



STEDMAN





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Edmund Clarence Fickman

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

Household Edition

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



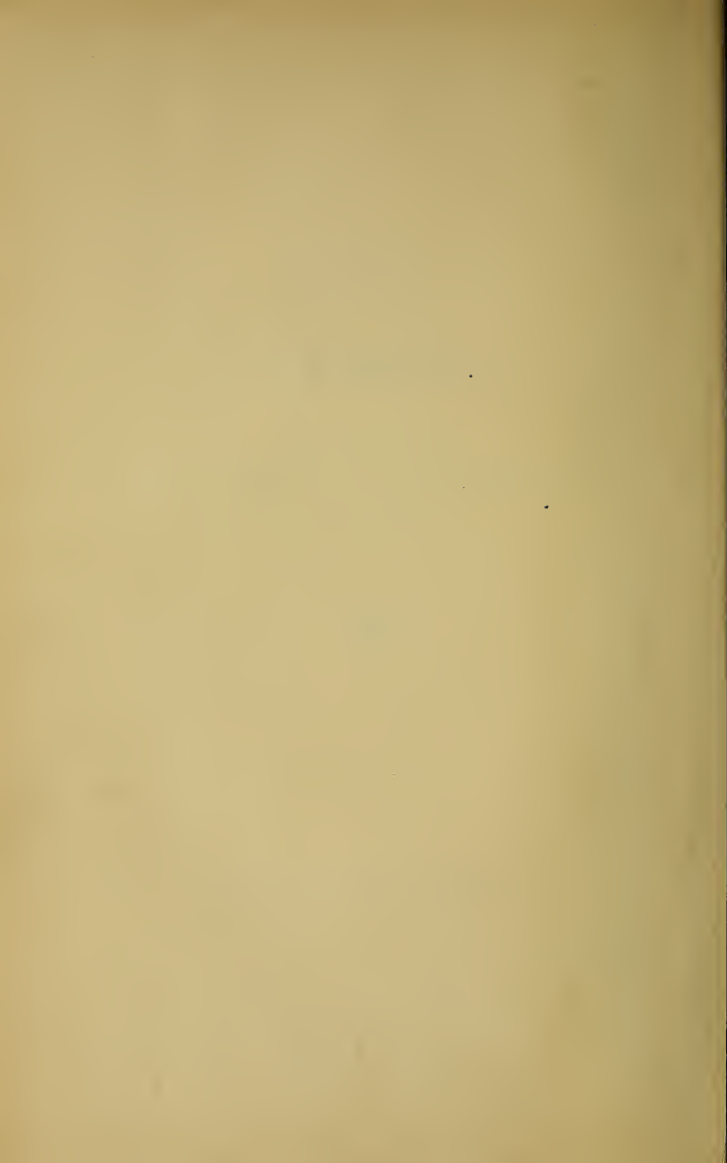
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THIS COLLECTION
IS AFFECTIONATELY AND REVERENTLY
Dedicated
TO MY MOTHER.







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EARLY POEMS.





EARLY POEMS.

BOHEMIA.

A PILGRIMAGE.

I.

WHEN *buttercups are blossoming,*
The poets sang, *'t is best to wed :*
So all for love we paired in Spring —
Blanche and I — ere youth had sped,
For Autumn's wealth brings Autumn's wane
Sworn fealty to royal Art
Was ours, and doubly linked the chain,
With symbols of her high domain,
That twined us ever heart to heart ;
And onward, like the Babes in the Wood,
We rambled, till before us stood
The outposts of Bohemia.

II.

For, roaming blithely many a day,
Eftsoons our little hoard of gold,
Like Christian's follies, slipt away,
Unloosened from the pilgrim's hold,
But left us just as blithe and free ;

Whereat our footsteps turned aside
 From lord and lady of degree,
 And bore us to that brave countree
 Where merrily we now abide, —
 That proud and humble, poor and grand,
 Enchanted, golden Gypsy-Land,
 The Valley of Bohemia.

III.

Together from the higher clime,
 By terraced cliff and copse along,
 Adown the slant we stept, in time
 To many another pilgrim's song,
 And came where faded far away,
 Each side, the kingdom's ancient wall,
 From breaking unto dying day ;
 Beyond, the magic valley lay,
 With glimpse of shimmering stream and fall ;
 And here, between twin turrets, ran,
 Built o'er with arch and barbacan,
 The entrance to Bohemia.

IV.

Beneath the lichened parapet
 Grim-sculptured Gog and Magog bore
 The Royal Arms, — Hope's Anchor, set
 In azure, on a field of *or*,
 With pendent mugs, and hands that wield
 A lute and tambour, graven clear ;
 What seemed a poet's scroll revealed
 The antique legend of the shield :
 Cambrinus. Rex. helde. Massaille. her e.
 Joynd. with. ye. Kinge. of. Yvetot.
 O. worlde-worne. Pilgrim. passe. belowe.
 Co. entre. sayre. Bohemia.

v.

No churlish warder barred the gate,
Nor other pass was needed there
Than equal heart for either fate,
And barren scrip, and hope to spare.
Through the gray archway, hand in hand,
We walked, beneath the rampart high,
*And on within the wondrous land ;
There, changed as by enchanter's wand,
My sweetheart, fairer to the eye
Than ever, moved along serene
In hood and cloak, — a gypsy queen,
Born princess of Bohemia !

VI.

A fairy realm ! where slope and stream,
Champaign and upland, town and grange,
Like shadowy shiftings of a dream,
Forever blend and interchange ;
A magic clime ! where, hour by hour,
Storm, cloud, and sunshine, fleeting by,
Commingle, and, through shine and shower,
Bright castles, lit with rainbows, tower,
Emblazoning the distant sky
With glimmering glories of a land
Far off, yet ever close at hand
As hope, in brave Bohemia.

VII.

On either side the travelled way,
Encamped along the sunny downs,
The blithesome, bold Bohemians lay ;
Or hid, in quaintly-gabled towns,
At smoke-stained inns of musty date,

And spider-haunted attic nooks
 In empty houses of the great,
 Still smacking of their ancient state, —
 Strewn round with pipes and mouldy books,
 And robes and buskins over-worn,
 That well become the careless scorn
 And freedom of Bohemia.

VIII.

For, loving Beauty, and, by chance,
 Too poor to make her all in all,
 They spurn her half-way maintenance,
 And let things mingle as they fall ;
 Dissevered from all other climes,
 Yet compassing the whole round world,
 Where'er are jests, and jousts at rhymes,
 True love, and careless, jovial times,
 Great souls by jilting Fortune whirled,
 Men that were born before their day,
 Kingly, without a realm to sway,
 Yet monarchs in Bohemia ;

IX.

And errant wielders of the quill ;
 And old-world princes, strayed afar,
 In thread-bare exile chasing still
 The glimpses of a natal star ;
 And Woman — taking refuge there
 With woman's toil, and trust, and song,
 And something of a piquant air
 Defiant, as who must and dare
 Steer her own shallop, right or wrong.
 A certain noble nature schools,
 In scorn of smaller, mincing rules,
 The maidens of Bohemia.

X.

But we pursued our pilgrimage
 Far on, through hazy lengths of road,
 Or crumbling cities gray with age ;
 And stayed in many a queer abode,
 Days, seasons, years, — wherein were born
 Of infant pilgrims, one, two, three ;
 And ever, though with travel worn,
 Nor garnered for the morrow's morn,
 We seemed a merry company, —

We, and the mates whom friendship, or
 What sunshine fell within our door,
 Drew to us in Bohemia.

XI.

For Ambrose — priest without a cure —
 Christened our babes, and drank the wine
 He blessed, to make the blessing sure ;
 And Ralph, the limner — half-divine
 The picture of my Blanche he drew,
 As Saint Cecilia 'mong the caves, —
 She singing ; eyes a holy blue,
 Upturned and rapturous ; hair, in hue,
 Gold rippled into amber waves.

There, too, is wayward, wild Annette,
 Danseuse and warbler and grisette,
 True daughter of Bohemia,

XII.

But all by turns and nothing long ;
 And Rose, whose needle gains her bread ;
 And bookish Sibyl, — she whose tongue
 The bees of Hybla must have fed ;
 And one — a poet — nowise sage

For self, but gay companion boon
 And prophet of the golden age ;
 He joined us in our pilgrimage
 Long since, one early Autumn noon
 When, faint with journeying, we sate
 Within a wayside hostel-gate
 To rest us in Bohemia.

XIII.

In rusty garb, but with an air
 Of grace, that hunger could not whelm,
 He told his wants, and — “ Could we spare
 Aught of the current of the realm —
 A shilling ? ” — which I gave ; and so
 Came talk, and Blanche’s kindly smile ;
 Whereat he felt his heart aglow,
 And said : “ Lo, here is silver ! lo,
 Mine host hath ale ! and it were vile,
 If so much coin were spent by me
 For bread, when such good company
 Is gathered in Bohemia.”

XIV.

Richer than Kaiser on his throne,
 A royal stoup he bade them bring ;
 And so, with many of mine own,
 His shilling vanished on the wing ;
 And many a skyward-floating strain
 He sang, we chorusing the lay
 Till all the hostel rang again ;
 But when the day began to wane,
 Along the sequel of our way
 He kept us pace ; and, since that time,
 We never lack for song and rhyme
 To cheer us, in Bohemia.

XV.

And once we stopped a twelvemonth, where
Five-score Bohemians began
Their scheme to cheapen bed and fare,
Upon a late-discovered plan ;
“ For see,” they said, “ the sum how small
By which one pilgrim’s wants are met !
And if a host together fall,
What need of any cash at all ? ”
Though how it worked I half forget,
Yet still the same old dance and song
We found, — the kindly, blithesome throng
And joyance of Bohemia.

XVI.

Thus onward through the Magic Land,
With varying chance. But once there past
A mystic shadow o’er our band,
Deeper than Want could ever cast,
For, oh, it darkened little eyes !
We saw our youngest darling die,
Then robed her in her palmer’s guise,
And crossed the fair hands pilgrim-wise,
And, one by one, so tenderly,
Came Ambrose, Sibyl, Ralph, and Rose,
Strewing each sweetest flower that grows
In wildwoods of Bohemia.

XVII.

But last the Poet, sorrowing, stood
Above the tiny clay, and said :
“ Bright little Spirit, pure and good,
Whither so far away hast fled ?
Full soon thou tryest that other sphere :

Whate'er is lacking in our lives
 Thou dost attain ; for Heaven is near,
 Methinks, to pilgrims wandering here,
 As to that one who never strives
 With fortune,— has not come to know
 The pride and pain that dwell so low
 In valleys of Bohemia."

XVIII.

He ceased, and pointed solemnly
 Through western windows ; and we saw
 That lustrous castle of the sky
 Gleam, touched with flame ; and heard with awe,
 About us, gentle whisperings
 Of unseen watchers hovering near
 Our dead, and rustling angel wings !
 Now, whether this or that year brings
 The valley's end, or, haply, here
 Our pilgrimage for life must last,
 We know not ; but a sacred past
 Has hallowed all Bohemia.

THE DIAMOND WEDDING.

O LOVE ! Love ! Love ! what times were those,
 Long ere the age of belles and beaux
 And Brussels lace and silken hose,
 When, in the green Arcadian close,
 You married Psyche, under the rose,
 With only the grass for bedding !
 Heart to heart, and hand in hand,
 You followed Nature's sweet command —

Roaming lovingly through the land,
Nor sighed for a Diamond Wedding.

So have we read, in classic Ovid,
How Hero watched for her beloved,
Impassioned youth, Leander.
She was the fairest of the fair,
And wrapt him round with her golden hair,
Whenever he landed cold and bare,
With nothing to eat and nothing to wear
And wetter than any gander ;
For Love was Love, and better than money ;
The slyer the theft, the sweeter the honey ;
And kissing was clover, all the world over,
Wherever Cupid might wander.

So thousands of years have come and gone,
And still the moon is shining on,
Still Hymen's torch is lighted ;
And hitherto, in this land of the West,
Most couples in love have thought it best
To follow the ancient way of the rest,
And quietly get united.

But now, True Love, you're growing old —
Bought and sold, with silver and gold,
Like a house, or a horse and carriage !
Midnight talks,
Moonlight walks,
The glance of the eye and sweetheart sigh,
The shadowy haunts with no one by,
I do not wish to disparage ;
But every kiss
Has a price for its bliss,
In the modern code of marriage ;

And the compact sweet
 Is not complete,
 Till the high contracting parties meet
 Before the altar of Mammon ;
 And the bride must be led to a silver bower,
 Where pearls and rubies fall in a shower
 That would frighten Jupiter Ammon !

I need not tell
 How it befell,
 (Since Jenkins has told the story
 Over and over and over again,
 In a style I cannot hope to attain,
 And covered himself with glory !)
 How it befell, one Summer's day,
 The King of the Cubans strolled this way, —
 King January 's his name, they say, —
 And fell in love with the Princess May,
 The reigning belle of Manhattan ;
 Nor how he began to smirk and sue,
 And dress as lovers who come to woo,
 Or as Max Maretzek and Jullien do,
 When they sit, full-bloomed, in the ladies' view,
 And flourish the wondrous baton.

He was n't one of your Polish nobles,
 Whose presence their country somehow troubles,
 And so our cities receive them ;
 Nor one of your make-believe Spanish grandees,
 Who ply our daughters with lies and candies,
 Until the poor girls believe them.
 No, he was no such charlatan —
 Count de Hoboken Flash-in-the-pan,

Full of gasconade and bravado,
But a regular, rich Don Rataplan
Santa Claus de la Muscovado
Señor Grandissimo Bastinado !
His was the rental of half Havana
And all Matanzas ; and Santa Anna,
Rich as he was, could hardly hold
A candle to light the mines of gold
Our Cuban owned, choke-full of diggers ;
And broad plantations, that, in round figures,
Were stocked with at least five thousand niggers !
“ Gather ye rosebuds while ye may ! ”
The Señor swore to carry the day,
To capture the beautiful Princess May,
 With his battery of treasure ;
Velvet and lace she should not lack ;
Tiffany, Haughwout, Ball & Black,
Genin and Stewart, his suit should back
 And come and go at her pleasure ;
Jet and lava — silver and gold —
Garnets — emeralds rare to behold —
Diamonds — sapphires — wealth untold
All were hers, to have and to hold ;
 Enough to fill a peck-measure !

He did n't bring all his forces on
At once, but like a crafty old Don,
Who many a heart had fought and won,
 Kept bidding a little higher ;
And every time he made his bid,
And what she said, and all they did —
 'T was written down,
 For the good of the town,
By Jeems, of *The Daily Flyer*.

A coach and horses, you 'd think, would buy
For the Don an easy victory ;

But slowly our Princess yielded.

A diamond necklace caught her eye,
But a wreath of pearls first made her sigh.
She knew the worth of each maiden glance,
And, like young colts, that curvet and prance,
She led the Don a deuce of a dance,

In spite of the wealth he wielded.

She stood such a fire of silks and laces,
Jewels, and golden dressing-cases,
And ruby brooches, and jets and pearls,
That every one of her dainty curls
Brought the price of a hundred common girls ;

Folks thought the lass demented !

But at last a wonderful diamond ring,
An infant Koh-i-noor, did the thing,
And, sighing with love, or something the same,
(What 's in a name ?)

The Princess May consented.

Ring ! ring the bells, and bring
The people to see the marrying !
Let the gaunt and hungry and ragged poor
Throng round the great Cathedral door,
To wonder what all the hubbub 's for,
And sometimes stupidly wonder
At so much sunshine and brightness, which
Fall from the church upon the rich,
While the poor get all the thunder.

Ring ! ring, merry bells, ring !
 O fortunate few
 With letters blue,
 Good for a seat and a nearer view !
 Fortunate few, whom I dare not name ;
Dilettanti ! Crème de la crème !
 We commoners stood by the street façade
 And caught a glimpse of the cavalcade ;
 We saw the bride
 In diamonded pride,
 With jewelled maidens to guard her side, —

Six lustrous maidens in tarletan.
 She led the van of the caravan ;
 Close behind her, her mother
 (Dressed in gorgeous *moire antique*,
 That told, as plainly as words could speak,
 She was more antique than the other,)
 Leaned on the arm of Don Rataplan
 Santa Claus de la Muscovado
 Señor Grandissimo Bastinado.
 Happy mortal ! fortunate man !
 And Marquis of El Dorado !

In they swept, all riches and grace,
 Silks and satins, jewels and lace ;
 In they swept from the dazzled sun,
 And soon in the church the deed was done.
 Three prelates stood on the chancel high :
 A knot that gold and silver can buy
 Gold and silver may yet untie,
 Unless it is tightly fastened ;
 What 's worth doing at all 's worth doing well.
 And the sale of a young Manhattan belle
 Is not to be pushed or hastened ;

So two Very-Reverends graced the scene,
And the tall Archbishop stood between,
 By prayer and fasting chastened.
The Pope himself would have come from Rome,
But Garibaldi kept him at home.
Haply these robed prelates thought
Their words were the power that tied the knot ;
But another power that love-knot tied,
And I saw the chain round the neck of the bride, —
A glistening, priceless, marvellous chain,
Coiled with diamonds again and again,
 As befits a diamond wedding ;
Yet still 't was a chain, and I thought she knew it,
And half-way longed for the will to undo it,
 By the secret tears she was shedding.

But is n't it odd, to think whenever
We all go through that terrible River, —
Whose sluggish tide alone can sever
(The Archbishop says) the Church decree,
By floating one into Eternity
And leaving the other alive as ever, —
As each wades through that ghastly stream,
The satins that rustle and gems that gleam
Will grow pale and heavy, and sink away
To the noisome River's bottom-clay ;
Then the costly bride and her maidens six
Will shiver upon the banks of the Styx,
Quite as helpless as they were born, —
Naked souls, and very forlorn ;
The Princess, then, must shift for herself,
And lay her royalty on the shelf ;
She, and the beautiful Empress, yonder,
Whose robes are now the wide world's wonder,

And even ourselves, and our dear little wives,
 Who calico wear each morn of their lives,
 And the sewing girls, and *les chiffoniers*,
 In rags and hunger, — a gaunt array, —
 And all the grooms of the caravan —
 Ay, even the great Don Rataplan
 Santa Claus de la Muscovado
 Señor Grandissimo Bastinado —
 That gold-encrusted, fortunate man ! —
 All will land in naked equality :
 The lord of a ribboned principality
 Will mourn the loss of his *cordón*.
 Nothing to eat, and nothing to wear
 Will certainly be the fashion there !
 Ten to one, and I 'll go it alone,
 Those most used to a rag and bone,
 Though here on earth they labor and groan,
 Will stand it best, as they wade abreast
 To the other side of Jordan.

PENELOPE.

NOT thus, Ulysses, with a tender word,
 Pretence of state affairs, soft blandishment,
 And halt assurances, canst thou evade
 My heart's discernment. Think not such a film
 Hath touched these aged eyes, to make them lose
 The subtlest mood of those even now adroop,
 Self-conscious, darkling from my nearer gaze.
 Full well I know thy mind, O man of wiles !

O man of restless yearnings — fate-impelled,
 Fate-conquering — like a waif thrown back and forth
 O'er many waters ! Oft I see thee stand
 At eve, a landmark on the outer cliff,
 Looking far westward ; later, when the feast
 Smokes in the hall, and nimble servants pass
 Great bowls of wine, and ancient Phemeus sings
 The deeds of Peleus' son, thy right hand moves
 Straight for its sword-hilt, like a ship for home ;
 Then, when thou hearest him follow in the song
 Thine own miraculous sojourn of long years
 Through stormy seas, weird islands, and the land
 Of giants, and the gray companions smite
 Their shields, and cry, *What do we longer here ?*
Afloat ! and let the great waves bear us on !
 I know thou growest weary of the realm,
 Thy wife, thy son, the people, and thy fame.

I too have had my longings. Am I not
 Penelope, who, when Ulysses came
 To Sparta, and Icarius bade her choose
 Betwixt her sire and wooer, veiled her face
 And stept upon the galley silver-oared,
 And since hath kept thine Ithacensian halls ?
 Then when the hateful Helen fled to Troy
 With Paris, and the Argive chieftains sailed
 Then ships to Aulis, I would have thee go —
 Presaging fame, and power, and spoils of war.
 So ten years passed ; meanwhile I reared thy son
 To know his father's wisdom, and, apart
 Among my maidens, wove the yellow wool.
 But then, returning one by one, they came, —
 The island-princes ; high-born dames of Crete
 And Cephalonia saw again their lords ;

Only Ulysses came not ; yet the war
Was over, and his vessels, like a troop
Of cranes in file, had spread their wings for home.
More was unknown. Then many a winter's night
The servants piled great fagots, smeared with tar,
High on the palace-roof ; with mine own hands
I fired the heaps, that, haply, far away
On the dark waters, might my lord take heart
And know the glory of his kingly towers.

So winter passed ; and summer came and went,
And winter and another summer ; then —
Alas, how many weary months and days !
But he I loved came not. Meanwhile thou knowest
Pelagia's noblest chiefs, with kingly gifts
And pledge of dower, gathered in the halls ;
But still this heart kept faithful, knowing yet
Thou wouldst return, though wrecked on alien shores.
And great Athenè often in my dreams
Shone, uttering words of cheer. But, last of all,
The people rose, swearing a king should rule,
To keep their ancient empery of the isles
Inviolate and thrifty : bade me choose
A mate, nor longer dally. Then I prayed
Respite, until the web within my loom,
Of gold and purple curiously devised
For old Laertes' shroud, should fall complete
From hands still faithful to his blood. Thou knowest
How like a ghost I left my couch at night,
Unravelling the labor of the day,
And warded off the fate, till came that time
When my lost sea-king thundered in his halls,
And with long arrows clove the suitors' hearts.
So constant was I ! now not thirty moons

Go by, and thou forgettest all. Alas !
What profit is there any more in love ?
What thankless sequel hath a woman's faith !

Yet if thou wilt, — in these thy golden years,
Safe-housed in royalty, like a god revered
By all the people, — if thou yearnest yet
Once more to dare the deep and Neptune's hate,
I will not linger in a widowed age ;
I will not lose Ulysses, hardly found
After long vigils ; but will cleave about
Thy neck, with more than woman's prayers and tears,
Until thou take me with thee. As I left
My sire, I leave my son, to follow where
Ulysses goeth, dearer for the strength
Of that great heart which ever drives him on
To large experience of newer toils !

Trust me, I will not any hindrance prove,
But, like Athenè's helm, a guiding star,
A glory and a comfort ! O, be sure
My heart shall take its lesson from thine own !
My voice shall cheer the mariners at their oars
In the night watches ; it shall warble songs,
Whose music shall o'erpower the luring airs
Of Nereïd or Siren. If we find
Those isles thou namest, where the golden fount
Gives youth to all who taste it, we will drink
Deep draughts, until the furrows leave thy brow,
And I shall walk in beauty, as when first
I saw thee from afar in Sparta's groves.
But if Charybdis seize our keel, or swift
Black currents bear us down the noisome wave
That leads to Hades, till the vessel sink

In Stygian waters, none the less our souls
 Shall gain the farther shore, and, hand in hand,
 Walk from the strand across Elysian fields,
 'Mong happy thronging shades, that point and say :
 " There go the great Ulysses, loved of gods,
 And she, his wife, most faithful unto death ! "

THE SINGER.

O LARK ! sweet lark !
 Where learn you all your minstrelsy ?
 What realms are those to which you fly ?
 While robins feed their young from dawn till dark,
 You soar on high, —
 Forever in the sky.

O child ! dear child !
 Above the clouds I lift my wing
 To hear the bells of Heaven ring ;
 Some of their music, though my flights be wild,
 To Earth I bring ;
 Then let me soar and sing !

HELIOTROPE.

I WALK in the morning twilight,
 Along a garden-slope,
 To the shield of moss encircling
 My beautiful Heliotrope.

O sweetest of all the flowerets
That bloom where angels tread !
But never such marvellous odor
From heliotrope was shed,

As the passionate exhalation,
The dew of celestial wine,
That floats in tremulous languor
Around this darling of mine.

For, only yester-even,
I saw the dearest scene !
I heard the delicate footfall,
The step of my love, my queen.

Along the walk she glided :
I made no sound nor sign,
But ever, at the turning
Of her star-white neck divine,

I shrunk in the shade of the cypress,
And crouched in the swooning grass,
Like some Arcadian shepherd
To see an Oread pass.

But when she came to the border
At the end of the garden-slope,
She bent, like a rose-tree, over
That beautiful Heliotrope.

The cloud of its subtile fragrance
Entwined her in its wreath,
And all the while commingled
With the incense of her breath.

And so she glistened onward,
 Far down the long parterre,
 Beside the statue of Hesper,
 And a hundred times more fair.

But ah ! her breath had added
 The perfume that I find
 In this, the sweetest of flowerets,
 And the paragon of its kind.

I drink deep draughts of its nectar ;
 I faint with love and hope !
 Oh, what did she whisper to you,
 My beautiful Heliotrope ?

ROSEMARY.

“THERE 'S ROSEMARY, THAT 'S FOR REMEMBRANCE.”

YEARS ago, when a summer sun
 Warmed the greenwood into life,
 I went wandering with one
 Soon to be my wife.

Birds were mating, and Love began
 All the copses to infold ;
 Our two souls together ran
 Melting in one mould.

Skies were bluer than ever before :
 It was joy to love you then,
 And to know I loved you more
 Than could other men !

Winds were fresh and your heart was brave,
Sang to mine a sweet refrain,
And for every pledge I gave
Pledged me back again.

How it happened I cannot tell,
But there came a cursed hour,
When some hidden shape of hell
Crept within our bower.

Sudden and sharply either spoke
Bitter words of doubt and scorn ;
Pride the golden linklets broke, —
Left us both forlorn.

Seven long years have gone since then,
And I suffered, but, at last,
Rose and joined my fellow-men,
Crushing down the past.

Far away over distant hills,
Now I know your life is led ;
Have you felt the rust that kills ?
Are your lilies dead ?

Summer and winter you have dwelt,
Like a statue, cold and white ;
None, of all the crowd who knelt,
Read your soul aright.

O, I knew the tremulous swell
Of its secret undertone !
That diviner music fell
On my ear alone !

Ever in dreams we meet with tears :
 Lake and mountain — all are past :
 With the stifled love of seven long years
 Hold each other fast !

Though the glamour of the night
 Fades with morning far away,
 Oftentimes a strange delight
 Haunts the after-day.

Even now, when the summer sun
 Warms the greenwood far within,
 Even now my fancies run
 On what might have been.

SUMMER RAIN.

WESTERMORN the air was dry
 As the winds of Araby,
 While the sun, with pitiless heat,
 Glared upon the glaring street,
 And the meadow fountains sealed,
 Till the people everywhere,
 And the cattle in the field,
 And the birds in middle air,
 And the thirsty little flowers,
 Sent to heaven a fainting prayer
 For the blessed summer showers.

Not in vain the prayer was said ;
 For at sunset, overhead,
 Sailing from the gorgeous West,
 Came the pioneers, abreast,

Of a wondrous argosy, —
The Armada of the sky !
Far along I saw them sail,
Wafted by an upper gale ;
Saw them, on their lustrous route,
Fling a thousand banners out :
Yellow, violet, crimson, blue,
Orange, sapphire, — every hue
That the gates of Heaven put on,
To the sainted eyes of John,
In that hallowed Patmos isle
Their skyey pennons wore ; and while
I drank the glory of the sight
Sunset faded into night.

Then diverging, far and wide,
To the dim horizon's side,
Silently and swiftly there,
Every galleon of the air,
Manned by some celestial crew,
Out its precious cargo threw,
And the gentle summer rain
Cooled the fevered Earth again.

Through the night I heard it fall
Tenderly and musical ;
And this morning not a sigh
Of wind uplifts the briony leaves,
But the ashen-tinted sky
Still for earthly turmoil grieves,
While the melody of the rain,
Dropping on the window-pane,
On the lilac and the rose,
Round us all its pleasance throws,



“ And the gentle summer rain
Cooled the fevered earth again.” Page 26.

Till our souls are yielded wholly
To its constant melancholy,
And, like the burden of its song,
Passionate moments glide along.

Pinks and hyacinths perfume
All our garden-fronted room ;
Hither, close beside me, Love !
Do not whisper, do not move.
Here we two will softly stay,
Side by side, the livelong day.
Lean thy head upon my breast :
Ever shall it give thee rest,
Ever would I gaze to meet
Eyes of thine up-glancing, Sweet !
What enchanted dreams are ours !
While the murmur of the showers
Dropping on the tranquil ground,
Dropping on the leaves and flowers,
Wraps our yearning souls around
In the drapery of its sound.

Still the plenteous streamlets fall :
Here two hearts are all in all
To each other ; and they beat
With no evanescent heat,
But softly, steadily, hour by hour,
With the calm, melodious power
Of the gentle summer rain,
That in Heaven so long hath lain,
And from out that shoreless sea
Pours its blessings tenderly.

Freer yet its currents swell !
Here are streams that flow as well,

Rivulets of the constant heart ;
 But a little space apart
 Glide they now, and soon shall run,
 Love-united, into one.
 It shall chance, in future days,
 That again the lurid rays
 Of that hidden sun shall shine
 On the floweret and the vine,
 And again the meadow-springs
 Fly away on misty wings :
 But no glare of Fate adverse
 Shall on us achieve its curse,
 Never any baneful gleam
 Waste our clear, perennial stream ;
 For its fountains lie below
 That malign and ominous glow, —
 Lie in shadowy grottoes cool,
 Where all kindly spirits rule ;
 Calmly ever shall it flow
 Toward the waters of the sea, —
 That serene Eternity !

TOO LATE.

CROUCH no more by the ivied walls,
 Weep no longer over her grave,
 Strew no flowers when evening falls :
 Idly you lost what angels gave !

Sunbeams cover that silent mound
 With a warmer hue than your roses' red ;
 To-morrow's rain will bedew the ground
 With a purer stream than the tears you shed.

But neither the sweets of the scattered flowers,
Nor the morning sunlight's soft command,
Nor all the songs of the summer showers,
Can charm her back from that distant land.

Tenderest vows are ever too late !
She, who has gone, can only know
The cruel sorrow that was her fate,
And the words that were a mortal woe.

Earth to earth, and a vain despair ;
For the gentle spirit has flown away,
And you can never her wrongs repair,
Till ye meet again at the Judgment Day.

VOICE OF THE WESTERN WIND.

VOICE of the western wind !
Thou singest from afar,
Rich with the music of a land
Where all my memories are ;
But in thy song I only hear
The echo of a tone
That fell divinely on my ear
In days forever flown.

Star of the western sky !
Thou beamest from afar,
With lustre caught from eyes I knew,
Whose orbs were each a star ;
But, oh, those orbs — too wildly bright —
No more eclipse thine own,
And never shall I find the light
Of days forever flown !

FLOOD-TIDE.

JUST at sunrise, when the land-breeze cooled the
fevered air once more,
From a restless couch I wandered to the sounding
ocean shore ;
Strolling down through furrowed sand-hills, while the
splendor of the day
Flashed across the trembling waters to the West and
far away.
There I saw, in distant moorings, many an anchored
vessel tall ;
Heard with cheery morning voices sailor unto sailor
call.
Crowned with trailing plumes of sable, right afront my
standing-place
Moved a swarthy ocean-steamer in her storm-resisting
grace.
Prophet-like, she clove the waters toward the ancient
mother-land,
And I heard her clamorous engine and the echo of
command,
While the long Atlantic billows to my feet came rolling
on,
With the multitudinous music of a thousand ages gone.

There I stood, with careless ankles half in sand and
half in spray,
Till the baleful mist of midnight from my being passed
away ;
Then, with eager inhalations opening all my mantle
wide,

Felt my spirit rise exultant with the rising of the tide ;
Felt the joyous morning breezes run afresh through
every vein,
Till the natural pulse of manhood beat the call-to-arms
again.
Then came utterance self-condemning, — oh, how wild
with sudden scorn
Of the chain that held me circling in a little round for-
lorn !
Of the sloth which, like a vapor, hugs the dull, insensate
heart,
That can act in meek submission to the lowness of its
part, —
In the broad terrestrial drama play the herald or the
clown,
While the warrior wins his garlands and the monarch
wears his crown !

“ Shame ” I said, “ upon the craven who can rest, con-
tent to save
Paltry handfuls of the riches that his guardian-angel
gave !
Shame upon all listless dreamers early hiding from the
strife,
Sated with some little gleaning of the harvest-fields of
life !
Shame upon God’s toiling thinkers, who make profit of
their brains,
Getting store of scornful pittance for their slow-decay-
ing pains !
Give me purpose, steadfast purpose, and the grandeur
of a soul
Born to lead the van of armies or a people to control.
Let me float away and ever, from this shore of bog and
mire,

On the mounting waves of effort, buoyed by the soul's
desire !
Would that it were mine to govern yon large wonder
of our time :
Such a life were worth the living ! thus to sail through
every clime,
From a hundred spicy shorelands bearing treasures
manifold ;
Foremost to achieve discovery of the peerless lands of
gold ;
Or to thrid the crashing hummocks for the silent North-
ern Pole,
And those solemn open waters that beyond the ice-
plains roll, —
Cold and shining sea of ages ! like a silver fillet set
On the Earth's eternal forehead, for her bridal coronet.
Or to close with some tall frigate, for my country and
the right,
Gunwale grinding into gunwale through the rolling
cloud of fight.
When the din of cannonading and the jarring war
should cease,
From the lion's mouth of battle there should flow the
sweets of peace.
I should count repose in cities from my seventy years
a loss, —
Resting only on the waters, like the dusk-winged alba-
tross.
I should lay the wire-wrought cable — a ghostly depth
below —
Along the marly summit of the plummet-found plateau ;
To the old Antipodes with the olive branch should
roam,
Joining swart Mongolian races to the ranks of Chris-
tendom.

Oftentimes our stately presence in a tyrant's port should
save
Captives, rash in freedom-loving, from the dungeon and
the grave ;
And a hymn should greet our coming, far across the
orient sea,
Like the glad apostles' anthem, when an angel set them
free.

Such the nobler life heroic ! life which ancient Homer
sung
Of the sinewy Grecian worthies, when the blithesome
Earth was young,
And a hundred marvellous legends lay about the misty
land
Where the wanton Sirens carolled and the cliffs of
Scylla stand.
How their lusty strokes made answer, when Ulysses
held the helm,
And with subtle words of wisdom spake of many a
wondrous realm !
Neither Circè, nor the languor of enchanted nights
and days
Soothed their eager-eyed disquiet, — tamed their ventu-
rous, epic ways ;
And the dread Sicilian monster, in his cavern by the
shore,
Felt the shadow of their coming, and was blind for
evermore.

So lived all those stalwart captains of the loyal Saxon
blood,
Grasping morsels of adventure as an eagle grasps his
food ;

Fought till death for queen and country, hating Anti-
christ and Spain ;
Sacked the rich Castilian cities of the glittering western
main ;
Hacked and hewed the molten idols of each gray
cathedral pile,
And with Carthaginian silver dowered the virgin Eng-
lish isle.
Up and down the proud Antilles still the ringing echoes
go :
Ho! a Raleigh! Ho! a Drake! — and, forever,
WESTWARD HO !

Why should not my later pæan catch the swell of that
refrain,
And, with bursts of fresh endeavor, send it down the
age again ?
But I know, that, while the mariner wafts along the
golden year,
Broader continents of action open up in every sphere.
And I deem those noble also, who, with strong persua-
sive art,
Strike the chords of aspiration in a people's lyric
heart.
If in mine — of all republics the Atlantis and supreme —
There be little cause for mouthing on the old, undying
theme —
Yet I falter while I say it : — ours of every crime the
worst !
For the long revenge of Heaven crying loud and call-
ing first :
But if fiery Carolina and all the sensual South,
Like the world before the deluge, laugh to scorn the
warning mouth, —

In the lap of hoary Europe lie her children ill at rest,
 Reaching hands of supplication to their brethren of
 the West ;
 Pale about the lifeless fountain of their ancient free-
 dom, wait
 Till the angel move its waters and avenge their stricken
 state.
 Let me then, a new crusader, to the eastward set my
 face,
 Wake the fires of old tradition on each sacred altar-
 place,
 Till a trodden people rouse them, with a clamor as
 divine
 As the winds of autumn roaring through the clumps of
 forest-pine.
 I myself would seize their banner ; they should follow
 where it led,
 To the triumph of the victors or the pallor of the dead.
 It were better than to conquer — from the light of life
 to go
 With such words as once were uttered, off the isle of
 Floreo :
Here die I, Sir Richard Grenvile, of a free and joyful
mood :
Ending earth for God and honor, as a valiant soldier
should !
 But my present life — what is it ? mated, housed, like
 other men ;
 Thoughtful of the cost of feeding, valiant only with the
 pen ;
 Lying, walled about with custom, on an iron bed of
 creeds ;
 Peering out through grated windows at the joy my
 spirit needs.

And I hear the sound of chanting, — mailed men are
passing by ;
Crumble, walls, and loosen, fetters ! I will join them,
ere I die !”

So the sleeping thoughts of boyhood oped their eyes
and newly stirred,
And my muscles cried for usage, till the man their
plainings heard :
While the star that lit me ever in the dark and thorny
ways,
Mine by natal consecration, by the choice of after
days, —
Seen through all the sorrow thickening round the hopes
of younger years, —
Rayless grew, and left me groping in the valley of my
tears.

Seaward now the steamer hovered ; seaward far her
pennons trailed,
Where the blueness of the heavens at the clear horizon
paled ;
Where the mingled sky and water faded into fairy-
land,
Smaller than her tiny model, deftly launched from
childhood's hand.
With a statelier swell and longer, up the glaucis of the
shore,
Came the waves that leapt so freshly in their youth, an
hour before.
So I made an end and, turning, reached a scallop-
crested rock,

In the stormy spring-tides hurling back the tumult of
their shock.

There reclining, gazed a moment at the pebbles by my
feet,

Left behind the billowy armies on their oceanward
retreat ;

Thousands lying close together, where the hosts a pas-
sage wore,

Many-hued, and tessellated in a quaint mosaic floor.

Thinking then upon their fitness, — each adjusted to
its place,

Fairly strewn, and smoothed by Nature with her own
exceeding grace, —

All at once some unseen warder drew the curtains wide
apart,

That awhile had cast their shadow on the picture of my
heart ;

Told me — “Thou thyself hast said it ; in thy calling
be of cheer :

Broader continents of action open up in every sphere !
Hold thy lot as great as any : each shall magnify his
own,

Each shall find his time to enter, though unheralded
and lone,

On the inner life's arena — there to sound his battle-
cry,

Self with self in secret tourney, underneath the silent
sky.

Strong of faith in that mute umpire, some have con-
quered, and withstood

All the pangs of long endurance, the dear pains of
fortitude ;

Felt a harsh misapprehension gall the wounds of mar-
tyrdom ;

In the present rancor measured even the scorn of days
to come ;
Known that never should the whiteness of their virtue
shine revealed,
Never should the truer Future rub the tarnish from the
shield.
That diviner abnegation hath not yet been asked of
thee :
Art thou able to attain it, if perchance it were to be ?
O, our feeble tests of greatness ! Look for one so calm
of soul
As to take the even chalice of his life and drink the
whole.
Noble deeds are held in honor, but the wide world sorely
needs
Hearts of patience to unravel this, — the worth of com-
mon deeds.”

As the darkened earth forever to the morning turns
again ;
As the dreaming soldier, after all the perilous cam-
paign,
Struggling long with horse and rider, in his sleep smites
fiercely out,
And, with sudden pang awaking, through the darkness
peers about, —
Hearing but the crickets chirrup loud, beneath his
chimney-stone,
Feeling but the warm heart throbbing, in the form
beside his own, —
Then to knowledge of his hamlet, dearer for the toil he
knows,
Comes at last, content to nestle in the sweets of his
repose,

So fell I, from those high fancies, to the quiet of a
heart
Knowing well how Duty maketh each one's share the
better part.
As again I looked about me — North and South, and
East and West —
Now of all the wide world over still my haven seemed
the best.

Calm, and slowly lifting upward, rose the eastern glory
higher,
Gilding sea, and shore, and vessel, and the city-crown-
ing spire.
Then the sailors shook their canvas to the dryness of
the sun,
And along the harbor-channel glided schooners, one by
one.
At the last I sought my cottage ; there, before the gar-
den gate,
By the lilac, stood my darling, looking for her truant
mate.
Stooping at the porch, we entered ; — where the morn-
ing meal was laid,
Turning over holy pages, one as pure and holy
played, —
Little Paul, who links more firmly our two hearts than
clasp of gold ;
And I caught a blessed sentence, while I took him to
my hold :
“ Peace,” it said, “ O restless spirit, eager as the climbing
wave !
With my peace there flows a largesse such as monarchs
never gave.”

APOLLO.

VAINLY, O burning Poets !
 Ye wait for his inspiration,
 Even as kings of old
 Stood by the oracle-gates.
*Hasten back, he will say, hasten back
 To your provinces far away !
 There, at my own good time,
 Will I send my answer to you.*
 Are ye not kings of song ?
 At last the god cometh !
 The air runs over with splendor ;
 The fire leaps high on the altar ;
 Melodious thunders shake the ground.
 Hark to the Delphic responses !
 Hark ! it is the god !

THE ORDEAL BY FIRE.

TO many a one there comes a day
 So black with maledictions, they
 Hide every earthly hope away.

In earlier woes the sufferer bore,
 Consolation entered at his door,
 And raised him gently from the floor.

To this great anguish, newly come,
 All former sorrows, in their sum,
 Were but a faint exordium.

His days and nights are full of groans ;
Sorely, and with a thousand moans,
For many wanderings he atones.

Old errors, vanquished for a space,
Rise up to smite him in the face
And threaten him with new disgrace.

And others, shadows of the first,
From slanderous charnel-houses burst,
Pursuing, cry, *Thou art accurst !*

Dear, feeble voices ask for bread ;
The dross, for which he bowed his head
So long, has taken wings and fled.

The strong resources of his health
Have softly slipt away by stealth :
No future toil may bring him wealth.

Dreading the shadow of his shame,
False friends, who with the sunshine came,
Forego the mention of his name.

Thus on a fiery altar tost,
The harvests of his life are lost
In one consuming holocaust.

What can he, but to beat the air,
And, from the depth of his despair,
Cry " Is there respite anywhere ?

" Is Life but Death ? Is God unjust
Shall all the castle of my trust
Dissolve, and crumble into dust ? "

There are, who, with a wild desire
For slumber, blinded by the fire,
Sink in its ashes and expire.

God pity them ! too harsh a test
Has made them falter ; sore distress,
They barter everything for rest.

But many, of a sterner mould,
Themselves within themselves infold,
Even make Death unloose his hold,

Although it were a grateful thing
To drain the cup his heralds bring,
And yield them to his ransoming ;

To quaff the calm, Lethean wave, —
In passionless tenure of the grave
Forgetting all they could not save.

What angels hold them up, among
The ruins of their lives, so long ?
What visions make their spirits strong ?

In sackcloth, at the outer gate,
They chant the burden of their fate,
Yet are not wholly desolate.

A blessed ray from darkness won
It may be, even, to know the sun
Hath distant lands he shines upon ;

It may be that they deem it vile
For one to mount his funeral pile,
Because the heavens cease to smile ;

That scorn of cowardice holds fast,
Lighting the forehead to the last,
Though all of bravery's hopes are past.

Perchance the sequence of an art
Leads to a refuge for the heart, —
A sanctuary far apart.

It may be that, in dearest eyes,
They see the light of azure skies,
And keep their faith in Paradise.

Thou, who dost feel Life's vessel strand
Full-length upon the shifting sand,
And hearest breakers close at hand,

Be strong and wait ! nor let the strife,
With which the winds and waves are rife,
Disturb that sacred inner life.

Anon thou shalt regain the shore,
And walk — though naked, maimed, and sore —
A nobler being than before !

No lesser griefs shall work thee ill ;
No malice shall have power to kill :
Of woe thy soul has drunk its fill.

Tempests, that beat us to the clay,
Drive many a lowering cloud away,
And bring a clearer, holier day.

The fire, that every hope consumes,
Either the inmost soul entombs
Or evermore the face illumines !

Robes of asbestos do we wear ;
 Before the memories we bear,
 The flames leap backward everywhere.

THE PROTEST OF FAITH.

TO REV. — —

DEAR Friend and Teacher, — not by word alone,
 But by the plenteous virtues shining out
 Along the zodiac of a good man's life ;
 Dear gentle friend ! from one so loved as you, —
 Because so loving, and so finely apt
 In tender ministry to a little flock,
 With whom you joy and suffer . . . and, withal,
 So constant to the spirit of our time
 That I must hold you of a different sort
 From those dry lichens on the altar steps,
 Those mutes in surplices, school-trained to sink
 The ashes of their own experience
 So low, in doctrinal catacombs, that none
 Find token they can love and mourn like us, —
 From such an one as you, I cannot brook
 What from these mummies were a pleasant draught
 Of bitter hyssop — pleasant unto me,
 Drunk from a chalice worthier men have held
 And emptied to the lees.

I cannot brook
 The shake o' the head and earnest, sorrowing glance,
 Which often seem to say : — "Be wise in time !
 Give up the iron key that locks your heart.

I grant you charity, and patient zeal,
And something of a young, romantic love
For what is good, as children love the fields
And birds and babbling brooks, they know not why.
You have your moral virtues, but you err :
To err is fatal. O, my heart is faint
Lest that sweet prize I win should not be yours !”

In some such wise I read your half-dropped thoughts ;
Yet wondrous compensation falls to all,
And every soul has strongholds of its own,
Invisible, yet answering to its needs.
And even I may have a secret tower
Up storm-cleft Pisgah, whence I see beyond
Jordan, and far across the happy plains,
Where gleams the Holy City, like a queen,
The crown of all our hopes and perfect faith.
I may have gone somewhat within the veil,
Though few repose serenely in the light
Of that divinest splendor, till they shine,
With countenance aglow, like him of old, —
Prophet and priest and warrior, all in one.
But every human path leads on to God ;
He holds a myriad finer threads than gold,
And strong as holy wishes, drawing us
With delicate tension upward to Himself.
You see the strand that reaches down to you ;
Haply I see mine own, and make essay
To trace its glimmerings — up the shadowy hills
Forever narrowing to that unknown sky.

There grows a hedge about you pulpit-folk :
You reason *ex cathedra*. Little gain
Have we to clash in tourney on the least

Of points, wherewith you trammel down the Faith,
 It being, at outset, understood right well
 By lay knights-errant, that their Reverend foes,
 Fore-pledged to hold their own, will sound their trumps,
 Though spearless and unhorsed ! Why take the field,
 When, at the best, both sides go bowing off
 With mutual courtesy, and fair white flags
 Afloat at camp, and every fight is drawn ?
 As soon encounter statues, balanced well
 Upon their granite, fashioned not to move,
 And drawing all mankind to hold in awe
 Their grim persistence.

If, indeed, I sin
 In counting somewhat freely on that Love
 From which, through rolling ages, worlds have sprung,
 And — last and best of all — the lords of worlds,
 Through type on type uplifted from the clay ;
 If I have been exultant in the thought
 That such humanity came so near to God,
 He held us as His children, and would find
 Imperial progress through the halls of Time
 For every soul, — why, then, my crescent faith
 Clings round the promise ; if it spread beyond,
 You think, too far, I say that Peter sprang
 Upon the waves of surging Galilee,
 While all the eleven hugged the ship in fear :
 The waters were as stone unto his feet
 Until he doubted, even then the Christ
 Put forth a blessed hand, and drew him on
 To closer knowledge !

So, if it be mine
 First of us twain to pass the sable gates,

That guard so well their mysteries, and thou,
 With some dear friend, may'st stand beside my grave.
 Speak no such words as these: — "Not long ago
 His voice rang out as cheerly as mine own;
 And we were friends, and, far into the nights,
 Would analyze the wisdom of old days
 By all the tests of Science in her prime;
 Anon would tramp afield, to fruits and flowers,
 And the long prototypes of trees and beasts
 Graven in sandstone; so, at last, would come,
 Through lanes of talk, to that perennial tree, —
 The Tree of Life, on which redemption hangs,
 But there fell out of tune; we parted there,
 He bolstering up a creed too broad for me!
 I held him kindly for an ardent soul,
 Who lacked not skill to make his argument
 Seem fair and specious. But he groped in doubt:
 His head and heart were young; he wandered off,
 And fell afoul of all those theorists
 Who soften down our dear New England faith
 With German talk of 'Nature,' 'inner lights
 And harmonies': so, taken with the wind
 Of those high-sounding terms, he spoke at large,
 And held discussion bravely till he died.
 Here sleep his ashes; where his soul may be,
 Myself, who loved him, do not care to think."

The ecstasy of Faith has no such fears
 As those you nurse for me! The marvellous love,
 Which folds the systems in a flood of light,
 Makes no crude works to shatter out of joint
 Through all the future. O, believe, with me,
 For every instinct in these hearts of ours
 A full fruition hastens! O, believe

That promise greater than our greatest trust
 And loftiest aspiration ! Tell thy friend,
 Beside my grave : " He did the best he could,
 With earnest spirit polishing the lens
 By which he took the heavens in his ken,
 And through the empyrean sought for God ;
 He caught, or thought he caught, from time to time,
 Bright glimpses of the Infinite, on which
 He fed in rapturous and quiet joy,
 That helped him keep a host of troubles down.
 He went his way, — a different path from mine,
 But took his place among the ranks of men
 Who toil and suffer. If, in sooth, it be
 Religion keeps us up, this man had that.
 God grant his yearnings were a living faith !
 Heaven lies above us : may we find him there
 Beside the waters still, and crowned with palms ! "

THE FRESHET.

A CONNECTICUT IDYL.

LAST August, of a three weeks' country tour,
 Five dreamy days were passed amid old elms
 And older mansions, and in leafy dales,
 That knew us till our elders pushed us forth
 To larger life, — as eagles push their young,
 New-fledged and wondering, from the eyrie's edge,
 To cater for themselves.

