev'n unto the middle south was
 ribb'd
 And barr'd with bloom on bloom.
 The sun below,
 Held for a space 'twixt cloud and
 wave, shower'd down
 Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over
 That various wilderness a tissue of
 light
 Unparallel'd. On the other side, the
 moon,
 Half-melted into thin blue air, stood
 still,
 And pale and fibrous as a wither'd
 leaf,
 Not yet endured in presence of His eyes
 To indue his lustre; most unloverlike,
 Since in his absence full of light and
 joy,
 And giving light to others. But this
 most,
 Next to her presence whom I loved
 so well,
 Spoke loudly even into my inmost
 heart
 As to my outward hearing: the loud
 stream,
 Forth issuing from his portals in the
 crag
 (A visible link unto the home of my
 heart),
 Ran amber toward the west, and nigh
 the sea
 Parting my own loved mountains was
 received,

Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy
 Of that small bay, which out to open
 main
 Glow'd intermingling close beneath
 the sun.
 Spirit of Love! that little hour was
 bound
 Shut in from Time, and dedicate to
 thee:
 Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,
 and the earth
 They fell on became hallow'd ever-
 more.

We turn'd: our eyes met: hers
 were bright, and mine
 Were dim with floating tears, that shot
 the sunset
 In lightnings round me; and my name
 was borne
 Upon her breath. Henceforth my
 name has been
 A hallow'd memory like the names of
 old,
 A center'd, glory-circled memory,
 And a peculiar treasure, brooking
 not
 Exchange or currency: and in that
 hour
 A hope flow'd round me, like a golden
 mist
 Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,
 A moment, ere the onward whirlwind
 shatter it,
 Waver'd and floated — which was less
 than Hope,
 Because it lack'd the power of perfect
 Hope;
 But which was more and higher than
 all Hope,
 Because all other Hope had lower aim;
 Even that this name to which her
 gracious lips
 Did lend such gentle utterance, this
 one name,
 In some obscure hereafter, might in-
 wreath
 (How lovelier, nobler then!) her life,
 her love,
 With my life, love, soul, spirit, and
 heart and strength.

“Brother,” she said, “let this be
 call'd henceforth
 The Hill of Hope;” and I replied,
 “O sister,
 My will is one with thine; the Hill of
 Hope.”
 Nevertheless, we did not change the
 name.

I did not speak: I could not speak
 my love.
 Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in
 lip-depths.
 Love wraps his wings on either side
 the heart,
 Constraining it with kisses close and
 warm,
 Absorbing all the incense of sweet
 thoughts
 So that they pass not to the shrine of
 sound.
 Else had the life of that delighted hour
 Drunk in the largeness of the utter-
 ance
 Of Love; but how should Earthly
 measure mete
 The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimit-
 ed Love,
 Who scarce can tune his high majestic
 sense
 Unto the thundersong that wheels the
 spheres,
 Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,
 And flowing odor of the spacious air,
 Scarce housed within the circle of this
 Earth,
 Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,
 Which pass with that which breathes
 them? Sooner Earth
 Might go round Heaven, and the strait
 girth of Time
 Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,
 Than language grasp the infinite of
 Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy
 hour,
 Thou art blessed in the years, divinest
 day!
 O Genius of that hour which dost up
 hold
 Thy coronal of glory like a God,

Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,
 Who walk before thee, ever turning
 round
 To gaze upon thee till their eyes are
 dim
 With dwelling on the light and depth
 of thine,
 Thy name is ever worshipp'd among
 hours!
 Had I died then, I had not seem'd to
 die,
 For bliss stood round me like the light
 of Heaven, —
 Had I died then, I had not known the
 death;
 Yea had the Power from whose right
 hand the light
 Of Life issueth, and from whose left
 hand floweth
 The Shadow of Death, perennial efflu-
 ences
 Whereof to all that draw the whole-
 some air,
 Somewhile the one must overflow the
 other;
 Then had he stemm'd my day with
 night, and driven
 My current to the fountain whence it
 sprang, —
 Even his own abiding excellence —
 On me, methinks, that shock of gloom
 had fall'n
 Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged
 The other, like the sun I gazed
 upon,
 Which seeming for the moment due
 to death,
 And dipping his head low beneath the
 verge,
 Yet bearing round about him his own
 day,
 In confidence of unabated strength,
 Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven,
 from light to light,
 And holdeth his undimmed forehead
 far
 Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the down-
 ward hill;
 We past from light to dark. On the
 other side

Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain
 hall,
 Which none have fathom'd. If you
 go far in
 (The country people rumor) you may
 hear
 The moaning of the woman and the
 child,
 Shut in the secret chambers of the
 rock.
 I too have heard a sound — perchance
 of streams
 Running far on within its inmost
 halls,
 The home of darkness; but the cav-
 ern-mouth,
 Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,
 Gives birth to a brawling brook, that
 passing lightly
 Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,
 Is presently received in a sweet grave
 Of eglantines, a place of burial
 Far lovelier than its cradle; for un-
 seen,
 But taken with the sweetness of the
 place,
 It makes a constant bubbling melody
 That drowns the nearer echoes. Low-
 er down
 Spreads out a little lake, that, flood-
 ing, leaves
 Low banks of yellow sand; and from
 the woods
 That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-
 presses, —
 Three cypresses, symbols of mortal
 woe,
 That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,
 And sitting down upon the golden
 moss,
 Held converse sweet and low — low
 converse sweet,
 In which our voices bore least part.
 The wind
 Told a lovetale beside us, how he woo'd
 The waters, and the waters answering
 lisp'd
 To kisses of the wind, that, sick with
 love,
 Fainted at intervals, and grew again

To utterance of passion. Ye cannot
 shape
 Fancy so fair as is this memory.
 Methought all excellence that ever was
 Had drawn herself from many thousand
 years,
 And all the separate Edens of this
 earth,
 To centre in this place and time. I
 listen'd,
 And her words stole with most pre-
 vailing sweetness
 Into my heart, as thronging fancies
 come
 To boys and girls when summer days
 are new,
 And soul and heart and body are all
 at ease :
 What marvel my Camilla told me all ?
 It was so happy an hour, so sweet a
 place,
 And I was as the brother of her blood,
 And by that name I moved upon her
 breath ;
 Dear name, which had too much of
 nearness in it
 And heralded the distance of this time!
 At first her voice was very sweet and
 low,
 As if she were afraid of utterance ;
 But in the onward current of her
 speech,
 (As echoes of the hollow-banked
 brooks
 Are fashion'd by the channel which
 they keep),
 Her words did of their meaning bor-
 row sound,
 Her cheek did catch the color of her
 words.
 I heard and trembled, yet I could but
 hear ;
 My heart paused — my raised eyelids
 would not fall,
 But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.
 I seem'd the only part of Time stood
 still,
 And saw the motion of all other things ;
 While her words, syllable by syllable,
 Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear
 Fell ; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not
 to speak ;

But she spake on, for I did name no
 wish,
 What marvel my Camilla told me all
 Her maiden dignities of Hope and
 Love —
 "Perchance," she said, "return'd."
 Even then the stars
 Did tremble in their stations as I gazed ;
 But she spake on, for I did name no
 wish,
 No wish — no hope. Hope was not
 wholly dead,
 But breathing hard at the approach
 of Death, —
 Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine
 No longer in the dearest sense of mine —
 For all the secret of her inmost heart,
 And all the maiden empire of her
 mind,
 Lay like a map before me, and I saw
 There, where I hoped myself to reign
 as king,
 There, where that day I crown'd my-
 self as king,
 There in my realm and even on my
 throne,
Another! then it seem'd as tho' a link
 Of some tight chain within my inmost
 frame
 Was riven in twain : that life I heeded
 not
 Flow'd from me, and the darkness of
 the grave,
 The darkness of the grave and utter
 night,
 Did swallow up my vision ; at her feet,
 Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,
 Smit with exceeding sorrow unto
 Death.

Then had the earth beneath me
 yawning cloven
 With such a sound as when an iceberg
 splits
 From cope to base — had Heaven from
 all her doors,
 With all her golden thresholds clash-
 ing, roll'd
 Her heaviest thunder — I had lain as
 dead,
 Mute, blind and motionless as then I
 lay ;

Dead, for henceforth there was no life
for me!

Mute, for henceforth what use were
words to me!

Blind, for the day was as the night to
me!

The night to me was kinder than the
day;

The night in pity took away my day,
Because my grief as yet was newly
born

Of eyes too weak to look upon the
light;

And thro' the hasty notice of the ear
Frail Life was startled from the ten-
der love

Of him she brooded over. Would I
had lain

Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound
Round my worn limbs, and the wild
brier had driven

Its knotted thorns thro' my unpain-
ing brows,

Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.
The wind had blown above me, and
the rain

Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded
snake

Had nestled in this bosom-throne of
Love,

But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me.

All too soon

Life (like a wanton too-officious friend,
Who will not *hear* denial, vain and
rude

With proffer of unwish'd-for services)
Entering all the avenues of sense
Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,
With hated warmth of apprehensiveness.

And first the chillness of the sprinkled
brook

Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd
to hear

Its murmur, as the drowning seaman
hears,

Who with his head below the surface
dropt

Listens the muffled booming indistinct
Of the confused floods, and dimly knows

His head shall rise no more: and then
came in

The white light of the weary moon
above,

Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.
Was my sight drunk that it did shape
to me

Him who should own that name? Were
it not well

If so be that the echo of that name
Ringing within the fancy had updrawn
A fashion and a phantasm of the
form

It should attach to? Phantom!—
had the ghostliest

That ever lusted for a body, sucking
The foul steam of the grave to thicken
by it,

There in the shuddering moonlight
brought its face

And what it has for eyes as close to
mine

As he did — better that than his, than
he

The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the
beloved,

The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,
The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,
All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.

O how her choice did leap forth from
his eyes!

O how her love did clothe itself in
smiles

About his lips! and — not one mo-
ment's grace —

Then when the effect weigh'd seas
upon my head

To come my way! to twit me with the
cause!

Was not the land as free thro' all
her ways

To him as me? Was not his wont to
walk

Between the going light and growing
night?

Had I not learnt my loss before he
came?

Could that be more because he came
my way?

Why should he not come my way if
he would?

And yet to-night, to-night — when all
 my wealth
 Flash'd from me in a moment and I
 fell
 Beggar'd for ever — why *should* he
 come my way
 Robed in those robes of light I must
 not wear,
 With that great crown of beams about
 his brows —
 Come like an angel to a damned soul,
 To tell him of the bliss he had with
 God —
 Come like a careless and a greedy
 heir
 That scarce can wait the reading of
 the will
 Before he takes possession? Was
 mine a mood
 To be invaded rudely, and not rather
 A sacred, secret unapproach'd woe,
 Unspeakable? I was shut up with
 Grief;
 She took the body of my past delight,
 Narded and swathed and balm'd it
 for herself,
 And laid it in a sepulchre of rock
 Never to rise again. I was led mute
 Into her temple like a sacrifice;
 I was the High Priest in her holiest
 place,
 Not to be loudly broken in upon.

Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy
 as these well-nigh
 O'erbore the limits of my brain: but he
 Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm
 upstay'd.
 I thought it was an adder's fold, and
 once
 I strove to disengage myself, but
 fail'd,
 Being so feeble: she bent above me,
 too;
 Wan was her cheek; for whatsoe'er
 of blight
 Lives in the dewy touch of pity had
 made
 The red rose there a pale one — and
 her eyes —
 I saw the moonlight glitter on their
 tears —

And some few drops of that distress-
 ful rain
 Fell on my face, and her long ringlets
 moved,
 Drooping and beaten by the breeze,
 and brush'd
 My fallen forehead in their to and
 fro,
 For in the sudden anguish of her heart
 Loosed from their simple thrall they
 had flow'd abroad,
 And floated on and parted round her
 neck,
 Mantling her form halfway. She,
 when I woke,
 Something she ask'd, I know not what,
 and ask'd,
 Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for
 the sound
 Of that dear voice so musically low,
 And now first heard with any sense
 of pain,
 As it had taken life away before,
 Choked all the syllables, that strove
 to rise
 From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,
 From his great hoard of happiness
 distill'd
 Some drops of solace; like a vain
 rich man,
 That, having always prosper'd in the
 world,
 Folding his hands, deals comfortable
 words
 To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in
 truth,
 Fair speech was his and delicate of
 phrase,
 Falling in whispers on the sense, ad-
 dress'd
 More to the inward than the outward
 ear,
 As rain of the midsummer midnight
 soft,
 Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and
 the green
 Of the dead spring: but mine was
 wholly dead,
 No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit
 for me.

Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd
 wrong ?
 And why was I to darken their pure
 love,
 If, as I found, they two did love each
 other,
 Because my own was darken'd ? Why
 was I
 To cross between their happy star and
 them ?
 To stand a shadow by their shining
 doors,
 And vex them with my darkness ?
 Did I love her ?
 Ye know that I did love her ; to this
 present
 My full-orb'd love has waned not.
 Did I love her,
 And could I look upon her tearful
 eyes ?
 What had *she* done to weep ? Why
 should *she* weep ?
 O innocent of spirit — let my heart
 Break rather — whom the gentlest
 airs of Heaven
 Should kiss with an unwonted gentle-
 ness.
 Her love did murder mine ? What
 then ? She deem'd
 I wore a brother's mind : she call'd
 me brother :
 She told me all her love : she shall
 not weep.

The brightness of a burning thought,
 awhile
 In battle with the glooms of my dark
 will,
 Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up
 There on the depth of an unfathom'd
 woe
 Reflex of action. Starting up at once,
 As from a dismal dream of my own
 death,
 I, for I loved her, lost my love in
 Love ;
 I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she
 lov'd,
 And laid it in her own, and sent my
 cry
 Thro' the blank night to Him who
 loving made

The happy and the unhappy love,
 that He
 Would hold the hand of blessing over
 them,
 Lionel, the happy, and her, and her,
 his bride !
 Let them so love that men and boys
 may say,
 " Lo ! how they love each other ! " till
 their love
 Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all
 Known, when their faces are forgot in
 the land —
 One golden dream of love, from which
 may death
 Awake them with heaven's music in a
 life
 More living to some happier happi-
 ness,
 Swallowing its precedent in victory.
 And as for me, Camilla, as for me, —
 The dew of tears is an unwholesome
 dew,
 They will but sicken the sick plant
 the more.
 Deem that I love thee but as brothers
 do,
 So shalt thou love me still as sisters
 do ;
 Or if thou dream aught farther,
 dream but how
 I could have loved thee, had there
 been none else
 To love as lovers, loved again by
 thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I
 spake,
 When I beheld her weep so rue-
 fully ;
 For sure my love should ne'er indue
 the front
 And mask of Hatè, who lives on
 others' moans.
 Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bit-
 ter draughts,
 And batten on her poisons ? Love
 forbid !
 Love passeth not the threshold of cold
 Hate,
 And Hate is strange beneath the roof
 of Love.

O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up
these tears
Shed for the love of Love ; for tho'
mine image,
The subject of thy power, be cold in
her,
Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the
source
Of these sad tears, and feeds their
downward flow.

So Love, arraign'd to judgment and
to death,
Received unto himself a part of
' blame,
Being guiltless, as an innocent pri-
soner,
Who, when the woful sentence hath
been past,
And all the clearness of his fame hath
gone
Beneath the shadow of the curse of
man,
First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom
awaked,
And looking round upon his tearful
friends,
Forthwith and in his agony con-
ceives
A shameful sense as of a cleaving
crime —
For whence without some guilt should
such grief be ?

