



Songs
from Edgewood
Stephen Henry Thayer



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SONGS FROM EDGEWOOD

By

STEPHEN HENRY THAYER

Author of "Songs of Sleepy Hollow," etc.



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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Published, November, 1902

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Many of these poems have been printed in periodicals and magazines; a number of them, however, have never been submitted to the test of publication.

EDGEWOOD, *December, 1902.*

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THE HOME OF THE POCANTICO

DOWN from the cliffs of Ossining,
 Into the hollows below,
Vexed as with alternate passion and pain,
 Flows the river Pocantico.
Surging, eddying, veering in vain,
 It dances and delves, a thing of life;
 It sleeps in pools, it bickers in strife,
And turns on itself again and again
Over the cliffs of Ossining,
 Into the hollows below.

Down from the cliffs of Ossining,
 Out of the hollows below,
Far through fallow and glen it glides,
 Heavy with sighs, as loth to go;
Hushed in the haunted wood it hides,
 Lonesome for love of its springs afar
 Up in the hills, where the evening star
Drops fire-threads over silvery slides —
Down on the cliffs of Ossining,
 Down in the hollows below.

O for the cliffs of Ossining!
O for the hollows below!
The stones uprise in watery guise,
And build their mimic bars arow;
The driftwood rallies, yeomanwise,
As if to stay the helpless river
That downward flows forever and ever,—
That whispers, and moans, and faintly cries:
“O for the cliffs of Ossining!
O for the hollows below!”

Far from the cliffs of Ossining,
Far from the hollows below,
It lags through marshy meadow and lea
With leaden feet, and heart as slow,
As if in dread of the thirsty sea—
The sea that drinks and drinks for aye,
Through all the centuries and a day—
The waters that flow eternally
Down from the cliffs of Ossining,
Down from the hollows below!

DRINK DEEP, O EYES! DRINK DEEP, O
VEINS!

ENTRANCÈD, in dim night, I gaze,
As vagrant wandering idle ways,
With brain beguiled to deeps of slumberous
draughts;

Sleep foldeth me in drowsy maze,
My senses lulled by soft, ambrosial wafts
Of airs from dreamland, foldeth me
In mists as on a vaporous sea.

Unbidden are these opiate charms
That lure the soul to listless calms,
That lay all burning passions of the mind;
Sirens, that wind their covert arms
About my willing spirit, witchingly they wind,
Then whisper, magic-tongued, until
They snare me captive, spite of will.

Yet vanish not away, weird sprites,
Invisible in day's fierce lights,
Wait ye on me; I would that ye might weave

Your spells about my troublous nights,
 About my fearful fancy; e'en deceive
Me to unconsciousness, as erst,
In child days, I was fondly nursed.

And, Love, inveigle me to try
Thy fate, till from a breathless sigh
 The spectral eyes of some fair, phantom face
Shall steal down, azure as the sky,
 To fade and vanish from my shadowy gaze;
So I shall grieve as one alone,
As homeless winds that moan and moan.

Thou hast thy joys, O wandering Brain!
How lightly art thou vexed with pain,
 When in the stilly hours thy tangled thought
Flies, wing-shod, through the meshy skein
 Of many a devious web, or, near distraught,
Goes tripping blindly through vague years
Of time, and chance, and mythic tears.

And thou, O Sleep, art serpent-wise;
When ecstasy hath dazed mine eyes,
 Or fancy builded Heaven-touched fanes to draw
My thought, half-drunken, to the skies,
 Then thou redeemest, by thy silent law,
The mind o'erwrought and ledest it
To bring truth to its homelier wit.

Thou night of sleep dost balance ill,
Dost aid, with nice, adjusting skill,
 By happy arts, to win from wantonness
The trembling nerves that throb and thrill;
 To hold men bound, and yet to free and bless
As some divinity; enchain
And slave me, so to free again!

Drink deep, O eyes! Drink deep, O veins!
For blood is purer for your gains;
 The clod shall find its swifter feet and wing,
The soul shall quicken heart and brains,
 The spirit wake with new-born notes to sing,
And Love shall come with sweeter kiss,
To measure out its matchless bliss.
Drink deep, O eyes! Drink deep, O veins!

EUROPA

GREAT Sovereign of the earth and sea,
Whose sceptre shall forever be
The reign, supreme, of Liberty,
Draw Thou the veil that dims our sight; light Thou
our eyes,
That we may see!

Beyond the waters, east and west,
Six giant legions ominous rest,
Equipped and armed from sole to crest;
The burdened nations groan and reel, and listen for
The dread behest.

The Ottoman, by the Ægean tide
Is bonded; there the navies ride
And train their armaments to bide
The menace from the eagle's north, or who will dare
The kings allied.

The cringing Sultan can but wait
The will of other crowns; his fate
Is graven in the hearts that hate

And tremble at his wasting power,—the curse of
men,—

So weak, so great.

His doom is written in the skies;

His Orient Empire palsied lies,

And still and still he crucifies

The last bare hope that yet might save, and mocks
his knell,

And still defies.

I hear the empires muttering now,

The northern Cæsar keeps his vow,

And waits and wills both where and how

His sheathless sword shall smite at last; he waits,
and knits

His iron brow.

I see the Austrians mustering where

The Adriatic's waters glare,

Or by the Danube; and they swear

Eternal vigilance against the Cossack hordes

So sleepless there.

The crafty Chancellor, outworn,

Who guards the German State, in scorn

Watches the French frontier—his thorn;

Looks north to the Crimean gates, and eastward to

The Golden Horn.

Europa waits the signal; swells
Imperial armies; still compels—
From Britain to the Dardanelles—
Fresh millions to her warrior camps, and millions
more
For ships and shells.

Till on her mighty martial field
The greatest product she can yield
Are armèd men and sword and shield:
Whole nations bent and strung for what? O Lord,
Thy thought
Is still concealed!

Great Sovereign of the earth and sea,
Whose sceptre shall forever be
The reign, supreme, of Liberty,
Draw Thou the veil that dims our sight; light Thou
our eyes,
That we may see!

IN THE AUTUMN GARDEN-CLOSE

I N the autumn garden-close
Neither lily nor the rose
Greets me, nor can one there see
Fruit or foliage on the tree:
In the boughs no birds shall sing,—
Southward flew they, fleet of wing,
While along the crannied wall
Prone the vine,—its leaves let fall;
There the sere and pallid stocks,
Robbed of sheaves and silken shocks,
Ghostly stand, and by the hedge,
Rifled of its blood-stained pledge,
Lies the strawberry bed, alas!
Tangled in the weedy grass;
In the autumn garden-close
All is lifeless as the rose!

In the autumn garden-close,
Where the lily and the rose
Lifeless lie like some lost bliss,
Dream I of a fancied kiss;

There a faintly visioned form —
Lily-white, yet rosy-warm —
Leans against the parapet,
Thrilling all my being yet;
Phantom feet tread lightly there;
Sunshine melts in golden hair;
Airy songs escape sweet lips,
Fairy, tapering finger-tips
Pluck the lily and the rose
In the autumn garden-close.

There a gracious smile once stirred
My fool-heart to say the word;
There — ah! there I whispered low,
“Love,” to which she answered “No!”
“No,” that made the garden-close
Desolate as winter snows!

Yet, I cannot tell you why,
In that place — though now shall sigh
Drearly the autumn winds,—
My mute loneliness still finds
Love — though lifeless as the rose —
Sacred in its garden-close.

ECCE SIGNUM !

(IN MEMORY OF E. C. K.)

I N the dark night, the night of sleep,
I, gazing upward through the deep,
See thee, pale moon, thy vigil keep.

Thou hauntest earth though thou art dead;
A wandering spectre, garmented
In ghostly lustre overhead.

Marvel, O heart, that death can hold
Such fire, drawn from the burning gold
Of the great sun, and yet be cold;

That death, so clothed in radiant light,
A glory in the gloom of night,
Is yet itself but dust and blight.

Sweet face! thou, too, dost sacred shine,
Though dead; foreshadowing some divine,
Undying beauty, as a sign

That death is life beyond—afar,
Reviving in some peerless star,
Where souls beloved immortal are.

AURORA'S GIFT TO TITHONUS

AND thou, Tithonus, wouldst thou live for aye?
The gods will mock thee in thy vast desire:
Couldst thou but know the bitterness that falls
To lonely hearts, thou wouldst not make thy plea
For earth's poor moiety when Heaven is thine!
These are thy dreamful days when fair eyes gleam
As stars, and airy songs are tipped with love;
When every springtide zephyr doth diffuse
Its sweet intoxicant from roses, rare;
When morn is jewelled with an amber dew,
Whose every drop reflects a golden world.
Thy heart hath never known impassioned days
Pale to the sere; thy brow hath never borne
The burden of parched noon, nor thy leal thought
The soul-sick chill of loss, irreparable;
If, by the slightest tilt, some glittering prize
Hath fallen from thy grasp, a luminous hope
Hath lightened up the way wherein it fell,
And, shining on it there, hath won it back.
Swift fancy spans thy blithesome world for thee,
And deftly turns it round and round,—a spell

Of wonder to thy radiant eyes—to fill
Thy being with delight; sweet murmurings
The wanton brook sings to thy listening ear:
Wild echoings from feathered throats outburst
To thrill thine eager nerves with ecstasy!
And thus, Tithonus, life enchants thy soul.
Oh, who would talk of death 'mid such fair days!

'T is well; long may thy trysting heart be glad.
Yet the grim shadows will their darkness bring;
Clear skies will overcast betimes, the bright
Sun vanish in eclipse, and the pale moon
Gleam no more on lover eyes. Joy will flee;
Woes will come; Memory then will weave its thoughts
Of years outlived, and mend with fragile thread
The tattered remnants of lost time. The torch
Of hope will fade to gloom, the hours of love
To darkness. Thou must bear the growing weight
While ever lessening strength will mark thy life.
Deem not the gods unkind; they cannot fill
Disconsolate hearts with buoyance, nor retrieve
The waste that overtakes the mortal frame.
Thy limbs, Tithonus, bear mortality.
Couldst thou command a stay—block the huge globe
That now revolves in circled grooves of time,
Decay would still leave cankering mould on all,—
Pale Death blight beauty's charm with its dread touch!

So Earth would make fresh graves for all—save thee.
Thou canst not change the bitterness of earth;
And yet its loneliness is lit by stars
That glimmer in the sullen dark,—Heaven's stars!
What undergloom must veil the soul foredoomed
To mock its longing with a hopeless fate!

This prison-house of time bequeaths a boon;
Its boltless doors—ajar—are hinged to move,
And swinging wide, shall free, at last, the soul!
It cannot languish alway; destiny,
So large, has marked for it high, infinite
Beatitudes that widen to the light.
How can it live forever here on sweets
Sipped to the barren husk? how can it bear
Reviving worn-out dreams of bitterness,
Or death without its sacred elegy,—
Without a prophecy of life beyond?

O brave heart, now so soon to fall away!
Thou, fair Aurora, tinged with morning fire,—
So gifted, yet so light,—see'st thou the gloom
That crowns Tithonus' drooping head e'en now?
And thou, whose love-born pleadings won her grace,
Dost thou not feel the arrow that must pierce
Worse than the barb of death? And dost forget
The high transmission of the soul to Heaven?

So, so, Tithonus, 't is thy triumph day,—
Thou weav'st the net that evermore must hold
Thy spirit to its clay-built walls. Think not
Of any future joy,—of life divine,—
That soars persistent in a flameless day;
Thy home is earth. O life in death, 't is thine!

Another and another shall depart
Until no friend shall greet thee, no loved guest
Shall tread thy chambers, and thy lonely walls
Shall break in hollow tones; an ancient voice
Shall moan of vanished years in murmurs low,
Till eyes shall dim, and ears shall dull, and lips
Be mute, and ghostly thoughts shall die away:
No odorous zephyrs—to thy deadened sense—
Shall bring thee sweets; thy slackened form shall
shrink,

Thy nerves shall palsy, and thy flickering mind,
Like some spent taper, burn to nothingness;
Still, thou, Tithonus, creeping up and down,
A spectral apparition, wan and faint,
Shall cling to the pale shadow of thy life.

O Immortality, so mocked! O Hope,
So palled that the jet wings of night are white!
O black and fathomless abyss, endless
Of time! O Misery, where every spark

Of faith and love is blotted out of day!
Yet never end to come,—crumbling to dust
Forever and forever! This thy boon—
Goddess of Light—to brave Tithonus given;
Earth, earth forever; never, never Heaven!

IN THE HOUSE WHERE WE DWELL

I N the house where we dwell,
Lo, a shadow dwelleth now;
Knowest thou when, dark, it fell?
Can thy lips its secret tell?

Wilt thou answer—ay, wilt thou—
In the house where we dwell?

In the house where we dwell,
Love's words murmured their dead vow!
Knowest thou, or canst thou tell
Where love, prone and dying, fell—
By what secret weapon—how,
In the house where we dwell?

In the house where we dwell,
Dost recall the answer low,
When thy lover's last words fell?
What was it, heart, canst thou tell
Of the love that loved thee so—
In the house where we dwell?

In the house where we shall dwell,
In its gates beyond our reach,

From whose height lost angels fell,
Shall love, there, our souls impel,—
 Bind us, spirits, each to each,—
In the house where we shall dwell?

A SONG FROM SLEEPY HOLLOW

COVET I no laden barges
Of rich stuffs from India's coast,
No strong wines or wasted largess
Dainty epicures may boast;
Care I not for these, or any
Sweet beguilements for the many.

