

NEW SONGS OF NATURE



AUGUSTUS WIGHT BOMBERGER





THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

*From a painting by Alice Barber Stephens
reproduced in water colors by
Mary H. Weber*

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF
AUGUSTUS WIGHT BOMBERGER



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ALICE BARBER STEPHENS
AND OTHERS



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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO HIM WHO WROTE

When I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools, and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?

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NEW SONGS OF NATURE

BY WOODLAND WAYS

I KNOW some holy places
This side the Holy Land,
Where acolyte nor priest have been,
Nor carven altars stand;
Whose other-world seclusion
Is garrisoned with trees:
Oh, would that more from day to day
Made pilgrimage to these!

Here worship is right easy,
And sacrifice is sweet;
And some that sing with never a word
Celestial themes repeat;
And weary hearts are rested,
And old, grow young again:
Oh, would they were forever sought
By all the sons of men!

Come here and get forgiveness
From travel-stain!—they cry;
These fountains, too, are fed from heaven,
Beneath the open sky;
These, too, have blessed healing
For many a foolish sin:
Oh, hearken to their silver bells!
Oh, come, and enter in!

Oh, come! This joy of flowers
Uprising everywhere—

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This subtle incense 'round about,
Is nature's perfect prayer;
Breathe deep! God shares it with thee,
And meeting him alone,
Ye twain may hold communion here,
And here be made as one.

IN JOYOUS FAITH

In joyous faith, from mountain top and vale,
Hark, hark, they come—the myriad birds of spring!
Swift as an arrow, at the Master's call
They pierce the frigid air with steady wing,
And laugh to shame the winter winds that rail
Against the precious promises they bring.
They wake the lonesome wood with sound of song;
They stir the drowsy violets with mirth,
And send a thrill of gladness into all
The dark and mournful silences of earth,
Until at last, a sweet, exultant throng,
They swell the triumph of perennial birth.

Oh, wondrous miracle of victory!
In joyous faith they win,—and so may we.

A LEGEND OF HARVEST

IN ancient Israel, so say the seers,
Two brothers lived in peace—as brothers should,
And tilled that ground whereon in after years
King Solomon's illustrious temple stood.
A common heritage, each gave the field
His honest share of toil, and took therefrom
An equal portion of the summer's yield,
Nor grudged his part—nor held in doubt the sum.

But on the night the harvesting was done,
And all the corn lay heaped beneath the skies,
The elder kinsman sat in thought alone
And gently reasoned with himself this wise:—
"My brother is not strong, and suffered sore
Beneath the heat and burden of the day,
Lo, I will take some sheaves from out my store,
Unknown, and add to his across the way."
And reasoning thus, he did; then found sweet sleep.
Not so, howe'er, the younger of the twain,
Who lay awake and said: "How can I keep
My great, full half of all this golden grain,
I who am still but one, whilst he must feed
His wife and little children from his share!"
So that same night, to meet a greater need,
He, too, in secret did what he deemed fair.

Now, when at break of day both cheerily
Came forth to work—with greeting, name for name,
Each scarce concealed his wonderment to see
His separate stack of sheaves was still the same!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And when, next night, and next, in love, anew
 These Jewish kinsmen gave by stealth their best—
But all in vain—behold the riddle grew
 Exceeding strange, and caused them much unrest.
Until at last its secret was revealed
 To both at once (blest be the hand that weaves
Such threads of chance), for half across their field
 They met one night—each bent with heavy sheaves!

Ah, kinsmen true, no offering later laid
 By Solomon upon the costliest shrine
Of this immortal ground was better made
 Than yours, nor gave to heaven a holier sign!

EARTH AND INFINITY

THERE'S part o' the sun in an apple;
 There's part o' the moon in a rose;
There's part of the flaming Pleiades
 In every leaf that grows.
Out of the vast comes nearness;
 For the God whose love we sing
Lends a little of his heaven
 To every living thing.

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

FROM some illumined folio
Of mediæval days,
Or missal—of a soul grown tired
Of Latin litanies,
Hath come, unmarked by moil of time,
This closely-margined Christmas rhyme.—

This tender tale of Madelon,
The little maid forlorn,
Who, back of all the orient throng,
That night the Christ was born,
Stood weeping in the cattle-cave,
The while the rest their treasure gave.

Stood weeping, for to see their gold,
And frankincense and myrrh,
And think that He, the babe divine,
Should have no gift from her!
To whom, so standing, like a flame
Of holy light, an angel came.

And took her gently by the hand,
And led her just outside
The entrance to that sacred place,
And questioned why she cried.
Whom then the little shepherdess
Thus answered in her dire distress:

“Good angel, woe is me, who heard
Thy chorus sing so clear,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

With father in the field, that I
Come empty-handed here!
Oh, would, this dark and wintry hour,
There was but one bright summer flower

That I might fetch—all fragrant and
Begemmed with starlit dew,
For Him they worship as their King,
And with them worship too!
But, bearing naught, I stand alone—
Alack, alack for Madelon!"

Thus quoth she. But that moment, lo,
A silvery, crimson cloud
Descended sudden through the night
And did them both enshroud!
And, from amidst it, with his rod,
The angel smote the frozen sod.

And there, obedient, burst forth,
At Madelon's own feet,
A rose unknown to earth before,
Pure white and wondrous sweet;
And ere the cloud had passed away
She knelt, as one who kneels to pray,

And took it from the angel's hand,
And then with eager heart
Bore it, unmindful of the gloom
Within, to where, apart,
The light-encircled mother kept
Deep watch—and gave it Him who slept.

Which, quick to see, the orient throng,
Still rapturously bent,

Did count in silence, eye to eye,
A sign from heaven sent,
That He, the holy, undefiled,
Should be thus worshiped by a child.

And one declared her snow-white flower,
(Thus ends the ancient tale),
Was heavenly token, too, that hearts
Like hers would never fail
Henceforth to find some gift upspring
For each desire to serve this King.

THE WAYFARER

AS I pondered whose knock it might be,
Or stranger, or comrade, or kin,
One stood there I trembled to see,
And begged me to let him come in.

His garments, 'twas easy to trace,
Were sackcloth and drenched with the night;
But I caught a high look in his face
Protesting his heavenly right.

So I yielded. And, bearing his woe,
He darkened my dwelling with tears;
And remaineth: nor ever shall go!—
Unfaltering friend of the years.

AT A TOMB IN ABYDOS

HOW little hath life changed, O ancient king!
This fan so delicate and bracelet rare,
These dainty, jewelled trinkets for the hair,
Were thine own gift, I know, and thine this ring.
And Bener-Ab, thy daughter, "Sweet of Heart,"
Who wore them once, was precious of a truth
And dear to thee in all her winsome youth,
Unspotted from the world, unspoiled of art:
So dear that thou at times didst reckon less
Thy royal sceptre than her soft caress;
Yet for that cause wert all the more a king,
Five thousand years ago when thou didst reign
In great Abydos—city of the plain.
And now—ah me, how close these symbols bring
Thy soul to mine across the vast of years—
These toys her marble sepulchre doth keep
To tell of thy devotion, though she sleep,
And quicken even me to just such tears
Of voiceless sorrow thou thyself didst shed
That distant day thou laid'st her with the dead:
Until, a brother, at thy side I stand,
Who find the centuries naught and love the same,
And mourn with thee thy child of gentle name,
And, mourning, feel the pressure of thy hand!

OVER CRAG AND BARRIER

HOW the mountain brook comes bearing
Melody along!
Crag and barrier in its way
Check it not—ah, no! but they
Are the secret,—yes, the very
Substance of its song.

How it leaps them all, and scatters
Sparkling showers of light!
Showers of light that seem to be
Presage of the sun-lit sea,
Even here among the shadows,—
Shadows dark as night!

But for them its voice were silent,
Dumb with dull repose.
Crag and barrier awake
Its wild melody, and make
Radiance for it (else deep-hidden)
As it onward goes.

While resisting, they but lend it
Something of their strength,—
Something strange of earth and air
Which doth give it character
Which, transmuted, is the beauty
Of its life at length.

Oh, the mystic power of hindrance,
Whatsoe'er it be—

Crag or barrier—that imparts
High reward to valiant hearts,
Light and song and strength to help them
Toward eternity!

THANKSGIVING DAY

NOW every leaf has fallen
And every flower is dead;
And all the orchard branches
Are empty overhead;

The meadow-land is mournful,
One time so bright and gay;
And yet we seek the fields serene,
For 'tis Thanksgiving day.

A shadow walks beside us;
A silence broods above;
But still our hearts are happy
With an inviolate love;

A love that makes November
More beautiful than May,
The love that springs from faith in God
Upon Thanksgiving day.

OUR MOTHER OF ARDEN

LONG ago, beloved, in this same sweet country, with its winding river,
And these hills of harvest, glistening like gold,
Lived a woman—worthy, for her gentle spirit and her true devotion,
Of the tenderest lyric that was ever told.

Listen, little kinsman! She was small and slender—almost frail
of body,
Yet as brave as Dian, and as full of mirth;
For her heart was heaven, and her lips were music, and her eyes
were April—
April that comes bearing sunbeams to the earth.

Lean thee near, my laddie! It was I who knew her—I and all the
orchards,
Forest nooks and fountains, flowered fields afar;
Birds of spring and summer; all the wilding breezes; morningtide
and twilight—
Twilight with its silence and its silver star.

For she made us comrades—happy, faithful comrades, trusting one
another,
We who were but strangers till she passed our way;
Till she stopped and showed us all we have in common—all we
share as children,
Some new bond revealing unto us each day.

Nor bereft, beloved, are we at this moment of the joy she brought us,
Neither I, nor any bird, nor flower, nor breeze;

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But it lingers always like a breath of Eden, though she hath departed,
Softening the shadows, trembling in the trees.

How I still remember every fond occasion when they sent me for her
To the town that could not keep her when I came!
How they sang together—even in the distance—when they first
beheld us!—
How the water, rippling, whispered her dear name!

How we yielded to her—with what quick abandon—all our hidden
treasure!
How we gave it—eager, bountiful and glad!
Birds, their brightest carols; flowers their rarest perfume; each
of us his substance,
Lavishly outpouring everything we had.

And we do not falter even now, beloved, but are ever tranquil—
With a deep, mysterious, wonderful content;
For, amidst the darkness (bend thine ear a little!) we have found
her footprints,
And the night is leading whitherward she went!

MY MORNING MINSTREL

I N sackcloth clad, from hill and plain,
The day advances, bathed in tears;
But music stirs my sluggish ears—
A robin singing in the rain!

I rise, and in the dull gray light
I see him from my window-seat,
The leafless branches 'neath his feet
Half hid by lingering mists of night.

Against his draggled front, forlorn,
The chill March breezes moan and sigh;
But still, with head uplifted high,
He carols bravely to the morn.

Then I, who listen, feel a glow—
A quick thanksgiving—touch my heart;
The veil is rent, the mists depart,
Again the vernal zephyrs blow.

While with the song, from everywhere,
A sudden flush of Spring descends,
And, even as the singer ends,
Sweet breath of blossoms fills the air.