I fell in, there,
 With Gilbert Ripley, once my chum at Yale.
 Poor Gilbert groaned along a double year, —

Read, spoke, boxed, fenced, rowed, trod the foot-ball
ground, —

Loving the college library more than Greek,
His meerschaum most of all. But when we came
Together, gathered from the breathing-time
They give the fellows while the dog-days last,
He found the harness chafe ; then grew morose,
And kicked above the traces, going home
Hardly a Junior, but a sounder man,
In mind and body, than a host who win
Your baccalaureate honors. There he stayed,
Half tired of bookmen, on his father's farm,
And gladly felt the plough-helve. In a year
The old man gave his blessing to the son,
And left his life, as 't were his harvest-field,
When work was over. Gilbert hugged the farm,
Now made his own, besides a pretty sum
In good State Sixes ; partly worked the land,
With separate theories for every field,
And partly led the student-life of old,
Mouthing his Shakespeare's ballads to himself
Among the meadow-mows ; or, when he read
In the evening, found a picture of his bull,
Just brought from Devon, sleek as silk, loom in
Before his vision. Thus he weighed his tastes,
Each against each, in happiest equipoise.
The neighbor farmers seeing he had thrift
That would not run to waste, and pardoning all
Beyond their understanding, wished him well.

But when I saw him stride among his stock, —
Straight-shouldered cattle, breathing of the field, —
Saw him how blowze and hearty ; then, at eve,
Close sitting by his mother in the porch,

Heard him discuss the methods of the times,
 The need our country has of stalwart men,
 Who scorn the counter and will till the land,
 Strong-handed, free of thought, — I somehow felt
 The man was noble, and his simple life
 More like the pattern given in the Mount
 Than mine, hedged close about with city life
 And grim, conventional manners.

So much, then,

For Gilbert Ripley. Not to dwell too long
 Upon his doings, let me tell the tale
 I got from him, one hazy afternoon,
 When he and I had wandered to the bridge,
 New-built across our favorite of the streams
 That skirt the village, — here three miles apart,
 Twin currents, joining in a third below.

There memory's shallop bore us dreamily,
 Through changeful windings, to the long, long days
 Of June vacations. How we boys would thrid
 The alder thickets at the water's edge,
 Conjecturing forward, though the Present lay
 Like Eden round us; for the Future shone —
 The sun to which each young heart turned for light!
 What wild conceits of great, oracular lives,
 Ourselves would equal! but let that go by:
 Each has gone by, in turn, to humbler fates.
 Sometimes we angled, and our trolling hooks
 Swung the gray pickerel from his reedy shoals.
 Beyond a horseshoe bend, the current's force
 Wore out a deeper channel, where the shore
 Fell off, precipitous, on the western side.
 There dived the bathers; there I learned to swim, —

Flung far into the middle stream by one
Who watched my gaspings, laughing, till my limbs,
Half of themselves, struck out, and held me up.
Far down, a timbered dam, from bank to bank,
Shut back the waters in a shadowy lake,
About a mimic island. Languidly
The chestnuts still infoliate its space,
And still the whispering flags are intertwined
With whitest water-lilies near the marge.
Close by, the paper-mill, with murmurous wheel,
Still glistens through the branches, while its score
Of laughing maidens throng the copse at noon.

But we, with careless arms upon the rail,
Peered through and through the water ; almost saw
Its silvery Naiads, from their wavering depths,
Gleam with strange faces upward ; almost heard
Sweet voices carol : "Ah, you all come back !
We charm your childhood ; then you roam away,
To float on alien waters, like the winds ;
But, ah, you all come back, — come dreaming back !"

At last I broke the silence : "See," I said
To Gilbert, "see how fair our dear old stream !
How calm, beneath the shadow of these piers,
It eddies in and out, and cools itself
In slumberous ripples whispering repose."

But he made answer : "Yes, this August day
The wave is summer-charmed, the fields are hazed ;
But in the callow Spring, when Easter winds
Are on us, laden with rain, these fickle streams —
More gentle now than in his cradled sleep
Some Alexander — take up arms, spread wide,

Leap high and cruel in a fierce campaign
Along their valleys. See this trellised bridge,
New-built, and firmer than the one from which
We fellows dropped the line : — *that* went away
Two years ago, like straw before a gale,
In the great April flood, of which you heard,
When George and Lucy Dorrance lost their lives.
I saw them perish. You remember her, —
She that was Lucy Hall, — a charming girl,
The fairest of our schoolmates, with a heart
Light as her smile and fastened all upon
The boy that won her ; yet her glances fell
Among us, right and left, like shooting stars
In clear October nights when winds are still.

“ That year our Equinoctial came along
Ere the snow left us. Under mountain pines
White drifts lay frozen like the dead, and down
Through many a gorge the bristling hemlocks crossed
Their spears above the ice-enfettered brooks ;
But the pent river wailed, through prison walls,
For freedom and the time to rend its chains.
At last it came : five days a drenching rain
Flooded the country ; snow-drifts fell away ;
The brooks grew rivers, and the river here —
A ravenous, angry torrent — tore up banks,
And overflowed the meadows, league on league.
Great cakes of ice, four-square, with mounds of hay,
Fence-rails, and scattered drift-wood, and huge beams
From broken dams above us, mill-wheel ties,
Smooth lumber, and the torn-up trunks of trees,
Swept downward, strewing all the land about.
Sometimes the flood surrounded, unawares,
Stray cattle, or a flock of timorous sheep,

And bore them with it, struggling, till the ice
Beat shape and being from them. You know how
These freshets scour our valleys. So it raged
A night and day ; but when the day grew night
The storm fell off ; lastly, the sun went down
Quite clear of clouds, and ere he came again
The flood began to lower.

“ Through the rise
We men had been at work, like water-sprites,
Lending a helping hand to cottagers
Along the lowlands. Now, at early morn,
The banks were sentry-lined with thrifty swains,
Who hauled great stores of drift-wood up the slope.
But toward the bridge our village maidens soon
Came flocking, thick as swallows after storms,
When, with light wing, they skim the happy fields
And greet the sunshine. Danger mostly gone,
They watched the thunderous passage of the flood
Between the abutments, while the upper stream,
Far as they saw, lay like a seething strait,
From hill to hill. Below, with gradual fall
Through narrower channels, all was clash and clang
And inarticulate tumult. Through the grove
Yonder, our picnic-ground, the driving tide
Struck a new channel, and the craggy ice
Scored down its saplings. Following with the rest
Came George and Lucy, not three honeymoons
Made man and wife, and happier than a pair
Of cooing ring-doves in the early June.

“ Two piers, you know, bore up the former bridge,
Cleaving the current, wedge-like, on the north ;
Between them stood our couple, intergrouped

With many others. On a sudden loomed
 An immolating terror from above, —
 A floating field of ice, where fifty cakes
 Had clung together, mingled with a mass
 Of *débris* from the upper conflict, logs
 Woven in with planks and fence-rails ; and in front
 One huge, old, fallen trunk rose like a wall
 Across the channel. Then arose a cry
 From all who saw it, clamoring, *Flee the bridge !*
Run shoreward for your lives ! and all made haste,
 Eastward and westward, till they felt the ground
 Stand firm beneath them ; but, with close-locked arms,
 Lucy and George still looked, from the lower rail,
 Toward the promontory where we stood,
 Nor saw the death, nor seemed to hear the cry.
Run George ! run Lucy ! shouted all at once :
 Too late, too late ! for, with resistless crash,
 Against both piers that mighty ruin lay
 A space that seemed an hour, yet far too short
 For rescue. Swaying slowly back and forth,
 With ponderous tumult, all the bridge went off ;
 Piers, beams, planks, railings snapped their groaning
 ties
 And fell asunder !

 “ But the middle part,
 Wrought with great bolts of iron, like a raft
 Held out awhile, whirled onward in the wreck
 This way and that, and washed with freezing spray.
 Faster than I can tell you, it came down
 Beyond our point, and in a flash we saw
 George, on his knees, close-clinging for dear life,
 One arm around the remnant of the rail,
 One clasping Lucy. We were pale as they,

Powerless to save ; but even as they swept
 Across the bend, and twenty stalwart men
 Ran to and fro with clamor for *A rope !*
A boat ! — their cries together reached the shore :
Save her ! Save him ! — so true Love conquers all.
 Furlongs below they still more closely held
 Each other, 'mid a thousand shocks of ice
 And seething horrors ; till, at last, the end
 Came, where the river, scornful of its bed,
 Struck a new channel, roaring through the grove.
 There, dashed against a naked beech that stood
 Grimly in front, their shattered raft gave up
 Its precious charge ; and then a mist of tears
 Blinded all eyes, through which we seemed to see
 Two forms in death-clasp whirled along the flood,
 And all was over.

“ Then from out the crowd
 Certain went up the lane, and broke the news
 To Lucy's widowed mother ; she spoke not,
 Nor wept, nor murmured, but with stony glare
 Took in her loss, like Niobe, and to bed
 Moved stolidly and never rose again.
 Old Farmer Dorrance gave a single groan,
 And hurried down among us — all the man,
 Though white with anguish — as we took our course
 Around the meadows, searching for the dead.

“ An eddying gulf ran up the hither bank,
 Close by the paper-mill, and there the flood
 Gave back its booty ; there we found them laid,
 Covered with floating leaves and twigs of trees,
 Not many feet apart : so Love's last clasp
 Held lingeringly, until the cruel ice

Battered its fastenings. On a rustic bier,
 Made of loose boughs and strewn with winter ferns,
 We placed them, side by side, and bore them home.
 The old man walked behind them, by himself,
 And wrung his hands and bowed his head in tears."

So Gilbert told his story ; I, meanwhile,
 Followed his finger's pointing, as it marked
 Each spot he mentioned, like a teacher's wand.
 But now the sun hung low ; from many a field
 The loitering kine went home with tinkling bells.
 Slow-turning, toward the farm we made our way,
 And met a host of maidens, merry-eyed,
 Whom I knew not, yet caught a frequent glance
 I seemed to know, that half-way brought to mind
 Sweet eyes I loved to watch in school-boy days, —
 Sweet sister-eyes to those that glistened now.

THE SLEIGH-RIDE.

HARK ! the jingle
 Of the sleigh-bells' song !
 Earth and air in snowy sheen commingle ;
 Swiftly throng
 Norseland fancies, as we sail along.

Like the maiden
 Of some fairy-tale,
 Lying, spell-bound, in her diamond-laden
 Bridal veil,
 Sleeps the Earth beneath a garment pale.



“Hark! the jingle
Of the sleigh-bells’ song.” Page 56.

High above us
Gleams the ancient moon,
Gleam the eyes of shining ones that love us :
Could their tune
Only fill our ears at heaven's noon,

You and I, love,
With a wild delight,
Hearing that seraphic strain would die, love,
This same night,
Straight to join them in their starry height !

Closer nestle,
Dearest, to my side.
What enchantment, in our magic vessel
Thus to glide,
Making music, on a silver tide !

Jingle ! jingle !
How the fields go by !
Earth and air in snowy sheen commingle,
Far and nigh ;
Is the ground beneath us, or the sky ?

Heavenward yonder,
In the lurid north,
From Valhalla's gates that roll asunder,
Red and wroth,
Balder's funeral flames are blazing forth.

O, what splendor !
How the hues expire !
All the elves of light their tribute render
To the pyre,
Clad in robes of gold and crimson fire.

Jingle ! jingle !
 Let the Earth go by !
 With a wilder thrill our pulses tingle ;
 You and I
 Will shout our loves, but aye forget to sigh !

THE BALLAD OF LAGER BIER.

I N fallow college days, Tom Harland,
 We both have known the ways of Yale,
 And talked of many a nigh and far land,
 O'er many a famous tap of ale.
 There still they sing their Gaudeamus,
 And see the road to glory clear ;
 But taps, that in our day were famous,
 Have given place to Lager Bier.

Now, settled in this island-city,
 We let new fashions have their weight ;
 Though none too lucky — more 's the pity ! —
 Can still beguile our humble state
 By finding time to come together,
 In every season of the year,
 In sunny, wet, or windy weather,
 And clink our mugs of Lager Bier.

On winter evenings, cold and blowing,
 'T is good to order " 'alf-and-'alf " ;
 To watch the fire-lit pewter glowing,
 And laugh a hearty English laugh ;

Or even a sip of mountain whiskey
Can raise a hundred phantoms dear
Of days when boyish blood was frisky,
And no one heard of Lager Bier.

We 've smoked in summer with Oscanyan,
Cross-legged in that defunct bazaar,
Until above our heads the banyan
Or palm-tree seemed to spread afar ;
And, then and there, have drunk his sherbet,
Tinct with the roses of Cashmere :
That Orient calm ! who would disturb it
With Norseland calls for Lager Bier ?

There 's Paris chocolate, — nothing sweeter,
At midnight, when the dying strain,
Just warbled by *La Favorita*,
Still hugs the music-haunted brain ;
Yet of all bibulous compoundings,
Extracts or brewings, mixed or clear,
The best, in substance and surroundings,
For frequent use, is Lager Bier.

Karl Schæffer is a stalwart brewer,
Who has above his vaults a hall,
Where — fresh-tapped, foaming, cool, and pure —
He serves the nectar out to all.
Tom Harland, have you any money ?
Why, then, we'll leave this hemisphere,
This western land of milk and honey,
For one that flows with Lager Bier.

Go, flaxen-haired and blue-eyed maiden,
My German Hebe ! hasten through

Yon smoke-cloud, and return thou laden
 With bread and cheese and bier for two.
 Limburger suits this bearded fellow ;
 His brow is high, his taste severe :
 But I 'm for Schweitzer, mild and yellow,
 To eat with bread and Lager Bier.

Ah, yes ! the Schweitzer hath a savor
 Of marjoram and mountain thyme,
 An odoriferous, Alpine flavor ;
 You almost hear the cow-bells chime
 While eating it, or, dying faintly,
 The *Ranz-des-vaches* entrance the ear,
 Until you feel quite Swiss and saintly,
 Above your glass of Lager Bier.

Here comes our drink, froth-crowned and sunlit,
 In goblets with high-curving arms,
 Drawn from a newly opened runlet,
 As bier must be, to have its charms.
 This primal portion each shall swallow
 At one draught, for a pioneer ;
 And thus a ritual usage follow
 Of all who honor Lager Bier.

Glass after glass in due succession,
 Till, borne through midriff, heart, and brain,
 He mounts his throne and takes possession, —
 The genial Spirit of the grain !
 Then comes the old Berserker madness
 To make each man a priest and seer,
 And, with a Scandinavian gladness,
 Drink deeper draughts of Lager Bier !

Go, maiden, fill again our glasses !
While, with anointed eyes, we scan
The blouse Teutonic lads and lasses,
The Saxon — Pruss — Bohemian,
The sanded floor, the cross-beamed gables,
The ancient Flemish paintings queer,
The rusty cup-stains on the tables,
The terraced kegs of Lager Bier.

And is it Göttingen, or Gotha,
Or Munich's ancient Wagner Brei,
Where each Bavarian drinks his quota,
And swings a silver tankard high ?
Or some ancestral Gast-Haus lofty
In Nuremburg — of famous cheer
When Hans Sachs lived, and where, so oft, he
Sang loud the praise of Lager Bier ?

For even now some curious glamour
Has brought about a misty change !
Things look, as in a moonlight dream, or
Magician's mirror, quaint and strange.
Some weird, phantasmagoric notion
Impels us backward many a year,
And far across the northern ocean,
To Fatherlands of Lager Bier.

As odd a throng I see before us
As ever haunted Brocken's height,
Carousing, with unearthly chorus,
On any wild Walpurgis-night ;
I see the wondrous art-creations !
In proper guise they all appear,
And, in their due and several stations,
Unite in drinking Lager Bier.

I see 'in yonder nook a trio :
 There 's Doctor Faust, and, by his side,
 Not half so love-distraught as Io,
 Is gentle Margaret, heaven-eyed ;
 That man in black beyond the waiter —
 I know him by his fiendish leer —
 Is Mephistophiles, the traitor !
 And how he swigs his Lager Bier !

Strange if great Goethe should have blundered,
 Who says that Margaret slipt and fell
 In Anno Domini Sixteen Hundred,
 Or thereabout ; and Faustus, — well,
 We won't deplore his resurrection,
 Since Margaret is with him here,
 But, under her serene protection,
 May boldly drink our Lager Bier.

That bare-legged gypsy, small and lithy,
 Tanned like an olive by the sun,
 Is little Mignon ; sing us, prithee,
Kennst du das Land, my pretty one !
 Ah, no ! she shakes her southern tresses,
 As half in doubt and more in fear ;
 Perhaps the elvish creature guesses
 We 've had too much of Lager Bier.

There moves, full-bodied, ripe, and human,
 With merry smiles to all who come,
 Karl Schæffer's wife, — the very woman
 Whom Rubens drew his Venus from !
 But what a host of tricksome graces
 Play round our fairy Undine here,
 Who pouts at all the bearded faces,
 And, laughing, brings the Lager Bier.

“ Sit down, nor chase the vision farther,
You ’re tied to Yankee cities still ! ”
I hear you, but so much the rather
Should Fancy travel where she will.
Yet let the dim ideals scatter ;
One puff, and lo ! they disappear ;
The comet, next, or some such matter,
We ’ll talk above our Lager Bier.

Now, then, your eyes begin to brighten,
And marvellous theories to flow ;
A philosophic theme you light on,
And, spurred and booted, off you go !
If e’er — to drive Apollo’s phaeton—
I need an earthly charioteer,
This tall-browed genius I will wait on,
And prime him first with Lager Bier.

But higher yet, in middle Heaven,
Your steed seems taking flight, my friend ;
You read the secret of the Seven,
And on through trackless regions wend !
Don’t vanish in the Milky Way, for
This afternoon you ’re wanted here ;
Come back ! come back ! and help me pay for
The bread and cheese and Lager Bier.



HOW OLD BROWN TOOK HARPER'S FERRY.

JOHN BROWN in Kansas settled, like a steadfast
Yankee farmer,
Brave and godly, with four sons, all stalwart men of
might.

There he spoke aloud for freedom, and the Border-strife
grew warmer,

Till the Rangers fired his dwelling, in his absence, in
the night ;

And Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

Came homeward in the morning — to find his house
burned down.

Then he grasped his trusty rifle and boldly fought for
freedom ;

Smote from border unto border the fierce, invading
band ;

And he and his brave boys vowed — so might Heaven
help and speed 'em ! —

They would save those grand old prairies from the
curse that blights the land ;

And Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

Said, "Boys, the Lord will aid us !" and he shoved
his ramrod down.

And the Lord *did* aid these men, and they labored day
and even,

Saving Kansas from its peril ; and their very lives
seemed charmed,

Till the ruffians killed one son, in the blessed light of
Heaven, —
In cold blood the fellows slew him, as he journeyed
all unarmed ;
Then Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Shed not a tear, but shut his teeth, and frowned a ter-
rible frown !

Then they seized another brave boy, — not amid the
heat of battle,
But in peace, behind his ploughshare, — and they
loaded him with chains,
And with pikes, before their horses, even as they goad
their cattle,
Drove him cruelly, for their sport, and at last blew
out his brains ;
Then Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Raised his right hand up to Heaven, calling Heaven's
vengeance down.

And he swore a fearful oath, by the name of the
Almighty,
He would hunt this ravening evil that had scathed
and torn him so ;
He would seize it by the vitals ; he would crush it day
and night ; he
Would so pursue its footsteps, so return it blow
for blow,
That Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Should be a name to swear by, in backwoods or in
town !

Then his beard became more grizzled, and his wild
blue eye grew wilder,
And more sharply curved his hawk's-nose, snuffing
battle from afar ;
And he and the two boys left, though the Kansas strife
waxed milder,
Grew more sullen, till was over the bloody Border
War,
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown, .
Had gone crazy, as they reckoned by his fearful glare
and frown.

So he left the plains of Kansas and their bitter woes
behind him,
Slipt off into Virginia, where the statesmen all are
born,
Hired a farm by Harper's Ferry, and no one knew
where to find him,
Or whether he 'd turned parson, or was jacketed and
shorn ;
For Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Mad as he was, knew texts enough to wear a parson's
gown.

He bought no ploughs and harrows, spades and shov-
els, and such trifles ;
But quietly to his rancho there came, by every train,
Boxes full of pikes and pistols, and his well-beloved
Sharp's rifles ;
And eighteen other madmen joined their leader there
again.

Says Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,

"Boys, we've got an army large enough to march
and take the town !

"Take the town, and seize the muskets, free the ne-
groes and then arm them ;
Carry the County and the State, ay, and all the po-
tent South.

On their own heads be the slaughter, if their victims
rise to harm them —

These Virginians ! who believed not, nor would
heed the warning mouth."

Says Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,

"The world shall see a Republic, or my name is not
John Brown."

'T was the sixteenth of October, on the evening of a
Sunday :

"This good work," declared the captain, "shall be
on a holy night !"

It was on a Sunday evening, and before the noon of
Monday,

With two sons, and Captain Stephens, fifteen pri-
vates — black and white,

Captain Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,

Marched across the bridged Potomac, and knocked the
sentry down ;

Took the guarded armory-building, and the muskets
and the cannon ;

Captured all the county majors and the colonels, one
by one ;

Scared to death each gallant scion of Virginia they ran
 on,
 And before the noon of Monday, I say, the deed was
 done.

Mad Old Brown,
 Osawatomie Brown,
 With his eighteen other crazy men, went in and took
 the town.

Very little noise and bluster, little smell of powder
 made he ;

It was all done in the midnight, like the Emperor's
coup d'état.

“Cut the wires ! Stop the rail-cars ! Hold the streets
 and bridges !” said he,
 Then declared the new Republic, with himself for
 guiding star, —

This Old Brown,
 Osawatomie Brown ;
 And the bold two thousand citizens ran off and left the
 town.

Then was riding and railroading and expressing here
 and thither ;

And the Martinsburg Sharpshooters and the Charles-
 town Volunteers,
 And the Shepherdstown and Winchester Militia has-
 tened whither

Old Brown was said to muster his ten thousand
 grenadiers.

General Brown !

Osawatomie Brown !!

Behind whose rampant banner all the North was pour-
 ing down.

But at last, 't is said, some prisoners escaped from Old
Brown's durance,
And the effervescent valor of the Chivalry broke
out,
When they learned that nineteen madmen had the
marvellous assurance —
Only nineteen — thus to seize the place and drive
them straight about ;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Found an army come to take him, encamped around
the town.

But to storm, with all the forces I have mentioned,
was too risky ;
So they hurried off to Richmond for the Government
Marines,
Tore them from their weeping matrons, fired their
souls with Bourbon whiskey,
Till they battered down Brown's castle with their lad-
ders and machines ;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Received three bayonet stabs, and a cut on his brave
old crown.

Tallyho ! the old Virginia gentry gather to the baying !
In they rushed and killed the game, shooting lustily
away ;
And whene'er they slew a rebel, those who came too
late for slaying,
Not to lose a share of glory, fired their bullets in his
clay ;

And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Saw his sons fall dead beside him, and between them
laid him down.

How the conquerors wore their laurels ; how they hastened
on the trial ;

How Old Brown was placed, half dying, on the
Charlestown court-house floor ;

How he spoke his grand oration, in the scorn of all denial ;

What the brave old madman told them, — these are
known the country o'er.

“ Hang Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,”

Said the judge, “and all such rebels !” with his most
judicial frown.

But, Virginians, don't do it ! for I tell you that the
flagon,

Filled with blood of Old Brown's offspring, was first
poured by Southern hands ;

And each drop from Old Brown's life-veins, like the
red gore of the dragon,

May spring up a vengeful Fury, hissing through your
slave-worn lands !

And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,

May trouble you more than ever, when you've nailed
his coffin down !



SONNETS.



HOPE DEFERRED.

BRING no more flowers and books and precious things !

O speak no more of our beloved Art,
Of summer haunts, — melodious wanderings
In leafy refuge from this weary mart !
Surely such thoughts were dear unto my heart ;
Now every word a newer sadness brings !
Thus oft some forest-bird, caged far apart
From verdurous freedom, droops his careless wings,
Nor craves for more than food from day to day ;
So long bereft of wildwood joy and song,
Hopeless of all he dared to hope so long,
The music born within him dies away ;
Even the song he loved becomes a pain,
Full-freighted with a yearning all in vain.

A MOTHER'S PICTURE.

SHE seemed an angel to our infant eyes !
Once, when the glorifying moon revealed
Her who at evening by our pillow kneeled, —
Soft-voiced and golden-haired, from holy skies
Flown to her loves on wings of Paradise, —
We looked to see the pinions half concealed.
The Tuscan vines and olives will not yield
Her back to me, who loved her in this wise,
And since have little known her, but have grown
To see another mother, tenderly
Watch over sleeping children of my own.
Perchance the years have changed her : yet alone
This picture lingers ; still she seems to me
The fair young angel of my infancy.





POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.





POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

ELFIN SONG.

FROM "THE RIME OF THE ELLE-KING."

I.

FAR in the western ocean's breast
The summer fairies have found a nest ;
The heavens ever unclouded smile
Over the breadth of their beautiful isle ;
Through it a hundred streamlets flow,
In spangled paths, to the sea below,
And woo the vales that beside them lie
With a low and tremulous minstrelsy.
The elfin brood have homes they love
In the earth below and skies above ;
But the haunt which of all they love the best
Is the palm-crowned isle, in the ocean's breast,
That mortals call Canary ;
And many an Ariel, blithesome, airy,
And each laughing Fay and lithesome Fairy,
Know well the mystical way in the West
To the sweet isle of Canary.

2.

With an ever-sounding choral chant,
And a clear, cerulean, wild desire
To clasp that fairy island nigher,
The sinuous waves of ocean pant ;
For here all natural things are free
To mingle in passionate harmony.
The light from their mirror turns away
With a golden splendor, in the day,
But nightly, when coroneted Even
Marshals the shining queen of heaven,
There gleams a silvery scenery,
From the rim of the great prismatic sea
 Around the isle of Canary,
To the central crags of Pisgatiri,
Where the crested eagle builds his eyry,
 Scanning the shores of sweet Canary.

3.

Lustrously sailing here and there,
Afloat in the beatific air,
Birds, of purple and blue and gold,
Pour out their music manifold ;
All day long in the leas they sing,
While the sun-kissed flowers are blossoming ;
At eve, when the dew-drop feeds the rose,
And the fragrant water-lilies close,
The marvellous-throated nightingale
With a dying music floods each vale,
Till the seaward breezes, listening, stay
To catch the harmony of his lay
 And cool the air of Canary ;
And thus the melodies ever vary,
In the vales of the ocean aviary,
 In the blissful valleys of sweet Canary.

4.

The Elle-King's palace was builded there
By elves of water and earth and air ;
Lovingly worked each loyal sprite,
And it grew to life in a summer night.
Over the sheen of its limpid moat,
Wafted along, in a magic boat,
By fairy wings that fan the sails,
And eddying through enchanted vales,
Through walls of amber and crystal gates,
We come where a fairy warder waits ;
And so, by many a winding way
Where sweet bells jingle and fountains play,
To the inmost, royalest room of all, —
The elfin monarch's reception-hall,

The pearl and pride of Canary !

To guard its fastness the elves are wary,
And no weird thing, of pleasure chary,
Can enter with evil in sweet Canary !

5.

All that saddens, and care and pain,
Are banished far from that fair domain ;
There forever, by day and night,
Is naught but pleasance and love's delight ;
Daily, the Genii of the flowers
Shade with beauty a hundred bowers ;
Nightly, the Gnomes of precious stones
Emblazon and light a hundred thrones ;
And the Elves of the field, so swift and mute,
Bring wine and honey and luscious fruit ;
And the Sylphs of the air, at noontide, cool
The depths of each bower and vestibule ;

And all are gay, — from the tricksome Fay
 Who flutters in woodlands far away,
 To the best-beloved attendant Elf,
 And the royal heart of the King himself,
 Who rules in bright Canary ;
 And the laboring Fairies are blithe and merry,
 Who press the juice from the swollen berry
 That reddens the vines of sweet Canary.

6.

What if there be a fated day
 When the Faëry Isle shall pass away,
 And its beautiful groves and fountains seem
 The myths of a long, delicious dream !
 A century's joys shall first repay
 Our hearts, for the evil of that day ;
 And the Elfin-King has sworn to wed
 A daughter of Earth, whose child shall be,
 By cross and water hallowéd,
 From the fairies' doom forever free.
 What if there be a fated day !
 It is far away ! it is far away !
 Maiden, fair Maiden, I, who sing
 Of this summer isle am the island King.
 I come from its joys to make thee mine :
 Half of my kingdom shall be thine ;
 Our horses of air and ocean wait —
 Then hasten, and share the Elle-King's state
 In the sweet isle of Canary ;
 And many an Ariel, blithesome, airy,
 And each laughing Fay and lithesome Fairy,
 Shall rovingly hover around and over thee,
 And the love of a king shall evermore cover thee,
 Nightly and daily in sweet Canary.

AMAVI.

I LOVED : and in the morning sky,
 A magic castle upward grew !
 Cloud-haunted turrets pointing high
 Forever to the dreamy blue ;
 Bright fountains leaping through and through
 The golden sunshine ; on the air
 Gay banners streaming ;— never drew
 Painter or poet scene more fair.

And in that castle I would live,
 And in that castle I would die ;
 And there, in curtained bowers, would give
 Heart-warm responses, sigh for sigh ;
 There, when but one sweet face was nigh,
 The hours should lightly move along,
 And ripple, as they glided by,
 Like stanzas of an antique song.

O foolish heart ! O young romance,
 That faded with the noonday sun !
 Alas, for gentle dalliance,
 For life-long pleasures never won !
 O for a season dead and gone !
 A wizard time, which then did seem
 Only a prelude, leading on
 To sweeter portions of the dream.

She died, — nor wore my orange flowers : —
 No longer, in the morning sky,

That magic castle lifts its towers
 Which shone, awhile, so lustrously.
 Torn are the bannerols, and dry
 The silver fountains in its halls ;
 But the drear sea, with endless sigh,
 Moans round and over the crumbled walls.

Let the winds blow ! let the white surge
 Ever among those ruins wail !
 Its moaning is a welcome dirge
 For wishes that could not avail.
 Let the winds blow ! a fiercer gale
 Is wild within me ! what may quell
 That sullen tempest ? I must sail
 Whither, O whither, who can tell !

ODE TO PASTORAL ROMANCE.

" Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not."

THE TEMPEST.

I.

QUEEN of the shadowy clime !
 Thou of the fairy-spell and wondrous lay :
 Sweet Romance ! breathe upon my way,
 Not with the breath of this degenerate time,
 But of that age when life was summer play,
 When Nature wore a verdurous hue,
 And Earth kept holiday ;
 When on the ground Chaldæan shepherds lay,

Gazing all night, with calm, creative view,
 Into the overhanging blue,
 And found, amid the many-twinkling stars,
 Warriors and maidens fair,
 Heroes of marvellous deeds and direful wars,
 Serpents and flaming hair,
 The Dragon and the Bear,
 A silvery Venus and a lurid Mars.

II.

Come at thy lover's call,
 Thou, that, with embraces kind,
 Throwing thy tendrils round the lives of all,
 Something in all to beautify dost find !
 So thine own ivy, on the Gothic wall,
 Or pendent from the arms
 Of gnarléd oaks, where'er its clusters fall,
 Clings to adorn and adds perennial charms.
 And therefore, Romance, would I greet
 Thee by the fairest of fair names,
 Calling thee debonair and sweet ;
 For sweet thou art — inspiring Manhood's dreams,
 When all aweary of the actual life ;
 And sweet thy influence seems
 To Woman, shrinking from the strife,
 The sordid tumult of the wrangling mart.
 But doubly sweet thou art,
 Leading the tender child by gentle streams,
 Among the lilies of our flowery Youth ;
 Filling his all-believing heart
 With thoughts that glorify the common truth ;
 Building before him, in the lustrous air,
 Ethereal palaces and castles fair.

III.

With such mild innocence the Earth
 Received thy blessings at her birth ;
 And in the pastoral days of yore,
 To Man's enchanted gaze,
 Nature was fair — O, how much more
 Than in our wiser days !
 Then deities of sylvan form,
 While yet the hearts of men were young and warm,
 Like shepherds wandered through the arching groves,
 Or sang aloud, the listening flocks among,
 Sweet legends of their loves ;
 Then Cupid and fair Psyche breathed their vows, —
 He with the feathered darts and bow unstrung,
 And garlands on his brows ;
 She folding gently to her bosom doves
 Snow-white, forever, as their mistress, young ;
 And, as they sighed together, peerless Joy
 Enwreathed the maiden and the raptured boy !

IV.

Yes ! on romantic pilgrimage,
 To the calm piety of Nature's shrine,
 Through summer-paths, thou ledst our human-kind,
 With influence divine.
 In that orient, elden age,
 Ere man had learned to wage
 Dispassionate war against his natural mind,
 Thy voice of mystery,
 Reading aloud the Earth's extended page,
 Bade human aspirations find

In the cool fountain and the forest-tree
 A sentient imagery ;
 The flowing river and the murmuring wind,
 The land — the sea —
 Were all informed by thee !

v.

Through coral grottoes wandering and singing,
 The merry Nereid glided to her cave ;
 Anon, with warm, luxurious motion flinging
 Her sinuous form above the moonlit wave,
 To the charmed mariner gave
 A glimpse of snowy arms and amber tresses,
 While on his startled ear
 The sea-nymph's madrigal fell clear ;
 Then to the far recesses,
 Where drowsy Neptune wears the emerald crown,
 Serenely floated down,
 Leaving the mariner all amort with fear.
 In the under-opening wood,
 What time the Gods had crowned the full-grown year,
 The Dryad and the Hamadryad stood
 Among the fallow deer ;
 Bending the languid branches of their trees,
 With every breeze,
 To view their image in the fountains near : —
 The fountains ! whence the white-limbed Naiads sang,
 Pouring upon the air melodious trills,
 And, while the echoes through the forest rang,
 The white-limbed Naiads of a thousand rills
 Far o'er the Arcadian vales a pæan spread.
 Led by Diana, in the dewy dawn,
 The Oread sisters chased the dappled fawn

Through all the coverts of their native hills ;
 Home, with the spoils, at sultry noon they fled, —
 Home to their shaded bowers,
 Where, with the ivy, and those sacred flowers
 That now have faded from the weary earth,
 Each laughing Oread crowned an Oread's head.
 The mountains echoed back their maiden mirth,
 Rousing old Pan, who, from a secret lair,
 Shook the wild tangles of his frosty hair,
 And laid him down again with sullen roar :
 But now the frightened nymphs like statues stand,
 One balancing her body half in air,
 Dreading to hear again that tumult sore ;
 One, with a liquid tremor in her eye,
 Waving above her head a glimmering hand ;
 Till suddenly, like dreams, away they fly,
 Leaving the forest stiller than before !

VI.

Such was thy power, O Pastoral Romance !
 In that ambrosial age of classic fame,
 The spirit to entrance.
 Fain would I whisper of the latter days,
 When, in thy royal name,
 The mailéd knights encountered lance to lance,
 All for sweet Romance and fair ladies' praise ;
 But no ! I bowed the knée
 And vowed allegiance to thee,
 As I beheld thee in thy golden prime,
 And now from thy demesne must haste away :
 Perchance that of the aftertime,
 Of nodding plumes and chivalrous array,
 In aftertime I sing a roundelay.

VII.

Fair Spirit of ethereal birth,
In whom such mysteries and beauties blend !
Still from thine ancient dwelling-place descend
And idealize our too material earth ;
Still to the Bard thy chaste conceptions lend,
To him thine early purity renew ;
Round every image grace majestic throw !
Till rapturously the living song shall glow
With inspiration as thy being true,
And Poesy's creations, decked by thee,
Shall wake the tuneful thrill of sensuous ecstasy.

1850.







ALICE OF MONMOUTH,

AN

IDYL OF THE GREAT WAR;

AND

OTHER POEMS.

1864.





This Volume

IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY

OF

C. F. S.

DIED: MAY 13, 1863.





ALICE OF MONMOUTH.

I.

I.

HENDRICK VAN GHELT of Monmouth shore,
His fame still rings the county o'er !
The stock that he raised, the stallion he rode,
The fertile acres his farmers sowed ;
The dinners he gave ; the yacht which lay
At his fishing-dock in the Lower Bay ;
The suits he waged, through many a year,
For a rood of land behind his pier, —
Of these the chronicles yet remain
From Navesink Heights to Freehold Plain.

2.

The Shrewsbury people in autumn help
Their sandy toplands with marl and kelp,
And their peach and apple orchards fill
The gurgling vats of the cross-road mill.
They tell, as each twirls his tavern-can,
Wonderful tales of that stanch old man,

And they boast, of the draught they have tasted and
 smelt,
 " 'T is good as the still of Hendrick Van Ghelt ! "

3.

Were he alive, and at his prime,
 In this, our boisterous modern time,
 He would surely be, as he could not then,
 A stalwart leader of mounted men, —
 A ranger, shouting his battle-cry,
 Who knew how to fight and dared to die ;
 And the fame which a county's limit spanned
 Might have grown a legend throughout the land.

4.

He would have scoured the Valley through,
 Doing as now our bravest do ;
 Would have tried rough-riding on the border,
 Punishing raider and marauder ;
 With bearded Ashby crossing swords
 As he took the Shenandoah fords ;
 Giving bold Stuart a bloody chase
 Ere he reached again his trysting-place.
 Horse and horseman of the foe
 The blast of his bugle-charge should know,
 And his men should water their steeds, at will,
 From the banks of Southern river and rill.

5.

How many are there of us, in this
 Discordant social wilderness,
 Whose thriftiest scions the power gain,
 Through meet conditions of sun and rain,

To yield, on the fairest blossoming shoot,
A mellow harvest of perfect fruit ?
Fashioned after so rare a type,
How should his life grow full and ripe,
There, in the passionless haunts of Peace,
Through trade, and tillage, and wealth's increase ?

6.

But at his manor-house he dwelt,
And royally bore the name Van Ghelt ;
Nor found a larger part to play
Than such as a county magnate may :
Ruling the hustings as he would,
Lord of the rustic neighborhood ;
With potent wishes and quiet words
Holding an undisputed sway.
The broadest meadows, the fattest herds,
The fleetest roadsters, the warmest cheer, —
These were old Hendrick's many a year.
Daughters unto his hearthstone came,
And a son — to keep the ancient name.

7.

Often, perchance, the old man's eye
From a seaward casement would espy,
Scanning the harborage in the bay,
A ship which idly at anchor lay ;
Watching her as she rose and fell,
Up and down, with the evening swell,
Her cordage slackened, her sails unbent,
And all her proud life somnolent.
And perchance he thought — " My life, it seems,
Like her, unfreighted with aught but dreams ;

Yet I feel within me a strength to dare
 Some outward voyage, I know not where !”
 But the forceful impulse wore away
 In the common life of every day,
 And for Hendrick Van Ghelt no timely hour
 Ruffled the calm of that hidden power ;
 Yet in the prelude of my song
 His storied presence may well belong,
 As a Lombardy poplar, lithe and hoar,
 Stands at a Monmouth farmer’s door,
 Set like a spire against the sky,
 Marking the hours, while lover and maid
 Linger long in its stately shade,
 And round its summit the swallows fly.

II.

I.

NATURE a devious by-way finds : solve me her
 secret whim,
 That the seed of a gnarled oak should sprout to a sap-
 ling straight and prim ;
 That a russet should grow on the pippin stock, on the
 garden-rose a brier ;
 That a stalwart race, in old Hendrick’s son, should
 smother its wonted fire.

Hermann, fond of his book, and shirking the brawny
 out-door sports ;
 Sent to college, and choosing for life the law with her
 mouldy courts ;

Proud, and of tender honor, as well became his father's
blood,
But with cold and courtly self-restraint weighing the ill
and good ;

Wed to a lady whose delicate veins that molten azure
held,
Ichor of equal birth, wherewith our gentry their coup-
plings weld ;
Viewing his father's careless modes with half a tolerant
eye,
As one who honors, regretting not, old fashions pass-
ing by.

After a while the moment came when, unto the son
and heir,
A son and heir was given in turn, — a moment of joy
and prayer ;
For the angel who guards the portals twain oped, in
the self-same breath,
To the child the pearly gate of life, to the mother the
gate of death.

Father, and son, and an infant plucking the daisies
over a grave :
The swell of a boundless surge keeps on, wave follow-
ing after wave ;
Ever the tide of life sets toward the low invisible shore :
Whence had the current its distant source ? when
shall it flow no more ?

2.

Nature's serene renewals, that make the scion by one
remove

Bear the ancestral blossom and thrive as the forest
 wilding throve !
 Roseate stream of life, which hides the course its ducts
 pursue,
 To rise, like that Sicilian fount, in far-off springs anew !

For the grandsire's vigor, rude and rare, asleep in the
 son had lain,
 To waken in Hugh, the grandson's frame, with the
 ancient force again ;
 And ere the boy, said the Monmouth wives, had grown
 to his seventh year,
 Well could you tell whose mantling blood swelled in
 his temples clear.

Tall, and bent in the meeting brows ; swarthy of hair
 and face ;
 Shoulders parting square, but set with the future hunts-
 man's grace ;
 Eyes alive with a fire which yet the old man's visage
 wore
 At times, like the flash of a thunder-cloud when the
 storm is almost o'er.

3.

Toward the mettled stripling, then, the heart of the old
 man yearned ;
 And thus — while Hermann Van Ghelt once more,
 with a restless hunger, turned
 From the grave of her who died so young, to his books
 and lawyer's gown,
 And the ceaseless clangor of mind with mind in the
 close and wrangling town —

They two, the boy and the grandsire, lived at the manor-house, and grew,
The one to all manly arts apace, the other a youth anew —
Pleased with the boy's free spirit, and teaching him,
step by step, to wield
The mastery over living things, and the craft of flood
and field.

Apt, indeed, was the scholar ; and born with a subtle
art to gain
The love of all dumb creatures at will ; now lifting
himself, by the mane,
Over the neck of the three-year colt, for a random
bareback ride,
Now chasing the waves on the rifted beach at the turn
of the evening tide.

Proud, in sooth, was the master : the youngster, he oft
and roundly swore,
Was fit for the life a gentleman led in the lusty days of
yore !
And he took the boy wherever he drove, — to a county
fair or race ;
Gave him the reins and watched him guide the span at
a spanking pace ;

Taught him the sportsman's keen delight : to swallow
the air of morn,
And start the whistling quail that hides and feeds in
the dewy corn ;
Or in clear November underwoods to bag the squirrels,
and flush
The brown-winged, mottled partridge a-whir from her
nest in the tangled brush ;

Taught him the golden harvest laws, and the signs of
sun and shower,
And the thousand beautiful secret ways of graft and
fruit and flower ;
Set him straight in his saddle, and cheered him gallop-
ing over the sand ;
Sailed with him to the fishing-shoals and placed the
helm in his hand.

Often the yacht, with all sail spread, was steered by
the fearless twain
Around the beacon of Sandy Hook, and out in the open
main ;
Till the great sea-surges rolling in, as south-by-east
they wore,
Lifted the bows of the dancing craft, and the buoyant
hearts she bore.

But in dreamy hours, which young men know, Hugh
loved with the tide to float
Far up the deep, dark-channeled creeks, alone in his
two-oared boat ;
While a fiery woven tapestry o'erhung the waters low,
The warp of the frosted chestnut, the woof with maple
and birch aglow ;

Picking the grapes which dangled down ; or watching
the autumn skies,
The osprey's slow imperial swoop, the scrawny heron's
rise ;
Nursing a longing for larger life than circled a rural
home,
An instinct of leadership within, and of action yet to
come.



“Often the yacht, with all sail spread.” Page 98.

4.

Curtain of shifting seasons dropt on moor and meadow
 and hall,
 Open your random vistas of changes that come with
 time to all !
 Hugh grown up to manhood ; foremost, searching the
 county through,
 Of the Monmouth youth, in birth and grace, and the
 strength to will and do.

The father, past the prime of life, and his temples
 flecked with toil,
 A bookman still, and leaving to Hugh the care of stock
 and soil.
 Hendrick Van Ghelt, a bowed old man in a fireside-
 corner chair,
 Counting the porcelain Scripture tiles which frame the
 chimney there, —

The shade of the stalwart gentleman the people used
 to know,
 Forgetful of half the present scenes, but mindful of
 long-ago ;
 Aroused, mayhap, by growing murmurs of Southern
 feud, that came
 And woke anew in his fading eyes a spark of their
 ancient flame.

5.

Gazing on such a group as this, folds of the curtain
 drop,
 Hiding the grandsire's form ; and the wheels of the
 sliding picture stop.

L. of C.

Gone, that stout old Hendrick, at last ! and from miles
around they came, —
Farmer, and squire, and whispering youths, recalling
his manhood's fame.

Dead : and the Van Ghelt manor closed, and the home-
stead acres leased ;
For their owner had moved more near the town, where
his daily tasks increased,
Choosing a home on the blue Passaic, whence the
Newark spires and lights
Were seen, and over the salt sea-marsh the shadows
of Bergen Heights.

Back and forth from his city work, the lawyer, day by
day,
With the press of eager and toiling men, followed his
wonted way ;
And Hugh, — he dallied with life at home, tending the
garden and grounds ;
But the mansion longed for a woman's voice to soften
its lonely sounds.

“ Hugh,” said Hermann Van Ghelt, at length, “ choose
for yourself a wife,
Comely, and good, and of birth to match the mother
who gave you life.
No words of woman have charmed my ear since last I
heard her voice ;
And of fairest and proudest maids her son should make
a worthy choice.”

But now the young man's wandering heart from the
great world turned away,

To long for the healthful Monmouth meads, the shores
of the breezy bay ;
And often the scenes and mates he knew in boyhood
he sought again,
And roamed through the well-known woods, and lay in
the grass where he once had lain.

III.

LADIES, in silks and laces,
Lunching with lips that gleam,
Know you aught of the places
Yielding such fruit and cream ?

South from your harbor-islands
Glisten the Monmouth hills ;
There are the ocean highlands,
Lowland meadows and rills,

Berries in field and garden,
Trees with their fruitage low,
Maidens (asking your pardon)
Handsome as cities show.

Know you that, night and morning,
A beautiful water-fay,
Covered with strange adorning,
Crosses your rippling bay ?

Her sides are white and sparkling ;
She whistles to the shore ;
Behind, her hair is darkling,
And the waters part before.

Lightly the waves she measures
Up to the wharves of the town ;
There, unlading her treasures,
Lovingly puts them down.

Come with me, ladies ; cluster
Here on the western pier ;
Look at her jewels' lustre,
Changed with the changing year !

First of the months to woo her,
June his strawberries flings
Over her garniture,
Bringing her exquisite things ;

Rifling his richest casket ;
Handing her, everywhere,
Garnets in crate and basket ;
Knowing she soon will wear

Blackberry jet and lava,
Raspberries ruby-red,
Trinkets that August gave her,
Over her toilet spread.

After such gifts have faded,
Then the peaches are seen, —
Coral and ivory braided,
Fit for an Indian queen.

And September will send her,
Proud of his wealth, and bold,
Melons glowing in splendor,
Emeralds set with gold.

So she glides to the Narrows,
 Where the forts are astir :
 Her speed is a shining arrow's !
 Guns are silent for her.

So she glides to the ringing
 Bells of the belfried town,
 Kissing the wharves, and flinging
 All of her jewels down.

Whence she gathers her riches,
 Ladies, now would you see ?
 Leaving your city niches,
 Wander awhile with me.

IV.

I.

THE strawberry-vines lie in the sun,
 Their myriad tendrils twined in one ;
 Spread like a carpet of richest dyes,
 The strawberry-field in sunshine lies.
 Each timorous berry, blushing red,
 Has folded the leaves above her head,
 The dark, green curtains gemmed with dew ;
 But each blushful berry, peering through,
 Shows like a flock of the underthread, —
 The crimson woof of a downy cloth
 Where the elves may kneel and plight their troth

2.

Run through the rustling vines, to show
 Each picker an even space to go,

Leaders of twinkling cord divide
The field in lanes from side to side ;
And here and there with patient care,
Lifting the leafage everywhere,
Rural maidens and mothers dot
The velvet of the strawberry-plot :
Fair and freckled, old and young,
With baskets at their girdles hung,
Searching the plants with no rude haste,
Lest berries should hang unpicked, and waste : —
Of the pulpy, odorous, hidden quest,
First gift of the fruity months, and best.

3.

Crates of the laden baskets cool
Under the trees at the meadow's edge,
Covered with grass and dripping sedge,
And lily-leaves from the shaded pool ;
Filled, and ready to be borne
To market before the morrow morn.
Beside them, gazing at the skies,
Hour after hour a young man lies.
From the hillside, under the trees,
He looks across the field, and sees
The waves that ever beyond it climb,
Whitening the rye-slope's early prime ;
At times he listens, listlessly,
To the tree-toad singing in the tree,
Or sees the catbird peck his fill
With feathers adroop and roguish bill.
But often, with a pleased unrest,
He lifts his glances to the west,
Watching the kirtles, red and blue,
Which cross the meadow in his view ;

And he hears, anon, the busy throng
Sing the Strawberry-Pickers' Song :

4.

" Rifle the sweets our meadows bear,
Ere the day has reached its nooning ;
While the skies are fair, and the morning air
Awakens the thrush's tuning.

*" Softly the rivulet's ripples flow ;
Dark is the grove that lovers know ;
Here, where the whitest blossoms blow,
The reddest and ripest berries grow.*

" Bend to the crimson fruit, whose stain
Is glowing on lips and fingers ;
The sun has lain in the leafy plain,
And the dust of his pinions lingers.

*" Softly the rivulet's ripples flow ;
Dark is the grove that lovers know ;
Here, where the whitest blossoms blow,
The reddest and ripest berries grow.*

" Gather the cones which lie concealed,
With their vines your foreheads wreathing ;
The strawberry-field its sweets shall yield
While the western winds are breathing.

*" Softly the rivulet's ripples flow ;
Dark is the grove that lovers know ;
Here, where the whitest blossoms blow,
The reddest and ripest berries grow."*

5.

From the far hillside comes again
An echo of the pickers' strain.
Sweetly the group their cadence keep ;
Swiftly their hands the trailers sweep ;
The vines are stripped and the song is sung,
A joyous labor for old and young ;
For the blithe children, gleaning behind
The women, marvellous treasures find.

6.