Musing by these limpid waters,
Rest I, with a heart at ease;
Not the Orient and the lotus,
With their paradise of peace,
Could console my spirit's dreaming,
As this spring-tide forest teeming.

Over pebbly shoals, in laughter,
Sings the brook, or in the deeps
Lies in pools, and sighs in softer
Lulls of music where it sleeps,
Much like any child, uncaring
How the troubled world is faring.

Low winds whisper where the nestlings
Tip the twigs against the blue,
And the hermit in the west sings—
Sweeter notes I never knew—
Notes from some diviner psalter
Than from templed choir or altar.

Envy I no jaded spirit
Wandering from mart to mart,
Listening — though he never hear it —
For the song that fills my heart;
I, who haunt this dreamland, cherish
Loves that in the world would perish.

THE VIOLIN

FROM out the open casement near,
Ecstatic strains subdue the ear—
Mingling with moonlight, mild and clear.

No harper, nay, nor magic flute,
No dulcimer nor languid lute—
Nor bugle—with its brave salute,—

Nor any martial music blown
By trumpeter soever known,
(Or e'er the impulse of its tone,)

Can match the matchless violin,
As from the casement there within
Its wizard lyre lulls other din.

What overtures its spirit makes!
What slumb'rous memories it wakes—
As wooing, wailing, sobbing, breaks

Upon the stillness of the night
Those weird heartrendings of delight—
Transmuting darkness into light!

Its voice—a human cry—portends
Of mythic ills, and vaguely blends
With breathings—tragic-wrought—or lends

A spell, like murmuring, midnight toll —
Prophetic of a dreaded dole
Lamenting to the listening soul!

Now from its throat a vibrant air—
High pitched—as if in piteous prayer—
Turns wantonly to laughter there;

Now deftly falls to accents, faint;
The viol-chords, in hushed constraint,
Plead tremulous—a lover's plaint:

Fear—hopeless of a hovering fate—
As 't were hope born a moment late,
Intreats Love to compassionate;

Then treacherous storms—tempestuous—fall
Athwart its strings, that frenzied—call
In mad confusion, and inthrall

The trancèd spirit with their pain,
And stir the heart till it seem fain
To beat as it were passion-slain!

So love, and hate, and tears, and scorn, —
Midnight despair and rosy morn,
And rapture, laughter, all are born

To leap—succeeding—in a throng
Of suppliant tones—or fierce or strong—
From this witch'd instrument of song!

THE SWORD

OVER the mantel hangs the sword,
Sheathed in scabbard, dented and old;
Red scarf—tasselled and faded there—
Clings to the hilt; never a word,
All its battles are left untold;
Fighting and blood, or when or where,
The sword speaks not, the sword is great:
Silence is gold when acts are fate!

Blood, did you say? Ay—death on death!
Who knows? Where is the wearer now—
He whose right arm wielded it then?
Dust! with the host that breathed the breath
Of the battle years, when the nation's vow
Foredoomed the lives of a million men.
Silent! Ah yes! The man who led
With horse and yonder sword, is dead!

Who can tell of its flashing blade?
Who confess the valor it taught?
Where are the ranks that followed its lead?

Where are the fields of carnage laid ?
Where are the hearts that back of it fought ?
On what page is written their meed ?
Silent the men and their battle-cry—
They who challenged their fate—to die!

Powerless now on the panelled wall;
Nerveless,—smitten like its master's hand;
Flash gone out of its tempered steel
Since it lay on its master's pall;
Bound no more by the red scarf band
Near the heart that it once could feel;
Never to mix again in the din—
Or in the van to lose or to win!

Peace is carved on the rusty sword;
Peace is wrought in the silent stone;
Memory crowned by Love's true art:
Battle and Victory speak no word;
Sword art thou of the spirit of one
Whom death enshrines in the reverent heart!
Love and Honor gleam from thy blade;
Battle and Victory fade and fade!

NO MORE EVER MORE!

I DREAMT as one entranced;
I was in a garden-close;
Stooping, I gathered—it chanced—
A red, red rose.

A rose—as oft before
I had plucked for another's hand,
In the far-off days of yore,
In a far-off land.

Drooping, it fell from my grasp;
Withered, it lay on its bed;
I leaned and reached to clasp
Its stem;—it was dead!

It mouldered to dust,—the rose,—
And the breeze its odors bore
To her (so I dreamt, who knows?)
Sighing: “Love no more!”

I awoke; the stars shone bright;
A hushed sea-breath from the shore
Whispered a vow to the night:
“I love ever more!”

FAITH

ALONE she bears the mystic flame,—
A torch that like a star doth gleam;
A leader, she, without a name:
Alone she bears the mystic flame.

A darkness falls across her way;
Her face is rapt as in a dream.
Perchance she murmurs, “Where is day?”

She walks afar;—none other near,
Yet by her side speed silent feet;
Strange voices fall on her fine ear.

She leads the way that man shall tread,—
Whose centuries time the ceaseless beat
Of living following the dead;
She leads the way that man shall tread.

O TIME!

(A SONG)

THE path led through a haunted wood,
That, erstwhile, bore thy sandalled feet;
O'er pebbly brook, at lover's mood,
Through mazy wilds, by murmurs sweet,
It trailed the dreamy solitude.

It wound within the brooding deep,
It rested by a mossy base
Beneath the wide-armed oak, where creep
The tangled vines that interlace;
Where maiden ferns a covert keep;

It stole through yonder open vale;
It curved about a sudden steep
Where soft airs whisper, or winds wail
Such songs as make the spirit weep,
Or lash it to a kindred gale.

But now the grasses overgrow;
No maiden waits my coming there;
The brooklet laughs, as long ago,
Yet, yet, I never more would dare
To breathe thy name; thou wouldst not know.

The path is lost to thee and me.

O Time, sleep on in hushed repose:
Vain eyes, be blind, ye cannot see!

Nay, let the dull heart ache; it knows
That never more our love can be.

STRANGERS

I MAY not lisp it e'en to a spirit,—
I, who 've a cloister of my own;
Shut in its chrysalis none can hear it—
The exiled thought I'd think alone:
Inviolate; — never a password sent
Betrays my secret or its intent.

Nor can I read the heart that's near to me;
Snare it in its stilly recess;
Fathom its wish,— its love that's dear to me;
These, mayhap, I can only guess:
Mured in its temple there it may be—
Far as the stars and deep as the sea!

Little know we—each one—of the other;
Only now and again a spark
Lightens the way to the soul—to smother;
Lost in the silence and the dark!
Friends—and yet we go all the years through
Keeping hushed vigils;—O if we knew!

YE MOUNTAINS

YE mountains, I know ye—O monarchs of earth
and years,

Enthroned in the clouds and peerlessly crowned as
the seers;

Grim prophets are ye over limitless vistas of space;

Ye are lordlier than the princely peers of the race;

Steadfast as sovereigns are ye; calm as kingdoms are
calm

When demons of death would arise in riot to harm!

Peaks so wild have ye, and minarets marvellously steep,

(Where flashing bolts of fire, like battling armies afar,

Smite fierce, whose thunderings break from frowning
crest and spar

O'er cavernous passes, sheer and tragically deep,)

That—trembling—I'm awed of ye and th' unseen

Lord of the hills;

Quivering as the harp in the storm-wind quivers and
thrills!

O summits of earth, where glory and splendor avail,

Whose heavens are charged, where immanent tem-
pests assail,

I know, ay, I know that the gales of the wide, wild
sea

Call up their defiance and shout, "We are free, we
are free!"

But your crags send heralds to mock in scorn their
refrain

What time their banners advance in their chariot-
train;

These shall ye smite in your fury again and again;
Disarm and vanquish them—hurling them back to
the plain!

I haste to your heights from the dusky valleys of lust;
I scale your cliffs and copings of adamant crust,
Afar from the drudgings of earth and lurings of gain,
Up to your palace of light and castles of rain.

O might, colossus, and majesty moulded in one!—
Ye that face the stars and challenge the infinite sun,—
From glory to gloom and from gloom to glory ye
rise,

Through Alpine frost and through firmament fire, to
the skies;

Through æons of time—through strange mutations
of time—

Forever ye stand encompassed in beauty sublime!

REMINISCENCE

WE were young in those halcyon years:
O the laughter that lurked in her eyes!
There was bliss in her heart; there were tears;
There were Love's intercedings and sighs
Ere the intricate world made us wise
Since those halcyon, far-away years.

O the laughter that lurked in her eyes!
And the song from her lips! ay so sweet
Are its echoes, birdlike, that arise,
Waking memories, fragile and fleet,
Waking bitterness strangely unmeet
Of the laughter that lurked in her eyes.

There was bliss in her heart, there were tears;
And the beauty,—the light in her face!
A vision that ever appears;
A wondrous marvel of grace!
I remember the lingering delays;
There was bliss in her heart, there were tears.

There were Love's intercedings and sighs;
There was Hope with its saddened refrain,
Like the rose in the bosom that dies;
Like a joy that covers a pain
When the ultimate vestige is vain—
Of Love's intercedings and sighs.

Yes, the intricate world made us wise:
Still—still would I—brooding alone,
Hear the pleadings of Love,—the replies,—
When she gave me her lips and her zone
In our trystings, ere Cupid had flown,—
Ere the intricate world made us wise!

NIGHT WATCHES

ABOVE the hills the opal sky —
A burnished shield—o'erfloods with gold
The summits; bends to beautify
The plain, and bathes the winter wold
In one last fringe of light
Before the shades of night!

The dark veil deepens as dull woe
On dreading souls; not suddenly,
But stealing hope with omens, slow:
So fades the light on land and sea!

VOICE OF THE WIND-HARP

I AM a harp whose chords are drawn
To serenade the waking morn:
I murmur paternosters while
The sun reflects its hidden smile,
And whisper—when the day is shy—
In sighs of softest minstrelsy.

I answer to the mournful breeze
In low, pathetic melodies,
As if the sad caress were set
To soothe despair or chide regret;
I breathe the spirit—tameless, free,—
Of winds that smite the tragic sea,
And beat in phantom waves, that sweep
Along its own unfathomed deep;
I claim a kinship with the North,
And signal ghostly echoes forth
That wail whene'er its tempests wail
Against the wrecks of mast and sail;
I hear the forest dip its crest
To storms that prey from east to west,

And stir with sympathies that wake
In tremulous rapture when they break;
I hear the diapason swell
Within my soul at lawless knell
Of thunder crashing in the hills;
I feel the hand that calms and stills.

Lo from the south the breezes bear
Their tropic fleet from odors rare,
And laden every beckoning stem
With buds that throb to welcome them;
How blithely now the wooing note
O'erfloods the misty hills and moat,
And tells a tale of wingèd love
To birdling maidens far above;
How glad the music from my strings
Leaps upward on unpinioned wings,
For spring-tide fills and thrills again,
And joy shall hush the harp of pain!

LOVE AND DEATH

I CANNOT speak the word to her disburdened ear,
Nor stir her marble breast, nor challenge one lost
tear;

The voice would fall unheard, for my Love would not
hear.

I cannot speak the word, nor would she understand
The pall that overhangs and darkens all the land,—
That stays me when I grasp her dear, unfeeling hand.

If she could know the blight that desolates my heart,
Could she—ay could she—then one burning glance
impart?

It cannot be; nay, nay; Death has a fateful dart!

Love burns the glowing cheek; Love speaks in flash-
ing word;

Love thrills and thrills again as song-note thrills the
bird;

Love moans, though it shall know it never will be
heard!

So calm and pale she is, like moonlight overhead;
So silent while I weep for one whom Heaven has wed:
My heart—my heart will break for my Love lying
dead!

IN THE CATHEDRAL

SHE stole to the portal, stood
And gazed as in a dream;
The priest in gown and hood
Passed in the shadowy gleam;
The flickering tapers light
The dim cathedral night.

Unseen she passed the door,
Up through the aisle, and fell
On her knees on the floor;
The chimes pealed out a knell;
The priest in the chancel there
Drearly droned a prayer.

Her face, like the marble tile,
An ashen pallor shed;
She muttered words the while
As lips speak to the dead;
Her eyes were hopelessly sad;
She seemed heart-broke — or mad!

A stillness bound the air;
The echoing arches slept;
Like spectral sentinels there
The giant pillars kept
A hushed watch through the place—
The dark and hollow space.

Hark! from the hidden loft—
Scarce heard—a throb awakes;
Such music falls—as soft
As harp-chords! now it breaks
The thirsty silence—fills
The choir—the vast arch thrills!

It sweeps the groined height;
It frees her fettered soul;
She feels her spirit's flight
Beyond her faint control;
She feels the icy band
Cleft by an unseen hand.

Prayer breathed from heart and lip;
In ecstasy she caught
Its power from finger-tip
To inmost soul! it wrought
A glory in her face—
Lit by diviner grace.

Sweet faith, that erst-while slept,
Now burned in mystic flame;
Her heart its rapture wept
And banished all its shame;
She heard ethereal wings;-
Glad angels touched the strings!

THE PORTRAIT

IF e'er love challenges thy heart
To paint my face when I am dead,
I pray thee draw the veil apart
And paint the inner light instead;
Deem not thy touch a happy one
To catch some transient gleam or tone,
An aimless smile, a fleeting ray,
Or trifles groōved in meaner clay,
With all the finer essence gone.

Our souls so stained and wanton weak,
So tempered are to earthly mood,
That half the words we tamely speak
Are destitute of faith or good;
Our passions are so mixed with ills,
And burn so low, our wayward wills
So vexed by rude and lawless lust,
Our eyes so leaden with the dust,
That Heaven's pure radiance rarely thrills.