O ruby-throated minstrel mine,
I bless the dawn that gave thee birth,
And set the tenderest chord of earth
Within that sturdy breast of thine!

MY LITTLE WINDING ROAD

MY little winding road will soon have met
Its last horizon on the hills; and yet
I am content, nor vainly ask to know
Aught of the darkness whitherward I go.
Content, because I count it but the same
As the wide, mothering darkness whence I came;
And find that darkness still, from morn to morn,
Fecund with love divine as on the day
It gave to earth its primal rondelay,
And the first lilies of the field were born!
Behind me, from its vast, inviolate verge,
All life and joy and beauty still emerge.
Age upon age it yieldeth more and more
Th' unfailing largess of its hidden store:
Transcendent streams of infinite delight
Poured forth from out its gateways of the night.—
The seasons, with their circling mystery
Of bird, and flower, and plant, and fruitful tree;
Whose angels leave—but to return again,
And lift their silver trumpets to the sky,
Anointed with new glory from on high,
For glad redemption of the hearts of men:
And children, in a sweet and countless throng:
And music, in a never-ending song:
All these, and more, surpassing tongue to tell,
Creatures of its tremendous miracle;
Its silence, not a silence as of death,
But the deep breathing of immortal breath!

Such is my goal!—a fate I do not fear;
Believing rather, as the stars draw near,
That this great source, whereunto now I come,
Which gave me trustful, shall so take me home.

WANDERLUST SONG

IT is summer—it is June!
Heaven and earth are all atune:
All the roses of the garden sing to roses in the sky;
All the voices of the meadow answer voices from on high;
All the joy that bloomed in Eden sixty centuries ago
Is still dancing, bright as ever, where the vernal waters flow.
True-of-heart, come forth with me!
Crown the choral melody!
I have broken loose a little from the tyranny of trade,
For the sweet emancipation nature yields;
I have felt upon my spirit her mysterious accolade;
I have found again my freedom in the fields.
True-of-heart, come forth with me,
Share the glad discovery!
Heaven and earth are all atune:
It is summer—it is June!

THE ANGEL OF THE WISE MEN

WHAT though the kings that came
From orient lands afar,
But counted thy celestial flame
A new and wondrous star?—

And, as they onward sped,
Aglow with ardent love,
Dreamed not their burning hearts were fed
From thy great soul above?—

The barren wastes of sand
They trod were none the less
Visioned with bloom on every hand
And heavenly palaces.

And like as doves that fly,
Instinctive, to their nest,
Or day or night, with eager eye,
They kept their holy quest.

Pursuing, unexplained,
Thy true, unfailing fire,
Until at length they had attained
The hope thou didst inspire.

And what—ah, what though we,
Who follow on as they,
Are not permitted e'en to see
Thy light above the way?—

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Still, still thou hoverest near!
Still, still the breezes stir
With breath of music, soft and clear,
And frankincense and myrrh!

Till—questioning not—in some
Deep hour of joy, behold,
Star Angel, we ourselves, have come
To Bethlehem, as of old!

And worship with the Wise,
Who proved thine ancient tryst;
Finding beneath the riven skies
Their very Lord—the Christ.

HIS FIRST OFFENSE

OUT of a vagabond throng
That tells its own pitiful tale,
An urchin is hustled along
And given his turn at the rail.

Hungry, bedraggled, forlorn,
Destitute, desolate, dumb,
He stares like an infant new-born,
In wonder what next is to come.

Wait, ere you utter his doom!
Who shall thenceforward atone
Once he is sent from this room
Into the darkness alone?

See, how he questions your face!
What shall he find here today?
Whither go forth from this place?
Wait, Judge!—which way, sir; which way?

Promise of something divine
Pleads from his riveted eye;
Destiny noble as thine
Warns thee his angel is nigh.

Justice draws quickly aside;
Mercy, advancing to see,
Measures him ere he is tried:
Wait, Judge!—let this one go free!

Free, to some friendship of men;
Free, to some kindly control
That shall lift to high heaven again
Another regenerate soul.

"IN THE WATERS OF MALTA"

I N the waters of Malta, long moments before
The vessels approaching gave sound of an oar,
From wave-crest to wave-crest was wafted along
The solemn refrain of the galley-slaves' song.
Dull, barbarous, heart-broken, still it arose,
Intoned of an angel that only grief knows.—
A star in the blackness, a bloom in the night;
A ray from the zenith, unquenched in the soul;
A dream of some distant renaissance of right;
A freedom no collar of steel could control:
In the waters of Malta, long moments before
The vessels approaching gave sound of an oar.

Oh, note everlasting; oh, rhythm of God!—
Or grave of the ocean, or tomb of the sod
Holds in it immortal the joy of thy wings
Uplifting the hopeless to heavenly things!

THE HERMIT THRUSH

SWEET singer, in the high and holy place
Of this dim-lit cathedral of the hills;
With reverent brow and unuplifted face,
I quaff the cup thy melody distills!

What sparkling well of limpid music springs
Within thy breast, to quench my thirst like this!
What nameless chords are hid beneath thy wings,
That all my soul is quickened by thy bliss!

Perchance the same mysterious desire
Hath brought us both to this deep shrine as one;
For now—it burns a single flame of fire,
Dropped through the branches from the setting sun.

And, as thou singest, lo, the voice is mine,
Each note, a thought; each thought, a silent prayer,
Of joy, of peace—of ecstasy divine,
Poured forth upon the fragrant woodland air.

And I, who stand aloof, am not alone,
Here, in these great cathedral aisles untrod;
O Hermit, thou hast opened heaven, unknown,
And through thy song have I communed with God!

THE LOST CHILD

I KNOW one who hath gone from me a space;
I One whom I love well, with unwaning love,
Although I see him not; a little boy,
Blue-eyed and brave, and of a countenance
Where played continually from lips to brow
A spiritual gladness, as some light
Reflected down from heaven. What time he went
My heart was mad with longing, and a while
I was so fain to follow him, these hands
Reached out into the emptiness to find
Some other hands to lead me. And yet, now,
I have deep peace and am content to wait.
For many signs have shown from year to year
He is not far away. And one—this memory
Which fell upon me as a voice divine,
A still, small voice, and comforted by woe.

A twelve-month, more or less, ere he had gone,
I strayed forth with him to a wood one day;
A wood of beechen-trees and towering oaks,
Where squirrels ran and the brown mock-bird sang,
And amorous winds made court among the leaves,
And purple violets decked the mossy turf;—
A place of sweet allurements to us both.

Proceeding vagrantly, with devious course,
We came at length upon a limpid brook
That flowed along with many a variant mood
From darksome pool to sharp and shelving ledge,
Yet ever happy on its wilful way:

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And here I sat me down to rest and read,
Letting my lad keep company meantime
With all the birds and flowers 'round about.

How many minutes passed me, thus engaged,
I know not; but was suddenly aware,
By reason of a silence and a void,
That he was missing. Straight, I dropped my book,
And, anxious on the instant, did arise,
Searching, distraught, the trees on every side,
And calling loud his name; yet vainly. Then
Descended, all a-tremble, to the pool;
But saw no trace. Then stept across the stream,
And, entering the denser growth beyond,
Began to pray at heart for my dear boy,
That God might keep him safely; for I found
The wood bewildering, and of great extent.

On, on I went—half sick and half afraid;
Ran; climbed anon; crept now thro' bush and vine;
To right, to left; returned; retraced my path;
Looked; listened hard; continuing, till at last,
Confounded in the quest, I leaned against
A smooth and silvery bole, and shut my eyes,
To quell forboding and becalm my mind.

Whereon, mine ears, left wholly to themselves,
And rendered subtle and the more alert
In answer to the soul's intense desire,
Caught the faint echo of a childish laugh!

Doubting, I waited. But, 'twas borne once more
Unto my straining sense, scarce heard, yet sure;—
As sweet a sound to me in that still spot

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

As ever kissed the winds of Paradise;
And lifting up moist lids I started fast
Whither again it rose, till I espied
A narrow, glimmering maze of gold ahead,
Far through the verdant gloom,—a shining marge
That beckoned beautiful, and, hurrying on,
Grew bright; and then I neared the voice; and then
Emerged upon a meadow eagerly—
A broad and smiling meadow, daisy-strewn,
And there beheld my darling boy at play!

And this it is hath helped to give me peace
Since he hath left me for another realm—
This memory. Ah, it is a holy sign,
That tells me often as I walk alone
He is not dead; nay, nay! But, even so
As he escaped from me within the wood
And crossed the brook and vanished 'mongst the trees,
And, wandering forward, found the meadow fair,
Where we were reunited, heart to heart,—
So, even so, upon that later day
He did but cross to heaven, in the which
I, following, shall discover him right soon;
And bless the blessed God that brought me forth,
Whose breath is on each breeze, and leaf, and flower,
And quickens every sunbeam of the sky.

SONG SPARROW BROOK

LOOK—this is Song Sparrow brook!
L Come—here is the path we took
In bygone days, beneath the trees!
How sweet to find its melodies
Of limpid water quite the same!
And he, the bird that gave it name
Still singing on, as brave as ever!
 Ah, dear companion, take my hand,
 This is our own, our native land,
Such heav'n can not be lost, no never!
But here, as children once again,
Far from the sinfulness of men,
You but a girl and I a boy
May drink again the olden joy!

Look—this is Song Sparrow brook!
Come—here is the path we took!

OUT OF GOD'S CRUCIBLE

WHAT alchemy divine is this!—
W Mixt of the night, and sorrow's black alloy,
And fire of pain, my soul hath found the bliss
Of perfect joy.

"I TRAVEL LIGHT"

I TRAVEL light—that I may bear
The heat and burden of the day
More buoyantly, and better share
With others by the way
What strength is mine, untaxed by things
That heap the shoulders, and harass
The hands that would be free as wings
With healing, as I pass.
I travel light—not weighted down
With heavy harnessings of pride,
And leaden love of vain renown
And lust of gold beside;
But trig and trim from foot to crown,
With swift reliance for my blade,
I fare me on from town to town,
Alert and unafraid.—
I travel light!

I travel light—that I may get
Spare moments on this pilgrimage
Of mine amidst a throng, nor let
It all my time engage;
But gain occasion—now and then,
For sweet adventure, far and wide
From th' loud multitude of men
And traffic's weary tide,
In helping of some heart more frail,
Or bowed beneath a deadlier blow
Than I have known—and fain to fail
For bitterness of woe—

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Out, out to where the country yields
A calm surcease from toil and grief,
And all the fair and fragrant fields
Breathe rest and deep relief.—
I travel light!

I travel light—that I may keep,
Unhelmeted, my head on high
Toward the great hills of heav'n, where leap,
Eternal to the sky,
Those upper fountain-springs of life,
Whose freshening waters fall below,
As dew, on pilgrims faint with strife,
To cheer them as they go
With an uplifting sense, and sure
Of triumph even in defeat.
I travel light—who would endure
Must bear (for death is fleet),
Not weapons that but sap his strength—
(Death-given, to betray his trust)—
But arms that in the end at length
Shall turn them not to dust.—
I travel light!