From the workers a maiden parts :
The baskets at her waistband shine
With berries that look like bleeding hearts
Of a hundred lovers at her shrine ;
No Eastern girl were girdled so well
With silken belt and silver bell.
Her slender form is tall and strong ;
Her voice is the sweetest in the song ;
Her brown hair, fit to wear a crown,
Loose from its bonnet ripples down.
Toward the crates, that lie in the shade
Of the chestnut copse at the edge of the glade,
She moves from her mates, through happy rows
Of the children loving her as she goes.
Alice, our Alice! one and all,
Striving to stay her footsteps, call
(For children with skilful choice dispense
The largesse of their innocence) ;
But on, with a sister's smile, she moves
Into the darkness of the groves,
And deftly, daintily, one by one,
Shelters her baskets from the sun,
Under the network, fresh and cool,
Of lily-leaves from the crystal pool.

7.

Turning her violet eyes, their rays
Glistened full in the young man's gaze ;
And each at each, for a moment's space,
Looked with a diffident surprise.
" Heaven ! " thought Hugh, " what artless grace
That laborer's daughter glorifies !
I never saw a fairer face,
I never heard a sweeter voice ;
And oh ! were she my father's choice,
My father's choice and mine were one
In the strawberry-field and morning sun."

V.

L OVE, from that summer morn
Melting the souls of these two ;
Love, which some of you know
Who read this poem to-day —
Is it the same desire,
The strong, ineffable joy,
Which Jacob and Rachel felt,
When he served her father long years,
And the years were swift as days —
So great was the love he bore ?
Race, advancing with time,
Growing in thought and deed,
Mastering land and sea,
Say, does the heart advance,
Are its passions more pure and strong ?
They, like Nature, remain,
No more and no less than of yore.
Whoso conquers the earth,

Winning its riches and fame,
 Comes to the evening at last,
 The sunset of threescore years,
 Confessing that Love was real,
 All the rest was a dream !
 The sum of his gains is dross ;
 The song in his praise is mute ;
 The wreath of his laurels fades :
 But the kiss of his early love
 Still burns on his trembling lip,
 The spirit of one he loved
 Hallows his dreams at night.
 A little while, and the scenes
 Of the play of Life are closed ;
 Come, let us rest an hour,
 And by the pleasant streams,
 Under the fresh, green trees,
 Let us walk hand in hand,
 And think of the days that were.

VI.

I.

ON river and height and salty moors the haze of
 autumn fell,
 And the cloud of a troubled joy enwrapt the face of
 Hugh as well, —
 The spell of a secret haunt that far from home his foot-
 steps drew ;
 A love which over the brow of youth the mask of
 manhood threw.

Birds of the air to the father, at length, the common rumor brought :

“Your son,” they sang, “in the cunning toils of a rustic lass is caught !”

“A fit betrothal,” the lawyer said, “must make these follies cease ;

Which shall it be ? — the banker’s ward ? — Edith, the judge’s niece ?”

“Father, I pray” — said Hugh. “O yes !” out-leapt the other’s mood,

“I hear of your wanton loiterings ; they ill become your blood !

If you hold our name at such light worth, forbear to darken the life

Of this Alice Dale” — “No, Alice Van Ghelt ! father, she is my wife.”

2.

Worldlings, who say the eagle should mate with eagle, after his kind,

Nor have learned from what far and diverse cliffs the twain each other find,

Yours is the old, old story, of age forgetting its wiser youth ;

Of eyes which are keen for others’ good and blind to an inward truth.

But the pride which closed the father’s doors swelled in the young man’s veins,

And he led his bride, in the sight of all, through the pleasant Monmouth lanes,

To the little farm his grandsire gave, years since, for a birthday gift :

Unto such havens unforeseen the barks of our fortune
 drift !
 There, for a happy pastoral year, he tilled the teeming
 field,
 Scattered the marl above his land, and gathered the
 orchard's yield ;
 And Alice, in fair and simple guise, kissed him at even-
 fall ;
 And her face was to him an angel's face, and love was
 all in all.

— What is this light in the southern sky, painting a
 red alarm ?
 What is this trumpet call, which sounds through peace-
 ful village and farm, —
 Jarring the sweet idyllic rest, stilling the children's
 throng,
 Hushing the cricket on the hearth, and the lovers'
 evening song ?

VII.

I.

WAR! war! war!
 Manning of forts on land and ships for sea ;
 Innumerable lips that speak the righteous wrath
 Of days which have been and again may be ;
 Flashing of tender eyes disdaining tears ;
 A pause of men with indrawn breath,
 Knowing it awful for the people's will
 Thus, thus to end the mellow years
 Of harvest, growth, prosperity,
 And bring the years of famine, fire, and death,
 Though fear and a nation's shame are more awful still.

2.

War ! war ! war !
 A thundercloud in the South in the early Spring, —
 The launch of a thunderbolt ; and then,
 With one red flare, the lightning stretched its wing,
 And a rolling echo roused a million men !

Then the ploughman left his field ;
 The smith, at his clanging forge,
 Forged him a sword to wield.
 From meadow, and mountain-gorge,
 And the Western plains, they came,
 Fronting the storm and flame.

War ! war ! war !

Heaven aid the right !

God nerve the hero's arm in the fearful fight !
 God send the women sleep, in the long, long night,
 When the breasts on whose strength they leaned shall
 heave no more !

VIII.

I.

SPAKE each mother to her son,
 Ere an ancient field was won :
 "Spartan, who me your mother call,
 Our country is mother of us all ;
 In her you breathe, and move, and are.
 In peace, for her to live — in war,
 For her to die — is, gloriously,
 A patriot to live and die !"

2.

The times are now as grand as then
 With dauntless women, earnest men ;

For thus the mothers whom we know
Bade their sons to battle go ;
And, with a smile, the loyal North
Sent her million freemen forth.

3.

“What men should stronger-hearted be
Than we, who dwell by the open sea,
Tilling the lands our fathers won
In battle on the Monmouth Plains ?
Ah ! a memory remains,
Telling us what they have done,
Teaching us what we should do.
Let us send our rightful share, —
Hard-handed yeomen, horsemen rare,
A hundred riders fleet and true.”

4.

A hundred horsemen, led by Hugh :
“Were he still here,” their captain thought,
“The brave old man who trained my youth,
What a leader he would make
Where the battle’s topmost billows break !
The crimes which brought our land to ruth,
How in his soul they would have wrought !
God help me, no deed of mine shall shame
The honor of my grandsire’s name ;
And my father shall see how pure and good
Runs in these veins the olden blood.”

5.

Shore and inland their men have sent :
Away, to the mounted regiment,

The silver-hazed Potomac heights,
 The circling raids, the hundred fights,
 The booth, the bivouac, the tent.
 Away, from the happy Monmouth farms,
 To noontide marches, night alarms,
 Death in the shadowy oaken glades,
 Emptied saddles, broken blades, —
 All the turmoil that soldiers know
 Who gallop to meet a mortal foe,
 Some to conquer, some to fall :
 War hath its chances for one and all

6.

Heroes, who render up their lives
 On the country's fiery altar-stone —
 They do not offer themselves alone.
 What shall become of the soldiers' wives ?
 They stay behind in the lonely cots,
 Weeding the humble garden-plots ;
 Some to speed the needle and thread,
 For the soldiers' children must be fed ;
 All to sigh, through the toilsome day,
 And at night teach lisping lips to pray
 For the fathers marching far away.

IX.

I.

CLOUD and flame on the dark frontier,
 Veiling the hosts embattled there :
 Peace, and a boding stillness, here,
 Where the wives at home repeat their prayer.

2.

The weary August days are long ;
 The locusts sing a plaintive song,
 The cattle miss their master's call
 When they see the sunset shadows fall.
 The youthful mistress, at even-tide,
 Stands by the cedarn wicket's side,
 With both hands pushing from the front
 Her hair, as those who listen are wont ;
 Gazing toward the unknown South,
 While silent whispers part her mouth :

3.

“ O, if a woman could only find
 Other work than to wait behind,
 Through midnight dew and noontday drouth, —
 To wait behind, and fear, and pray !
 O, if a soldier's wife could say, —
 ‘ Where thou goest, I will go ;
 Kiss thee ere thou meet'st the foe ;
 Where thou lodgest, worst or best,
 Share and soothe thy broken rest ! ’
 — Alas, to stifle her pain, and wait,
 This was ever a woman's fate !
 But the lonely hours at least may be
 Passed a little nearer thee,
 And the city thou guardest with thy life
 Thou 'lt guard more fondly for holding thy wife.”

4.

Ah, tender heart of woman leal,
 Supple as wax and strong as steel !
 Thousands as faithful and as lone,
 Following each some dearest one,

Found in those early months a home
 Under the brightness of that dome
 Whose argent arches for aye enfold
 The hopes of a people in their hold, —
 Irradiate, in the sight of all
 Who guard the Capital's outer wall.
 Lastly came one, amid the rest,
 Whose form a sunburnt soldier prest,
 As lovers embrace in respite lent
 From unfulfilled imprisonment.
 And Alice found a new content :
 Dearer for perils that had been
 Were short-lived meetings, far between ;
 Better, for dangers yet to be,
 The moments she still his face could see.
 These, for the pure and loving wife,
 Were the silver bars that marked her life,
 That numbered the days melodiously ;
 While, through all noble daring, Hugh
 From a Captain to a Colonel grew,
 And his praises sweetened every tongue
 That reached her ear, — for old and young
 Gave him the gallant leader's due.

X.

I.

FLIGHT of a meteor through the sky,
 Scattering firebrands, arrows, and death, —
 A baleful year, that hurtled by
 While ancient kingdoms held their breath.

2.

The Capital grew aghast with sights
Flashed from the lurid river-heights,
Full of the fearful things sent down,
By demons haunting the middle air,
Into the hot, beleaguered town, —
All woful sights and sounds, which seem
The fantasy of a sickly dream :
Crowded wickedness everywhere ;
Everywhere a stifled sense
Of the noonday-striding pestilence ;
Every church, from wall to wall,
A closely-mattressed hospital ;
And ah ! our bleeding heroes, brought
From smouldering fields so vainly fought,
Filling each place where a man could lie
To gasp a dying wish — and die ;
While the sombre sky, relentlessly,
Covered the town with a funeral-pall,
A death-damp, trickling funeral-pall.

3.

Always the dust and mire ; the sound
Of the rumbling wagon's ceaseless round,
The cannon jarring the trampled ground.
The sad, unvarying picture wrought
Upon the pitying woman's heart
Of Alice, the Colonel's wife, and taught
Her spirit to choose the better part, —
The labor of loving angels, sent
To men in their sore encompassment.
Daily her gentle steps were bent
Through the thin pathways which divide
The patient sufferers, side from side,

In dolorous wards, where Death and Life
Wage their silent, endless strife ;
And she gave to all her soothing words,
Sweet as the songs of homestead birds.
Sometimes that utterance musical
On the soldier's failing sense would fall
Seeming, almost, a prelude given
Of whispers that calm the air of Heaven ;
While her white hand, moistening his poor lips
With the draught which slakeless fever sips,
Pointed him to that fount above, —
River of water of life and love, —
Stream without price, of whose purity
Whoever thirsteth may freely buy.

4.

How many — whom in their mortal pain
She tended — 't was given her to gain,
Through Him who died upon the rood,
For that divine beatitude,
Who of us all can ever know
Till the golden books their records show ?
But she saw their dying faces light,
And felt a rapture in the sight.
And many a sufferer's earthly life
Thanked for new strength the Colonel's wife ;
Many a soldier turned his head,
Watching her pass his narrow bed,
Or, haply, his feeble frame would raise,
As the dim lamp her form revealed ;
And, like the children in the field,
(For soldiers like little ones become, —
As simple in heart, as frolicsome,)
One and another breathed her name,
Blessing her as she went and came.

5.

So, through all actions pure and good,
 Unknowing evil, shame, or fear,
 She grew to perfect ladyhood, —
 Unwittingly the mate and peer
 Of the proudest of her husband's blood.

XI.

1.

LIKE an affluent, royal town, the summer camps
 Of a hundred thousand men are stretched away.
 At night, like multitudinous city lamps,
 Their numberless watch-fires beacon, clear and still,
 And a glory beams from the zenith lit
 With lurid vapors that over its star-lights flit ;
 But wreaths of opaline cloud o'erhang, by day,
 The crystal-pointed tents, from hill to hill,
 From vale to vale — until
 The heavens on endless peaks their curtain lay.
 A magical city ! spread to-night
 On hills which slope within our sight :
 To-morrow, as at the waving of a wand,
 Tents, guidons, bannerols are moved afar, —
 Rising elsewhere, as rises a morning-star,
 Or the dream of Aladdin's palace in fairy-land.

2.

Camp after camp, like marble square on square ;
 Street following street, with many a park between ;
 Bright bayonet-sparkles in the tremulous air ;
 Far-fading, purple smoke above their sheen ;

Green central fields with flags like flowers abloom ;
 And, all about, close-ordered, populous life :
 But here no festering trade, no civic strife,
 Only the blue-clad soldiers everywhere,
 Waiting to-morrow's victory or doom, —
 Men of the hour, to whom these pictures seem,
 Like school-boy thoughts, half real, half a dream

3.

Camps of the cavalry, apart,
 Are pitched with nicest art
 On hilly suburbs where old forests grow.
 Here, by itself, one glimmers through the pines, —
 One whose high-hearted chief we know :
 A thousand men leap when his bugles blow ;
 A thousand horses curvet at his lines,
 Pawing the turf ; among them come and go
 The jacketed troopers, changed by wind and rain,
 Storm, raid, and skirmish, sunshine, midnight dew,
 To bronzed men who never ride in vain.

4.

In the great wall-tent at the head of the square,
 The Colonel hangs his sword, and there
 Huge logs burn high in front at the close of the day ;
 And the captains gather ere the long tattoo,
 While the banded buglers play ;
 Then come the tales of home and the troopers' song.
 Clear over the distant outposts float the notes,
 And the lone vidette to catch them listens long ;
 And the officer of the guard, upon his round,
 Pauses, to hear the sound
 Of the chiming chorus poured from a score of throats :

5.

CAVALRY SONG.

Our good steeds snuff the evening air,
Our pulses with their purpose tingle ;
The foeman's fires are twinkling there ;
He leaps to hear our sabres jingle !

HALT !

Each carbine sends its whizzing ball :
Now, cling ! clang ! forward all,
Into the fight !

Dash on beneath the smoking dome,
Through level lightnings gallop nearer !
One look to Heaven ! No thoughts of home :
The guidons that we bear are dearer.

CHARGE !

Cling ! clang ! forward all !
Heaven help those whose horses fall !
Cut left and right !

They flee before our fierce attack !
They fall, they spread in broken surges !
Now, comrades, bear our wounded back,
And leave the foeman to his dirges.

WHEEL !

The bugles sound the swift recall :
Cling ! clang ! backward all !
Home, and good night !



“When April rains.” Page 121.

XII.

I.

WHEN April rains and the great spring-tide
Cover the lowlands far and wide,
And eastern winds blow somewhat harsh
Over the salt and mildewed marsh,
Then the grasses take deeper root,
Sucking, athirst and resolute ;
And when the waters eddy away,
Flowing in trenches to Newark Bay,
The fibrous blades grow rank and tall,
And from their tops the reed-birds call.
Five miles in width the moor is spread ;
Two broad rivers its borders thread ;
The schooners which up their channels pass
Seem to be sailing in the grass,
Save as they rise with the moon-drawn sea,
Twice in the day, continuously.

2.

Gray with an inward struggle grown,
The brooding lawyer, Hermann Van Ghelt,
Lived at the mansion-house, alone ;
But a chilling cloud at his bosom felt,
Like the fog which crept, at morn and night,
Across the rivers in his sight,
And rising, left the moorland plain
Bare and spectral and cold again.
He saw the one tall hill, which stood
Huge with its quarry and gloaming wood,
And the creeping engines, as they hist

Through the dim reaches of the mist, —
Serpents, with ominous eyes aglow,
Thridding the grasses to and fro ;
And he thought how each dark, receding train
Carried its freight of joy and pain,
On toil's adventure and fortune's quest,
To the troubled city of unrest ;
And he knew that under the desolate pall
Of the bleak horizon, skirting all,
The burdened ocean heaved, and rolled
Its moaning surges manifold.

3.

Often at evening, gazing through
The eastward windows on such a view,
Its sense enwapt him as with a shroud ;
Often at noon, in the city's crowd,
He saw, as 't were in a mystic glass,
Unbidden faces before him pass :
A soldier, with eyes unawed and mild
As the eyes of one who was his child ;
A woman's visage, like that which blest
A year of his better years the best ;
And the plea of a voice, remembered well,
Deep in his secret hearing fell.
And as week by week its records brought
Of heroes fallen as they fought,
There little by little awakenéd
In the lawyer's heart a shapeless dread,
A fear of the tidings which of all
On ear and spirit heaviest fall, —
Changeless sentence of mortal fate,
Freezing the marrow with — Too Late !

XIII.

1.

THUS, — when ended the morning tramp,
And the regiment came back to camp,
And the Colonel, breathing hard with pain,
Was carried within the lines again, —
Thus a Color-Sergeant told
The story of that skirmish bold :

2.

“T was an hour past midnight, twelve hours ago, —
We were all asleep, you know,
Save the officer on his rounds,
And the guard-relief, — when sounds
The signal-gun ! once — twice —
Thrice ! and then, in a trice,
The long assembly-call rang sharp and clear,
Till ‘Boots and Saddles’ made us scamper like mice.
No time to waste
In asking whether a fight was near ;
Over the horses went their traps in haste ;
Not ten minutes had past
Ere we stood in marching gear,
And the call of the roll was followed by orders fast :
‘Prepare to mount !’
‘Mount !’ — and the company ranks were made ;
Then in each rank, by fours, we took the count,
And the head of the column wheeled for the long parade.

3.

“There, on the beaten ground,
The regiment formed from right to left ;

Our Colonel, straight in his saddle, looked around,
Reining the stallion in, that felt the heft
Of his rider, and stamped his foot, and wanted to dance.
At last the order came :
'By twos: forward, march!' — and the same
From each officer in advance ;
And, as the rear-guard left the spot,
We broke into the even trot.

4.

“ ‘Trot, march!’ — two by two,
In the dust and in the dew,
Roads and open meadows through.
Steadily we kept the tune
Underneath the stars and moon.
None, except the Colonel, knew
What our orders were to do ;
Whether on a forage-raid
We were tramping, boot and blade,
Or a close reconnoissance
Ere the army should advance ;
One thing certain, we were bound
Straight for Stuart's camping-ground.
Plunging into forest-shade,
Well we knew each glen and glade !
Sweet they smelled, the pine and oak,
And of home my comrade spoke.
Tramp, tramp, out again,
Sheer across the ragged plain,
Where the moonbeams glaze our steel
And the fresher air we feel.
Thus a triple league, and more,
Till behind us spreads the gray,
Pallid light of breaking day,

And on cloudy hills, before,
 Rebel camp-fires smoke away.
 Hard by yonder clump of pines
 We should touch the rebel lines :
 'Walk, march !' and, softly now,
 Gain yon hillock's westward brow.

5.

"Halt !" and "Right into line !" — There on the ridge
 In battle-order we let the horses breathe ;
 The Colonel raised his glass and scanned the bridge,
 The tents on the bank beyond, the stream beneath.
 Just then the sun first broke from the redder east,
 And their pickets saw five hundred of us, at least,
 Stretched like a dark stockade against the sky ;
 We heard their long-roll clamor loud and nigh :
 In half a minute a rumbling battery whirled
 To a mound in front, unlimbering with a will,
 And a twelve-pound solid shot came right along,
 Singing a devilish morning-song,
 And touched my comrade's leg, and the poor boy
 curled
 And dropt to the turf, holding his bridle still.
 Well, we moved out of range, — were wheeling round,
 I think, for the Colonel had taken his look at their
 ground,
 (Thus he was ordered, it seems, and nothing more :
 Hardly worth coming at midnight for !)
 When, over the bridge, a troop of the enemy's horse
 Dashed out upon our course,
 Giving us hope of a tussle to warm our blood.
 Then we cheered, to a man, that our early call
 Had n't been sounded for nothing, after all ;
 And halting, to wait their movements, the column stood.

6.

"Then into squadrons we saw their ranks enlarge,
 And slow and steady they moved to the charge,
 Shaking the ground as they came in carbine-range.
 'Front into line! March! Halt! Front!'
 Our Colonel cried; and in squadrons, to meet the brunt,
 We too from the walk to the trot our paces change:
 'Gallop, march!' — and, hot for the fray,
 Pistols and sabres drawn, we canter away.

7.

"Twenty rods over the slippery clover
 We galloped as gayly as lady and lover;
 Held the reins lightly, our good weapons tightly,
 Five solid squadrons all shining and sightly;
 Not too fast, half the strength of our brave steeds to
 wasten,
 Not too slow, for the warmth of their fire made us
 hasten,
 As it came with a rattle and opened the battle,
 Tumbling from saddles ten fellows of mettle.
 So the distance grew shorter, their sabres shone broader;
 Then the bugle's wild blare and the Colonel's loud
 order, —

"CHARGE!" and we sprang, while the far echo rang,
 And their bullets, like bees, in our ears fiercely sang.
 Forward we strode to pay what we owed,
 Right at the head of their column we rode;
 Together we dashed, and the air reeled and flashed;
 Stirrups, sabres, and scabbards all shattered and crashed
 As we cut in and out, right and left, all about,
 Hand to hand, blow for blow, shot for shot, shout for
 shout,

Till the earth seemed to boil with the heat of our toil.
 But in less than five minutes we felt them recoil,
 Heard their shrill rally sound, and, like hares from the
 hound,
 Each ran for himself: one and all fled the ground !
 Then we goaded them up to their guns, where they
 cowered,
 And the breeze cleared the field where the battle-cloud
 lowered.
 Threescore of them lay, to teach them the way
 Van Ghelt and his rangers their compliments pay.
 But a plenty, I swear, of our saddles were bare ;
 Friend and foe, horse and rider, lay sprawled every-
 where :
 'T was hard hitting, you see, Sir, that gained us the
 day !

8.

“ Yes, they too had their say before they fled, ·
 And the loss of our Colonel is worse than all the rest.
 One of their captains aimed at him, as he led
 The foremost charge — I shot the rascal dead,
 But the Colonel fell, with a bullet through his breast.
 We lifted him from the mire, when the field was won,
 And their captured colors shaded him from the sun
 In the farmer's wagon we took for his homeward ride ;
 But he never said a word, nor opened his eyes,
 Till we reached the camp. In yon hospital tent he lies,
 And his poor young wife will come to watch by his
 side.
 The surgeon has n't found the bullet, as yet,
 But he says it 's a mortal wound. Where will you get
 Another such man to lead us, if he dies ? ”

XIV.

I.

SPRUNG was the bow at last ;
And the barbed and pointed dart,
Keen with stings of the past,
Barbed with a vain remorse,
Clove for itself a course
Straight to the father's heart ;
And a lonely wanderer stood,
Mazed in a mist of thought,
On the edge of a field of blood.
— For a battle had been fought,
And the cavalry skirmish was but a wild prelude
To the broader carnage that heaped a field in vain :
A terrible battle had been fought,
Till its changeful current brought
Tumultuous, angry surges roaring back
To the lines where our army had lain.
The lawyer, driven hard by an inward pain,
Was crossing, in search of a dying son, the track
Where the deluge rose and fell, and its stranded wrack
Had sown the loathing earth with human slain.

2.

Friends and foes, — who could discover which,
As they marked the zigzag, outer ditch,
Or lay so cold and still in the bush,
Fallen and trampled down in the last wild rush ?
Then the shattered forest-trees ; the clearing there
Where a battery stood ; dead horses, pawing the air
With horrible upright hoofs ; a mangled mass
Of wounded and stifled men in the low morass ;

And the long trench dug in haste for a burial-pit,
Whose yawning length and breadth all comers fit.

3.

And over the dreadful precinct, like the lights
That flit through graveyard walks in dismal nights,
Men with lanterns were groping among the dead,
Holding the flame to every hueless face,
And bearing those whose life had not wholly fled
On stretchers, that looked like biers, from the ghastly
place.

4.

The air above seemed heavy with errant souls,
Dense with ghosts from those gory forms arisen, —
Each rudely driven from its prison,
'Mid the harsh jar of rattling musket-rolls,
And quivering throes, and unexpected force ;
In helpless waves adrift confusedly,
Freighting the sombre haze without resource.
Through all there trickled, from the pitying sky,
An infinite mist of tears upon the ground,
Muffling the groans of anguish with its sound.

5.

On the borders of such a land, on the bounds of Death,
The stranger, shuddering, moved as one who saith :
“ God ! what a doleful clime, a drear domain ! ”
And onward, struggling with his pain,
Traversed the endless camp-fires, spark by spark,
Past sentinels that challenged from the dark,
Guided through camp and camp to one long tent
Whose ridge a flying bolt from the field had rent,
Letting the midnight mist, the battle din,
Fall on the hundred forms that writhed within.

6.

Beyond the gaunt Zouave at the nearest cot,
And the bugler shot in the arm, who lay beside
(Looking down at the wounded spot
Even then, for all the pain, with boyish pride),
And a score of men, with blankets opened wide,
Showing the gory bandages which bound
The paths of many a deadly wound,
— Over all these the stranger's glances sped
To one low stretcher, at whose head
A woman, bowed and brooding, sate,
As sit the angels of our fate,
Who, motionless, our births and deaths await.
He whom she tended moaned and tost,
Restless, as some laborious vessel, lost
Close to the port for which we saw it sail,
Groans in the long perpetual gale ;
But she, that watched the storm, forbore to weep.
Sometimes the stranger saw her move
To others, who also with their anguish strove ;
But ever again her constant footsteps turned
To one who made sad mutterings in his sleep ;
Ever she listened to his breathings deep,
Or trimmed the midnight lamp that feebly burned.

XV.

LEANING her face on her hand
She sat by the side of Hugh,
Silently watching him breathe,
As a lily curves its grace
Over the broken form

Of the twin which stood by its side.
A glory upon her head
Trailed from the light above,
Gilding her tranquil hair.
There, as she sat in a trance,
Her soul flowed through the past,
As a river, day and night,
Passes through changeful shores, —
Sees, on the twofold bank,
Meadow and mossy grange,
Castles on hoary crags,
Forests, and fortified towns,
And shrinks from the widening bay,
And the darkness which overhangs
The unknown, limitless sea.
Was it a troubled dream,
All that the stream of her life
Had mirrored along its course?
All — from that summer morn
When she seemed to meet in the field
One whom she vowed to love,
And with whom she wandered thence,
Leaving the home of her youth?
Were they visions indeed, —
The pillars of smoke and flame,
The sound of a hundred fights,
The grandeur, and ah! the gloom,
The shadows which circled her now,
And the wraith of the one she loved
Gliding away from her grasp,
Vanishing swiftly and sure?
Yes, it was all a dream;
And the strange, sad man, who moved
To the other side of the couch,

Bending over it long,
 Pressing his hand on his heart,
 And gazing, anon, in her eyes, —
 He, with his scanty hair,
 And pallid, repentant face,
 He, too, was a voiceless dream,
 A vision like all the rest ;
 He with the rest would fade
 When the day should dawn again,
 When the spectral mist of night,
 Fused with the golden morn,
 Should melt in the eastern sky.

XVI.

I.

“ **S**TEADY ! forward the squadron ! ” cries
 The dying soldier, and strives amain
 To rise from the pillow and his pain.
 Wild and wandering are his eyes,
 Painting once more, on the empty air,
 The wrathful battle’s wavering glare.
 “ Hugh ! ” said Alice, and checked her fear
 “ Speak to me, Hugh ; your father is here.”
 “ Father ! what of my father ? he
 Is anything but a father to me ;
 What need I of a father, when
 I have the hearts of a thousand men ? ”
 “ — Alas, Sir, he knows not me nor you ! ”
 And with caressing words, the twain —
 The man with all remorsefulness,
 The woman with loving tenderness —

Soothed the soldier to rest anew,
And, as the madness left his brain,
Silently watched his sleep again.

2.

And again the father and the wife,
Counting the precious sands of life,
Looked each askance, with those subtle eyes,
That probe through human mysteries
And hidden motives fathom well ;
But the mild regard of Alice fell,
Meeting the other's contrite glance,
On his meek and furrowed countenance,
Scathed, as it seemed, with troubled thought :
" Surely, good angels have with him wrought,"
She murmured, and halted, even across
The sorrowful threshold of her loss,
To pity his thin and changing hair,
And her heart forgave him, unaware.

3.

And he, — who saw how she still repress
A drear foreboding within her breast,
And, by her wifeness's nearest right,
Ever more closely through the night
Clave unto him whose quickened breath
Came like a waft from the realm of Death, —
He felt what a secret, powerful tie
Bound them in one, mysteriously.
He studied her features, as she stood
Lighting the shades of that woful place
With the presence of her womanhood,
And thought — as the dying son had thought
When her beauty first his vision caught —

"I never saw a fairer face ;
 I never heard a sweeter voice !"
 And a sad remembrance travelled fast
 Through all the labyrinth of the past,
 Till he said, as the scales fell off at last,
 "How could I blame him for his choice ?"
 Then he looked upon the sword, which lay
 At the headboard, under the night-lamp's ray ;
 He saw the coat, the stains, the dust,
 The gilded eagles worn with rust,
 The swarthy forehead and matted hair
 Of the strong, brave hero lying there ;
 And he felt how gently Hugh held command, —
 The life how gallant, the death how grand ;
 And with trembling lips, and the words that choke,
 And the tears which burn the cheek, he spoke :
 "Where is the father who would not joy
 In the manhood of such a noble boy ?
 This life, which had being through my own,
 Was a better life than I have known ;
 O that its fairness should be earth,
 Ere I could prize it at its worth !"
 "Too late ! too late !" — he made his moan —
 "I find a daughter, and her alone.
 He deemed you worthy to bear his name,
 His spotless honor, his lasting fame :
 I, who have wronged you, bid you live
 To comfort the lonely — and forgive."

4-

Dim and silvery from the east
 The infant light of another morn
 Over the stirring camps was borne ;
 But the soldier's pulse had almost ceased,

And there crept upon his brow the change —
 Ah, how sudden ! alas, how strange !
 Yet again his eyelids opened wide,
 And his glances moved to either side,
 This time with a clear intelligence
 Which took all objects in its sense,
 A power to comprehend the whole
 Of the scene that girded his passing soul.
 The father, who saw it, slowly drew
 Nearer to her that wept anew,
 And gathered her tenderly in his hold, —
 As mortals their precious things enfold,
 Grasping them late and sure ; and Hugh
 Gazed on the two a space, and smiled
 With the look he wore when a little child, —
 A smile of pride and peace, that meant
 A free forgiveness, a full content ;
 Then his clouding sight an instant clung
 To the flag whose stars above him hung,
 And his blunted senses seemed to hear
 The long reveillée sounding near ;
 But the ringing clarion could not vie
 With the richer notes which filled his ear,
 Nor the breaking morn with that brighter sky.

XVII.

I.

WEAR no armor, timid heart ;
 Fear no keen misfortune's dart,
 Want, nor scorn, nor secret blow
 Dealt thee by thy mortal foe.

2.

Let the Fates their weapons wield,
 For a wondrous woven shield
 Shall be given thee, ere long.
 Mesh of gold were not so strong ;
 Not so soft were silken shred ;
 Not so fine the spider's thread
 Barring the enchanted door
 In that tale of ancient lore,
 Guarding, silently and well,
 All within the mystic cell.
 Such a shield, where'er thou art,
 Shall be thine, O wounded heart !
 From the ills that compass thee
 Thou behind it shalt be free ;
 Envy, slander, malice, all
 Shall withdraw them from thy — Pall.

3.

Build no house with patient care,
 Fair to view, and strong as fair ;
 Walled with noble deeds' renown ;
 Shining over field and town,
 Seen from land and sea afar,
 Proud in peace, secure in war.
 For the moments never sleep,
 Building thee a castle-keep, —
 Proof alike 'gainst heat and cold,
 Earthly sorrows manifold,
 Sickness, failure of thine ends,
 And the falling off of friends.
 Treason, want, dishonor, wrong,
 None of these shall harm thee long.

Every day a beam is made ;
 Hour by hour a stone is laid.
 Back the cruellest shall fall
 From the warder at the wall ;
 Foemen shall not dare to tread
 On the ramparts o'er thy head ;
 Dark, triumphant flags shall wave
 From the fastness of thy — Grave.

XVIII.

I.

THERE 's an hour, at the fall of night, when the
 blissful souls
 Of those who were dear in life seem close at hand ;
 There 's a holy midnight hour, when we speak their
 names
 In pauses between our songs on the trellised porch ;
 And we sing the hymns which they loved, and almost
 know
 Their phantoms are somewhere with us, filling the
 gaps,
 The sorrowful chasms left when they passed away ;
 And we seem, in the hush of our yearning voices, to
 hear
 Their warm, familiar breathing somewhere near.

2.

At such an hour, — when again the autumn haze
 Silvered the moors, and the new moon peered from the
 west
 Over the blue Passaic, and the mansion shone

Clear and white on the ridge which skirts the stream, —
At the twilight hour a man and a woman sat
On the open porch, in the garb of those who mourn.
Father and daughter they seemed ; and with thoughtful
 eyes,
Silent, and full of the past, they watched the skies.

XIX.

SILENT they were, not sad ; for the sod that covers
 the grave
Of those we have given to fame smells not of the hate-
 ful mould,
But of roses and fragrant ferns, while marvellous im-
 mortelles
Twine in glory above, and their graces give us joy.
Silent, but oh ! not sad : for the babe on the couch
 within
Drank at the mother's breast, till the current of life,
 outdrawn,
Opened inflowing currents of faith and sweet content ;
And the gray-haired man, repenting in tears the foolish
 past,
Had seen in the light from those inscrutable infant
 eyes,
Fresh from the unknown world, the glimpses which,
 long ago,
Gladdened his golden youth, and had found his soul at
 peace.

XX.

I.

LASTLY the moon went down ; like burnished steel
The infinite ether wrapt the crispy air.
Then, arm in arm on the terrace-walk, the pair
Moved in that still communion where we feel
No need of audible questions and replies,
But mutual pulses all our thoughts reveal ;
And, as they turned to leave the outer night,
Far in the cloudless North a radiant sight
Stayed their steps for a while and held their eyes.

2.

There, through the icy mail of the boreal heaven,
Two-edged and burning swords by unseen hands
Were thrust, till a climbing thron'g its path had riven
Straight from the Pole, and, over seas and lands,
Pushed for the zenith, while from East to West
Flamed many a towering helm and gorgeous crest ;
And then, a rarer pageant than the rest,
An angrier light glared from the southern sky,
As if the austral trumpets made reply,
And the wrath of a challenged realm had swiftly tost
On the empyrean the flags of another host, —
Pennons with or and scarlet blazing high,
Crimson and orange banners proudly crost ;
While through the environed space, that lay between
Their adverse fronts, the ether seemed to tremble,
Shuddering to view such ruthless foes assemble,
And one by one the stars withdrew their sheen.

3.

The two, enrapt with such a vision, saw
Its ominous surges, dense, prismatic, vast,
Heaved from the round horizon ; and in awe,
Musing awhile, were silent. Till at last
The younger, fair in widow's garments, spoke :
" See, father, how, from either pole,
The deep, innumerable columns roll ;
As if the angelic tribes their concord broke,
And the fierce war that scathes our land had spread
Above, and the very skies with ire were red ! "

4.

Even as she spoke, there shone
High in the topmost zenith a central spark,
A luminous cloud that glowed against the dark ;
Its halo, widening toward either zone,
Took on the semblance of a mystic hand
Stretched from an unknown height ; and lo ! a band
Of scintillant jewels twined around the wrist,
Sapphire and ruby, opal, amethyst,
Turquoise, and diamond, linked with flashing joints.
Its wide and puissant reach began to clasp,
In countless folds, the interclashing points
Of outshot light, gathering their angry hues —
North, south, east, west — with noiseless grasp,
By some divine, resistless law,
Till everywhere the wondering watchers saw
A thousand colors blend and interfuse,
In aureate wave on wave ascending higher, —
Immeasurable, white, a spotless fire ;
And, glory circling glory there, behold
Gleams of the heavenly city walled with gold !

5.

“Daughter,” the man replied, (his face was bright
With the effulgent reflex of that light,)
“The time shall come, by merciful Heaven willed,
When these celestial omens shall be fulfilled,
Our strife be closed and the nation purged of sin,
And a pure and holier union shall begin ;
And a jarring race be drawn, throughout the land,
Into new brotherhood by some strong hand ;
And the baneful glow and splendor of war shall fade
In the whiter light of love, that, from sea to sea,
Shall soften the rage of hosts in arms arrayed,
And melt into share and shaft each battle-blade,
And brighten the hopes of a people great and free.
But, in the story told of a nation’s woes,
Of the sacrifices made for a century’s fault,
The fames of fallen heroes shall ever shine,
Serene, and high, and crystalline as those
Fair stars, which reappear in yonder vault ;
In the country’s heart their written names shall be,
Like that of a single one in mine and thine.





MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.





MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

ALECTRYÛN.

GREAT Arês, whose tempestuous godhood found
Delight in those thick-tangled solitudes
Of Hebrus, watered tracts of rugged Thrace,—
Great Arês, scouring the Odrysian wilds,
There met Alectryôn, a Thracian boy,
Stalwart beyond his years, and swift of foot
To hunt from morn till eve the white-toothed boar.
“What hero,” said the war-God, “joined his blood
With that of Hæmian nymph, to make thy form
So fair, thy soul so daring, and thy thews
So lusty for the contest on the plains
Wherein the fleet Odrysæ tame their steeds?”

From that time forth the twain together chased
The boar, or made their coursers cleave the breadth
Of yellow Hebrus, and, through vales beyond,
Drove the hot leopard foaming to his lair.
And day by day Alectryôn dearer grew

To the God's restless spirit, till from Thrace
He bore him, even to Olympos ; there
Before him set immortal food and wine,
That fairer youth and lustier strength might serve
His henchman ; bade him bear his arms, and cleanse
The crimsoned burnish of his brazen car :
So dwelt the Thracian youth among the Gods.

There came a day when Arês left at rest
His spear, and smoothed his harmful, unhelmed brow,
Calling Alectryôn to his side, and said :
" The shadow of Olympos longer falls
Through misty valleys of the lower world ;
The Earth shall be at peace a summer's night ;
Men shall have calm, and the unconquered host
Peopling the walls of Troas, and the tribes
Of Greece, shall sleep sweet sleep upon their arms ;
For Aphroditê, queen of light and love,
Awaits me, blooming in the House of Fire,
Girt with the cestus, infinite in grace,
Dearer than battle and the joy of war :
She, for whose charms I would renounce the sword
Forever, even godhood, would she wreath
My brows with myrtle, dwelling far from Heaven.
Hêphæstos, the lame cuckold, unto whose
Misshapen squalor Zeus hath given my queen,
To-night seeks Lemnos, and his sooty vault
Roofed by the roaring surge ; wherein, betimes,
He and his Cyclops pound the ringing iron,
Forging great bolts for Zeus, and welding mail,
White-hot, in shapes for Heroes and the Gods.
Do thou, Alectryôn, faithful to my trust,
Hie with me to the mystic House of Fire.
Therein, with wine and fruitage of her isle,

Sweet odors, and all rarest sights and sounds,
 My Paphian mistress shall regale us twain.
 But when the feast is over, and thou seest
 Arès and Aphroditê pass beyond
 The portals of that chamber whence all winds
 Of love flow ever toward the fourfold Earth,
 Watch by the entrance, sleepless, while we sleep ;
 And warn us ere the glimpses of the Dawn ;
 Lest Hêlios, the spy, may peer within
 Our windôws, and to Lemnos speed apace,
 In envy clamoring to the hobbling smith,
 Hêphæstos, of the wrong I do his bed."

Thus Arès ; and the Thracian boy, well pleased,
 Swore to be faithful to his trust, and liege
 To her, the perfect queen of light and love.
 So saying, they reached the fiery, brazen gates,
 Encolumned high by Heaven's artisan,
 Hêphæstos, rough, begrimed, and halt of foot, —
 Yet unto whom was Aphroditê given
 By Zeus, because from his misshapen hands
 All shapely things found being ; but the gift
 Brought him no joyance, nor made pure his fame,
 Like those devices which he wrought himself,
 Grim, patient, unbeloved.

There passed they in
 At portals of the high, celestial House,
 And on beyond the starry-golden court,
 Through amorous hidden ways, and winding paths
 Set round with splendors, to the spangled hall
 Of secret audience for noble guests.
 Here Charis labored, so Hêphæstos bade,
 Moulding the room's adornments ; here she built

Low couches, framed in ivory, overlain
 With skins of pard and panther, and the fleece
 Of sheep which graze the low Hesperian isles ;
 And in the midst a cedarn table spread,
 Whereon the loves of all the elder Gods
 Were wrought in gold and silver ; and the light
 Of quenchless rubies sparkled over all.
 Thus far came Arês and Alectryôn,
 First leaving shield and falchion at the door,
 That naught of violence should haunt that air*
 Serene, but laughter-loving peace, and joys
 The meed of Gods, once given men to know.

Then, from her daïs in the utmost hall,
 Shone toward them Aphroditê, not by firm,
 Imperial footfalls, but in measureless
 Procession, even as, wafted by her doves,
 She kissed the faces of the yearning waves
 From Cyprus to the high Thessalian mount,
 Claiming her throne in Heaven ; so light she stept,
 Untended by her Graces ; only he,
 Erôs, th' eternal child, with welcomings
 Sprang forward to Arês, like a beam of light
 Flashed from a coming brightness, ere it comes ;
 And the ambrosial mother to his glee
 Joined her own joy, coy as she glided near
 Arês, till Arês closed her in his arms
 An instant, with the perfect love of Gods.
 And the wide chamber gleamed with their delight,
 And infinite tinkling laughters rippled through
 Far halls, wherefrom no boding echoes came.

But when the passion of their meeting fell
 To dalliance, the mighty lovers, sunk

Within those ivory couches golden-fleeced,
Made wassail at the wondrous board, and held
Sweet stolen converse till the middle night.
And soulless servitors came gliding in,
Handmaidens, wrought of gold, the marvellous work
Of lame Hêphæstos ; having neither will,
Nor voice, yet bearing on their golden trays
Lush fruits and Cyprian wine, and, intermixt,
Olympian food and nectar, earth with heaven.
These Erôs and Alectryôn took therefrom,
And placed before the lovers ; and, meanwhile,
Melodious breathings from unfingered lutes,
Warblings from unseen nightingales, and songs
From lips uncrimsoned, scattered music round.
So fled the light-shod moments, hour by hour,
While the grim husband clanged upon his forge
In lurid caverns of the distant isle,
Unboding, and unheeded in his home,
Save with a scornful jest. Till now the crown
Of Artemis shone at her topmost height :
Then rose the impassioned lovers, with rapt eyes
Fixed each on each, and passed beyond the hall,
Through curtains of that chamber whence all winds
Of love flow ever toward the fourfold Earth ;
At whose dim vestibule Alectryôn
Disposed him, mindful of his master's word ;
But Erôs, heavy-eyed, long since had slept,
Deep-muffled in the softness of his plumes.
And all was silence in the House of Fire.

Only Alectryôn, through brazen bars,
Watched the blue East for Eôs, she whose torch
Should warn him of the coming of the Sun.
Even thus he kept his vigils ; but, ere half

Her silvery downward path the Huntress knew,
His senses by that rich immortal food
Grew numbed with languor. Then the shadowy hall's
Deep columns glimmered, interblent with dreams, —
Thick forests, running waters, darkling caves
Of Thrace ; and half in thought he grasped the bow ;
Hunted once more within his native wilds,
Cheering the hounds ; until before his eyes
The drapery of all nearer pictures fell,
And his limbs drooped. Whereat the imp of Sleep,
Hypnos, who hid him at the outer gate,
Slid in with silken-sandalled feet, and laid
A subtle finger on his lids. And so,
Crouched at the warder-post, Alectryôn slept.

Meanwhile the God and Goddess, recking nought
Of evil, trusting to the faithful boy,
Sank satiate in the calm of tranced rest.
And past the sleeping warder, deep within
The portals of that chamber whence all winds
Of love flow ever toward the fourfold Earth,
Hypnos kept on, walking, yet half afloat
In the sweet air ; and fluttering with cool wings
Above their couch fanned the reposeful pair
To slumber. Thus, a careless twilight hour,
Unknowing Eôs and her torch, they slept.

Ill-fated rest ! Awake, ye fleet-winged Loves,
Your mistress ! Eôs, rouse the sleeping God,
And warn him of the coming of the Day !
Alectryôn, wake ! In vain : Eôs swept by,
Radiant, a blushing finger on her lips.
In vain ! Close on her flight, from furthest East,
The peering Hélios drove his lambent car,

Casting the tell-tale beams on earth and sky,
Until Olympos laughed within his light,
And all the House of Fire grew roofed with gold ;
And through its brazen windows Hêlios gazed
Upon the sleeping lovers : thence away
To Lemnos flashed, across the rearward sea,
A messenger, from whom the vengeful smith,
Hêphæstos, learned the story of his wrongs ;
Whence afterward rude scandal spread through Heaven.

But they, the lovers, startled from sweet sleep
By garish Day, stood timorous and mute,
Even as a regal pair, the hart and hind,
When first the keynote of the clarion horn
Pierces their covert, and the deep-mouthed hound
Bays, following on the trail ; then, with small pause
For amorous partings, sped in diverse ways.
She, Aphroditê, clothed in pearly cloud,
Dropt from Olympos to the eastern shore ;
Thence floated, half in shame, half laughter-pleased,
Southward across the blue Ægæan sea,
That had a thousand little dimpling smiles
At her discomfort, and a thousand eyes
To shoot irreverent glances. But her conch
Passed the Eubœan coasts, and softly on
By rugged Dêlos, and the gentler slope
Of Naxos, to Icarian waves serene ;
Thence sailed betwixt fair Rhodos, on the left,
And windy Carpathos, until it touched
Cyprus ; and soon the conscious Goddess found
Her bower in the hollow of the isle ;
And wondering nymphs in their white arms received
Their white-armed mistress, bathing her fair limbs
In fragrant dews, twining her lucent hair

With roses, and with kisses soothing her ;
 Till, glowing in fresh loveliness, she sank
 To stillness, tended in the sacred isle,
 And hid herself awhile from all her peers.

But angry Arês faced the treacherous Morn,
 Spurning the palace tower ; nor looked behind,
 Disdainful of himself and secret joys
 That stript him to the laughter of the Gods.
 Toward the East he made, and overhung
 The broad Thermaic gulf ; then, shunning well
 The crags of Lemnos, by Mount Athôs stayed
 A moment, mute ; thence hurtled sheer away,
 Across the murmuring Northern sea, whose waves
 Are swollen in billows ruffled with the cuffs
 Of endless winds ; so reached the shores of Thrace,
 And spleen pursued him in the tangled wilds.

Hither at eventide remorseful came.
 Alectryôn ; but the indignant God,
 With harsh revilings, changed him to the Cock,
 That evermore, remembering his fault,
 Heralds with warning voice the coming Day.

THE TEST.

SEVEN women loved him. When the wrinkled
 pall

Enwrapt him from their unfulfilled desire
 (Death, pale, triumphant rival, conquering all,)

They came, for that last look, around his pyre.

One strewed white roses, on whose leaves were
hung

Her tears, like dew ; and in discreet attire

Warbled her tuneful sorrow. Next among

The group, a fair-haired virgin moved serenely,
Whose saintly heart no vain repinings wrung,

Reached the calm dust, and there, composed and
queenly,

Gazed, but the missal trembled in her hand :

“ That ’s with the past,” she said, “ nor may I meanly

Give way to tears !” and passed into the land.

The third hung feebly on the portals, moaning,
With whitened lips, and feet that stood in sand,

So weak they seemed, — and all her passion owning.

The fourth, a ripe, luxurious maiden, came,
Half for such homage to the dead atoning

By smiles on one who fanned a later flame

In her slight soul, her fickle steps attended.

The fifth and sixth were sisters ; at the same

Wild moment both above the image bended,

And with immortal hatred each on each

Glared, and therewith her exultation blended,

To know the dead had ’scaped the other’s reach !

Meanwhile, through all the words of anguish spoken,

One lowly form had given no sound of speech,

Through all the signs of woe, no sign nor token ;
 But when they came to bear him to his rest,
 They found her beauty paled, — her heart was broken :

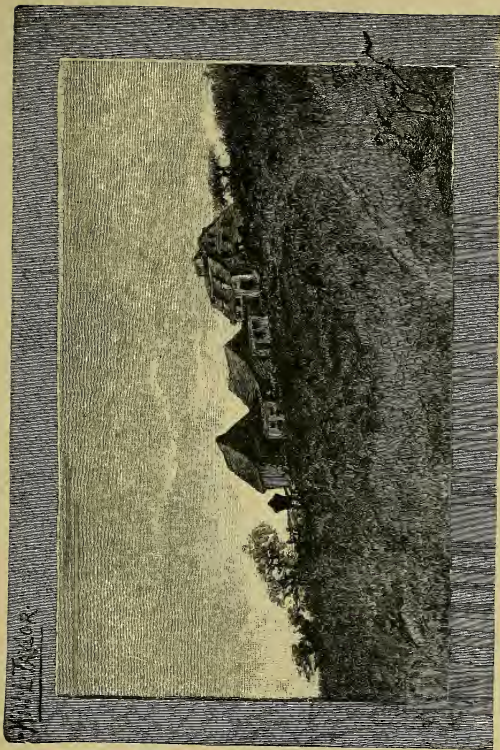
And in the Silent Land his shade confest
 That she, of all the seven, loved him best.

THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW.

ONCE more on the fallow hillside, as of old, I lie
 at rest
 For an hour, while the sunshine trembles through the
 walnut-tree to the west, —
 Shakes on the rocks and fragrant ferns, and the berry-
 bushes around ;
 And I watch, as of old, the cattle graze in the lower
 pasture-ground.

Of the Saxon months of blossom, when the merle and
 mavis sing,
 And a dust of gold falls everywhere from the soft mid-
 summer's wing,
 I only know from my poets, or from pictures that hither
 come,
 Sweet with the smile of the hawthorn-hedge and the
 scent of the harvest-home.

But July in our own New England — I bask myself i
 its prime,
 As one in the light of a face he loves, and has not se
 for a time !



"Once more on the fallow hillside." Page 154.