So picture not these alien signs
To thy mute love, which craves the best;

Efface from memory's generous lines

The grosser taints that mar the rest,
Lest—dwelling in the thought of these—
Thy spirit may not find release

To search within for that lost art
Which writes its meaning in the heart,
With no estranged device to please.

If thou recallest one dear thought

Which flashed to thee the love I bore,
Illumine it, as once it wrought

Its image in my life before;
Lend it the spell that won thy grace,
The fire that tinged thy beauteous face;
One regal touch that still shall wed
Thy being to thy loved one, dead,
And consecrate the empty place!

For what is skill, or what indeed—

The arts inviolate, that draw
In flawless lines, and yet must need
Forget the spirit in the law?

O, paint one longing look from me,
Of Love's eyes, passion-strained to see;
'T will be more worth than half the world
Of canvas ever yet unfurled,—
One soul-lit glance 'twixt thee and me!

TO THE VICTOR

QUESTION

O TELL me by what marvel feat
Thou 'st gained at last this sovereign seat;
What radiance shone upon thy course;
What trumpet-music—from what source—
Fell on thine eager ear to thrill
Thy tireless will?

O tell me what strong wings were thine
To lift thee; by what deft design
Thou 'st mastered mere and waste, to tread
These glittering summits overhead;
What mystic wand or fortune's star
Led thee afar?

REPLY

No mystic wand, no wings,—ah me!—
No fortune's star could I foresee,
Nor any beaconing of the way
Transformed the darkness into day;
No marvel feat, nay,—all of these
I paid in fees.

Yet vanward-seen, beyond me, wound
A pathless trail that scorned the ground;
 And as I went, before me pressed
 Undaunted feet that took no rest;
From the still stars a voice, unheard,
My spirit stirred,—

And—seeming—these, from out the deeps,—
Led upward to the shining steeps;
 The gloom of earth, the pall of night,
 Bereft and vanquished, took their flight,
And victory came; but naught of mine;
Nay, naught of mine!

THE TREES

WHAT is the wisdom taught of the trees?
Something of energy, something of ease;
Steadfastness rooted in passionless peace.

Life—giving verdure to upland and glen;
Graces—compelling the praises of men;
Freedom that bends to the eagle and wren.

Largess—expanding in ripeness and size;
Shadow that shelters the foolish and wise;
Patience that buffets all winds of the skies.

Uprightness—standing for truth like a tower;
Dignity—symbol of honor and power;
Beauty that blooms in the ultimate flower!

THE MASTER

“HO for a song!” the master cried.
“The day is dying, sing me a song;
Something to daunt the eventide;
Something to speed the twilight, long.

“Sing me a song of halcyon days,
When life was set to happy rhymes;
Something of love in the sylvan Mays,—
Of memories sweet as the Minster-chimes.”

The slave crouched low at his master's feet,
Weary of heart, with downcast eyes;
He heard the chime of the Minster beat
Its solemn hymnal to the skies;

His weird voice stirred the slumb'rous air
In breathings like a smothered sigh,
As broodingly, with careless care,
He hummed the stave of a lullaby.

He crooned a minstrel-lay of love,—
Of love that he had never shared;
And into tender cadence wove
The happiness he 'd never dared.

Singing, he felt the bonds he wore;
Their legacy of toil and scourge;
Their bitterness and chastening, sore,
Which hushed his love song to a dirge.

Ever the fate of a hopeless gloom;
Ever the weight of a pitiless arm
To brave and bear, till the day of doom,
But never love with its healing balm.

When, lo, his quickening pulses thrilled
His spirit with impassioned fire!
Until the night—subdued and stilled—
Seemed harkening to his living lyre.

His words were winged; his vibrant song—
Upborne on tides of inward flame—
Out-heralded his sense of wrong
And triumphed o'er the badge of shame.

The master—listening—bowed his head;
The night crept on in shadows grim;
The song to silence falling, shed
A nameless influence over him.

And from the portal—awed—he stole;
Pacing the night with visage grave,
He passed this sentence on his soul:
“He is the master, I, the slave!”

ALONE

THE rooms are silent; the strange guests,
Who thronged but now, are gone:
The laughters cease; the music rests
Its rhythmic feet; alone
I watch the embers die,
And hear the night wind sigh.

The bright glare pales; the shadows fall
Athwart the casement squares,
And all the shapes are wrapt in pall;
A gloom my faint heart shares;
I feel the deepening shade
Within my bosom laid.

The silent rooms are dreary space
Filled with a ghostly throng,
But in the dimness is a face
That leaves me never long,—
A haunting face, and sweet,
Which I no longer greet.

The empty rooms may throng again
With living guests, and oft

The laughters ring; the music's strain
Break with its murmurs, soft;
But what is voice and lute
When one loved voice is mute?

They cannot know my hidden bruise
Who their light homage pay;
They think me rude when I refuse
To sing my songs of May;
They cannot know the deeps
From which my song-note leaps.

Yet I shall join the throng and sing
On many a gala day;
Shall sing my songs to soothe the sting,
But not the songs of May:
Then hear the night wind sigh,
And watch the embers die!

THE WISE WORLDLING

COMPLETE like Grecian art; defined
In wisdom; versed in all the schools;
He knows tradition—who designed
The antiques; all the expert's rules;
Has conned the classic age and tongue;
Can quote all sages read and sung.

Of form and beauty he would teach
The acme of the artist's thought;
So, too, in manners, breeding, speech,
A true Adonis deftly wrought;
He's master of the daintiest laws
Of etiquette; permits no flaws.

The patterns of the world in him
Are matched; in elegance a kind
Of nimbus crowns his head, though dim;
A self-complacency of mind
Looms up—a condescending way
That says, "I'm not of common clay."

The nicest platitudes are his,—
Sir Oracle in word and pen;

In critiques on utilities,
He knows beyond the vulgar ken;
In style, in fashions, in the games,
Eclipses all the lesser fames.

Spencerian — he's solved the doubt
Of origin, and scorns the creeds;
'T is evolution, out and out;
'T is dirt must answer all our needs;
And Nature! — why, her utmost laws
Exist, and that's their primal cause!

Ah, Egotist! earth's world-wise man,
Blind as the night, dead as the moon!
He knows too much who knows the plan
Of the Great Infinite, so soon.
Though to the central seas he'd bore,
With his dull bit, he'd miss the core.

IN SPIRIT

OUR hands may never press, nor palms
Clasp—plighting,—nor outstretching arms,
Nor eyes one instant cross and meet
To wed swift thoughts with wingèd feet.

Our lips may never meet; in vain
Our orphaned souls hive heartless gain,
While we go separate on our ways
Through the mist-veil of earthly days.

MYSTÈRE

THEY will clasp and greet from year to year,
Neither to know of the other's fear;
Their voices may blend, yet ever unknown,
Each journeys apart, bereft and alone.

They will clasp and greet, but neither will dare
To know the other's secret despair;
Strangers are they, though bounden by fate;
Betrothed, foresworn; ay, never to mate!

SONG OF THE SEA

I SEAWARD gaze for the tardy rain;
The tempest broods in the sky;
The sea-gulls toss on the surge like a pain,
And the heavy north winds sigh;
I listen and hear the billows rave
In the caverned cliffs ashore;
I listen to hear a voice on the wave,
But it speaks to me no more.

A galleon sailed to the underworld,
One day, in a gold mist clad;
The chanting breeze swept the sails, unfurled,
In musical cadences glad.
My pulses beat with a fear unsaid,
With a farewell over the sea;
And now I moan with the winds for the dead,—
For a Love that is lost to me.

No more the rose from its scented heart
Breaks forth in blossom again;
No crown of lilies mocks with its art
The heart of love that is slain.

For over the sea, in calm and storm,
 In mist or the midnight gloom,
I, gazing, wis that a lover's form
 Is wrought in the shadowy loom.

And watching the sea through the golden haze,
 With its silver sails unfurled,
I, fancying, dream through desolate days,
 Of the ship from the underworld.
Yet I know—I know my Love is dead,
 Though the sea may never own
That it laid my Love in its fathomless bed
 And left me to moan and moan!

O REALIST!

THINE is an arid mind, untaught
Of dreamy vistas stretching o'er
Fair aisles for fancy to explore,
Or through seductive lures of thought
Illumined by the poet's lore.

Barren of wistful musings thou,
(Weird offsprings of the solitudes,)
Of rapt delights, of darkling broods;
Unused to passion's heightened vow,
Or flashes from its splendid moods.

Thou singest not of Paradise,
Outbreathings from a soulful lyre;
No gleams betokening heart of fire
With visage set to visioned eyes;
No hidden ardors of desire.

Thou dost defy these signs of Heaven;
Deny the fearful throes of prayer,
And fearful joys the soul would share,
By which the soul is purged and shriven
Of lowly taints and stagnant air,—

O Realist!

BEYOND

THE vast Beyond,—how alien it seems;
I, dwelling here in dust and blight,
Can only fathom it in my dreams.

I listen; nought but the silences speak;
I cannot know the way, the where;
My vision fails, and my faith is weak.

I wander alone beneath the stars,
And breathe the whisper of a prayer;
But the veil is drawn beyond the bars.

In vain I grope for the signal mark;
Here is the tomb, yonder the light;
Forever I doubt 'twixt day and dark.

YONDER

O FOR the Silences! O for the Solitudes!
Hurrying men so noisy are!
Hear the loud world vaunt of its folly-broods!
Lo the sereneness of a star!

Baseborn shall hourly shout us their thunders;
Brave souls hushed to whispers are;
Earth shall eternally boast its rude wonders;
O for the stillness of a star!

Down the broad thoroughfares millions make clamor;
Yonder—silence is divine!
Clash in thy tumults, O nations in armor!
Peace, be still, O spirit of mine!

MIDSUMMER ODE TO INDOLENCE

SWEET loiterer thou, O Indolence,
 Becalmèd guest of soul and sense!
 I crown thee as my happy chance,
 Thou easer of all circumstance.

Too lax art thou to laugh or sigh,
 Too listless with inert content
To ask the world for what, or why,
 Or on whose mission, thou art sent.

Unhappy questioners may haste,
With tireless word and will, to waste
 Their prying craft on strange inquests;
 Thou heedest not such stern behests,
Or grim philosophies, designed
To vex the current of the mind;
 Thou hast no heart of bitterness,
 Nor dost thou tax thee more or less
With yea or nay; wise reasoners keep
 In sufferance just outside thy gate;
For grievance thou might haply weep,
 Or lightly mourn at darker fate;
Still, still thou hast no poignancy,
Nor passion, save in mild degree;

Whate'er betide, thou fain would gaze
With hermit's eyes on troubled ways,
Or stretch thy limbs, or sleep, or eat,
Or watch the trip of blithesome feet,
Or sit in drowsy aisles and dream
On summer days—entrancèd seem,
And hear the lapsing brooklet sing
To throstle on its wizard wing,
And hear the austere note reply
From out the dizzy dome of sky;
Sufficed—though all the world be rife
With wakenings of love and life,—
To hush thy tongue, to seal thine ear,
Or sing a song of careless cheer;
To lounge in scented fields, to climb
The lower hills, to roam the vale,
Or watch the sunsets pale and pale,
Unmoved to span the heights sublime;
In fallow thoughts to take thine ease,
Nor envy others their degrees,
But just to live, and breathe, and rest,
And deem thyself supremely blest.

Sweet loiterer thou, O Indolence,
Becalmèd guest of soul and sense!
I crown thee as my happy chance,
Thou easer of all circumstance.

UNRECONCILED

'T IS said that hearts are reconciled
When love no more is passion-wild,
Or—world-wise—will not be beguiled
 To worship prone;
'T is said, when love is buried deep,
When its leal joy is gone to sleep
In bitterness, or lives to weep
 And die alone,
That then men come to find, at last,
Consolement, since the dream is past,
And leave love, with its joy, outcast,
 Quite reconciled.
If this be so, I cannot tell;
If this be so, ah well, ah well!
Still would I dream of love's lost spell,—
 Unreconciled.

THE TRIUMPH OF SONG

GO forth, frail barque,
Upborne and seaward, to the isles of Dream;
Outspeed th' uneasy winds of day and dark;
Hie onward through the golden and the gleam.

Go forth, frail barque;
Thy hidden course fate leads thee on to find;
The stars may pilot to thy shining mark;
Joys shall be thine that tempests may not bind.

Go forth, frail barque;
Wings buoy thy burden, making music, rare,
That floats above thee, circling as a lark
That rides the swell and ebb of ambient air.

Go forth, frail barque,
Celestial argosy of love and light;
Lo, lo, ye tardy earthling-children, hark!
And hark, ye angels, clothed in robes of white!

O WAR SHIP!

FAR down the Southern, coastwise sea
An ocean fortress, armored, glides;
The sun's glow gilds with radiancy
The eager waters that she rides;
Astern the billows in her wake
Recede, revolve, rebound, and break.

O War Ship! what strange power is thine?
What tragic sweep of grace and force?
What stately reach of depth and line
To plow the waters in thy course!
Far on the great swells seem to feel
The coming of thy lordly keel.

Down, down the Southern coast she speeds,
Nor feels the tempest on her trail;
Her mighty form, defiant, leads
In scorn of night, of storm or gale,
While all about the sea-gulls shriek,
And all about the wild horns speak.

She waits not for the morning calm,
As seaward, crossing reef and shoal,

Beyond the land of prune and palm,
She passes southward to her goal;
The dawn across her armor falls
As she salutes Old Morro's walls.