So died that hour, and fell into the
abysm
Of forms outworn, but not to me out-
worn,
Who never hail'd another — was there
one ?
There might be one — one other, worth
the life
That made it sensible. So that hour
died
Like odor rapt into the winged
wind
Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily built,
that they,
They — when their love is wreck'd —
if Love can wreck —
On that sharp ridge of utmost doom
ride highly

Above the perilous seas of Change
and Chance ;
Nay, more, hold out the lights of
cheerfulness ;
As the tall ship, that many a dreary
year
Knit to some dismal sandbank far at
sea,
All thro' the livelong hours of utter
dark,
Showers slanting light upon the dolor-
ous wave.
For me — what light, what gleam on
those black ways
Where Love could walk with banish'd
Hope no more ?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters
fair ;
Love's arms were wreath'd about the
neck of Hope,
And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love
drew in her breath
In that close kiss, and drank her
whisper'd tales.
They said that Love would die when
Hope was gone,
And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd
after Hope ;
At last she sought out Memory, and
they trod
The same old paths where Love had
walk'd with Hope,
And Memory fed the soul of Love
with tears.

II.

FROM that time forth I would not see
her more ;
But many weary moons I lived
alone —
Alone, and in the heart of the great
forest.
Sometimes upon the hills beside the
sea
All day I watch'd the floating isles of
shade,
And sometimes on the shore, upon the
sands
Insensibly I drew her name, until
The meaning of the letters shot into

My brain; anon the wanton billow
 wash'd
 Them over, till they faded like my
 love.
 The hollow caverns heard me—the
 black brooks
 Of the midforest heard me — the soft
 winds,
 Laden with thistledown and seeds of
 flowers,
 Paused in their course to hear me, for
 my voice
 Was all of thee: the merry linnet
 knew me,
 The squirrel knew me, and the dragon-
 fly
 Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.
 The rough brier tore my bleeding
 palms; the hemlock,
 Brow-high, did strike my forehead as
 I past;
 Yet trod I not the wildflower in my
 path,
 Nor bruised the wildbird's egg.

Was this the end ?

Why grew we then together in one
 plot ?
 Why fed we from one fountain ? drew
 one sun ?
 Why were our mothers' branches of
 one stem ?
 Why were we one in all things, save
 in that
 Where to have been one had been the
 cope and crown
 Of all I hoped and fear'd ? — if that
 same nearness
 Were father to this distance, and that
 one
 Vauncourier to the *double* ? if Affec-
 tion
 Living slew Love, and Sympathy
 hew'd out
 The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy ?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the
 hill
 Where last we roam'd together, for the
 sound
 Of the loud stream was pleasant, and
 the wind

Came wooingly with woodbine smells.
 Sometimes
 All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,
 Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-
 cones
 That spired above the wood; and with
 mad hand
 Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-
 screen,
 I cast them in the noisy brook be-
 neath,
 And watch'd them till they vanish'd
 from my sight
 Beneath the bower of wreathed eglan-
 tines :
 And all the fragments of the living
 rock
 (Huge blocks, which some old trem-
 bling of the world
 Had loosen'd from the mountain, till
 they fell
 Half-digging their own graves) these
 in my agony
 Did I make bare of all the golden
 moss,
 Wherewith the dashing runnel in the
 spring
 Had liveried them all over. In my
 brain
 The spirit seem'd to flag from thought
 to thought,
 As moonlight wandering thro' a mist :
 my blood
 Crept like marsh drains thro' all my
 languid limbs ;
 The motions of my heart seem'd far
 within me,
 Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its
 pulses ;
 And yet it shook me, that my frame
 would shudder,
 As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.
 But over the deep graves of Hope and
 Fear,
 And all the broken palaces of the
 Past,
 Brooded one master-passion evermore,
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-
 shock'd, —
 Hung round with ragged rims and
 burning folds, —

Embathing all with wild and woful
hues,
Great hills of ruins, and collapsed
masses
Of thundershaken columns indistinct,
And fused together in the tyrannous
light —
Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was
no more,
Some one had told me she was dead,
and ask'd
If I would see her burial: then I seem'd
To rise, and through the forest-shadow
borne
With more than mortal swiftness, I
ran down
The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon
The rear of a procession, curving round
The silver-sheeted bay: in front of
which
Six stately virgins, all in white, upbore
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest
lawn,
Wreathed round the bier with gar-
lands: in the distance,
From out the yellow woods upon the
hill
Look'd forth the summit and the pin-
nacles
Of a gray steeple — thence at intervals
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,
Save those six virgins which upheld
the bier,
Were stoled from head to foot in flow-
ing black;
One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd
his brow,
And he was loud in weeping and in
praise
Of her we follow'd: a strong sympathy
Shook all my soul: I flung myself
upon him
In tears and cries: I told him all my
love,
How I had loved her from the first;
whereat
He shrank and howl'd, and from his
brow drew back
His hand to push me from him; and
the face,

The very face and form of Lionel
Flash'd thro' my eyes into my inner-
most brain,
And at his feet I seem'd to faint and
fall,
To fall and die away. I could not rise
Albeit I strove to follow. They past
on,
The lordly Phantasms! in their float-
ing folds
They past and were no more: but I
had fallen
Prone by the dashing runnel on the
grass.

Always the inaudible invisible
thought,
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,
Shaped by the audible and visible,
Moulded the audible and visible;
All crisped sounds of wave and leaf
and wind,
Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain;
The cloud-pavilion'd element, the
wood,
The mountain, the three cypresses, the
cave,
Storm, sunset, glows and glories of
the moon
Below black firs, when silent-creeping
winds
Laid the long night in silver streaks
and bars,
Were wrought into the tissue of my
dream:
The moanings in the forest, the loud
brook,
Cries of the partridge like a rusty key
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-
hawk-whirr
Awoke me not, but were a part of
sleep,
And voices in the distance calling to me
And in my vision bidding me dream on,
Like sounds without the twilight realm
of dreams,
Which wander round the bases of the
hills,
And murmur at the low-dropt eaves
of sleep,
Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes
The vision had fair prelude, in the end

Opening on darkness, stately vestibules
 To caves and shows of Death: whether the mind,
 With some revenge — even to itself unknown, —
 Made strange division of its suffering
 With her, whom to have suffering view'd had been
 Extremest pain; or that the clear-eyed Spirit,
 Being blunted in the Present, grew at length
 Prophetic and prescient of whate'er
 The Future had in store: or that which most
 Enchains belief, the sorrow of my spirit
 Was of so wide a compass it took in
 All I had loved, and my dull agony,
 Ideally to her transferr'd, became
 Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;

Alone I sat with her: about my brow
 Her warm breath floated in the utterance
 Of silver-chorded tones: her lips were sunder'd
 With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke in light
 Like morning from her eyes — her eloquent eyes,
 (As I have seen them many a hundred times)
 Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine down rain'd
 Their spirit-searching splendors. As a vision
 Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd
 In damp and dismal dungeons underground,
 Confined on points of faith, when strength is shock'd
 With torment, and expectancy of worse
 Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged walls,
 All unawares before his half-shut eyes,
 Comes in upon him in the dead of night,

And with the excess of sweetness and of awe,
 Makes the heart tremble, and the sight run over
 Upon his steely gyves; so those fair eyes
 Shone on my darkness, forms which ever stood
 Within the magic cirque of memory,
 Invisible but deathless, waiting still
 The edict of the will to reassure
 The semblance of those rare realities
 Of which they were the mirrors. Now the light
 Which was their life, burst through the cloud of thought
 Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I spake,
 Hung round with paintings of the sea, and one
 A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow
 Clambering, the mast bent and the ravin wind
 In her sail roaring. From the outer day,
 Betwixt the close-set ivies came a broad
 And solid beam of isolated light,
 Crowded with driving atomies, and fell
 Slanting upon that picture, from prime youth
 Well-known well-loved. She drew it long ago
 Forthgazing on the waste and open sea,
 One morning when the upblown billow ran
 Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had pour'd
 Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms
 Color and life: it was a bond and seal
 Of friendship, spoken of with tearful smiles;
 A monument of childhood and of love;
 The poesy of childhood; my lost love

Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it
together
In mute and glad remembrance, and
each heart
Grew closer to the other, and the eye
Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing
like
The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-
couch'd —
A beauty which is death; when all at
once
That painted vessel, as with inner
life,
Began to heave upon that painted
sea;
An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,
made the ground
Reel under us, and all at once, soul,
life
And breath and motion, past and
flow'd away
To those unreal billows: round and
round
A whirlwind caught and bore us;
mighty gyres
Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-
driven
Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she
shriek'd;
My heart was cloven with pain; I
wound my arms
About her: we whirl'd giddily; the
wind
Sung; but I clasp'd her without fear:
her weight
Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim
eyes,
And parted lips which drank her
breath, down-hung
The jaws of Death: I, groaning, from
me flung
Her empty phantom: all the sway and
whirl
Of the storm dropt to windless calm,
and I
Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and
ever.

III.

I CAME one day and sat among the
stones

Strewn in the entry of the moaning
cave;
A morning air, sweet after rain, ran
over
The rippling levels of the lake, and
blew
Coolness and moisture and all smells
of bud
And foliage from the dark and drip-
ping woods
Upon my fever'd brows that shook
and throbb'd
From temple unto temple. To what
height
The day had grown I know not. Then
came on me
The hollow tolling of the bell, and all
The vision of the bier. As heretofore
I walk'd behind with one who veil'd
his brow.
Methought by slow degrees the sullen
bell
Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the
shore
Sloped into louder surf: those that
went with me,
And those that held the bier before
my face,
Moved with one spirit round about
the bay,
Trod swifter steps; and while I walk'd
with these
In marvel at that gradual change, I
thought
Four bells instead of one began to
ring,
Four merry bells, four merry marriage-
bells,
In clanging cadence jangling peal on
peal —
A long loud clash of rapid marriage-
bells.
Then those who led the van, and those
in rear,
Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bac-
chanals
Fled onward to the steeple in the
woods:
I, too, was borne along and felt the
blast
Beat on my heated eyelids: all at
once

The front rank made a sudden halt ;
 the bells
 Lapsed into frightful stillness ; the
 surge fell
 From thunder into whispers ; those six
 maids
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on
 the sand
 Threw down the bier ; the woods upon
 the hill
 Waved with a sudden gust that sweep-
 ing down
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew
 it far
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud
 Over the sounding seas : I turn'd : my
 heart
 Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the
 hand,
 Waiting to see the settled countenance
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading
 flowers.
 But she from out her death-like
 chrysalis,
 She from her bier, as into fresher
 life,
 My sister, and my cousin, and my
 love,
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white —
 her hair
 Studded with one rich Provence rose
 — a light
 Of smiling welcome round her lips —
 her eyes
 And cheeks as bright as when she
 climb'd the hill.
 One hand she reach'd to those that
 came behind,
 And while I mused nor yet endured
 to take
 So rich a prize, the man who stood
 with me
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down
 his robes,
 And claspt her hand in his : again the
 bells
 Jangled and clang'd : again the stormy
 surf
 Crash'd in the shingle : and the whirl-
 ing rout
 Led by those two rush'd into dance,
 and fled

Wind-footed to the steeple in the
 woods,
 Till they were swallow'd in the leafy
 bowers,
 And I stood sole beside the vacant
 bier.

There, there, my latest vision — then
 the event !

IV.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.¹

(Another speaks.)

He flies the event : he leaves the event
 to me :
 Poor Julian — how he rush'd away ;
 the bells,
 Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear
 and heart —
 But cast a parting glance at me, you
 saw,
 As who should say "Continue." Well
 he had
 One golden hour — of triumph shall I
 say ?
 Solace at least — before he left his
 home.

Would you had seen him in that
 hour of his !
 He moved thro' all of it majesti-
 cally —
 Restrain'd himself quite to the close —
 but now —

Whether they *were* his lady's mar-
 riage bells,
 Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
 I never ask'd : but Lionel and the girl
 Were wedded, and our Julian came
 again
 Back to his mother's house among the
 pines.
 But these, their gloom, the mountains
 and the Bay,
 The whole land weigh'd him down as
 Ætna does
 The Giant of Mythology : he would
 go,

¹ This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio. See Introduction, p. 647.

Would leave the land for ever, and
 had gone
 Surely, but for a whisper, "Go not
 yet,"
 Some warning — sent divinely — as it
 seem'd
 By that which follow'd — but of this
 I deem
 As of the visions that he told — the
 event
 Glanced back upon them in his after
 life,
 And partly made them — tho' he knew
 it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not
 look at her —
 No not for months: but, when the
 eleventh moon
 After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,
 Heard yet once more the tolling bell,
 and said,
 Would you could toll me out of life,
 but found —
 All softly as his mother broke it to
 him —
 A crueller reason than a crazy ear,
 For that low knell tolling his lady
 dead —
 Dead — and had lain three days with-
 out a pulse:
 All that look'd on her had pronounced
 her dead.
 And so they bore her (for in Julian's
 land
 They never nail a dumb head up in
 elm),
 Bore her free-faced to the free airs of
 heaven,
 And laid her in the vault of her own
 kin.

What did he then? not die: he is
 here and hale —
 Not plunge headforemost from the
 mountain there,
 And leave the name of Lover's Leap:
 not he:
 He knew the meaning of the whisper
 now,
 Thought that he knew it. "This, I
 stay'd for this;

O love, I have not seen you for so
 long.
 Now, now, will I go down into the
 grave,
 I will be all alone with all I love,
 And kiss her on the lips. She is his
 no more:
 The dead returns to me, and I go down
 To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so
 He rose and went, and entering the
 dim vault,
 And, making there a sudden light, be-
 held
 All round about him that which all
 will be.
 The light was but a flash, and went
 again.
 Then at the far end of the vault he saw
 His lady with the moonlight on her
 face;
 Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars
 Of black and bands of silver, which
 the moon
 Struck from an open grating overhead
 High in the wall, and all the rest of
 her
 Drown'd in the gloom and horror of
 the vault.

"It was my wish," he said, "to pass,
 to sleep,
 To rest, to be with her — till the great
 day
 Peal'd on us with that music which
 rights all,
 And raised us hand in hand." And
 kneeling there
 Down in the dreadful dust that once
 was man,
 Dust, as he said, that once was loving
 hearts,
 Hearts that had beat with such a love
 as mine —
 Not such as mine, no, nor for such as
 her —
 He softly put his arm about her neck
 And kiss'd her more than once, till
 helpless death
 And silence made him bold — nay, but
 I wrong him,

He revered his dear lady even in death ;
 But, placing his true hand upon her heart,
 "O, you warm heart," he moan'd,
 "not even death
 Can chill you all at once:" then start-
 ing, thought
 His dreams had come again. "Do I
 wake or sleep ?
 Or am I made immortal, or my love
 Mortal once more ?" It beat — the
 heart — it beat :
 Faint — but it beat: at which his own
 began
 To pulse with such a vehemence that
 it drown'd
 The feeble motion underneath his
 hand.
 But when at last his doubts were sat-
 isfied,
 He raised her softly from the sepul-
 chre,
 And, wrapping her all over with the
 cloak
 He came in, and now striding fast, and
 now
 Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore
 Holding his golden burthen in his
 arms,
 So bore her thro' the solitary land
 Back to the mother's house where she
 was born.