THE OLD OX-TEAM

FULL fifty years have passed, and yet—
Amid the city's noise and fret,
With wistful feelings of regret
I do remember still
The quiet farm I used to love,
Its sunlit fields, so sweet to rove,
And, best of all, the days I drove
Its old ox-team to mill.

Ah, those were happy days, I ween!
And fresh and beautiful and green,
And all the long, long space between
Seems nothing to my heart;
Seems nothing now and fades away,
And lo, a barefoot boy and gay,
And lord of all my eyes survey,
I mount that lumbering cart!

O-ho, how royally we go!
And how the cows look round and low,
As if to tell us that they know
The secret of our quest!
Out, out, along the orchard lane,
And up the hill at last, where, fain,
Spite whip and goad, my stubborn twain
Would stop a while and rest.

Sooth, is it real, or do I dream?
Beneath the elm-trees now, my team,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Hitched clumsily with yoke and beam,
Has reached the rumbling mill;
Where, after many a call and shout,
A flour-bedizened form comes out
And backs my rig around about
And loads it to the fill.

And now, perched high on sacks of bran,
And feeling very much a man,
And businesslike, the road I scan,
Then take my whip and turn
Homeward—and slower than we came;
But not too slow, for still the same
Bright summer skies, with joy aflame,
Above us softly burn.

Yes, slow and sleepily we went,
And yet, how careless and content!
Oh, would those hours were still unspent,
And this loud, restless mart,
Which grows so wearisome and sad,
Were dream itself—and I the lad
I used to be, supremely glad,
Within that old ox-cart!





MAGDALENÉ

Painted by Ada C. Williamson

MAGDALENÉ

UP to the wicket-gate of heaven,
Alone and bent with years,
One Magdalené came at last:
About her (like as tears)
The darksome dews of evening fell:
Inside the gate stood Gabriel.

“Woman, what claim hast thou to these
Celestial courts?” he said.
And Magdalené, pierced with shame,
Shrank back and bowed her head.
For, toiling thitherward, ah me,
’Twas not this face she hoped to see!

But from a tree of living bloom,
(Whose branches overhang
The very wall of heaven itself)
Behold, a blackbird sang,
“Oh, Gabriel, forget her sin,
She is so weary, let her in!”

He waited; then again he spoke,
“Woman, why art thou mute?”
And lo—and nearer—sang the bird,
Like some sweet silver flute,
“Oh, Gabriel, forget her sin,
She is so sorry, let her in!”

But the great angel turned away
With no relenting word;

And the deep silence gave no sign,
Save that the gentle bird—
As one that weepeth!—warbled low,
“Ah, Gabriel, how could'st thou go!”

Yet, as she stood disconsolate,
Down to the wicket came
One that she knew (oh, love divine!)
And called her by her name,
And loosed the gate and threw it wide,
And Magdalené went inside.

RED-BREAST AND SONG SPARROW

HAIL, bravest, earliest harbingers of spring!
Or ever the first flower hath shown its face,
Or April hath revealed his hiding-place,
Ye come in joyful faith, on dauntless wing.
Skies give no promise, and the breezes bring
No gentle sign of unforgotten grace
To field or forest, but with stern embrace
Unbroken winter reigneth, till ye sing—
Sweet little servants of the living God!
Till ye, Red-Breast and Sparrow, one and all,
Unfaltering where no vernal feet have trod,
Confront the darkness and serenely call;
And bright Arbutus hears beneath the sod
And starts again to keep high festival.

THE MAN BORN BLIND

SAY what ye will of Him, one thing I know—
Know, by the witness of these eyes of mine,
That this same Christ ye would belittle so,
His healing—is divine!

Nor care I aught His toil-worn hands may be
Proof of the carpenter and Nazarene;
The blessed touch of them hath brought to me
Heaven—beautiful, serene.

And shall I now gainsay the voice I heard,
And call it blasphemous, for such as you?
No, but the rather glorify His word
Who found it wondrous true.

Aye, cast me from among you, if ye will;
Ye gave not, nor can take the light of day
That came to me—outcast, indeed, until
This Jesus passed my way.

Nor go I forth alone—for He hath made
The whole wide earth sweet company and fair;
And e'en His presence, like a sunlit shade,
Attends me everywhere.

Ah, Lord, 'tis but a moment since I thought—
Banished of all—to seek Thy face again;
And Thou, behold, hast found me, ere I sought—
My king, my man of men!

FIVE MILE RUN

(The Stony Creek)

DEAR little man—do you mind the brook
Called “Five Mile Run” and the route we took
To reach it by that last small street
Where the sky and the old town seemed to meet?
And how glad we were, little man—do you mind?—
To leave the noise and the heat behind,
And feel the houses were out of sight
And we needn’t be back again till night!
How we stopped to hark, where the willows grew,
For its first, faint music stealing through?—
That limpid stream, with its rippling song,
That laughed with joy, as we came along,
Through bush and bramble, by vine and tree,
Lured by the wilding melody!
How we kept together, and, crouching low,
Caught deep, bright glimpses of its flow
Down, down through a dim and leafy maze,
All woven with branches overhead,
That closed at length on its silver thread
And set a bound to our eager gaze?—
Yet not to our feet, which followed still,
Sure to find again our merry rill!
And then, do you mind—dear little man,
That break in the woods where the water ran
Right into the open for half a mile,
To go to sleep in the sun a while?
How we loved those fields, so broad and fair,
With the blue above, and the Lark’s clear call,
And the big, white clouds, high over all,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And the fragrant, breezy, golden air!
And then—that place on its winding way
Where the water spread to a little bay
On which the ducks kept holiday!—
Dear little man—do you mind that too?
Ah me, ah me, if I only knew!
For, behold, this very afternoon
Our brook is singing its old, sweet tune;
And, lo, as I seek it, lone and sad,
I remember that woodland call we had,
And, hungry to hear you, fain would try
To lift it again through the trees to the sky!

Yet I will not doubt—I will not fear!
For at times in the stillness you seem quite near;
And your face is always so full of joy
That I think, with a thrill—my own dear boy,
You perhaps have discovered where you have gone
Some stream just as lovely as “Five Mile Run”!

MY HOUSE IS BUT A COTTAGE

MY house is but a cottage
Beside a country lane;
Not grand, nor large, nor stately,
But simple, small and plain;

The proud and ostentatious
All pass it by unseen;
But, ah, this little house of mine
Is beautiful within!

Let others fill their mansions
With every gilded toy,
The furniture of my dear house
Is sweet content and joy,

And sacrifice and service,
And thoughtfulness and cheer;
And, over these, that perfect love
Which casteth out all fear.

THE HILLS OF PENNSYLVANIA

O SPLENDID Pennsylvania hills,
How mightily they stand,
To keep the sinuous, silver streams
That feed the meadow land!
For one is here beneath my feet,
And the next—this peerless day,
With a thousand sheltered farms between,
Is twenty miles away.

Is twenty miles away, and yet
Their great, far-reaching arms
Are round about each nestling vale
That shrinks from rude alarms.
And so they stand, serene and strong,
In the clear September air—
Grave sentinels, unmoved since God
Himself first set them there.

A stately peace is on their crest
That nothing can destroy,
And here the breezes gain new life
And speed away with joy!
And here the golden sunlight rolls
In billows broad and free,
While from on high the deep blue sky
Looks down in love on me.

Glad faith and hope are garrisoned
Within their noble bounds,
And from their summit men of earth

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Are stirred by heavenly sounds;
While vision quickens with delight
As nature stands revealed
In wide expanse, from lofty cloud
To hamlet of the field.

O splendid Pennsylvania hills,
My hold, my help, my home,
Through every storm of days gone by
And all the days to come!
Encircled by the firmament
And crowned with towering trees—
Safe, safe am I, and lifted up
'Midst battlements like these!

LOSS AND GAIN

THAT night the ship Titanic sank at sea,
And some so stood amidst the encircling tide
That every poor and sodden thing that mars
The goodly face of Death was swept aside,
And they beheld him but as Victory,
And won the high approval of the stars!
That night, so beautiful above the wave
It drew these, drowning, from the gulf that yawned
Beneath their feet, and gave them wings to save
Their souls forever, as the daylight dawned:
That holy night!—one, from a hundred more
Not less heroic, but not summoned by
The ministering angels of the sky
To quite so sweet a privilege, loomed before
The swinging lifeboat, holding hand in hand
Two boys, and, answering, was heard to cry—
“No, no; of course not! Bless you, no; not I!
But these!—their mother waits upon the land!
I have but charge of them, they are not mine!”
Then leaned far down and kissed them from on high:
And, turning back again, became divine
And godlike, in the twinkling of an eye!

ASCENDENCY

O SPIRIT of all sacrifice,
That, beckoning, leads apart
Some chosen ones for utmost toil,
Come, thou, inspire my heart!

Inspire my heart to scale the hills
Only thine own have gained;
Striving, unmindful of my strength,
Till I, too, have attained!

For in such striving, lo, I see
A man that was concealed—
A very angel of the Lord,
Within my soul revealed.

A man in whose fair lineaments
Transcendent beauties shine;
A mighty man—victorious,
Of countenance divine.

And I am not myself—this clay
That I would fain disown,
But something high and pure and fit
To stand before God's throne.

No longer the misshapen child
Of an ignoble race;
But some new creature, born of heaven
And touched with royal grace.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And then, as I behold, I know
That this which is—shall be;
My deathless part—arisen and sealed
With immortality:

Something secure—which neither time
Nor sense hath power to mar;
And looking—lo, I bow and breathe
Its triumph from afar.

BONDMAN AM I

BONDMAN am I, yet gloriously free!
Vassal of Truth, but by that high estate
Of right redeemed and set at liberty
From servitudes that make life desolate:
With every chain unloosed and shackle riven
For those sweet bands that gird the soul for heaven.

RUTH AND NAOMI

WHAT though the plain of Moab, broad and fair,
Lay ripe with harvest in the orient air,
That sun-lit morning from the hillside where
Ruth lingered and looked down!

Unmoved of spirit at the goodly sight
Of native field and forest bathed in light,
She stood as one encompassed by the night,
In some strange land alone.

But when Naomi whispered "come"—behold
The fields seemed suddenly aflame with gold,
And all the earth grew radiant as of old,
The while they journeyed on.

AT YULE IN THE HOME-LAND

THINK you that the Lord of children
Keeps not Christmas-time on high?
Think you, as we sing together,
They are silent in the sky?
Hark! I hear this very moment,
As we lift our happy song,
Wondrous halleluiahs rising
From a sweet, immortal throng!

Listen! the celestial music
Hath a sound of holy mirth.
Look! the trees of life are shining
Like the Christmas-trees of earth.
Look again! from every portal
Come they now with loud acclaim,
And the glory, and the gladness
And the words are still the same.

And the Christ!—He moves amongst them
In that dear and blessed land,
Smiling ever as He passes,
Answering gently each demand;
Or, in tender exaltation,
Pausing, silent, as afar
Echoes of their carols reach Him
From the Christmas where we are.