O War Ship, waiting for thy doom !
O War Ship, fouled by treacherous hand!
To hundreds of thy braves a tomb,—
Thy braves, the martyrs of our land!
We send thee greeting 'neath the waves;
We crown our martyrs in their graves!

COULD HAND HAVE LED

DEATH laid me low on its black bier,
And then he came—bent over me—
Prone with a passion poignant dear;
He pled his grief so fearfully

That all the spirit-pulses beat
About my heart, stained my white lips;
Sent fever-throbs to my clod feet,
Then back to cheek and finger-tips!

Could I have answered his wild plea,
Could my dumb will have beckoned him,
Could hand have led—though agony
Of death might smite him, eyes grow dim,

And his whole being waste and fade,
I would have borne him through the night
Of gloom, up from its solemn shade,
To the vast Heaven's eternal light!

CONTRASTED

DREAMING — I saw a wounded soldier halt
Along the line of a great battle-field;
And by his side a horseman seemed to vault
Into his saddle, armed with sword and shield.

Comrades were they, and pledged as one to fight;
Swift-footed came, behind, the common foe;
The horseman paused a moment, then took flight;
The wounded mate gazed at his friend, when lo,

A sudden dust arose, he saw—beyond—
Two aliens smite the rider, and he fell,
But rising—for the blows had only stunned—
Fought with his might, and stood him bravely well.

The wounded comrade hastened on; forgot
His own distress; bore down with noble will,
And with keen weapon smote; the foe, distraught
Or craven, fled; one instant he stood still

As if by grief o'erborne, then with great stress
Upraised the false one on his steed again,
Spoke him the gentlest words of friendliness,
And sped the horse once more across the plain.

Then, bitterly, I said: "Some men are steel,
Are true as Heaven; and some, as worthless clay,
Will crumble back to dust, nor once reveal
One sign of God on all their clodden way!"

SONG

THE springtide comes with tears and laughter ;
The summer goes apace ;
The autumn flaunts its banners after ;
The winter winds embrace.
These come fleet-winged, and hastening go ;
Ties made that quickly sever ;
But Love, perennial here below,
Is with the heart forever !

The spring is but a fickle thing,
And summer suns are fleeting ;
The autumn brings its offering ;
And winter, icy greeting.
So all the year 's a fugitive,
Returning to us never !
But Love, in matchless gifts, shall give,
And Love goes on forever !

IN PORT

SAIL swiftly, happy ship,
Down to thy mother-sea;
Pass the portal-gate and dip
 Into thy nativity;
Sailing to the underworld
With thy flaunting flags unfurled!

Sail slowly through the calm
 In careless indolence,
Wafted by faint airs of balm
 To the sunny islands hence;
Linger by the southern main,
Rover of the ocean's plain.

Sail swiftly—tempest flailed—
 Athwart the foamy crest;
Many a ship has been begaled
 Wandering from its harbor-rest.
Speed thou onward; fleetly fly;
Dash the greedy waters by!

Sail slowly through the mist
 Into the vast unknown,

Where white, fatal lips have kissed,
Leaving other lips to moan.
Signal when thou pierce the veil,
Lest death—haply—cross thy trail.

Sail homeward into port,
Out of the misty dark;
No fierce lightnings more shall sport,
Making thee their shining mark.
Salutations speed thee on;
Voyage ended,—haven won!

NIGHT WATCHES

THE shadows fall; the night is still;
 Deep shadows, silence, deep;
The pine trees in the gloom scarce thrill,
 The winds are lulled to sleep;
The night-owl, hushed and tranced, bates
Its cry, and in the darkness waits.

The leaden clouds hang—threatening—low;
 The stars are dimmed and blurred;
The glazed and inky waters flow,
 By never a ripple stirred;
The great hills hang in masses, black,
Above the river's ancient track.

No light—save faintest gleam—escapes
 From the inmantled skies;
Eclipsed the world of earthly shapes,
 Eclipsed as hope that dies,
As joy that shrinks, when Death's slow dart
Shall—piercing—cleave life's bond apart!

FALLEN

I HAVE missed thee from my heart
I As the wasting days have fled;
Art thou living, art thou dead
Since our souls have dwelt apart?
There are moments when I start
Trembling with the thought of thee,
When my orphaned love would flee
Across the world where'er thou art;
Yet I know it shall not be!

How irreparable is fate!
I forever hear it say,
“Lost in darkness on his way”;
And I hear the words “Too late!”
Once thou merited to mate
With a queen—or so I deemed;
But, alas, I had but dreamed;
Now my love is desolate,
Empty of the love that seemed.

Thou hast forfeit made of all;
Faith, the fountain-life of love,

(Love that Heaven's high passions move
Since the primal Eden-fall),
Holding us in its sweet thrall,
 Bondage of its own true hand,
 Loosed us of its mystic band;
Set us free, and that is all;
 Parted us,—we understand.

Honor, what is it, canst tell—
 Thou, a fallen angel, so?
 Ever deignest thou to know
Its proud meaning since thou fell?
Thou didst imitate it well,
 Bearing in thy mobile face
 Counterfeit of its fair grace,
Mask of Heaven above the Hell
 Thou hast cherished in its place.

Silence—lips of bitterness;
 He, so frail and lawless weak,
 Wilt not listen if thou speak;
Lips that once, with sacred kiss

Answered to the love of his,
 Murmur not,—nay, lisp his name
 More in sorrow than in blame;
Breathe to other ears but this,
 “Once I loved him”; shield his shame!

“NAY, DEATH”

TWO wandered forth in the night—
Life and its Shadow—two.

She shuddered. Lo the Mocking Blight
With secret arrow slew!

“I know thee, Fatal One,” she said;

“Ah, dost? where’s Faith, then, dead?”

Two met beyond in Borderland.

“Not one step more,” she said.

“Who art thou, woman? Take my hand.”

“Nay, Death, I’m not afraid;

I am immortal,—born of Light!

Thou—thou—Eternal Night!”

WHO HAS THE CLUE ?

SLOWLY the year creeps, and the long day
Dreamily dawns and dies in the deep.
Militant Life goes searching the way
That it must lead, its pound to pay,
Its faith to hold, its woes to weep,
Welcoming every errant ray.

Heart-throbs, dreading; aching with sense
Of want and hunger, craving good;
Groping and gleaning for recompense
That high Hope promises to dispense;
Good that never is understood;
Want and hunger and hope intense!

Yonder a child is born to the New;
Yonder an old man dies in the Gray.
All betwixt the Earth and the Blue
Is underwrit with the pound that's due!
A day, a year; a year, a day;
To end in what? Who has the clue?

A SONG OF THE SARANAC CAMP

THE rare September breezes blow,
The mellowed suns serenely glow,
As on the northern lake we float,
Scarce balanced in its slender boat.

The frail shell dances on the crest;
We row it east, we row it west;
The music of its rhythmic oars
Re-echoes from the balsam shores.

The golden days glide idly by,
And fade like cloudlets in the sky;
Our listless moods—like dreams—repeat
The magic of their fancies, fleet.

We light our camp-fires 'neath the stars ;
We feed them with the forest spars,
And fling our wild songs to the night
Until the very birds take flight.

And what care we for wind or rain ?
Or what care we for loss or gain ?
The great hills to our spirits sing ;
The world, the world has taken wing !

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

“ Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory.”

OUT of the depths of Silence!
Out from the home of the soul,
Stealeth a voice that I love; thence
Cometh a joy to console;
Thence a prayer of the spirit, —
Or a hushed song; I hear it
Out of the depths.

Not from the stroke of the harper,
Not from the notes of the flute,
Not from the piper—sharper, —
Or dulcet of the lute,
Issueth music clearest;
But from the Silence, dearest, —
Out of the depths.

Out of the depths! Dost wonder,
When all the earth is waking,
Vibrant with sound, that, under
My breast, my heart is aching,
As a mute voice from Memory
Sings a soul-song to me
Out of the depths ?

SEAWARD

SAIL seaward, barque, and lightly lave
Thy prow within the shallow wave;
Sail seaward, cleave the ebbing tide
That ripples on thy polished side;
Thou floatest on a mimic sea,
Nor canst thou know thy destiny;
This is thy childhood; in thy play
Thou fanciest, here within the bay,
That thou canst ride on all the seas
Of waters with an equal ease.

Sail seaward, ah, no seer can tell
What fortune bides thee, fair or fell.
Leap on, leap on, O magic barque,
Even though thou venture in the dark,
Have faith to brave the giant sea
If thou wouldst snatch a victory;
Nay, fear it not, be strong, be free,
The gods may bind the gales for thee!

THE GRAVE OF HELEN HUNT JACKSON (H. H.)

(ON CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN)

ALONE! At night the moon looks down
Upon the mountain-gloom;
It lays a silver robe and crown
Over a poet's tomb.

Covering the mound are stone on stone,
Borne there by travellers, one by one.

No shaft climbs skyward, marble-pale;
No alien throngs intrude;
No warders guard the forest-trail
To mar the solitude.

Alone, beneath the beech and pine,
She rests, who sang her songs, divine.

The hermit-thrush its note outwells
Within the shaded deeps;
The wandering breeze bemoans, and knells
Its requiem while she sleeps;
Save these, O Silence, claim thine own
Where she lies in the mount,—alone!

INVIOLATE

A SONG

O SECRET, inveiled from all comers;
O Secret, that ever abides
Enbosomed, through winters and summers,
Whatever the fate that betides,

I guard thee, I chide thee, I hide thee,
Yet out of masked eyes dost thou gaze;
How sorely my lips have belied thee,
Thee—that thine own spirit betrays.

Love is so bereft of its pleasure,
Forbidden its soul to reveal,
And thou art so charged with its treasure,
Its tenderest thought to conceal,

That Pain—unsubmissive—transgresses;
And Sadness—like Joy—will run o'er,
When Love is denied its redresses;
When Love hath no window or door!

Will Time thy fast fetters dissever,—
Thine—sealed by the subtlest of art?
O Secret, must thou be forever
Entombed in the cell of the heart?

DOOM DAYS

THERE are doom-days when sadness fills
The least, dark channel of the soul,
As whispering in the gloaming thrills,
Though e'er so loud the thunders roll.

Days when the dearth of life outweighs
All life, and makes a void of all;
When darkling thoughts of other days,
Like warning echoes, call and call:

When hopeless dreams, as strange mirage,
Return to make more hopeless, hope;
And ebbing joys the hours discharge,
As backward into night they grope!

When Love foregoes its lightest plea
For want of answering love, and fain
Would seek the shrine of memory
To worship at its sacred fane.

Though suns may shed their radiance
In wealth of gold, when such days are;
And Earth, bedecked—by happy chance,—
May blossom as in Zanzibar,

'T is midnight still to souls distraught,
Save this,— that every thought 's awake;
And every thought an anguished thought
That prays as if the heart would break!

Then, then, O master-Will, command!
Blind eyes, see thou with second sight:
Weak hand, grasp thou a stronger hand;
And Heart, go out into the light!

BIRDS OF SLEEPY-HOLLOW

I WATCH the downward flowing stream,
Far, far within this emerald wood;
It woos me to its lonely mood;
It charms my spirit with its dream.

I stroll along its shadowy banks,
O sweet enchanter, Solitude!
Dull world, with all thine alien brood,
Away, for thee I give no thanks.

Stern prophets of the brain that guess
In riddles, now I want ye not;
Too much the mind is overwrought
With answerings of no and yes.

One little day, one peerless space
Of time shall fill me to the brim
With joy that has a golden rim,
Nor craves a thought I dare not trace.

The nymphs, whose refuge is the shade;
The wing'd sprites of the forests green

That skim the air, that sing unseen,
Are blessed; in them no hopes shall fade,

Nor prone hearts sadden for their lost;
Their fairy breasts may never grieve
For passionate loves beyond retrieve,
Nor perish by untimely frost;

They rest in nature's infinite,
Nor search to fathom blind decrees;
Enough, they own a realm of trees,
A world of sky, a heaven of light.

Their eyes are gleams of night and day,
Their plumes are tinged with fire and fern,
Their songs are raptures that they learn
From angels on their chartless way.

The baffled art of man may strain
To wrest the secret mysteries
From vaulted skies, from earth and seas;
What matter for the loss or gain?

They question not, yet blissful are
In ignorance; though knowledge fails,
They, fearless, mount the shining trails,
And face the radiance of a star!

I, too, would scent the spicy breeze
Within this elfin-land, would hear

Soft silences that miss the ear,
And dwell and sing as one of these;

Find wings that worldlings may not clip,
And heights that challenge meaner gain;
Forget the low and level plain
In lavish nature's fellowship.

O world, if thou thy gifts would give
In wealth that laughs at reel or scale
(Whatever schemes may win or fail),
Give these to me, and let me live!

A PICTURE

THE TWILIGHT-LAND

BEYOND the river, on Nyack's strand,
When night draws near, is the twilight-land;
Bathed in a flood of crimson and gold,
It lies in a mantle manifold.

The throbbing waves have melted the sky
And steeped the waters in amber dye;
Only the mountain's shadow o'erpalls
The sheen, as into the sea it falls.

On marge and hill the torches are lit,
Dim gleams that under the water flit;
While into the mirror, near and far,
Fall faint fire-tips of star on star.

The sails float over the fields of sleep
Like spectres winging the airy deep,
And gliding across the glistening floor
They dip in the dusky depths once more.

A dreamy hush pervades the spell,
Save muffled beat of the sunset-bell!

THE AMERICAN SOLDIER BOY

HE leaves his home of love and prayer;
Its fields and workshop; sweetheart, mother;
He leaves that he may do and dare;
And oh the grief to bear and smother!