There the good mother's kindly min-
 istering,
 With half a night's appliances, recall'd
 Her fluttering life: she rais'd an eye
 that ask'd
 "Where?" till the things familiar to
 her youth
 Had made a silent answer: then she
 spoke
 "Here! and how came I here?" and
 learning it
 (They told her somewhat rashly as I
 think)
 At once began to wander and to wail,
 "Ay, but you know that you must give
 me back:
 Send! bid him come;" but Lionel
 was away —

Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none
 knew where.
 "He casts me out," she wept, "and
 goes" — a wail
 That seeming something, yet was noth-
 ing, born
 Not from believing mind, but shatter'd
 nerve,
 Yet haunting Julian, as her own re-
 proof
 At some precipitance in her burial.
 Then, when her own true spirit had
 return'd,
 "Oh yes, and you," she said, "and
 none but you ?
 For you have given me life and love
 again,
 And none but you yourself shall tell
 him of it,
 And you shall give me back when he
 returns."
 "Stay then a little," answer'd Julian,
 "here,
 And keep yourself, none knowing, to
 yourself ;
 And I will do your will. I may not
 stay,
 No, not an hour; but send me notice
 of him
 When he returns, and then will I re-
 turn,
 And I will make a solemn offering of
 you
 To him you love." And faintly she
 replied,
 "And I will do *your* will, and none
 shall know."

Not know? with such a secret to be
 known.
 But all their house was old and loved
 them both,
 And all the house had known the loves
 of both ;
 Had died almost to serve them any
 way,
 And all the land was waste and soli-
 tary :
 And then he rode away; but after this,
 An hour or two, Camilla's travail came
 Upon her, and that day a boy was born,
 Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,
 And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
 There fever seized upon him: myself
 was then
 Travelling that land, and meant to
 rest an hour;
 And sitting down to such a base repast,
 It makes me angry yet to speak of it—
 I heard a groaning overhead, and
 climb'd
 The moulder'd stairs (for everything
 was vile)
 And in a loft, with none to wait on
 him,
 Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
 Raving of dead men's dust and beat-
 ing hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
 A flat malarian world of reed and rush!
 But there from fever and my care of
 him
 Sprang up a friendship that may help
 us yet.
 For while we roam'd along the dreary
 coast,
 And waited for her message, piece by
 piece
 I learnt the dearier story of his life;
 And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel,
 Found that the sudden wail his lady
 made
 Dwelt in his fancy: did he know her
 worth,
 Her beauty even² should he not be
 taught,
 Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,
 The value of that jewel he had to
 guard²

Suddenly came her notice and we
 past,
 I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,
 the soul:
 That makes the sequel pure; tho'
 some of us
 Beginning at the sequel know no more.
 Not such am I: and yet I say the bird
 That will not hear my call, however
 sweet,

But if my neighbor whistle answers
 him—
 What matter² there are others in the
 wood
 Yet when I saw her (and I thought him
 crazed,
 Tho' not with such a craziness as needs
 A cell and keeper), those dark eyes
 of hers—
 Oh! such dark eyes! and not her eyes
 alone,
 But all from these to where she touch'd
 on earth,
 For such a craziness as Julian's look'd
 No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came
 To greet us, her young hero in her
 arms!
 "Kiss him," she said. "You gave me
 life again.
 He, but for you, had never seen it once.
 His other father you! Kiss him, and
 then
 Forgive him, if his name be Julian too."

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart!
 his own
 Sent such a flame into his face, I
 knew
 Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him
 there.

But he was all the more resolved to
 go,
 And sent at once to Lionel, praying
 him
 By that great love they both had
 borne the dead,
 To come and revel for one hour with
 him
 Before he left the land for evermore;
 And then to friends—they were not
 many—who lived
 Scatteringly about that lonely land
 of his,
 And bade them to a banquet of fare-
 wells.
 And Julian made a solemn feast: I
 never
 Sat at a costlier; for all round his hall

From column on to column, as in a
wood,

Not such as here — an equatorial one,
Great garlands swung and blossom'd;
and beneath,

Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of
Art,

Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven
knows when,

Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten
sun,

And kept it thro' a hundred years of
gloom,

Yet glowing in a heart of ruby — cups
Where nymph and god ran ever round
in gold —

Others of glass as costly — some with
gems

Movable and resettable at will,
And trebling all the rest in value —

Ah heavens!

Why need I tell you all? — suffice to
say

That whatsoever such a house as his,
And his was old, has in it rare or fair
Was brought before the guest: and
they, the guests,

Wonder'd at some strange light in
Julian's eyes

(I told you that he had his golden
hour),

And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his
And that resolved self-exile from a
land

He never would revisit, such a feast
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n
than rich,

But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the
hall

Two great funereal curtains, looping
down,

Parted a little ere they met the floor,
About a picture of his lady, taken
Some years before, and falling hid the
frame.

And just above the parting was a
lamp:

So the sweet figure folded round with
night

Seem'd stepping out of darkness with
a smile.

Well then — our solemn feast — we
ate and drank,

And might — the wines being of such
nobleness —

Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
And something weird and wild about
it all:

What was it? for our lover seldom
spoke,

Scarce touch'd the meats; but ever
and anon

A priceless goblet with a priceless wine
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his
use;

And when the feast was near an end,
he said:

“There is a custom in the Orient,
friends —

I read of it in Persia — when a man
Will honor those who feast with him,
he brings

And shows them whatsoever he ac-
counts

Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.
This custom —”

Pausing here a moment, all
The guests broke in upon him with
meeting hands

And cries about the banquet — “ Beau-
tiful!

Who could desire more beauty at a
feast?”

The lover answer'd, “There is more
than one

Here sitting who desires it. Laud me
not

Before my time, but hear me to the
close.

This custom steps yet further when
the guest

Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost
For after he hath shown him gems or
gold,

He brings and sets before him in rich
guise

That which is thrice as beautiful as
these,
The beauty that is dearest to his
heart —
'O my heart's lord, would I could
show you,' he says,
'Ev'n my heart too.' And I propose
to-night
To show you what is dearest to my
heart,
And my heart too.

"But solve me first a doubt.

I knew a man, nor many years ago;
He had a faithful servant, one who
loved

His master more than all on earth
beside.

He falling sick, and seeming close on
death,

His master would not wait until he
died,

But bade his menials bear him from
the door,

And leave him in the public way to
die.

I knew another, not so long ago,
Who found the dying servant, took
him home,

And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved
his life.

I ask you now, should this first master
claim

His service, whom does it belong to?
him

Who thrust him out, or him who saved
his life?"

This question, so flung down before
the guests,

And balanced either way by each, at
length

When some were doubtful how the
law would hold,

Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of
phrase.

And he beginning languidly — his loss
Weigh'd on him yet — but warming
as he went,

Glanced at the point of law, to pass
it by,

Affirming that as long as either lived,
By all the laws of love and grateful-

ness,
The service of the one so saved was
due

All to the saver — adding, with a
smile,

The first for many weeks — a semi-
smile

As at a strong conclusion — "body
and soul

And life and limbs, all his to work his
will."

Then Julian made a secret sign to
me

To bring Camilla down before them
all.

And crossing her own picture as she
came,

And looking as much lovelier as her-
self

Is lovelier than all others — on her
head

A diamond circlet, and from under
this

A veil, that seemed no more than
gilded air,

Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern
gauze

With seeds of gold — so, with that
grace of hers,

Slow-moving as a wave against the
wind,

That flings a mist behind it in the
sun —

And bearing high in arms the mighty
babe,

The younger Julian, who himself was
crown'd

With roses, none so rosy as himself —
And over all her babe and her the
jewels

Of many generations of his house
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had
decked them out

As for a solemn sacrifice of love —
So she came in: — I am long in telling
it,

I never yet beheld a thing so strange,

Sad, sweet, and strange together —
 floated in —
 While all the guests in mute amazement
 rose —
 And slowly pacing to the middle
 hall,
 Before the board, there paused and
 stood, her breast
 Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her
 feet,
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
 But him she carried, him nor lights
 nor feast
 Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men ;
 who cared
 Only to use his own, and staring wide
 And hungering for the gilt and
 jewell'd world
 About him, look'd, as he is like to
 prove,
 When Julian goes, the lord of all he
 saw.

“My guests,” said Julian: “you
 are honor'd now
 Ev'n to the uttermost: in her behold
 Of all my treasures the most beau-
 tiful,
 Of all things upon earth the dearest to
 me.”
 Then waving us a sign to scat our-
 selves,
 Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
 And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face
 Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again
 Thrice in a second, felt him tremble
 too,
 And heard him muttering, “So like,
 so like ;
 She never had a sister. I knew none.
 Some cousin of his and hers — O God,
 so like !”
 And then he suddenly ask'd her if
 she were.
 She shook, and cast her eyes down,
 and was dumb.
 And then some other question'd if she
 came
 From foreign lands, and still she did
 not speak.
 Another, if the boy were hers: but
 she

To all their queries answer'd not a
 word,
 Which made the amazement more,
 till one of them
 Said, shuddering, “Her spectre !”
 But his friend
 Replied, in half a whisper, “Not at
 least
 The spectre that will speak if spoken
 to.
 Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
 Prove, as I almost dread to find her,
 dumb !”

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd
 all :
 “She is but dumb, because in her you
 see
 That faithful servant whom we spoke
 about,
 Obedient to her second master now ;
 Which will not last. I have here to-
 night a guest
 So bound to me by common love and
 loss —
 What! shall I bind him more? in his
 behalf,
 Shall I exceed the Persian, giving
 him
 That which of all things is the dearest
 to me,
 Not only showing? and he himself
 pronounced
 That my rich gift is wholly mine to
 give.

“Now all be dumb, and promise all
 of you
 Not to break in on what I say by
 word
 Or whisper, while I show you all my
 heart.”
 And then began the story of his love
 As here to-day, but not so wordily —
 The passionate moment would not
 suffer that —
 Past thro' his visions to the burial ;
 thence
 Down to this last strange hour in his
 own hall ;
 And then rose up, and with him all
 his guests

Once more as by enchantment; all
 but he,
 Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell
 again,
 And sat as if in chains — to whom he
 said :

“Take my free gift, my cousin, for
 your wife;

And were it only for the giver's sake,
 And tho' she seem so like the one you
 lost,

Yet cast her not away so suddenly,
 Lest there be none left here to bring
 her back :

I leave this land for ever.” Here he
 ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one
 hand,

And bearing on one arm the noble
 babe,

He slowly brought them both to
 Lionel.

And there the widower husband and
 dead wife

Rush'd each at each with a cry, that
 rather seem'd

For some new death than for a life
 renew'd;

Whereat the very babe began to wail;
 At once they turn'd, and caught and

brought him in
 To their charm'd circle, and, half kill-
 ing him

With kisses, round him closed and
 clasp'd again.

But Lionel, when at last he freed him-
 self

From wife and child, and lifted up a
 face

All over glowing with the sun of
 life,

And love, and boundless thanks —
 the sight of this

So frighted our good friend, that turn-
 ing to me

And saying, “It is over: let us
 go” —

There were our horses ready at the
 doors —

We bade them no farewell, but mount-
 ing these

He past for ever from his native land;
 And I with him, my Julian, back to
 mine.

BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS.

TO

ALFRED TENNYSON,

MY GRANDSON.

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one with mine,
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,
Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.
May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine !

THE FIRST QUARREL.

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.)

I.

"WAIT a little," you say, "you are
sure it'll all come right,"
But the boy was born i' trouble, an'
looks so wan an' so white :
Wait ! an' once I ha' waited — I hadn't
to wait for long.
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry. —
No, no, you are doing me
wrong !
Harry and I were married : the boy
can hold up his head,
The boy was born in wedlock, but
after my man was dead ;
I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an'
I work an' I wait to the end.
I am all alone in the world, an' you
are my only friend.

II.

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you
the tale o' my life.
When Harry an' I were children, he
call'd me his own little wife ;

I was happy when I was with him, an'
sorry when he was away,
An' when we play'd together, I loved
him better than play ;
He workt me the daisy chain — he
made me the cowslip ball,
He fought the boys that were rude,
an' I loved him better than all.
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at
home in disgrace,
I never could quarrel with Harry — I
had but to look in his face.

III.

There was a farmer in Dorset of
Harry's kin, that had need
Of a good stout lad at his farm ; he
sent, an' the father agreed ;
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire
farm for years an' for years ;
I walked with him down to the quay,
poor lad, an' we parted in tears.
The boat was beginning to move, we
heard them a-ringing the bell,
"I'll never love any but you, God
bless you, my own little Nell."

IV.

I was a child, an' he was a child, an'
he came to harm ;

There was a girl, a hussy, that workt
with him up at the farm,
One had deceived her an' left her
alone with her sin an' her shame,
And so she was wicked with Harry; the
girl was the most to blame.

v.

And years went over till I that was
little had grown so tall,
The men would say of the maids, "Our
Nelly's the flower of 'em all."
I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught
myself all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when
Harry came home for good.

vi.

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as
happy too,
For I heard it abroad in the fields "I'll
never love any but you";
"I'll never love any but you" the
morning song of the lark,
"I'll never love any but you" the night-
ingale's hymn in the dark.

vii.

And Harry came home at last, but he
look'd at me sidelong and shy,
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so
many years had gone by,
I had grown so handsome and tall—
that I might ha' forgot him
somehow—
For he thought—there were other
lads—he was fear'd to look
at me now.

viii.

Hard was the frost in the field, we were
married o' Christmas day,
Married among the red berries, an' all
as merry as May—
Those were the pleasant times, my
house an' my man were my
pride,
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel
a-sailing with wind an' tide.

ix.

But work was scant in the Isle, tho'
he tried the villages round,
So Harry went over the Solent to see
if work could be found;
An' he wrote, "I ha' six weeks' work,
little wife, so far as I know;
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an'
kiss you before I go."

x.

So I set to righting the house, for
wasn't he coming that day?
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was
push'd in a corner away,
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a
letter along wi' the rest,
I had better ha' put my naked hand
in a hornets' nest.

xi.

"Sweetheart" — this was the letter —
this was the letter I read —
"You promised to find me work near
you, an' I wish I was dead —
Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you
haven't done it, my lad,
An' I almost died o' your going away,
an' I wish that I had."

xii.

I too wish that I had — in the pleasant
times that had past,
Before I quarrell'd with Harry — *my*
quarrel — the first an' the last.

xiii.

For Harry came in, an' I flung him
the letter that drove me wild,
An' he told it me all at once, as simple
as any child,
"What can it matter, my lass, what I
did wi' my single life?
I ha' been as true to you as ever a
man to his wife;
An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst."
"Then," I said, "I'm none o' the
best."
An' he smiled at me, "Ain't you, my
love? Come, come, little wife,
let it rest!

The man isn't like the woman, no
need to make such a stir."

But he anger'd me all the more, an' I
said "You were keeping with her,
When I was a-loving you all along an'
the same as before."

An' he didn't speak for a while, an'
he anger'd me more and more.

Then he patted my hand in his gentle
way, "Let bygones be!"

"Bygones! you kept yours hush'd," I
said, "when you married me!

By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she*
— in her shame an' her sin —

You'll have her to nurse my child, if
I die o' my lying in!

You'll make her its second mother! I
hate her — an' I hate you!"

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better
ha' beaten me black an' blue

Than ha' spoken as kind as you did,
when I were so crazy wi' spite,

"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill
all come right."

XIV.

An' he took three turns in the rain,
an' I watch'd him, an' when he
came in

I felt that my heart was hard, he was
all wet thro' to the skin,

An' I never said "off wi' the wet," I
never said "on wi' the dry,"

So I knew my heart was hard, when
he came to bid me goodbye.

"You said that you hated me, Ellen,
but that isn't true, you know;

I am going to leave you a bit — you'll
kiss me before I go?"

XV.

"Going! you're going to her — kiss
her — if you will," I said, —

I was near my time wi' the boy, I must
ha' been light i' my head —

"I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!"
— I didn't know well what I
meant,

But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he
turn'd *his* face an' he went.

XVI.