Nay, nay!—He hath not forgotten,
And beholding Him they know,

By a deep and heavenly knowledge,
We, too, keep the feast below.
Therefore let us keep it nobly,
And on spirit-wings aspire
To our loved-ones and their Saviour,
And the goal of our desire.

THE STREAM AND THE OCEAN

I KNOW a shining river
That goes to meet the tide,
Spreading a last triumphant sound
Of singing far and wide;
As though it loved the billows,
And ran to their embrace
With joyful sense of nobler life
Unhedged by narrow space:

And I have wished that I might be
Like it when I put out to sea!

THE BOY OF THE BY-WAY

ONE April morning, as I went
To work, depressed and uncontent,
I met a lad who made me glad
In a trice with some odd tricks he had.

The air was cool and brightly clear,
And he cried, the moment I drew near,
"Oh, uncle, say—isn't this a day?—
Turn off that street and come my way!"

"It's farther, I know, thro' the fields, but yet
You're early—and think of the fun you'll get!"
And he coaxed—and still he coaxed, until
I said at last "I believe I will!"

So over a fence we leaped and then
Ran down a hill and up again;
Then wheeled about and shouted out,
And drove away my lingering doubt.

Then he did a handspring, and then a lot
Of other stunts I had half forgot;
And he stoned a mark, and whispered, "Hark—
While I whistle a bit and lure that Lark!"

And the more he did the better I felt,
And the sweeter the vernal breezes smelt;
Till, at last, when he sang till the echoes rang,
I tingled clean thro' with his own wild tang.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And I vowed to myself I had never seen
The sky so blue or the grass so green;
Nor everywhere the earth so fair
And utterly free from pain and care!

And, feeling thus, when we came to part,
I thought, "Here's a youngster I've liked from the start,
And henceforth—egad!—when I'm sour and sad
'Twill be well to remember this same lad."

So I called, as he vanished from sight, "Old man,
Let us meet some day again, if you can!"
"Sure! count on me"—with a laugh said he,
"For I'm simply the boy you used to be!"

RED GLORY ON THE HILLS

RED glory on the hills,
But lengthening shadows here;
And in the secret of my soul
A longing—and a fear!

The flaming fire grows pale
Beneath the deepening haze,
And in my soul a mist of pain
Enshrouds the golden days.

The solemn night descends,
The distant flame is gone,
And now—beside a grave—I stand
In darkness, and alone.

Alone, yet not alone!—
For, lo, there shines afar,
Upon my head, bowed down by grief,
The splendor of a star!

A star whose light is love—
Love wonderful and great;
And, lifted by its power, behold,
I am not desolate!

AT THE SIGN OF THE GOLDEN WEDDING

TWO travelers passed here late this darksome day,
With faces set serenely toward the night;
And merry, too, as though the old delight
Of summer flowers still garlanded the way:
Long, long I watched them coming, hand in hand,
Far down the road across the meadow land.

What time they stopped for quiet rest and cheer
('Twas but a little spell) I found them both
Surpassing sweet in converse, and was loth
To have them leave, with evening so near:
But when I questioned whitherward they went,
They smiled, with deep foreknowledge and content,

Yet told me not; but having gently said,
"Good friend, farewell!" resumed their course, like those
On some sure quest, grown eager at its close.—
"And now?" you ask. Ah, yes!—the hearth burns red,
Come, comrades, while their memory lingers, come,
And pledge them—that, ere this, they are at home!

TO LIVE IS MORE THAN LIFE

TO live is more than life! Immersed in night
Mere life is but the process of decay;
He lives—who struggles upward toward the light,
And finds immortal day:

Who listens deeply to the first faint cry
Of quickened spirit summoning his strength,
And follows—follows on, till eye to eye
He stands with God at length:

Who solves the mighty language of the sea;
Who reads great thought inscribed on stock and stone,
And hears with awe his final destiny
Unfolded from a throne:

Who gathers surely as he goes along
The subtle things—the verities of earth,
That feed his new-born self and make it strong
And glad with vital mirth:

Whose hours—escaped from dull routine of sense,
All-valiant and with splendid labor rife,
Discover truth in ample recompense;
To live is more than life!

SPACE AND SPIRIT: TIME AND LOVE

O H, what is space to spirit!—
Naught, less than naught, I say.
Or time, with Love!—unnumbered years,
With Love, are but a day.

'Tis of myself I know this,
For I have felt my soul
Arise, and giving space no thought
Circle from pole to pole.

And I have found within me
His tenderness the same
Who fashioned the first flowers—and set
Alcyoné aflame!

THE VISION OF KING THAMYRIS

Who builds for immortality—
Or churl, or man of high degree,
The motive of his house must be
Unselfishness and love.

THE work was finished; and at eventide
King Thamyris went forth in royal pride
To look upon the temple he had made.—
From marble plinth to towering colonnade
Its snow-white beauty, rich and manifold,
Rose all aflush with hues of red and gold
And flaming purple from the sunset sky.
Deep silence reigned about, nor ventured nigh
Vassal or serf to where, serene and grand,
Aloof from all, the monarch took his stand,
Enrapt with exaltation in the thought
Of what at length his mighty arm had wrought;
How men had smiled and sneered at first, but how
Their doubt had turned to wonderment, till now
His was the triumph, his the eternal fame!
Aye, had they not indeed inscribed his name
In splendid letters 'gainst the crowning height
Of topmost tabature, in blazoned sight
Of every lifted eye, that earth might call
That king illustrious who had planned it all?
And God—whose house it was—oh, would not he,
He, too, with that great name well pleaséd be,
And grant, what time it met his holy gaze,
Increased dominion and new length of days!

Thus mused the king—with self-complacent heart,
Of coming glory as he stood apart;
Nor marked the hour.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And now the solitude

Of night drew on—but still entranced he stood
Beneath the stars which one by one appeared
Above the matchless building he had reared.
Till, lingering there alone, behold, he saw
A wondrous thing that smote his soul with awe.
For, suddenly, athwart the darkness came,
In noiseless flight, an angel all aflame,
Who, circling 'round the marble walls a space
On shining pinion, with resplendent face,
Sought out and found the writing that bespoke
Their royal builder, and at one swift stroke
Erased it all, and in its stead set down
A name unheard of and of no renown—
A woman's name; then, where with covered head
The king now prostrate lay, descending, said:—
“Vain creature of the dust, know thou this hour
Not unto thee, despite that wealth and power
Which built this shrine—not unto thee is due
Chief praise, but unto one ye never knew;
Whose name high heaven hath given thy lofty place,
Because it, only, hath befitting grace.
For, while from day to day thou toil'd'st and strove
And laid'st these stones in pride, she watched in love,
In thankful love, that man should thus accord
Such honor unto God, her sovereign Lord!
Each pillar here, each sculptured marble rare
Hath breathed, O king, the incense of her prayer.
Into the mortar went like subtile wine
Her faith and her unselfishness divine.
Year after year, in utter sacrifice,
She gave her life that this great fane might rise.
To her—or man, or beast of low degree,
That labored here shared like nobility.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

She cheered with song the masons at their task;
Or kept cool drink for all who came to ask;
Or even fed, betimes, the ponderous ox,
That drew with patient steps these great-hewn blocks
And rested for a moment by the way,
Handfuls of springing grass, or toothsome hay;
And kindly, too, with many a gentle word:
Till toil was sweetened and each toiler stirred
With one supreme desire to labor well
That God might find the work acceptable.—
For which, O king, I witness to thee now
She is immortal here—not thou, not thou!”

So spake the voice. And then the king was left
Alone again—aye, more than that, bereft
Of pride, the very substance of his crown!
And in the dark—abased—with head bowed down,
He turned, retraced his steps, and desolate,
Passed in unseen beneath his palace gate.

Oh, builders all, great brood of Thamyris!—
Who strive today as he, whose hope was his,
Still, still the old requirement doth remain,
And, else love move the heart, ye, too, in vain
Sue heaven for that approving word whose breath
Alone can make you mightier than death.

ROOSEVELT THE NIGHT OF HIS WOUNDING
AT MILWAUKEE

THIS sort the valorous Arthur strove to be;
This—was the ancient glory of the Graeme;
This—won for Lincoln immortality,
And gave to Washington a deathless name.

This—Douglas nobly dreamed of, and was true;
This—fired the spirit of Joan of Arc;
This—made an Iron Duke at Waterloo,
And held his eye to a celestial mark.

This—moved a pontiff so that he released
His men from barbarous homages, and taught
The real sway of every righteous priest,
The power so great the potentate is naught.

And this once more hath made a people proud,
As little children, unashamed of tears;
Whose hearts in joyful gratitude are bowed,
Nor grudge the bitter travail of the years.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

SYLVIA

THE one on whom I lean me
In days of deepest need,
The world, regarding, doth esteem
At best a broken reed;—

At best a feeble ally
For any man to trust,
When other help he counted on
Hath crumbled into dust.

But I—ah, I have tested
This unpretentious heart!
And let the world think what it will
In secret and apart,

I know its dauntless courage,
Who find amidst my fear
The high endurance of the hills
Serenely centered here.—

I know—who, turning hither,
Have never been deceived;
But live to bless her fortitude,
In whom I have believed.

THE HAIR-CLOTH SOFA

COMRADE, spare me your derision,
Playful though it be!
This, to you so worn with age,
Still appeals to me!

These rude arms were comfort once—
True, unquestioning joy,
Deep and faithful sanctuary
For a little boy!

Daily I remember how
He who came and went
Nestled here in peace at evening,
Happy and content!

I have never changed it since—
Nay, and never will!
Like an altar of the heart,
It shall stay, until

Alien spirits enter here—
Those that cannot know!
Then, perhaps, this hair-cloth sofa,
Left alone, may go.

THIS IS MY FAITH

THIS is my faith—the power that holds me fast
To one from heaven with whom my life is cast;
Whose very heart thereby is knit with mine,
Never less human, hardly more divine.
A power—not separate and apart from me,
But soul of what I am and hope to be.
I know nor seraphim, nor angels know,
Nor any God that dwells not here below;
But this—ah, this Man from the stars above
Hath made my sorrow his, his love my love!
He feels as I do, and I understand
His thought, his look, the pressure of his hand!
And we both toil, and rest from toil as one,
I, and this Man of men, from sun to sun;
And when strife comes we battle unafraid,
Armed with the weapons he and I have made.

JANET

JANET, do you mind the crossing
At the ford of Jellicoe,
How you said you liked it better
Than the dusty bridge below?

And the stepping-stones, my Janet—
How I fixt them for you there,
Firm and smooth above the water,
Swirling onward everywhere?

Still I see you passing over,
Gay of spirit, and unshod;
Moving lightly as the current
That threw kisses where you trod.

And the music of your laughter,
And the vision of your feet,
As I watched, in love, and waited—
Ah, 'twas all exceeding sweet!

Janet, Janet, gone forever,
Would I had you back again!
Fresh at morning, fresh at evening—
Every day was heaven then.

Would that you had always let me
Fix the path for you to go,
As I fixt the crossing, Janet,
At the ford of Jellicoe!