Where suns are bright and skies are blue
He's tanned his skin a wholesome tawny;
His eye is keen, his spirit too;
His form is lithesome, taut, and brawny.

He wears no paltry lace of gold
To make the staring people praise him,
Nor brazen medals, manifold,
Pretentious, dons, forsooth to grace him.

He'll sing or march, or shoot and drill,
Or camp and sleep and take his chance, sirs;
He knows that war is meant to kill,
And battles as he'd lead the lancers.

He holds his faith and courage strong;
His constancy deserts him never;
He bears with patience, waiting long;
And fights — aye, fights, if needs, forever.

O foe, beware the sword he wields,
For while his heart is true and tender,
His steel 's as true; he never yields
When Honor calls him to defend her.

ESTRANGED

A SONG

BROODING alone o'er remembered meetings,
Bereft of thee and my heart;
Thinking sore thoughts of the springtide greetings,
Ere yet we wandered apart,

I stroll through the wood where erst we, dreaming,
Lisp'd Edens each unto each;
The shadows — how dusk in the autumn gleaming!
The stillness — how thirsty for speech!

The fugitive brook — could it breathe thy spirit,
Or breezes bear it to me;
Or echo of thine — might I but hear it,
I'd crave a vision of thee!

But vague winds sing sad orisons only;
The waters tauntingly play;
And I, unappeased, lament here, lonely,
A heart as alien as they.

UNVEILED

OF what is man made, tell me: of the dust;
Of tissue, adipose with fibres strung;
Of veins inlacing; of eye, ear, and tongue;
Of luring, lawless appetite and lust;
Of hands that grasp, of feet that plod and dance,
Of brain to thwart the reckless dice of chance?

For what is man made, tell me: is 't to win
The prizes, empty; wear the purple robe;
Command, like Cæsar, conquering the globe?
To fight for laurels in the endless din,
Or feel the galling fetters; laugh or sigh;
To heap up treasures, or to slave and die?

Have life and death no signet, save to swell
The everlasting cortege to the tomb?
Have truth and love but one unchanging doom,
Earth-born, and subject to its fateful spell?
If this be so, then hence all aimless strife,—
All noble emulation. What is life?

What is it to be free, to will and wait,
To long and love, and win by sacrifice?

To fall, repent, and gather strength to rise ?
To credit faith, and trust that soon or late,
Beyond the human-tide, above the clod,
There live, eternal, truth and love in God ?

Some order, yet concealed, of science wrought
Within the spirit realm, unveiled, will show
A world that, part divined, we do not know,
A sphere upreared upon sublimer thought,
Soul-lit, and consecrate to boundless good,
Wherein all life will then be understood.

ON THE SUMMIT!

HIGH, so high, without alloy;
So intoxicating, rare;
Nay, I cannot breathe this air
On the summit of my joy!
'T is too strong for me.

Only moments can I stay
Where my soul would dwell apart;
To the valley, O my heart!
From these heights let us away,
Till eternity!

WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM

THANKS for sunshine, did you say? —
For the purple ides of May,
For the luxury of living
In such days without misgiving,
For the perfect innocence
Of a love without suspense,
For a sky without its rain,
For a joy without its pain,
For a face of waxen beauty
Never crossed by frown of duty,
For the wings to soar above
Without feet and hands of love,
For a fairy dream that finds
Heaven without earth's countersigns?

Nay, ah better, I would say,
Wed night's dark to beauteous day;
Never fortune without loss,
Or crown unchallenged by a cross;
Love, too light, has many friends;
Little gives, it only lends;

Heart will never find its mate
Loyal, uninured to wait;
Roses lavish sweetest breath
Through the subtle airs of death;
Chastened are the souls that rise
From the vale of sacrifice;
Won, ah thrice, the victory, meet,
Through the portal of defeat.

Thanks, sweet friend, thou givest truest,
For the years thou daily ruest;
Bitterness is Heaven's disguise;
Darkness comes, then Paradise!

MIGHT-HAVE-BEEN

HAD thine eyes with venturous glance
Told thine own wild tumult when
Tremulous words revealed mine, then;—
Had thy blood by some quick chance
Bounded, burning in thy gaze,
Startling with a sweet amaze;

Had thy hidden bosom beat,
Throbbing as the sea throbs there,
Passion-laden, mine to share,
When love cast me at thy feet,
Then—ah then would I have known
To have claimed thee for my own!

DÉMENCE

HE who burned with a soul's desire,
Brave with truth, with faith of fire,
Suddenly lost from his being, bright,
Thought, that wrought in his ardent brain;
Love and light, — when terrible night
Came like death, or a prison-chain!

Joy went out like a smothered flame;
Blackness quenched his golden day
Leaving only image and name —
All else gone on an unknown way.

After the silent years have fled,
Lo he returns again from the dead!

QUESTION

Where hast thou been, O truant Mind,
Lost from thy happy eminence
Wandering afar? What mystic signed
Thee to follow in blind suspense

Down to the underworld of Time?
Wast lost in some benighted vale,
Languishing in shadows, pale,
Poisoned in mists of a deadly clime?

REPLY

Caves and hollows of earth were mine;
Dreams of Heaven, its heights divine;
Lowest of low and highest of high,
Now in Hades, now in the isle
Of bliss Elysium under the sky,
Or cast in donjons of exile!

Where have I been? O ask not me!
Plunged in woes of Hell's abyss;
Outlaw, ranging a precipice,
Striding waves of a troubled sea!
Where have I been? O ask not me!
Famished of hunger and thirst for thee!

THE TIDES

'T IS morning, and the tides flow in.
I hear, above the wide world's din,
The throb their flooding waters make;
I hear the wild waves bound and break.
The tides flow in.

'T is midday, and the tides ebb low,
As glaring in the tropic glow,
The bare and barren sand-bar lies
Beneath the bending, brazen skies.
The tides ebb low.

O Love, that floods the heart; that makes
The swell of song, the throbs and aches,
The grief and glory of the whole,
With thy great passion in the soul;
That bursts and breaks,

Like any flood, across the leas,
Dost thou, too, ebb and ebb like these
Lost waves that bleach the scorching sands,
To leave life empty in our hands?
Art thou like these?

AVANT ET APRÈS

A SONG

IDLING, at dawn, on the sands of the shore,
Crooning the creed of the lover's lore,
My heart went winging its way to the rills
And daffodils.

Sailing afar on a troubled sea,
At noontide thinking, thinking of thee,
My heart, o'erborne by its vision of years,
Trembled with fears.

Brooding of thee in the twilight deep,
Wandering distraught by the wooded steep,
My heart, importunate, longing, alone,
Pleads for thine own.

L. of C.

OH! THE SUBTILE KNOWING

O COULD we know that life would last for aye,
That life were ours forever and a day,
Then would we love through life's eternal May?

If earth and Heaven were pledged and all were fair,
Immortal Love to have an endless share,
No change—immutable,—how would Love fare?

But since we can but guess, the hope—the gleam—
May fade; the little rift, the fitful beam
Of light that gilds, as Heaven, be but a dream.

The tolling of the hours, the days, the years;
The tragedies, the piteous twinge, the tears,
The dear solitudes,—all stir our fears.

The glimmering faith, the doubt, the heart-refrain;
The bliss, the happy bondage, then the bane;
The eager joy, alas, the grievous pain!

These — then we part; and oh! the subtile knowing,
That soon shall ebb the tide that erst was flowing,
That somewhere lurks the shadow of our going,

Gives sadness to Love's passionate complaining,
A nameless pang to Love's leal bond, unfeigning,
Beyond dominion of the heart's constraining.

If we could know that Love were ours forever,
No wrench of ties, a union severed never,
Would Love live, think you, pure, unfailing ever?

FATE — DESTINY

I AM Mortality; death is my doom;
Matter in transit, a clod for the tomb;
A soldier of fate, for spoil or for fame,
For love or for hate, for honor or shame.
I am Mortality, born of her womb!

I am immortal; a prisoner set free;
Destiny, careless of earth's elegy;
Soul winged of spirit, a star in the night;
With Heaven to inherit, with God in the fight.
I am immortal, this my degree!

DEAD, DEAD!

THEN fell a silence hushed as sleep,
Save that the midnight stroke was heard
From yonder church-tower; not a word
Was spoken; gazing through the dark
I saw a star shoot—as a lark
Might take its flight — through the heaven's deep.

Grieving, with eyes that could not weep,
For one whose life but now had fled,
A mother bent beside a bed;
A sister, tear-blind, whispered, "Dead!"
And I, O God! with broken heart,
Crept off, and wrung my hands, apart,
A lover; Death's distempered dart
Had smitten low; and in its keep

Death barred my own. O nothingness!
Prone, prone for aye, she lay at last,
A shadow of her brief life, past;
Blank all the world; blank as the night!
For me, no more the sun's great light;
For me, no more her dear caress!

The kingdoms of the world were less
Than that fair form of lifeless mould
That even now was marble cold.
O Love! O Love! but fold on fold
The veil of darkness, drawn between,
Which hides the seen from the unseen,
Which eyes pierce not, howe'er so keen,
Had wrapt My Own in nothingness.

Then fell a silence hushed as sleep,
Save that the morning stroke was heard
From yonder church-tower; and one word,
Which knelled the midnight of my soul,—
A wild despair, a toll on toll,
An echo through the hopeless deep,—
“Dead, Dead!”

THE HOUSE OF LIFE

L O, reaching upward to the light,
The House of Life, the House of Death!
Ye cannot know to what dim height,
Till, suddenly, with one's frail breath
It vanishes to dust and blight.

Its walls shall rise through toil and tears,
And day by day make treacherous gain;
Blithe joys shall well, consort with fears,
As Time shall watch, in half disdain,
To mark the way his craftsman rears.

Wrought in its forms are beauteous lines,
Yet interwrought are blemished stones;
Here are the marks of fair designs,
And here of base, forbidding ones;
While on its summit sunlight shines.

Uncertain shadows fleck its face,
Though kindly warmth may greet at heart;
Each day may deign to give it grace,
Each night may mar its frailer art,
As light and darkness interlace.

Fret not, O Life, nor rue thy cell
That crumbles with the crumbling mould,
Wherein but Liliputians dwell
As dwelt primeval man of old;
For soon, ah soon, Time breaks the spell!

AUTUMN SONG OF THE WOOD AND GRASSES

MURMURS of the sodden grasses,
Whispering to the sloping wood:
“Give us of thy gorgeous masses,
Make for us a scarlet hood;
Make for us thy many-tinted
Upland blushes, never hinted
In our valley solitude.

“We are meek and marshy nestlings
Lying at the feet of thee.
Thou dost harp the song the West sings,
And it sets thy passion free.
Glory from thy summit blazes,
Lighting through the Indian hazes
Down to our captivity.

“Ah, that we could mount the slopings,
Feel the throbbing of the hills;
Flee these dim and shadowy gropings
Where the nightly mist distils!
Lift us, O thou lordly forest!
Where thy need of strength is sorest,
Where the echoing storm-horn thrills!”

Murmurs from the maples, dying,
Mournfully sweep down the vale;
From the lofty lindens crying:
“Hearest not our saddened wail?
All the blood has left our branches,
Life within us ebbs and blanches
As we shiver in the gale.

“Take us to your sheltering meadows
Where your fragrant beauty lies;
Hide us in your bosky shadows
From the bitterness of skies;
From the fatal north wind wrecking
Limb and mast, and rudely decking
Our green wreaths with hectic dyes.”

But the marshes will not listen
To the importuning height,
For the frosty dews now glisten
O'er the spectral, grassy blight;
Death has done its dreaded reaping—
Glen and forest, hushed, are sleeping
In the grim autumnal night.

FRAGMENTS

MUSIC is strongest vexed in the strain;
Music is deepest drawn from the stress
Of a turbulent soul and a poignant pain;
Music is truest groping to guess
Whatever the intricate passions repress.

Regrets are broodings over seasons gone,
Born in the shadow of the gathering night;
The disillusion, after dazzling suns have shone
Through lavish morns, far on the perilous height,
Seen now from darkened vales, through years of
blight.

The spirit's music is the mystic song that sweeps
Across the harp from out the deeps;
The soul's rapt prayer from mute, unfashioned lips—
a breath
That challenges and conquers death!

BEYOND THE NIGHT

HE who lies here scarce a score
Of years had trod this nether shore;
Heart he had of faith and flame,
Starward drawing; to him came
One of light, an angel, white,
Beckoning hence, beyond the night!

Now his spirit on its way,
Touched by God's celestial ray,
Knows such fund of wisdom, old,
As no mortal e'er was told!

Far beyond the ken of man,
More than link or lens can span —
He who — while of earth unwise,
Sees now with anointed eyes!

None has known, no ear has heard
Here, what now, by spirit-word,
Is imparted to his soul
Out of God's eternal whole!

I COULD NOT KNOW

A SONG

WE met beside the rippling stream
That vexed the byways, lonely;
She — Nature's beauty — like a dream,
And I — a stripling only.

We met and plucked the wind May-flowers,
Like careless children straying,
Nor minded that the springtide showers
About our steps were playing.

We gazed into the fleecy sky;
We thrilled the woods with singing;
We watched the early nestlings fly,
And wished ourselves were winging.

We drew together, whispering low,
And told our love in laughter;
I could not know — I could not know
That I should rue it after.

Our hearts were light as April air,
Our thoughts were quite as fairy,

As with wild gusto, debonair,
We spun our vows to marry.