And then he sent me a letter, "I've
gotten my work to do;

You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I
never loved any but you;

I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry
for what she wrote,

I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go
to-night by the boat."

XVII.

An' the wind began to rise, an' I
thought of him out at sea,

An' I felt I had been to blame; he
was always kind to me.

"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it
'ill all come right" —

An' the boat went down that night —
the boat went down that night.

RIZPAH.

17—.

I.

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind
over land and sea —

And Willy's voice in the wind, "O
mother, come out to me."

Why should he call me to-night, when
he knows that I cannot go?

For the downs are as bright as day, and
the full moon stares at the snow.

II.

We should be seen, my dear; they
would spy us out of the town.

The loud black nights for us, and the
storm rushing over the down,

When I cannot see my own hand, but
am led by the creak of the chain.

And grovel and grope for my son till I
find myself drenched with the

rain.

III.

Anything fallen again? nay — what
was there left to fall?

I have taken them home, I have num-
ber'd the bones, I have hidden
them all.

What am I saying? and what are *you*?
do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As
the tree falls so must it lie.

IV.

Who let her in? how long has she been?
you — what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never
have spoken a word.
O — to pray with me — yes — a lady
— none of their spies —
But the night has crept into my heart,
and begun to darken my eyes.

V.

Ah — you, that have lived so soft,
what should *you* know of the
night,
The blast and the burning shame and
the bitter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep —
you were only made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together —
and now you may go your way.

VI.

Nay — for it's kind of you, Madam, to
sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I
have only an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before
he went out to die.
"They dared me to do it," he said,
and he never has told me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard
once when he was but a child —
"The farmer dared me to do it," he
said; he was always so wild —
And idle — and couldn't be idle — my
Willy — he never could rest.
The King should have made him a
soldier, he would have been
one of his best.

VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates,
and they never would let him
be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the
mail, and he swore that he
would:

And he took no life, but he took one
purse, and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows — I'll
none of it, said my son.

VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and the
lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth — but they kill'd him,
they kill'd him for robbing the
mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show
— we had always borne a good
name —
To be hang'd for a thief — and then
put away — isn't that enough
shame?
Dust to dust — low down — let us hide!
but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could
stare at him, passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven
and horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer
who kill'd him and hang'd him
there.

IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I had
bid him my last goodbye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell.
"O mother!" I heard him cry.
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had
something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The
jailer forced me away.

X.

Then since I couldn't but hear that
cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up: they
fasten'd me down on my bed.
"Mother, O mother!" — he call'd in the
dark to me year after year —
They beat me for that, they beat me
— you know that I couldn't but
hear;
And then at the last they found I had
grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again — but the
creatures had worked their will.

XI.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone
of my bone was left —
I stole them all from the lawyers —
and you, will you call it a
theft? —
My baby, the bones that had suck'd
me, the bones that had laughed
and had cried —
Theirs? O no! they are mine — not
theirs — they had moved in my
side.

XII.

Do you think I was scared by the
bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried
'em all —
I can't dig deep, I am old — in the
night by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the
trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I
laid him in holy ground.

XIII.

They would scratch him up — they
would hang him again on the
cursed tree.
Sin? O yes — we are sinners, I know
— let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the
Lord's good will toward men —
“ Full of compassion and mercy, the
Lord ” — let me hear it again;
“ Full of compassion and mercy —
long-suffering.” Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder
— the Saviour lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except
for the worst of the worst,
And the first may be last — I have
heard it in church — and the
last may be first.
Suffering — O long-suffering — yes, as
the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the
wind and the shower and the
snow.

XIV.

Heard, have you? what? they have
told you he never repented his
sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his
mother? are *you* of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when
the storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and
the sea that 'ill moan like a
man?

XV.

Election, Election and Reprobation —
it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I
shall not find him in Hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that
the Lord has look'd into my
care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy
with Willy, I know not where.

XVI.

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul,
that is all your desire :
Do you think that I care for *my* soul
if my boy be gone to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark — go,
go, you may leave me alone —
You never have borne a child — you
are just as hard as a stone.

XVII.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think
that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my
Willy's voice in the wind —
The snow and the sky so bright — he
used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the
church and not from the gibbet
— for hark!
Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is
coming — shaking the walls —
Willy — the moon's in a cloud —
Good night. I am going. He
calls.

THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

I.

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur
thou mun a' sights¹ to tell.

Eh, but I be maän glad to seeä tha sa
'arty an' well.

"Cast awaäy an a disolut land wi' a
vartical soon²!"

Strange fur to goä fur to think what
saäilors a' seäan an' a' doon;

"Summat to drink — sa' 'ot?" I 'a
nowt but Adam's wine:

What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to
the 'eät o' the line⁴

II.

"What's i' tha bottle a-stanning
theer?" I'll tell tha. Gin.

But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun
goä fur it down to the inn.

Naay — fur I be maän-glad, but thaw
tha was iver sa dry,

Thougits naw gin fro' the bottle theer,
an' I'll tell tha why.

III.

Meä an' thy sister was married, when
wur it? back-end o' June,

Ten year sin', and wa' greed as well
as a fiddle i' tune:

I could fettle and clump owd booöts
and shoes wi' the best on 'em all,

As fur as fro' Thursby thurn hup to
Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.

We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an'
as 'appy as 'art could think,

An' then the babby wur burn, and
then I taäkes to the drink.

¹ The vowels *äi*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *cräin'*, *däin'*, *whäi*, *äi* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

² The *oo* short, as in "wood."

IV.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw
I be hafe shaämed on it now,

We could sing a good song at the
Plow, we could sing a good song
at the Plow;

Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd
an' hurted my huck,¹

An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes
slaäpe down i' the squad an'
the muck:

An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilör — not
hafe ova' a man, my lad —

Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my faäce
like a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa
mad

That Sally she turn'd a tongue-bang-
er,² an' raäted ma, 'Sottin' thy
braäins

Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an'
hawmin'³ about i' the laänes,

Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn't
touch thy 'at to the Squire;

An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse
an' I seeäd 'im a-gitten' o' fire;

But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hal-
lus as droonk as a king,

Foälks' coostom fitted awaäy like a
kite wi' a brokken string.

V.

An' Sally she wesh'd foälks' cloäths
to keep the wolf fro' the door,

Eh but the moor she riled me, she
druv me to drink the moor,

Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,
wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur
'id,

An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde,
and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

VI.

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a
bull gotten loose at a faäir,

An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an'
cryin' and teärin' 'er 'aäir,

An' I tumbled athurt the craädle an'
sweär'd as I'd break ivry stick

¹ Hip.

² Scold.

³ Lounging.

O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied
 our Sally a kick,
 An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs,
 an' she an' the babby beäl'd,¹
 Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did
 nor a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

VII.

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I
 seeäd that our Sally went
 läämed
 Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur
 dreädful ashaämed;
 An' Sally wur sloomy² an' draggie
 taäil'd in an' owd turn gown,
 An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd
 and the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

VIII.

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty
 an' neät an' sweet,
 Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower
 fro' 'eäd to feeät:
 An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied
 'er by Thursby thurn;
 Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of
 a Sunday at murn,
 Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-
 mountin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,
 An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e
 shined like a sparkle o' fire.
 "Doesn't tha see 'im," she axes, "fur
 I can see 'im?" an' I
 Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as
 danced in 'er pratty blue eye;
 An' I says "I mun gie tha a kiss," an'
 Sally says "Noä, thou moänt,"
 But I gied'er a kiss, an' then anoother,
 an' Sally says "doänt!"

IX.

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at
 fust she wur all in a tew,
 But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn toghiter
 like birds on a beugh;
 An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire
 an' the loove o' God fur men,
 An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally
 gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

¹ Bellowed, cried out.² Sluggish, out of spirits.

X.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick
 like Saätan as fell
 Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire — thaw
 theer's naw drinkin' i' Hell;
 Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the
 wolf fro' the door,
 All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er
 as well as afoor.

XI.

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blub-
 ber'd awaäy o' the bed —
 "Weänt niver do it naw moor;"
 an' Sally looökt up an' she said,
 "I'll upowd it¹ tha weänt; thou'rt
 like the rest o' the men,
 Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till
 tha does it agëan.
 Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I
 knaws, as knaws tha sa well,
 That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smelis 'im
 tha'll foller 'im slick into Hell."

XII.

"Naäy," says I, "fur I weänt goä
 sniffin' about the tap."
 "Weänt tha?" she says, an' mysen I
 thowt i' mysen "mayhap."
 "Noä;" an' I started awaäy like a
 shot, an' down to the Hinn,
 An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin'
 theer, yon big black bottle o'
 gin.

XIII.

"That caps owt,"² says Sally, an' saw
 she begins to cry,
 But I puts it inter 'er 'ands 'an I says
 to 'er, "Sally," says I,
 "Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the
 Lord an' the power ov 'is
 Graäce,
 Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll looök my
 hennemy strait i' the faäce,
 Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let
 ma looök at 'im then,
 'E seeäs naw moor nor watter, an'
 'e's the Divil's oän sen."

¹ I'll uphold it.² That's beyond everything.

XIV.

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't
do naw work an' all,
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an'
poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'
sattled 'ersen o' my knee,
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till
ageän I feel'd mysen free.

XV.

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk
stood a-gawmin'¹ in,
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd
instead of a quart o' gin;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—
an' I wur chousin' the wife,
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur
it nobbut to saäve my life;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick
ov 'is airm, an' 'e shaws it to me,
"Feäl thou this! thou can't graw
this upo' watter!" says he.
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just
as candles was lit,
"Thou moänt do it," he says, "tha
mun breäk 'im off bit by bit."
'Thou'rt but a Methody-man," says
Parson, and laäys down 'is 'at,
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, "but
I respects tha fur that;"
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks
down fro' the 'All to see,
An' 'e spansk 'is 'and into mine, "fur
I respects tha," says 'e;
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a
wind fro' far an' wide,
And browt me the booöts to be cob-
bled fro' hafe the coontryside.

XVI.

An' their 'e stans an' their 'e shall
stan to my dying daäy;
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in
anoother kind of a waäy,
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I
keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts
'im, an' puts 'im back i' the light.

¹ Staring vacantly.

XVII.

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a
quart? Naw doubt:
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi'
an' fowt it out.
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I
cared to taäste,
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur
I'd feäl mysen cleän dis-
graäced.

XVIII.

An' once I said to the Missis, "My
lass, when I cooms to die,
Smash the bottle to smithers, the
Divil's in 'im," said I.
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if
Sally be left aloän,
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke
'im afoor the Throän.

XIX.

Coom thou 'eer — yon laädy a-steppin'
along the streeät,
Doesn't tha know 'er — sa pratty, an'
feät, an' neät, an' sweeät?
Look at the cloäths on 'er back,
thebbe ammost spick-span-new,
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a
codlin wesh'd i' the dew.

XX.

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we
be a-goin to dine,
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-pud-
din'¹ an' Adam's wine;
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun
goä fur it down to the Hinn,
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood,
noä, not fur Sally's oän kin.

THE REVENGE.

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

I.

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard
Grenville lay,
And a pinnance, like a flutter'd bird,
came flying from far away:

¹ A pudding made with the first milk of
the cow after calving.

"Spanish ships of war at sea! we
have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard:
"Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my
ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I
must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we
fight with fifty-three?"

II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville. "I
know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight
with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that
are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I
left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the
devildoms of Spain."

III.

So Lord Howard past away with five
ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the
silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his
sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down
below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that
they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for
the glory of the Lord.

IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to
work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till
the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving
upon the weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!

There'll be little of us left by the
time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again. "We be
all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the
children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon
Don or devil yet."

V.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and
we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into
the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck,
and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right
and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro'
the long sea-lane between.

VI.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd
down from their decks and
laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made
mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip
that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with
her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and
we stay'd.

VII.

And while now the great San Philip
hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two
upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from
them all.

VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she be-
thought herself and went
Having that within her womb that
had left her ill content;

And the rest they came aboard us, and
they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with
their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off
as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the
land.

IX.

And the sun went down, and the stars
came out far over the summer
sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight
of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
with her battle-thunder and
flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
drew back with her dead and her
shame.
For some were sunk and many were
shatter'd, and so could fight us
no more —
God of battles, was ever a battle like
this in the world before ?

X.

For he said "Fight on! fight on!"
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the
short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he
had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was
dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in
the side and the head,
And he said "Fight on! fight on!"

XI.

And the night went down, and the sun
smiled out far over the summer
sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken
sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again,
for they fear'd that we still
could sting,

So they watch'd what the end would be,
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were
slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for
life
In the crash of the cannonades and
the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold
were most of them stark and
cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent,
and the powder was all of it
spent;
And the masts and the rigging were
lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English
pride,
"We have fought such a fight for a
day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die — does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner —
sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into
the hands of Spain!"

XII.

And the gunner said "Ay, ay," but
the seamen made reply:
"We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise,
if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to
strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they
yielded to the foe.

XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their
flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old
Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with
their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he
cried:

"I have fought for Queen and Faith
like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is
bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard
Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he
died.

XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had
been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory
of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship
and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil
for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor
down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a
swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and
long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had
ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the
weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a
great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is
raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their
sails and their masts and their
flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on
the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went
down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

THE SISTERS.

THEY have left the doors ajar; and
by their clash,
And prelude on the keys, I know the
song,
Their favorite — which I call "The
Tables Turned."
Evelyn begins it "O diviner Air."

EVELYN.

O diviner Air,
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust,
the glare,
Far from out the west in shadowing
showers,
Over all the meadow baked and bare,
Making fresh and fair
All the bowers and the flowers,
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,
Over all this weary world of ours,
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that — you scarce could
better that.
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

EDITH.

O diviner light,
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon
with night,
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding
showers,
Far from out a sky for ever bright,
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,
Over all the meadow's drowning flow-
ers,
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices — and
themselves!
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the
other,
As one is somewhat graver than the
other —
Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle,
whom
You count the father of your fortune,
longs
For this alliance: let me ask you then,
Which voice most takes you? for I
do not doubt
Being a watchful parent, you are
taken
With one or other: tho' sometimes I
fear
You may be flickering, fluttering in a
doubt
Between the two — which must not be
— which might

Be death to one : they both are beautiful :

Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says
The common voice, if one may trust
it : she ?

No ! but the paler and the graver,
Edith.

Woo her and gain her then : no
wavering, boy !

The graver is perhaps the one for you
Who jest and laugh so easily and so
well.

For love will go by contrast, as by
likes.

No sisters ever prized each other
more.

Not so : their mother and her sister
loved

More passionately still.

But that my best

And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes
it,

And that I know you worthy every-
way

To be my son, I might, perchance, be
loath

To part them, or part from them : and
yet one

Should marry, or all the broad lands
in your view

From this bay window — which our
house has held

Three hundred years — will pass col-
laterally.

My father with a child on either
knee,

A hand upon the head of either child,
Smoothing their locks, as golden as
his own

Were silver, "get them wedded"
would he say.

And once my prattling Edith ask'd
him "why?"

Ay, why? said he, "for why should I
go lame?"

Then told them of his wars, and of
his wound.

For see — this wine — the grape from
whence it flow'd

Was blackening on the slopes of
Portugal,

When that brave soldier, down the
terrible ridge

Plunged in the last fierce charge at
Waterloo,

And caught the laming bullet. He
left me this,

Which yet retains a memory of its
youth,

As I of mine, and my first passion.
Come!

Here's to your happy union with my
child!

Yet must you change your name :
no fault of mine!

You say that you can do it as willingly
As birds make ready for their bridal-

time

By change of feather : for all that,
my boy,

Some birds are sick and sullen when
they moult.