Again the perfect blue of the sky ; the fresh green
woods ; the call
Of the crested jay ; the tangled vines that cover the
frost-thrown wall :

Sounds and shadows remembered well ! the ground-
bee's droning hum ;
The distant musical tree-tops ; the locust beating his
drum ;
And the ripened July warmth, that seems akin to a fire
which stole,
Long summers since, through the thews of youth, to
soften and harden my soul.

Here it was that I loved her — as only a stripling can,
Who doats on a girl that others know no mate for the
future man ;
It was well, perhaps, that at last my pride and honor
outgrew her art,
That there came an hour, when from broken chains I
fled — with a broken heart.

'T was well : but the fire would still flash up in sharp,
heat-lightning gleams,
And ever at night the false, fair face shone into passion-
ate dreams ;
The false, fair form, through many a year, was some-
where close at my side,
And crept, as by right, to my very arms and the place
of my patient bride.

Bride and vision have passed away, and I am again
alone ;
Changed by years ; not wiser, I think, but only differ-
ent grown :

Not so much nearer wisdom is a man than a boy, for-
sooth,
Though, in scorn of what has come and gone, he hates
the ways of his youth.

In seven years, I have heard it said, a soul shall change
its frame ;
Atom for atom, the man shall be the same, yet not the
same ;
The last of the ancient ichor shall pass away from his
veins,
And a new-born light shall fill the eyes whose earlier
lustre wanes.

In seven years, it is written, a man shall shift his
mood ;
Good shall seem what was evil, and evil the thing that
was good :
Ye that welcome the coming and speed the parting
guest,
Tell me, O winds of summer ! am I not half-confest ?

For along the tide of this mellow month new fancies
guide my helm,
Another form has entered my heart as rightful queen
of the realm ;
From under their long black lashes new eyes — half-
blue, half-gray —
Pierce through my soul, to drive the ghost of the old love
quite away.

Shadow of years ! at last it sinks in the sepulchre of
the past, —
A gentle image and fair to see ; but was my passion so
vast ?

“For you,” I said, “be you false or true, are ever life
of my life !”

Was it myself or another who spoke, and asked her to
be his wife ?

For here, on the dear old hillside, I lie at rest again,
And think with a quiet self-content of all the passion
and pain,
Of the strong resolve and the after-strife ; but the vistas
round me seem
So little changed that I hardly know if the past is not
a dream.

Can I have sailed, for seven years, far out in the open
world ;
Have tacked and drifted here and there, by eddying
currents whirled ;
Have gained and lost, and found again ; and now, for a
respite, come
Once more to the happy scenes of old, and the haven I
voyaged from ?

Blended, infinite murmurs of True Love's earliest song,
Where are you slumbering out of the heart that gave
you echoes so long ?
But chords that have ceased to vibrate the swell of an
ancient strain
May thrill with a soulful music when rightly touched
again.

Rock and forest and meadow, — landscape perfect and
true !
O, if ourselves were tender and all unchangeful as
you,

I should not now be dreaming of seven years that have
 been,
 Nor bidding old love good by forever, and letting the
 new love in !

ESTELLE.

“How came he mad?” — HAMLET.

OF all the beautiful demons who fasten on human
 hearts
 To fetter the bodies and souls of men with exquisite,
 mocking arts,
 The cruellest, and subtlest, and fairest to mortal sight,
 Is surely a woman called Estelle, who tortures me day
 and night.

The first time that I saw her she passed with sweet lips
 mute,
 As if in scorn of the vacant praise of those who made
 her suit ;
 A hundred lustres flashed and shone as she rustled
 through the crowd,
 And a passion seized me for her there, — so passionless
 and proud.

The second time that I saw her she met me face to
 face ;
 Her bending beauty answered my bow in a tremulous
 moment's space ;
 With an upward glance that instantly fell she read me
 through and through,
 And found in me something worth her while to idle
 with and subdue ;

Something, I know not what : perhaps the spirit of
eager youth,
That named her a queen of queens at once, and loved
her in very truth ;
That threw its pearl of pearls at her feet, and offered
her, in a breath,
The costliest gift a man can give from his cradle to his
death.

The third time that I saw her — this woman called
Estelle —
She passed her milk-white arm through mine and daz-
zled me with her spell ;
A blissful fever thrilled my veins, and there, in the
moon-beams white,
I yielded my soul to the fierce control of that madden-
ing delight !

And at many a trysting afterwards she wove my heart-
strings round
Her delicate fingers, twisting them, and chanting low
as she wound ;
The rune she sang rang sweet and clear like the chime
of a witch's bell ;
Its echo haunts me even now, with the word, Estelle !
Estelle !

Ah, then, as a dozen before me had, I lay at last at her
feet,
And she turned me off with a calm surprise when her
triumph was all complete :
It made me wild, the stroke which smiled so pitiless
out of her eyes,
Like lightning fallen, in clear noonday, from cloudless
and bluest skies !

The whirlwind followed upon my brain and beat my
 thoughts to rack :
 Who knows the many a month I lay ere memory floated
 back ?
 Even now, I tell you, I wonder whether this woman
 called Estelle
 Is flesh and blood, or a beautiful lie, sent up from the
 depths of hell.

For at night she stands where the pallid moon streams
 into this grated cell,
 And only gives me that mocking glance when I speak
 her name — *Estelle!*
 With the old resistless longing often I strive to clasp
 her there,
 But she vanishes from my open arms and hides I know
 not where.

And I hold that if she were human she could not fly
 like the wind,
 But her heart would flutter against my own, in spite
 of her scornful mind :
 Yet, oh ! she is not a phantom, since devils are not so
 bad .
 As to haunt and torture a man long after their tricks
 have made him mad !

EDGED TOOLS.

WELL, Helen, quite two years have flown
 Since that enchanted, dreamy night,
 When you and I were left alone,
 And wondered whether they were right

Who said that each the other loved ;
And thus debating, yes and no,
And half in earnest, as it proved,
We bargained to pretend 't was so.

Two sceptic children of the world,
Each with a heart engraven o'er
With broken love-knots, quaintly curled,
Of hot flirtations held before ;
Yet, somehow, either seemed to find,
This time, a something more akin
To that young, natural love, — the kind
Which comes but once, and breaks us in.

What sweetly stolen hours we knew,
And frolics perilous as gay !
Though lit in sport, Love's taper grew
More bright and burning day by day.
We knew each heart was only lent,
The other's ancient scars to heal :
The very thought a pathos blent
With all the mirth we tried to feel.

How bravely, when the time to part
Came with the wanton season's close,
Though nature with our mutual art
Had mingled more than either chose,
We smothered Love, upon the verge
Of folly, in one last embrace,
And buried him without a dirge,
And turned, and left his resting-place.

Yet often (tell me what it means !)
His spirit steals upon me here,

Far, far away from all the scenes
 His little lifetime held so dear ;
 He comes : I hear a mystic strain
 In which some tender memory lies ;
 I dally with your hair again ;
 I catch the gleam of violet eyes.

Ah, Helen ! how have matters been
 Since those rude obsequies, with you ?
 Say, is my partner in the sin
 A sharer of the penance too ?
 Again the vision 's at my side :
 I drop my head upon my breast,
 And wonder if he really died,
 And why his spirit will not rest.

THE SWALLOW.

HAD I, my love declared, the tireless wing
 That wafts the swallow to her northern skies,
 I would not, sheer within the rich surprise
 Of full-blown Summer, like the swallow, fling
 My coyer being ; but would follow Spring,
 Melodious consort, as she daily flies,
 Apace with suns, that o'er new woodlands rise
 Each morn — with rains her gentler stages bring.
 My pinions should beat music with her own ;
 Her smiles and odors should delight me ever,
 Gliding, with measured progress, from the zone
 Where golden seas receive the mighty river,
 Unto yon lichened cliffs, whose ridges sever
 Our Norseland from the arctic surge's moan.

REFUGE IN NATURE.

WHEN the rude world's relentless war has pressed
Fiercely upon them, and the hot campaign
Closes with battles lost, some yield their lives,
Or linger in the ruins of the fight —
Unwise, and comprehending not their fate,
Nor gathering that affluent recompense
Which the all-pitying Earth has yet in store.
Surely such men have never known the love
Of Nature ; nor had recourse to her fount
Of calm delights, whose influences heal
The wounded spirits of her vanquished sons ;
Nor ever — in those fruitful earlier days,
Wherein her manifest forms do most enrich
Our senses void of subtler cognizance —
Wandered in summer fields, climbed the free hills,
Pursued the murmuring music of her streams,
And found the borders of her sounding sea.

But thou — when, in the multitudinous lists
Of traffic, all thine own is forfeited
At some wild hazard, or by weakening drains
Poured from thee ; or when, striving for the meed
Of place, thou failest, and the lesser man
By each ignoble method wins thy due ;
When the injustice of the social world
Environs thee ; when ruthless public scorn,
Black slander, and the meannesses of friends
Have made the bustling practice of the world
To thee a discord and a mockery ;
Or even if that last extremest pang

Be thine, and, added to such other woes,
The loss of that forever faithful love
Which else had balanced all : the putting out,
Untimely, of the light in dearest eyes ; —
At such a time thou well may'st count the days
Evil, and for a season quit the field ;
Yet not surrendering all human hopes,
Nor the rich physical life which still remains
God's boon and thy sustainer. It were base
To join alliance with the hosts of Fate
Against thyself, crowning their victory
By loose despair, or seeking rest in death.

More wise, betake thee to those sylvan haunts
Thou knewest when young, and, once again a child,
Let their perennial loveliness renew
Thy natural faith and childhood's heart serene.
Forgetting all the toilsome pilgrimage,
Awake from strife and shame, as from a dream
Dreamed by a boy, when under waving trees
He sleeps and dreams a languid afternoon.
Once more from these harmonious beauties gain
Repose and ransom, and a power to feel
The immortal gladness of inanimate things.

There is the mighty Mother, ever young
And garlanded, and welcoming her sons,
There are her thousand charms to soothe thy pain,
And merge thy little, individual woe
In the broad health and happy fruitfulness
Of all that smiles around thee. For thy sake
The woven arches of her forests breathe
Perpetual anthems, and the blue skies smile
Between, to heal thee with their infinite hope.

There are her crystal waters : lave thy brows,
 Hot with long turmoil, in their purity ;
 Wash off the battle-dust from those poor limbs
 Blood-stained and weary. Holy sleep shall come
 Upon thee ; waking, thou shalt find in bloom
 The lilies, fresh as in the olden days ;
 And once again, when Night unveils her stars,
 Thou shalt have sight of their high radiance,
 And feel the old, mysterious awe subdue
 The phantoms of thy pain.

And from that height

A voice shall whisper of the faith, through which
 A man may act his part until the end.
 Anon thy ancient yearning for the fight
 May come once more, tempered by poise of chance,
 And guided well with all experience.
 Invisible hands may gird thy armor on,
 And Nature put new weapons in thy hands,
 Sending thee out to try the world again, —
 Perchance to conquer, being cased in mail
 Of double memories ; knowing smaller griefs
 Can add no sorrow to the woful past ;
 And that, howbeit thou mayest stand or fall,
 Earth proffers men her refuge everywhere,
 And Heaven's promise is for aye the same.

MONTAGU.

QUEEN Katherine of Arragon
 In gray Kimbolton dwelt,
 A joyous bride, ere bluff King Hal
 At Bullen's footstool knelt.

Still in her haughty Spanish eyes
Their childhood's lustre shone,
That lit with love two royal hearts,
And won the English throne.

From gray Kimbolton's castle-gate
She rode, each summer's day,
And blithely led the greenwood chase
With hawk and hound away.

And ever handsome Montagu,
Her Master of the Horse,
To guard his mistress kept her pace
O'er heather, turf, and gorse.

O, who so brave as Montagu
To leap the hedges clear !
And who so fleet as he to find
The coverts of the deer !

And who so wild as Montagu,
To seek his sovereign's love !
More hopeless than a child, who craves
The brightest star above.

Day after day her presence fed
The fever at his heart ;
Yet loyally the young knight scorned
To play a traitor's part.

Only, when at her palfrey's side
He bowed him by command,
Lightening her footfall to the earth,
He pressed her dainty hand ;

A tender touch, as light as love,
Soft as his heart's desire ;
But aye, in Katherine's artless blood,
It woke no answering fire.

King Hal to gray Kimbolton came
Erelong, and true love's sign,
Unused in colder Arragon,
She prayed him to divine :

"Canst tell me, Sire," she said, "what mean
The gentry of your land,
When softly, thus, and thus, they take
And press a lady's hand?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Hal, "but tell me, Chick,
Each answering in course,
Do any press your hand?" "O yes,
My Master of the Horse."

Off to the wars her gallant went,
And pushed the foremost dikes,
And gashed his fair young form against
A score of Flemish pikes.

Heart's blood ebbed fast ; but Montagu,
Dipping a finger, wove
These red words in his shield : "Dear Queen,
I perish of your love !"

Kimbolton, after many a year,
Again met Katherine's view :
The banished wife, with half a sigh,
Remembered Montagu.

WILD WINDS WHISTLE.

1.

SIR ULRIC a Southern dame has wed ;
Wild winds whistle and snow is come ;
 He has brought her home to his bower and bed.
Hither and thither the birds fly home.

Her hair is darker than thick of night ;
Wild winds whistle, &c.
 Her hands are fair, and her step is light.
Hither and thither, &c.

From out his castel in the North
 Sir Ulric to hunt rode lightly forth.

Three things he left her for good or ill, —
 A bonny bird that should sing at will,

With carol sweeter than silver bell,
 Day and night in the old castel ;

A lithe little page to gather flowers ;
 And a crystal dial to mark the hours.

2.

Lady Margaret watched Sir Ulric speed
 Away to the chase on his faithful steed.

From morning till night, the first day long,
 She sat and listened the bonny bird's song.

The second day long, with fingers fair,
She curled and combed her page's hair.

The third day's sun rose up on high ;
By the dial she was seated nigh :

She loathed the bird and the page's face,
And counted the shadow's creeping pace.

3.

The strange knight drew his bridle-rein ;
He looked at the sky and he looked at the plain.

"O lady!" he said, "'t was a sin and shame
To leave for the chase so fair a dame.

"O lady!" he said, "we two will flee
To the blithesome land of Italie ;

"There the orange grows, and the fruitful vine,
And a bower of myrtle shall be thine."

He has taken her hand and kissed her mouth :
Now Ho ! sing Ho ! for the sunny South.

He has kissed her mouth and clasped her waist :
Now, good gray steed, make haste, make haste !

4.

Sir Ulric back from the chase has come,
And sounds the horn at his castel-home.

Or ever he drew his bridle-rein,
He saw the dial split in twain ;

The bonny blithe bird was stark and dead,
And the lithe little page hung down his head.

The lithe little page hung down his head ;
Wild winds whistle and snow is come ;
"O where, Sir Page, has my lady fled ?"
Hither and thither the birds fly home.

PETER STUYVESANT'S NEW YEAR'S CALL

I JAN. A. C. 1661.

WHERE nowadays the Battery lies,
New York had just begun,
A new-born babe, to rub its eyes,
In Sixteen Sixty-One.
They christened it Nieuw Amsterdam,
Those burghers grave and stately,
And so, with schnapps and smoke and psalm,
Lived out their lives sedately.

Two windmills topped their wooden wall,
On Stadthuys gazing down,
On fort, and cabbage-plots, and all
The quaintly gabled town ;
These flapped their wings and shifted backs,
As ancient scrolls determine,
To scare the savage Hackensacks,
Paumanks, and other vermin.

At night the loyal settlers lay
Betwixt their feather-beds ;

In hose and breeches walked by day,
And smoked, and wagged their heads.
No changeful fashions came from France,
The freulen to bewilder,
And cost the burgher's purse, perchance,
Its every other guilder.

In petticoats of linsey-red,
And jackets neatly kept,
The vrouws their knitting-needles sped
And deftly spun and swept.
Few modern-school flirtations there
Set wheels of scandal trundling,
But youths and maidens did their share
Of staid, old-fashioned bundling.

— The New Year opened clear and cold ;
The snow, a Flemish ell
In depth, lay over Beeckman's Wold
And Wolfert's frozen well.
Each burgher shook his kitchen-doors,
Drew on his Holland leather,
Then stamped through drifts to do the chores,
Beshrewing all such weather.

But — after herring, ham, and kraut —
To all the gathered town
The Dominic preached the morning out,
In Calvinistic gown ;
While tough old Peter Stuyvesant
Sat pewed in foremost station, —
The potent, sage, and valiant
Third Governor of the nation.

Prayer over, at his mansion hall,
With cake and courtly smile
He met the people, one and all,
In gubernatorial style ;
Yet missed, though now the day was old,
An ancient fellow-feaster, —
Heer Govert Loockermans, that bold
Brewer and burgomeester ;

Who, in his farm-house, close without
The picket's eastern end,
Sat growling at the twinge of gout
That kept him from his friend.
But Peter strapped his wooden peg,
When tea and cake were ended
(Meanwhile the sound remaining leg
Its high jack-boot defended),

A woolsey cloak about him threw,
And swore, by wind and limb,
Since Govert kept from Peter's view,
Peter would visit him ;
Then sallied forth, through snow and blast,
While many a humble greeter
Stood wondering whereaway so fast
Strode bluff Hardkoppig Pieter.

Past quay and cowpath, through a lane
Of vats and mounded tans,
He puffed along, with might and main,
To Govert Loockermans ;
Once there, his right of entry took,
And hailed his ancient crony :
" Myn Góð ! in dese Manhattoes, Loock,
Ve gets more snow as money ! "

To which, and after whiffs profound,
With doubtful wink and nod,
There came at last responsive sound :
“Yah, Peter ; yah, Myn Góð !”
Then goedevrouw Marie sat her guest
Beneath the chimney-gable,
And courtesied, bustling at her best
To spread the New Year's table.

She brought the pure and genial schnapps,
That years before had come —
In the “Nieuw Nederlandts,” perhaps —
To cheer the settlers' home ;
The long-stemmed pipes ; the fragrant roll
Of pressed and crispy Spanish ;
Then placed the earthen mugs and bowl,
Nor long delayed to vanish.

Thereat, with cheery nod and wink,
And honors of the day,
The trader mixed the Governor's drink
As evening sped away.
That ancient room ! I see it now :
The carven nutwood dresser ;
The drawers, that many a burgher's vrouw
Begrudged their rich possessor ;

The brace of high-backed leathern chairs,
Brass-nailed at every seam ;
Six others, ranged in equal pairs ;
The bacon hung abeam ;
The chimney-front, with porcelain shelft ;
The hearty wooden fire ;
The picture, on the steaming delft,
Of David and Goliah.

I see the two old Dutchmen sit
Like Magog and his mate,
And hear them, when their pipes are lit,
Discuss affairs of state :
The clique that would their sway demean ;
The pestilent importation
Of wooden nutmegs, from the lean
And losel Yankee nation.

But when the subtle juniper
Assumed its sure command,
They drank the buxom loves that were, —
They drank the Motherland ;
They drank the famous Swedish wars,
Stout Peter's special glory,
While Govert proudly showed the scars
Of Indian contests gory.

Erelong, the berry's power awoke
Some music in their brains,
And, trumpet-like, through rolling smoke,
Rang long-forgotten strains, —
Old Flemish snatches, full of blood,
Of phantom ships and battle ;
And Peter, with his leg of wood,
Made floor and casement rattle.

Then round and round the dresser pranced,
The chairs began to wheel,
And on the board the punch-bowl danced
A Netherlandish reel ;
Till midnight o'er the farm-house spread
Her New-Year's skirts of sable,
And, inch by inch, each puzzled head
Dropt down upon the table.

But still to Peter, as he dreamed,
That table spread and turned ;
The chimney-log blazed high, and seemed
To circle as it burned ;
The town into the vision grew
From ending to beginning ;
Fort, wall, and windmill met his view,
All widening and spinning.

The cowpaths, leading to the docks,
Grew broader, whirling past,
And checkered into shining blocks, —
A city fair and vast ;
Stores, churches, mansions, overspread
The metamorphosed island,
While not a beaver showed his head
From Swamp to Kalchook highland.

Eftsoons the picture passed away ;
Hours after, Peter woke
To see a spectral streak of day
Gleam in through fading smoke ;
Still slept old Govert, snoring on
In most melodious numbers ;
No dreams of Eighteen Sixty-One
Commingled with his slumbers.

But Peter, from the farm-house door,
Gazed doubtfully around,
Rejoiced to find himself once more
On sure and solid ground.
The sky was somewhat dark ahead,
Wind east, and morning lowery ;
And on he pushed, a two-miles' tread,
To breakfast at his Bouwery.



TRANSLATION.





TRANSLATION.

JEAN PROUVAIRE'S SONG AT THE BARRICADE.

“While the men were making cartridges and the women lint; while a large frying-pan, full of melted pewter and lead, destined for the bullet-mould, was smoking over a burning furnace; while the videttes were watching the barricades with arms in their hands; while Enjolras, whom nothing could distract, was watching the videttes, — Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, a few others besides, sought each other and got together, as in the most peaceful days of their student-chats, and in a corner of this wine-shop changed into a casemate, within two steps of the redoubt which they had thrown up, their carbines, primed and loaded, resting on the backs of their chairs, these gallant young men, so near their last hour, began to sing love-rhymes. . . . The hour, the place, these memories of youth recalled, the few stars which began to shine in the sky, the funereal repose of these deserted streets, the imminence of the inexorable event, gave a pathetic charm to these rhymes, murmured in a low tone in the twilight by Jean Prouvaire, who, as we have said, was a sweet poet.” — *Les Misérables: Saint Denis*, Book XII. Chapter VI.

DO you remember our charming times,
When we were both at the age which knows,
Of all the pleasures of Paris, none
Like making love in one's Sunday clo'es;

When all your birthdays, added to mine,
A total of forty would not bring,

And when, in our humble and cosey roost,
All, even the Winter, to us was Spring?

Rare days! then prudish Manuel stalked,
Paris feasted each saintsday in;
Foy thundered away; and—ah, your waist
Pricked me well with a truant pin!

Every one ogled you. At Prado's,
Where you and your briefless barrister dined,
You were so fair that the roses, I thought,
Turned to look at you from behind.

They seemed to whisper: "How handsome she is!
What wavy tresses! what sweet perfume!
Under her mantle she hides her wings;
Her flower of a bonnet is just in bloom!"

I roamed with you, pressing your dainty arm,
And the passers thought that Love, in play,
Had mated, in unison so sweet,
The gallant April with gentle May.

We lived so coseyly, all by ourselves,
On love,—that choice forbidden fruit,—
And never a word my lips could speak
But your heart already had followed suit.

The Sarbonne was that bucolic place
Where night till day my passion throve:
'T is thus that an ardent youngster makes
The Student's Quarter a Realm of Love.

O Place Maubert! O Place Dauphine!
Sky-parlor reaching heavenward far,

In whose depths, when you drew your stocking on,
I saw a twinkling morning-star.

Hard-learned Plato I 've long forgot :
Neither Malebranche nor Lamennais
Could teach me such faith in Providence
As the flower which in your bosom lay.

You were my servant and I your slave :
O golden attic ! O joy, to lace
Your corset ; to watch you showing, at morn,
The ancient mirror your youthful face !

Ah ! who indeed could ever forget
That sky and dawn commingling still ;
That ribbony, flowery, gauzy glory,
And Love's sweet nonsense talked at will ?

Our garden a pot of tulips was ;
Your petticoat curtained the window-pane ;
I took the earthen bowl of my pipe
And gave you a cup of porcelain.

What huge disasters to make us fun !
Your muff afire ; your tippet lost ;
And that cherished portrait of Shakespeare, sold,
One hungry evening, at half its cost.

I was a beggar and you were kind :
A kiss from your fair round arms I 'd steal,
While the folio-Dante we gayly spread
With a hundred chestnuts, our frugal meal.

And oh ! when first my favored mouth
A kiss to your burning lips had given,

You were dishevelled and all aglow ;
I, pale with rapture, believed in Heaven.

Do you remember our countless joys,
Those neckerchiefs rumpled every day ?
Alas, what sighs from our boding hearts
The infinite skies have borne away !





THE BLAMELESS PRINCE

AND OTHER POEMS.

1869.





Affectionately Enscribed

TO

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.





THE BLAMELESS PRINCE.

—◆—
P R E L U D E .

*P*OET, wherefore hither bring
Old romance, while others sing
Sweeter idyls of to-day?
Why not picture in your lay
Western woods and waters grand,
Clouds and skies of this fair land?
Are there fairer far away?

I have many another song
Of those regions where belong,
First of all, my heart and home.
If for once my fancy roam,
Trust me, in the land I view
Falls the sunshine, falls the dew,
And the Spring and Summer come.

*Why from yonder stubble glean
Ancient names of King and Queen,
Knightly men and maidens fair?
Are there in our time no rare
Beauteous women, heroes brave?*

*Is there naught this side the grave
Worth the dust you gather there ?*

Nay, but these were human too,
Strong or wayward, false or true.
Art will seek through every clime
For her picture or her rhyme ;
Yes, nor looking far around,
But to-day I sought and found
These who lived in that old time.

*Why should we again be told
Dross will mingle with all gold ?
That which time nor test can stain
Was not smelted quite in vain.
What of Albert's blameless heart,
Arthur's old heroic part,
Saxon Alfred's glorious reign ?*

Yes, my Prince was such as they,
Part of gold, and part of clay,
Though his metal shone as bright,
And his dross was hid from sight.
He who brightest is, and best,
Still may fear the secret test
That shall try his heart aright.

Let me, then, of what befell
Hearts that loved, my story tell.
Turn the leaf that lies between
You who listen and the scene !
Your pity for the Lady, since
She died of sorrow ; spare my Prince ;
Love to the last my gentle Queen !



“The open sea bore commerce to her marts,” Page 189.



THE BLAMELESS PRINCE.

LONG since, there was a Princess of the blood,
Sole heiress to the crown her father wore, —
Plucked from a dying stem, that one fair bud
Put forth, and withered ere it others bore ;
And scarce the King her blossomed youth had seen,
When he, too, slept the sleep, and she was Queen.

Hers was a goodly realm, not stretched afar
In desert wilds by wolf and savage scoured,
But locked in generous limits, strong in war,
Serene in peace, with mountains walled and towered,
Fed by the tilth of many a fertile plain,
And veined with streams that proudly sought the main.

The open sea bore commerce to her marts,
Tumbling half round her borders with its tide ;
Her vessels shot the surge ; all noble arts
Of use and beauty in her towns were plied ;
Her court was regal ; lords and ladies lit
The palace with their graces and their wit.

Wise councillors devised each apt decree
That gained the potent sanction of her hand ;
Great captains led her arms on shore and sea ;
She was the darling of a loyal land ;
Poets sang her praises, and in hut and hall
Her excellence was the discourse of all.

Her pride was suited to her high estate,
Her gentleness was equal with her youth,
Her wisdom in her goodness found its mate ;
Her beauty was not that which brings to ruth
Men's lives, yet pure and luminous ; — and fair
Her locks, and over all a sovereign air.

Without, she bore herself as rulers should,
Queenly in walk and gesture and attire ;
Within, she nursed her flower of maidenhood,
Sweet girlish thoughts and virginal desire :
No woman's head so keen to work its will
But that the woman's heart is mistress still.

Three years she ruled a nation well content
To have a maiden queen ; then came a day
When those on whom her councils chiefly leant
Began to speak of marriage, and to pray
Their sovereign not to hold herself alone,
Nor trust the tenure of an heirless throne ;

And then the people took the cry, nor lack
Was there of courtly suitors far or near, —
Kings, dukes, crown-princes, — swift upon the track,
Like huntsmen closing round a royal deer.
These she regarded not, but still, among
Her maids and missals, to her freedom clung.

And with the rest there came a puissant king,
Whose country pressed against her own domain, —
In strength its equal, but continuing
Its dearest foe through many a martial reign.
He sued to join his hand and realm with hers,
And end these wars ; then all her ministers

Pleaded his suit ; but, asking yet for grace,
And that her hand might wait upon her heart,
She halted, till the proud king turned his face
Homeward ; and still the people, for their part,
Waited her choice, nor grudged her sex's share
Of coyness to a queen so young and fair.

There was a little State that nestled close
Beside her boundaries, as wont to claim,
Though free, protection there from outer foes,
A Principality — at least in name —
Whose ruler was her father's life-long friend
And firm ally, a statesman skilled to lend

Shrewd counsel, and who made, in days gone by,
A visit to this court, and with him led
His son, a gentle Prince, of years anigh
Her own, — twelve summers shone from either head ;
And while their elders moved from place to place, —
The field-review, the audience, the chase, —

The Princess and the Prince, together thrown,
With their companions held a mimic court,
And with that sweet equality, the crown
Of Childhood, — which discovers in its sport
No barriers of rank or wealth or power, —
He named himself her consort. From that hour

The mindful Princess never quite forgot
Those joyous days, nor him, the fair-haired Prince ;
And though she well had learned her greater lot,
And haply from his thought had passed long since
Her girlish image, chance, that moves between
Two courts, had brought his portrait to the Queen.

This from her cabinet she took one morn,
 When they still urged the suit of that old king,
 And said, half jesting, with a pretty scorn,
 "Why mate your wilful Queen with mouldering
 And crabbed Age? Now were he shaped like this,
 With such a face, he were not so amiss.

"Queens are but women; 't is a sickly year
 That couples frost and thaw, our minstrels sing." —
 "Ho!" thought the graybeards, "sets the wind so
 near?"

And thought again: "Why not? the schemeful king
 Perchance would rule us where he should be ruled;
 A humbler consort will be sooner schooled."

Forewarned are those whom Fortune's gifts await.
 Ere waned a moon the elder prince had learned —
 From half the weathercocks which gilt the state,
 Spying the wind and shifting where it turned —
 That for love's simple sake his son could gain
 The world's chief prize, which kings had sought in vain.

How could he choose but clutch it? Yet the son
 Seemed worthy, for his parts were of that mould
 Oft-failing Nature strives to join in one,
 And shape a hero, — pure and wise and bold:
 In arts and arms the wonder of his peers,
 The flower of princes, prince of cavaliers;

Tall, lithe of form, and of a Northern mien,
 Gentle in speech and thought, — while thus he shone,
 A rising star, though chosen of a queen,
 Why seek the skies less tranquil than his own?
 Why should he climb beside her perilous height,
 And in that noonday blaze eclipse his light?

Ah, why? — one's own life may be bravely led,
But not another's. Yet, as to and fro
The buzzing private embassies were sped,
And when the Queen's own pages, bowing low,
Told in his ear a sweet and secret story,
The Prince, long trained to seek his house's glory,

Let every gracious sentence seem a plume
Of love and beckoning beauty for his helm.
So passed a season; then the cannon's boom
And belfry's peal delivered to the realm
The Queen's betrothal, and the councils met,
And for the nuptial rites a day was set.

NOW when the time grew ripe, the favored Prince
Rides forth, and through the little towns that mourn
His loss, and past the boundaries; and, since
To ape the pomp to which he was not born
Seemed in his soul a foolish thing and vain,
A few near comrades, only, made his train.

Nor pressed the populace along the ways;
But — for he wished it so — unheralded
He rode from post to post through many days,
Yet gained a greatness as the distance fled,
As some dim comet, drawing near its bound,
Takes lustre from the orb it courses round.

And league by league his fantasies outran
His progress, brooding on his mistress' power,
Until his own estate the while began
To seem of lesser worth each passing hour ;
And with misdoubt this fortune weighed him down,
As though a splendid mantle had been thrown

About him, which he knew not well to wear,
And might not forfeit. Yet he spurred apace,
And reached a country-seat that bordered near
The Capital. Here, for a little space,
He was to rest from travel, and await
His day of entrance at the city's gate.

Upon these grounds a gray-haired noble dwelt,
A ribboned courtier of the former reign ;
A tedious proper man, who glibly knelt
To royalty, — this ancient chamberlain, —
Yoked with a girlish wife, and, for the rest,
Proud of the charge that made a prince his guest.

The highway ran beside a greenwood keep
That reached, herefrom, quite to the city's edge ;
Across, the fields with golden corn were deep ;
The level sunset pierced the wayside hedge ;
The banks were all abloom ; a pheasant whirred
Far in the bush ; anon, some tuneful bird

Broke into song, or, from a covert dark,
A bounding deer its dappled haunches showed
As though it heard the stag-hound's distant bark.
The wistful Prince with loitering purpose bode,
And thought how good it were to spend one's life
Far off from men, nor jostled with their strife.

Even as he mused he saw his host ahead,
 Speeding to welcome him, in lordly wont,
And all the household in a line bestead ;
 And lightly with that escort, at the front,
A peerless woman rode across the green ;
Then the Prince thought, " It surely is the Queen,

Who comes to meet me of her loving grace !"
 And his blood mounted ; but he knew how fair
The royal locks, and, when she neared his place,
 He saw the lady's prodigal dark hair
And wondrous loveliness were wide apart
From the sweet, tranquil picture next his heart.

And when the chamberlain, with halted suit,
 Made reverence, and was answered courteous-wise,
The lady to her knightly guest's salute
 Turned her face full, so that he marked her eyes, —
How dewy gray beneath each long, black lid,
And danger somewhere in their light lay hid.

There are some natures housed so chaste within
 Their placid dwellings that their heads control
The tumult of their hearts ; and thus they win
 A quittance from this pleading of the soul
For Love, whose service does so wound and heal ;
How should they crave for what they cannot feel ?

From passion and from pain enfranchised quite,
 Alike from gain and never-stanch'd Regret,
Calm as the blind who have not seen the light,
 The dumb who hear no precious voice ; and yet
The sun forever pours his lambent fire
And the high winds are vocal with desire.

And there are those whose fervent souls are wed
To glorious bodies, panoplied for love,
Born to hear sweetest words that can be said,
To give and gather kisses, and to move
All men with longing after them, — to know
What flowers of paradise for lovers grow.

The Vestal, with her silvery content,
The Lesbian, with the passion and the pain, —
Which creature hath their one Creator lent
More light of heaven? Who would dare restrain
The beams of either? who the radiance mar
Of the white planet or the burning star?

If in its innocence a life is bound
With cords that thrall its birthright and design,
Let those whose hands the evil meshes wound
Pray that it cast no look beyond their line;
That no strong voice too late may enter in
Its prison-range, to teach what might have been.

Was there no conscious spirit thus to plead
For this bright lady, as the wondering guest
Closed with his welcomers, and each took heed
Of each, and horse to horse they rode abreast,
Nearing a fair and spacious house that stood,
Half hidden, in the edges of the wood?

And while, the last court-tidings running o'er,
Their talk on this and that at random fell,
And the trains joined behind, the lady bore
Her beauteous head askance, yet wist full well
How the Prince looked and spoke; unwittingly,
With the strange female sense and secret eye,

Made of him there her subtile estimate,
 Forecast his lot, and thought how all things flow
 To those who have a surfeit. Could the great,
 The perfect Queen, she marvelled, truly know
 And love him at his value? In his turn,
 He read her face as 't were a marble urn

Embossed with Truth and blushful Innocence,
 Yet with the wild Loves carven in repose ;
 And as he looked he felt, and knew not whence,
 A thought like this come as the wind that blows :
 " A face to lose one's life for ; ay, and more,
 To live for ! " — So they reached the sculptured door

And casements gilded with the dying light.
 That eve the host spread out a stately board,
 And with his household far into the night
 Feasted the Prince. The lady, next her lord,
 Drooped like a musk-rose trained beside a tomb.
 Loath was the guest that night to seek his room.

AH ! wherefore tell again an oft-told tale, —
 That of the sleeping knight who lost his wage
 In the enchanted land, though cased with mail,
 And bore the sacred shrine an empty gage ?
 How this thing went it were not worth to view
 But for the triple coil which thence outgrew ;

How, with the morn, the ancient chamberlain
Made off, and on the marriage business moved ;
How day by day those young hearts fed amain
Upon the food of lovers, till — they loved.
Beneath the mists of duty and degree
A warmth of passion crept deliciously

About the twain ; and there, within the gleam
Of those gray languid eyes, his nearing fate
Seemed to the one a far, unquiet dream.
So when the heralds said, " All things await
Your princely coming," the glad summons broke
Upon him like a harsh bell's jangling stroke,

And waked him, and he knew he must be gone
And put that honeyed chalice quite away ;
Yet once more met the lady, and alone,
It chanced, within the grounds. The two, that day,
Lured by a falling water's sound, went deep
Beyond the sunlight, in the forest-keep.

Here from a range of wooded uplands leapt
A mountain brook and far-off meadows sought ;
Now under firs and tasselled chestnuts crept,
Then on through jagged rocks a passage fought,
Until it clove this shadowy gorge and cool
In one white cataract, — with a dark, broad pool

Beneath, the home of mottled trout. One side
Rose the cliff's hollowed height, and overhung
An open sward across that basin wide.
The liberal sun through slanting larches flung
Rich spots of gold upon the tufted ground,
And the great royal forest gloomed around.

The Prince, divided from the world so far,
Sat with the lady on a fallen tree ;
They looked like lovers, yet a prison-bar
Between them had not made the two less free.
Only their eyes told what they could not say,
For still their lips spoke alien words that day.

She told a legend of an early king
Who knew the fairy of this wildwood glen,
And often sought her haunt, far off to fling
His grandeur, and be loved like common men.
He died long since, the lady said ; but she,
Who could not die, how weary she must be !

They talked of the strange beauty of the spot,
The light that glinted through the ancient trees,
Their own young lives, the Prince's future lot ;
Then jested with false laughs. Like tangled bees,
Each other and themselves they sweetly stung ;
They sung fond songs, and mocked the words they sung.

At last he hung his picture by a chain
About her neck, and on it graved the date.
Her merry eyes grew soft with tender pain ;
She heard him sigh, " Alas, by what rude fate
Our lives, like ships at sea, an instant meet,
Then part forever on their courses fleet ! "

And in sheer pity of herself she dropped
Her lovely head ; and, though with self she strove,
One hot tear fell. The shadow, which had stopped
On her life's dial, moved again, and Love
Went sobbing by, and only left his wraith ;
For both were loyal to their given faith.

Farewells they breathed and self-reproaches found,
 Half gliding with the current to the fall,
 Yet struggling for the shore. Was she not bound?
 Did not his plighted future, like a wall,
 Jut 'cross the stream? They feared themselves, and rose,
 And through the forest gained the mansion-close

Unmissed, and parted thus, nor met anew;
 For on the morrow, when the Prince took horse,
 The lady feigned an illness, or 't was true,—
 Yet maybe from her oriel marked his course,
 Watching his plume, that into distance past,
 Like some dear sail which sinks from sight at last.

He rode beneath their arch, where pennons flared
 And standards with his colors blazoned in.
 Then thousands shouted welcome; trumpets blared;
 He felt the glories of his life begin!
 Far, far behind, that eddy in its stream
 Now seemed; its vanished shores, in turn, a dream.

Enough; he passed the ways and reached the Queen.
 With pomp and pageantry the vows were said
 Leave to the chroniclers the storied scene,
 The church, the court, the masks and jousts that sped;
 Not theirs, but ours, to follow Love apart,
 Where first the bridegroom held his bride to heart,

And saw her purity and regnant worth
 Thus kept for him and yielded to his care.
 What marvel that of all who dwelt on earth
 He seemed most fortunate and she most fair
 That self-same hour? And "By God's grace," he thought,
 "May I to some ignoble end be brought,

“ Unless I so reward her for her choice,
And shape my future conduct in this land
By her deserving, that the world’s great voice
Proclaim me not unworthy ! Let my hand
Henceforward make her tasks its own ; my life
Be merged in this fair ruler, precious wife,

“ The paragon and glory of her kind ! ”
Who reads his own heart will not think it strange
He put that yester romance from his mind
So readily. Men’s lives, like oceans, change
In shifting tides, and ebb from either shore
Till the strong planet draws them on once more.

AND as a pilgrim, shielded by the wings
Of some bright angel, crosses perilous ground,
Through unknown ways, and, while she leads and sings,
Forgets the past, nor sees what pits surround
His footsteps, so the young Prince cast away
That self-distrust, and with his sovereign May

The gladness joined, and with her sat in state,
Beneath the ancient scutcheons of her throne,
And welcome gave, and led the revels late ;
But when the still and midnight heavens shone
They fled the masquers, and the city’s hum
Was silent, and the palace halls grew dumb,

And Love and Sleep in that serene eclipse
Moved, making prince and clown of one degree,
Then was she all his own ; then from her lips
He learned with what a sweet humility
She, whose least word a spacious kingdom ruled,
In Love's free vassalage would fain be schooled.

How poor, she said, her sovereignty seemed,
Unless it made her richer in his eye!
And poor his life, until her sunlight beamed
Upon it, said the Prince. So months went by ;
They were a gracious pair ; the Queen was glad ;
Peace smiled, and the wide land contentment had.

And for a time the courteous welcome paid
The chosen consort, and the people's joy
In the Queen's joy, kept silent those who weighed
The Prince's make, and sought to find alloy
In his fine gold ; but, when the freshness fled
From these things told, some took new thought and said :

“ Look at the Queen : her heart is wholly set
Upon the Prince ! what if he warp her mind
To errant policies, and rule us yet
By proxy ? ” “ What and if he prove the kind
Of trifling gallant,” others said, “ to slight
Our mistress, for each new and base delight ?

“ Ay, we will watch him, lest he do her wrong ! ”
And his due station, even from the first,
The peers of haughty rank and lineage long,
Jealous of one whose blossom at a burst
Outflamed their own, begrudged him ; till their pique
Grew plain, and sent proud color to his cheek.

So now he fared as some new actor fares,
Who through dark arras gains the open boards,
Facing the lights, and feels a thousand stares
Come full upon him ; and the great throng hoards
Its plaudits ; and, as he begins his tale,
His rivals wait to mock him if he fail.

But here a brave simplicity of soul
And careless vigilance, by honor bred,
Stayed him, and o'er his actions held control.
A host of generous virtues stood in stead,
To help him on ; with patient manliness
He kept his rank, no greater and no less ;

His life was as a limpid rivulet ;
His thoughts, like golden sands, were through it seen,
Not on himself in poor ambition set,
But on his chosen country and the Queen ;
And with such gentle tact he bore a sense
Of conduct due, nor took nor gave offence,

That, as time went, he earned their trust, who first
Withheld it him, and brought them, one by one,
To seek him for a comrade ; but he nursed
His friendships with such equal care that none
Could claim him as their own ; nor was his word
Of counsel dulled by being often heard ;

Nor would he sully his fresh youth among
The roisterers and pretty wanton dames
Who strove to win him ; nor with ribald tongue
Joined in the talk that round a palace flames ;
Nor came and went alone, save — 't was his wont
In his own land — he haply left the hunt

On forest days, and, plunging down the wood,
 There in the brakes and copses half forgot
 The part he bore, and caught anew the mood
 Of youth, and felt a heart for any lot ;
 Then, loitering cityward behind the train,
 With fresher courage took his place again.

His pure life made the wits about the court
 Find in its very blamelessness a fault
 That lacked the generous failings of their sort.
 "With so much sweet," they swore, "a grain of salt
 Were welcome ! lighter tongue and freer mood
 Were something more of man, if less of prude !"

And others to his praises would oppose
 Suspicion of his prowess, and they said,
 "Our rose of princes is a thornless rose,
 A woman's toy !" and, when the months were sped,
 And the glad Queen was childed with a son,
 Light jests upon his mission well begun

They bandied ; yet the Prince, who felt the sting,
 Bided his time. Till on the land there brake
 A sudden warfare ; for that haughty king,
 Gathering a mighty armament to take
 Revenge for his lost suit, with sword and flame
 Against the borders on short pretext came.

Then with hot haste the Queen's whole forces poured
 To meet him. With the call to horse and blade
 The Prince, deep-chafed in spirit, placed his sword
 At orders of the General, and prayed
 A humble station, but, as due his rank,
 Next in command was made, and led the flank.

And so with doubtful poise a fierce war raged,
Till on a day encountered face to face
The two chief hosts, and dreadful battle waged
To close the issue. In its opening space
Death smote the General, and in tumult sore
The line sank back ; but swiftly, at the fore

Placing himself, the Prince right onward hurled
The strife once more, and with his battle-shout
Woke victory ; again his forces whirled
The hostile troops, and drove them on in rout.
The strength of ten battalions seemed to yield
Before his arm ; and so he won that field,

And slew with his own hand the vengeful king,
And with that death-stroke brought the war to end,
Conquering the common foe, and conquering
The hate, from which he would not else defend
His clear renown than with such manful deeds
As fall to faith and valor at their needs.

Again — this time the chaplet was his own —
The people wreathed their laurels for his brow ;
His horses trod on flowers ; the city shone
With flags of victory ; and none but now —
As with no vaunting mien he wore his bays —
Confessed him brave as good, and gave their praise.

PEACE smiled anew ; the kingdom was at rest.
 Ah, happy Queen ! whom every matron's tongue
 Ran envious of, with such a consort blest
 As wins the heart of women, old and young ;
 So gallant, yet so good, the gentlest maid
 By this fair standard her own suitor weighed.

I hold the perfect mating of two souls,
 Through wedded love, to be the sum of bliss.
 When Earth, this fruit that ripens as it rolls
 In sunlight, grows more prime, lives will not miss
 Their counterparts, and each shall find its own ;
 But now with what blind chance the lots are thrown !

And because Love sets with a rising tide
 Along the drift where much has gone before
 One holds of worth, — we lavish first, beside,
 Heart, honors, regal gifts, and love the more
 When yielding most, — for this the Queen's love knew
 No slack, but still its current deeper grew.

And because Love is free, and follows not
 On gratitude, nor comes from what is given
 So much as on the giving ; and, I wot,
 Partly because it irks one to have thriven
 At hands which seem the weaker, and should thrive
 While those of him they cling to lift and strive ;

And partly that his marriage seemed a height
 Which raised him from the passions of our kind,
 Nor with his own intent ; and that, despite
 Its clear repose, he somehow longed to find
 The lower world, starve, hunger, and be fed
 With joy and sorrow, sweet and bitter bread, —

For all these things the Prince loved not the Queen
With that sufficiency which alone can take
A rapture in itself and rest serene ;
Yet knew not what his life lacked that should make
It worth to live, — our custom has such art
To dull the craving of the famished heart, —

Perchance had never known it, but a light
Flashed in his path and lit a fiery train
About him ; else, day following day, and night
By night, through years his soul had felt no pain,
No triumph, but had shared the common lull,
Been all it seemed, as blameless, true, and dull.

And yet in one fair woman beauty, youth,
And passion were united, and her love
Was framed about his likeness. Some, forsooth,
May shift their changeful worship as they rove,
Or clowns or princes ; but her fancy slept,
Dreaming upon that picture which she kept,

A secret pain and pleasance. With what strife
Men sought her love she wist not, for the prize
Was not for them. She lived a duteous life.
'T was something thus to let her constant eyes
Feed on his face, to hear his name, — to know
He lived, had walked those paths, had loved her so.

There is a painting of a youthful monk
Who sits within a walled and cloistered nook,
His breviary closed, and listens, sunk
In day-dreams, to a viol, — with a look
Of strange regret fixed on two pairing doves,
Who find their fate and simple natural loves.

Yet bonds of gold, linked hands, and chancel vows,
Even spousal beds, do not a marriage make.
When such things chain the soul that never knows
Love's mating, little vantage shall it take,
Wandering with alien feet throughout the wide,
Hushed temple, over those who pine outside !

So this young wife forecast her horoscope
And found its wedded lines of little worth,
Yet owned not to herself what hopeless hope
Or dumb intent made green her spot of earth.
So passed three changeless years, as such years be ;
At last the old lord died, and left her free,

The mistress of his rank and broad estate,
In honor of her constancy. Then life
Rushed back ; she saw her beauty grown more great,
Ripened as if a summer field were rife
With grain, the harvester neglectful, since
Hers was no mean desire that sought a prince,

Eager to make his birth and bloom her own,
Or reign a wanton favorite. But she thought,
" I might have loved and clung to him alone,
Am fairer than he knew me ; yet, if aught
Of rarity make sweet my hair and lips,
What sweetness hath the honey that none sips ? "

After her time of mourning she grew bold,
And said, " Once let me look upon his face !
The Queen will take no harm if I behold
What all the world can see." She left her place,
And with a kinsman, at a palace rout,
Followed the long line passing in and out

Before the dais. The Prince's eyes and hers
Met like the clouds that lighten. In a breath
Swift memory flamed between them, as, when stirs
No wind, and the dark sky is still as death,
One lance of living fire is hurled across ;
Then comes the whirlwind, and the forests toss !

Yet as she bent her beauteous shoulders down,
And heard the kindly greeting of the Queen,
He spoke such words as one who wears a crown
Speaks, and no more ; and with a low, proud mien
She murmured answer, from the presence past
Lightly, nor any look behind her cast.

In that first glimpse each read the other's heart ;
But not without a summoning of himself
To judgment did the Prince forever part
From truth and fealty. As he pondered, still
With stronger voice Love claimed a debt unpaid,
And youth's hot pulses would not be gainsaid.

She with a fierce, full gladness saw again
Their broken threads of love begin to spin
In one red strand, and let it guide her then,
Whether it led to danger or to sin ;
And shortly, on the morrow, took the road,
And gained her country-seat, and there abode.

The Prince, a bright near morning, mounted horse,
Garbed for the hunt, and left the town, and through
The deep-pathed wood rode on a wayward course,
With a set purpose in him, — though he knew
It not, and let his steed go where it might ;
For this sole thought pursued him since that night : —

“What recompense for me who have not sown
The seed and reaped the harvest of my days?
Youth passes like a bird; but love alone
Makes wealth of riches, power of rank, men’s praise
A goodly sound. Of such things have I aught?
There is a foil to make their substance naught.

“What were his gifts who made each lovely thing,
Yet lacked the gift of love? or what the fame
Of some dwarfed poet, whose numbers still we sing,
If no fair woman trembled where he came?
The beggar dying in ditch is not accurst
If love once crowned him! Fate may do her worst.

“For Age that erst has drawn the wine of love
And filled its birth-cup to the jewelled brim,
And, while it sparkled, held it high above,
And drained it slowly, swiftly, — then, though dim
Grow the blurred eyes, and comfort and desire
Are but the ashes of their ancient fire,

“Yet will it bide its exit in content,
Remembering the past, nor grudge, with hoar
And ravenous look, the youth we have not spent.
No earthly sting has power to harm it more;
It lived and loved, was young, and now is old,
And life is rounded like a ring of gold.”