Oh, the cool and limpid water,
Singing summer's gentlest hymn!—
Ah, the dusty bridge and highway,
And the city far and dim!

THE HEART OF WINTER

HAIL, Springs of life within the silent rock!
I know the secret of your hiding-place,
I hear the hidden music of your flowing,
I see the vernal sunbeams brightly glowing
Above the limpid depths of your embrace.
And though no bolt of heaven nor thunder-shock
Hath aught of power to pierce your mighty prison,
Yet this, this too, I know, that, by and by,
Some messenger of song that God hath sent
Will seek these solid walls, and find their portal,
And gently call you forth, in faith immortal,—
Will gently call till every bar is rent,
And Earth awakens with the joyful cry,
"Behold, behold, the Springs of life are risen!"

“THE WISE DISCIPLE YEN”

WHILE the years were young in hoar Cathay,
The wise disciple Yen,
Through a time of dire confusion,
That filled his fellow-men
With deep despondency of soul,
Still kept him in complete control;
Nor found his humble cottage mean,
But in its calm seclusion
Lived on unruffled and serene—
While the years were young in hoar Cathay;
His meat—a single bamboo-cup
Of rice—enough against each day;
His drink—though but one small gourd-dish
Of water—yet full sweet to sup,
And much as any man might wish.

For—not alone earth's meat and drink
Were joy to Yen, who lived apart,
But food of noble thoughts to think
And gentle feasting of the heart!
And so, while others found distress
And poverty in life—and pain,
He dwelt within his narrow lane
Abating naught of happiness.

Oh, would such wisdom were alway
As this of Yen, to strengthen men
Through times like that in hoar Cathay!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

LINES FOR THE CENTENARY OF AN AMERICAN BOROUGH

(Read at Norristown, Pennsylvania, May 5th 1912)

THEY make a city great—they give a town
In course of time illustrious renown,
Who lift it up with patient hardihood
To high achievement for the common good;
Whose minds are set, whose lives are dedicate
To fashion it a model for the state:
Knights of the proletariat, who see,
Even above its unheroic pale,
The ancient glory of the Holy Grail
Still beckoning on toward better things to be.

For places only win immortal fame
When linked with heaven in purpose and in deed;
The full-blown splendor of a noble name
Springs not, nor flowers from ignoble seed;
But rather out of planting, brave and wise,
Of virgin stock, committed unto soil
Deep-nourished by the blood of sacrifice,
And brought to fruitfulness by bitter toil.

Do we forget? Then let us seek anew
That narrow, unpretentious wooden span
Where once the "embattled farmers," man for man
In Concord village gave to God his due!
I know well why each bares his reverent head
For those who fell here, and yet are not dead;
Nor count it strange I hear no trivial sound
Above this richly consecrated ground.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Or, turning thence, while memory yet distils
Tears undenied, hark with me to the hills
Of Valley Forge! What palaces of kings
Tower upward toward the everlasting stars
So proud as these? What other silence sings
Freedom's great song in such transcendent bars
As this, whose choristers one theme repeat—
Sublime recovery from sublime defeat!

Or, circling thitherward, let us obey
The call of other places on our way,
If but a few, where some souls played a part
In war, religion, literature, or art,
So well, so dauntlessly they lent to each
A voice to speak for them beyond the reach
Of human utterance, written down in books:
Danvers, for Whittier; Boston-town, for Brooks;
Cambridge, for Lowell, Longfellow and Holmes;
Who built existence into sunlit domes
As deeply vaulted as the blue above;
Nor fail to note that town of brother-love
Exalted in a measure over all
By those who christened Independence Hall.

Or, last, in our own meadows, broad and fair,
For Bayard Taylor, pause at Kennett Square;—
Or, Plymouth Meeting, where a prince of men,
(Who painted pictures pure and undefiled
And gave his life to save a little child)
Left after him the heart of Hovenden.

And so, returning from our spirit quest
Made better by these precincts we have trod,
And seeing things as he—the wise Lord God

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Would have us see them, may we here stand forth,
This day of all a century the best,
To a wide vision of intrinsic worth!
Beholding out of what our town hath done,
These hundred years, deeds only that endure;
And thinking most of those who one by one
Set lofty standards and then made them sure
By valorous devotion to the end.
Twin Captains* first, arising to defend
Our mother country in the throes of war—
Tall men and true, who fought so long and well
In her behalf, their splendor spread afar;
And those of other walks Fame doth not tell,
But cherished equally within their sphere;
And some still militant among us here;
(Not a large company, and yet enough
When knit together of majestic stuff!)
In church and school, in court-house and in store—
Who, counting not material gain the less,
Have ever reckoned other gain the more,
And wrought that this our borough might possess,
With every new advancement we have made,
A fuller mead of civic righteousness,
Above mere ostentation and parade!
That virtue which will neither take nor give
Aught other than an honorable wage;
That quality which, living, says "let live!"
To all who share the common heritage;
Which, laboring for the universal need,
Meets every fellow-laborer face to face,
And scorns to make its native town a place
Of exploitation for unworthy greed;

* Major-Generals John Frederick Hartranft and Winfield Scott Hancock.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

But spendeth and is willing to be spent
In many things for love, without reward;
That glory of those doers of the word
Whom we should magnify in every home
Today and always! and to whom can come
No monument more beautiful—more fit,
Than that we raise in elevating it!

Therefore, let civic righteousness be made
The chief petition of our festal prayers,
In secret and in general affairs;
That we may front the future unafraid,
Beneath its gonfalon against the sky;
And, having here received its accolade,
May guard it here—nor suffer it to die!

WHILE BETHLEHEM SLEPT

ONE night in deep December,
In Israel of old,
From the hill-tops over Bethlehem,
Where the sky was clear and cold,
There fell a light so wondrous
It turned the streets to gold:
But the people slept and saw it not,
In Israel of old.

For high above the heavens,
Where many mansions are,
While tongues of fire, responsive,
Leaped forth from star to star,
The gates of life were opened,
And splendor flamed afar—
The splendor of Jerusalem,
Where many mansions are.

And thro' the flaming splendor,
There streamed a mighty throng
Of endless, white-robed angels,
Singing an endless song;
A song of peace and gladness,
And right for every wrong:
But the people slept and heard it not—
Heard not the endless song.

Only a few poor shepherds,
Who kept their flocks in fear,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Beheld those singers beautiful,
And, as the song drew near,
Heard all its tender message,
Across the midnight clear:
Beheld—and heard—and worshiped,
Beside their flocks in fear.

And one triumphant mother,
Within the village, heard
That same great song celestial,
Until her soul was stirred
To tears of love unbounded,
With every gracious word:
But all the town about her slept,
Nor knew, nor saw, nor heard.

O child of earth, be watchful,
These brooding Christmas days;
Faint not, but guard thine altar,
Thine eyes, expectant, raise;
Still Bethlehem's choir angelic,
Pours forth its song of praise,
And some there be will hear and see,
These brooding Christmas days!

TO A GOLDFINCH

(Perched on a Thistle Weed above the Snow)

LITTLE Yellow-bird, delaying
Bravely in a blighted land;
Left alone, but still obeying
Summer's sorrowful command;
She hath gone, but thou art token
Of her love, and wilt remain
Till, earth's icy thraldom broken,
She shall come to us again.

Winds may rail against thy gladness,
Fain to drive thee far away;
Winter hem thee in with sadness
Till thy gold be turned to gray;
All their hardship doth but make thee
Dearer than thou wast before,
And as field and sky forsake thee
We but cherish thee th' more.

Thine unfaltering devotion,
(Sweet remembrancer, and true!)
Kindleth a divine emotion
Making us courageous too;
And, upon our spirits stealing,
Cometh strength to do and dare—
Little Yellow-bird revealing
Springtime in the frozen air!

WHAT THOUGH MY HOUSE BE FAR AFIELD

WHAT though my house be far afield,
By darkling wood and starlit sky,
If God hath set his mighty shield,
Invisible, on high!

I find the solitude my strength,—
The solitude that bringeth near
Such shelter; and through all the length
Of night, I feel no fear.

But that sweet sense of things unseen
With which, in deep tranquillity,—
I know the encircling gloom, serene,
Is garrisoned for me!

While with the day—ah, with the day!—
When shadowy coppice-aisles grow bright,
And crest and summit far away
Appear impearled in light:

When silence trembles with a song,
And wakening winds take up the strain,
Till mead and vale and thicket throng
With melodies again:

Then do I lift mine eyes in bliss
At love so wondrously revealed,
And thank the Lord of all for this—
My dwelling far afield.

MY PALACE

I LIVE in a palace of love,
I live in a palace of joy,
I live in a palace of wonderful peace,
With four little girls and a boy.

With four little girls and a boy,
And one who is mother of these,
And then still another who calls himself "brother,"
And dresses in kilts to his knees.

With these, and a cherub of light
Who is gone but whose spirit remains,
And at times in the evening above us repeats
The gentlest of heavenly strains.

My palace is not builded high,
Nor splendid, nor stately, nor strong;
Ah, no—and yet still a true palace it is,
With its children—and sunshine—and song!

For everything changes when these
Their magical building begin;
And a very plain place, at their touch, may become
All beautiful ever within!

And such is this palace of mine,
This palace of love, peace, and joy,
And mother—and cherub—and brother in kilts—
And four little girls, and a boy.

LINES FOR TWO LITTLE DWELLERS IN THE
COUNTRY

I HAVE not seen your house at all,
Yet know that angels love it
And keep it ever, 'round about,
(Dear Eleanor, and Edith, too)
And ever watch above it!
For angels seek just such as you,
And, when you little dream, delight
To be your guardians by day,
Your sentinels by night!

So—if, some winter afternoon,
When all is very quiet,
There seems to flit across your room
A joyful shadow, like a bird
In summer passing by it,—
Then sit you close, and speak no word,
And bow your heads, and do not fear,
And you may see them, bending down
Together, and quite near!

Or—if, may be, at night time, when
The fires begin to darken,
A wind outside appears to call,
As though, in accents soft and low,
A clear voice whispered "hearken!"—
Then think the sweetest song you know,
And listen sharp, nor be afraid,
And you may hear the angels sing
Their slumber serenade!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

But, should you fail, perchance, to see,
Or even fail to hear them,
Oh, doubt me not, they do indeed
Love little girls (God's angels fair)
And often hover near them,
And watch about them everywhere,
And count it a supreme delight
To be their guardians by day,
Their sentinels by night!

MAN-O'-THE-WOOD AND GOLDEN-THROAT

(Lines written upon meeting the Brown Thrasher)

“WHAT are you singing for—Golden-throat?
The earth is empty here;
In all these forest aisles remote
There is not one listening ear.
That glorious strain, celestial bird,
Deserves a raptured throng;
To pour it forth alone, unheard,
Seems but a waste of song.”

“What are you loving for—Man-o'-the-wood
With heaven in your face?
Amidst this utter solitude
All love is out of place.
Your heart's-desire hath passed afar
To brighter realms above;
To keep on loving where you are
Seems but a waste of love.”