An old and worthy name ! but mine
that stirr'd

Among our civil wars and earlier too
Among the Roses, the more venerable.

I care not for a name — no fault of
mine.

Once more — a happier marriage than
my own !

You see yon Lombard poplar on the
plain.

The highway running by it leaves a
breadth

Of sward to left and right, where, long
ago,

One bright May morning in a world
of song,

I lay at leisure, watching overhead
The aërial poplar wave, an amber

spire.

I dozed ; I woke. An open landau-
let

Whirl'd by, which, after it had past
me, show'd

Turning my way, the loveliest face
on earth.

The face of one there sitting opposite,
On whom I brought a strange unhap-

piness,

That time I did not see.

Love at first sight
 May seem — with goodly rhyme and
 reason for it —
 Possible — at first glimpse, and for a
 face
 Gone in a moment — strange. Yet
 once, when first
 I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,
 A moonless night with storm — one
 lightning-fork
 Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I
 loiter'd there
 The full day after, yet in retrospect
 That less than momentary thunder-
 sketch
 Of lake and mountain conquers all
 the day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face
 for me.
 Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as
 well.
 For look you here — the shadows are
 too deep,
 And like the critic's blurring comment
 make
 The veriest beauties of the work
 appear
 The darkest faults: the sweet eyes
 frown: the lips
 Seem but a gash. My sole memorial
 Of Edith — no, the other, — both
 indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro'
 sense and soul
 And by the poplar vanish'd — to be
 found
 Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the
 tall
 Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping
 beechen boughs
 Of our New Forest. I was there
 alone:
 The phantom of the whirling landau-
 let
 For ever past me by: when one quick
 peal
 Of laughter drew me thro' the glim-
 mering glades
 Down to the snowlike sparkle of a
 cloth

On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face
 again,
 My Rosalind in this Arden — Edith
 — all
 One bloom of youth, health, beauty,
 happiness,
 And moved to merriment at a passing
 jest.

There one of those about her know-
 ing me
 Call'd me to join them; so with these
 I spent
 What seem'd my crowning hour, my
 day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccess-
 fully,
 The worse for her, for me! was I con-
 tent?
 Ay — no, not quite; for now and then
 I thought
 Laziness, vague love-longings, the
 bright May,
 Had made a heated haze to magnify
 The charm of Edith — that a man's
 ideal
 Is high in Heaven, and lodged with
 Plato's God,
 Not findable here — content, and not
 content,
 In some such fashion as a man may
 be
 That having had the portrait of his
 friend
 Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and
 says,
 "Good! very like! not altogether he."

As yet I had not bound myself by
 words,
 Only, believing I loved Edith, made
 Edith love *me*. Then came the day
 when I,
 Flattering myself that all my doubts
 were fools
 Born of the fool this Age that doubts
 of all —
 Not I that day of Edith's love or
 mine —
 Had braced my purpose to declare
 myself:

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.
 The golden gates would open at a
 word.
 I spoke it — told her of my passion,
 seen
 And lost and found again, had got so
 far,
 Had caught her hand, her eyelids
 fell — I heard
 Wheels, and a noise of welcome at
 the doors —
 On a sudden after two Italian years
 Had set the blossom of her health
 again,
 The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd
 — there,
 There was the face, and altogether
 she.
 The mother fell about the daughter's
 neck,
 The sisters closed in one another's
 arms,
 Their people throng'd about them
 from the hall,
 And in the thick of question and
 reply
 I fled the house, driven by one angel
 face,
 And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;
 I could not free myself in honor —
 bound
 Not by the sounded letter of the word,
 But counterpressures of the yielded
 hand
 That timorously and faintly echoed
 mine,
 Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of
 her eyes
 Upon me when she thought I did not
 see —
 Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but
 could I wed her
 Loving the other? do her that great
 wrong?
 Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-
 morn?
 Had I not known where Love, at first
 a fear,
 Grew after marriage to full height
 and form?

Yet after marriage, that mock-sister
 there —
 Brother-in-law — the fiery nearness of
 it —
 Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood —
 What end but darkness could ensue
 from this
 For all the three? So Love and Honor
 jarr'd
 Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise
 the full
 High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up
 and down
 Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:

“My mother bids me ask” (I did not
 tell you —
 A widow with less guile than many a
 child.
 God help the wrinkled children that
 are Christ's
 As well as the plump cheek — she
 wrought us harm,
 Poor soul, not knowing) “are you
 ill?” (so ran
 The letter) “you have not been here
 of late.
 You will not find me here. At last I
 go
 On that long-promised visit to the
 North.
 I told your wayside story to my
 mother
 And Evelyn. She remembers you.
 Farewell.
 Pray come and see my mother. Al-
 most blind
 With ever-growing cataract, yet she
 thinks
 She sees you when she hears. Again
 farewell.”

Cold words from one I had hoped to
 warm so far
 That I could stamp my image on her
 heart!
 “Pray come and see my mother, and
 farewell.”
 Cold, but as welcome as free airs of
 heaven
 After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,
 strange!

What dwarfs are men ! my strangled
vanity
Utter'd a stifled cry — to have vex't
myself
And all in vain for her — cold heart
or none —
No bride for me. Yet so my path
was clear
To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.

For Evelyn knew not of my former
suit,
Because the simple mother work'd upon
By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.
And Edith would be bridesmaid on
the day.

But on that day, not being all at
ease,
I from the altar glancing back upon
her,
Before the first "I will" was utter'd,
saw
The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, pas-
sionless —
"No harm, no harm" I turn'd again,
and placed
My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke
no word,
She wept no tear, but round my
Evelyn clung
In utter silence for so long, I thought
"What, will she never set her sister
free?"

We left her, happy each in each,
and then,
As tho' the happiness of each in each
Were not enough, must fain have tor-
rents, lakes,
Hills, the great things of Nature and
the fair,
To lift us as it were from common-
place,
And help us to our joy. Better have
sent
Our Edith thro' the glories of the
earth,
To change with her horizon, if true
Love
Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would
not live
Save that I think this gross hard-
seeming world
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers
Behind the world, that make our griefs
our gains.

For on the dark night of our mar-
riage-day
The great Tragedian, that had
quenched herself
In that assumption of the bridesmaid
— she
That loved me — our true Edith —
her brain broke
With over-acting, till she rose and
fled
Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn
rain
To the deaf church — to be let in —
to pray
Before that altar — so I think; and
there
They found her beating the hard Pro-
testant doors.
She died and she was buried ere we
knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak.
At once
The bright quick smile of Evelyn,
that had sunn'd
The morning of our marriage, past
away:
And on our home-return the daily
want
Of Edith in the house, the garden,
still
Haunted us like her ghost; and by
and by,
Either from that necessity for talk
Which lives with blindness, or plain
innocence
Of nature, or desire that her lost
child
Should earn from both the praise of
heroism,
The mother broke her promise to the
dead,
And told the living daughter with
what love

Edith had welcomed my brief wooing
of her,
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and
death.

Henceforth that mystic bond be-
twixt the twins —
Did I not tell you they were twins?
—prevail'd
So far that no caress could win my
wife
Back to that passionate answer of full
heart
I had from her at first. Not that her
love,
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power
of love,
Had lessen'd, but the mother's gar-
ulous wail
For ever woke the unhappy Past
again,
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to
be my bride,
Put forth cold hands between us, and
I fear'd
The very fountains of her life were
chill'd;
So took her thence, and brought her
here, and here
She bore a child, whom reverently we
call'd
Edith; and in the second year was
born
A second — this I named from her
own self,
Evelyn; then two weeks — no more
— she joined,
In and beyond the grave, that one
she loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,
Thro' dreams by night and trances of
the day,
The sisters glide about me hand in
hand,
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell
One from the other, no, nor care to tell
One from the other, only know they
come,
They smile upon me, till, remembering
all
The love they both have borne me,
and the love

I bore them both — divided as I am
From either by the stillness of the
grave —
I know not which of these I love the
best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own
true eyes
Are traitors to her; our quick Ev-
elyn —
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they
talk,
And not without good reason, my
good son —
Is yet untouch'd: and I that hold
them both
Dearest of all things — well, I am not
sure —
But if there lie a preference either way,
And in the rich vocabulary of Love
"Most dearest" be a true superla-
tive —
I think *I* likewise love your Edith
most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR,
THE ENTAIL. ¹

I.

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur
New Squire coom'd last night.
Butter an' heggs — yis — yis. I'll
goä wi' tha back: all right;
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-
rants the heggs be as well,
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya
breaks the shell.

II.

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hev a glass
o' cowslip wine!
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as
thaw they was gells o' mine,
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire
an' 'is darters an' me,
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I
niver not took to she:
But Nelly, the last of the cletch² I
liked 'er the fust on 'em all,

¹ See note to "Northern Cobbler."

² A brood of chickens.

Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es
died o' the fever at fall:
An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord,
but Miss Annie she said it wur
draäins,
Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an'
arn'd naw thanks fur 'er pääins
Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my childer,
I han't gotten none!
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone.

III.

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass. tha
dosn' knaw what that be?
But I knaws the law, I does, for the
lawyer ha towd it me.
"When theer's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by
the fault o' that ere mäile —
'The gells they counts fur nowt, and
the next un he taäkes the taäil."

IV.

What be the next un like? can tha
tell ony harm on 'im lass? —
Naay sit down — naw 'urry — sa
cowl! — hev another glass!
Straänge an' cowl fur the time! we
may happen a fall o' snaw —
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm,
but I likes to knaw.
An' I 'oaps es 'e beänt boooklarn'd:
but 'e dosn' not coom fro' the
shere;
We' anew o' that wi' the Squire, an'
we haätes boooklarnin' ere.

V.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an'
niver lookt arter the land —
Whoäts or turmuts or taätes — e' 'ed
hallus a booök i' 'is 'and,
Hallus aloän wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh
upo' seventy year.
An' booöks, what's boooks? thou
knaws thebbe neyther 'ere nor
theer.

VI.

An' the gells, they hadn't naw taäils,
an' the lawyer he towd it me

That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he
couldn't cut down a tree!
"Drat the trees," says I, to be sewer I
haätes 'em, my lass,
Fur we puts the muck o' the land an'
they sucks the muck fro' the
grass.

VII.

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an'
gied to the tramps goin' by —
An' all o' the wust i' the parish — wi'
hoffens a drop in 'is eye.
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her
awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,
An' they rampaged about wi' their
grooms, an' was 'untin' arter
the men,
An' hallus a-dallackt¹ an' dizen'd out,
an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,
While 'e sit like a graät glimmer-
gowk² wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is
noäse,
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff as it
couldn't be scroob'd awaäy,
Fur atween 'is reädin' an' writin' 'e
sniff't up a box in a daäy,
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor
arter the birds wi' 'is gun,
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e
läved it to Charlie 'is son,
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds,
but Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,
For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an'
'e didn't take kind to it like;
But I eärs es 'e'd gie fur a howry³ owd
book thutty pound an' moor,
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn
sen, sa I knaw'd es 'e'd coom
to be poor;
An' 'e gied — I be fear'd to tell tha 'ow
much — fur an owd scratted
stoän,
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land
an' 'e got a brown pot an' a
boän,
An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't
goä, wi' good gowd o' the
Queen,

¹ Overdressed in gay colors.² Owl.³ Filthy.

An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt
 an' which was a shaame to be
 seen ;
 But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e
 niver not seed to owt,
 An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks,
 an' booöks, as thou knaws,
 beänt nowt.

VIII.

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she
 lived she kep 'em all clear,
 Thaw es long es she lived I never hed
 none of 'er darters 'ere ;
 But arter she died we was all es one,
 the childer an' me,
 An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an'
 offens we hed 'em to tea.
 Lawk ! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses
 'ud talk o' their Missis's wäyys,
 An' the Missis talk'd o' the lasses. —
 I'll tell tha some o' these daäyys.
 Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck
 oop, like 'er mother afoor —
 'Er an' 'er blessed darter — they niver
 derken'd my door.

IX.

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till
 'e'd gotten a fright at last,
 An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's
 letters they foller'd sa fast ;
 But Squire wur afeard o' 'is son,
 an' 'e says to 'im, meek as a
 mouse,
 "Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or
 the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,
 Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I
 'oäps es thou'll 'elp me a bit,
 An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil
 I may saäve mysen yit."

X.

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, 'an 'e
 sweärs, an' 'e says to im "Noä.
 I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an'
 be dang'd if I iver let goä !
 Coom ! coom ! feyther," 'e says, "why
 shouldn't thy booöks be sowd ?
 I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe
 worth their weight i' gowd."

XI.

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd
 'em, belong'd to the Squire,
 But the lasses 'ed teärd out leaves i'
 the middle to kindle the fire ;
 Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd
 nigh to nowt at the saäle,
 And Squire were at Charlie ageän to
 git 'im to cut off 'is taäil.

XII.

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes — 'e
 were that outdacious at oäm,
 Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out Hell
 wi' a small-tooth coämb —
 Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an'
 droonk wi' the farmer's säile,
 Mad wi' the lasses an' all — an' 'e
 wouldn't cut off the taäil.

XIII.

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck ; and
 a thurn be a-grawin' theer,
 I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the
 Maäy es I see'd it to-year —
 Theerabouts Charlie joompt — and it
 gied me a scare tother night,
 Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i'
 the derk, fur it looökt sa white.
 "Billy," says 'e, "hev a joomp!" —
 thaw the banks o' the beck be
 sa high,
 Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un,
 thaw niver a hair wur awry ;
 But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'
 Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,
 Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur
 'e lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

XIV.

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur
 gone an' 'is boy wur deäd,
 An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but
 'e niver not lift oop 'is 'eääd :
 Hallus a soft un Squire ! an' 'e smiled,
 fur 'e hedn't naw friend,
 Sa feyther an' son was buried togher,
 an' this wur the hend.

XV.

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the
 mooney, but hes the pride,

'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o'
the tother side;
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord,
howsiver they praäy'd an'
praäy'd,
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves
their debts to be paäid.
Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo'
poor owd Squire i' the wood,
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur
they weant niver coom to naw
good.

XVI.

Fur Molly the long un she walkt
awaäy wi' a hofficer lad,
An' nawbody 'eard on 'er sin, sa o'
coorse she be gone to the bad!
An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-
'arts she niver 'ed none —
Straänge an' unheppen¹ Miss Lucy!
we nämed her "Dot an' gaw
one!"

An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics,
wi'out ony harm i' the legs,
An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'ead
as bald as one o' them heggs,
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as
big i' the mouth as a cow,
An' saw she mun hammergrate,² lass,
or she weänt git a maäte ony-
how!

An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me
afoor my awn foälks to my
faäce

"A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev
to be larn'd her awn plaäce,"
Hes for Miss Hannie the heldest hes
now be a grawin sa howd,
I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt
not fit to be towd!

XVII.

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd
Miss Annie to saäy
Es I should be talkin ageän 'em, es
soon es they went awaäy,
Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they
went, an' our Nelly she gied me
'er 'and,

¹ Ungainly, awkward. ² Emigrate.

Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an'
'is gells es belong'd to the land;
Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe ney-
ther 'ere nor theer!
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs
fur huppuds o' twenty year.

XVIII.

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd,
sa I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,
An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an'
they knaw'd what a hegg wur
an' all;
Hugger-mugger they lived, but they
wasn't that eäsy to pleäse,
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they
laäid big heggs es tha sees;
An' I niver puts saäme¹ i' my butter,
they does it at Willis's farm,
Taäste another drop o' the wine —
tweänt do tha na harm.

XIX.