Thereat with sudden rein the Prince wheeled horse,
And sought a pathway that he long had known
Yet shunned till now. Beside a water-course
It led him for a winding league and lone;
Then made a rugged circuit, — where the brook
Down a steep ledge of rock its plunges took, —

And ended at an open sward, the same
Against whose edge the leaping cataract fell
From those high cliffs. Five years ago he came
To bury youth and love within that dell,
And, as again he reached the spot he sought,
Truth, fame, his child, the Queen, were all as naught.

Dismounting then, he pushed afoot, between
The alder saplings, to the outer wood,
The grounds, the garden-walks, and found, unseen,
A private door, nor tarried till he stood
Within the threshold of my Lady's room, —
A shadowed nook, all stillness and perfume.

Jasmine and briony the lattice climbed,
The rose and honeysuckle trailed above ;
'T was such an hour as poets oft have rhymed,
And such a chamber as all lovers love.
He found her there, and at her footstool knelt.
Each in the other's fancies had so dwelt,

That, as one sees for days a sweet strange face,
Until at night in dreams he does caress
Its owner, and next morning in some place
Meets her, and wonders if she too can guess
How near and known he thinks her, — in this wise
They read one story in each other's eyes.

Her thick hair falling from its lilies hid
Their first long kiss of passion and content.
He heard her soft, glad murmur, as she slid
Within his hold, and 'gainst his bosom leant,
Whispering : " At last ! at last ! the years were sore.*
" Their spite," he said, " shall do us wrong no more !"

What else, when mingled longings swell full-tide,
And the heart's surges leap their bounds for aye,
And fell the landmarks? What but fate defied,
Time clutched, and any future held at bay?
They recked not of the thorn, but seized the flower;
For all the sin, their joy was great that hour.

And since, for all the joy, theirs was a sin
That baned them with one bane; since many men
Had sought her love, but one alone could win
That largess, with his blameless life till then
Inviolate, — they bargained for love's sake
No severance of their covert league to make.

Yet, since nobility compelled them still,
They pledged themselves for honor's sake to hold
This hidden unto death; at either's will
To meet and part in secret; to unfold
In their own hearts their trespass and delight,
Nor look their love, but guard it day or night.

SO fell the blameless Prince. That day more late
Than wont he reached the presence of the Queen,
Deep in a palace chamber, where she sate
Fondling his child. The sunset lit her mien,
And made a saintly glory in her hair;
An awe came on him as he saw her there.

And, because perfect love suspecteth not,
She found no blot upon his brow. 'T was good
To take a pleasure in her wedded lot,
And watch the infant creeping where he stood ;
And, as he bent his head, she little wist
What kisses burned upon the lips she kissed.

And he, still kind and wise in his decline,
Seeing her trustful calm, had little heart
To shake it, So his conduct gave no sign
Of broken faith ; no slurring of his part
Betrayed him to the courtiers or the wife.
Perhaps a second spring-time in his life

Waxed green, and fresh-bloomed love renewed again
The joys that light our youth and leave our prime,
And women found him tenderer, and men
A blither, heartier comrade ; but, meantime,
What hidden gladness made his visage bright
They could not guess ; nor with what craft and sleight

The paramours, in fealty to that Love
Who laughs at locks and walks in hooded guise,
Met here and there, yet made no careless move
Nor bared their strategy to cunning eyes.
And though, a portion of the winter year,
The Queen's own summons brought her rival near

The Prince, among the ladies of her train,
Then, meeting face to face at morn and night,
They were as strangers. If it was a pain
To pass so coldly on, in love's despite,
It was a joy to hear each other's tone,
And keep the life-long secret still their own.

Once having dipped their palms they drank full draught,
And, like the desert-parched, alone at first
Felt the delight of drinking, while they quaffed
As if the waters could not slake their thirst ;
That nicer sense unreached, when down we fling,
And view the oasis around the spring.

And, in that first bewilderment, perchance
The Prince's lapse had caught some peering eye,
But that his long repute, and maintenance
Against each test, had put suspicion by.
Now no one watched or doubted him. So long
His inner strength had made his outwork strong,

So long had smoothed his face, 't was light to take,
From what had been his blamelessness, a mask.
And still, for honor's and the country's sake,
He set his hands to every noble task ;
Held firmly yet his place among the great,
Won by the sword and saviour of the state ;

And as in war, so now in civic peace,
He led the people on to higher things,
And fostered Art and Song, and brought increase
Of Knowledge, gave to Commerce broader wings,
And with his action strengthened fourfold more
The weight his precept in their councils bore.

Then as the mellow years their fruitage brought,
And fair strong children made secure the throne,
He reared them wisely, heedfully ; and sought
Their good, the Queen's desire, and these alone.
Himself so pure, that fathers bade their sons,
" Observe the Prince, who every license shuns ;

“Who, being most brave, is purest !” Wedded wives,
Happy themselves, the Queen still happiest found,
And plighted maids still wished their lovers’ lives
Conformed to his. Such manhood wrapt him round,
So winsome were his grace and knightly look,
The dames at court their lesser spoil forsook,

And wove a net to snare him, and their mood
Grew warmer for his coldness ; and the hearts
Of those most heartless beat with quicker blood,
Foiled of his love ; yet, heedless of their arts,
Courteous to all, he went his way content,
Nor ever from his princely station bent.

“What is this charm,” they asked, “that makes him
chaste

Beyond all men ?” and wist not what they said.
The common folk, — because the Prince had cased
His limbs in silver mail, and on his head
Worn snowy plumes, and, covered thus in white,
Shone in the fiercest turmoil of the fight ;

And mostly for the whiteness of his soul,
Which seemed so virginal and all unblurred, —
They called him the White Prince, and through the whole
True land the name became a household word.
“God save the Queen !” the loyal people sung,
“And the White Prince !” came back from every
tongue.

So passed the stages of a glorious reign.
The Queen in tranquil goodness reached her noon ;
The Prince wore year by year his double chain ;
His mistress kept her secret like the moon,
That hides one half its splendor and its shade ;
And newer times and men their entrance made.

But did these two, who took their secret fill
Of stolen waters, find the greater bliss
They sought? At first, to meet and part at will
Was, for the peril's sake, a happiness ;
Ay, even the sense of guilt made such delights
More worth, as one we call the wisest writes.

But with the later years Time brought about
His famed revenges. Not that love grew cold,
The lady never found a cause to doubt
That with the Prince his passion kept its hold ;
And while their loved are loyal to them yet,
'T is not the wont of women to regret.

Yet 't was her lot to live as one whose wealth
Is in another's name ; to sigh at fate
That hedged her from possession, save by stealth
And trespass on the guileless Queen's estate ;
To see her lover farthest when most near,
Nor dare before the world to make him dear.

To see her perfect beauty but a lure,
That made men list to follow where she went,
And kneel to woo the hand they deemed so pure,
And hunger for her pitying mouth's consent ;
Calling her hard, who was so gently made,
Nor found delight in all their homage paid.

Nor ever yet was woman's life complete
Till at her breast the child of him she loved
Made life and love one name. Though love be sweet,
And passing sweet, till then its growth has proved
In woman's paradise a sterile tree,
Fruitless, though fair its leaves and blossoms be.

Meanwhile the Prince put on his own disguise,
Holding it naught for what it kept secure,
Nor wore it only in his comrades' eyes ;
Beneath this cloak and seeming to be pure
He felt the thing he seemed. For some brief space
His conscience took the reflex of his face.

But lastly through his heart there crept a sense
Of falseness, like a worm about the core,
Until he grew to loathe the long pretence
Of blamelessness, and would the mask he wore
By some swift judgment from his face were torn,
So might the outer quell the inner scorn.

Such self-contempt befell him, when the feast
Rang with his praise, he blushed from nape to crown,
And ground his teeth in silence, yet had ceased
To bear it, crying, "Crush me not quite down,
Who ask your scorn, as viler than you deem
Your vilest, and am nothing that I seem !"

With such a cry his conscience riotous
Had thrown, perchance, the burden on it laid,
But love and pity held his voice ; and thus
The paramours their constant penance made ;
False to themselves, before the world a lie,
Yet each for each had cast the whole world by.

In those transcendent moments, when the fire
Leapt up between them rapturous and bright,
One incompleteness bred a wild desire
To let the rest have token of its light ;
So natural seemed their love, — so hapless, too,
They might not make it glorious to view,

And speak their joy. 'T was all as they had come,
 They two, in some far wildwood wandering mazed,
 Upon a mighty cataract, whose foam
 And splendor ere that time had never dazed
 Men's eyes, nor any hearing save their own
 Could listen to its immemorial moan,

And felt amid their triumph bitter pain
 That only for themselves was spread that sight.
 Oft, when his comrades sang a tender strain,
 And music, talk, and wine, outlasted night,
 Rose in the Prince's throat this sudden tide,
 "And I, — I also know where Love doth hide!"

Yet still the seals were ever on his mouth ;
 No heart, save one, his joy and dole might share.
 Passed on the winter's rain and summer's drouth ;
 Friends more and more, and lovers true, the pair,
 Though life its passion and its youth had spent,
 Still kept their faith as seasons came and went.

ONE final hour, with stammering voice and halt,
 The Prince said : " Dear, for you, — whose only
 gain
 Was in your love that made such long default
 To self, — Heaven deems you sinless ! but a pain
 Is on my soul, and shadow of guilt threefold :
 First, in your fair life, fettered by my hold ;

“Then in the ceaseless wrong I do the Queen,
Who worships me, unknowing ; worse than all,
To wear before the world this painted mien !
See to it : on my head some bolt will fall !
We have sweet memories of the good years past,
Now let this secret league no longer last.”

So of her love and pure unselfishness
She yielded at his word, yet fain would pray
For one more tryst, one day of tenderness,
Where first their lives were mated. Such a day
Found them entwined together, met to part,
Lips pressed to lips, and voiceless grief at heart.

And last the Prince drew off his signet-stone,
And gave it to his mistress, — as he rose
To shut the book of happy moments gone,
For so all earthly pleasures find a close, —
Yet promised, at her time of utmost need
And summons by that token, to take heed

And do her will. “And from this hour,” he said,
“No woman’s kiss save one my lips shall know.”
So left her pale and trembling there, and fled,
Nor looked again, resolved it must be so ;
But somewhere gained his horse, and through the wood
Moved homeward with his thoughts, a phantom brood

That turned the long past over in his mind,
Poising its good and evil, while a haze
Gathered around him, of that sombre kind
Which follows from a place where many days
Have seen us go and come ; and even if sore
Has been our sojourn there, we feel the more

That parting is a sorrow, — though we part
With those who loved us not, or go forlorn
From pain that ate its canker in the heart ;
But when we leave the paths where Love has borne
His garlands to us, Pleasure poured her wine,
Where life was wholly precious and divine,

Then go we forth as exiles. In such wise
The loath, wan Prince his homeward journey made,
Brooding, and marked not with his downcast eyes
The shadow that within the coppice shade
Sank darker still ; but at the horse's gait
Kept slowly on, and rode to meet his fate.

For from the west a silent gathering drew,
And hid the summer sky, and brought swift night
Across that shire, and went devouring through
The strong old forest, stronger in its might.
With the first sudden crash the Prince's steed
Took the long stride, and galloped at good need.

The wild pace tallied with the rider's mood,
And on he spurred, and even now had reached
The storm that charged the borders of the wood,
When one great whirlwind seized an oak which
bleached
Across his path, and felled it ; and its fall
Bore down the Prince beneath it, horse and all.

There lay he as he fell ; but the mad horse
Plunged out in fright, and reared upon his feet,
And for the city struck a headlong course,
With clatter of hoof along the central street,
Nor halted till, thus masterless and late,
Bleeding and torn, he reached the palace-gate.

Then rose a clamor and the tidings spread,
And servitors and burghers thronged about,
Crying, "The Prince's horse! the Prince is dead!"
Till on the courser's track they sallied out,
And came upon the fallen oak, and found
The Prince sore maimed and senseless on the ground.

Then wattleing boughs, they raised him in their hold,
And after that rough litter, and before,
The people went in silence; but there rolled
A fiery vapor from the lights they bore,
Like some red serpent huge along the road.
Even thus they brought him back to his abode.

There the pale Queen fell on him at the porch,
Dabbling her robes in blood, and made ado,
And over all his henchman held a torch,
Until with reverent steps they took him through;
And the doors closed, and midnight from the domes
Was sounded, and the people sought their homes.

But on the morrow, like a dreadful bird,
Flew swift the tidings of this sudden woe,
And reached the Prince's paramour, who heard
Aghast, as one who crieth loud, "The blow
Is fallen! I am the cause!" — as one who saith,
"Now let me die, whose hands have given death!"

So gat her to the town remorsefully,
White with a mortal tremor and the sin
Which sealed her mouth, and waited what might be,
And watched the doors she dared not pass within.
Alas, poor lady! that lone week of fears
Outlived the length of all her former years.

Some days the Prince, upon the skirts of death,
Spake not a word nor heard the Queen's one prayer,
Nor turned his face, nor felt her loving breath,
Nor saw his children when they gathered there,
But rested dumb and motionless ; and so
The Queen grew weak with watching and her woe,

Till from his bed they bore her to her own
A little. In the middle-tide of night,
Thereafter, he awoke with moan on moan,
And saw his death anigh, and said outright,
" I had all things, but love was worth them all !"
Then sped they for the Queen, yet ere the call

Reached her, he cried once more, " Too late ! too late !"

And at those words, before they led her in,
Came the sure dart of him that lay in wait.

The Prince was dead : what goodness and what sin
Died with him were untold. At sunrise fell
Across the capital his solemn knell.

All respite it forbade, and joyance thence,
To one for whom his passion till the last
Wrought in the dying Prince. Her wan suspense
Thus ended, a great fear upon her passed.
" I was the cause !" she moaned from day to day,
" Now let me bear the penance as I may !"

So with her whole estate she sought and gained
A refuge in a nunnery close at view,
And there for months withdrew her, and remained
In tears and prayers. Anon a sickness grew
Upon her, and her face the ghost became
Of what it was, the same and not the same.

SO died the blameless Prince. The spacious land
Was smitten in his death, and such a wail
Arose, as when the midnight angel's hand
Was laid on Egypt. Gossips ceased their tale,
Or whispered of his goodness, and were mute ;
No sound was heard of viol or of lute ;

The streets were hung with black ; the artisan
Forsook his forge ; the artist dropped his brush ;
The tradesmen closed their windows. Man with man
Struck hands together in the first deep hush
Of grief ; or, where the dead Prince lay in state,
Spoke of his life, so blameless, pure, and great.

But when, within the dark cathedral vault,
They joined his ashes to the dust of kings,
No royal pomp was shown ; for Death made halt
Above the palace yet, on dusky wings,
Waiting to gain the Queen, who still was prone
Along the couch where haply she had thrown,

At knowledge of the end, her stricken frame.
With visage pale as in a mortal swound
She stayed, nor slept, nor wept, till, weeping, came
The crown-prince and besought her to look round
And speak unto her children. Then she said :
“ Hereto no grief has fallen on our head ;

“ Now all our earthly portion in one mass
Is loosed against us with this single stroke !
Yet we are Queen, and still must live, — alas ! —
As he would have us.” Even as she spoke
She wept, and mended thence, yet bore the face
Of one whose fate delays but for a space.

Thenceforth she worked and waited till the call
Of Heaven should close the labor and the pause.
Months, seasons passed, yet evermore a pall
Hung round the court. The sorrow and the cause
Were always with her ; after things were tame
Beside the shadow of his deeds and fame.

Her palaces and parks seemed desolate ;
No joy was left in sky or street or field ;
No age, she thought, would see the Prince's mate :
What matchless hand his knightly sword could wield ?
The world had lost, this royal widow said,
Its one bright jewel when the Prince was dead.

So that his fame might be enduring there
For many a reign, and sacred through the land,
She gathered bronze and lazuli, and rare
Sward marbles, while her cunning artists planned
A stately cenotaph, — and bade them place
Above its front the Prince's form and face,

Sculptured, as if in life. But the pale Queen,
Watching the work herself, would somewhat lure
Her heart from plaining ; till, behind a screen,
The tomb was finished, glorious and pure,
Even like the Prince : and they proclaimed a day
When the Queen's hand should draw its veil away.

It chanced, the noon before, she bade them fetch
Her equipage, and with her children rode
Beyond the city walls, across a stretch
Of the green open country, where abode
Her subjects, happy in the field and grange,
And with their griefs, that took a meaner range,

Content. But as her joyless vision dwelt
On beauty that so failed her wound to heal,
She marked the Abbey's ancient pile, and felt
A longing at its chapel-shrine to kneel,
To pray, and think awhile on Heaven, — her one
Sole passion, now the Prince had thither gone.

She reached the gate, and through the vestibule
The nuns, with reverence for the royal sorrow,
Led to the shrine, and left her there to school
Her heart for that sad pageant of the morrow.
O, what deep sighs, what piteous tearful prayers,
What golden grief-blanch'd hair strewn unawares !

Anon her coming through the place was sped,
And when from that lone ecstasy she rose
The saintly Abbess held her steps, and said :
“ God rests those, daughter, who in others' woes
Forget their own ! In yonder corridor
A sister-sufferer lies, and will no more

“ Pass through her door to catch the morning's breath,—
A worldling once, the chamberlain's young wife,
But now a pious novice, meet for death ;
She prays to see your face once more in life.”
“ She, too, is widowed,” thought the Queen. Aloud
She answered, “ I will visit her,” and bowed

Her head, and, following, reached the room where lay
One that had wronged her so ; and shrank to see
That beauteous pallid face, so pined away,
And the starved lips that murmured painfully,
“ I have a secret none but she may hear.”
At the Queen's sign, they two were left anear.

With that the dying rushed upon her speech,
 As one condemned, who gulps the poisoned wine
 Nor pauses, lest to see it stand at reach
 Were crueller still. "Madam, I sought a sign,"
 She cried, "to know if God would have me make
 Confession, and to you ! now let me take

"This meeting as the sign, and speak, and die !"
 "Child," said the Queen, "your years are yet too few.
 See how I live, — and yet what sorrows lie
 About my heart." — "I know, — the world spake true !
 You too have loved him ; ay, he seems to stand
 Between us ! Queen, you had the Prince's hand,

"But not his love !" Across the good Queen's brow
 A flame of anger reddened, as when one
 Meets unprepared a swift and ruthless blow,
 But instant paled to pity, as she thought,
 "She wanders : 't is the fever at her brain !"
 And looked her thought. The other cried again :

"Yes ! I am ill of body and soul indeed,
 Yet this was as I say. O, not for me
 Pity, from you who wear the widow's weed,
 Unknowing !" — "Woman, whose could that love be,
 If not all mine ?" The other, with a moan,
 Rose in her bed ; the pillow, backward thrown,

Was darkened with the torrent of her hair.

"'T was hers," she wailed, — "'t was hers who loved
 him best."

Then tore apart her night-robe, and laid bare

Her flesh, and lo ! against her poor white breast
 Close round her gloomed a shift of blackest serge,
 Fearful, concealed ! — "I might not sing his dirge,"

She said, "nor moan aloud and bring him shame,
Nor haunt his tomb and cling about the grate,
But this I fashioned when the tidings came
That he was dead and I must expiate,
Being left, our double sin!" — In the Queen's heart,
The tiger — that is prisoned at life's start

In mortals, though perchance it never wakes
From its mute sleep — began to rouse and crawl.
Her lips grew white, and on her nostrils flakes
Of wrath and loathing stood. "What, now, is all
This wicked drivell?" she cried; "how dare they bring
The Queen to listen to so foul a thing?"

"Queen! I speak truth, — the truth, I say! He fed
Upon these lips, — this hair he loved to praise!
I held within these arms his bright fair head
Pressed close, ah, close! — Our lifetimes were the days
We met, — the rest a void!" — "Thou spectral Sin,
Be silent! or, if such a thing hath been, —

"If this be not thy frenzy, — quick, the proof,
Before I score the lie thy lips amid!"
She spoke so dread the other crouched aloof,
Panting, but with gaunt hands somewhere undid
A knot within her hair, and thence she took
The signet-ring and passed it. The Queen's look

Fell on it, and that moment the strong stay,
Which held her from the instinct of her wrong,
Broke, and therewith the whole device gave way,
The grand ideal she had watched so long:
As if a tower should fall, and on the plain
Only a scathed and broken pile remain.

But in its stead she would not measure yet
 The counter-chance, nor deem this sole attain
 Made the Prince less than one in whom 't was set
 To prove him man. "I held him as a saint,"
 She thought, "no other: — of all men alone
 My blameless one! Too high my faith had flown:

"So be it!" With a sudden bitter scorn
 She said: "You were his plaything, then! the food
 Wherewith he dulled what appetite is born,
 Of the gross kind, in men. His nobler mood
 You knew not! How, shall I, — the fountain life
 Of yonder children, — his embosomed wife

"Through all these years, — shall I, his Queen, for this
 Sin-smitten harlot's gage of an hour's shame,
 Misdoubt him?" — "Yes, I was his harlot, — yes,
 God help me! and had worn the loathly name
 Before the world, to have him in that guise!"
 "Thou strumpet! wilt thou have me of his prize

"Rob Satan?" cried the Queen, and one step moved.
 "Queen, if you loved him, save me from your bane,
 As something that was dear to him you loved!"
 Then from beneath her serge she took the chain
 Which, long ago in that lone wood, the Prince
 Hung round her, — she had never loosed it since, —

And gave therewith the face which, in its years
 Of youthful, sunniest grace, a limner drew;
 And unsigned letters, darkened with her tears,
 Writ in the hand that hapless sovereign knew
 Too well; — then told the whole, strange, secret tale,
 As if with Heaven that penance could avail,

Or with the Queen, who heard as idols list
The mad priest's cry, nor changed her place nor
moaned,
But, clutching those mute tokens of each tryst,
Hid them about her. But the other groaned :
"The picture, — let me see it ere I die, —
Then take them all ! once, only !" — At that cry

The Queen strode forward with an awful stride,
And seized the dying one, and bore her down,
And rose her height, and said, "Thou shouldst have died
Ere telling this, nor I have worn a crown
To hear it told. I am of God accurst !
Of all his hated, may he smite thee first !"

With that wild speech she fled, nor looked behind,
Hasting to get her from that fearful room,
Past the meek nuns in wait. These did not find
The sick one's eyes — yet staring through the gloom,
While her hands fumbled at her heart, and Death
Made her limbs quake, and combated her breath —

More dreadful than the Queen's look, as she thence
Made through the court, and reached her own array
She knew not how, and clamored, "Bear me hence !"
And, even as her chariot moved away,
High o'er the Abbey heard the minster toll
Its doleful bell, as for a passing soul.

Though midst her guardsmen, as they speeded back,
The wont of royalty maintained her still,
Where grief had been were ruin now and rack !
The firm earth reeled about, nor could her will
Make it seem stable, while her soul went through
Her wedded years in desperate review.

The air seemed full of lies ; the realm, unsound ;
 Her courtiers, knaves ; her maidens, good and fair,
 Most shameless bawds ; her children clung around
 Like asps, to sting her ; from the kingdom's heir,
 Shuddering, she turned her face, — his features took
 A shining horror from his father's look.

Along her city streets the thrifty crowd,
 As the Queen passed, their loving reverence made.
 " 'T is false ! they love me not ! " she cried aloud ;
 So flung her from her chariot, and forbade
 All words, but waved her ladies back, and gained
 Her inmost room, and by herself remained.

" We have been alone these years, and knew it not,"
 She said ; " now let us on the knowledge thrive ! "
 So closed the doors, and all things else forgot
 Than her own misery. " I cannot live
 And bear this death," she said, " nor die, the more
 To meet him, — and that woman gone before ! "

Thus with herself she writhed, while midnight gloomed,
 As lone as any outcast of us all ;
 And once, without a purpose, as the doomed
 Stare round and count the shadows on the wall,
 Unclasped a poet's book which near her lay,
 And turned its pages in that witless way,

And read the song, some wise, sad man had made,
 With bitter frost about his doubting heart.
 " What is this life," it plained, " what masquerade
 Of which ye all are witnesses and part ?
 ' T is but a foolish, smiling face to wear
 Above your mortal sorrow, chill despair ;

“ To mock your comrades and yourselves with mirth
That feeds the care ye cannot drive away ;
To vaunt of health, yet hide beneath the girth
Impuissance, fell sickness, slow decay ;
To cloak defeat, and with the rich, the great,
Applaud their fairer fortunes as their mate ;

“ To brave the sudden woe, the secret loss,
Though but to-morrow brings the open shame ;
To pay the tribute of your caste, and toss
Your last to him that 's richer save in name ;
To judge your peers, and give the doleful meed
To crime that 's white beside your hidden deed ;

“ To whisper love, where of true love is none, —
Desire, where lust is dead ; to live unchaste,
And wear the priestly cincture ; — last, to own,
When the morn's dream is gone and noontide waste,
Some fate still kept ye from your purpose sweet,
Down strange, circuitous paths it drew your feet ! ”

Thus far she read, and, “ Let me read no more, ”
She clamored, “ since the scales have left mine eyes
And freed the dreadful gift I lacked before !
We are but puppets, in whatever guise
They clothe us, to whatever tune we move ;
Albeit we prate of duty, dream of love.

“ Let me, too, play the common part, and wean
My life from hope, and look beneath the mask
To read the masker ! I, who was a Queen,
And like a hireling thought to 'scape my task !
For some few seasons left this heart is schooled :
Yet, — had it been a little longer fooled, —

“O God!” And from her seat she bowed her down.

The gentle sovereign of that spacious land
Lay prone beneath the bauble of her crown,
Nor heard all night her whispering ladies stand
Outside the portal. Greatly, in the morn,
They marvelled at her visage wan and worn.

BUT when the sun was high, the populace
By every gateway filled the roads, and sought
The martial plain, within whose central space
That wonder of the Prince's tomb was wrought.
Thereto from out the nearer land there passed
The mingled folk, an eager throng and vast ;

Knights, commons, men and women, young and old,
The present and the promise of the realm.
Anon the coming of the Queen was told,
And mounted guards, with sable plumes at helm,
Made through the middle, like a reaper's swath,
A straight, wide roadway for the sovereign's path.

Then rose the murmurous sound of her advance,
And, with the crown-prince, and her other brood
Led close behind, she came. Her countenance
Moved not to right nor left, until she stood
Before the tomb ; yet those, who took the breath
That clothed her progress, felt a waft of death.

O noble martyr ! queenliest intent !
Strong human soul, that holds to pride through all !
Ah me ! with what fierce heavings in them pent
The brave complete their work, whate'er befall !
Upon her front the people only read
Pale grief that clung forever to the dead.

How should they know she trod the royal stand,
And took within her hold the silken line,
As, while the headsman waits, one lays her hand
Upon the scarf that slays her by a sign ?
With one great pang she drew the veil, and lo !
The work was dazzling in the noonday glow.

There shone the Prince's image, golden, high,
Installed forever in the people's sight.
" Alas ! " they cried, " too good, too fair to die ! "
But at the foot the Queen had bid them write
Her consort's goodness, and his glory-roll,
Yet knew not they had carved upon the scroll

That last assurance of his stainless heart, —
Forsuch they deemed his words who heard them fall, —
" *Of all great things this Prince achieved his part,
Yet wedded Love to him was worth them all.* "
Thus read the Queen : till now, her injured soul
Of its forlornness had not felt the whole.

Now all her heart was broken. There she fell,
And to the skies her lofty spirit fled.
The wrong of those mute words had smitten well.
A cry went up : " The Queen ! the Queen is dead !
O regal heart that would not reign alone !
O fatal sorrow ! O the empty throne ! "

Her people made her beauteous relics room
Within the chamber where her consort slept.
There rest they side by side. Around the tomb
A thousand matrons solemn vigil kept.
Long ages told the story of her reign,
And sang the nuptial love that had no stain.





MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.





"Blue rollers breaking in surf where we stand." Page 237.



I.

SONGS AND STUDIES.



SURF.

SPLENDORS of morning the billow-crests brighten,
Lighting and luring them on to the land, —
Far-away waves where the wan vessels whiten,
Blue rollers breaking in surf where we stand.
Curved like the necks of a legion of horses,
Each with his froth-gilded mane flowing free,
Hither they speed in perpetual courses,
Bearing thy riches, O beautiful sea !

Strong with the striving of yesterday's surges,
Lashed by the wanton winds leagues from the shore,
Each, driven fast by its follower, urges
Fearlessly those that are fleeting before ;
How they leap over the ridges we walk on,
Flinging us gifts from the depths of the sea, —
Silvery fish for the foam-haunting falcon,
Palm-weed and pearls for my darling and me !

Light falls her foot where the rift follows after,
 Finer her hair than your feathery spray,
 Sweeter her voice than your infinite laughter, —
 Hist ! ye wild couriers, list to my lay !
 Deep in the chambers of grottos auroral
 Morn laves her jewels and bends her red knee :
 Thence to my dear one your amber and coral
 Bring for her dowry, O beautiful sea !

TOUJOURS AMOUR.

PRITHEE tell me, Dimple-Chin,
 At what age does Love begin ?
 Your blue eyes have scarcely seen
 Summers three, my fairy queen,
 But a miracle of sweets,
 Soft approaches, sly retreats,
 Show the little archer there,
 Hidden in your pretty hair ;
 When didst learn a heart to win ?
 Prithee tell me, Dimple-Chin !

“ Oh ! ” the rosy lips reply,
 “ I can't tell you if I try.
 'T is so long I can't remember :
 Ask some younger lass than I ! ”

Tell, O tell me, Grizzled-Face,
 Do your heart and head keep pace ?
 When does hoary Love expire,
 When do frosts put out the fire ?
 Can its embers burn below
 All that chill December snow ?

Care you still soft hands to press,
 Bonny heads to smooth and bless?
 When does Love give up the chase?
 Tell, O tell me, Grizzled-Face!

“Ah!” the wise old lips reply,
 “Youth may pass and strength may die;
 But of Love I can't foretoken:
 Ask some older sage than I!”

LAURA, MY DARLING.

L AURA, my darling, the roses have blushed
 At the kiss of the dew, and our chamber is hushed;
 Our murmuring babe to your bosom has clung,
 And hears in his slumber the song that you sung;
 I watch you asleep with your arms round him thrown,
 Your links of dark tresses wound in with his own,
 And the wife is as dear as the gentle young bride
 Of the hour when you first, darling, came to my side.

Laura, my darling, our sail down the stream
 Of Youth's summers and winters has been like a dream;
 Years have but rounded your womanly grace,
 And added their spell to the light of your face;
 Your soul is the same as though part were not given
 To the two, like yourself, sent to bless me from heaven,—
 Dear lives, springing forth from the life of my life,
 To make you more near, darling, mother and wife!

Laura, my darling, there 's hazel-eyed Fred,
 Asleep in his own tiny cot by the bed,

And little King Arthur, whose curls have the art
Of winding their tendrils so close round my heart ;
Yet fairer than either, and dearer than both,
Is the true one who gave me in girlhood her troth :
For we, when we mated for evil and good, —
What were we, darling, but babes in the wood ?

Laura, my darling, the years which have flown
Brought few of the prizes I pledged to my own.
I said that no sorrow should roughen her way, —
Her life should be cloudless, a long summer's day.
Shadow and sunshine, thistles and flowers,
Which of the two, darling, most have been ours ?
Yet to-night, by the smile on your lips, I can see
You are dreaming of me, darling, dreaming of me.

Laura, my darling, the stars, that we knew
In our youth, are still shining as tender and true ;
The midnight is sounding its slumberous bell,
And I come to the one who has loved me so well.
Wake, darling, wake, for my vigil is done :
What shall dissever our lives which are one ?
Say, while the rose listens under her breath,
"Naught until death, darling, naught until death !"

THE TRYST.

SLEEPING, I dreamed that thou wast mine,
In some ambrosial lovers' shrine.
My lips against thy lips were pressed,
And all our passion was confessed ;
So near and dear my darling seemed,
I knew not that I only dreamed.

Waking, this mid and moonlit night,
 I clasp thee close by lover's right.
 Thou fearest not my warm embrace,
 And yet, so like the dream thy face
 And kisses, I but half partake
 The joy, and know not if I wake.

VIOLET EYES.

ONE can never quite forget
 Eyes like yours, May Margaret,
 Eyes of dewy violet !
 Nothing like them, Margaret,
 Save the blossoms newly born
 Of the May and of the Morn.

Oft my memory wanders back
 To those burning eyes and black,
 Whose heat-lightnings once could move
 Me to passion, not to love ;
 Longer in my heart of hearts
 Linger those disguiséd arts,
 Which, betimes, a hazel pair
 Used upon me unaware ;
 And the wise and tender gray —
 Eyes wherewith a saint might pray —
 Speak of pledges that endure
 And of faith and vigils pure ;
 But for him who fain would know
 All the fire the first can show,
 All the art, or friendship fast,
 Of the second and the last, —

And would gain a subtler worth,
 Part of Heaven, part of Earth, —
 He these mingled rays can find
 In but one immortal kind :
 In those eyes of violet,
 In *your* eyes, May Margaret !

THE DOORSTEP.

THE conference-meeting through at last,
 We boys around the vestry waited
 To see the girls come tripping past
 Like snow-birds willing to be mated.

Not braver he that leaps the wall
 By level musket-flashes litten,
 Than I, that stepped before them all
 Who longed to see me get the mitten.

But no, she blushed and took my arm !
 We let the old folks have the highway,
 And started toward the Maple Farm
 Along a kind of lovers' by-way.

I can't remember what we said,
 'T was nothing worth a song or story ;
 Yet that rude path by which we sped
 Seemed all transformed and in a glory.

The snow was crisp beneath our feet,
 The moon was full, the fields were gleaming ;
 By hood and tippet sheltered sweet,
 Her face with youth and health was beaming.

The little hand outside her muff, —
O sculptor, if you could but mould it! —
So lightly touched my jacket-cuff,
To keep it warm I had to hold it.

To have her with me there alone, —
'T was love and fear and triumph blended.
At last we reached the foot-worn stone
Where that delicious journey ended.

The old folks, too, were almost home ;
Her dimpled hand the latches fingered,
We heard the voices nearer come,
Yet on the doorstep still we lingered.

She shook her ringlets from her hood
And with a "Thank you, Ned," dissembled,
But yet I knew she understood
With what a daring wish I trembled.

A cloud passed kindly overhead,
The moon was slyly peeping through it,
Yet hid its face, as if it said,
"Come, now or never ! do it ! *do it!*"

My lips till then had only known
The kiss of mother and of sister,
But somehow, full upon her own
Sweet, rosy, darling mouth, — I kissed her !

Perhaps 't was boyish love, yet still,
O listless woman, weary lover !
To feel once more that fresh, wild thrill
I 'd give — but who can live youth over ?

FUIT ILIUM.

ONE by one they died, —
 Last of all their race ;
 Nothing left but pride,
 Lace, and buckled hose.
 Their quietus made,
 On their dwelling-place
 Ruthless hands are laid :
 Down the old house goes !

See the ancient manse
 Meet its fate at last !
 Time, in his advance,
 Age nor honor knows ;
 Axe and broadaxe fall,
 Lopping off the Past :
 Hit with bar and maul,
 Down the old house goes !

Sevenscore years it stood :
 Yes, they built it well,
 Though they built of wood,
 When that house arose.
 For its cross-beams square
 Oak and walnut fell ;
 Little worse for wear,
 Down the old house goes !

Rending board and plank,
 Men with crowbars ply,
 Opening fissures dank,
 Striking deadly blows.

From the gabled roof
How the shingles fly !
Keep you here aloof, —
Down the old house goes !

Holding still its place,
There the chimney stands,
Stanch from top to base,
Frowning on its foes.
Heave apart the stones,
Burst its iron bands !
How it shakes and groans !
Down the old house goes !

Round the mantel-piece
Glisten Scripture tiles ;
Henceforth they shall cease
Painting Egypt's woes,
Painting David's fight,
Fair Bathsheba's smiles,
Blinded Samson's might, —
Down the old house goes !

On these oaken floors
High-shoed ladies trod ;
Through those panelled doors
Trailed their furbelows :
Long their day has ceased ;
Now, beneath the sod,
With the worms they feast, —
Down the old house goes !

Many a bride has stood
In yon spacious room ;

Here her hand was wooed
 Underneath the rose ;
O'er that sill the dead
 Reached the family tomb :
All, that were, have fled, —
 Down the old house goes !

Once, in yonder hall,
 Washington, they say,
Led the New-Year's ball,
 Stateliest of beaux.
O that minuet,
 Maids and matrons gay !
Are there such sights yet ?
 Down the old house goes !

British troopers came
 Ere another year,
With their coats aflame,
 Mincing on their toes ;
Daughters of the house
 Gave them haughty cheer,
Laughed to scorn their vows, —
 Down the old house goes !

Doorway high the box
 In the grass-plot spreads ;
It has borne its locks
 Through a thousand snows ;
In an evil day,
 From those garden-beds
Now 't is hacked away, —
 Down the old house goes !

Lo ! the sycamores,
 Scathed and scrawny mates,
 At the mansion doors
 Shiver, full of woes ;
 With its life they grew,
 Guarded well its gates ;
 Now their task is through, —
 Down the old house goes !

On this honored site
 Modern trade will build, —
 What unseemly fright
 Heaven only knows !
 Something peaked and high,
 Smacking of the guild :
 Let us heave a sigh, —
 Down the old house goes !

COUNTRY SLEIGHING.

A NEW SONG TO AN OLD TUNE.

I N January, when down the dairy
 The cream and clabber freeze,
 When snow-drifts cover the fences over,
 We farmers take our ease.
 At night we rig the team,
 And bring the cutter out ;
 Then fill it, fill it, fill it, fill it,
 And heap the furs about.

Here friends and cousins dash up by dozens,
And sleighs at least a score ;
There John and Molly, behind, are jolly, —
Nell rides with me, before.
All down the village street
We range us in a row :
Now jingle, jingle, jingle, jingle,
And over the crispy snow !

The windows glisten, the old folks listen
To hear the sleigh-bells pass ;
The fields grow whiter, the stars are brighter,
The road is smooth as glass.
Our muffled faces burn,
The clear north-wind blows cold,
The girls all nestle, nestle, nestle,
Each in her lover's hold.

Through bridge and gateway we're shooting straightway,
Their tollman was too slow !
He'll listen after our song and laughter
As over the hill we go.
The girls cry, " Fie ! for shame !"
Their cheeks and lips are red,
And so, with kisses, kisses, kisses,
They take the toll instead.

Still follow, follow ! across the hollow
The tavern fronts the road.
Whoa, now ! all steady ! the host is ready, —
He knows the country mode !
The irons are in the fire,
The hissing flip is got ;
So pour and sip it, sip it, sip it,
And sip it while 't is hot.

Push back the tables, and from the stables
Bring Tom, the fiddler, in ;
All take your places, and make your graces,
And let the dance begin.
The girls are beating time
To hear the music sound ;
Now foot it, foot it, foot it, foot it,
And swing your partners round.

Last couple toward the left ! all forward !
Cotillons through, let 's wheel :
First tune the fiddle, then down the middle
In old Virginia Reel.
Play Money Musk to close,
Then take the " long chassé,"
While in to supper, supper, supper,
The landlord leads the way.

The bells are ringing, the ostlers bringing
The cutters up anew ;
The beasts are neighing ; too long we 're staying,
The night is half-way through.
Wrap close the buffalo-ropes,
We 're all aboard once more ;
Now jingle, jingle, jingle, jingle,
Away from the tavern-door

So follow, follow, by hill and hollow,
And swiftly homeward glide.
What midnight splendor ! how warm and tender
The maiden by your side !
The sleighs drop far apart,
Her words are soft and low ;
Now, if you love her, love her, love her,
'T is safe to tell her so.

PAN IN WALL STREET.

A. D. 1867.

JUST where the Treasury's marble front
 Looks over Wall Street's mingled nations ;
 Where Jews and Gentiles most are wont
 To throng for trade and last quotations ;
 Where, hour by hour, the rates of gold
 Outrival, in the ears of people,
 The quarter-chimes, serenely tolled
 From Trinity's undaunted steeple, —

Even there I heard a strange, wild strain
 Sound high above the modern clamor,
 Above the cries of greed and gain,
 The curbstone war, the auction's hammer ;
 And swift, on Music's misty ways,
 It led, from all this strife for millions,
 To ancient, sweet-do-nothing days
 Among the kirtle-robed Sicilians.

And as it stilled the multitude,
 And yet more joyous rose, and shriller,
 I saw the minstrel, where he stood
 At ease against a Doric pillar :
 One hand a droning organ played,
 The other held a Pan's-pipe (fashioned
 Like those of old) to lips that made
 The reeds give out that strain impassioned.

'T was Pan himself had wandered here
 A-strolling through this sordid city,
 And piping to the civic ear
 The prelude of some pastoral ditty!
 The demigod had crossed the seas, —
 From haunts of shepherd, nymph, and satyr,
 And Syracusan times, — to these
 Far shores and twenty centuries later.

A ragged cap was on his head ;
 But — hidden thus — there was no doubting
 That, all with crispy locks o'erspread,
 His gnarléd horns were somewhere sprouting ;
 His club-feet, cased in rusty shoes,
 Were crossed, as on some frieze you see them,
 And trousers, patched of divers hues,
 Concealed his crooked shanks beneath them.

He filled the quivering reeds with sound,
 And o'er his mouth their changes shifted,
 And with his goat's-eyes looked around
 Where'er the passing current drifted ;
 And soon, as on Trinacrian hills
 The nymphs and herdsmen ran to hear him,
 Even now the tradesmen from their tills,
 With clerks and porters, crowded near him.

The bulls and bears together drew
 From Jauncey Court and New Street Alley,
 As erst, if pastorals be true,
 Came beasts from every wooded valley ;
 The random passers stayed to list, —
 A boxer Ægon, rough and merry,
 A Broadway Daphnis, on his tryst
 With Nais at the Brooklyn Ferry.

A one-eyed Cyclops halted long
 In tattered cloak of army pattern,
 And Galatea joined the throng, —
 A blowsy, apple-vending slattern ;
 While old Silenus staggered out
 From some new-fangled lunch-house handy,
 And bade the piper, with a shout,
 To strike up Yankee Doodle Dandy !

A newsboy and a peanut-girl
 Like little Fauns began to caper :
 His hair was all in tangled curl,
 Her tawny legs were bare and taper ;
 And still the gathering larger grew,
 And gave its pence and crowded nigher,
 While aye the shepherd-minstrel blew
 His pipe, and struck the gamut higher.

O heart of Nature, beating still
 With throbs her vernal passion taught her, —
 Even here, as on the vine-clad hill,
 Or by the Arethusan water !
 New forms may fold the speech, new lands
 Arise within these ocean-portals,
 But Music waves eternal wands, —
 Enchantress of the souls of mortals !

So thought I, — but among us trod
 A man in blue, with legal baton,
 And scoffed the vagrant demigod,
 And pushed him from the step I sat on.
 Doubting I mused upon the cry,
 “ Great Pan is dead ! ” — and all the people
 Went on their ways : — and clear and high
 The quarter sounded from the steeple.

ANONYMA.

HER CONFESSION.

I F I had been a rich man's girl,
 With my tawny hair, and this wanton art
 Of lifting my eyes in the evening whirl
 And looking into another's heart;
 Had love been mine at birth, and friends
 Caressing and guarding me night and day,
 With doctors to watch my finger-ends,
 And a parson to teach me how to pray;

If I had been reared as others have, —
 With but a tith of these looks, which came
 From my reckless mother, now in her grave,
 And the father who grudged me even his name, —
 Why, I should have station and tender care,
 Should ruin men in the high-bred way,
 Passionless, smiling at their despair,
 And marrying where my vantage lay.

As it is, I must have love and dress,
 Jewelled trinkets, and costly food,
 For I was born for plenteousness,
 Music and flowers, and all things good.
 To that same father I owe some thanks,
 Seeing, at least, that blood will tell,
 And keep me ever above the ranks
 Of those who wallow where they fell.

True, there are weary, weary days
 In the great hotel where I make my lair,
 Where I meet the men with their brutal praise,
 Or answer the women, stare for stare.
 'T is an even fight, and I 'll carry it through, —
 Pit them against me, great and small :
 I grant no quarter, nor would I sue
 For grace to the softest of them all.

I cannot remember half the men
 Whose sin has tangled them in my toils, —
 All are alike before me then,
 Part of my easily conquered spoils :
 Tall or short, and dark or fair,
 Rich or famous, haughty or fond,
 There are few, I find, who will not forswear
 The lover's oath and the wedding bond.

Fools ! what is it that drives them on
 With their perjured lips on poison fed ;
 Vain of themselves, and cruel as stone,
 How should they be so cheaply led ?
 Surely they know me as I am, —
 Only a cuckoo, at the best,
 Watching, careless of hate and shame,
 To crouch myself in another's nest.

But the women, — how they flutter and flout,
 The stupid, terribly virtuous wives,
 If I but chance to move about
 Or enter within their bustling hives !
 Buz ! buz ! in the scandalous gatherings,
 When a strange queen lights amid their throng,
 And their tongues have a thousand angry stings
 To send her travelling, right or wrong.

Well, the earth is wide and open to all,
And money and men are everywhere,
And, as I roam, 't will ill befall
If I do not gain my lawful share :
One drops off, but another will come
With as light a head and heavy a purse ;
So long as I have the world for a home,
I'll take my fortune, better or worse !

SPOKEN AT SEA.

THE LOG-BOOK OF THE STEAMSHIP VIRGINIA.

TWELVE hundred miles and more
From the stormy English shore,
All aright, the seventh night,
On her course our vessel bore.
Her lantern shone ahead,
And the green lamp and the red
To starboard and to larboard
Shot their light.

Close on the midnight call
What a mist began to fall,
And to hide the ocean wide,
And to wrap us in a pall !
Beneath its folds we past :
Hidden were shroud and mast,
And faces, in near places
Side by side.

Sudden there also fell
 A summons like a knell :
 Every ear the words could hear, —
 Whence spoken, who could tell ?
 “What ship is this ? where bound ?”
 Gods, what a dismal sound !
 A stranger, and in danger,
 Sailing near.

“The Virginia, on her route
 From the Mersey, seven days out ;
 Fore and aft, our trusty craft
 Carries a thousand souls, about.”
 “All these souls may travel still,
 Westward bound, if so they will ;
 Bodies rather, I would gather !”
 Loud he laughed.

“Who is ’t that hails so rude,
 And for what this idle mood ?
 Words like these, on midnight seas,
 Bode no friend nor fortune good !”
 “Care not to know my name,
 But whence I lastly came,
 At leisure, for my pleasure,
 Ask the breeze.

“To the people of your port
 Bear a message of this sort :
 Say, I haste unto the West,
 A sharer of their sport.
 Let them sweep the houses clean :
 Their fathers did, I ween,
 When hearing of my nearing
 As a guest !

"As by Halifax ye sail
 And the steamship England hail,
 Of me, then, bespeak her men ;
 She took my latest mail, —
 'T was somewhere near this spot :
 Doubtless they 've not forgot.
 Remind them (if you find them !)
 Once again.

"Yet that you all may know
 Who is 't that hailed you so,
 (Slow he saith, and under breath,)
 I leave my sign below !"
 Then from our crowded hold
 A dreadful cry uprolled,
 Unbroken, and the token, —
 It was Death.

THE DUKE'S EXEQUY.

ARRAS, A. D. 1404.

CLOTHED in sable, crowned with gold,
 All his wars and councils ended,
 Philip lay, surnamed The Bold :
 Passing-bell his quittance tolled,
 And the chant of priests ascended.

Mailéd knights and archers stand,
 Thronging in the church of Arras ;
 Nevermore at his command
 Shall they scour the Netherland,
 Nevermore the outlaws harass ;

Naught is left of his array
Save a barren territory ;
Forty years of generous sway
Sped his princely hoards away,
Bartered all his gold for glory.

Forth steps Flemish Margaret then,
Striding toward the silent ashes ;
And the eyes of arméd men
Fill with startled wonder, when
On the bier her girdle clashes !

Swift she drew it from her waist,
And the purse and keys it carried
On the ducal coffin placed ;
Then with proud demeanor faced
Sword and shield of him she married.

“ No encumbrance of the dead
Must the living clog forever ;
From thy debts and dues,” she said,
“ From the liens of thy bed,
We this day our line dissever.

“ From thy hand we gain release,
Know all present by this token !
Let the dead repose in peace,
Let the claims upon us cease
When the ties that bound are broken.

“ Philip, we have loved thee long,
But, in years of future splendor,
Burgundy shall count among
Bravest deeds of tale and song
This, our widowhood’s surrender.”

Back the stately Duchess turned,
 While the priests and friars chanted,
 And the swinging incense burned :
 Thus by feudal rite was earned
 Greatness for a race undaunted.

THE HILLSIDE DOOR.

SOMETIMES within my hand
 A Spirit puts the silver key
 Of Fairyland :
 From the dark, barren heath he beckons me,
 Till by that hidden hillside door,
 Where bards have passed before,
 I seem to stand.

The portal opens wide :
 In, through the wondrous, lighted halls,
 Voiceless I glide
 Where tinkling music magically falls,
 And fair in fountained gardens move
 The heroes, blest with love
 And glorified.

Then by the meadows green,
 Down winding walks of elf and fay,
 I pass unseen :
 There rest the valiant chieftains wreathed with bay ;
 Here maidens to their lovers cling,
 And happy minstrels sing,
 Praising their queen.

For where yon pillars are,
 And birds with tuneful voices call,
 There shines a star, —
 The crown she wears, the Fairy Queen of all !
 Led to that inmost, wooded haunt
 By maidens ministrant,
 I halt afar.

O joy ! she sees me stand
 Doubting, and calls me near her throne,
 And waves her wand,
 As in my dreams, and smiles on me alone.
 O royal beauty, proud and sweet !
 I bow me at her feet
 To kiss that hand :

Ah woe ! ah, fate malign !
 By what a rude, revengeful gust,
 From that fair shrine
 Which holds my sovran mistress I am thrust !
 Then comes a mocking voice's taunt,
 Crying, *Thou fool, avaunt !*
 She is not thine !

And I am backward borne
 By unseen awful hands, and cast,
 In utter scorn,
 Forth from that brightness to the midnight blast :
 Not mine the minstrel-lover's wreath,
 But the dark, barren heath,
 And heart forlorn.

AT TWILIGHT.