“Just for the joy of it!—Golden-throat,
The joy a true love brings.”
“And I, dear man, miss never a note
For the joy a true song sings.”—
O, blithesome bird—thrice happy man!
Such love, such song as yours
Made life divine when life began,
And will, while life endures.



“WHAT ARE YOU SINGING FOR—GOLDEN THROAT?”

From a photograph tinted in water colors



THE PARACLETE

THE battle hems me hard; I reel
With mortal weakening and fear;
When, lo, amidst the dark, I feel
A Stranger drawing near!

I dare not turn; but as His breath
Falls close upon my cheek, I pray
He may not see me yield to death
And perish by the way!

And then—with sudden joy divine—
I feel, although He hath not spoke,
A mighty shoulder touching mine,
And dealing stroke for stroke!

He holds the foe in check—His glance
Hath caught my eye! I press His hand,
And thank him for deliverance,
And bless Him where we stand!

GOD AND THE RIGHT

ACROSS the deep, from the ends of earth,
Comes the cry of Almighty God!
Of Him that hung with fire and cloud
O'er the path that Israel trod!
And poor and thin is the lion's roar
'Mid Jehovah's thunderous call to war!

What though the king be small and weak,
And weak and small his land,
If the reins of his battle-steeds are held
In the grip of an unseen hand!
If at the bar of his standard swings
The gonfalon of the King of kings!

You may beat him back to his northern kraal,
But beware the solemn day
When he turns to die, and you find, too late,
You have driven God to bay;
That your claims are valueless and vain,
And He of the heavens is suzerain!

Midlothian's voice, deep-toned and true
That spoke for peace before;
For peace, with honor, in defeat,
Now speaks for peace once more
With holier fire and deeper tone,
From beside the great, white Judgment Throne!

Who died for the freedom of Brabant
Shall die for freedom still,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

At Laing's Nek, or red Ingago,
Or fierce Majuba Hill!
Has earth not seen—in dread alarm—
The Judge of Earth make bare his arm!

Still live "the Beggars" that stood for right
'Gainst the men of greed and power!
The brood that William the Silent led
Through the Lowlands' blackest hour;
That fought five days for a victory
In the dauntless ships of the Zuyder Zee!

The sturdy "Beggars" that rode the waves
Of a universal doom,
And, sailing bloody seas, emerged
Triumphant from their gloom!
That made the Dutch republic's star
Shine with the glory of brave Alkmaar!

And they shall live through flood, or flame,
Or woe, or women's tears,
Till they reach, in some new century,
The first of the Thousand Years!
Then, Lord of Hosts, make war to cease,
And bless their land, and give them peace!

IO TRIUMPHE—DIES DIERUM

O DAY of days, O crimson morn of morns!
Jerusalem may sleep, but Olivet
Cries out in joy, and all her sons have met
To swell the chorus of thy silver horns!
Hark, hark, with victory
The very battlements of heaven are ringing;
And e'en in tear-bedimmed Gethsemane
Glad birds are singing!

Haste, haste, ye faithful ones, for well you may!
There is no sorrow here but in your hearts:
Across the vale the lingering gloom departs
And new-born splendor flames along the way:
See, see,—the radiant trees
Have heard the truth, and stir with life to tell it,
While night—that flies before the early breeze—
Cannot repel it.

Such thrill of triumph never filled the air
As that that beats about your narrow path;
Each opening flower a deeper beauty hath
Than ever bloomed before in Judah fair.
Haste, haste,—there is no death!—
The Crucified hath broken death's dark prison,
The Son of Man hath breathed immortal breath,
The Christ is risen!

Now let the stately palm uplift its head,
That gave its branches once with head bowed down;
And let the dews of night flash forth a crown
Upon its crest, for Him that is not dead!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

The King—the King, for whom
The sun appears again, as at creation;
Hail, hail the King!—come gather at His tomb
In adoration!

IN TOWN AT SPRING

IN town at Spring, when some first golden day
Seems far as heaven from the squalid street
And alley-way where hapless children meet
Ill fed and clothed, to pass an hour at play;
Behold, I find them still so bright and gay
With game and dance and simple, artless song,
I think sweet April of the fields must be
Moving unseen—unknown of them or me
In tender love amidst the tattered throng!
And, with a magic only April knows,
Lending each little heart, and eye, and ear
A bloom as beautiful as Sharon's rose—
The gladness of a lute they never hear,
The brightness of a face they never see—
Sweet April with his gentle ministry,
In town at Spring!

THE LITTLE RED TOP

“AND are these things all?” A shadow fell
On the Angel’s brow, like a mist of pain;
And he waited a moment, loth to teil
The man he had come in vain.

“Thine alms have been many; the list is long;
But sifting each one I find no trace
Of the brotherly kindness—deep and strong,
That winneth redeeming grace.”

Transfixt with sorrow the pilgrim stood,
Nor made one plea for himself; but, lo,
As he looked back into the solitude
And girded his cloak to go,

There ran by the Angel, with outstretched hand,
And a sudden cry, exceeding glad,
Straight forth from the gates of the better land,
A brave and beautiful lad:

Who, calling the traveler, bade him stop,
And seizing his arm, said eagerly
“Oh, don’t you remember the little red top?
Quick, tell him of that!” said he.

“The little red top?—do I hear aright?
Fell the answer doubtfully and slow;
For the weary man had forgotten quite
This deed of the days below.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

But the Angel, following close, was now
Beside the boy, in the gloom apart;
And gently commanded "Tell me, do thou,
Of the little red top, dear Heart."

So he told—how, once, at the village shop
This very pilgrim, so old and gray,
Went in, though a stranger, and bought him the top
He had longed for, many a day;

And, bringing it out to him, kissed him there,
And whispered he too was once a boy,
And patted his head and stroked his hair,
And leaving him wished him joy.

.
It was nothing. And yet the face of the child
Lit up at the end with a wondrous light
As he saw (oh, love of the undefiled!)
'Twas enough in heaven's sight:

For the Angel turned, and tenderly
Took each by the hand, when the tale was told;
And, leading them back again, all three
Passed in through the gates of gold.

MY GUEST

OH, miracle of life,
A little child hath come,
Breathing the spirit of a king
To tarry at my home!

The marks of high degree
Are plain upon his face;
His hands, his feet, his lips, his heart,
Are touched with royal grace.

And when in wondering love
I gaze into his eyes,
The clear light of nobility
Deep-mirrored in them lies.

While, oft, at sound of song,
He suddenly appears
Enrapt with joy, as though there still
Fell faintly on his ears

Some last melodious strain,
Unheard—undreamed of earth,
That swept his own fair palace gates,
The moment of his birth.

Ah, lineage half revealed,
Glimpse of immortal line,
I look, sweet prince, and heaven is near
That was—and shall be thine!

THE CORN HARVEST

IN beautiful battalions,
That stretch from sea to sea,
Unnumbered as the stars above
And plumed with victory,
Behold, behold—ye sons of men—
Morn following glorious morn,
On mead and vale and mountain-side,
God's hosts of waving corn!

What armies of a mighty land
Were e'er arrayed as these!
Not helmeted for strife they stand,
But bearing gifts of peace;
A hundred thousand regiments
Of veterans straight and tall,
Each girt about with treasure-trove
And waiting for his call.

Astir with sound more eloquent
Than loud acclaim of war,
They flash their emerald shields, and spread
Jehovah's fame afar.
Host answers unto murmuring host,
Till all the shining ranks
Seem animate with one great cry—
"Give thanks, O earth, give thanks!"

September's red and fiery sun
Bronzes their sturdy breasts;

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

The North-wind turns to deeper gold
Their richly tasseled crests;
While God above, not scant in love,
Still multiplies their store,
That plentiful prosperity
May bide at every door.

Legions of blessing, sooth, are they,
Upraised by some still voice
Of power divine that no man knows,
To make the year rejoice;
Legions of blessing, laden down
With bread from heaven, borne
To mead and vale and mountain-side—
God's hosts of waving corn!

HER TWO ANGELS

SHE walked with Seraphim on either side,
(And one of them was Joy, and one was Sorrow)
Who came with gifts, and yet were moved to borrow
Gifts in return from her they glorified.
Each fain had led her by a separate way,
But lo, behold, she choose the path, not they!
And, going forward, holy signs were wrought
In silence by this pilgrim they had sought.
For, soon, grave Sorrow bore beneath the spell
Joy's rose; and Joy, grave Sorrow's asphodel.
Whereafter, Joy displayed a lovely sadness;
While Sorrow, brightening into gentle gladness
Kept pace with them a little less supinely,
Anon uplifting her white brow divinely.
And, step by step, their voices both grew sweet
 With mortal kindness, as some instrument
 A master touch hath tuned, with high intent
That it may nobler, loftier themes repeat!
 Until (oh, miracle of earth!) these two,
 Unconsciously, in perfect measure knew
 That wonder, of all wondrous things below,
 The concord of a woman's weal and woe:
Who, ever tranquil and unfoiled of fear,
In her own course, thro' shadows dark and drear
As night fell 'round about—afar and wide,
Still walked with Seraphim on either side.

SPIRIT OF GRAY NOVEMBER

SPIRIT of gray November—left alone,
With fields forsaken and unfriendly skies—
Thou hast a tranquil beauty all thine own,
And I have learned to love thy solemn eyes!

In thee, at last, the passion of the year
Gives way to resignation's noblest mood;
While patient peace descends from far and near,
To soothe and dignify thy solitude.

Thy coming throws a calm upon my grief,
And when I follow where thy feet have trod,
I am as that one, seeking for relief,
Who yields the burden of his life to God.

And so, as earlier each waning day
Night drops its mantle on the golden hills,
I bow my head, I brush my tears away,
And drink with thee, the cup that nature fills.

For after all the summer's joy and pain
The weary earth hath need of longer rest,
And why should this poor soul of mine detain
The wakeful fire that lingers in the west?

No, no; for, lo, there shines another light—
The very faith and hope for which I cried,
As, piercing through the deeper shades of night,
The stars of heaven draw closer to thy side!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

While in the darkness, from the stilly air,
Some bird of winter bids my spirit sing;
And all about my pathway bleak and bare,
The nestling grain gives prophecy of spring!

Spirit of gray November—from thine heart
Do I behold the glory of thy face,
And there, in stately company apart,
Rejoice to find a blessed hiding-place!

AT DAWN IN A FALL GARDEN

The God, who, out of black earth, upon the open verge of winter, can raise up a rose of rarest beauty—hath he no word for you?

O WHITE rose, royally arrayed
Amidst the darkness from afar,
And brought forth, calm and unafraid,
To greet the morning star!

The mystic silence of the night,
And night's deep restfulness divine,
And sense of pure, siderial light—
All these, and more, are thine.

And more!—for as I gaze, behold,
Thy heavenly petals seem to move
With music that I knew of old,
And, knowing, learned to love.

Till, gazing on, enrapt, I hear,
Arising in thy dewy breast,
A message beautiful and clear
From gardens of the Blest.

And, close as thy sweet breath to thee,
And not less sure, although unseen,
A gentle presence comes to me,
Seraphic and serene.