We wandered wild those happy days,
Romanced of future living,
As hand in hand with sweet delays
We kissed without misgiving.

The hours went by, the weeks alas!
And tears came with leave-saying.
O she was my own bonny lass,
For we had plighted Maying!

I met her when a riper grace
Had molded form and feeling,
Had made a marvel of her face,
Its wondrous eyes revealing,

But was it she? I looked again;
I felt my pulses leaping,
And, half between a joy and pain,
A numbness o'er me creeping,

For as I gazed I heard her name,
Heard lips their kisses paying;—
Ah, all in vain — I owned in shame,—
In vain we plighted Maying!

OLD ROSES

HERE are the roses bordering the wall;
Constant, though blanched—as if famished and
faint;

Planted, I ween, by Patience and Paul
When once a plebeian cottage, and quaint,
Reared by some sombre Puritan saint,
Stood on the barren mall.

Near a blind trail in the garden-close,
Patience and Paul rough-fashioned a bed
By the lichened wall, where they planted a rose
And scattered some seeds of poppies, red,
Patience and Paul are a hundred years dead,
But the rose — immemorial — blows.

8

RAPPELER

A SONG

NO signet you 'll wear on your finger?
No word you 'll pledge from your lips?
Have I long in durance to linger,
Kissing your finger-tips?

Must I languish, lonely with waiting?
Heart ache — inured to its pain?
Through seasons — disowned and unmating —
Bear scorn and disdain?

You may bid me hope and remember,
Or bid me go and forget,
Till the flame shall die in the ember,
Vain love in regret.

You may bid me go, but remember,
O Heart, I 'll never forget;
Though the flame may die in the ember —
I 'll remember yet!

IN BONDS

IMPORTUNING liberty,
Chainless, I would fain be free;
Fain, and yet, though fetterless,
Feel I earthly gall and stress.

Searching, I can find no peace;
Gain from trammels no surcease.
Earth its bound doth fix, and fate
Masters me, and bids me wait.

Toiling, yet I toil in vain;
Loss o'ertops the plume of gain,
Meets me—victor—face to face,
Folds me in its hard embrace.

Seemingly, despair and woe
Lead me to their dungeon, low;
“What can serve?” and prone I pray.
Darkness lies across my way;

Darkness, when the soul craves light,
Frowns and blackens into night.
Prisoner—born to liberty;
Chainless—still I am not free!

THE CITY UNDERTOWN

DOWN, down, down beneath the tides
Lies the city Undertown.

Over crest and billow glides

Many a barque, and threatening, frown
Sullen clouds from out the skies,
Casting sombre shadows down
On the city Undertown.

Night illumes with starry gleam

Her dim aisles, where mermaids, pale,
Lave and frolic as in dream,
In the ripples of her veil.

Moonbeams, stealing unaware,
With a silver nimbus crown
The weird city Undertown.

Sunken in the caverned deep,

All oblivious of her charm,
Lies the city lapped in sleep,
Couched within the watery calm.
Pinnacle and tower and spire,
Glistening many a fathom down,
Deck the city Undertown.

Spectres walk her shining streets;
 Flickering torches light her caves;
Phantom horses, gaunt and fleet,
 Noiseless, tread her shimmering paves;
Jewelled chariots mutely speed
 O'er transparent highways — down
In the heart of Undertown.

Blustering gale and tempest break
 On the waters far above;
Swelling seas upheave and shake,
 Yet the city does not move;
These shall never vex her rest —
 Many, many fathoms down, —
Vex the city Undertown.

When the day looms out of night,
 Lo, the city's marvels lie
Hidden in the golden light,
 Like the stars of heaven on high.
All the magic of it then
 Vanishes from crypt to crown.
Ha — a ghost is Undertown!

THE BUGLE-TRUMPETS

O AND can ye tell us what the bugle-trumpets
scream

When they cry "To war, to war!" away on Afric's
coast?

Dream ye e'er so wisely, can ye prophets ever dream
What English glory means in its armed and serried
host?

Rifle-shot and cannon-shot hush the heart from
beating.

Down through flashing aisles of fire the ranks are
told to tread!

Now goes forward victory, and now defeat retreating;
But victory and defeat reap their holocaust of dead!

Lo, the sun goes shining on the evil and the good;
Lo, the crimes of man and devil swarm beneath its
fire;

Yet are men in darkness while the shedding of their
blood

Makes the good to seem, belike, the devil's own
desire.

Ye are sires of freedom; canst tell us of the coming?
All we know is blood of human staining crest and
plain;
Heaps and heaps of carnage, and oh the dreadful sum-
ming,
The waste, the wail, the weeping! Ay, tell us of the
gain.

PROPHETIC

YONDER a banner fearless borne!
Insignia of the Alpha morn.
O'er its white shield is writ the name
Of one who bore the cross of shame.
No rich escutcheon mars its fold,
Nor sceptred eagles, — crown of gold, —
Nor any Delphic sign or lyre
To fire the jaded soul's desire.
About it throng no warders, brave,
The honor of its lead to save;
Behind it march no surpliced choir,
Nor outworn flamen, priest, or prior.
It champions no creed nor law
To hold its devotees in awe;
No wrangling sects, with *pro* and *con*,
Drone paternosters, following on;
Nor any Pharisaic fools
Who 'd burn the race to save their schools;
Nay, none of these may march and fight
Beneath this banner's hallowed light.
Above the low, ill-favored fate
Of screeds proclaimed in brooding hate;

Beyond the shadows, sick and pale,
Which haunt the way-worn in the vale;
Beyond the mists of paltry things
That cling like clods to feet and wings,—
This banner of the morning star
Leads on wherever mortals are!

APART

'T IS a story that is graven
On the parchment of a heart;
Of a love that 's missed its haven;
Of two lives that live apart;
Of a love that lives unsated in the world's un-
worldly mart.

We twain bound,— the Fate 's to sever;
Bound as one by love's leal plight;
Happy troth foredoomed; forever
Destined to a hapless night;
Banished into outer darkness like the quen-
ching of a light.

O imperious faith that proved her
Queen of truth, and deified!
How she loved me, how I loved her!
Hearts with arms that, clinging, vied,
Till our lips, in utter hunger kissed,— were
never satisfied.

Beauty, to my votive vision,
Wrought a magic in her face.

What a marvellous intuition
Was her sweet, unsullied grace!
All my being bowed in homage when I felt her
dear embrace.

Then we could not harbor other
Than a whole life's happy day;
Never dreamt of change, or whether
Time would steal our bliss away;
Tranced, we were linked together in the pur-
ple ives of May.

But alas! Love's exiled token,
Smitten of a wayward will,—
Of a treacherous pride, and broken,—
Love, the victim, panting still;
How the suppliant soul, aggrieving, moans
where Love would throb and thrill;—

Echoing from out the ruin
Of the Castle of Despair!
Love no more to will or do, in
The world; nor dream, nor dare;
Spectral eyes, too, through the shadows, deso-
late and tearless there.

And a voice from far years sending
Messages, so futile now,
Of a love whose hopeless rending
Can no more the life endow;
Haunting voice that, voiceless, ever challenges
the blighted vow.

WINTER IN SLEEPY HOLLOW WOODS

NO imprint marks the fallen snow
As through the solitudes I walk;
The sunlight sheds its setting glow
On yonder hill, as fain to mock
The glimmering twilight here below.

The trees stretch, over hushed defiles,
Their bare arms, and, within the shade,
Weave trceries across the miles
Of hermit wood and hollow glade
That pencil all the stilly aisles.

The nymphs have left their lonely haunt,
And arctic frosts now seal each nook;
Nor does the song of mavis daunt
The icy challenge of the brook,
That clamors with a muffled taunt.

The shy hare peeps from covert bed,
Half-hidden in its furrèd nest;
The light dart of the squirrel's tread
Scarce dints the white drift's stainless breast;
The tropic voices all are dead.

From out the silence breaks the chat
And flutter of the winter wren;
The sparrows gossip this and that;
The partridge drums from up the glen,
And, treed above, what's woodpeck at?

Against the purple depths of sky,
The button-balls, a thousand spheres,
Cling to their tenuous stems on high,
From skeletons that scorn the years,
And wake an ancient lullaby.

The tulip-tree flings amber shells
Aloft to catch the starry fleece
(Fair-shapen as the lily-bells,
They rustle in the wintry breeze,)
And why? Ah, Nature never tells!

The last year's golden-rod sways yet,
A spectre in the ghostlier snow;
The sumach casts its silhouette
Against the western afterglow
Whereof the shadows still are set.

The winds sweep o'er the forest lane
In moaning tones or shivering blasts,
Now murmuring a sad refrain,

Now charging through the empty masts,
Now lulled to silence once again.

Dumb winter! nay, thy voices speak
Prophetic of the days to be.
I see, in fen and cloister bleak,
The yet unbloomed felicity
Of happy Mays, now veiled and meek.

LOVE and Life came, passing by.
Love came first, a dream of bliss;
Then swift Life came, hurrying nigh;
Touched Love's lips with bitterness;
Seared them with its fevered kiss.

Love and Death came, passing by.
Love came first with saddened eyes;
Then pale Death drew, shadowy, nigh;
Charged Love with its mortal sighs;
Pressed from it heart-riven cries.

Life and Death! Lo where are they?
Love alone doth live and wait.
These, of earth, shall pass away.
Faith-winged for its deathless fate,
Love shall join its spirit-mate!

A HYMN OF PEACE

O GOD! we are of yesterday,
A nation of the latter time;
Thy wisdom leads us on the way —
The highway to a purer clime;
Teach us, O God! to trust in Thee,
Thou Sovereign over land and sea.

Let monarchs build their armored fleets,
And glory in the awful game
That Egypt played, and Europe greets
As umpire of her tarnished fame;
But teach us, God, to trust in Thee—
To trust in Thee on land and sea.

Thou dost not reckon us to blame
For sins of others; Thou dost rate
Us, chiefly, guardian, in Thy name,
Of Freedom on our own estate.
Hold thou our passions, God; decree
To us Thy peace on land and sea.

Let despots arbitrate in blood;
The sword shall but beget the sword;

Ours is a realm where Brotherhood
Must will for Peace, Thy Conquering Word;
Ours is the law to trust in Thee
For Freedom over land and sea.

Divest us of the pride of Might,
The boast of Power, the Roman's boast;
Enlighten with Thy Living Light;
Be Thou the Leader of our host,
Until, at last, our trust in Thee
Shall win the world to Liberty!

ON THE WING

LOW murmur the wild waters
In the wood, in the valleys,
To tell of their gladness in the bloom of the year;
To sing to the birdling,
As it hither, thither, sallies
With delight; so I know the happy days are near.

O songster of the winter!
In the waste of thy forest,
What might thy songs have been o'er Arctic fields of
snow?
There thy longing spirit
Must have breathed its saddest, sorest,
Ay, loneliest of notes, to utter all thy woe!

Yet 't is not in thee, songster,
To brood beneath the shadow,
As broods the soul of man; thy spirit hath no gloom;
Blissful, thou, in sunshine,
Sailing o'er the summer-meadow,
And blissful art thou 'midst the winter's dreary doom.

Light as the dream of poet,
Thou, winged and merry-hearted,
So full of joyance! say, couldst ever thou be sad?
Nay, thou didst sing blithely,
Even when thy bosom started
At tempest-whirls of storm that fain would make thee
mad.

For, sweeping on thy pinions,
Thou hearest all sounds lending
Their mingled murmurs to the music of thy heart;
Gazing through the ether,
Then thou feelest all things blending
In rapture as divine and heavenly as thou art!

COME, DEFT FANCY

FROM the maze of sleep and song,
From the spell of fair romance,
Where the dismal plagues of wrong
Never dim thy quivering glance,
Come, deft Fancy, swift of wing,
Bird of thought and sprite of heart,
Soar to treasured realms and bring
Trophies of thy wizard art.

Image to the dullard's eyes
Phantoms of the storied past;
Heave his heavy breast with sighs
For a love that could not last.
Flash along thy thread of thought,
Conjured from some magic loom,
Spirit-visions inly wrought;
Voices from the voiceless tomb.

Earth and stars to thee are one;
Space is but a moment's flight;
Thou dost scale the setting sun;
Mount the silvery beams of night,—

Traverse them at single span;
Hauntest deeps and mountain crest;
Laugh at clumsy-footed man,
For thou never takest rest.

Lightly, Fancy, soothe the brain;
Ease it with a touch of thine;
Loose the tension of its strain
With thy ministry benign.
Teach the world that, at a bound,
Thou and thought are everywhere;
Masters over sight and sound;
Meteors free as light and air.

Pierce o'erladen hearts and bring
Radiant dreams to dreary sense;
From ethereal worlds O wing
Life a fairer recompense!
Something never won or lost;
Fortune without toil or bane;
Peerless beauty without cost;
Love without its consort — Pain.

Come, deft Fancy, with thine art
Gild the dusky vale of earth;
Lighten thou the human heart
With the solace of thy mirth!

ONLY DUST TO DUST

AY, our woven lives must part.
Long I've known it would be so.
Joy so dear will find its woe;
Love so full its wounded heart.
Thou wilt stay, but I depart
Hence, far hence from friend and foe;
Where the spirits are, I go;
Thus our woven lives must part.

Thou wilt mourn for our lost days
From the dawn to set of sun;
And thy tireless thought will run
On and on through pathless ways;
Skyward thou wilt gaze and gaze,
Musing with thyself as one.
From the shadowy realms outspun,
Doomed to mourn for our lost days.