THE sunset darkens in the west,
The sea-gulls haunt the bay,
And far and high the swallows fly
To watch the dying day.
Now where is she that once with me
The rippling waves would list ?
And O for the song I loved so long,
And the darling lips I kist !

Yon twinkling sail may whiter gleam
Than falcon's snowy wing,
Her lances far the evening-star
Beyond the waves may fling ;
Float on, ah float, enchanted boat,
Bear true hearts o'er the main,
But I shall guide thy helm no more,
Nor whisper love again !





II.

POEMS OF NATURE.



WOODS AND WATERS.

“O ye valleys! O ye mountains!
O ye groves and crystal fountains!
How I love at liberty,
By turns, to come and visit ye!”

COME, let us burst the cerements and the shroud,
And with the livelong year renew our breath,
Far from the darkness of the city's cloud
Which hangs above us like the pall of Death.
Haste, let us leave the shadow of his wings!
Off from our cares, a stolen, happy time!
Come where the skies are blue, the uplands green;
For hark! the robin sings
Even here, blithe herald, his auroral rhyme,
Foretelling joy, and June his sovereign queen.

See, in our pavéd courts her missal scroll
Is dropped astealth, and every verdant line,
Emblazoned round with Summer's aureole,
Pictures to eager eyes, like thine and mine,

Her trees new-leaved and hillsides far away.
Ransom has come : out from this vaulted town,
Poor prisoners of a giant old and blind,
Into the breezy day,
Fleeing the sights and sounds that wear us down,
And in the fields our ancient solace find !

Again I hunger for the living wood,
The laurelled crags, the hemlocks hanging wide,
The rushing stream that will not be withstood,
Bound forward to wed him with the river's tide :
O what wild leaps through many a fettered pass,
Through knotted ambuscade of root and rock,
How white the plunge, how dark the cloven pool !
Then to rich meadow-grass,
And pastures fed by tinkling herd and flock,
Till the wide stream receives its waters cool.

Again I long for lakes that lie between
High mountains, fringed about with virgin firs,
Where hand of man has never rudely been,
Nor plashing wheel the limpid water stirs ;
There let us twain begin the world again
Like those of old ; while tree, and trout, and deer
Unto their kindred beings draw our own,
Till more than haunts of men,
Than place and pelf, more welcome these appear,
And better worth sheer life than we had known.

Thither, ay, thither flee, O dearest friend,
From walls wherein we grow so wan and old !
The liberal Earth will still her lovers lend
Water of life and storied sands of gold.
Though of her perfect form thou hast secured

Thy will, some charm shall aye thine hold defy,
 And day by day thy passion yet shall grow,
 Even as a bridegroom, lured
 By the unravished secret of her eye,
 Reads the bride's soul, yet never all can know.

And when from her embrace again thou 'rt torn,
 (Though well for her the world were thrown away !)
 At thine old tasks thou 'lt not be quite forlorn,
 Remembering where is peace ; and thou shalt say,
 " I know where beauty has not felt the curse, —
 Where, though I age, all round me is so young
 That in its youth my soul's youth mirrored seems ;
 Yes, in their rippling verse,
 For all our toil, they have not falsely sung
 Who said there still was rest beyond our dreams.

TO BAYARD TAYLOR.

WITH A COPY OF THE ILIAD.

BAYARD, awaken not this music strong,
 While round thy home the indolent sweet breeze
 Floats lightly as the summer breath of seas
 O'er which Ulysses heard the Sirens' song.
 Dreams of low-lying isles to June belong,
 And Circe holds us in her haunts of ease ;
 But later, when these high ancestral trees
 Are sere, and such melodious languors wrong
 The reddening strength of the autumnal year,
 Yield to heroic words thy ear and eye ;—

Intent on these broad pages thou shalt hear
 The trumpets' blare, the Argive battle-cry,
 And see Achilles hurl his hurtling spear,
 And mark the Trojan arrows make reply !

THE MOUNTAIN.

TWO thousand feet in air it stands
 Betwixt the bright and shaded lands,
 Above the regions it divides
 And borders with its furrowed sides.
 The seaward valley laughs with light
 Till the round sun o'erhangs this height ;
 But then the shadow of the crest
 No more the plains that lengthen west
 Enshrouds, yet slowly, surely creeps
 Eastward, until the coolness steeps
 A darkling league of tilth and wold,
 And chills the flocks that seek their fold.

Not like those ancient summits lone,
 Mont Blanc, on his eternal throne, —
 The city-gemmed Peruvian peak, —
 The sunset-portals landsmen seek,
 Whose train, to reach the Golden Land,
 Crawls slow and pathless through the sand, —
 Or that, whose ice-lit beacon guides
 The mariner on tropic tides,
 And flames across the Gulf afar,
 A torch by day, by night a star, —



“Two thousand feet in air it stands.” Page 266

Not thus, to cleave the outer skies,
Does my serener mountain rise,
Nor aye forget its gentle birth
Upon the dewy, pastoral earth.

But ever, in the noonday light,
Are scenes whereof I love the sight, —
Broad pictures of the lower world
Beneath my gladdened eyes unfurled.
Irradiate distances reveal
Fair nature wed to human weal ;
The rolling valley made a plain ;
Its checkered squares of grass and grain ;
The silvery rye, the golden wheat,
The flowery elders where they meet, —
Ay, even the springing corn I see,
And garden haunts of bird and bee ;
And where, in daisied meadows, shines
The wandering river through its vines,
Move specks at random, which I know
Are herds a-grazing to and fro.

Yet still a goodly height it seems
From which the mountain pours his streams,
Or hinders, with caressing hands,
The sunlight seeking other lands.
Like some great giant, strong and proud,
He fronts the lowering thunder-cloud,
And wrests its treasures, to bestow
A guerdon on the realm below ;
Or, by the deluge roused from sleep
Within his bristling forest-keep,
Shakes all his pines, and far and wide
Sends down a rich, imperious tide.

At night the whistling tempests meet
In tryst upon his topmost seat,
And all the phantoms of the sky
Frolic and gibber, storming by.

By day I see the ocean-mists
Float with the current where it lists,
And from my summit I can hail
Cloud-vessels passing on the gale, —
The stately argosies of air, —
And parley with the helmsmen there ;
Can probe their dim, mysterious source,
Ask of their cargo and their course, —
Whence come ? where bound ? — and wait reply,
As, all sails spread, they hasten by.

If, foiled in what I fain would know,
Again I turn my eyes below
And eastward, past the hither mead
Where all day long the cattle feed,
A crescent gleam my sight allures
And clings about the hazy moors, —
The great, encircling, radiant sea,
Alone in its immensity.

Even there, a queen upon its shore,
I know the city evermore
Her palaces and temples rears,
And woos the nations to her piers ;
Yet the proud city seems a mole
To this horizon-bounded whole ;
And, from my station on the mount,
The whole is little worth account
Beneath the overhanging sky,

That seems so far and yet so nigh.
Here breathe I inspiration rare,
Unburdened by the grosser air
That hugs the lower land, and feel
Through all my finer senses steal
The life of what that life may be,
Freed from this dull earth's density,
When we, with many a soul-felt thrill,
Shall thrid the ether at our will,
Through widening corridors of morn
And starry archways swiftly borne.

Here, in the process of the night,
The stars themselves a purer light
Give out, than reaches those who gaze
Enshrouded with the valley's haze.
October, entering Heaven's fane,
Assumes her lucent, annual reign :
Then what a dark and dismal clod,
Forsaken by the Sons of God,
Seems this sad world, to those which march
Across the high, illumined arch,
And with their brightness draw me forth
To scan the splendors of the North !
I see the Dragon, as he toils
With Ursa in his shining coils,
And mark the Huntsman lift his shield,
Confronting on the ancient field
The Bull, while in a mystic row
The jewels of his girdle glow ;
Or, haply, I may ponder long
On that remoter, sparkling throng,
The orient sisterhood, around
Whose chief our Galaxy is wound ;

Thus, half enwrap in classic dreams,
 And brooding over Learning's gleams,
 I leave to gloom the under-land,
 And from my watch-tower, close at hand,
 Like him who led the favored race,
 I look on glory face to face !

So, on the mountain-top, alone,
 I dwell, as one who holds a throne ;
 Or prince, or peasant, him I count
 My peer, who stands upon a mount,
 Sees farther than the tribes below,
 And knows the joys they cannot know ;
 And, though beyond the sound of speech
 They reign, my soul goes out to reach,
 Far on their noble heights elsewhere,
 My brother-monarchs of the air.

HOLYOKE VALLEY.

“ Something sweet
 Followed youth, with flying feet,
 And will never come again.”

HOW many years have made their flights,
 Northampton, over thee and me,
 Since last I scaled those purple heights
 That guard the pathway to the sea ;

Or climbed, as now, the topmost crown
 Of western ridges, whence again
 I see, for miles beyond the town,
 That sunlit stream divide the plain ?

There still the giant warders stand
And watch the current's downward flow,
And northward still, with threatening hand,
The river bends his ancient bow.

I see the hazy lowlands meet
The sky, and count each shining spire,
From those which sparkle at my feet
To distant steeples tipt with fire.

For still, old town, thou art the same :
The redbreasts sing their choral tune,
Within thy mantling elms aflame,
As in that other, dearer June,

When here my footsteps entered first,
And summer perfect beauty wore,
And all thy charms upon me burst,
While Life's whole journey lay before.

Here every fragrant walk remains,
Where happy maidens come and go,
And students saunter in the lanes
And hum the songs I used to know.

I gaze, yet find myself alone,
And walk with solitary feet :
How strange these wonted ways have grown !
Where are the friends I used to meet ?

In yonder shaded Academe
The rippling metres flow to-day,
But other boys at sunset dream
Of love, and laurels far away ;

And ah ! from yonder trellised home,
 Less sweet the faces are that peer
 Than those of old, and voices come
 Less musically to my ear.

Sigh not, ye breezy elms, but give
 The murmur of my sweetheart's vows,
 When Life was something worth to live,
 And Love was young beneath your boughs !

Fade beauty, smiling everywhere,
 That can from year to year outlast
 Those charms a thousand times more fair,
 And, O, our joys so quickly past !

Or smile to gladden fresher hearts
 Henceforth : but they shall yet be led,
 Revisiting these ancient parts,
 Like me to mourn their glory fled.

THE FEAST OF HARVEST.

THE fair Earth smiled and turned herself and woke,
 And to the Sun with nuptial greeting said :
 " I had a dream, wherein it seemed men broke
 A sovran league, and long years fought and bled,
 Till down my sweet sides ran my children's gore,
 And all my beautiful garments were made red,
 And all my fertile fields were thicket-grown,
 Nor could thy dear light reach me through the air ;
 At last a voice cried, ' Let them strive no more !'
 Then music breathed, and lo ! from my despair
 I wake to joy, — yet would not joy alone !

“For, hark! I hear a murmur on the meads, —
 Where as of old my children seek my face, —
 The low of kine, the peaceful tramp of steeds,
 Blithe shouts of men in many a pastoral place,
 The noise of tilth through all my goodliest land,
 And happy laughter of a dusky race
 Whose brethren lift them from their ancient toil,
 Saying: “The year of jubilee has come;
 Gather the gifts of Earth with equal hand;
 Henceforth ye too may share the birthright soil,
 The corn, the wine, and all the harvest-home.”

“O my dear lord, my radiant bridegroom, look!
 Behold their joy who sorrowed in my dreams, —
 The sword a share, the spear a pruning-hook;
 Lo, I awake, and turn me toward thy beams
 Even as a bride again! O, shed thy light
 Upon my fruitful places in full streams!
 Let there be yield for every living thing;
 The land is fallow, — let there be increase
 After the darkness of the sterile night;
 Ay, let us twain a festival of Peace
 Prepare, and hither all my nations bring!”

The fair Earth spake: the glad Sun speeded forth,
 Hearing her matron words, and backward drave
 To frozen caves the icy Wind of the North, —
 And bade the South Wind from the tropic wave
 Bring watery vapors over river and plain, —
 And bade the East Wind cross her path, and lave
 The lowlands, emptying there her laden mist, —
 And bade the Wind of the West, the best wind, blow
 After the early and the latter rain, —
 And beamed himself, and oft the sweet Earth kissed,
 While her swift servitors sped to and fro.

Forthwith the troop that, at the beck of Earth,
Foster her children, brought a glorious store
Of viands, food of immemorial worth,
Her earliest gifts, her tenderest evermore.
First came the Silvery Spirit, whose marshalled files
Climb up the glades in billowy breakers hoar,
Nodding their crests ; and at his side there sped
The Golden Spirit, whose yellow harvests trail
Across the continents and fringe the isles,
And freight men's argosies where'er they sail :
O, what a wealth of sheaves he there outspread !

Came the dear Spirit whom Earth doth love the best,
Fragrant of clover-bloom and new-mown hay,
Beneath whose mantle weary ones find rest,
On whose green skirts the little children play :
She bore the food our patient cattle crave.
Next, robed in silk, with tassels scattering spray,
Followed the generous Spirit of the Maize ;
And many a kindred shape of high renown
Bore in the clustering grape, the fruits that wave
On orchard branches or in gardens blaze,
And those the wind-shook forest hurtles down.

Even thus they laid a great and marvellous feast,
And Earth her children summoned joyously,
Throughout that goodliest land wherein had ceased
The vision of battle, and with glad hands free
These took their fill, and plenteous measures poured,
Beside, for those who dwelt beyond the sea ;
Praise, like an incense, upward rose to Heaven
For that full harvest ; and the autumnal Sun
Stayed long above ; and ever at the board,
Peace, white-robed angel, held the high seat given,
And War far off withdrew his visage dun.

AUTUMN SONG.

NO clouds are in the morning sky,
 The vapors hug the stream,—
 Who says that life and love can die
 In all this northern gleam?
 At every turn the maples burn,
 The quail is whistling free,
 The partridge whirs, and the frosted burs
 Are dropping for you and me.

Ho! hilly ho! heigh O!

Hilly ho!

In the clear October morning.

Along our path the woods are bold,
 And glow with ripe desire;
 The yellow chestnut showers its gold,
 The sumachs spread their fire;
 The breezes feel as crisp as steel,
 The buckwheat tops are red:
 Then down the lane, love, scurry again,
 And over the stubble tread!

Ho! hilly ho! heigh O!

Hilly ho!

In the clear October morning.

WHAT THE WINDS BRING.

WHICH is the Wind that brings the cold?
 The North-Wind, Freddy, and all the snow;
 And the sheep will scamper into the fold
 When the North begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the heat ?
The South-Wind, Katy; and corn will grow,
And peaches redden for you to eat,
When the South begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the rain ?
The East-Wind, Arty; and farmers know
That cows come shivering up the lane
When the East begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the flowers ?
The West-Wind, Bessy; and soft and low
The birdies sing in the summer hours
When the West begins to blow.

BETROTHED ANEW.

THE sunlight fills the trembling air,
And balmy days their guerdons bring;
The Earth again is young and fair,
And amorous with musky Spring.

The golden nurslings of the May
In splendor strew the spangled green,
And hues of tender beauty play,
Entangled where the willows lean.

Mark how the rippled currents flow :
What lustres on the meadows lie !
And hark, the songsters come and go,
And trill between the earth and sky.



“The sunlight fills the trembling air.” Page 276.

Who told us that the years had fled,
Or borne afar our blissful youth ?
Such joys are all about us spread,
We know the whisper was not truth.

The birds, that break from grass and grove,
Sing every carol that they sung
When first our veins were rich with love,
And May her mantle round us flung.

O fresh-lit dawn ! immortal life !
O Earth's betrothal, sweet and true,
With whose delights our souls are rife
And aye their vernal vows renew !

Then, darling, walk with me this morn :
Let your brown tresses drink its sheen ;
These violets, within them worn,
Of floral fays shall make you queen.

What though there comes a time of pain
When autumn winds forbode decay ;
The days of love are born again,
That fabled time is far away !

And never seemed the land so fair
As now, nor birds such notes to sing,
Since first within your shining hair
I wove the blossoms of the Spring.





III.

SHADOW-LAND.



“THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY.”

COULD we but know
The land that ends our dark, uncertain travel,
Where lie those happier hills and meadows low, —
Ah, if beyond the spirit's inmost cavel,
Aught of that country could we surely know,
Who would not go ?

Might we but hear
The hovering angels' high imagined chorus,
Or catch, betimes, with wakeful eyes and clear,
One radiant vista of the realm before us, —
With one rapt moment given to see and hear,
Ah, who would fear ?

Were we quite sure
To find the peerless friend who left us lonely,
Or there, by some celestial stream as pure,
To gaze in eyes that here were lovelit only, —
This weary mortal coil, were we quite sure,
Who would endure ?

"DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW."

WAKING, I have been nigh to Death, —
 Have felt the chillness of his breath
 Whiten my cheek and numb my heart,
 And wondered why he stayed his dart, —
 Yet quailed not, but could meet him so,
 As any lesser friend or foe.

But sleeping, in the dreams of night,
 His phantom stifles me with fright!
 O God! what frozen horrors fall
 Upon me with his visioned pall:
 The movelessness, the unknown dread,
 Fair life to pulseless silence wed!

And *is* the grave so darkly deep,
 So hopeless, as it seems in sleep?
 Can our sweet selves the coffin hold
 So dumb within its crumbling mould?
 And is the shroud so dank and drear
 A garb, — the noisome worm *so* near?

Where then is Heaven's mercy fled, —
 To quite forget the voiceless dead?

THE ASSAULT BY NIGHT.

ALL night we hear the rattling flaw,
 The casements shiver with each breath;
 And still more near the foemen draw,
 The pioneers of Death.

Their grisly chieftain comes :
 He steals upon us in the night ;
 Call up the guards ! light every light !
 Beat the alarum drums !

His tramp is at the outer door ;
 He bears against the shuddering walls ;
 Lo ! what a dismal frost and hoar
 Upon the window falls !
 Outbar him while ye may !
 Feed, feed the watch-fires everywhere, —
 Even yet their cheery warmth will scare
 This thing of night away.

Ye cannot ! something chokes the grate
 And clogs the air within its flues,
 And runners from the entrance-gate
 Come chill with evil news :
 The bars are broken ope !
 Ha ! he has scaled the inner wall !
 But fight him still, from hall to hall ;
 While life remains, there's hope.

Too late ! the very frame is dust,
 The locks and trammels fall apart ;
 He reaches, scornful of their trust,
 The portals of the heart.
 Ay, take the citadel !
 But where, grim Conqueror, is thy prey ?
 In vain thou 'lt search each secret way,
 Its flight is hidden well.

We yield thee, for thy paltry spoils,
 This shell, this ruin thou hast made ;

Its tenant has escaped thy toils,
 Though they were darkly laid.
 Even now, immortal, pure,
 It gains a house not made with hands,
 A refuge in serener lands,
 A heritage secure.

GEORGE ARNOLD.

GREENWOOD, NOVEMBER 13, 1865.

WE stood around the dreamless form
 Whose strength was so untimely shaken,
 Whose sleep not all our love could warm,
 Nor any dearest voice awaken ;

And while the Autumn breathed her sighs,
 And dropped a thousand leafy glories,
 And all the pathways, and the skies,
 Were mindful of his songs and stories,

Nor failed to wear the mingled hues
 He loved, and knew so well to render,
 But wooed — alas, in vain ! — their Muse
 For one more tuneful lay and tender,

We paused awhile, — the gathered few
 Who came, in longing, not in duty, —
 With eyes that full of weeping grew,
 To look their last upon his beauty.

Death would not rudely rob that face,
Nor dim its fine Arcadian brightness,
But gave the lines a clearer grace,
And sleep's repose, and marble's whiteness.

And, gazing there on him so young,
We thought of all his ended mission,
The broken links, the songs unsung,
The love that found no ripe fruition ;

Till last the old, old question came
To hearts that beat with life around him,
Why Death, with downward torch aflame,
Had searched our number till he found him ?

Why passed the one who poorly knows
That blithesome spell for either fortune,
Or mocked with lingering menace those
Whose pains the final thrust importune ;

Or left the toiling ones who bear
The crowd's neglect, the want that presses,
The woes no human soul can share,
Nor look, nor spoken word, confesses.

And from the earth no answer came,
The forest wore a stillness deeper,
The sky and lake smiled on the same,
And voiceless as the silent sleeper.

And so we turned ourselves away,
By earth and air and water chidden,
And left him with them, where he lay,
A sharer of their secret hidden.

And each the staff and shell again
Took up, and marched with memories haunted;
But henceforth, in our pilgrim-strain,
We 'll miss a voice that sweetly chaunted!

THE SAD BRIDAL.

WHAT would you do, my dear one said,—
What would you do, if I were dead?
If Death should mumble, as he list,
These red lips which now you kist?
What would my love do, were I wed
To that ghastly groom instead;
If o'er me, in the chancel, Death
Should cast his amaranthine wreath,—
Before my eyes, with fingers pale,
Draw down the mouldy bridal veil?
—Ah no! no! it cannot be!
Death would spare their light, and flee,
And leave my love to Life and me!







OCCASIONAL POEMS.



SEVERAL of the earlier productions under this title are reprinted in answer to frequent requests for copies of them, and in deference to a public sentiment which received them kindly when they first appeared.



OCCASIONAL POEMS.

—◆—
SUMTER.

APRIL 12, 1871.

CAME the morning of that day
When the God to whom we pray
Gave the soul of Henry Clay
To the land ;
How we loved him, living, dying !
But his birthday banners flying
Saw us asking and replying
Hand to hand.

For we knew that far away,
Round the fort in Charleston Bay,
Hung the dark impending fray,
Soon to fall ;
And that Sumter's brave defender
Had the summons to surrender
Seventy loyal hearts and tender, —
(Those were all !)

And we knew the April sun
Lit the length of many a gun, —
Hosts of batteries to the one
 Island crag ;
Guns and mortars grimly frowning,
Johnson, Moultrie, Pinckney, crowning,
And ten thousand men disowning
 The old flag.

O, the fury of the fight
Even then was at its height !
Yet no breath, from noon till night,
 Reached us here ;
We had almost ceased to wonder,
And the day had faded under,
When the echo of the thunder
 Filled each ear !

Then our hearts more fiercely beat,
As we crowded on the street,
Hot to gather and repeat
 All the tale ;
All the doubtful chances turning,
Till our souls with shame were burning,
As if twice our bitter yearning
 Could avail !

Who had fired the earliest gun ?
Was the fort by traitors won ?
Was there succor ? What was done
 Who could know ?
And once more our thoughts would wander
To the gallant, lone commander,
On his battered ramparts grander
 Than the foe.

Not too long the brave shall wait :
 On their own heads be their fate,
 Who against the hallowed State
 Dare begin ;
 Flag defied and compact riven !
 In the record of high Heaven
 How shall Southern men be shriven
 For the sin ?

WANTED — A MAN.

BACK from the trebly crimsoned field
 Terrible words are thunder-tost ;
 Full of the wrath that will not yield,
 Full of revenge for battles lost !
 Hark to their echo, as it crost
 The Capital, making faces wan :
 “End this murderous holocaust ;
 Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN !

“Give us a man of God’s own mould,
 Born to marshal his fellow-men ;
 One whose fame is not bought and sold
 At the stroke of a politician’s pen ;
 Give us the man of thousands ten,
 Fit to do as well as to plan ;
 Give us a rallying-cry, and then,
 Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN !

“No leader to shirk the boasting foe,
 And to march and countermarch our brave,

Till they fall like ghosts in the marshes low,
 And swamp-grass covers each nameless grave ;
 Nor another, whose fatal banners wave
 Aye in Disaster's shameful van ;
 Nor another, to bluster, and lie, and rave ; —
 Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN !

“ Hearts are mourning in the North,
 While the sister rivers seek the main,
 Red with our life-blood flowing forth, —
 Who shall gather it up again ?
 Though we march to the battle-plain
 Firmly as when the strife began,
 Shall all our offering be in vain ? —
 Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN !

“ Is there never one in all the land,
 One on whose might the Cause may lean ?
 Are all the common ones so grand,
 And all the titled ones so mean ?
 What if your failure may have been
 In trying to make good bread from bran,
 From worthless metal a weapon keen ? —
 Abraham Lincoln, find us a MAN !

“ O, we will follow him to the death,
 Where the foeman's fiercest columns are !
 O, we will use our latest breath,
 Cheering for every sacred star !
 His to marshal us high and far ;
 Ours to battle, as patriots can
 When a Hero leads the Holy War ! —
 Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN ! ”

September 8, 1862.

TREASON'S LAST DEVICE.

S ONS of New England, in the fray,
Do you hear the clamor behind your back?
Do you hear the yelping of Blanche, and Tray,
Sweetheart, and all the mongrel pack?
Girded well with her ocean crags,
Little our mother heeds their noise;
Her eyes are fixed on crimsoned flags:
But you — do you hear it, Yankee boys?

Do you hear them say that the patriot fire
Burns on her altars too pure and bright,
To the darkened heavens leaping higher,
Though drenched with the blood of every fight;
That in the light of its searching flame
Treason and tyrants stand revealed,
And the yielding craven is put to shame,
On Capitol floor or foughten field?

Do you hear the hissing voice, which saith
That she — who bore through all the land
The lyre of Freedom, the torch of Faith,
And young Invention's mystic wand —
Should gather her skirts and dwell apart,
With not one of her sisters to share her fate, —
A Hagar, wandering sick at heart;
A pariah, bearing the Nation's hate?

Sons, who have peopled the distant West,
And planted the Pilgrim vine anew,
Where, by a richer soil cared,
It grows as ever its parent grew,

Say, do you hear, — while the very bells
Of your churches ring with her ancient voice,
And the song of your children sweetly tells
How true was the land of your fathers' choice, —

Do you hear the traitors who bid you speak
The word that shall sever the sacred tie?
And ye, who dwell by the golden Peak,
Has the subtle whisper glided by?
Has it crost the immemorial plains,
To coasts where the gray Pacific roars
And the Pilgrim blood in the people's veins
Is pure as the wealth of their mountain ores?

Spirits of sons who, side by side,
In a hundred battles fought and fell,
Whom now no East and West divide,
In the isles where the shades of heroes dwell;
Say, has it reached your glorious rest,
And ruffled the calm which crowns you there, —
The shame that recreants have confest,
The plot that floats in the troubled air?

Sons of New England, here and there,
Wherever men are still holding by
The honor our fathers left so fair!
Say, do you hear the cowards' cry?
Crouching among her grand old crags,
Lightly our mother heeds their noise,
With her fond eyes fixed on distant flags;
But you — do you hear it, Yankee boys?

Washington, January 19, 1863.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

ASSASSINATED GOOD FRIDAY, 1865.

“FORGIVE them, for they know not what they do!”
He said, and so went shriven to his fate, —
Unknowing went, that generous heart and true.
Even while he spoke the slayer lay in wait,
And when the morning opened Heaven's gate
There passed the whitest soul a nation knew.
Henceforth all thoughts of pardon are too late;
They, in whose cause that arm its weapon drew,
Have murdered Mercy. Now alone shall stand
Blind Justice, with the sword unsheathed she wore.
Hark, from the eastern to the western strand,
The swelling thunder of the people's roar:
What words they murmur, — Fetter not her hand!
So let it smite, such deeds shall be no more!

ISRAEL FREYER'S BID FOR GOLD.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1869.

ZOUNDS! how the price went flashing through
Wall street, William, Broad street, New!
All the specie in all the land
Held in one Ring by a giant hand —
For millions more it was ready to pay,
And throttle the Street on hangman's-day.
Up from the Gold Pit's nether hell,
While the innocent fountain rose and fell,

Loud and higher the bidding rose,
 And the bulls, triumphant, faced their foes.
 It seemed as if Satan himself were in it :
 Lifting it — one per cent a minute —
 Through the bellowing broker, there amid,
 Who made the terrible, final bid !
 High over all, and ever higher,
 Was heard the voice of Israel Freyer, —
 A doleful knell in the storm-swept mart, —
 “ Five millions more ! and for any part
 “ I ’ll give One Hundred and Sixty ! ”

Israel Freyer — the Government Jew —
 Good as the best — soaked through and through
 With credit gained in the year he sold
 Our Treasury’s precious hoard of gold ;
 Now through his thankless mouth rings out
 The leaguers’ last and cruellest shout !
 Pity the shorts ? Not they, indeed,
 While a single rival ’s left to bleed !
 Down come dealers in silks and hides,
 Crowding the Gold Room’s rounded sides,
 Jostling, trampling each other’s feet,
 Uttering groans in the outer street ;
 Watching, with upturned faces pale,
 The scurrying index mark its tale ;
 Hearing the bid of Israel Freyer, —
 That ominous voice, would it never tire ?
 “ Five millions more ! — for any part,
 (If it breaks your firm, if it cracks your heart,)
 I ’ll give One Hundred and Sixty ! ”

One Hundred and Sixty ! Can’t be true !
 What will the bears-at-forty do ?

How will the merchants pay their dues?
 How will the country stand the news?
 What 'll the banks — but listen! hold!
 In screwing upward the price of gold
 To that dangerous, last, particular peg,
 They had killed their Goose with the Golden Egg
 Just there the metal came pouring out,
 All ways at once, like a water-spout,
 Or a rushing, gushing, yellow flood,
 That drenched the bulls wherever they stood!
 Small need to open the Washington main,
 Their coffer-dams were burst with the strain!

 It came by runners, it came by wire,
 To answer the bid of Israel Freyer,
 It poured in millions from every side,
 And almost strangled him as he cried, —
 “I 'll give One Hundred and Sixty!”

Like Vulcan after Jupiter's kick,
 Or the aphoristical Rocket's stick,
 Down, down, down, the premium fell,
 Faster than this rude rhyme can tell!
 Thirty per cent the index slid,
 Yet Freyer still kept making his bid, —
 “One Hundred and Sixty for any part!”
 — The sudden ruin had crazed *his* heart,
 Shattered his senses, cracked his brain,
 And left him crying again and again, —
 Still making his bid at the market's top
 (Like the Dutchman's leg that never could stop,
 “One Hundred and Sixty — Five Millions more!”
 Till they dragged him, howling, off the floor.
 The very last words that seller and buyer
 Heard from the mouth of Israel Freyer —

A cry to remember long as they live —
 Were, " I 'll take Five Millions more ! I 'll give, —
 I 'll give One Hundred and Sixty ! "

Suppose (to avoid the appearance of evil)
 There's such a thing as a Personal Devil,
 It would seem that his Highness here got hold,
 For once, of a bellowing Bull in Gold !
 Whether bull or bear, it wouldn't much matter
 Should Israel Freyer keep up his clatter
 On earth or under it (as, they say,
 He is doomed) till the general Judgment Day,
 When the Clerk, as he cites him to answer for 't,
 Shall bid him keep silence in that Court !
 But it matters most, as it seems to me,
 That my countrymen, great and strong and free,
 So marvel at fellows who seem to win,
 That if even a Clown can only begin
 By stealing a railroad, and use its purse
 For cornering stocks and gold, or — worse —
 For buying a Judge and Legislature,
 And sinking still lower poor human nature,
 The gaping public, whatever befall,
 Will swallow him, tandem, harlots, and all !
 While our rich men drivell and stand amazed
 At the dust and pother his gang have raised,
 And make us remember a nursery tale
 Of the four-and-twenty who feared one snail.

What 's bred in the bone will breed, you know ;
 Clowns and their trainers, high and low,
 Will cut such capers, long as they dare,
 While honest Poverty says its prayer.
 But tell me what prayer or fast can save

Some hoary candidate for the grave,
 The market's wrinkled Giant Despair,
 Muttering, brooding, scheming there,—
 Founding a college or building a church
 Lest Heaven should leave him in the lurch !
 Better come out in the rival way,
 Issue your scrip in open day,
 And pour your wealth in the grimy fist
 Of some gross-mouthed, gambling pugilist ;
 Leave toil and poverty where they lie,
 Pass thinkers, workers, artists, by,
 Your pot-house fag from his counters bring
 And make him into a Railway King !
 Between such Gentiles and such Jews
 Little enough one finds to choose :
 Either the other will buy and use,
 Eat the meat and throw him the bone,
 And leave him to stand the brunt alone.

— Let the tempest come, that's gathering near,
 And give us a better atmosphere !

CUBA.

IS it naught? Is it naught
 That the South-wind brings her wail to our shore,
 That the spoilers compass our desolate sister ?
 Is it naught? Must we say to her, " Strive no more."
 With the lips wherewith we loved her and kissed her ?
 With the mocking lips wherewith we said,
 " Thou art the dearest and fairest to us

Of all the daughters the sea hath bred,
 Of all green-girdled isles that woo us !”
 Is it naught ?

Must ye wait ? Must ye wait.
 Till they ravage her gardens of orange and palm,
 Till her heart is dust, till her strength is water ?
 Must ye see them trample her, and be calm
 As priests when a virgin is led to slaughter ?
 Shall they smite the marvel of all lands, —
 The nation's longing, the Earth's completeness, —
 On her red mouth dropping myrrh, her hands
 Filled with fruitage and spice and sweetness ?
 Must ye wait ?

In the day, in the night,
 In the burning day, in the dolorous night,
 Her sun-browned cheeks are stained with weeping.
 Her watch-fires beacon the misty height : —
 Why are her friends and lovers sleeping ?
 “ Ye, at whose ear the flatterer bends,
 Who were my kindred before all others, —
 Hath he set your hearts afar, my friends ?
 Hath he made ye alien, my brothers,
 Day and night ? ”

Hear ye not ? Hear ye not
 From the hollow sea the sound of her voice ;
 The passionate, far-off tone, which sayeth :
 “ Alas, my brothers ! alas, what choice, —
 The lust that shameth, the sword that slayeth ?
 They bind me ! they rend my delicate locks ;
 They shred the beautiful robes I won me !

My round limbs bleed on the mountain rocks :
 Save me, ere they have quite undone me !”
 Hear ye not ?

Speak at last ! Speak at last !
 In the might of your strength, in the strength of your right,
 Speak out at last to the treacherous spoiler !
 Say : “ Will ye harry her in our sight ?
 Ye shall not trample her down, nor soil her !
 Loose her bonds ! let her rise in her loveliness, —
 Our virginal sister ; or, if ye shame her,
 Dark Amnon shall rue for her sore distress,
 And her sure revenge shall be that of Tamar !”
 Speak at last !

1870.

CRETE.

THOUGH Arkádi's shattered pile
 Hides her dead without a dirge,
 Lo ! where still the mountain isle
 Fronts the angry Moslem surge !
 Hers, in old, heroic days,
 Her unfettered heights afar
 'Twixt the Grecian Gulf to raise,
 And the torrid Libyan star.

From her bulwarks to the North
 Stretched the glad Ægæan Sea,
 Sending bards and warriors forth
 To the triumphs of the free ;
 Ill the fierce invader throve,
 When, from island or from main,

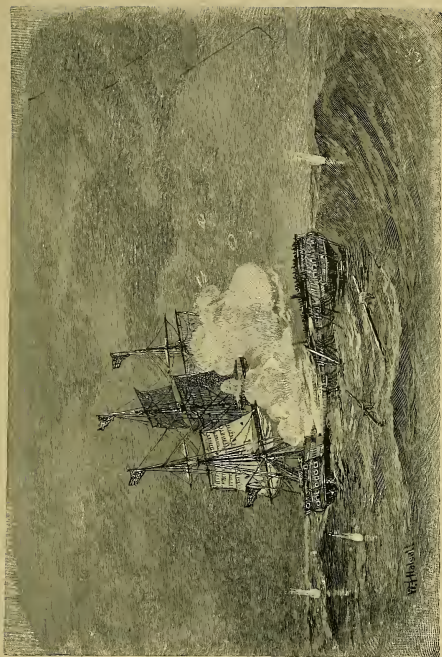
Side by side the Grecians strove :
 Swift he sought his lair again !

Though the Cretan eagle fell,
 And the ancient heights were won,
 Freedom's light was guarded well, —
 Handed down from sire to son ;
 Through the centuries of shame,
 Ah ! it never wholly died,
 But was hid, a sacred flame,
 There on topmost Ida's side.

Shades of heroes Homer sung —
 Wearing once her hundred crowns —
 Rise with shadowy swords among
 Candia's smoking fields and towns ;
 Not again their souls shall sleep,
 Nor the crescent wane in peace,
 Till from every island-keep
 Shines the starry Cross of Greece.

THE OLD ADMIRAL.

GONE at last,
 That brave old hero of the Past !
 His spirit has a second birth,
 An unknown, grander life ; —
 All of him that was earth
 Lies mute and cold,
 Like a wrinkled sheath and old
 Thrown off forever from the shimmering blade
 That has good entrance made
 Upon some distant, glorious strife.



“Every broadside swept to death a score.” Page 301.

From another generation,
 A simpler age, to ours Old Ironsides came ;
 The morn and noontide of the nation
 Alike he knew, nor yet outlived his fame, —
 O, not outlived his fame !
 The dauntless men whose service guards our shore
 Lengthen still their glory-roll
 With his name to lead the scroll,
 As a flagship at her fore
 Carries the Union, with its azure and the stars,
 Symbol of times that are no more
 And the old heroic wars.

He was the one
 Whom Death had spared alone
 Of all the captains of that lusty age,
 Who sought the foeman where he lay,
 On sea or sheltering bay,
 Nor till the prize was theirs repressed their rage.
 They are gone, — all gone :
 They rest with glory and the undying Powers ;
 Only their name and fame and what they saved are ours !

It was fifty years ago,
 Upon the Gallic Sea,
 He bore the banner of the free,
 And fought the fight whereof our children know.
 The deathful, desperate fight ! —
 Under the fair moon's light
 The frigate squared, and yawed to left and right.
 Every broadside swept to death a score !
 Roundly played her guns and well, till their fiery en-
 signs fell,
 Neither foe replying more.

All in silence, when the night-breeze cleared the air,
 Old Ironsides rested there,
 Locked in between the twain, and drenched with blood.
 Then homeward, like an eagle with her prey !
 O, it was a gallant fray,
 That fight in Biscay Bay !
 Fearless the Captain stood, in his youthful hardihood ;
 He was the boldest of them all,
 Our brave old Admiral !

And still our heroes bleed,
 Taught by that olden deed.
 Whether of iron or of oak
 The ships we marshal at our country's need,
 Still speak their cannon now as then they spoke ;
 Still floats our unstruck banner from the mast
 As in the stormy Past.

Lay him in the ground :
 Let him rest where the ancient river rolls ;
 Let him sleep beneath the shadow and the sound
 Of the bell whose proclamation, as it tolls,
 Is of Freedom and the gift our fathers gave.
 Lay him gently down :
 The clamor of the town
 Will not break the slumbers deep, the beautiful ripe
 sleep
 Of this lion of the wave,
 Will not trouble the old Admiral in his grave.

Earth to earth his dust is laid.
 Methinks his stately shade
 On the shadow of a great ship leaves the shore ;
 Over cloudless western seas

Seeks the far Hesperides,
 The islands of the blest,
 Where no turbulent billows roar, —
 Where is rest.

His ghost upon the shadowy quarter stands
 Nearing the deathless lands.

There all his martial mates, renewed and strong,
 Await his coming long.

I see the happy Heroes rise
 With gratulation in their eyes :

“ Welcome, old comrade,” Lawrence cries ;

“ Ah, Stewart, tell us of the wars !

Who win the glory and the scars ?

How floats the skyey flag, — how many stars ?

Still speak they of Decatur's name,

Of Bainbridge's and Perry's fame ?

Of me, who earliest came ?

Make ready, all :

Room for the Admiral !

Come, Stewart, tell us of the wars !”

GETTYSBURG.

WAVE, wave your glorious battle-flags, brave sol-
 diers of the North,
 And from the field your arms have won to-day go
 proudly forth !
 For now, O comrades dear and leal, — from whom no
 ills could part,
 Through the long years of hopes and fears, the nation's
 constant heart, —

Men who have driven so oft the foe, so oft have striven
in vain,
Yet ever in the perilous hour have crossed his path
again, —
At last we have our hearts' desire, from them we met
have wrung
A victory that round the world shall long be told and
sung !
It was the memory of the past that bore us through
the fray,
That gave the grand old Army strength to conquer on
this day !

O now forget how dark and red Virginia's rivers flow,
The Rappahannock's tangled wilds, the glory and the
woe ;
The fever-hung encampments, where our dying knew
full sore
How sweet the north-wind to the cheek it soon shall
cool no more ;
The fields we fought, and gained, and lost ; the low-
land sun and rain
That wasted us, that bleached the bones of our un-
buried slain !
There was no lack of foes to meet, of deaths to die no
lack,
And all the hawks of heaven learned to follow on our
track ;
But henceforth, hovering southward, their flight shall
mark afar
The paths of yon retreating hosts that shun the north-
ern star.

At night, before the closing fray, when all the front
was still,

We lay in bivouac along the cannon-crested hill.
Ours was the dauntless Second Corps ; and many a
soldier knew
How sped the fight, and sternly thought of what was
yet to do.
Guarding the centre there, we lay, and talked with
bated breath
Of Buford's stand beyond the town, of gallant Rey-
nold's death,
Of cruel retreats through pent-up streets by murderous
volleys swept, —
How well the Stone, the Iron, Brigades their bloody
outposts kept :
'T was for the Union, for the Flag, they perished,
heroes all,
And we swore to conquer in the end, or even like them
to fall.

And passed from mouth to mouth the tale of that grim
day just done,
The fight by Round Top's craggy spur, — of all the
deadliest one ;
It saved the left : but on the right they pressed us
back too well,
And like a field in Spring the ground was ploughed with
shot and shell.
There was the ancient graveyard, its hummocks crushed
and red,
And there, between them, side by side, the wounded
and the dead :
The mangled corpses fallen above, — the peaceful dead
below,
Laid in their graves, to slumber here, a score of years
ago ;

It seemed their waking, wandering shades were asking
of our slain,
What brought such hideous tumult now where they so
still had lain !

Bright rose the sun of Gettysburg that morrow morn-
ing-tide,
And call of trump and roll of drum from height to
height replied.
Hark ! from the east already goes up the rattling din ;
The Twelfth Corps, winning back their ground, right
well the day begin !
They whirl fierce Ewell from their front ! Now we of
the Second pray,
As right and left the brunt have borne, the centre
might to-day.
But all was still from hill to hill for many a breathless
hour,
While for the coming battle-shock Lee gathered in his
power ;
And back and forth our leaders rode, who knew not
rest or fear,
And along the lines, where'er they came, went up
the ringing cheer.

'T was past the hour of nooning ; the Summer skies
were blue ;
Behind the covering timber the foe was hid from view ;
So fair and sweet with waving wheat the pleasant val-
ley lay,
It brought to mind our Northern homes and meadows
far away ;
When the whole western ridge at once was fringed
with fire and smoke ;

Against our lines from sevenscore guns the dreadful
tempest broke !
Then loud our batteries answer, and far along the crest,
And to and fro the roaring bolts are driven east and
west ;
Heavy and dark around us glooms the stifling sulphur-
cloud,
And the cries of mangled men and horse go up beneath
its shroud.

The guns are still : the end is nigh : we grasp our
arms anew ;
O now let every heart be stanch and every aim be
true !
For look ! from yonder wood that skirts the valley's
further marge,
The flower of all the Southern host move to the final
charge.
By Heaven ! it is a fearful sight to see their double rank
Come with a hundred battle-flags, — a mile from flank
to flank !
Tramping the grain to earth, they come, ten thousand
men abreast ;
Their standards wave, — their hearts are brave, — they
hasten not, nor rest,
But close the gaps our cannon make, and onward press,
and nigher,
And, yelling at our very front, again pour in their fire !

Now burst our sheeted lightnings forth, now all our
wrath has vent !
They die, they wither ; through and through their
wavering lines are rent.
But these are gallant, desperate men, of our own race
and land,

Who charge anew, and welcome death, and fight us
hand to hand :
Vain, vain ! give way, as well ye may — the crimson
die is cast !
Their bravest leaders bite the dust, their strength is
failing fast ;
They yield, they turn, they fly the field : we smite them
as they run ;
Their arms, their colors are our spoil ; the furious fight
is done !
Across the plain we follow far and backward push the
fray :
Cheer ! cheer ! the grand old Army at last has won the
day !

Hurrah ! the day has won the cause ! No gray-clad
host henceforth
Shall come with fire and sword to tread the highways
of the North !
'T was such a flood as when ye see, along the Atlantic
shore,
The great Spring-tide roll grandly in with swelling
surge and roar :
It seems no wall can stay its leap or balk its wild desire
Beyond the bound that Heaven hath fixed to higher
mount, and higher ;
But now, when whitest lifts its crest, most loud its bil-
lows call,
Touched by the Power that led them on, they fall, and
fall, and fall.
Even thus, unstayed upon his course, to Gettysburg
the foe
His legions led, and fought, and fled, and might no
further go.

Full many a dark-eyed Southern girl shall weep her
lover dead ;
But with a price the fight was ours, — we too have
tears to shed !
The bells that peal our triumph forth anon shall toll
the brave,
Above whose heads the cross must stand, the hill-
side grasses wave !
Alas ! alas ! the trampled grass shall thrive another
year,
The blossoms on the apple-boughs with each new
Spring appear,
But when our patriot-soldiers fall, Earth gives them up
to God ;
Though their souls rise in clearer skies, their forms
are as the sod ;
Only their names and deeds are ours, — but, for a cen-
tury yet,
The dead who fell at Gettysburg the land shall not
forget.

God send us peace ! and where for aye the loved and
lost recline
Let fall, O South, your leaves of palm, — O North,
your sprigs of pine !
But when, with every ripened year, we keep the har-
vest-home,
And to the dear Thanksgiving-feast our sons and
daughters come, —
When children's children throng the board in the old
homestead spread,
And the bent soldier of these wars is seated at the head,
Long, long the lads shall listen to hear the gray-beard
tell

Of those who fought at Gettysburg and stood their
ground so well :

“’T was for the Union and the Flag,” the veteran
shall say,

“Our grand old Army held the ridge, and won that
glorious day !”

DARTMOUTH ODE.

I.

PRELUDE.

A WIND and a voice from the North !
A courier-wind sent forth

From the mountains to the sea :

A summons borne to me

From halls which the Muses haunt, from hills where
the heart and the wind are free !

“Come from the outer throng !”

(Such was the burden it bore,)

“Thou who hast gone before,

Hither ! and sing us a song,

Far from the round of the town and the sound of the
great world’s roar !”

O masterful voice of Youth,

That will have, like the upland wind, its own wild
way !

O choral words, that with every season rise

Like the warblings of orchard-birds at break of day !

O faces, fresh with the light of morning skies !

No marvel world-worn toilers seek you here,
 Even as they life renew, from year to year,
 In woods and meadows lit with blossoming May ;
 But O, blithe voices, that have such sweet power,
 Unto your high behest this summer hour
 What answer has the poet ? how shall he frame his
 lay ?

II.

THEME.

“WHAT shall my song rehearse ?” I said
 To a wise bard, whose hoary head
 Is bowed, like Kearsarge crouching low
 Beneath a winter weight of snow,
 But whose songs of passion, joy, or scorn,
 Within a fiery heart are born.

“What can I spread, what proper feast
 For these young Magi of the East ?
 What wisdom find, what mystic lore,
 What chant they have not heard before ?
 Strange words of old has every tongue
 Those happy cloistered hills among ;
 For each riddle I divine
 They can answer me with nine ;
 Their footsteps by the Muse are led,
 Their lips on Plato’s honey fed ;
 Their eyes have skill to read the page
 Of Theban bard or Attic sage ;
 “For them all Nature’s mysteries, —
 The deep-down secrets of the seas,
 The cyclone’s whirl, the lightning’s shock,
 The language of the riven rock ;
 They know the starry sisters seven, —

What clouds the molten suns enfold,
 And all the golden woof of heaven
 Unravell'd in their lens behold !
 Gazing in a thousand eyes,
 So rapt and clear, so wonder-wise,
 What shall my language picture, then,
 Beyond their wont — that has not reached their ken ?

“ What else are poets used to sing,
 Who sing of youth, than laurell'd fame and love ?
 But ah ! it needs no words to move
 Young hearts to some impassioned vow,
 To whom already on the wing
 The blind god hastens. Even now
 Their pulses quiver with a thrill
 Than all that wisdom wiser still.
 Nor any need to tell of rustling bays,
 Of honor ever at the victor's hand,
 To them who at the portals stand
 Like mettled steeds, — each eager from control
 To leap, and, where the corso lies ablaze,
 Let out his speed and soonest pass the goal.

“ What is there left ? what shall my verse
 Within those ancient halls rehearse ? ”
 Deep in his heart my plaint the minstrel weigh'd,
 And a subtle answer made :
 “ The world that is, the ways of men,
 Not yet are glass'd within their ken.
 Their foster-mother holds them long, —
 Long, long to youth, — short, short to age, appear
 The rounds of her Olympic Year, —
 Their ears are quicken'd for the trumpet-call.
 Sing to them one true song,

Ere from the Happy Vale they turn,
 Of all the Abyssinian craved to learn,
 And dared his fate, and scaled the mountain-wall
 To join the ranks without, and meet what might
 befall."

III.

VESTIGIA RETRORSUM.

GONE the Arcadian age,
 When, from his hillside hermitage
 Sent forth, the gentle scholar strode
 At ease upon a royal road,
 And found the outer regions all they seem
 In Youth's prophetic dream.
 The graduate took his station then
 By right, a ruler among men :
 Courtly the three estates, and sure ;
 The bar, the bench, the pulpit, pure ;
 No cosmic doubts arose, to vex
 The preacher's heart, his faith perplex.
 Content in ancient paths he trod,
 Nor searched beyond his Book for God.
 Great virtue lurked in many a saw
 And in the doctor's Latin lay ;
 Men thought, lived, died, in the appointed way.
 Yet eloquence was slave to law,
 And law to right : the statesman sought
 A patriot's fame, and served his land, unbought,
 And bore erect his front, and held his oath in awe.

IV.

ÆREA PROLES.