Late is thy day of life, and late
The glory of thy wondrous bloom,
Which, even as I watch and wait,
Emerges from the gloom;

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

But not too late!—white rose—for I,
Who erstwhile lay me down forlorn
Look forth, as thou, upon the sky,
Triumphant and new-born!

O LOVE DIVINE

O LOVE Divine!—He came, and gently singing
At earliest dawn in secret to a bird,
Thrilled it with joy till it awoke, and winging
Its way aloft, proclaimed Him with no word,
Yet surely, sweetly, by the holy sign
Of His own melody. O Love Divine!

Then, in a little while, bent low and kneeling
Deep in a leafy wood with dew bedight,
He lured a wilding flower forth, unsealing
Its tomb with living touch, and toward the light
Turning its face, that these dull eyes of mine
Might trace His presence too. O Love Divine!

Nor this alone: but, where angelic fingers
Wove pearl and rose amidst the orchard trees,
He came again—to breathe the breath that lingers,
When Spring is at the flood, on every breeze;
That, deaf and sightless, I might not repine,
But still discover Him. O Love Divine!

And then—e'en at my hearth—when day was ended,
And in the dusk I soothed my suffering child,
He, crowning all His tenderness, descended
Once more, unseen, and where I sat beguiled
The little one to sleep. "Ah—else than Thine—
There is no heaven!" I cried: Thou Love Divine!

THE OVEN BIRD

“TEACHER, teacher, teacher, teacher, teacher!”
Was there ever such a saucy creature?—
Boasting loud and clear, in your very ear,
That you cannot find him, far or near!

How he sets the forest aisles a-ringing
With his merry notes, more noise than singing!
And how impudent is his plain intent
To divert the quest on which you're bent!

Surely, now, you think, he's over yonder;
But, next moment, as you peer and ponder,
Quick and bright and gay as a boy at play,
He invites you, “Look this other way!”

Yet, don't blame him; birds have many a reason
In the deep, mysterious summer season,
Thus to call and hide, and to lure aside
Those who seek and will not be denied.

In these ferny, redolent recesses,
Just where one least dreams of it or guesses,
Nestling in the ground, he, the golden-crowned,
Has a home 'twould grieve him were it found.

Yes, 'twould put him to complete confusion
Should you stumble on its sweet seclusion.
So be kind to him—have a mind to him,
As you tread these pathways cool and dim.

THE BUILDER

“**I** WILL build me a house”—a young man said,
In the fullness of his heart,
“Yea, unto the limit of my strength,
With true, untrammeled art.”

“Of large achievement and broad emprise,
And philanthropic deed;
Setting no stone for self, but all
For humankind’s great need.”

And, so determined, he toiled and strove
Through week and month and year;
Nor lacked in measure of patient love,
Nor felt he any fear.

But, e’en as he wrought, his labor failed,
Each undertaking fell,
Till night came on, sans pillar or post
Of the house he planned so well.

And, unrequite in the eyes of men
For all his life’s hard day,
Baffled—but still serene, at length
He went forth on his way.

Yet though Earth, then, saw naught, ah me,
But this—the foolish vow
Of one forespent thereby, behold,
It seeth better now!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

It seeth now—erect, sublime,
A building that still stands,
The while of him who built, undreamed,
A house not made with hands;

But of imperishable frame,
Complete, high-portaled, whole,
Which rose to heaven what time he toiled
From that young builder's soul.

SONG FOR VIRGINIA FIVE YEARS OLD

THIS is Virginia—daydawn and roses,
Wild summer roses with meadow-larks singing!
This is Virginia—lovelight upspringing
Into the vernal air.
Sweetness of Perdita, fleetness of Dian,
Heart of Persephoné, April-attended;
This is Virginia—paradise blended
With things of the earth that are fair.

ON THE EDGE OF A WOOD

TWO little maids there are that dwell
Close by a wood and love it well
And find it wonderful with cheer
Through all the ever-changing year.
A tall, great-hearted wood, whose trees
Delight to sing with every breeze.
At times—a strain that rolls along
Like some sonorous minster song,
On, on and upward to the sky;
And then, at times, a lullaby
In such a low, sweet monotone
It must be meant for birds alone.
For here, indeed, the birds abide,
In every vista—deep and wide,
In every nook and leafy close
Engirt with fern and briar-rose.
Here, bide they—blithesome to the last—
Until the summertime is past;
Then hie them southward with the fall,
In silent flight. And yet, not all;
For here the bonnie red-bird stays
E'en in the snow-bound winter days,
To help in keeping hearts aglow.
For these two little maids, you know,
(Pray, did I make that understood)
Live all the year beside the wood;
And when the fields are wrapped in white
The red-bird is a splendid sight—
A flaming promise, left by June,
That after while—aye, very soon

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

She will return; nor better pledge
Could one desire on tree and hedge!
And yet these maidens know quite well
Full many another, and could tell
How through the cold this wood they love,
Holds, for fair June, a treasure-trove
Of violet and anemone,
(Safe-hid beneath each sheltering tree)
To claim when frosty winds are spent;
And—knowing well—they rest content;
Nor find their store of gladness fail,
Whatever time of year prevail—
In summer, sweetening with song;
In winter, growing hale and strong.

And for these twain no mysteries
Lurk awesomely among the trees.
For they have solved them and have found,
Or fairy tread, or elfin sound
All very easily understood,
Here, in the halcyon solitude—
Whose nymphs are squirrels; whose glendoveer
Is but a chipmunk, none need fear;
Whose faun is but a fox; and so
The other sprites that come and go—
Each harmless, winsome, full of mirth,
Within this sylvan home of earth.

And now, thou wouldst their names?—before
My rhyme is run? Ah, friend, no more
Can I reveal, except to say
That one is quiet, and one gay;
And one has eyes so bright they look
Like wavelets of a laughing brook;

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And she—the other—placid eyes,
Illumined as from evening skies:—
This much. Naught else. Yet—this much said,
Oh, come, indeed, let us instead
Of names, a gentler plan employ,
And call them simply Peace and Joy!—
For so they are!—these twain that dwell
Close by a wood, and love it well.

AN AUTUMN LITANY

O THOU, who stood above the prostrate Christ
Which wrestled thro' Gethsemane's dark night,
And, wrestling, won!—and faced the morning light
With victory radiant on His lifted brow,
Come, pitying God!—come quickly in Thy might
To every soul that faints with weakness now,
For Thou alone art strong!

Except Thine hand renew, from day to day,
The poor and crumbling altar of the heart,
Its incense fails, its votaries depart,
To bitter ashes burns its holiest fire.
Come, changeless One, that saw the planets start,
And in each soul Thy steadfast flame inspire.
For Thou alone art true!

Frail, faltering man stumbles without Thine aid,
Sinks—strives to rise—and bites the dust in shame;
Father of Love, that knowest all our frame,
Bow down beside him—bid him cling to Thee,
That he may conquer in Thy conquering Name:
Thy life be his—Thy will his fortress be,
And make him strong and true!

TO PERSEPHONÉ AFAR

ANGEL of the lengthening days,
Beautiful with bloom,
To this bleak domain of winter
Hasten through the gloom!

And with bird, and bud, and blossom
Following in your train,
Down upon its frozen fountains
Rain, rain, rain!

Rain your showers of love abundant,
Rain your floods of song;
Rain, oh, rain your joy resistless,
Till earth's captive throng,

Held awhile in icy thraldom,
Quicken to the sound;
Wake, arise, and—laughing gently,
Leave the bonds that bound.

Hark, I hear across the distance
Even now your wings,
Beating glad the empyrean
Where the South-wind sings!

And at times the evening air
Seemeth strangely bright,
As with some mirage, reflecting
Your imperial flight.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

While a thrill of deep expectance
Stirs the silent waste:
Angel of the lengthening days,
Haste, haste, haste!

OFTTIMES—BESET BY MEMORY

OFTTIMES—beset by memory,
I beg some distant star
To answer with articulate voice
And tell me where you are;
Yet am denied, except to see
A face from out eternity
Unspeakably afar!

And then—at other moments, given
A respite even here,
Some earthly sign—a breeze, a flower,
Or birdsong, sweet and clear,
But touches me, with quick caress,
And lo, amidst forgetfulness
I smile to think—how near!

AT A TEACHER'S VACANT CHAIR

“ALMOST a lifetime here, from day to day,
She taught the younger children of the poor.”
So spake her friend; and, turning half away,
I think, “what strength was hers to thus endure!”

And then—as if revealed alone to me,
Lo, all that course of uneventful years,
Through which she labored well and patiently,
Before my inner vision reappears!

'Tis but a tenuous threading, thin and white,
Amidst earth's everywhere encroaching throng,
Of little pilgrims toiling toward the light,
With one frail figure leading them along.

And yet I feel some mighty presence nigh,
Brooding above that pitiful, small host;
Some glory of the Lord from out the sky,
Some hovering angel of the Holy Ghost.

While at the end I hear a loving voice
That saith divinely—“Daughter, forasmuch
As thou wert true to children, rise, rejoice,
Enter the place I have prepared for such!”

Then, suddenly, above me and around,
The dull, rude school-room groweth wondrous fair;
Its yard, on either side, is heavenly ground,
And she, that came and went, herself is there!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Just for a breath she turneth her glad brow
From desk to desk in blessing, but I see,
Ere she hath vanished, that she knoweth now
The immortal measure of her ministry.

GOD AND MAN

O MASTER mind, immeasurable heart!—
All earth and heaven are thine, and tell of thee.
Thy high and holy thought, thy tender love
Shine forth at morning in the sun above
And sing together from the starlit sea!
And I, who am but one, still have my part
In th' great cosmic joy thou dost inspire;
I feel its faith—I kindle with its fire,
And, taking to myself its rhythmic beat,
I find the very altars where thou art
And bow me down and worship at thy feet.

SING—SILVER TRUMPET DIVINE

OUT of an infinite woe,
Part of a heavenly plan
Purposed for mortals below,
Rises the God that was man.

High on Jerusalem's hills
Myriad angels appear;
Over the firmament thrills
Melody wonderful clear.

Never the Pleiades heard
Tidings so good to repeat;
Never the voice of a bird
Trembled with music so sweet.

What was the door of a tomb,
Sealed with the seal of despair,
Leads to a garden, where bloom
Flowers eternally fair.

Travelers weary with sin,
Begging a place with the dead,
Find, as they sadly look in,
Life everlasting instead!—

Sing—silver trumpet divine!
Summon the day without fear!
Sing—for the Christ that was thine
Waits again only to hear!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE

WITH joy unspeakable and full of glory,
I find God everywhere;
In nestling vale—on towering promontory
Swept by the ocean air:
But gentlest, mightiest, divinest when
He makes his dwelling in the hearts of men.

Behold that figure fearlessly withstanding
A multitude alone!
He speaks!—it is the Lord of Hosts demanding
For righteousness her own.
They strike him down!—but now their curses die,
For, lo, he rises taller to the sky.