I shall list to hear thee pray;
Haply hear a song from thee,
Dwelling by thy land-locked sea.
Shall I know thee, who can say?

Quickly, like a sudden thought,
 I, a spirit, winged, may fly
 Outward, onward through the sky;
 Hear thee saying, overwrought:

“All his love is turned to naught”;
 Hear thy troubled bosom sigh:
 “All is lost since he must die,
 Leaving memory distraught.”

I shall answer from the skies:
 “All his love is turned to fire,
 Burning purer, deeper, higher,
 Far, than thine; thy laden sighs,

For thy murmurs, cannot rise;
 Lo, how foolish thy desire
 Clings to earth to faint and tire!”
 Thou wilt hear me from the skies.
 Vex thee not of “dust to dust.”
 Nothingness? nay, do not read
 Life in such a barren creed.
 Life is neither dust nor lust.

“Dust to dust,” not soul to dust;
 Frailest thought and lightest deed,
 Heavenly-born, shall Godward lead;
 Only earth is “dust to dust.”

“ MINE ”

UP through the uttermost reaches
My longings go, silent or singing;
My heart in its haste beseeches
For that which was mine from beginning.
I know, as defiant I wait,
That sometime, early or late,
I shall have what the Angels are bringing!

Beyond is a radiant vision,
Above the golden-fringed ether,
Dispelling doubt and derision;
Yet not e'en the singing, nay, neither
The vision, shall change the delays,
For the gods have immutable ways,
Unmindful of time and its tether.

“O laggard years!” I go saying;
“O ecstasy lost in despairing!”
What means it — all of my praying,—
Since time and the gods are uncaring?
“Be it love, be it life or death!”
I cry in a murmur of breath
To the years, unheeding, unsparing.

Though time may quicken or tarry,
Unchallenged, with wanton disdain;
And hope, inconstant, miscarry;
And I, with grievous restraining,
Go bitterly forth in my haste,
Yet nothing shall perish with waste,
Nor aught be gained with complaining.

To patience, at last, I am wedded;
To patience, — nor chide in my singing.
Go, Time, with feet that are leaded;
Go, Time, with feet that are winging,
Or slowly or swift; not for me
The weal or the woe born of thee,
Since mine is ordained from beginning!

PEACE

PEACE on the lily dawns, and Peace
On the rose; on the limpid brooks

That, endless, purl in naiad nooks;
On languishings of summer seas.

Peace on these all; on the shy ways
Nature sets in her perfect days.

On the wood-songsters, nesting high,
Dawns Peace, from nearness to the sky.

The meadow cowslips lean and listen,
Rooted in mould, as if to hear

The skyey signs, or flash the glisten
Of morning suns above the mere:

Winds, like the piping of ancient Pan,
Like the faint lute of some sea-maid,
Alternate breathe through aisle and glade,
While golden cloudlets form and fade,

Unnoted by the thought of man.

Peace, then, to these! Peace shall be thine,
O Nature, through thine earth-bound years,

For thou art ancient. God's design

Brings Peace with time; He crowns the seers!

We! — we poor mortals are but young.
Nor do we die; our lives are sprung
From an immortal race, so sorrow
Draws its swift pangs from Time's to-morrow.

The spirit, all-imperious, longs,
And for such longings pays its fee;
It strains its vision, fain to see
Veiled vistas of eternity!
And so strange music fills our songs.

THE NEW YEAR'S LEGACY

FROM the old year to the new
Goes a message, flies a message,
Like a wingèd thought, to you,
New year; I, the old year, presage
Many gifts; I cannot name them;
Rapturous joys, I would not tame them.
Joys to you
From the old year to the new!

I, the old year, to the new,
Send you greeting, send you greeting;
Dying, I bequeath to you
Spring's sweet tide with blossoms fleeting;
Spring, with happy omens laden,
Heart of lover, heart of maiden,
Sent to you,
From the old year to the new.

I, the old year, to the new,
Send you Summer, passionèd Summer;
Dying, I bequeath to you
Ripening noons, and throbbing murmur

Of fair nature's lavish blisses,
Quickened by the hot sun's kisses,
 Sent to you,
From the old year to the new.

I, the old year, to the new,
 Send you Autumn, bounteous Autumn;
Dying, I bequeath to you
 Golden fruits, and favors brought from
The Orient and the Indies;
And from all the world I send these
 Gifts to you,
From the old year to the new.

I, the old year, to the new,
 Send you Winter, hoary Winter;
Dying, I bequeath to you,
 Stored with all things Time has sent her,
Winter, hale, whose glittering garment
Robes the earth, like some pure star, meant
 To light you
From the old life to the new !

THE REIGN OF MARS

HE stands colossal, armed and strong,
With star-decked breast, for right or wrong,
In midst of Europe's subject-throng;
The challenger in tragic deeds,
The victor in heroic song !

At his behest the legions band;
Send trumpeters through all the land;
Unsheathe the sword with iron hand,
To make him umpire of the world;
The crowned heads bow at his command !

On all the waters steel fleets wait,
Mailed warders over gulf and strait,
Clad and complete for their grim fate;
They hold the ocean's highways bond
In name of one so weak, so great !

The shields of empires guard his fame;
He herald, dread, of death and shame;
While armored champions proclaim,
From realm to realm, to prince and slave,
The magic lustre of his name !

Who dares defy him? — he 's the King!
Who dares deny him offering?
Who dares to parley? who to bring
 One rebel word to mar his reign,
Or dauntless deed, or anything?

From Algiers to the Arctic seas,
From th' Orient to the Hebrides,
The Saxon, Slav, and Japanese,
 Beneath his banner, at his feet,
Bend loyal to his dark decrees.

His is the arm to smite and kill;
The blood of ages marks his skill
On countless battle-fields, until
 The coming of the Prince of Peace,
The crowning of His Liege's will!

Then Thou, Almighty, on Thy throne,
Wilt draw all sceptres to Thine Own;
Wilt reign supreme and reign alone;
 And he shall fall as Satan fell;
He, lord of Carnage, falling prone!

THY THOUGHT OF ME

THY thought of me? 'T is but a chance,
Conveyed in thy sheer look, askance,
As some swift birdling in its flight
Might skim across the skyey light,
Then vanish in the blue expanse.

For who am I thou wouldst entrance?
My name thou scarce would deign indite,
Nor murmur to me in a dance,
Thy thought of me.

But thou to me? A heart's romance!
Thy vision stirs with strange delight;
I dream of thee in mid of night,
Until alas! like some death-lance,
My soul impales, with inward glance,
Thy thought of me.

10

WERE I IN LOVE

WERE I in love I would not go
As suppliant in thy train, and so
Be servile courtier by thy grace,
Enamored of thy form and face,
Pleading for favor, stooping low.

Thy vanity should never know
One specious word, or fawning show
Of flattery and fulsome praise,
Were I in love.

But with a constancy of glow,
With tireless will,— with blow on blow,
I'd fight to win for thee a place
Befitting in the proud world's race,
Then love thee, have thee, yes or no,
Were I in love!

THE WANDERER

L OVE returns to its home again;
Love, that in silent years of pain,
 Haunted, e'en as a pallid thing,
 Giving no sign of its suffering;
Love — the old, old Love that was slain!

I feel its plaint as if 't were fain
To free itself where it had lain;
 Beating, to loose its fettered wing.
 Love returns!

I ween, O Love, nor thong nor chain
Can hold thee, nor thy heart restrain;
 Nay, any arts that earth could bring,
 Or Time, the despot, tethering
With golden links, are vain, are vain.
 Love returns!

WHEN NIGHT STEALS ON

WHEN night steals on, then day's dull care
Glides from me, borne in half despair
For its stern duty and demand;
And luring, as with some witch wand,
Enchantments inly draw me, where,

Lulled as by spirit-touch, I share,
Mute-voiced, such dreams as seem like prayer;
And music floats from fairy-land,
When night steals on.

Then sinks the twilight's waning glare;
Then still stars gleam in misty air;
And walking, silent, on the strand
Together, two, we understand,—
We, listening to the sea surge there,
When night steals on!

MY FAIR SIXTEEN

MY Fair Sixteen, I know, I know.
“Time flies,” we ’re told; but is it so?
Nay, rather like some blind ground-mole,
It bores a subterranean hole
Beneath our feet,—a secret foe.

If it had pinions, high and low
We ’d hunt it, trusting Cupid’s bow;
Or clip its wings and steal its toll,
My Fair Sixteen.

But now we know not where to go;
It springs its hidden mines, or lo
It pierces to our very soul
And feasts upon our life-blood’s dole,
But not on thine, O no, O no,
My Fair Sixteen!

TRUE EMINENCE

TRUE Eminence, I know thy place;
Thou dwellest in unblazoned ways,
A lone retreat removed from town
Where thou art chary of renown,
Nor challengest in any race.

Thou hast an easy charm of grace
(Dissembling not in heart nor face),
And dignity without the gown,
True Eminence.

No wily flatterers shall trace
Thee to thy quiet nook, where space
And freedom are alike thine own;
Thy nice sincerity would frown
On these, as tricksters in disgrace,
True Eminence.

STOIC-WISE

BE still, O heart! so prone to heat;
Be cold, aloof, and dull to greet;
Be loth, demurring, stoic-wise;
Hark thee! guard well thy brusque disguise;
Be thou inexorably discreet.

Dost thou not know how cruel-sweet
It is to crush beneath one's feet
The fellow-soul that pleading, lies?
Be still, O heart!

Thou dost protest, as it were meet
To let thy prisoned pity cheat
Thy stoic will and brim the eyes.
What if the pierced heart breaks and dies?
O Love, O Love, stay thy quick beat!
Be still, O heart!

I WATCHED AND WATCHED

THE ship was free with the flooding tide ;
Swung from moorings, the river to ride ;
The stern bent north, the stem to the sea,
As it bore my own away from me
To the underworld and the ocean, wide.

My lips were brave and even defied
My heart, bereft, as it throbbed and sighed!
I watched and watched till I could not see.
The ship was free!

Far down past city and isles it plied,
Till only faintly could be descried,
Like a vision dimmed in memory,
Fading and fading fast from the lea,—
The ship, with the Dear Ones, deified.
The ship was free!

IN THE HUSHED GLOAMING

I N the hushed gloaming, when the dying light
Gleams soft appealings to her inly sight,
She sits alone and watches o'er the bay;
The shadows deepen with the ebb of day,
Her tranced spirit blending with the night.

Lo, in the utter stillness of its flight,
The pallid moon, of mildly argent white,
Steals, lonely, on its solitary way
In the hushed gloaming!

Her heart, in homage, owns its lenient might,
And vows a votive token to its bright
And beauteous vision; chastened thoughts betray
A silver lining, lured by its ray.
Her couchant being thrills with veiled delight
In the hushed gloaming!

I WATCHED HER READ

I WATCHED her read a song of mine;
She paused, then scanned it line by line;
A smile suffused her face, I guessed
Of irony than interest;
Than this — she gave no other sign.

Whatever thought she might enshrine
I lacked the vision to divine;
And yet with still lips closely pressed
I watched her read.

There seemed unconsciously to shine,
Through softer eyes, a spell, benign;
And secretly, as some strange guest
Intruding on her silent quest,
A tear fell; with what joy, divine,
I watched her read!

RETOUR À LA VIE

ALLEGORIQUE

MY beautiful Rose, scarce yet in its plume,
I folded and laid in a cloisteral room
Of my errant heart; and I said: "O Rose,
I will hold thee fast in memory's close;
I'll lay thee away in the drear, dim gloom:

"Thou wilt droop and die and death will consume
Thy beauty ere yet thy lavish perfume
Will charge dear memory; for no one knows —
My beautiful Rose!"

Time wrought a change in its mutable loom,
And I said: "I'll go to the desolate tomb
Of my pale, dead rose, in its still repose,
And pay it the tribute that memory owes."
When, Lo, in the tomb — see! see! — in full bloom,
My beautiful Rose!

BEAUTY

ANOINT my sight that I may see thee, Fair,—
Daughter of Light from out the marvellous
skies,—

Beauty, whose form in this frail image dies;
Anoint my sight, that when I plead how rare
Of grace thou art, I yet may not despair
Of knowing the divinity thine eyes
Reflect to me from yon veiled Paradise,
The peerless spirit of thee dwelling there.

O could my blinded vision cleave the clay
That shields thee, Queen, beyond my mortal gaze,
And snatch a glimpse of thee on that highway
Of thy soul's birth, in immemorial days,
Then to thy very self I'd token bring
Of which this thought is but vain shadowing!

CASTALY

I 'D fain be drunk with the waters of thine,
Drinking till stars in my vision shone bright;
Till night challenged day in excess of light,
And rapture resolved to sorrow, divine.

Then I 'd sing to the world a song of mine,
Aflame with the fire of my soul's delight;
A song uplifting my soul by its might,
Exalting my soul by the mead of its wine!

I would smite the chords of prodigal life,
Of ecstasy charged with passion and prayer,
The tragic and glad that equally share
The spirit with which they are nobly rife;
So life would become a gloria day
Wherein my song would conquer its way!

TO OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

ONCE thou didst sing of "Silent Melody,"
Of stringless harp, of weird and broken bard
Whom ruthless Time, with withering hand, and
hard,
Had stricken low until, in plaintive plea
(Though 'reft of voice to sing or eyes to see),
He craved once more to touch the vanished chord,
To dream the old songs back, and hear th' award
That floated in his wandering memory.
Not thou, O no! not thou; thou ne'er didst feel
The touch of Time; nor see through glimmering
eyes;
Nor let thy lyre fall stringless at thy feet;
Nor thy clear voice forget its joyance, leal;
Nor flashing thought to lose its cunning, wise;
'T is Time, not thou, that, conquered, owns
defeat.