BUT, now, far other days
 Have made less green the poet's bays, —
 Have less revered the band and gown,
 The grave physician's learned frown, —
 Shaken the penitential mind
 That read the text nor looked behind, —
 Brought from his throne the bookman down,
 Made hard the road to station and renown !
 Now from this seclusion deep
 The scholar wakes, — as one from sleep,
 As one from sleep remote and sweet,
 In some fragrant garden-close
 Between the lily and the rose,
 Roused by the tramp of many feet,
 Leaps up to find a ruthless, warring band,
 Dust, strife, an untried weapon in his hand !
 The time unto itself is strange,
 Driven on from change to change,
 Neither of past nor present sure,
 The ideal vanished nor the real secure.
 Heaven has faded from the skies,
 Faith hides apart and weeps with clouded eyes ;
 A noise of cries we hear, a noise of creeds,
 While the old heroic deeds
 Not of the leaders now are told, as then,
 But of lowly, common men.
 See by what paths the loud-voiced gain
 Their little heights above the plain :
 Truth, honor, virtue, cast away
 For the poor plaudits of a day !
 Now fashion guides at will

The artist's brush, the writer's quill,
 While, for a weary time unknown,
 The reverent workman toils alone,
 Asking for bread and given but a stone.
 Fettered with gold the statesman's tongue ;
 Now, even the church, among
 New doubts and strange discoveries, half in vain
 Defends her long, ancestral reign ;
 Now, than all others grown more great,
 That which was the last estate
 By turns reflects and rules the age, —
 Laughs, scolds, weeps, counsels, jeers, — a jester and a
 sage !

V.

ENCHANTMENTS.

HERE, in Learning's shaded haunt,
 The battle-fugue and mingled cries forlorn
 Softened to music seem, nor the clear spirit daunt ;
 Here, in the gracious world that looks
 From earth and sky and books,
 Easeful and sweet it seems all else to scorn
 Than works of noble use and virtue born ;
 Brave hope and high ambition consecrate
 Our coming years to something great.
 But when the man has stood,
 Anon, in garish outer light,
 Feeling the first wild fever of the blood
 That places self with self at strife
 Whether to hoard or drain the wine of life, —
 When the broad pageant flares upon the sight,
 And tuneful Pleasure plumes her wing
 And the crowds jostle and the mad bells ring, —

Then he, who sees the vain world take slow heed
 Albeit of his worthiest and best,
 And still, through years of failure and unrest,
 Would keep inviolate his vow,
 Of all his faith and valor has sore need !
 Even then, I know, do nobly as we will,
 What we would not, we do, and see not how ;
 That which we would, is not, we know not why ;
 Some fortune holds us from our purpose still, —
 Chance sternly beats us back, and turns our steps
 awry !

VI.

YOUTH AND AGE.

How slow, how sure, how swift,
 The sands within each glass,
 The brief, illusive moments, pass !
 Half unawares we mark their drift
 Till the awakened heart cries out, — Alas !
 Alas, the fair occasion fled,
 The precious chance to action all unwed !
 And murmurs in its depths the old refrain, —
 Had we but known betimes what now we know in
 vain !

When the veil from the eyes is lifted
 The seer's head is gray ;
 When the sailor to shore has drifted
 The sirens are far away.
 Why must the clearer vision,
 The wisdom of Life's late hour,
 Come, as in Fate's derision,
 When the hand has lost its power ?

Is there a rarer being,
 Is there a fairer sphere
 Where the strong are not unseeing,
 And the harvests are not sere ;
 Where, ere the seasons dwindle
 They yield their due return ;
 Where the lamps of knowledge kindle
 While the flames of youth still burn ?
 O for the young man's chances !
 O for the old man's will !
 Those flee while this advances,
 And the strong years cheat us still.

VII.

WHAT CHEER ?

Is there naught else ? — you say, —
 No braver prospect far away ?
 No gladder song, no ringing call
 Beyond the misty mountain-wall ?
 And were it thus indeed, I know
 Your hearts would still with courage glow ;
 I know how yon historic stream
 Is laden yet, as in the past,
 With dreamful longings on it cast
 By those who saunter from the crown
 Of this broad slope, their reverend Academe, —
 Who reach the meadowed banks, and lay them down
 On the green sward, and set their faces south,
 Embarked in Fancy's shallop there,
 And with the current seek the river's mouth,
 Finding the outer ocean grand and fair.
 Ay, like the stream's perpetual tide,
 Wave after wave each blithe, successive throng

Must join the main and wander far and wide.
 To you the golden, vanward years belong !
 Ye need not fear to leave the shore :
 Not seldom youth has shamed the sage
 With riper wisdom, — but to age
 Youth, youth, returns no more !
 Be yours the strength by will to conquer fate,
 Since to the man who sees his purpose clear,
 And gains that knowledge of his sphere
 Within which lies all happiness, —
 Without, all danger and distress, —
 And seeks the right, content to strive and wait,
 To him all good things flow, nor honor crowns him
 late.

VIII.

PHAROS.

ONE such there was, that brother elder-born
 And loftiest, — from your household torn
 In the rathe spring-time, ere
 His steps could seek their olden pathways here.
 Mourn !
 Mourn, for your Mother mourns, of him bereft, —
 Her strong one ! he is fallen :
 But has left
 His works your heritage and guide,
 Through East and West his stalwart fame divide.
 Mourn, for the liberal youth,
 The undaunted spirit whose quintessence rare,
 Fanned by the Norseland air,
 Saw flaming in its own white heat the truth
 That Man, whate'er his ancestry,
 Tanned by what sun or exiled from what shore,
 Hears in his soul the high command, — Be Free !

For him who, at the parting of the ways,
 Disdained the flowery path, and gave
 His succor to the hunted Afric slave,
 Whose cause he chose nor feared the world's dis-
 praise ;
 Yet found anon the right become the might,
 And, in the long revenge of time,
 Lived to renown and hoary years sublime.
 Ye know him now, your beacon-light !
 Ay, he was fronted like a tower, —
 In thought large-moulded, as of frame ;
 He that, in the supreme hour,
 Sat brooding at the river-heads of power
 With sovereign strength for every need that came !
 Not for that blameless one the place
 That opens wide to men of lesser race ; —
 Even as of old the votes are given,
 And Aristides is from Athens driven ;
 But for our statesman, in his grander trust
 No less the undefiled, The Just, —
 With poesy and learning lightly worn,
 And knees that bent to Heaven night and morn, —
 For him that sacred, unimpassioned seat,
 Where right and wrong for stainless judgment meet
 Above the greed, the strife, the party call. —
 Henceforth let CHASE'S robes on no base shoulders
 fall !

IX.

ATLANTIS SURGENS. •

WELL may your hearts be valiant, — ye who stand
 Within that glory from the past,
 And see how ripe the time, how fair the land

In which your lot is cast !
 For us alone your sorrow,
 Ye children of the morrow,—
 For us, who struggle yet, and wait,
 Sent forth too early and too late !
 But yours shall be our tenure handed down,
 Conveyed in blood, stamped with the martyr's
 crown ;
 For which the toilers long have wrought,
 And poets sung, and heroes fought ;
 The new Saturnian age is yours,
 That juster season soon to be
 On the near coasts (whereto your vessels sail
 Beyond the darkness and the gale),
 Of proud Atlantis risen from the sea !
 You shall not know the pain that now endures
 The surge, the smiting of the waves,
 The overhanging thunder,
 The shades of night which plunge engulféd under
 Those yawning island-caves ;
 But in their stead for you shall glisten soon
 The coral circlet and the still lagoon,
 Green shores of freedom, blest with calms,
 And sunlit streams and meads, and shadowy palms :
 Such joys await you, in our sorrows' stead ;
 Thither our charts have almost led ;
 Nor in that land shall worth, truth, courage, ask for
 alms.

X.

VALETE ET SALVETE.

O, TRAINED beneath the Northern Star !
 Worth, courage, honor, these indeed

Your sustenance and birthright are !
 Now, from her sweet dominion freed,
 Your Foster Mother bids you speed ;
 Her gracious hands the gates unbar,
 Her richest gifts you bear away,
 Her memories shall be your stay :
 Go where you will, her eyes your course shall mark
 afar.

June 25, 1873.

HORACE GREELEY.

EARTH, let thy softest mantle rest
 On this worn child to thee returning,
 Whose youth was nurtured at thy breast,
 Who loved thee with such tender yearning !
 He knew thy fields and woodland ways,
 And deemed thy humblest son his brother :—
 Asleep, beyond our blame or praise,
 We yield him back, O gentle Mother !

Of praise, of blame, he drank his fill :
 Who has not read the life-long story ?
 And dear we hold his fame, but still
 The man was dearer than his glory.
 And now to us are left alone
 The closet where his shadow lingers,
 The vacant chair, — that was a throne, —
 The pen, just fallen from his fingers.

Wrath changed to kindness on that pen ;
 Though dipped in gall, it flowed with honey ;
 One flash from out the cloud, and then
 The skies with smile and jest were sunny.

Of hate he surely lacked the art,
 Who made his enemy his lover:
 O reverend head and Christian heart!
 Where now their like the round world over?

He saw the goodness, not the taint,
 In many a poor, do-nothing creature,
 And gave to sinner and to saint,
 But kept his faith in human nature;
 Perchance he was not worldly-wise,
 Yet we who noted, standing nearer,
 The shrewd, kind twinkle in his eyes,
 For every weakness held him dearer.

Alas that unto him who gave
 So much, so little should be given!
 Himself alone he might not save
 Of all for whom his hands had striven.
 Place, freedom, fame, his work bestowed:
 Men took, and passed, and left him lonely; —
 What marvel if, beneath his load,
 At times he craved — for justice only!

Yet thanklessness, the serpent's tooth,
 His lofty purpose could not alter;
 Toil had no power to bend his youth,
 Or make his lusty manhood falter;
 From envy's sling, from slander's dart,
 That armored soul the body shielded,
 Till one dark sorrow chilled his heart,
 And then he bowed his head and yielded.

Now, now, we measure at its worth
 The gracious presence gone forever!

The wrinkled East, that gave him birth,
 Laments with every laboring river ;
 Wild moan the free winds of the West
 For him who gathered to her prairies
 The sons of men, and made each crest
 The haunt of happy household fairies ;

And anguish sits upon the mouth
 Of her who came to know him latest :
 His heart was ever thine, O South !
 He was thy truest friend, and greatest !
 He shunned thee in thy splendid shame,
 He stayed thee in thy voiceless sorrow ;
 The day thou shalt forget his name,
 Fair South, can have no sadder morrow.

The tears that fall from eyes unused, —
 The hands above his grave united, —
 The words of men whose lips he loosed,
 Whose cross he bore, whose wrongs he righted, —
 Could he but know, and rest with this !
 Yet stay, through Death's low-lying hollow,
 His one last foe's insatiate hiss
 On that benignant shade would follow !

Peace ! while we shroud this man of men
 Let no unhallowed word be spoken !
 He will not answer thee again,
 His mouth is sealed, his wand is broken.
 Some holier cause, some vaster trust
 Beyond the veil, he doth inherit :
 O gently, Earth, receive his dust,
 And Heaven soothe his troubled spirit !

December 3, 1872.

KEARNY AT SEVEN PINES.

SO that soldierly legend is still on its journey, —
 That story of Kearny who knew not to yield !
 'T was the day when with Jameson, fierce Berry, and
 Birney,
 Against twenty thousand he rallied the field.
 Where the red volleys poured, where the clamor rose
 highest,
 Where the dead lay in clumps through the dwarf oak
 and pine,
 Where the aim from the thicket was surest and nigh-
 est, —
 No charge like Phil Kearny's along the whole line.

When the battle went ill, and the bravest were solemn,
 Near the dark Seven Pines, where we still held our
 ground,
 He rode down the length of the withering column,
 And his heart at our war-cry leapt up with a bound ;
 He snuffed, like his charger, the wind of the powder, —
 His sword waved us on and we answered the sign :
 Loud our cheer as we rushed, but his laugh rang the
 louder,
 "There 's the devil's own fun, boys, along the whole
 line !"

How he strode his brown steed ! How we saw his blade
 brighten
 In the one hand still left, — and the reins in his
 teeth !
 He laughed like a boy when the holidays heighten,
 But a soldier's glance shot from his visor beneath.

Up came the reserves to the mellay infernal,
 Asking where to go in, — through the clearing or
 pine ?

“O, anywhere ! Forward ! ’T is all the same, Colonel :
 You ’ll find lovely fighting along the whole line !”

O, evil the black shroud of night at Chantilly,
 That hid him from sight of his brave men and tried !
 Foul, foul sped the bullet that clipped the white lily,
 The flower of our knighthood, the whole army’s pride !
 Yet we dream that he still, — in that shadowy region
 Where the dead form their ranks at the wan drum-
 mer’s sign, —
 Rides on, as of old, down the length of his legion,
 And the word still is Forward ! along the whole line

CUSTER.

WHAT ! shall that sudden blade
 Leap out no more ?
 No more thy hand be laid
 Upon the sword-hilt, smiting sore ?
 O for another such
 The charger’s rein to clutch, —
 One equal voice to summon victory,
 Sounding thy battle-cry,
 Brave darling of the soldiers’ choice !
 Would there were one more voice !

O gallant charge, too bold !
 O fierce, imperious greed
 To pierce the clouds that in their darkness hold

Slaughter of man and steed !
 Now, stark and cold,
 Among thy fallen braves thou liest,
 And even with thy blood defiest
 The wolfish foe :
 But ah, thou liest low,
 And all our birthday song is hushed indeed !

Young lion of the plain,
 Thou of the tawny mane !
 Hotly the soldiers' hearts shall beat,
 Their mouths thy death repeat,
 Their vengeance seek the trail again
 Where thy red doomsmen be ;
 But on the charge no more shall stream
 Thy hair, — no more thy sabre gleam, —
 No more ring out thy battle-shout,
 Thy cry of victory !

Not when a hero falls
 The sound a world appalls :
 For while we plant his cross
 There is a glory, even in the loss :
 But when some craven heart
 From honor dares to part,
 Then, then, the groan, the blanching cheek,
 And men in whispers speak,
 Nor kith nor country dare reclaim
 From the black depths his name.

Thou, wild young warrior, rest,
 By all the prairie winds caressed !
 Swift was thy dying pang ;
 Even as the war-cry rang

Thy deathless spirit mounted high
 And sought Columbia's sky : —
 There, to the northward far,
 Shines a new star,
 And from it blazes down
 The light of thy renown !

July 10, 1876.

THE COMEDIAN'S LAST NIGHT.

NOT yet ! No, no, — you would not quote
 That meanest of the critic's gags ?
 'T was surely not of me they wrote
 Those words, *too late the veteran lags* :
 'T is not so very late with me ;
 I 'm not so old as that, you know,
 Though work and trouble — as you see —
 (Not years) have brought me somewhat low.
 I failed, you say ? No, no, not yet !
 Or, if I did, — with such a past,
 Where is the man would have me quit
 Without one triumph at the last ?

But one night more, — a little thing
 To you, — I swear 't is all I ask !
 Once more to make the wide house ring, —
 To tread the boards, to wear the mask,
 To move the coldest as of yore,
 To make them laugh, to make them cry,
 To be — to be myself once more,
 And then, if must be, let me die !

The prompter's bell ! I'm here, you see :
 By Heaven, friends, you'll break my heart !
Nat Gosling's called : let be, let be, —
 None but myself shall act the part !

Yes, thank you, boy, I'll take your chair
 One moment, while I catch my breath.
 D'ye hear the noise they're making there ?
 'T would warm a player's heart in death.
 How say you now ? Whate'er they write,
 We've put that bitter gibe to shame ;
 I knew, I knew there burned to-night
 Within my soul the olden flame !
 Stand off a bit : that final round, —
 I'd hear it ere it dies away
 The last, last time ! — there's no more sound :
 So end the player and the play.

The house is cleared. My senses swim ;
 I shall be better, though, anon, —
 One stumbles when the lights are dim, —
 'T is growing late : we must be gone.
 Well, braver luck than mine, old friends !
 A little work and fame are ours
 While Heaven health and fortune lends,
 And then — the coffin and the flowers !
 These scattered garments ? let them lie :
 Some fresher actor (I'm not vain)
 Will dress anew the part ; — but I —
I shall not put them on again.

November 17, 1875.

THE MONUMENT OF GREELEY.

READ AT THE UNVEILING OF THE BUST SURMOUNTING THE
PRINTERS' MONUMENT TO HORACE GREELEY, GREEN-
WOOD CEMETERY, DECEMBER 4, 1876.

ONCE more, dear mother Earth, we stand
In reverence where thy bounty gave
Our brother, yielded to thy hand,
The sweet protection of the grave!
Well hast thou soothed him through the years,
The years our love and sorrow number, —
And with thy smiles, and with thy tears,
Made green and fair his place of slumber.

Thine be the keeping of that trust;
And ours this image, born of Art
To shine above his hidden dust,
What time the sunrise breezes part
The trees, and with new light enwreath
Yon head, — until the lips are golden,
And from them music seems to breathe
As from the desert statue olden.

Would it were so! that now we might
Hear once his uttered voice again,
Or hold him present to our sight,
Nor reach with empty hands and vain!
O that, from some far place, were heard
One cadence of his speech returning, —
A whispered tone, a single word,
Sent back in answer to our yearning!

It may not be? What then the spark,
 The essence which illumed the whole
 And made his living form its mark
 And outward likeness? What the soul
 That warmed the heart and poised the head,
 And spoke the thoughts we now inherit?
 Bright force of fire and ether bred, —
 Where art thou now, elusive Spirit?

Where, now, the sunburst of a love
 Which blended still with sudden wrath
 To nerve the righteous hand that strove,
 And blaze in the oppressor's path?
 Fair Earth, our dust is thine indeed!
 Too soon he reached the voiceless portal, —
 That whither leads? Where lies the mead
 He gained, and knew himself immortal?

Or, tell us, on what distant star,
 Where even as here are toil and wrong,
 With strength renewed he lifts afar
 A voice of aid, a war-cry strong?
 What fruit, this stern Olympiad past,
 Has that rich nature elsewhere yielded,
 What conquest gained and knowledge vast,
 What kindred beings loved and shielded!

Why seek to know? he little sought,
 Himself, to lift the close-drawn veil,
 Nor for his own salvation wrought
 And pleaded, ay, and wore his mail;
 No selfish grasp of life, no fear,
 Won for mankind his ceaseless caring,
 But for themselves he held them dear, —
 Their birth and shrouded exit sharing.

Not his the feverish will to live
A sunnier life, a longer space,
Save that the Eternal Law might give
The boon in common to his race.
Earth, 't was thy heaven he loved, and best
Thy precious offspring, man and woman,
And labor for them seemed but rest
To him, whose nature was so human.

Even here his spirit haply longed
To stay, remembered by our kind,
And where the haunts of men are thronged
Move yet among them. Seek and find
A presence, though his voice has ceased,
Still, even where we dwell, remaining,
With all its tenderest thrills increased
And all it cared to ask obtaining.

List, how the varied things that took
The impress of his passion rare
Make answer ! To the roadways look,
The watered vales, the hamlets fair.
He walks unseen the living woods,
The fields, the town, the shaded borough,
And in the pastoral solitudes
Delights to view the lengthening furrow.

The faithful East that cradled him,
Still, while she deems her nursling sleeps,
Sits by his couch with vision dim ;
The plenteous West his feast-day keeps ;
The wistful South recalls the ways
Of one who in his love enwound her,
And stayed her, in the evil days,
With arms of comfort thrown around her.

He lives wherever men to men
 In perilous hours his words repeat,
 Where clangs the forge, where glides the pen,
 Where toil and traffic crowd the street ;
 And in whatever time or place
 Earth's purest souls their purpose strengthen,
 Down the broad pathway of his race
 The shadow of his name shall lengthen.

" Still with us ! " all the liegemen cry
 Who read his heart and held him dear ;
 The hills declare " He shall not die ! "
 The prairies answer " He is here ! "
 Immortal thus, no dread of fate
 Be ours, no vain *memento mori* :
 Life, Life, not Death, we celebrate, —
 A lasting presence touched with glory.

The star may vanish, — but a ray,
 Sent forth, what mandate can recall ?
 The circling wave still keeps its way
 That marked a turret's seaward fall ;
 The least of music's uttered strains
 Is part of Nature's voice forever ;
 And aye beyond the grave remains
 The great, the good man's high endeavor !

Well may the brooding Earth retake
 The form we knew, to be a part
 Of bloom and herbage, fern and brake,
 New lives that from her being start.
 Naught of the soul shall there remain :
 They came on void and darkness solely
 Who the veiled Spirit sought in vain
 Within the temple's shrine Most Holy.

That, that, has found again the source
From which itself to us was lent :
The Power that, in perpetual course,
Makes of the dust an instrument
Supreme ; the universal Soul ;
The current infinite and single
Wherein, as ages onward roll,
Life, Thought, and Will forever mingle.

What more is left, to keep *our* hold
On him who was so true and strong ?
This semblance, raised above the mould
With offerings of word and song,
That men may teach, in aftertime,
Their sons how goodness marked the features
Of one whose life was made sublime
By service for his brother creatures.

And last, and lordliest, his fame, —
A station in the sacred line
Of heroes that have left a name
We conjure with, — a place divine,
Since, in the world's eternal plan,
Divinity itself is given,
To him who lives or dies for Man
And looks within his soul for Heaven.

NEWS FROM OLYMPIA.¹

OLYMPIA? Yes, strange tidings from the city
 Which pious mortals builded, stone by stone,
 For those old gods of Hellas, half in pity
 Of their storm-mantled height and dwelling lone, —
 Their seat upon the mountain overhanging
 Where Zeus withdrew behind the rolling cloud,
 Where crowned Apollo sang, the phorminx twanging,
 And at Poseidon's word the forests bowed.

Ay, but that fated day
 When from the plain Olympia passed away ;
 When ceased the oracles, and long unwept
 Amid their fanes the gods deserted fell,
 While sacerdotal ages, as they slept,
 The ruin covered well !

The pale Jew flung his cross, thus one has written,
 Among them as they sat at the high feast,
 And saw the gods, before that token smitten,
 Fade slowly, while His presence still increased,
 Until the seas Ionian and Ægæan
 Gave out a cry that Pan himself was dead,
 And all was still : thenceforth no more the pæan,
 No more by men the prayer to Zeus was said.

Sank, like a falling star,
 Hephaistos in the Lemnian waters far ;

¹ "One after the other the figures described by Pausanias are dragged from the earth. Niké has been found; the head of Kladeos is there; Myrtilos is announced, and Zeus will soon emerge. This is earnest of what may follow." — *Despatch to the London Times*.

The silvery Huntress fled the darkened sky ;
 Dim grew Athene's helm, Apollo's crown ;
 Alpheios' nymphs stood wan and trembling by
 When Hera's fane went down.

News ! what news ? Has it in truth then ended,
 The term appointed for that wondrous sleep ?
 Has Earth so well her fairest brood defended
 Within her bosom ? Was their slumber deep
 Not this our dreamless rest that knows no waking,
 But that to which the years are as a day ?
 What ! are they coming back, their prison breaking, —
 These gods of Homer's chant, of Pindar's lay ?

Are they coming back in might,
 Olympia's gods, to claim their ancient right ?
 Shall then the sacred majesty of old,
 The grace that holy was, the noble rage,
 Temper our strife, abate our greed for gold,
 Make fine the modern age ?

Yes, they are coming back, to light returning !
 Bold are the hearts and void of fear the hands
 That toil, the lords of War and Spoil unurning,
 Or of their sisters fair that break the bands ;
 That loose the sovran mistress of desire,
 Queen Aphrodite, to possess the earth
 Once more ; that dare renew dread Hera's ire,
 And rouse old Pan to wantonness of mirth.

The herald Niké, first,
 From the dim resting-place unfettered burst,
 Winged victor over fate and time and death !
 Zeus follows next, and all his children then ;

Phoibos awakes and draws a joyous breath,
And Love returns to men.

Ah, let them come, the glorious Immortals,
Rulers no more, but with mankind to dwell,
The dear companions of our hearts and portals,
Voiceless, unworshipped, yet beloved right well !
Pallas shall sit enthroned in wisdom's station,
Eros and Psyche be forever wed,
And still the primal loveliest creation
Yield new delight from ancient beauty bred.

Triumphant as of old,
Changeless while Art and Song their warrant hold,
The visions of our childhood haunt us still,
Still Hellas sways us with her charm supreme.
The morn is past, but Man has not the will
To banish yet the dream.

LE JOUR DU ROSSIGNOL.

'T WAS the season of feasts, when the blithe birds
had met

In their easternmost arbor, an innocent throng,
And they made the glad birthday of each gladder yet,
With the daintiest cheer and the rarest of song.

What brave tirra-lirras ! But clear amid all,
At each festival held in the favorite haunt,
The nightingale's music would quaver and fall,
And surest and sweetest of all was his chant.

At last came the nightingale's fête, and they sought
To make it the blithefullest tryst of the year,
Since this was the songster that oftenest caught
The moment's quick rapture, the joy that is near.

But, alas ! half in vain the fine chorus they made ;
Fresh-plumed and all fluttering, and uttering their
best,
For silent among them, so etiquette bade,
To the notes of his praisers sat listening the guest.

Quel dommage ! Must a failure, like theirs, be our
feast ?

Must our chorister's voice at his own fête be still ?
While he thinks : " You are kind. May your tribe be
increased ;

But at this I can give you *such* odds if I will ! "

What avail, fellow-minstrels, our crotchets and staves,
Though your tribute, like mine, rises straight from
the heart,

Unless while the bough on his laurel-bush waves,
To his own sängerfest the one guest lends his art ?

Whose swift wit like his, with which none dares to vie,
Whose carol so instant, so joyous and true ?
Sound it cheerly, dear HOLMES, for the sun is still high,
And we 're glad, as he halts, to be out-sung by you.

MERIDIAN.

AN OLD-FASHIONED POEM.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE YALE CLASS
OF 1853.Inque brevi spatio mutantur sæcla animantum
Et quasi cursores vitæ lampada tradunt.LUCRETIVS, *De Rer. Nat.*, Lib. ii.

I.

THE tryst is kept. How fares it with each one
At this mid hour, when mariners take the sun
And cast their reckoning? when some level height
Is reached by men who set their strength aright, —
Who for a little space the firm plateau
Tread sure and steadfast, yet who needs must know
Full soon begins the inevitable slide
Down westward slopings of the steep divide.

How stands it, comrades, at this noontide fleet,
When for an hour we gather to the meet?
Like huntsmen, rallied by the winding horn,
Who seek the shade with trophies lightly borne,
Remembering their deeds of derring-do —
What bows were bent, what arrows speeded true.
All, all have striven, and far apart have strayed:
Fling down! fill up the can! wipe off the blade!
Ring out the song! nor care, in this our mood,
What hollow echo mocks us from the wood!

Or is it with us, haply, as with those
Each man of whom the morn's long combat knows?

All veterans now : the bugle's far recall
 From the hot strife has sounded sweet to all.
 Welcome the rendezvous beneath the elms,
 The truce, the throwing down of swords and helms !

Life *is* a battle ! How these sayings trite
 Which school-boys write — and know not what they
 write —

In after years begin to burn and glow !
 What man is here that has not found it so ?
 Who here is not a soldier of the wars,
 Has not his half-healed wound, his early scars, —
 Has broken not his sword, or from the field
 Borne often naught but honor and his shield ?
 Ah, ye recruits, with flags and arms unstained,
 See by what toil and moil the heights are gained !
 Learn of our skirmish lost, our ridges won,
 The dust, the thirst beneath the scorching sun ;
 Then see us closer draw — by fate bereft
 Of men we loved — the firm-set column left.

II.

To me the picture that some painter drew
 Makes answer for our past. His throng pursue
 A siren, one that ever smiles before,
 Almost in reach, alluring more and more.
 Old, young, with outstretched hand, with eager eye,
 Fast follow where her wingèd sandals fly,
 While by some witchery unto each she seems
 His dearest hope, the spirit of his dreams.
 Ah, me ! how like those dupes of Pleasure's chase,
 Yet how unlike, we left our starting-place !
 Is there not something nobler, far more true,
 In the Ideal, still before our view,

Upon whose shining course we followed far
While sank and rose the night and morning star?
Ever we saw a bright glance cast behind
Or heard a word of hope borne down the wind, —
As yet we see and hear, and follow still
With faithful hearts and long-enduring will.

In what weird circle has the enchantress led
Our footsteps, so that now again they tread
These walks, and all that on the course befell
Seems to ourselves a shadow and a spell?
Was it the magic of a moment's trance,
A scholar's day-dream? Have we been, perchance,
Like that bewildered king who dipped his face
In water — while a dervish paused to trace
A mystic phrase — and, ere he raised it, lived
A score of seasons, labored, journeyed, wived
In a strange city, — Tunis or Algiers, —
And, after what had seemed so many years,
Came to himself, and found all this had been
During the palace-clock's brief noonday din?

For here the same blithe robins seem to house
In the elm-forest, underneath whose boughs
We too were sheltered; nay, we cannot mark
The five-and-twenty rings, beneath the bark,
That tell the growth of some historic tree,
Since we, too, were a part of Arcady.
And in our trance, *negari*, should the bell
Speak out the hour, *non potest quin*, 't were well
The upper or the lower room to seek
For Tully's Latin, Homer's rhythmic Greek; —
Yet were it well? ay, brothers, if, alack,
For this one day the shadow might go back!

Ah, no ! with doubtful faces each on each
We look, we speak with altered, graver speech :
The spell is gone ! We know what 't is to wake
From an illusive dream, at morning's break,
That we again are dark-haired, buoyant, young, —
Scanning, once more, our spring-time mates among,
The grand hexameter — that anthem free
Of the pursuing, loud-resounding sea, —
To wake, anon, and know another day
Already speeds for one whose hairs are gray, —
In this swift change to lose a third of life
Lopped by the stroke of Memory's ruthless knife,
And feel, though naught go ill, it is a pain
That youth, lost youth, can never come again !

Were the dream real, or should we idly go
To yonder halls and strive to make it so,
There listening to the voices that rehearse,
Like ours of old, the swift Ionic verse,
What silvery speech could now for us restore
The cadence that we thought to hear once more ?
The low, calm utterance of him who first
Our faltering minds to clearer knowledge nursed, —
The perfect teacher, who endured our raw
Harsh bleatings with a pang we never saw ;
Whose bearing was so apt we scarcely knew,
At first, the wit that lit him through and through,
Strength's surplusage ; nor, after many a day
Had taught us, rated well the heart that lay
Beneath his speech, nor guessed how brave a soul
In that frail body dwelt with fine control :
Alas, no longer dwells ! Time's largest theft
Was that which learning and the world bereft
Of this pure scholar, — one who had been great
In every walk where led by choice or fate,

Were not his delicate yearnings still repress
Obeying duty's every-day behest.
He shrank from note, yet might have worn at ease
The garb whose counterfeit a sad world sees
Round many a dolt who gains, and deems it fame,
One tenth the honor due to HADLEY'S name.

Too soon the years, gray Time's relentless breed,
Have claimed our Pascal. He is theirs indeed ;
Yet three remain of the ancestral mould,
Abreast, like them who kept the bridge of old :
The true, large-hearted man so many found
A helpful guardian, stalwart, sane, and sound ;
And he, by sure selection upward led,
Whom now we reverence as becomes the Head, —
The sweet polemic, pointing shafts divine
With kindly satire, — latest of the line
That dates from godly Pierson. No less dear,
And more revered with each unruffled year,
That other Grecian : he who stands aside
Watching the streams that gather and divide.
Alcestis' love, the Titan's deathless will,
We read of in his text, and drank our fill
At Plato's spring. Now, from his sacred shade,
Still on the outer world his hand is laid
In use and counsel. Whom the nation saw
Most fit for Heaven could best expound Earth's law.

His wise, kind eyes behold — nor are they loth —
The larger scope, the quarter-century's growth :
How blooms the Mother with unwrinkled brow
To whom her wandering sons, returning now,
Come not alone, but bring their sons to prove
That children's children have a share of love.

Through them she proffers us a second chance ;
With their young eyes we see her hands advance
To crown the sports once banished from her sight ;
With them we see old wrong become the right,
Tread pleasant halls, a healthy life behold
Less stinted than the cloister-range of old —
When the last hour of morning sleep was lost
And prayer was sanctified by dusk and frost,
And hungry tutors taught a class unfed
That a full stomach meant an empty head.
For them a tenth Muse, Beauty, here and there
Has touched the landmarks, making all more fair ;—
We knew her not, save in our stolen dreams
Or stumbling song, but now her likeness gleams
Through chapel aisles, and in the house where Art
Has builded for her praise its shrines apart.

Now the new Knowledge, risen like a sun,
Makes bright for them the hidden ways that none
Revealed to us ; or haply would dethrone
The gods of old, and rule these hearts alone
From yonder stronghold. By unnumbered strings
She draws our sons to her discoverings, —
Traces the secret paths of force, the heat
That makes the stout heart give its patient beat,
Follows the stars through æons far and free
And shows what forms have been and are to be.

Such things are plain to these we hither brought,
More strange and varied than ourselves were taught ;
But has the iris of the murmuring shell
A charm the less because we know full well
Sweet Nature's trick ? Is Music's dying fall
Less finely blent with strains antiphonal

Because within a harp's quick vibratings
 We count the tremor of the spirit's wings ?
 There is a path by Science yet untrod
 Where with closed eyes we walk to find out God !
 Still, still, the unattained ideal lures,
 The spell evades, the splendor yet endures ;
 False sang the poet, — there is no good in rest,
 And Truth still leads us to a deeper quest.

III.

But Alma Mater, with her mother-eyes
 Seeing us graver grown if not more wise, —
 She calls us back, dear comrades — ah, how dear,
 And dearer than when each to each was near !
 Time thickens blood ! Enough to know that one
 Our classmate was and is, and is her son ; —
 She looks unto the East, the South, the West,
 Asking, " Now who have kept my maxims best ?
 Who have most nearly held within their grasp
 The fluttering robe that each essayed to clasp ? "
 Can ye not answer, brothers, even as I,
 That still in front the vision seems to fly, —
 More light and fleet her shining footsteps burn,
 And speed the most when most she seems to turn ?
 And some have fallen, fallen from our band
 Just as we thought to see them lay the hand
 Upon her scarf : we know their precious names,
 Their hearts, their work, their sorrows, and their
 fames.

Few gifts the brief years brought them, yet how few
 Fell to the living as the lots we drew !
 But some, who most were baffled, later found
 Capricious Fortune's arms a moment wound
 About them ; some, who sought her on one side,
 Beheld her reach them by a compass wide.

What then is Life ? or what Success may be
 Who, who can tell ? who for another see ?
 From those, perchance, that closest seem to hold
 Her love, her strength, her laurels, or her gold,
 In this meridian hour she far has sped
 And left them but her phantom mask instead.

A grave, sweet poet in a song has told
 Of one, a king, who in his palace old
 Hung up a bell ; and placed its cord anear
 His couch, — that thenceforth, when the court should
 hear

Its music, all might know the king had rung
 With his own hand, and that its silver tongue
 Gave out the words of joy he wished to say,
 " I have been wholly happy on this day !"
 Joy's full perfection never to him came ;
 Voiceless the bell, year after year the same,
 Till, in his death-throes, round the cord his hand
 Gathered — and there was mourning in the land.

I pray you, search the wistful past, and tell
 Which of you all could ring the happy bell !
 The treasure-trove, the gifts we ask of Fate,
 Come far apart, come mildewed, come too late.
 What says the legend ? " All that man desires
 Greatly at morn he gains ere day expires ;"
 But Age craves not the fruits that gladden Youth, —
 It sits among its vineyards, full of ruth,
 Finding the owner's right to what is best
 Of little worth without the seeker's zest.

Yet something has been gained. Not all a waste
 The light-winged years have vanished in their haste,

Howbeit their gift was scant of what we thought,
So much we thought not of they slowly wrought !
Not all a waste the insight and the zeal
We gathered here : these surely make for weal ;
The current sets for him who swims upbuoyed
By the trained skill, with all his arts employed.
Coy Fortune may disdain our noblest cares,
The good she gives at last comes unawares : —
Long, long in vain, — with patience, worth, and love, —
To do her task the enchanted princess strove,
Till in the midnight pitying fairies crept
Unraveling the tangle while she slept.

This, then, the boon our Age of Wisdom brings, —
A knowledge of the real worth of things :
How poor, how good, is wealth ; how surely fame
And beauty must return to whence they came,
Yet not for this less beautiful and rare —
It is their evanescence makes them fair
And worth possession. Ours the age still strong
With passions, that demand not curb nor thong ;
And ours the age not old enough to set
Youth's joys above their proper worth, nor yet
So young as still to trust its empery more
Than unseen hands which lead to fortune's door.
For most have done the best they could, and all
The reign of law has compassed like a wall ;
Something accrued to each, and each has seen
A Power that works for good in life's demesne.
In our own time, to many a masquerade
The hour has come when masks aside were laid :
We've seen the shams die out, the poor pretense
Cut off at last by truth's keen instruments,
The ignoble fashion wane and pass away, —

The fine return a second time, to stay, —
The knave, the quack, and all the meaner brood,
Go surely down, by the strong years subdued,
And, in the quarter-century's capping-race,
Strength, talent, honor, take and hold their place.

More glad, you say, the song I might have sung
In the free, careless days when all were young!
Now, long deferred, the sullen stroke of time
Has given a graver key, a deeper chime,
That the late singer of this strain might prove
Himself less keen for honors, more for love,
And in the music of your answer find
The charms that life to further action bind.
The Past is past ; survey its course no more ;
Henceforth our glasses sweep the further shore.
Five lustra, briefer than those gone, remain,
And then — a white-haired few shall meet again,
Lifting their heads that long have learned to droop,
And hear some sweeter minstrel of our group.
But stay ! which one of us, alone, shall dine
At the Last Shadowy Banquet of the line ?
Who knows ? who does not in his heart reply
“ It matters not, so that it be not I.”



TRANSLATIONS.



THE DEATH OF AGAMEMNON.





TRANSLATIONS.

I. THE DEATH OF AGAMEMNON.

FROM HOMER.

[*Odyssey*, XI., 385-456.]

ODYSSEUS IN HADES.

AFTERWARD, soon as the chaste Persephone
hither and thither ³⁸⁵
Now had scattered afar the slender shades of the
women,
Came the sorrowing ghost of Agamemnon Atreides;
Round whom thronged, besides, the souls of the others
who also
Died, and met their fate, with him in the house of Ai-
gisthos.
He, then, after he drank of the dark blood, instantly
knew me, — ³⁹⁰
Ay, and he wailed aloud, and plenteous tears was shed-
ding,
Toward me reaching hands and eagerly longing to
touch me ;
But he was shorn of strength, nor longer came at his
bidding

That great force which once abode in his pliant members.

Seeing him thus, I wept, and my heart was laden with pity,

And, uplifting my voice, in wingéd words I addressed him :

“King of men, Agamemnon, thou glorious son of Atreus,

Say, in what wise did the doom of prostrate death overcome thee ?

Was it within thy ships thou wast subdued by Poseidon Rousing the dreadful blast of winds too hard to be mastered,

Or on the firm-set land did banded foemen destroy thee Cutting their oxen off, and their flocks so fair, or, it may be,

While in a town's defence, or in that of women, contending ?”

Thus I spake, and he, replying, said to me straightway :

“Nobly-born and wise Odysseus, son of Laertes, Neither within my ships was I subdued by Poseidon Rousing the dreadful blast of winds too hard to be mastered,

Nor on the firm-set land did banded foemen destroy me, —

Nay, but death and my doom were well contrived by Aigisthos,

Who, with my curséd wife, at his own house bidding me welcome,

Fed me, and slew me, as one might slay an ox at the manger !

So, by a death most wretched, I died ; and all my companions

Round me were slain off-hand, like white-toothed swine
that are slaughtered
Thus, when some lordly man, abounding in power and
riches,
Orders a wedding-feast, or a frolic, or mighty car-
rousal. ⁴¹⁵
Thou indeed hast witnessed the slaughter of number-
less heroes
Massacred, one by one, in the battle's heat; but with
pity
All thy heart had been full, if thou hadst seen what I
tell thee, —
How in the hall we lay among the wine-jars, and
under
Tables laden with food; and how the pavement, on all
sides, ⁴²⁰
Swam with blood! And I heard the dolorous cry of
Kassandra,
Priam's daughter, whom treacherous Klytaimnestra
anear me
Slew; and upon the ground I fell in my death-throes,
vainly
Reaching out hands to my sword, while the shameless
woman departed,
Nor did she even stay to press her hands on my eye-
lids, ⁴²⁵
No, nor to close my mouth, although I was passing to
Hades.
O, there is naught more dire, more insolent than a
woman
After the very thought of deeds like these has pos-
sessed her, —
One who would dare to devise an act so utterly shame-
less,

Lying in wait to slay her wedded lord. I bethought
 me, 430
 Verily, home to my children and servants giving me
 welcome
 Safe to return ; but she has wrought for herself con-
 fusion,
 Plotting these grievous woes, and for other women here-
 after,
 Even for those, in sooth, whose thoughts are set upon
 goodness."

Thus he spake, and I, in turn replying, addressed
 him : 435
 "Heavens ! how from the first has Zeus the thunderer
 hated,
 All for the women's wiles, the brood of Atreus ! What
 numbers
 Perished in quest of Helen, — and Klytaimnestra, the
 meanwhile,
 Wrought in her soul this guile for thee afar on thy
 journey."

Thus I spake, and he, replying, said to me straight-
 way : 440
 "See that thou art not, then, like me too mild to thy
 helpmeet ;
 Nor to her ear reveal each secret matter thou knowest,
 Tell her the part, forsooth, and see that the rest shall
 be hidden.
 Nathless, not unto thee will come such murder, Odys-
 seus,
 Dealt by a wife ; for wise indeed, and true in her pur-
 pose, 445
 Noble Penelope is, the child of Ikarios. Truly,
 She it was whom we left, a fair young bride, when we
 started

Off for the wars ; and then an infant lay at her bosom,
 One who now, methinks, in the list of men must be
 seated, —
 Blest indeed ! ah, yes, for his well-loved father, re-
 turning, 450
 Him shall behold, and the son shall clasp the sire, as is
 fitting.
 Not unto me to feast my eyes with the sight of my off-
 spring
 Granted the wife of my bosom, but first of life she be-
 reft me.
 Therefore I say, moreover, and charge thee well to
 remember,
 Unto thine own dear land steer thou thy vessel in
 secret, 455
 Not in the light ; since faith can be placed in woman
 no longer.”

II. THE DEATH OF AGAMEMNON.

FROM AISCHYLOS.

I.

[AISCHYLOS, *Agamemnon*, 1266-1318.]

CHORUS — KASSANDRA — AGAMEMNON.

CHORUS.

○ WRETCHED woman indeed, and O most wise,
 Much hast thou said ; but if thou knowest well
 Thy doom, why, like a heifer, by the Gods
 Led to the altar, tread so brave of soul ?

¹ Text of Paley.

KASSANDRA.

There 's no escape, O friends, the time is full.

CHORUS.

Nathless, the last to enter gains in time.

KASSANDRA.

The day has come ; little I make by flight.

CHORUS.

Thou art bold indeed, and of a daring spirit !

KASSANDRA.

Such sayings from the happy none hath heard.

CHORUS.

Grandly to die is still a grace to mortals.

KASSANDRA.

Alas, my sire, — thee and thy noble brood !

(She starts back from the entrance.)

CHORUS.

How now ? What horror turns thee back again ?

KASSANDRA.

Faugh ! faugh !

CHORUS.

Why such a cry ? There 's something chills thy soul !

KASSANDRA.

The halls breathe murder, — ay, they drip with blood.

CHORUS.

How ? 'T is the smell of victims at the hearth.

KASSANDRA.

Nay, but the exhalation of the tomb !

CHORUS.

No Syrian dainty, this, of which thou speakest.

KASSANDRA (*at the portal*).

Yet will I in the palace wail my own
And Agamemnon's fate ! Enough of life !
Alas, O friends !
Yet not for naught I quail, not as a bird
Snared in the bush : bear witness, though I die,
A woman's slaughter shall requite my own,
And, for this man ill-yoked, a man shall fall !
Thus prays of you a stranger, at death's door.

CHORUS.

Lost one, I rue with thee thy foretold doom !

KASSANDRA.

Once more I fain would utter words, once more, —
'T is my own threne ! And I invoke the Sun,
By his last beam, that my detested foes
May pay no less to them who shall avenge me,
Than I who die an unresisting slave !

(*She enters the palace.*)

CHORUS.

Of Fortune was never yet enow
To mortal man ; and no one ever
Her presence from his house would sever
And point, and say, " Come no more nigh !"
Unto our King granted the Gods on high

That Priam's towers should bow,
And homeward, crowned of Heaven, hath he come ;
But now if, for the ancestral blood that lay
At his doors, he falls, — and the dead, that cursed his
home,

He, dying, must in full requite, —
What manner of man is one that would not pray
To be born with a good attendant Sprite ?

(An outcry within the palace.)

AGAMEMNON.

Woe's me ! I am stricken a deadly blow within !

CHORUS.

Hark ! Who is 't cries "a blow" ? Who meets his
death ?

AGAMEMNON.

Woe's me ! again ! a second time I am stricken !

CHORUS.

The deed, methinks, from the King's cry, is done.
Quick, let us see what help may be in counsel !

2.

[*Agamemnon*, 1343-1377.]

Enter KLYTAIMNESTRA, *from the Palace.*

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

Now, all this formal outcry having vent,
I shall not blush to speak the opposite.
How should one, plotting evil things for foes,

Encompass seeming friends with such a bane
 Of toils ? it were a height too great to leap ?
 Not without full prevision came, though late,
 To me this crisis of an ancient feud.
 And here, the deed being done, I stand— even where
 I smote him ! nor deny that thus I did it,
 So that he could not flee nor ward off doom.
 A seamless net, as round a fish, I cast
 About him, yea, a deadly wealth of robe ;
 Then smote him twice ; and with a double cry
 He loosed his limbs ; and to him fallen I gave
 Yet a third thrust, a grace to Hades, lord
 Of the underworld and guardian of the dead.
 So, falling, out he gasps his soul, and out
 He spurts a sudden jet of blood, that smites
 Me with a sable rain of gory dew, —
 Me, then no less exulting than the field
 In the sky's gift, while bursts the pregnant ear !
 Things being thus, old men of Argos, joy,
 If joy ye can ; — I glory in the deed !
 And if 't were seemly ever yet to pour
 Libation to the dead, 't were most so now ;
 Most meet that one, who poured for his own home
 A cup of ills, returning, thus should drain it !

CHORUS.

Shame on thy tongue ! how bold of mouth thou art
 That vauntest such a speech above thy husband !

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

Ye try me as a woman loose of soul ;
 But I with dauntless heart avow to you
 Well knowing — and whether ye choose to praise or
 blame

I care not — this is Agamemnon ; yea,
 My husband ; yea, a corpse, of this right hand,
 This craftsman sure, the handiwork ! Thus stands it.

3.

[*Agamemnon*, 1466-1507.]

CHORUS — SEMI-CHORUS — KLYTAIMNESTRA.

CHORUS.

Woe ! Woe !

King ! O how shall I weep for thy dying ?
 What shall my fond heart say anew ?
 Thou in the web of the spider art lying,
 Breathing out life by a death she shall rue.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Alas ! alas for this slavish couch ! By a sword
 Two-edged, by a hand untrue,
 Thou art smitten, even to death, my lord !

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

Thou sayest this deed was mine alone ;
 But I bid thee call me not
 The wife of Agamemnon's bed ;
 'T was the ancient fell Alastor¹ of Atreus' throne,
 The lord of a horrid feast, this crime begot,
 Taking the shape that seemed the wife of the dead, —
 His sure revenge, I wot,
 A victim ripe hath claimed for the young that bled.

¹ The Evil Genius, the Avenger.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Who shall bear witness now, —
Who of this murder, now, thee guiltless hold?
How sayest thou? How?
Yet the fell Alastor may have holpen, I trow:
Still is dark Ares driven
Down currents manifold
Of kindred blood, wherever judgment is given,
And he comes to avenge the children slain of old,
And their thick gore cries to Heaven!

CHORUS.

Woe! Woe!
King! O how shall I weep for thy dying?
What shall my fond heart say anew?
Thou in the web of the spider art lying,
Breathing out life by a death she shall rue!

SEMI-CHORUS.

Alas! alas for this slavish couch! By a sword
Two-edged, by a hand untrue,
Thou art smitten, even to death, my lord!

KLYTAIMNESTRA.

Hath he not subtle Atè brought
Himself, to his kingly halls?
'T was on our own dear offspring, — yea,
On Iphigeneia, wept for still, he wrought
The doom that cried for the doom by which he falls.
O, let him not in Hades boast, I say,
For 't is the sword that calls,
Even for that foul deed, his soul away!



LATER POEMS.





LATER POEMS.



THE SONGSTER.

A MIDSUMMER CAROL.

I.

WITHIN our summer hermitage
I have an aviary, —
'T is but a little, rustic cage,
That holds a golden-winged Canary, —
A bird with no companion of his kind.
But when the warm south-wind
Blows, from rathe meadows, over
The honey-scented clover,
I hang him in the porch, that he may hear
The voices of the bobolink and thrush,
The robin's joyous gush,
The bluebird's warble, and the tunes of all
Glad matin songsters in the fields anear.
Then, as the blithe responses vary,

And rise anew, and fall,
 In every hush
 He answers them again,
 With his own wild, reliant strain,
 As if he breathed the air of sweet Canary.

II.

Bird, bird of the golden wing,
 Thou lithe, melodious thing!
 Where hast thy music found?
 What fantasies of vale and vine,
 Of glades where orchids intertwine,
 Of palm-trees, garlanded and crowned,
 And forests flooded deep with sound,—
 What high imagining
 Hath made this carol thine?
 By what instinct art thou bound
 To all rare harmonies that be
 In those green islands of the sea,
 Where thy radiant, wildwood kin
 Their madrigals at morn begin,
 Above the rainbow and the roar
 Of the long billow from the Afric shore?

Asking other guerdon
 None, than Heaven's light,
 Holding thy crested head aright,
 Thy melody's sweet burden
 Thou dost proudly utter,
 With many an ecstatic flutter
 And ruffle of thy tawny throat
 For each delicious note.
 — Art thou a waif from Paradise,

In some fine moment wrought
 By an artist of the skies,
 Thou winged, cherubic Thought ?

Bird of the amber beak,
 Bird of the golden wing !
 Thy dower is thy carolling ;
 Thou hast not far to seek
 Thy bread, nor needest wine
 To make thine utterance divine ;
 Thou art canopied and clothed
 And unto Song betrothed !
 In thy lone aërial cage
 Thou hast thine ancient heritage ;
 There is no task-work on thee laid
 But to rehearse the ditties thou hast made ;
 Thou hast a lordly store,
 And, though thou scatterest them free,
 Art richer than before,
 Holding in fee
 The glad domain of minstrelsy.