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone;
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arte⁷
my nightcap wur on;
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he
coom'd last night sa laäte —
Pluksh!!!² the hens i' the peäs! why
didn't tha hesp tha gaäte?

IN THE CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL.

EMMIE.

I.

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I
never had seen him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when
I saw him come in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of
France and of other lands —
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest,
big merciless hands!
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes,
but they said too of him

¹ Lard.

² A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands
to scare trespassing fowl.

He was happier using the knife than
 in trying to save the limb,
 And that I can well believe, for he
 look'd so coarse and so red,
 I could think he was one of those who
 would break their jests on the
 dead,
 And mangle the living dog that had
 loved him and fawn'd at his
 knee —
 Drench'd with the hellish oorali — that
 ever such things should be!

II.

Here was a boy — I am sure that some
 of our children would die
 But for the voice of Love, and the
 smile, and the comforting eye —
 Here was a boy in the ward, every
 bone seem'd out of its place —
 Caught in a mill and crush'd — it was
 all but a hopeless case:
 And he handled him gently enough;
 but his voice and his face were
 not kind,
 And it was but a hopeless case, he
 had seen it and made up his
 mind,
 And he said to me roughly "The lad
 will need little more of your
 care."
 "All the more need," I told him, "to
 seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;
 They are all his children here, and I
 pray for them all as my own:"
 But he turn'd to me, "Ay, good woman,
 can prayer set a broken bone?"
 Then he mutter'd half to himself, but
 I know that I heard him say
 "All very well — but the good Lord
 Jesus has had his day."

III.

Had? has it come? It has only
 dawn'd. It will come by and
 by.
 O how could I serve in the wards if the
 hope of the world were a lie?
 How could I bear with the sights and
 the loathsome smells of disease
 But that He said "Ye do it to me,
 when ye do it to these"?

IV.

So he went. And we past to this
 ward where the younger chil-
 dren are laid:
 Here is the cot of our orphan, our dar-
 ling, our meek little maid;
 Empty you see just now! We have
 lost her who loved her so
 much —
 Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sen-
 sitive plant to the touch;
 Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often
 moved me to tears,
 Hers was the gratefullest heart I have
 found in a child of her years —
 Nay you remember our Emmie; you
 used to send her the flowers;
 How she would smile at 'em, play
 with 'em, talk to 'em hours
 after hours!
 They that can wander at will where the
 works of the Lord are reveal'd
 Little guess what joy can be got from
 a cowslip out of the fields;
 Flowers to these "spirits in prison"
 are all they can know of the
 spring,
 They freshen and sweeten the wards
 like the waft of an Angel's
 wing;
 And she lay with a flower in one hand
 and her thin hands crost on her
 breast —
 Wan, but as pretty as heart can de-
 sire, and we thought her at rest,
 Quietly sleeping — so quiet, our doc-
 tor said "Poor little dear,
 Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll
 never live thro' it, I fear."

V.

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as
 far as the head of the stair,
 Then I return'd to the ward; the child
 didn't see I was there.

VI.

Never since I was nurse, had I been
 so grieved and so vext!
 Emmie had heard him. Softly she
 call'd from her cot to the next,

“ He says I shall never live thro’ it, O
 Annie, what shall I do ? ”
 Annie consider’d. “ If I,” said the
 wise little Annie, “ was you,
 I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to
 help me, for, Emmie, you see,
 It’s all in the picture there; ‘ Little
 children should come to me.’ ”
 (Meaning the print that you gave us,
 I find that it always can please
 Our children, the dear Lord Jesus
 with children about his knees.)
 “ Yes, and I will,” said Emmie, “ but
 then if I call to the Lord,
 How should he know that it’s me ?
 such a lot of beds in the ward ! ”
 That was a puzzle for Annie. Again
 she consider’d and said :
 “ Emmie, you put out your arms, and
 you leave ’em outside on the
 bed —
 The Lord has so *much* to see to ! but,
 Emmie, you tell it him plain,
 It’s the little girl with her arms lying
 out on the counterpane.”

VII.

I had sat three nights by the child —
 I could not watch her for four —
 My brain had begun to reel — I felt I
 could do it no more.
 That was my sleeping-night, but I
 thought that it never would
 pass.
 There was a thunderclap once, and a
 clatter of hail on the glass,
 And there was a phantom cry that I
 heard as I tost about,
 The motherless bleat of a lamb in the
 storm and the darkness with-
 out ;
 My sleep was broken beside with
 dreams of the dreadful knife
 And fears for our delicate Emmie who
 scarce would escape with her
 life ;
 Then in the gray of the morning it
 seem’d she stood by me and
 smiled,
 And the doctor came at his hour, and
 we went to see to the child.

VIII.

He had brought his ghastly tools : we
 believed her asleep again —
 Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying
 out on the counterpane,
 Say that His day is done ! Ah why
 should we care what they say ?
 The Lord of the children had heard
 her, and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE
PRINCESS ALICE.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that,
 which lived
 True life, live on — and if the fatal
 kiss,
 Born of true life and love, divorce
 thee not
 From earthly love and life — if what
 we call
 The spirit flash not all at once from
 out
 This shadow into Substance — then
 perhaps
 The mellow’d murmur of the people’s
 praise
 From thine own State, and all our
 breadth of realm,
 Where Love and Longing dress thy
 deeds in light,
 Ascends to thee ; and this March
 morn that sees
 Thy Soldier-brother’s bridal orange-
 bloom
 Break thro’ the yews and cypress of
 thy grave,
 And thine Imperial mother smile
 again,
 May send one ray to thee ! and who
 can tell —
 Thou — England’s England-loving
 daughter — thou
 Dying so English thou wouldst have
 her flag
 Borne on thy coffin — where is he can
 swear
 But that some broken gleam from our
 poor earth
 May touch thee, while remembering
 thee, I lay

At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds
Of England, and her banner in the East?

THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW.

I.

BANNER of England, not for a season,
O banner of Britain, hast thou
Floated in conquering battle or flapt
to the battle-cry!
Never with mightier glory than when
we had rear'd thee on high
Flying at top of the roofs in the
ghastly siege of Lucknow —
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard,
but ever we raised thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew.

II.

Frail were the works that defended
the hold that we held with our
lives —
Women and children among us, God
help them, our children and
wives!
Hold it we might — and for fifteen
days or for twenty at most.
“Never surrender, I charge you, but
every man die at his post!”
Voice of the dead whom we loved,
our Lawrence the best of the
brave:
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd
him — we laid him that night
in his grave.
“Every man die at his post!” and
there hail'd on our houses and
halls
Death from their rifle-bullets, and
death from their cannon-balls,
Death in our innermost chamber, and
death at our slight barricade,
Death while we stood with the mus-
ket, and death while we stoopt
to the spade,
Death to the dying, and wounds to
the wounded, for often there
fell,

Striking the hospital wall, crashing
thro' it, their shot and their
shell,

Death — for their spies were among
us, their marksmen were told
of our best,

So that the brute bullet broke thro'
the brain that could think for
the rest;

Bullets would sing by our foreheads,
and bullets would rain at our
feet —

Fire from ten thousand at once of the
rebels that girdled us round —

Death at the glimpse of a finger from
over the breadth of a street,

Death from the heights of the mosque
and the palace, and death in
ground!

Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine!
down, down! and creep thro'
the hole!

Keep the revolver in hand! you can
hear him — the murderous mole!

Quiet, ah! quiet — wait till the point
of the pickaxe be thro'!

Click with the pick, coming nearer
and nearer again than before —

Now let it speak, and you fire, and the
dark pioneer is no more;

And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew!

III.

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many
times, and it chanced on a day

Soon as the blast of that underground
thunderclap echo'd away,

Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur
like so many fiends in their
hell —

Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on
volley, and yell upon yell —

Fiercely on all the defences our myr-
iad enemy fell.

What have they done? where is it?
Out yonder. Guard the Redan!

Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the
Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran

Surging and swaying all round us, as
ocean on every side

Plunges and heaves at a bank that is
 daily drown'd by the tide —
 So many thousands that if they be bold
 enough, who shall escape ?
 Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall
 know we are soldiers and men !
 Ready : take aim at their leaders —
 their masses are gapp'd with
 our grape —
 Backward they reel like the wave, like
 the wave flinging forward again,
 Flying and foil'd at the last by the
 handful they could not subdue ;
 And ever upon the topmost roof our
 banner of England blew.

IV.

Handful of men as we were, we were
 English in heart and in limb,
 Strong with the strength of the race
 to command, to obey, to endure,
 Each of us fought as if hope for the
 garrison hung but on him ;
 Still — could we watch at all points ?
 we were every day fewer and
 fewer.
 There was a whisper among us, but
 only a whisper that past :
 " Children and wives — if the tigers
 leap into the fold unawares —
 Every man die at his post — and the
 foe may outlive us at last —
 Better to fall by the hands that they
 love, than to fall into theirs !"
 Roar upon roar in a moment two
 mines by the enemy sprung
 Clove into perilous chasms our walls
 and our poor palisades.
 Rifleman, true is your heart, but be
 sure that your hand be as true !
 Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed
 are your flank fusillades —
 Twice do we hurl them to earth from
 the ladders to which they had
 clung,
 Twice from the ditch where they shel-
 ter we drive them with hand-
 grenades ;
 And ever upon the topmost roof our
 banner of England blew.

v.

Then on another wild morning another
 wild earthquake out-tore
 Clean from our lines of defence ten or
 twelve good paces or more.
 Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden
 there from the light of the
 sun —
 One has leapt up on the beach, crying
 out : " Follow me, follow me ! " —
 Mark him — he falls ! then another,
 and *him* too, and down goes he.
 Had they been bold enough then, who
 can tell but the traitors had
 won ?
 Boardings and rafters and doors — an
 embrasure ! make way for the
 gun !
 Now double-charge it with grape ! It
 is charged and we fire, and they
 run.
 Praise to our Indian brothers, and let
 the dark face have his due !
 Thanks to the kindly dark faces who
 fought with us, faithful and few,
 Fought with the bravest among us,
 and drove them, and smote
 them, and slew,
 That ever upon the topmost roof our
 banner in India blew.

VI.

Men will forget what we suffer and
 not what we do. We can fight !
 But to be soldier all day and be senti-
 nel all thro' the night —
 Ever the mine and assault, our sallies,
 their lying alarms,
 Bugles and drums in the darkness, and
 shoutings and soundings to
 arms,
 Ever the labor of fifty that had to be
 done by five,
 Ever the marvel among us that one
 should be left alive,
 Ever the day with its traitorous death
 from the loopholes around,
 Ever the night with its coffinless
 corpse to be laid in the ground,
 Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a
 deluge of cataract skies,

Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not be heal'd,
Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife, —
Torture and trouble in vain, — for it never could save us a life.
Valor of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,
Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,
Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief,
Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew —
Then day and night, day and night, coming down on the still-shatter'd walls
Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls —
But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

VII.

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by the scout,
Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?
Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!
All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,
Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,
Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,
Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers,
Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!
Dance to the pibroch! — saved! we are saved! — is it you? is it you?
Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing of Heaven!
“Hold it for fifteen days!” we have held it for eighty-seven!

And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM.

(IN WALES.)

My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout
To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow —
I read no more the prisoner's mute wail
Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;
I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,
For I am emptier than a friar's brains;
But God is with me in this wilderness,
These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms —
And God's free air, and hope of better things.

I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,
Not now — I hope to do it — some scatter'd ears,
Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales —
But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wagg'd
They said with such heretical arrogance
Against the proud archbishop Arundel —
So much God's cause was fluent in it — is here
But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;
“Bara!” — what use? The Shepherd, when I speak,
Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard “Dim Saesneg” passes, wroth at things of old —
No fault of mine. Had he God's word in Welsh
He might be kindlier: happily come the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem

In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,
Least, for in thee the word was born
again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living
word,
Who whilome spakest to the South in
Greek

About the soft Mediterranean shores,
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
As good need was — thou hast come
to talk our isle.

Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to use the tongues of all
the world.

Yet art thou thine own witness that
thou bringest

Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,
My frightened Wiclif-preacher whom I
crost

In flying hither? that one night a
crowd

Throng'd the waste field about the
city gates:

The king was on them suddenly with
a host.

Why there? they came to hear their
preacher. Then

Some cried on Cobham, on the good
Lord Cobham;

Ay, for they love me! but the king —
nor voice

Nor finger raised against him — took
and hang'd,

Took, hang'd and burnt — how many
— thirty-nine —

Call'd it rebellion — hang'd, poor
friends, as rebels

And burn'd alive as heretics! for
your Priest

Labels — to take the king along with
him —

All heresy, treason: but to call men
traitors

May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,
Red in thy birth, redder with house-
hold war,

Now reddest with the blood of holy
men,

Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster —
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor
sang

Fluttering the hawks of this crown-
lusting line —

By firth and loch thy silver sister
grow,¹

That were my rose, there my allegi-
ance due.

Self-starved, they say — nay, mur-
der'd, doubtless dead.

So to this king I cleaved: my friend
was he,

Once my fast friend: I would have
given my life

To help his own from scathe, a thou-
sand lives

To save his soul. He might have
come to learn

Our Wiclif's learning: but the worldly
Priests

Who fear the king's hard common-
sense should find

What rotten piles uphold their mason-
work,

Urge him to foreign war. O had he
will'd

I might have stricken a lusty stroke
for him,

But he would not; far liever led my
friend

Back to the pure and universal
church,

But he would not: whether that heir-
less flaw

In his throne's title make him feel so
frail,

He leans on Antichrist; or that his
mind,

So quick, so capable in soldiership,
In matters of the faith, alas the while!

More worth than all the kingdoms of
this world,

Runs in the rut, a coward to the
Priest.

Burnt — good Sir Roger Acton, my
dear friend!

Burnt too, my faithful preacher,
Beverley!

¹ Richard II.

Lord give thou power to thy two witnesses!

Lest the false faith make merry over them!

Two — nay but thirty-nine have risen and stand,

Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,

Before thy light, and cry continually — Cry — against whom?

Him, who should bear the sword Of Justice — what! the kingly, kindly boy;

Who took the world so easily heretofore,

My boon companion, tavern-fellow — him

Who gibed and japed — in many a merry tale

That shook our sides — at Pardoners, Summoners,

Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries And nunneries, when the wild hour

and the wine Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth, Or Amurath of the East?

Better to sink Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling

Thy royalty back into the riotous fits Of wine and harlotry — thy shame, and mine,

Thy comrade — than to persecute the Lord,

And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred Arundel

Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the flame,

The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his clerks

Into the suburb — their hard celibacy, Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness,

molten Into adulterous living, or such crimes As holy Paul — a shame to speak of

them — Among the heathen —

Sanctuary granted

To bandit, thief, assassin — yea to him Who hacks his mother's throat — denied to him,

Who finds the Saviour in his mother tongue.

The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung down to swine —

The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will come,

God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar. Ah rather, Lord, than that thy

Gospel, meant To course and range thro' all the world, should be

Tether'd to these dead pillars of the Church —

Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,

Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart, and life

Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,

O Lord, how long!

My friend should meet me here. Here is the copse, the fountain and —

a Cross!

To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor knees.

Rather to thee, green boscaige, work of God,

Black holly, and white-flower'd way-faring-tree!

Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn

By this good Wiclif mountain down from heaven,

And speaking clearly in thy native tongue —

No Latin — He that thirsteth, come and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me

To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine arms,

God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and blood

And holier. That was heresy. (My good friend

By this time should be with me.) "Images?"