WINTER WOODS

THE silence in the woods weighs heavily
These winter days, scarce broken by the tread
Of timid feet on foliage fallen dead.
Hushed are the notes that erst, in earlier glee,
Sent messages of love from tree to tree;
Stilled, the once whispering leafage overhead.
Vanished are these like golden years long fled;
Like friends of yore who never more shall be.
Instead, O glory of the sinking day
Whose hectic fires have burned to embers, low!
O arctic brook that hastens to the sea!
O life o'erborne of time and mute decay!
Ye seem to challenge me, like some dread foe,
To ghostly visions of mortality!

IN MOUNTAIN MIST

“O DREARY day!” they said; “O lonely place!”
The great Leviathans were wrapt in doom;
A mountain mist had robed the cliffs in gloom;
Scarce could we see each other face to face;
The rocks were hung in folds of magic lace,
Spun by wild nature’s craft, and in her loom.
“O lonely place!” Yes, to the dead a tomb!
But for the living, here the soul might trace
The grandeur of the everlasting hills;
We could not see them, yet, like tragedy,
They overbore the spirit of our wills;
Awful, as when we hear the soundless sea!
Then, as a vision, through the earthly mist
Heaven flamed in sheen of gold and amethyst.

WAS IT A DREAM ?

WAS it a dream ? and was she spectral-born ?
Only the phantom of a day unknown ;

An apparition, pale, not mine to own ;
Conjured in memory of some myth, forlorn ;
She—whose eyes challenged e'en the rosy morn ?
Did not her being, shaped of love alone,
Glide, beauteous, to my throbbing bosom's
throne,

Fair as a vision, fadeless and unshorn ?

That day—nay, not illusive ! O that day
When Love's dawn to my waiting senses came,
A nimbus lightened up my wingèd way
And left in starry characters her name !
A peerless face and form it left ; and yet,
Was it a dream ?—and cannot I forget ?

11

THE GIANT AND THE PIGMIES

A GNARLED oaken log, with flinty heart,
Lies on the hearth, besieged by snapping pine;
The one, like some great fortress, gives no sign
Of yielding; all the woods with venom dart
Their fire-shots, smiting here and there, which start
The blazon-armored giant; work so fine
They do that not a single joint escapes; mine
On mine explodes with atomic skill and art.
Ah, these shall conquer, pigmies though they are;
The powers which crush, themselves shall fall at
last,
Inert with spoil and surfeited with lust.
The mighty crumble in the fiery war,—
E'en in the mimic, Liliputian blast,—
The mighty, weighted with earth's shale and dust.

TO-DAY!

THE world, to-day, is all for clamorous deeds,
Delirious for action; fevered feet

Go hurrying through the city's trammelled street,
And hands, outstretched, are clutching gilded weeds;
Weak men, fore-spent, lean hard on treacherous reeds.

O what to have, to do, to drink, and eat!

More gold, more marts for spoil they grasp and
greet;

For these men suffer,—martyrs to their greeds;

For these! Ah me, my soul turns sad at thought

Of life bent to the slave-task of this age;

Of life, so charged with fire and winged with
song!

How shall it answer, since itself has wrought

The pitiless shackles? Prisoned in a cage,

The spirit, sore distraught, ill brooks the wrong!

WINTER IN THE ADIRONDACKS

THE hills are white and silent. Lo, the lakes,
Immured in crystal tombs, lie still and prone;
The hoary forests, storm-clad, grieve and groan.
Whene'er the frost-spurred tempest, lawless, breaks
From yonder mountain fastnesses, and makes
For cloistered solitudes, you hear it moan
As 't were in pain; yet list the lyric tone
Of the brooklet's echo as it awakes
In rocky caves!

“Silent,” did I say? Nay,
Nature's never silent. From hollow grotes
To loftiest pinnacle her voices rise;
She, too, like man, is troubled night and day!
But 'midst the lonely sadness of her notes
Does not her heart dream of its paradise?

THE TWO SISTERS

O FAITH, who fain wouldst harbor sleepless
doubt;

Cloud-veiled in shadow gloomier than eve

When night draws near; whose fearful heart doth
grieve,

Doth pant and pale as beacon fires die out!

O Faith, revive; peer through the dusk; go shout

For thy sweet sister, Love, to bring relief,

With her diviner wand—to lost belief;

With her high mystery of truth to rout

All hovering broods that smother thy pure light;

To save thee to thine own, thou Heavenly heir!

Then shall thy lustre gild again the night,

While Love's leal breast doth bear thee so to share,

Through all the travail of thine earthly stress,

Thy victories, forth to everlastingness!

EN ROUTE

WHAT bitterness is this that girts with bands
My visionary thought, that frowns at my
glad dream,

That clips my magic sail when kind fates seem
To send fleet messengers from Heaven? Fair lands
Lie prone beyond my gaze; my outstretched hands,
Upborne, would grasp Hesperian fruits that gleam
As golden apples, where yon luring beam
Gilds happy shores, till my quick soul expands.

What bitterness? Ah, this: that ere the bound
Of my plumed paradise is won, or heart
Can garner to itself the glittering prize,
My baffled barque shall circle round and round,
Turn leeward, backward, lose its starry chart,
Plunge through lashed seas,—then, then at last to
rise!

“ O GLORY IN THE GLOOM ! ”

THE shadows fall and make a dimning blur;
A foot-fall on the path would seem like tread
Of marching warders; Dians, forest-bred,
Steal to the solitudes; hushed is the stir
Of bird-wing or of human tide; the whirl
Of day is silenced; hurrying life has fled;
Winds sink to rest, and light is forfeited
Mid the dark vales, the oaks, the denser fir.
But just as suns sink low and crimsons fade,
When earth goes glimmering downward to the
night,
Then dawns, within the mystic, cloisteral shade,
That luminous ray—the spirit’s inly light.
O glory in the gloom! O imagery
Transcending gift of Heaven to dawning day!

REGRETS !

YE come unbidden, when the tide is low
That erst had flooded my unchallenged days,
And leave me even bleak of heart, whose stays
Of love and faith are shorn and shaken so
That I had rather doubt, I ween, than know,
Till fear and hope encounter, and life weighs.
Ye come unbidden; and your shadow stays
Athwart my spirit like a bitter woe!

Regrets! Regrets! Ye are as dim defiles
Which suns nor warm, nor moon nor stars illumine;
Where love fains not, nor dearest joy beguiles—
(Whose days are darker than the dreaded doom).
These, these, like exiles to far ocean isles,
Are banished when Regrets diffuse their gloom!

WHITE FACE

ALPINE in height, a towering form, it lies
Against the blue, colossal in the morn;
And haply now the foamy clouds, o'erborne,
Shall veil its summit on the eastern skies;
And now the gentler airs shall whisper sighs,
Or the imperious tempest-storm, forlorn,
Whirl o'er its grim ravines and rock-ribs, shorn;
Yet, lo! it stands immutable, defies
The passion-throes of earth!

Symbol of power,
It breasts the heavens; and when the shadows fall,
When vales are blurred in dusk, watching, I see
A nimbus clinging, like a golden shower,
On its white brow. Even so, when truth shall pall
On lesser souls, the great seem rapt and free!

LOWELL

O LAUREATE, thou hast past; a hush more deep
Than sorrow's sacred pall falls on thy rest;
Love follows thee and mourns, with mute behest,
Thy silenced voice and thy last, unvexed sleep;
The elms about thine "Elmwood" droop and weep;
The birds, aggrieving, fold their wings to nest;
Yet more than these, how must thy loss invest
And pierce the heart in its lone, brooding keep!

No more the music from thy lips shall wake
In myriad strains; no more thy words shall fall
On charmèd ears, nor thy great spirit break
On waiting souls whom thou wast wont t' enthral.
Yet, Poet, thou hast sung immortal songs
Which shall forever thrill the world's vast throngs!

ON THAT GLAD DAY

HOW shall we seem, each to the other, when,
On that glad day, immortal, we shall meet—
Thou who, erstwhile, didst pass with hastening
feet;

I, who still wait here, in the haunts of men?
Speech—we shall need it not, nor language, then;
Nor troth, which here conveyed its passion sweet;
Nor any signal from loved lips, to greet
In happy seal of loyalty.

Then, ken

Of the spirit, vision of the soul, will tell,
More than ecstatic pleadings in lost years;
More than our trysting, with its magic spell;
Or faltering faith, half-perjured by pale fears.
From these all dross will then have fallen away,
And peerless love shall flood our souls that day!

PEACE

THE summits of the great hills yonder, raised
By vast upheavals, wrecks of Nature's throes,
Now touch, or seemingly, the sunset's rose,—
Calm with a peace on which our eyes have gazed,—
A peace whose marvel beauty lips have praised
Through all the years. Could we but brave the
woes

That else would blight our joys, the spirit knows
That we might even feel our souls a-dazed
At the great peace upborne from grievous wrecks
Of other days; a peace inborn alone
Of overbearing pain, whose dark reflex
At last—though how, we know not—can atone,
Through leagues of time, in beauty bathed in light,
For all the sorceries of our fearful night!

DEATH—LIFE

THOU, Foremost, standing on the highest plane,
Wise leader in the land, and nobly great,
In priceless virtues blest and consecrate,
By one swift, awful messenger art slain!
Slain! (Horror hatched in demon-heart and brain,
Hating the right with hell's infernal hate.)
Thou knowest now the love which crowns thy
fate,
Which crowns thy death,—the stricken nation's pain;
Thou knowest now the reverence, zeal, the woe,
The sorrowing, by countless millions borne;
Thou knowest more than mortal e'er shall know—
Shorn of thy dust, in thy triumphal morn—
Of joy eternal;—destiny God-given
To thee, great soul, within the gates of heaven!

RENUNCIATION

O COME to me again! Vain, vain recall!
Beyond the veil of nameless years I hear
Thy voice as music in a dream; so dear
That every pulse, impassioned of Love's thrall,
Beats wildly with heartrending! All in all
Wert thou; alas, now strange to me, and drear
Must ever be the lonely days; each year
That passes rears 'twixt us a higher wall!
Nay, never more—O never more—can be
The tremulous word once whispered to thee,
Sweet;
And never more the trysts, as hopeless we
Go separate! We may not—must not—meet,
Though Love for Love anhungered be to death,
Pleading its longing with its last, lost breath!

BROKEN GODS

GAZE backward thou into the slumb'rous past;
With eyes averted scan the vista, long,
Down the dim aisles where once thy faith was
strong,
In which, alas, so many wrecks were cast!
What dost thou to thyself confess at last?
These broken gods—to whom do they belong?
And are they worth the tribute of a song,—
Lost loves despoiled by Time's iconoclast?
What hold have they on thee—discarded things?
Yet when they claim a token, will thy heart
Dare cast them off as alien? Will it dare
Disown them—these thy virgin offerings,
Now wrought into thy being as a part
Of thy diviner self—e'en share for share?

TO WINTER

WAIT, Winter, haste not; stand aloof awhile.
Why need'st thou chill the melancholy days
With thine untimely shroud? Nay, let me gaze
With eyes that love to see the dying smile,
The sad sunshines that soften and beguile
The sense, and watch the witchery of haze
That lingers like a web in autumn ways,
To snare the painted fringe of forest-aisle.
Aye, stay thy frost-touch, Winter; rude thou art.
Let the gold harvest-moons, resplendent, reign;
Let Indian-summer warm its hectic heart
And dream itself the tropics once again;
Delay thine office! When the prone earth lies
An empty waste, then close dead Autumn's eyes.

THE QUEEN OF SONG

THE Queen came, gently bred, shrinking and soft
Of voice; with no armed warders—nay, nor
knight—

To herald her benign and beauteous might;
No torches flared; no banners waved aloft
To signal her approach; no helmets—doft—
Paid tribute as to one enshrined in light;
Alone she came in unemblazoned night,
Plain clad, anhungered, and impoverished oft,
Yet Queen above all others; royal-crowned
She came, and carved her name in deathless song!
Her magic wand all other sovereigns owned;
Her regal gifts to all the world belong!
Forever Queen,—even when empires fall,—
Since she is throned within the hearts of all!

EVOLUTION

I

THE hours are leaden; shadows fall mid-day;
Athwart my steps the ominous twilights creep:
The sorrowing skies, o'ercharged with grieving,
weep;

And grave is now the heart that once was gay.
O blithesome spell gone sad! O wiser May!

The first fool's paradise, wherein would leap,
At touch of lute, the dancing feet, to reap
The halcyon joys while rosy fancies play,
Has vanished. Pondering, with timid tread,

Slow-footed, wearied with a weight of lore,
Bent with a seer's ripe crown—a silvered head,

Lo, Knowledge limps where Folly danced before!
O dream of youth! O ignorance sublime!
So mocked, when thought allies itself with time!

2

Thus knowledge halts; the brooding mind abides
Bewildered and in doubt, a skeptic still;
It questions—as a baffled huntsman will

The secret covert where the deer-herd hides—
Betwixt the courses; then its search divides;
Tries, but faint-heartedly, with faltering skill,
To guess where, haply, waits the prize, until
Its morrow morn its yesterdays derides.
But Wisdom comes at last, the Siren, old,
With radiance crowned, to light her sacred aisle;
By subtle alchemy her thought of gold
O'er-treasures worlds of feathery dross and wile;
Serene, with dauntless steps, she hastes to greet
The day; lo, Knowledge kneeling at her feet!

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