III.

Brave songster, bold Canary !
 Thou art not of thy listeners wary,
 Art not timorous, nor chary
 Of quaver, trill, and tone,
 Each perfect and thine own ;
 But renewest, shrill or soft,
 Thy greeting to the upper skies,
 Chanting thy latest song aloft
 With no tremor or disguise.
 Thine is a music that defies

The envious rival near ;
 Thou hast no fear
 Of the day's vogue, the scornful critic's sneer.

Would, O wisest bard, that now
 I could cheerly sing as thou !
 Would I might chant the thoughts which on me throng
 For the very joy of song !
 Here, on the written page,
 I falter, yearning to impart
 The vague and wandering murmur of my heart,
 Haply a little to assuage
 This human restlessness and pain,
 And half forget my chain :
 Thou, unconscious of thy cage,
 Showerest music everywhere ;
 Thou hast no care
 But to pour out the largesse thou hast won
 From the south-wind and the sun ;
 There are no prison-bars
 Betwixt thy tricky spirit and the stars.

When from its delicate clay
 Thy little life shall pass away,
 Thou wilt not meanly die,
 Nor voiceless yield to silence and decay ;
 But triumph still in art
 And act thy minstrel-part,
 Lifting a last, long pæan
 To the unventured empyrean.
 — So bid the world go by,
 And they who list to thee aright,
 Seeing thee fold thy wings and fall, shall say :
 “ The Songster perished of his own delight ! ”

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH.

OUT, out, Old Age! aroint ye!
I fain would disappoint ye,
Nor wrinkled grow and learned
Before I am inurned.
Ruthless the Hours and hoary,
That scatter ills before ye!
Thy touch is pestilential,
Thy lays are penitential;
With stealthy steps thou stealest
And life's hot tide congealest;
Before thee vainly flying
We are already dying.
Why must the blood grow colder,
And men and maidens older?
Bring not thy maledictions,
Thy grewsome, grim afflictions, —
Thy bodings bring not hither
To make us blight and wither.
When this thy frost hath bound us,
All fairer things around us
Seem Youth's divine extortion
In which we have no portion.
“Fie, Senex!” saith a lass now,
“What need ye of a glass now?
Though flowers of May be springing
And I my songs am singing,
Thy blood no whit the faster
Doth flow, my ancient Master!”
Age is by Youth delighted,
Youth is by Age affrighted;

Blithe sunny May and joysome
Still finds December noisome.
Alack! a guest unbidden,
Howe'er our feast be hidden,
Doth enter with the feaster
And make a Lent of Easter!
I would thou wert not able
To seat thee at our table;
I would that altogether
From this thy wintry weather,
Since Youth and Love must leave us,
Death might at once retrieve us.
Old wizard, ill betide ye!
I cannot yet abide ye!

Ah, Youth, sweet Youth, I love ye!
There's naught on Earth above ye!
Thou purling bird uncaged
That never wilt grow aged,
To whom each day is giving
Increase of joyous living!
Soft words to thee are spoken,
For thee strong vows are broken,
All loves and lovers cluster,
To bask them in thy lustre.
Ah, girlhood, pout and dimple,
Half hid beneath the wimple!
Ah, boyhood, blithe and cruel,
Whose heat doth need no fuel,
No help of wine and spices
And frigid Eld's devices!
All pleasant things ye find you,
And to your sweet selves bind you.
For you alone the motion

Of brave ships on the ocean ;
 All stars for you are shining,
 All wreaths your foreheads twining ;
 All joys, your joys decreeing,
 Are portions of your being, —
 All fairest sights your features,
 Ye selfish, soulful creatures !
 Sing me no more distiches
 Of glory, wisdom, riches ;
 Tell me no beldame's story
 Of wisdom, wealth, and glory !
 To Youth these are a wonder, —
 To Age a corpse-light under
 The tomb with rusted portal
 Of that which seemed immortal.
 I, too, in Youth's dear fetter,
 Will love my foeman better, —
 Ay, though his ill I study, —
 So he be young and ruddy,
 Than comrade true and golden,
 So he be waxen olden.
 Ah, winsome Youth, stay by us !
 I prithee, do not fly us !
 Ah, Youth, sweet Youth, I love ye !
 There 's naught on Earth above ye !

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.

(FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.)

THOU art mine, thou hast given thy word ;
 Close, close in my arms thou art clinging ;
 Alone for my ear thou art singing
 A song which no stranger hath heard :

But afar from me yet, like a bird,
 Thy soul, in some region unstirred,
 On its mystical circuit is winging.

Thou art mine, I have made thee mine own ;
 Henceforth we are mingled forever :
 But in vain, all in vain, I endeavor —
 Though round thee my garlands are thrown,
 And thou yieldest thy lips and thy zone —
 To master the spell that alone
 My hold on thy being can sever.

Thou art mine, thou hast come unto me !
 But thy soul, when I strive to be near it —
 The innermost fold of thy spirit —
 Is as far from my grasp, is as free,
 As the stars from the mountain-tops be,
 As the pearl, in the depths of the sea,
 From the portionless king that would wear it.

THE FLIGHT OF THE BIRDS.

WHITHER away, Robin,
 Whither away?
 Is it through envy of the maple-leaf,
 Whose blushes mock the crimson of thy breast,
 Thou wilt not stay?
 The summer days were long, yet all too brief
 The happy season thou hast been our guest :
 Whither away?



“The blast is chill, yet in the upper sky
Thou still canst find the color of thy wing.” Page 373.

Whither away, Bluebird,
Whither away ?

The blast is chill, yet in the upper sky
Thou still canst find the color of thy wing,
The hue of May.

Warbler, why speed thy southern flight ? ah, why,
Thou too, whose song first told us of the Spring ?
Whither away ?

Whither away, Swallow,
Whither away ?

Canst thou no longer tarry in the North,
Here, where our roof so well hath screened thy nest ?
Not one short day ?

Wilt thou — as if thou human wert — go forth
And wanton far from them who love thee best ?
Whither away ?

HYPATIA.

"T IS fifteen hundred years, you say,
Since that fair teacher died
In learned Alexandria
By the stone altar's side : —
The wild monks slew her, as she lay
At the feet of the Crucified.

Yet in a prairie-town, one night,
I found her lecture-hall,
Where bench and dais stood aright,
And statues graced the wall,
And pendent brazen lamps the light
Of classic days let fall.

A throng that watched the speaker's face,
 And on her accents hung,
 Was gathered there : the strength, the grace
 Of lands where life is young
 Ceased not, I saw, with that blithe race
 From old Pelasgia sprung.

No civic crown the sibyl wore,
 Nor academic tire,
 But shining skirts, that trailed the floor
 And made her stature higher ;
 A written scroll the lecturn bore,
 And flowers bloomed anigh her.

The wealth her honeyed speech had won
 Adorned her in our sight ;
 The silkworm for her sake had spun
 His cincture, day and night ;
 With broider-work and Honiton
 Her open sleeves were bright.

But still Hypatia's self I knew,
 And saw, with dreamy wonder,
 The form of her whom Cyril slew
 (See Kingsley's novel, yonder)
 Some fifteen centuries since, 't is true,
 And half a world asunder.

Her hair was coifed Athenian-wise,
 With one loose tress down-flowing ;
 Apollo's rapture lit her eyes,
 His utterance bestowing, —
 A silver flute's clear harmonies
 On which a god was blowing.

Yet not of Plato's sounding spheres,
And universal Pan,
She spoke ; but searched historic years,
The sisterhood to scan
Of women, — girt with ills and fears, —
Slaves to the tyrant, Man.

Their crosiered banner she unfurled,
And onward pushed her quest
Through golden ages of a world
By their deliverance blest : —
At all who stay their hands she hurled
Defiance from her breast.

I saw her burning words infuse
A warmth through many a heart,
As still, in bright successive views,
She drew her sex's part ;
Discoursing, like the Lesbian Muse,
Of work, and song, and art.

Why vaunt, I thought, the past, or say
The later is the less ?
Our Sappho sang but yesterday,
Of whom two climes confess
Heaven's flame within her wore away
Her earthly loveliness.

So let thy wild heart ripple on,
Brave girl, through vale and city !
Spare, of its listless moments, one
To this, thy poet's ditty ;
Nor long forbear, when all is done,
Thine own sweet self to pity.

The priestess of the Sestian tower,
 Whose knight the sea swam over,
 Among her votaries' gifts no flower
 Of heart's-ease could discover :
 She died, but in no evil hour,
 Who, dying, clasped her lover.

The rose-tree has its perfect life
 When the full rose is blown ;
 Some height of womanhood the wife
 Beyond thy dream has known ;
 Set not thy head and heart at strife
 To keep thee from thine own.

Hypatia ! thine essence rare
 The rarer joy should merit :
 Possess thee of that common share
 Which lesser souls inherit :
 All gods to thee their garlands bear, —
 Take one from Love and wear it !

THE HEART OF NEW ENGLAND.

O LONG are years of waiting, when lovers' hearts
 are bound
 By words that hold in life and death, and last the half-
 world round ;
 Long, long for him who wanders far and strives with
 all his main,
 But crueller yet for her who bides at home and hides
 her pain !
 And lone are the homes of New England.

'T was in the mellow summer I heard her sweet reply ;
The barefoot lads and lassies a-berrying went by ;
The locust dinned amid the trees ; the fields were high
with corn ;
The white-sailed clouds against the sky like ships were
onward borne :
And blue are the skies of New England.

Her lips were like the raspberries ; her cheek was soft
and fair,
And little breezes stopped to lift the tangle of her hair ;
A light was in her hazel eyes, and she was nothing
loth
To hear the words her lover spoke, and pledged me
there her troth ;
And true is the word of New England.

When September brought the golden-rod, and maples
burned like fire,
And bluer than in August rose the village smoke and
higher,
And large and red among the stacks the ripened pump-
kins shone, —
One hour, in which to say farewell, was left to us alone ;
And sweet are the lanes of New England.

We loved each other truly ! hard, hard it was to part ;
But my ring was on her finger, and her hair lay next
my heart.
“ 'T is but a year, my darling,” I said ; “ in one short
year,
When our Western home is ready, I shall seek my
Katie here ” ;
And brave is the hope of New England.

I went to gain a home for her, and in the Golden State
With head and hand I planned and toiled, and early
worked and late ;
But luck was all against me, and sickness on me lay,
And ere I got my strength again 't was many a weary
day ;
And long are the thoughts of New England.

And many a day, and many a month, and thrice the
rolling year,
I bravely strove, and still the goal seemed never yet
more near.
My Katie's letters told me that she kept her promise
true,
But now, for very hopelessness, my own to her were few ;
And stern is the pride of New England.

But still she trusted in me, though sick with hope
deferred ;
No more among the village choir her voice was sweetest
heard ;
For when the wild northeaster of the fourth long winter
blew,
So thin her frame with pining, the cold wind pierced
her through ;
And chill are the blasts of New England.

At last my fortunes bettered, on the far Pacific shore,
And I thought to see old Windham and my patient love
once more ;
When a kinsman's letter reached me : " Come at once,
or come too late !
Your Katie's strength is failing ; if you love her, do not
wait :
Come back to the elms of New England."

O, it wrung my heart with sorrow! I left all else
behind,
And straight for dear New England I speeded like the
wind.
The day and night were blended till I reached my boy-
hood's home,
And the old cliffs seemed to mock me that I had not
sooner come ;
And gray are the rocks of New England.

I could not think 't was Katie, who sat before me there
Reading her Bible—'t was my gift—and pillowed in
her chair.
A ring, with all my letters, lay on a little stand,—
She could no longer wear it, so frail her poor, white
hand!
But strong is the love of New England.

Her hair had lost its tangle and was parted off her
brow ;
She used to be a joyous girl,—but seemed an angel
now,—
Heaven's darling, mine no longer ; yet in her hazel eyes
The same dear love-light glistened, as she soothed my
bitter cries :
And pure is the faith of New England.

A month I watched her dying, pale, pale as any rose
That drops its petals one by one and sweetens as it
goes.
My life was darkened when at last her large eyes
closed in death,
And I heard my own name whispered as she drew her
parting breath ;
Still, still was the heart of New England.

It was a woful funeral the coming sabbath-day ;
 We bore her to the barren hill on which the graveyard
 lay,
 And when the narrow grave was filled, and what we
 might was done,
 Of all the stricken group around I was the loneliest
 one ;
 And drear are the hills of New England.

I gazed upon the stunted pines, the bleak November
 sky,
 And knew that buried deep with her my heart hence-
 forth would lie ;
 And waking in the solemn nights my thoughts still
 thither go
 To Katie, lying in her grave beneath the winter snow ;
 And cold are the snows of New England.

THE DISCOVERER.

I HAVE a little kinsman
 Whose earthly summers are but three,
 And yet a voyager is he
 Greater than Drake or Frobisher,
 Than all their peers together !
 He is a brave discoverer,
 And, far beyond the tether
 Of them who seek the frozen Pole,
 Has sailed where the noiseless surges roll.
 Ay, he has travelled whither
 A winged pilot steered his bark
 Through the portals of the dark,

Past hoary Mimir's well and tree,
Across the unknown sea.

Suddenly, in his fair young hour,
Came one who bore a flower,
And laid it in his dimpled hand

With this command :

“Henceforth thou art a rover !

Thou must make a voyage far,
Sail beneath the evening star,
And a wondrous land discover.”

— With his sweet smile innocent
Our little kinsman went.

Since that time no word
From the absent has been heard.

Who can tell

How he fares, or answer well
What the little one has found
Since he left us, outward bound ?
Would that he might return !

Then should we learn
From the pricking of his chart
How the skyey roadways part.

Hush ! does not the baby this way bring,
To lay beside this severed curl,
Some starry offering
Of chrysolite or pearl ?

Ah, no ! not so !

We may follow on his track,
But he comes not back.

And yet I dare aver
He is a brave discoverer

Of climes his elders do not know.
 He has more learning than appears
 On the scroll of twice three thousand years,
 More than in the groves is taught,
 Or from furthest Indies brought ;
 He knows, perchance, how spirits fare, —
 What shapes the angels wear,
 What is their guise and speech
 In those lands beyond our reach, —
 And his eyes behold
 Things that shall never, never be to mortal hearers told.

SISTER BEATRICE.

A LEGEND FROM THE "SERMONES DISCIPULI" OF JEAN
 HEROLT, THE DOMINICAN, A. D. 1518.

A CLOISTER tale, — a strange and ancient thing
 Long since on vellum writ in gules and or :
 And why should Chance to me this trover bring
 From the grim dust-heap of forgotten lore,
 And not to that gray bard still measuring
 His laurelled years by music's golden score,
 Nor to some comrade who like him has caught
 The charm of lands by me too long unsought ?

Why not to one who, with a steadfast eye,
 Ingathering her shadow and her sheen,
 Saw Venice as she is, and, standing nigh,
 Drew from the life that old, dismantled queen ?
 Or to the poet through whom I well descriy
 Castile, and the Campeador's demesne ?

Or to that eager one whose quest has found
Each place of long renown, the world around ;

Whose foot has rested firm on either hill, —
The sea-girt height where glows the midnight sun,
And wild Parnassus ; whose melodious skill
Has left no song untried, no wreath unwon ?
Why not to these ? Yet, since by Fortune's will
This quaint task given me I must not shun,
My verse shall render, fitly as it may,
An old church legend, meet for Christmas Day.

Once on a time (so read the monkish pages),
Within a convent — that doth still abide
Even as it stood in those devouter ages,
Near a fair city, by the highway's side —
There dwelt a sisterhood of them whose wages
Are stored in heaven : each a virgin bride
Of Christ, and bounden meekly to endure
In faith, and works, and chastity most pure.

A convent, and within a summer-land,
Like that of Browning and Boccaccio !
Years since, my greener fancy would have planned
Its station thus : it should have had, I trow,
A square and flattened bell-tower, that might stand
Above deep-windowed buildings long and low,
Closed all securely by a vine-clung wall,
And shadowed on one side by cypress tall.

Within the gate, a garden set with care :
Box-bordered plots, where peach and almond trees
Rained blossoms on the maidens walking there,
Or rustled softly in the summer breeze ;

Here were sweet jessamine and jonquil rare,
 And arbors meet for pious talk at ease ;
 There must have been a dove-cote too, I know,
 Where white-winged birds like spirits come and go.

Outside, the thrush and lark their music made
 Beyond the olive-grove at dewy morn ;
 By noon, cicadas, shrilling in the shade
 Of oak and ilex, woke the peasant's horn ;
 And, at the time when into darkness fade
 The vineyards, from their purple depths were borne
 The nightingale's responses to the prayer
 Of those sweet saints at vespers, meek and fair.

Such is the place that, with the hand and eye
 Which are the joy of youth, I should have painted.
 Say not, who look thereon, that 't is awry —
 Like nothing real, by rhymesters' use attained.
 Ah well ! then put the faulty picture by,
 And help me draw an abbess long since sainted.
 Think of your love, each one, and thereby guess
 The fashion of this lady's beauteousness.

For in this convent Sister Beatrice,
 Of all her nuns the fairest and most young,
 Became, through grace and special holiness,
 Their sacred head, and moved, her brood among,
Dévoté d'âme et fervente au service ;
 And thrice each day, their hymns and Aves sung,
 At Mary's altar would before them kneel,
 Keeping her vows with chaste and pious zeal.

Now in the Holy Church there was a clerk,
 A godly-seeming man (as such there be

Whose selfish hearts with craft and guile are dark),
Young, gentle-phrased, of handsome mien and free.
His passion chose this maiden for its mark,
Begrudging heaven her white chastity,
And with most sacrilegious art the while
He sought her trustful nature to beguile.

Oft as they met, with subtle hardihood
He still more archly played the traitor's part,
And strove to wake that murmur in her blood
That times the pulses of a woman's heart ;
And in her innocence she long withstood
The secret tempter, but at last his art
Changed all her tranquil thoughts to love's desire,
Her vestal flame to earth's unhallowed fire.

So the fair governess, o'ermastered, gave
Herself to the destroyer, yet as one
That slays, in pity, her sweet self, to save
Another from some wretched deed undone ;
But when she found her heart was folly's slave,
She sought the altar which her steps must shun
Thenceforth, and yielded up her sacred trust,
Ere tasting that false fruit which turns to dust.

One eve the nuns beheld her entering
Alone, as if for prayer beneath the rood,
Their chapel-shrine, wherein the offering
And masterpiece of some great painter stood, —
The Virgin Mother, without plume or wing
Ascending, poised in rapt beatitude,
With hands crosswise, and intercession mild
For all who crave her mercy undefiled.

There Beatrice — poor, guilty, desperate maid —
 Took from her belt the convent's blessed keys,
 And with them on the altar humbly laid
 Her missal, uttering such words as these
 (Her eyes cast down, and all her soul afraid):
 "O dearest mistress, hear me on my knees
 Confess to thee, in helplessness and shame,
 I am no longer fit to speak thy name.

"Take back the keys wherewith in constancy
 Thy house and altar I have guarded well!
 No more may Beatrice thy servant be,
 For earthly love her steps must needs compel.
 Forget me in this sore infirmity
 When my successor here her beads shall tell."
 This said, the girl withdrew her as she might,
 And with her lover fled that selfsame night;

Fled out, and into the relentless world
 Where Love abides, but Love that breedeth Sorrow,
 Where Purity still weeps with pinions furled,
 And Passion lies in wait her all to borrow.
 From such a height to such abasement whirled
 She fled that night, and many a day and morrow
 Abode indeed with him for whose embrace
 She bartered heaven and her hope of grace.

O fickle will and pitiless desire,
 Twin wolves, that raven in a lustful heart
 And spare not innocence, nor yield, nor tire,
 But youth from joy and life from goodness part;
 That drag an unstained victim to the mire,
 Then cast it soiled and hopeless on the mart!
 Even so the clerk, once having dulled his longing,
 A worse thing did than that first bitter wronging.

The base hind left her, ruined and alone,
Unknowing by what craft to gain her bread
In the hard world that gives to Want a stone.
What marvel that she drifted whither led
The current, that with none to heed her moan
She reached the shore where life on husks is fed,
Sank down, and, in the strangeness of her fall,
Among her fellows was the worst of all !

Thus stranded, her fair body, consecrate
To holiness, was smutched by spoilers rude,
And entered all the seven fiends where late
Abode a seeming angel, pure and good.
What paths she followed in such woful state,
By want, remorse, and the world's hate pursued,
Were known alone to them whose spacious ken
O'erlooks not even the poor Magdalen.

After black years their dismal change had wrought
Upon her beauty, and there was no stay
By which to hold, some chance or yearning brought
Her vagrant feet along the convent-way ;
And half as in a dream there came a thought
(For years she had not dared to think or pray)
That moved her there to bow her in the dust
And bear no more, but perish as she must.

Crouched by the gate she waited, it is told,
Brooding the past and all of life forlorn,
Nor dared to lift her pallid face and old
Against the passer's pity or his scorn ;
And there perchance had ere another morn
Died of her shame and sorrows manifold,
But that a portress bade her pass within
For solace of her wretchedness or sin.

To whom the lost one, drinking now her fill
 Of woe that wakened memories made more drear,
 Said, " Was there not one Beatrice, until
 Some time now gone, that was an abbess here ?"
 " That was ?" the other said. " Is she not still
 The convent's head, and still our mistress dear ?
 Look ! even now she comes with open hand,
 The purest, saintliest lady in the land !"

And Beatrice, uplifting then her eyes,
 Saw her own self (in womanhood divine,
 It seemed) draw nigh, with holy look and wise,
 The aged portress leaving at a sign.
 Even while she marvelled at that strange disguise,
 There stood before her, radiant, benign,
 The blessed Mother of Mercy, all aflame
 With light, as if from Paradise she came !

From her most sacred lips, upon the ears
 Of Beatrice, these words of wonder fell :
 " Daughter, thy sins are pardoned ; dry thy tears,
 And in this house again my mercies tell,
 For, in thy stead, myself these woful years
 Have governed here and borne thine office well.
 Take back the keys : save thee and me alone
 No one thy fall and penance yet hath known !"

Even then, as faded out that loveliness,
 The abbess, looking down, herself descried
 Clean-robed and spotless, such as all confess
 To be a saint and fit for Heaven's bride.
 So ends the legend, and ye well may guess
 (Who, being untempted, walk in thoughtless pride)
 God of his grace can make the sinful pure,
 And while earth lasts shall mercy still endure.

SEEKING THE MAY-FLOWER.

THE sweetest sound our whole year round-
'T is the first robin of the spring !
The song of the full orchard choir
Is not so fine a thing.

Glad sights are common : Nature draws
Her random pictures through the year,
But oft her music bids us long
Remember those most dear.

To me, when in the sudden spring
I hear the earliest robin's lay,
With the first trill there comes again
One picture of the May.

The veil is parted wide, and lo,
A moment, though my eyelids close,
Once more I see that wooded hill
Where the arbutus grows.

I see the village dryad kneel,
Trailing her slender fingers through
The knotted tendrils, as she lifts
Their pink, pale flowers to view.

Once more I dare to stoop beside
The dove-eyed beauty of my choice,
And long to touch her careless hair,
And think how dear her voice.

My eager, wandering hands assist
With fragrant blooms her lap to fill,
And half by chance they meet her own,
Half by our young hearts' will.

Till, at the last, those blossoms won, —
Like her, so pure, so sweet, so shy, —
Upon the gray and lichened rocks
Close at her feet I lie.

Fresh blows the breeze through hemlock-trees,
The fields are edged with green below ;
And naught but youth and hope and love
We know or care to know !

Hark ! from the moss-clung apple-bough,
Beyond the tumbled wall, there broke
That gurgling music of the May, —
'T was the first robin spoke !

I heard it, ay, and heard it not, —
For little then my glad heart wist
What toil and time should come to pass,
And what delight be missed ;

Nor thought thereafter, year by year
Hearing that fresh yet olden song,
To yearn for unreturning joys
That with its joy belong.

HAWTHORNE

HARP of New England song,
 That even in slumber tremblest with the touch
 Of poets who like the four winds from thee waken
 All harmonies that to thy strings belong, —
 Say, wilt thou blame the younger hands too much
 Which from thy laurelled resting-place have taken
 Thee, crowned-one, in their hold? There is a name
 Should quicken thee! No carol Hawthorne sang,
 Yet his articulate spirit, like thine own,
 Made answer, quick as flame,
 To each breath of the shore from which he sprang,
 And prose like his was poesy's high tone.

By measureless degrees
 Star follows star throughout the rounded night.
 Far off his path began, yet reached the near
 Sweet influences of the Pleiades, —
 A portion and a sharer of the light
 That shall so long outlast each burning sphere.
 Beneath the shade and whisper of the pines
 Two youths were fostered in the Norseland air;
 One found an eagle's plume, and one the wand
 Wherewith a seer divines:
 Now but the Minstrel lingers of that pair, —
 The rod has fallen from the mage's hand.

Gray on thy mountain height,
 More fair than wonderland beside thy streams,
 Thou with the splendors twain of youth and age,

This was the son who read thy heart aright,
 Of whom thou wast beholden in his dreams, —
 The one New-Englander! Upon whose page
 Thine offspring still are animate, and move
 Adown thy paths, a quaint and stately throng:
 Grave men of God who made the olden law,
 Fair maidens, meet for love, —
 All living types that to the coast belong
 Since Carver from the prow thy headland saw.

 What should the master be
 Who to the world New-England's self must render,
 Her best interpreter, her very own?
 How spake the brooding Mother, strong and tender,
 Back-looking through her youth betwixt the moan
 Of forests and the murmur of the sea?
 "Thou too," she said, "must first be set aside
 To keep my ancient vigil for a space, —
 Taught by repression, by the combating
 With thine own pride of pride,
 An unknown watcher in a lonely place
 With none on whom thine utterance to fling."

 But first of all she fed
 Her heart's own favorite upon the store
 Of precious things she treasures in her woods,
 Of charm and story in her valleys spread.
 For him her whispering winds and brooks that pour
 Made ceaseless music in the solitudes;
 The manifold bright surges of her deep
 Gave him their light. Within her voice's call
 She lured him on, by roadways overhung
 With elms, that he might keep
 Remembrance of her legends as they fall
 Her shaded walks and gabled roofs among.

Within the mists she drew,
 Anon, his silent footsteps, as her own
 Were led of old, until he came to be
 An eremite, whose life the desert knew,
 And gained companionship in dreams alone.
 The world, it seemed, had naught for such as he, —
 For one who in his heart's deep wilderness
 Shrunk darkling, and, whatever wind might blow,
 Found no quick use for potent hands and fain,
 No chance that might express
 To human-kind the thoughts which moved him so.
 — O, deem not those long years were quite in vain!

For his was the brave soul
 Which, touched with fire, dwells not on whatsoever
 Its outer senses hold in their intent,
 But, sleepless even in sleep, must gather toll
 Of dreams which pass like barks upon the river
 And make each vision Beauty's instrument ;
 That from its own love Love's delight can tell,
 And from its own grief guess the shrouded Sorrow ;
 From its own joyousness of Joy can sing ;
 That can predict so well
 From its own dawn the lustre of to-morrow,
 The whole flight from the flutter of the wing.

And his the gift which sees
 A revelation and a tropic sign
 In the lone passion-flower, and can discover
 The likeness of the far Antipodes,
 Though but a leaf is stranded from the brine ;
 His the fine spirit which is so true a lover
 Of sovran Art, that all the beck of life
 Allure it not until the work be wrought.

Nay, though the shout and smoke of combat rose,
 He, through the changeful strife,
 Eternal loveliness more closely sought,
 And Beauty's changeless law and sure repose.

Was it not well that one —
 One, if no more — should meditate aloof,
 Though not for naught the time's heroic quarrel,
 From what men rush to do and what is done.
 He little knew to join the web and woof
 Whereof slow Progress weaves her rich apparel,
 But toward the Past half longing turned his head.
 His deft hand dallied with its common share
 Of human toil, nor sought new loads to lift,
 But held itself, instead,
 All consecrate to uses that make fair,
 By right divine of his mysterious gift.

How should the world discern
 The artist's self, save through the fine creation
 Of his rare moment? How, but from his song,
 The unfettered spirit of the minstrel learn?
 Yet on this one the stars had set the station
 Which to the chief romancer should belong:
 Child of the Beautiful! whose regnant brow
 She made her canopy, and from his eyes
 Looked outward with a steadfast purple gleam.
 Who saw him marvelled how
 The soul of that impassioned ray could lie
 So calm beyond, — unspoken all its dream.

What sibyl to him bore
 The secret oracles that move and haunt?
 At night's dread noon he scanned the enchanted glass,

Ay, and himself the warlock's mantle wore,
 Nor to the thronging phantoms said Avaunt,
 But waved his rod and bade them rise and pass;
 Till thus he drew the lineaments of men
 Who fought the old colonial battles three,
 Who with the lustihood of Nature warred
 And made her docile, — then
 Wrestled with Terror and with Tyranny,
 Twin wardens of the scaffold and the sword.

He drew his native land,
 The few and rude plantations of her Past,
 Fringed by the beaches of her sounding shore;
 Her children, as he drew them, there they stand;
 There, too, her Present, with an outline cast
 Still from the shape those other centuries wore.
 Betimes the orchards and the clover-fields
 Change into woods o'ershadowing a host
 That winds along the Massachusetts Path;
 The sword of Standish shields
 The Plymouth band, and where the lewd ones boast
 Stern Endicott pours out his godly wrath.

Within the Province House
 The ancient governors hold their broidered state, —
 Still gleam the lights, the shadows come and go;
 Here once again the powdered guests carouse,
 The masquerade lasts on, the night is late.
 Thrice waves a mist-invoking wand, and lo,
 What troubled sights! What summit bald and steep
 Where stands a ladder 'gainst the accursed tree?
 What dark processions thither slowly climb?
 Anon, what lost ones keep
 Their midnight tryst with forms that evil be,
 Around the witch-fire in the forest grim!

Clearly the master's plan
 Revealed his people, even as they were,
 The prayerful elder and the winsome maid,
 The errant roisterer, the Puritan,
 Dark Pyncheon, mournful Hester, — all are there.
 But none save he in our own time so laid
 His summons on man's spirit; none but he,
 Whether the light thereof were clear or clouded,
 Thus on his canvas fixed the human soul,
 The thoughts of mystery,
 In deep hearts by this mortal guise enshrouded,
 Wild hearts that like the church-bells ring and toll.

Two natures in him strove
 Like day with night, his sunshine and his gloom.
 To him the stern forefathers' creed descended,
 The weight of some inexorable Jove
 Prejudging from the cradle to the tomb;
 But therewithal the lightsome laughter blended
 Of that Arcadian sweetness undismayed
 Which finds in Love its law, and graces still
 The rood, the penitential symbol worn, —
 Which sees, beyond the shade,
 The Naiad nymph of every rippling rill,
 And hears quick Fancy wind her wilful horn.

What if he brooded long
 On Time and Fate, — the ominous progression
 Of years that with Man's retributions frown, —
 The destinies which round his footsteps throng, —
 Justice, that heeds not Mercy's intercession, —
 Crime, on its own head calling vengeance down, —
 Deaf Chance and blind, that, like the mountain-slide
 Puts out Youth's heart of fire and all is dark !

What though the blemish which, in aught of earth,
 The maker's hand defied,
 Was plain to him, — the one evasive mark
 Wherewith Death stamps us for his own at birth !

Ah, none the less we know
 He felt the imperceptible fine thrill
 With which the waves of being palpitate,
 Whether in ecstasy of joy or woe,
 And saw the strong divinity of Will
 Bringing to halt the stolid tramp of Fate ;
 Nor from his work was ever absent quite
 The presence which, o'ercast it as we may,
 Things far beyond our reason can suggest :
 There was a drifting light
 In Donatello's cell, — a fitful ray
 Of sunshine came to hapless Clifford's breast.

Into such blossom brake
 Our northern hedge, that neither morta. sadness
 Nor the drear thought of lives that strive and fail,
 Nor any hues its sombre leaves might take
 From clouded skies, could overcome its gladness
 Or in the blessing of its shade prevail.
 Fresh sprays it yielded them of Merry Mount
 For wedding wreaths ; blithe Phœbe with the sweet
 Pure flowers her promise to her lover gave :
 Beside it, from a fount
 Where Pearl and Pansie plashed their innocent feet,
 A brook ran on and kissed Zenobia's grave.

Silent and dark the spell
 Laid on New England by the frozen North ;
 Long, long the months, — and yet the Winter ends,

The snow-wraiths vanish, and rejoicing well
 The dandelions from the grass leap forth,
 And Spring through budding birch and willow sends
 Her wind of Paradise. And there are left
 Poets to sing of all, and welcome still
 The robin's voice, the humble-bee's wise drone;
 Nor are we yet bereft
 Of one whose sagas ever at his will
 Can answer back the ocean, tone for tone.

But he whose quickened eye
 Saw through New England's life her inmost spirit, —
 Her heart, and all the stays on which it leant, —
 Returns not, since he laid the pencil by
 Whose mystic touch none other shall inherit!
 What though its work unfinished lies? Half-bent
 The rainbow's arch fades out in upper air;
 The shining cataract half-way down the height
 Breaks into mist; the haunting strain, that fell
 On listeners unaware,
 Ends incomplete, but through the starry night
 The ear still waits for what it did not tell.

ALL IN A LIFETIME.

THOU shalt have sun and shower from heaven
 above,
 Thou shalt have flower and thorn from earth below,
 Thine shall be foe to hate and friend to love,
 Pleasures that others gain, the ills they know, —
 And all in a lifetime.

Hast thou a golden day, a starlit night,
Mirth, and music, and love without alloy?
Leave no drop undrunken of thy delight:
Sorrow and shadow follow on thy joy.
'T is all in a lifetime.

What if the battle end and thou hast lost?
Others have lost the battles thou hast won;
Haste thee, bind thy wounds, nor count the cost:
Over the field will rise to-morrow's sun.
'T is all in a lifetime.

Laugh at the braggart sneer, the open scorn, —
'Ware of the secret stab, the slanderous lie:
For seventy years of turmoil thou wast born,
Bitter and sweet are thine till these go by.
'T is all in a lifetime.

Reckon thy voyage well, and spread the sail, —
Wind and calm and current shall warp thy way;
Compass shall set thee false, and chart shall fail;
Ever the waves will use thee for their play.
'T is all in a lifetime.

Thousands of years ago were chance and change,
Thousands of ages hence the same shall be;
Naught of thy joy and grief is new or strange:
Gather apace the good that falls to thee!
'T is all in a lifetime!

THE SKULL IN THE GOLD DRIFT.

WHAT ho ! dumb jester, cease to grin and mask it !
 Grim courier, thou hast stayed upon the road !
 Yield up the secret of this battered casket,
 This shard, where once a living soul abode !
 What dost thou here ? how long hast lain imbedded
 In crystal sands, the drift of Time's despair ;
 Thine earth to earth with aureate dower wedded,
 Thy parts all changed to something rich and rare ?

Voiceless thou art, and yet a revelation
 Of that most ancient world beneath the new ;
 But who shall guess thy race, thy name and station,
 Æons and æons ere these boulders grew ?
 What alchemy can make thy visage liker
 Its untransmuted shape, thy flesh restore,
 Resolve to blood again thy golden ichor,
 Possess thee of the life thou hadst before ?

Before ! And when ? What ages immemorial
 Have passed since daylight fell where thou dost sleep !
 What molten strata, ay, and flotsam boreal,
 Have shielded well thy rest, and pressed thee deep !
 Thou little wist what mighty floods descended,
 How sprawled the armored monsters in their camp,
 Nor heardest, when the watery cycle ended,
 The mastodon and mammoth o'er thee tramp.

How seemed this globe of ours when thou didst scan it ?
 When, in its lusty youth, there sprang to birth

All that has life, unnurtured, and the planet
Was paradise, the true Saturnian Earth !
Far toward the poles was stretched the happy garden ;
Earth kept it fair by warmth from her own breast ;
Toil had not come to dwarf her sons and harden ;
No crime (there was no want) perturbed their rest.

How lived thy kind ? Was there no duty blended
With all their toilless joy, — no grand desire ?
Perchance as shepherds on the meads they tended
Their flocks, and knew the pastoral pipe and lyre ;
Until a hundred happy generations,
Whose birth and death had neither pain nor fear,
At last, in riper ages, brought the nations
To modes which we renew who greet thee here.

How stately then they built their royal cities,
With what strong engines speeded to and fro ;
What music thrilled their souls ; what poets' ditties
Made youth with love, and age with honor glow !
And had they then their Homer, Kepler, Bacon ?
Did some Columbus find an unknown clime ?
Was there an archetypal Christ, forsaken
Of those he died to save, in that far time ?

When came the end ? What terrible convulsion
Heaved from within the Earth's distended shell ?
What pent-up demons, by their fierce repulsion,
Made of that sunlit crust a sunless hell ?
How, when the hour was ripe, those deathful forces
In one resistless doom o'erwhelmed ye all ;
Ingulfed the seas and dried the river courses,
And made the forests and the cities fall !

Ah me ! with what a sudden, dreadful thunder
 The whole round world was split from pole to pole !
 Down sank the continents, the waters under,
 And fire burst forth where now the oceans roll ;
 Of those wan flames the dismal exhalations
 Stifled, anon, each living creature's breath,
 Dear life was driven from its utmost stations,
 And seethed beneath the smoking pall of death !

Then brawling leapt full height yon helméd giants ;
 The proud Sierras on the skies laid hold ;
 Their watch and ward have bidden time defiance,
 Guarding thy grave amid the sands of gold.
 Thy kind was then no more ! What untold ages,
 Ere Man, renewed from earth by slow degrees,
 Woke to the strife he now with Nature wages
 O'er ruder lands and more tempestuous seas.

How poor the gold, that made thy burial splendid,
 Beside one single annal of thy race,
 One implement, one fragment that attended
 Thy life — which now has left not even a trace !
 From the soul's realm awhile recall thy spirit,
 See how the land is spread, how flows the main,
 The tribes that in thy stead the globe inherit,
 Their grand unrest, their eager joy and pain.

Beneath our feet a thousand ages moulder,
 Grayer our skies than thine, the winds more chill ;
 Thine the young world, and ours the hoarier, colder,
 But Man's unfaltering heart is dauntless still.
 And yet — and yet like thine his solemn story ;
 Grope where he will, transition lies before ;
 We, too, must pass ! our wisdom, works, and glory
 In turn shall yield, and change, and be no more.

SONG FROM A DRAMA.

I KNOW not if moonlight or starlight
Be soft on the land and the sea,—
I catch but the near light, the far light,
Of eyes that are burning for me ;
The scent of the night, of the roses,
May burden the air for thee, Sweet,—
'T is only the breath of thy sighing
I know, as I lie at thy feet.

The winds may be sobbing or singing,
Their touch may be fervent or cold,
The night-bells may toll or be ringing,—
I care not, while thee I enfold !
The feast may go on, and the music
Be scattered in ecstasy round,—
Thy whisper, " I love thee ! I love thee !"
Hath flooded my soul with its sound.

I think not of time that is flying,
How short is the hour I have won,
How near is this living to dying,
How the shadow still follows the sun ;
There is naught upon earth, no desire,
Worth a thought, though 't were had by a sign !
I love thee ! I love thee ! bring nigher
Thy spirit, thy kisses, to mine

THE SUN-DIAL.

“ Horas non numero nisi serenas.”

ONLY the sunny hours
 Are numbered here, —
 No winter-time that lowers,
 No twilight drear.
 But from a golden sky
 When sunbeams fall,
 Though the bright moments fly, —
 They 're counted all.

My heart its transient woe
 Remembers not!
 The ills of long ago
 Are half forgot;
 But Childhood's round of bliss,
 Youth's tender thrill,
 Hope's whisper, Love's first kiss, —
 They haunt me still!

Sorrows are everywhere,
 Joys — all too few!
 Have we not had our share
 Of pleasure too?
 No Past the glad heart cowers,
 No memories dark;
 Only the sunny hours
 The dial mark.

MADRIGAL.

DORUS TO LYCORIS, WHO REPROVED HIM FOR INCONSTANCY.

WHY should I constant be ?
 The bird in yonder tree,
 This leafy summer,
 Hath not his last year's mate,
 Nor dreads to venture fate
 With a new-comer.

Why should I fear to sip
 The sweets of each red lip ?
 In every bower
 The roving bee may taste
 (Lest aught should run to waste)
 Each fresh-blown flower.

The trickling rain doth fall
 Upon us one and all ;
 The south-wind kisses
 The saucy milkmaid's cheek,
 The nun's, demure and meek,
 Nor any misses.

Then ask no more of me
 That I should constant be,
 Nor eke desire it ;
 Take not such idle pains
 To hold our love in chains,
 Nor coax, nor hire it.

Be all things in thyself, —
 A sprite, a tricky elf,
 Forever changing,
 So that thy latest mood
 May ever bring new food
 To Fancy ranging.

Forget what thou wast first,
 And as I loved thee erst
 In soul and feature,
 I 'll love thee out of mind
 When each new morn shall find
 Thee a new creature.

WITH A SPRIG OF HEATHER.

TO THE LADY WHO SENT ME A JAR OF HYMETTIAN HONEY.

LADY, had the lot been mine
 That befell the sage divine,
 Near Hymettus to be bred,
 And in sleep on honey fed,
 I would send to you, be sure,
 Rhythmic verses — tuneful, pure,
 Such as flowed when Greece was young,
 And the Attic songs were sung ;
 I would take your little jar,
 Filled with sweetness from afar, —
 Brown as amber, bright as gold,
 Breathing odors manifold, —
 And would thank you, sip by sip,
 With the classic honeyed lip.
 But the gods did not befriend

Me in childhood's sleep, nor send,
 One by one, their laden bees,
 That I now might sing at ease
 With the winsome voice and word
 In this age too seldom heard.
 (Had they the Atlantic crost,
 Half their treasure had been lost !)
 Changed the time, and gone the art
 Of the glad Athenian heart.
 Take you, then, in turn, I pray,
 For your gift, this little spray, —
 Heather from a breezy hill
 That of Burns doth whisper still.
 On the soil where this was bred
 The rapt ploughman laid his head,
 Sang, and looking to the sky
 Saw the Muses hovering nigh.
 From the air and from the gorse
 Scotland's sweetness took its source ; —
 Precious still your jar, you see,
 Though its honey stays with me.

THE LORD'S-DAY GALE.

BAY ST. LAWRENCE, AUGUST, 1873.

IN Gloucester port lie fishing craft, —
 More stanch and trim were never seen :
 They are sharp before and sheer abaft,
 And true their lines the masts between.
 Along the wharves of Gloucester Town
 Their fares are lightly handed down,
 And the laden flakes to landward lean.

Well know the men each cruising-ground,
 And where the cod and mackerel be ;
 Old Eastern Point the schooners round
 And leave Cape Ann on the larboard lee :
 Sound are the planks, the hearts are bold,
 That brave December's surges cold
 On Georges' shoals in the outer sea.

And some must sail to the banks far north
 And set their trawls for the hungry cod, —
 In the ghostly fog grope back and forth
 By shrouded paths no foot hath trod ;
 Upon the crews the ice-winds blow,
 The bitter sleet, the frozen snow, —
 Their lives are in the hand of God !

New England ! New England !
 Needs sail they must, so brave and poor,
 Or June be warm or Winter storm,
 Lest a wolf gnaw through the cottage-door !
 Three weeks at home, three long months gone,
 While the patient goodwives sleep alone,
 And wake to hear the breakers roar.

The Grand Bank gathers in its dead, —
 The deep sea-sand is their winding-sheet ;
 Who does not Georges' billows dread
 That dash together the drifting fleet ?
 Who does not long to hear, in May,
 The pleasant wash of Saint Lawrence Bay,
 The fairest ground where fishermen meet ?

There the west wave holds the red sunlight
 Till the bells at home are rung for nine :

Short, short the watch, and calm the night ;
The fiery northern streamers shine ;
The eastern sky anon is gold,
And winds from piny forests old
Scatter the white mists off the brine.

The Province craft with ours at morn
Are mingled when the vapors shift ;
All day, by breeze and current borne,
Across the bay the sailors drift ;
With toll and seine its wealth they win, —
The dappled, silvery spoil come in
Fast as their hands can haul and lift.

New England ! New England !
Thou lovest well thine ocean main !
It spreadeth its locks among thy rocks,
And long against thy heart hath lain ;
Thy ships upon its bosom ride
And feel the heaving of its tide ;
To thee its secret speech is plain.

Cape Breton and Edward Isle between,
In strait and gulf the schooners lay ;
The sea was all at peace, I ween,
The night before that August day ;
Was never a Gloucester skipper there,
But thought erelong, with a right good fare,
To sail for home from Saint Lawrence Bay.

New England ! New England !
Thy giant's love was turned to hate !
The winds control his fickle soul,
And in his wrath he hath no mate.

Thy shores his angry scourges tear,
 And for thy children in his care
 The sudden tempests lie in wait.

The East Wind gathered all unknown, —
 A thick sea-cloud his course before ;
 He left by night the frozen zone
 And smote the cliffs of Labrador ;
 He lashed the coasts on either hand,
 And betwixt the Cape and Newfoundland
 Into the Bay his armies pour.

He caught our helpless cruisers there
 As a gray wolf harries the huddling fold ;
 A sleet — a darkness — filled the air,
 A shuddering wave before it rolled :
 That Lord's-day morn it was a breeze, —
 At noon, a blast that shook the seas, —
 At night, — a wind of Death took hold !

It leapt across the Breton bar,
 A death-wind from the stormy East !
 It scarred the land, and whirled afar
 The sheltering thatch of man and beast ;
 It mingled rick and roof and tree,
 And like a besom swept the sea,
 And churned the waters into yeast.

From Saint Paul's light to Edward Isle
 A thousand craft it smote amain ;
 And some against it strove the while,
 And more to make a port were fain :
 The mackerel-gulls flew screaming past,

And the stick that bent to the noonday blast
Was split by the sundown hurricane.

Woe, woe to those whom the islands pen !
In vain they shun the double capes :
Cruel are the reefs of Magdalen ;
The Wolf's white fang what prey escapes ?
The Grin'stone grinds the bones of some,
And Coffin Isle is craped with foam ; —
On Deadman's shore are fearful shapes !

O, what can live on the open sea,
Or moored in port the gale outride ?
The very craft that at anchor be
Are dragged along by the swollen tide !
The great storm-wave came rolling west,
And tossed the vessels on its crest :
The ancient bounds its might defied !

The ebb to check it had no power ;
The surf ran up an untold height ;
It rose, nor yielded, hour by hour,
A night and day, a day and night ;
Far up the seething shores it cast
The wrecks of hull and spar and mast,
The strangled crews, — a woful sight !

There were twenty and more of Breton sail
Fast anchored on one mooring-ground ;
Each lay within his neighbor's hail
When the thick of the tempest closed them
round :
All sank at once in the gaping sea, —
Somewhere on the shoals their corse be,
The foundered hulks, and the seamen drowned.

On reef and bar our schooners drove
 Before the wind, before the swell ;
 By the steep sand-cliffs their ribs were stove, —
 Long, long, their crews the tale shall tell !
 Of the Gloucester fleet are wrecks threescore ;
 Of the Province sail two hundred more
 Were stranded in that tempest fell.

The bedtime bells in Gloucester Town
 That Sabbath night rang soft and clear ;
 The sailors' children laid them down, —
 Dear Lord ! their sweet prayers couldst thou hear ?
 'T is said that gently blew the winds ;
 The goodwives, through the seaward blinds,
 Looked down the bay and had no fear.

New England ! New England !
 Thy ports their dauntless seamen mourn ;
 The twin capes yearn for their return
 Who never shall be thither borne ;
 Their orphans whisper as they meet ;
 The homes are dark in many a street,
 And women move in weeds forlorn.

And wilt thou quail, and dost thou fear ?
 Ah, no ! though widows' cheeks are pale,
 The lads shall say : " Another year,
 And we shall be of age to sail ! "
 And the mothers' hearts shall fill with pride,
 Though tears drop fast for them who died
 When the fleet was wrecked in the Lord's-Day gale.



L'ENVOI.





AD VATEM.

WHITTIER ! the Land that loves thee, she whose
child .

Thou art, — and whose uplifted hands thou long
Hast stayed with song availing like a prayer, —
She feels a sudden pang, who gave thee birth
And gave to thee the lineaments supreme
Of her own freedom, that she could not make
Thy tissues all immortal, or, if to change,
To bloom through years coeval with her own ;
So that no touch of age nor frost of time
Should wither thee, nor furrow thy dear face,
Nor fleck thy hair with silver. Ay, she feels
A double pang that thee, with each new year,
Glad Youth may not revisit, like the Spring
That routs her northern Winter and anew
Melts off the hoar snow from her puissant hills.
She could not make thee deathless ; no, but thou,
Thou sangest her always in abiding verse
And hast thy fame immortal — as we say
Immortal in this Earth that yet must die,
And in this land now fairest and most young
Of all fair lands that yet must perish with it.
Thy words shall last : albeit thou growest old,
Men say ; but never old the poet's soul
Becomes ; only its covering takes on

A reverend splendour, as in the misty fall
Thine own auroral forests, ere at last
Passes the spirit of the wooded dell.
And stay thou with us long ; vouchsafe us long
This brave autumnal presence, ere the hues
Slow fading, — ere the quaver of thy voice,
The twilight of thine eye, move men to ask
Where hides the chariot, — in what sunset vale,
Beyond thy chosen river, champ the steeds
That wait to bear thee skyward ? Since we too
Would feign thee, in our tenderness, to be
Inviolatè, excepted from thy kind,
And that our bard and prophet best-belovèd
Shall vanish like that other : him that stood
Undaunted in the pleasure-house of kings,
And unto kings and crownèd harlots spake
God's truth and judgment. At his sacred feet
Far followed all the lesser men of old
Whose lips were touchèd with fire, and caught from him
The gift of prophecy ; and thus from thee,
Whittier, the younger singers, — whom thou seest
Each emulous to be thy staff this day, —
What learned they ? righteous anger, burning scorn
Of the oppressor, love to humankind,
Sweet fealty to country and to home,
Peace, stainless purity, high thoughts of heaven,
And the clear, natural music of thy song.

THE END.

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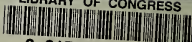
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