"Bury them as God's truer images

Are daily buried." "Heresy. —
 Penance?" "Fast,
 Hairshirt and scourge — nay, let a
 man repent,
 Do penance in his heart, God hears
 him." "Heresy —
 Not shriven, not saved?" "What
 profits an ill Priest
 Between me and my God? I would
 not spurn
 Good counsel of good friends, but
 shrive myself
 No, not to an Apostle." "Heresy."
 (My friend is long in coming.) "Pil-
 grimages?"
 Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-
 dances, vice.
 The poor man's money gone to fat the
 friar.
 Who reads of begging saints in Scrip-
 ture?" — "Heresy" —
 (Hath he been here — not found me
 — gone again?
 Have I mislearnt our place of meet-
 ing?) "Bread —
 Bread left after the blessing?" how
 they stared,
 That was their main test-question —
 glared at me!
 "He veil'd himself in flesh, and now
 He veils
 His flesh in bread, body and bread
 together."
 Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd
 wolves,
 "No bread, no bread. God's body!"
 Archbishop, Bishop,
 Priors, Canons, Friars, bellringers,
 Parish-clerks —
 "No bread, no bread!" — "Authority
 of the Church,
 Power of the keys!" — Then I, God
 help me, I
 So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two
 whole days —
 I lost myself and fell from evenness,
 And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever
 since
 Sylvester shed the venom of world-
 wealth
 Into the church, had only prov'n
 themselves

Poisoners, murderers. Well — God
 pardon all —
 Me, them, and all the world — yea,
 that proud Priest
 That mock-meek mouth of utter Anti-
 christ,
 That traitor to King Richard and the
 truth,
 Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.
 Amen!
 Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of
 life
 Be by me in my death.
 Those three! the fourth
 Was like the Son of God! Not burnt
 were they.
 On *them* the smell of burning had not
 past.
 That was a miracle to convert the king.
 These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel
 What miracle could turn? *He* here
 again,
He thwarting their traditions of Him-
 self,
He would be found a heretic to Him-
 self,
 And doom'd to burn alive.
 So, caught, I burn.
 Burn? heathen men have borne as
 much as this,
 For freedom, or the sake of those they
 loved,
 Or some less cause, some cause far
 less than mine;
 For every other cause is less than
 mine.
 The moth will singe her wings, and
 singed return,
 Her love of light quenching her fear
 of pain —
 How now, my soul, we do not heed the
 fire?
 Faint-hearted? tut! — faint-stom-
 ach'd! faint as I am,
 God willing, I will burn for Him.
 Who comes?
 A thousand marks are set upon my
 head.
 Friend? — foe perhaps — a tussle for
 it then!
 Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well
 disguised,

I knew thee not. Hast thou brought
bread with thee?
I have not broken bread for fifty hours.
None? I am damn'd already by the
Priest
For holding there was bread where
bread was none—
No bread. My friends await me yon-
der? Yes.
Lead on then. *Up* the mountain?
Is it far?
Not far. Climb first and reach me
down thy hand.
I am not like to die for lack of bread,
For I must live to testify by fire.¹

COLUMBUS.

CHAINS, my good lord: in your raised
brows I read
Some wonder at our chamber orna-
ments.
We brought this iron from our isles
of gold.

Does the king know you deign to
visit him
Whom once he rose from off his
throne to greet
Before his people, like his brother
king?
I saw your face that morning in the
crowd.

At Barcelona — tho' you were not
then
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd
herself
To meet me, roar'd my name; the
king, the queen
Bade me be seated, speak, and tell
them all
The story of my voyage, and while I
spoke
The crowd's roar fell as at the "Peace,
be still!"
And when I ceased to speak, the king,
the queen,
Sank from their thrones, and melted
into tears,

¹ He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

And knelt, and lifted hand and heart
and voice
In praise to God who led me thro' the
waste.
And then the great "Laudamus" rose
to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the
Ocean! chains
For him who gave a new heaven, a
new earth,
As holy John had prophesied of me,
Gave glory and more empire to the
kings
Of Spain than all their battles! chains
for him
Who push'd his prows into the setting
sun,
And made West East, and sail'd the
Dragon's mouth,
And came upon the Mountain of the
World,
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the
Ocean, we,
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic
queen —
Of the Ocean — of the Indies — Ad-
mirals we —
Our title, which we never mean to
yield,
Our guerdon not alone for what we
did,
But our amends for all we might have
done —
The vast occasion of our stronger
life —
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in
your Spain,
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth
the babe
Will suck in with his milk hereafter
— earth
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.
We fronted there the learning of all
Spain,
All their cosmogonies, their astrono-
mies;

Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the
 golden guess
 Is morning-star to the full round of
 truth.
 No guess-work! I was certain of my
 goal;
 Some thought it heresy, but that
 would not hold.
 King David call'd the heavens a hide,
 a tent
 Spread over earth, and so this earth
 was flat:
 Some cited old Lactantius: could it be
 That trees grew downward, rain fell
 upward, men
 Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and
 besides,
 The great Augustine wrote that none
 could breathe
 Within the zone of heat; so might
 there be
 Two Adams, two mankinds, and that
 was clean
 Against God's word: thus was I
 beaten back,
 And chiefly to my sorrow by the
 Church,
 And thought to turn my face from
 Spain, appeal
 Once more to France or England;
 but our Queen
 Recall'd me, for at last their High-
 nesses
 Were half-assured this earth might
 be a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,
 All glory to the mother of our Lord,
 And Holy Church, from whom I never
 swerved
 Not even by one hair's-breadth of
 heresy,
 I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a
 dream—I sail'd
 On my first voyage, harass'd by the
 frights
 Of my first crew, their curses and
 their groans.
 The great flame-banner borne by Tene-
 riffe,

The compass, like an old friend false
 at last
 In our most need, appall'd them, and
 the wind
 Still westward, and the weedy seas—
 at length
 The landbird, and the branch with
 berries on it,
 The carven staff—and last the light,
 the light
 On Guanahani! but I changed the
 name;
 San Salvador I call'd it; and the
 light
 Grew as I gazed, and brought out a
 broad sky
 Of dawning over—not those alien
 palms,
 The marvel of that fair new nature—
 not
 That Indian isle, but our most ancient
 East
 Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw
 The glory of the Lord flash up, and
 beat
 Thro' all the homely town from jas-
 per, sapphire,
 Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sar-
 dius,
 Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,
 Jacynth, and amethyst—and those
 twelve gates,
 Pearl—and I woke, and thought—
 death—I shall die—
 I am written in the Lamb's own Book
 of Life
 To walk within the glory of the Lord
 Sunless and moonless, utter light—
 but no!
 The Lord had sent this bright, strange
 dream to me
 To mind me of the secret vow I made
 When Spain was waging war against
 the Moor—
 I strove myself with Spain against
 the Moor.
 There came two voices from the Sep-
 ulchre,
 Two friars crying that if Spain should
 oust
 The Moslem from her limit, he, the
 fierce

Soldan of Egypt, would break down
and raze
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon
I vow'd
That, if our Princes harken'd to my
prayer,
Whatever wealth I brought from that
new world
Should, in this old, be consecrate to
lead
A new crusade against the Saracen,
And free the Holy Sepulchre from
thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes
gold enough
If left alone! Being but a Genovese,
I am handled worse than had I been a
Moor,
And breach'd the belting wall of
Cambalu,
And given the Great Khan's palaces
to the Moor,
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Pres-
ter John,
And cast it to the Moor: but *had* I
brought
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir
all
The gold that Solomon's navies car-
ried home,
Would that have gilded *me*? Blue
blood of Spain,
Tho' quartering your own royal arms
of Spain,
I have not: blue blood and black blood
of Spain,
The noble and the convict of Cas-
tile,
How'd me from Hispaniola; for you
know
The flies at home, that ever swarm
about
And cloud the highest heads, and
murmur down
Truth in the distance — these out-
buzz'd me so
That even our prudent king, our right-
eous queen —
I pray'd them being so calumniated
They would commission one of weight
and worth

To judge between my slander'd self
and me —
Fonseca my main enemy at their court,
They send me out *his* tool, Bovadilla,
one
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast —
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed
— who sack'd
My dwelling, seized upon my papers,
loosed
My captives, feed the rebels of the
crown,
Sold the crown-farms for all but noth-
ing, gave
All but free leave for all to work the
mines,
Drove me and my good brothers home
in chains,
And gathering ruthless gold — a sin-
gle piece
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castil-
lanos — so
They tell me — weigh'd him down
into the abysm —
The hurricane of the latitude on him
fell,
The seas of our discovering over-roll
Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,
With what was mine, came happily to
the shore.
There was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God
Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O
my lord,
I swear to you I heard his voice be-
tween
The thunders in the black Veragua
nights,
“O soul of little faith, slow to believe!
Have I not been about thee from thy
birth?
Given thee the keys of the great
Ocean-sea?
Set thee in light till time shall be no
more?
Is it I who have deceived thee or the
world?
Endure! thou hast done so well for
men, that men
Cry out against thee. was it otherwise
With mine own Son?”

And more than once in days
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when
drowning hope
Sank all but out of sight, I heard his
voice,
"Be not cast down. I lead thee by
the hand,
Fear not." And I shall hear his
voice again —
I know that he has led me all my life,
I am not yet too old to work his will —
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,
I lying here bedridden and alone,
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and
king —
The first discoverer starves — his fol-
lowers, all
Flower into fortune — our world's way
— and I,
Without a roof that I can call mine
own,
With scarce a coin to buy a meal
withal,
And seeing what a door for scoundrel
scum
I open'd to the West, thro' which the
lust,
Villany, violence, avarice, of your
Spain
Pour'd in on all those happy naked
isles —
Their kindly native princes slain or
slaved,
Their wives and children Spanish con-
cubines,
Their innocent hospitalities quench'd
in blood,
Some dead of hunger, some beneath
the scourge,
Some over-labor'd, some by their own
hands, —
Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature,
kill
Their babies at the breast for hate of
Spain —
Ah God, the harmless people whom
we found
In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!
Who took us for the very Gods from
Heaven,

And we have sent them very fiends
from Hell;
And I myself, myself not blameless, I
Could sometimes wish I had never led
the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic
Queen
Smiles on me, saying, "Be thou com-
forted!
This creedless people will be brought
to Christ
And own the holy governance of
Rome."

But who could dream that we, who
bore the Cross
Thither, were excommunicated there,
For curbing crimes that scandalized
the Cross,
By him, the Catalonian Minorite,
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who be-
lieve
These hard memorials of our truth to
Spain
Clung closer to us for a longer term
Than any friend of ours at Court?
and yet
Pardon — too harsh, unjust. I am
rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by
my bed,
And I will have them buried in my
grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are
God's
Own voice to justify the dead — per-
chance
Spain once the most chivalric race on
earth,
Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest
realm on earth,
So made by me, may seek to unbury
me,
To lay me in some shrine of this old
Spain,
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to
Spain.
Then some one standing by my grave
will say,

“Behold the bones of Christopher
Colòn” —

“Ay, but the chains, what do *they*
mean — the chains?” —

I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain
Who then will have to answer, “These
same chains

Bound these same bones back thro’
the Atlantic sea,

Which he unchain’d for all the world
to come.”

O Queen of Heaven who seest the
souls in Hell

And purgatory, I suffer all as much
As they do — for the moment. Stay,
my son

Is here anon: my son will speak for
me

Ablier than I can in these spasms that
grind

Bone against bone. You will not.
One last word.

You move about the Court, I pray
you tell

King Ferdinand who plays with me,
that one,

Whose life has been no play with him
and his

Hidalgos — shipwrecks, famines, fe-
vers, fights,

Mutinies, treacheries — wink’d at, and
condoned —

That I am loyal to him till the death,
And ready — tho’ our Holy Catholic

Queen,
Who fain had pledged her jewels on

my first voyage,
Whose hope was mine to spread the

Catholic faith,
Who wept with me when I return’d

in chains,
Who sits beside the blessed Virgin

now,
To whom I send my prayer by night

and day —
She is gone — but you will tell the

King, that I,
Rack’d as I am with gout, and

wrench’d with pains
Gain’d in the service of His Highness,
yet

Am ready to sail forth on one last
voyage,

And readier, if the King would hear,
to lead

One last crusade against the Saracen,
And save the Holy Sepulchre from
thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted: you
have dared

Somewhat perhaps in coming? my
poor thanks!

I am but an alien and a Genovese.

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND.
A.D. 700.)

I.

I WAS the chief of the race — he had
stricken my father dead —

But I gather’d my fellows together, I
swore I would strike off his
head.

Each one of them look’d like a king,
and was noble in birth as in
worth,

And each of them boasted he sprang
from the oldest race upon earth.

Each was as brave in the fight as the
bravest hero of song,

And each of them liefer had died than
have done one another a wrong.

He lived on an isle in the ocean — we
sail’d on a Friday morn —

He that had slain my father the day
before I was born.

II.

And we came to the isle in the ocean,
and there on the shore was he.

But a sudden blast blew us out and
away thro’ a boundless sea.

III.

And we came to the Silent Isle that
we never had touch’d at before,

Where a silent ocean always broke on
a silent shore,

And the brooks glitter'd on in the light
 without sound, and the long
 waterfalls
 Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the
 base of the mountain walls,
 And the poplar and cypress unshaken
 by storm flourish'd up beyond
 sight,
 And the pine shot aloft from the crag
 to an unbelievable height,
 And high in the heaven above it there
 flicker'd a songless lark,
 And the cock couldn't crow, and the
 bull couldn't low, and the dog
 couldn't bark.
 And round it we went, and thro' it, but
 never a murmur, a breath —
 It was all of it fair as life, it was all
 of it quiet as death,
 And we hated the beautiful Isle, for
 whenever we strove to speak
 Our voices were thinner and fainter
 than any flittermouse-shriek ;
 And the men that were mighty of
 tongue and could raise such
 a battle-cry
 That a hundred who heard it would
 rush on a thousand lances and
 die —
 O they to be dumb'd by the charm !
 — so fluster'd with anger were
 they
 They almost fell on each other ; but
 after we sail'd away.

IV.

And we came to the Isle of Shouting,
 we landed, a score of wild birds
 Cried from the topmost summit with
 human voices and words ;
 Once in an hour they cried, and when-
 ever their voices peal'd
 The steer fell down at the plow and
 the harvest died from the field,
 And the men dropt dead in the valleys
 and half of the cattle went lame,
 And the roof sank in on the hearth,
 and the dwelling broke into
 flame ;
 And the shouting of these wild birds
 ran into the hearts of my crew,

Till they shouted along with the shout-
 ing and seized one another and
 slew ;
 But I drew them the one from the
 other ; I saw that we could not
 stay,
 And we left the dead to the birds and
 we sail'd with our wounded
 away.

V.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers :
 their breath met us out on the
 seas,
 For the Spring and the middle Sum-
 mer sat each on the lap of the
 breeze ;
 And the red passion-flower to the
 cliffs, and the dark-blue cle-
 matis, clung,
 And starr'd with a myriad blossom
 the long convolvulus hung ;
 And the topmost spire of the moun-
 tain was lilies in lieu of snow,
 And the lilies like glaciers winded
 down, running out below
 Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy,
 the blaze of gorse, and the
 blush
 Of millions of roses that sprang with-
 out leaf or a thorn from the
 bush ;
 And the whole isle-side flashing down
 from the peak without ever a
 tree
 Swept like a torrent of gems from the
 sky to the blue of the sea ;
 And we roll'd upon capes of crocus
 and vaunted our kith and our
 kin,
 And we wallow'd in beds of lilies,
 and chanted the triumph of
 Finn,
 Till each like a golden image was
 pollen'd from head to feet
 And each was as dry as a cricket,
 with thirst in the middle-day
 heat.
 Blossom and blossom, and promise of
 blossom, but never a fruit !
 And we hated the Flowering Isle, as
 we hated the isle that was mute,

And we tore up the flowers by the
million and flung them in bight
and bay,
And we left but a naked rock, and in
anger we sail'd away.

VI.

And we came to the Isle of Fruits :
all round from the cliffs and
the capes,
Purple or amber, dangled a hundred
fathom of grapes,
And the warm melon lay like a little
sun on the tawny sand,
And the fig ran up from the beach
and rioted over the land,
And the mountain arose like a jew-
ell'd throne thro' the fragrant
air,
Glowing with all-color'd plums and
with golden masses of pear,
And the crimson and scarlet of berries
that flamed upon bine and vine,
But in every berry and fruit was the
poisonous pleasure of wine ;
And the peak of the mountain was
apples, the hugest that ever
were seen,
And they prest, as they grew, on each
other, with hardly a leaflet be-
tween,
And all of them redder than rosiest
health or than utterest shame,
And setting, when Even descended,
the very sunset aflame ;
And we stay'd three days, and we
gorged and we madden'd, till
every one drew
His sword on his fellow to slay him,
and ever they struck and they
slew ;
And myself, I had eaten but sparely,
and fought till I sunder'd the
fray,
Then I bade them remember my
father's death, and we sail'd
away.

VII.

And we came to the Isle of Fire : we
were lured by the light from
afar,

For the peak sent up one league of
fire to the Northern Star :
Lured by the glare and the blare, but
scarcely could stand upright,
For the whole isle shudder'd and
shook like a man in a mortal
affright :

We were giddy besides with the fruits
we had gorged, and so crazed
that at last

There were some leap'd into the fire ;
and away we sail'd, and we
past

Over that undersea isle, where the
water is clearer than air :

Down we look'd : what a garden ! O
bliss, what a Paradise there !

Towers of a happier time, low down
in a rainbow deep

Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal
sleep !

And three of the gentlest and best of
my people, whate'er I could
say,

Plunged head down in the sea, and
the Paradise trembled away.

VIII.

And we came to the Bounteous Isle,
where the heavens lean low on
the land,

And ever at dawn from the cloud
glitter'd o'er us a sunbright
hand,

Then it open'd and dropt at the side
of each man, as he rose from
his rest,

Bread enough for his need till the
laborless day dipt under the
West ;

And we wander'd about it and thro'
it. O never was time so
good !

And we sang of the triumphs of
Finn, and the boast of our
ancient blood,

And we gazed at the wandering wave
as we sat by the gurgle of
springs,

And we chanted the songs of the
Bards and the glories of fairy
kings :

But at length we began to be weary,
to sigh, and to stretch and
yawn,

Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and
the sunbright hand of the
dawn,

For there was not an enemy near, but
the whole green Isle was our
own,

And we took to playing at ball, and
we took to throwing the stone,

And we took to playing at battle, but
that was a perilous play,

For the passion of the battle was in
us, we slew and we sail'd
away.

IX.

And we came to the Isle of Witches
and heard their musical cry —

“Come to us, O come, come” in the
stormy red of a sky

Dashing the fires and the shadows of
dawn on the beautiful shapes,

For a wild witch naked as heaven
stood on each of the loftiest
capes,

And a hundred ranged on the rock
like white sea-birds in a row,

And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced
on the wrecks in the sand be-
low,

And a hundred splash'd from the
ledges, and bosom'd the burst
of the spray,

But I knew we should fall on each
other, and hastily sail'd away.

X.

And we came in an evil time to the
Isle of the Double Towers,

One was of smooth-cut stone, one
carved all over with flowers,

But an earthquake always moved in
the hollows under the dells,

And they shock'd on each other and
butted each other with clashing
of bells,

And the daws flew out of the Towers
and jangled and wrangled in
vain,

And the clash and boom of the bells
rang into the heart and the brain,

Till the passion of battle was on us,
and all took sides with the
Towers,

There were some for the clean-cut
stone, there were more for the
carven flowers,

And the wrathful thunder of God
peal'd over us all the day,

For the one half slew the other and
after we sail'd away.

XI.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint
who had sail'd with St. Brendan
of yore,

He had lived ever since on the Isle
and his winters were fiftenscore,

And his voice was low as from other
worlds, and his eyes were
sweet,

And his white hair sank to his heels
and his white beard fell to his
feet,

And he spake to me, “O Maeldune,
let be this purpose of thine!

Remember the words of the Lord
when he told us ‘Vengeance is
mine!’

His fathers have slain thy fathers
in war or in single strife,

Thy fathers have slain his fathers,
each taken a life for a life,

Thy father had slain his father, how
long shall the murder last?

Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer
the Past to be Past.”

And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard
and we pray'd as we heard him
pray,

And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and
sadly we sail'd away.

XII.

And we came to the Isle we were blown
from, and there on the shore
was he,

The man that had slain my father. I
saw him and let him be.

O weary was I of the travel, the
trouble, the strife and the sin,

When I landed again, with a tithe of
my men, on the Isle of Finn.

DE PROFUNDIS:

THE TWO GREETINGS.

I.

Out of the deep, my child, out of the
 deep,
 Where all that was to be, in all that
 was,
 Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the
 vast
 Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy-
 ing light —
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the
 deep,
 Thro' all this changing world of
 changeless law,
 And every phase of ever-heightening
 life,
 And nine long months of antenatal
 gloom,
 With this last moon, this crescent —
 her dark orb
 Touch'd with earth's light — thou
 comest, darling boy ;
 Our own ; a babe in lineament and
 limb
 Perfect, and prophet of the perfect
 man ;
 Whose face and form are hers and
 mine in one,
 Indissolubly married like our love ;
 Live, and be happy in thyself, and
 serve
 This mortal race thy kin so well, that
 men
 May bless thee as we bless thee, O
 young life
 Breaking with laughter from the dark ;
 and may
 The fated channel where thy motion
 lives
 Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy
 course
 Along the years of haste and random
 youth
 Unshatter'd ; then full-current thro'
 full man ;
 And last in kindly curves, with gen-
 tlest fall,
 By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,

To that last deep where we and thou
 are still.

II.

I.

Out of the deep, my child, out of the
 deep,
 From that great deep, before our
 world begins,
 Whereon the Spirit of God moves as
 he will —
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the
 deep,
 From that true world within the world
 we see,
 Whereof our world is but the bound-
 ing shore —
 Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,
 With this ninth moon, that sends the
 hidden sun
 Down yon dark sea, thou comest,
 darling boy.

II.

For in the world, which is not ours,
 They said
 "Let us make man" and that which
 should be man,
 From that one light no man can look
 upon,
 Drew to this shore lit by the suns and
 moons
 And all the shadows. O dear Spirit
 half-lost
 In thine own shadow and this fleshly
 sign
 That thou art thou — who wailest
 being born
 And banish'd into mystery, and the
 pain
 Of this divisible-indivisible world
 Among the numerable-innumerable
 Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite
 space
 In finite-infinite Time — our mortal
 veil
 And shatter'd phantom of that infinite
 One,
 Who made thee unconceivably Thy-
 self
 Out of His whole World-self and all
 in all —

Live thou! and of the grain and husk,
 the grape
 And ivyberry, choose; and still depart
 From death to death thro' life and
 life, and find
 Nearer and ever nearer Him, who
 wrought
 Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,
 But this main-miracle, that thou art
 thou,
 With power on thine own act and on
 the world.

THE HUMAN CRY.

I.

HALLOWED be Thy name — Halle-
 luiah! —
 Infinite Ideality!
 Immeasurable Reality!
 Infinite Personality!
 Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah!

II.

We feel we are nothing — for all is
 Thou and in Thee;
 We feel we are something — *that* also
 has come from Thee;
 We know we are nothing — but Thou
 wilt help us to be.
 Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah!

PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE "NINETEENTH CENTURY."

THOSE that of late had fled to far and
 fast
 To touch all shores, now leaving to
 the skill
 Of others their old craft seaworthy still,
 Have charter'd this; where, mindful
 of the past,
 Our true co-mates regather round the
 mast;
 Of diverse tongue, but with a com-
 mon will
 Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil
 And crocus, to put forth and brave
 the blast;
 For some, descending from the sacred
 peak

Of hoar high-templed Faith, have
 leagued again
 Their lot with ours to rove the world
 about;
 And some are wilder comrades, sworn
 to seek
 If any golden harbor be for men
 In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of
 Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOK-
FIELD.

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that
 knew you best,
 Old Brooks, who loved so well to
 mouth my rhymes,
 How oft we two have heard St. Mary's
 chimes!
 How oft the Cantab supper, host and
 guest,
 Would echo helpless laughter to your
 jest!
 How oft with him we paced that walk
 of lines,
 Him, the lost light of those dawn-
 golden times,
 Who loved you well! Now both are
 gone to rest.
 You man of humorous-melancholy
 mark,
 Dead of some inward agony — is it so?
 Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past
 away!
 I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:
 Σκίᾶς ὕναρ — dream of a shadow, go —
 God bless you. I shall join you in a day.

MONTENEGRO.

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle
 sails,
 They kept their faith, their freedom,
 on the height,
 Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day
 and night
 Against the Turk; whose inroad no-
 where scales
 Their headlong passes, but his foot-
 step fails,

And red with blood the Crescent reels
 from fight
 Before their dauntless hundreds, in
 prone flight
 By thousands down the crags and
 thro' the vales.
 O smallest among peoples! rough
 rock-throne
 Of Freedom! warriors beating back
 the swarm
 Of Turkish Islam for five hundred
 years,
 Great Tsernogora! never since thine
 own
 Black ridges drew the cloud and brake
 the storm
 Has breathed a race of mightier
 mountaineers.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,
 Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes
 and fears,

French of the French, and Lord of
 human tears;
 Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit
 laurels glance
 Darkening the wreaths of all that
 would advance,
 Beyond our strait, their claim to be
 thy peers;
 Weird Titan by thy winter weight of
 years
 As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of
 France!
 Who dost not love our England — so
 they say;
 I know not — England, France, all
 man to be
 Will make one people ere man's race
 be run:
 And I, desiring that diviner day,
 Yield thee full thanks for thy full
 courtesy
 To younger England in the boy my
 son.

TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH.

Constantinus, King of the Scots, after
 having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied
 himself with the Danes of Ireland under
 Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated
 by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with
 great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year
 937.

I.

¹ATHELSTAN King,
 Lord among Earls,
 Bracelet-bestower and
 Baron of Barons,
 He with his brother,
 Edmund Atheling,
 Gaining a lifelong
 Glory in battle,

¹ I have more or less availed myself of my
 son's prose translation of this poem in the
Contemporary Review (November 1876).

Slew with the sword-edge
 There by Brunanburh,
 Brake the shield-wall,
 Hew'd the linden-wood,¹
 Hack'd the battleshield,
 Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

II.

Theirs was a greatness
 Got from their Grandsires —
 Theirs that so often in
 Strife with their enemies
 Struck for their hoards and their
 hearths and their homes.

III.

Bow'd the spoiler,
 Bent the Scotsman,

¹ Shields of lindenwood.

Fell the shipcrews
 Doom'd to the death.
 All the field with blood of the fighters
 Flow'd, from when first the great
 Sun-star of morningtide,
 Lamp of the Lord God
 Lord everlasting,
 Glode over earth till the glorious
 creature
 Sank to his setting.

IV.

There lay many a man
 Marr'd by the javelin,
 Men of the Northland
 Shot over shield.
 There was the Scotsman
 Weary of war.

V.

We the West-Saxons,
 Long as the daylight
 Lasted, in companies
 Troubled the track of the host that
 we hated,
 Grimly with swords that were sharp
 from the grindstone,
 Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before
 us.

VI.

Mighty the Mereian,
 Hard was his hand-play,
 Sparing not any of
 Those that with Anlaf,
 Warriors over the
 Weltering waters
 Borne in the bark's-bosom,
 Drew to this island :
 Doom'd to the death.

VII.

Five young kings put asleep by the
 sword-stroke,
 Seven strong Earls of the army of
 Anlaf
 Fell on the war-field, numberless
 numbers,
 Shipmen and Scotsmen.

VIII.

Then the Norse leader,
 Dire was his need of it,
 Few were his following,

Fled to his warship:
 Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king
 in it,
 Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX.

Also the crafty one,
 Constantinus,
 Crept to his North again,
 Hoar-headed hero!

X.

Slender warrant had
He to be proud of
 The welcome of war-knives —
 He that was reft of his
 Folk and his friends that had
 Fallen in confict,
 Leaving his son too
 Lost in the carnage,
 Mangled to morsels,
 A youngster in war!

XI.

Slender reason had
He to be glad of
 The clash of the war-glaive —
 Traitor and trickster
 And spurner of treaties —
 He nor had Anlaf
 With armies so broken
 A reason for bragging
 That they had the better
 In perils of battle
 On places of slaughter —
 The struggle of standards,
 The rush of the javelins,
 The crash of the charges,¹
 The wielding of weapons —
 The play that they play'd with
 The children of Edward.

XII.

Then with their nail'd prows
 Parted the Norsemen, a
 Blood-redden'd relic of
 Javelins over
 The jarring breaker, the deep-
 sea billow,
 Shaping their way toward Dy-
 flen² again,
 Shamed in their souls.

¹ Lit. "the gathering of men." ² Dublin.

XIII.

Also the brethren,
King and Atheling,
Each in his glory,
Went to his own in his own West-
Saxonland,
Glad of the war.

XIV.

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,
Many a livid one, many a fallow-
skin —
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear
it, and
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to
rend it, and
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to
gorge it, and
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

XV.

Never had huger
Slaughter of heroes
Slain by the sword-edge —
Such as old writers
Have writ of in histories —
Hapt in this isle, since
Up from the East hither
Saxon and Angle from
Over the broad billow
Broke into Britain with
Haughty war-workers who
Harried the Welshman, when
Earls that were lured by the
Hunger of glory gat
Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE
TRENCH.

ILIAD, xviii. 202.

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and
round
The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas
flung
Her fringed ægis, and around his
head
The glorious goddess wreath'd a
golden cloud,

And from it lighted an all-shining
flame.
As when a smoke from a city goes to
heaven
Far off from out an island girt by
foes,
All day the men contend in grievous
war
From their own city, but with set of
sun
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the
glare
Flies streaming, if perchance the
neighbors round
May see, and sail to help them in the
war;
So from his head the splendor went
to heaven.
From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,
nor join'd
The Achæans — honoring his wise
mother's word —
There standing, shouted, and Pallas
far away
Call'd; and a boundless panic shook
the foe.
For like the clear voice when a trum-
pet shrills,
Blown by the fierce beleaguerers of a
town,
So rang the clear voice of Æakidès;
And when the brazen cry of Æakidès
Was heard among the Trojans, all
their hearts
Were troubled, and the full-maned
horses whirl'd
The chariots backward, knowing griefs
at hand;
And sheer-astounded were the chari-
oteers
To see the dread, unweariable fire
That always o'er the great Peleion's
head
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess
made it burn.
Thrice from the dyke he sent his
mighty shout,
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans
and allies;
And there and then twelve of their
noblest died
Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA
ON HER MARRIAGE.

O you that were eyes and light to the
King till he past away
From the darkness of life —
He saw not his daughter — he blest
her: the blind King sees you
to-day,
He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER
ABBEY.

Not here! the white North has thy
bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thine happier voyage
now
Toward no earthly pole.

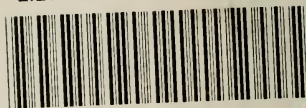
TO DANTE.

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLORENTINES.)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years, and grown
In power, and ever growest, since thine own
Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,
I, wearing but the garland of a day,
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 546 513 8