And look again! See now his presence filling
Yon woman's face with light;
Hark, hark you—hear his tender mercy thrilling
Her voice amidst the night!
How shines the sacred glow!—how sings the sound!
How all the dark grows beautiful around!

Or, turn you even to this child so lowly—
This boy of humble life!
Ah, stretch your hand to serve him!—he is holy,
His secret soul is rife
With solemn, sweet effulgence from a flame
Lit by the very God from whom he came.

For, whether, in the great of earth appearing
He thunders forth his will,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Or, through some' unknown spirit, gains a hearing
By love alone—God still
Is gentlest, mightiest, divinest when
He makes his dwelling in the hearts of men.

THE MEADOW LARK

CLEAR, clear—far or near,
Bird o' the morning, call!—I hear.
Out of the swift advancing light
Rising brighter and more bright
At the end of each quick flight,—
Meadow Lark, call!—I hear.

Call, call—for of all
Lures of melody, this the thrall
Dawn, awakening in thy breast,
Flings forth tenderly to the west,
This, oh, this is loveliest—
Loveliest lure of all.

Free, free—bush nor tree
Shut the goldening skies from thee!
Deep in the clover-field abloom,
Fragrant, billowy, great with room,
Wide apart from the forest gloom,
Thither thy nest shall be!

There, where—all the air
Bloweth halcyon, hale and rare!
Up and on with the buoyant day—
On into noon and evening gray,
Seeking the mountains far away—
Hale and halcyon air!

Joy, joy!—flute, hautboy,
Pipe, or piccolo seems a toy,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Poor and empty, with thy rich voice,
Caroling, silver-sweet, rejoice,
Silver-sweet, rejoice, rejoice—
Unto th' heights of joy!

Clear, clear—far or near,
Bird o' the morning, call!—I hear;
Finding with thee (out, out between
Th' boundless blue and rippling green)
My heaven not remote, but e'en
Gladly, gently near.

UNSEEN ANGEL OF THE NIGHT

UNSEEN angel of the night
From the realms of day,
One there is who waits impatient
To be borne away!—

One who sat and felt you passing
When you came before:
Unseen angel of the night,
Come—once—more!

Oh, the mystic nearness of you,
As you filled the room!
Close—ah, closer than its fragrance
To a rose abloom!

Oh, the soft, clear light that lingered,
As you went apace!
Never light of earth was like it,
Shining on his face!

Oh, the long and weary looking
Over life's wide sea!
Unseen angel of the night
Come—take—me!

AT VALLEY FORGE

HERE sleep some souls who, fighting well
With bitter hardship and distress,
Went down unmarked of men—yet fell
True victors none the less!

For these brave spirits, driven to bay,
First stood till they sublimed defeat,
And so, in a transcendent way,
Made God's great plan complete.

In this high camp no graves abound;
All rest with equal honor here;
And common strains of heavenly sound
Console each patriot ear.

Nor pride, nor rank impair the place;
But all the hills, from age to age,
Proclaim with undistinctive grace
One noble heritage.

FULFILMENT

O H, happy birds! (I one time said)
If you still sing when he is dead,
I'll stop my ears against the sound,
And falling prone upon the ground
Will look to heav'n, and where I lie
Beg God to let me also die! . . .

But now—oh, happy birds sing on!
You seem to come whence he hath gone,
And (like glad messengers) to say—
“Dear heart bowed down, rejoice, arise!
The skies he loved are still his skies,
And he—he is not far away;
But, listéning this moment, hears
Above the sod you wet with tears
These very songs we sing to you,
And, hearing, smiles beyond the blue!” . . .

Oh, happy birds!

HOW BRIGHTLY BRAVE

HOW brightly brave the fallen year
Goes forth to sacrifice!
How beautiful—how gently bold
Its gonfalons of red and gold
Loom heavenward, afar and near,
Against the darkening skies!

With what triumphant blossoming
It doth the hills endue!
Oh, heart, turn not in grief away,
But worship with each dying day!—
For hast thou not a sense of spring
Somewhere within thee, too?

THE SONG OF THE SHEPHERDS

THERE'S a wonderful song from the heavens,
That throbs with the quickening year
And everywhere to the frosty air
Tells a message strong and clear;
A song that sweeps to the zenith
Like a splendid flame of fire,
That thrills the night with a deep delight,
And touches the world's desire.

'Tis the ancient song of the shepherds,
The song of the star-lit sky,
Whose cadence wild grew soft and mild
In the hush of a lullaby;
Whose mighty halleluiahs
Sank to silence in their flow,
O'er a mother's head in a cattle-shed,
In the days of long ago.

Yet the song old Earth remembers,
And loves as it loved of yore,
From the stately halls of palace walls
To the dwellings of the poor;
And hearts that wait and listen
Still leap, in many a home,
As the winds repeat its promise sweet
Of a Christmas day to come.

While the faces of dream-clad children
Turn radiant with joy,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

As their eyes behold great gifts of gold
At the feet of the baby-boy,—
And there in reverence kneeling,
The wise men from afar,
'Neath the brightness—best and tenderest
That fell from Bethlehem's star.

Till the snow-bound hills are lifted
To the glittering arch above,
And the spirit-land seems close at hand,
With its warmth—and light—and love!
Oh, blessed song of the shepherds,
No music speaks as thine,
That told to earth a Saviour's birth
In melody divine!

OUTCRY AND ANSWER

I

O FAITHFUL heart, I know not if there be
A heaven even now awaiting thee,
Prepared in very truth by one whose eyes
Have seen, with me, thy life-long sacrifice!
A heaven where the bloom of joy foreborne
Shall tenderly encircle and adorn
That patient brow of thine with such delight
As shall atone for all its length of night,
And the sweet glory thou hast put aside
Shall turn again to thee, thrice glorified:
Brave heart, I cannot tell! But this I know,
If I were God, who on this earth below
Have followed daily in the appointed sphere
Where thou hast given thyself from year to year;
If I were God, with God's almighty power,
If I were God, for but one mortal hour!—
And found no bourne celestial set apart
As yet for thee, O, brave and faithful heart!—
Nor depths beneath my feet, nor heights above,
Nor sun, nor star should stay my hand of love,
Nor any claim of angels or of men
Divert me from my holy purpose then.
But, omnipresent, I would search the sky
And seek a place fit for thee, ere thou die;
A place where those rewards thou hast not had
Should come together at my quick behest,
From field and stream and mountains of the Blest,
In bright expectancy, to make thee glad.
A place of rest—perpetual, divine,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

For high and noble weariness like thine;
A place of plenty for thy hungry soul—
Of gracious plenty, without stint or dole;
And soft, Elysian wings of wondrous ease
For thy dear shoulders, bringing such release
From the dead weights they have sustained so long
Thou should'st at first half doubt their strength so strong;
A place of tree, and flower, and flight of birds,
And hill, and meadow-land too fair for words;
And reach of limpid, wind-swept water, kissed
At evening-time with gold and amethyst;
A place of freedom—full and absolute;
A place of home, where merry lips, now mute,
Should call a welcome to thee, and at last
The arms thou faintest for should hold thee fast:
All this—O, faithful heart!—against the time
Thou cam'st—and count the labour sweet, sublime—
If I were God! . . .

II

Far—far beyond all the summer days of earth,
High—high above all its hills and sunset skies,
Deep, deep encompassed with joy and holy mirth
And love that never dies—

God—God the father—hath kept a goodly land
Fresh for the children and them of childlike heart;
Fresh, fresh and pure, in the hollow of his hand—
His own great hand, apart!

There, songs of night itself are sweet as day;
There, flowers forgotten bloom in vernal field;
And gentle faces, that pale and pass away,
Are once again revealed!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Oh, blessed country, fed on every side
By fountain-springs of peace, serene and clear;
My spirit quickens, as across the tide
Thy deathless isles draw near!

LINES FOR FEBRUARY FOURTEEN

I

WITH ROSES

FLOWERS that bloom amidst the snow
Are of heaven surely;
Symbols whereby we may know
Love that loveth purely:
These are ever holy sign
That, though other love may die,
Never this Saint Valentine
Sendeth from the sky!

II

WHEN GENTLE CHAUCER LIVED

When gentle Chaucer lived they used to say
Birds mated on Saint Valentine's chill day;
A thing I thought must surely be untrue
Before the time, dear heart, I first met you;
Believing, until then, that wintry feast,
(Though kept, indeed, for a most kindly priest)
Too bleak and cold for Love. But now I see
Her brightest sunrise on the hills for me
This very hour!—and like the birds I sing
Awake, my own, spring calls to us, sweet spring!

LOVE SONG OF ARCADY

MY soul is a breeze of night
That slumbereth not, nor sleeps,
But, wandering passionately alone,
Unbroken vigil keeps;
Till there comes a plaintive call
From the wakening hills afar,
The first, faint call of its love—the dawn,
Led forth by a flaming star;
And then my soul, at peace and free,
And stirred with nameless melody,
Is the early breeze that sings to thee
A heart-song, tenderly.

For thou art the morning light
That maketh my soul rejoice;
The glory of earth is this—thy face,
Its music is thy voice!
And now I fly to thy breast,
As a wind from the southland blown,
As the warm south wind to the waiting earth,
Close, close to thy breast, mine own;
And behold, the sweets of flower and field,
Deep-hid, their vernal treasure yield,
And the heart of Summer, else concealed,
Is all unto me revealed!

The pulse of the wild-bird's song
Beats at thy throat—and there,
As I lift my head, I feel a breath
Of violets from thy hair;

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And, gentler still, the quick caress
Of April skies at break of day,
Unveiled within thy lustrous eyes!
Oh, cast me not away,
But let me, rather, at thy side—
Where woodland dell and rippling tide
To thee their holiest vows confide—
Forevermore abide!

COMPENSATION

I HAVE not quailed in the conflict, but I'm glad of the waning day,
And though I fight with a steady eye, my heart is far away;
And I look from the noise and tumult—the weary, hot unrest,
To the haven of thine arms, my Love, the refuge of thy breast.

The smoke of the strife is in my throat, its fever fills my brain,
Yet through it all I falter not, and give no sign of pain;
For I scent from the sunset hills afar the breath of eventide,
And I know the hour is close at hand to nestle at thy side.—

To nestle at thy side, mine own, and there in peace forget
The wrangling sounds of the dusky mart, its toil and bitter sweat;
And find thy faith more precious, thy sympathy more kind,
By the foul mistrust and cruel thrust of the battle left behind.

MY FIRST BOBOLINK

AT mid-morning yesterday, up in the hills
I met a strange bird with such wonderful trills

And magical blending of music and noise,
(Like the composite voice of a group of small boys,

Or perhaps, better still, like a half-dozen girls,
Some chatting, some singing, in eddies and whirls

Of small talk and melody, all in a mix),
He stopped and dumfounded me quite with his tricks.

Now who can he be, thought I, thus to pour forth
Such warm southern ecstasy here in the north?

He's new to me surely—yet surely I've read
Somewhere of those black and white wings, and that head

Tilted upward so pert, with its saucy buff cap—
So far back and so small that the slightest mishap

Might, methought, jar it off in a trice to the ground—
Oh, who is is this very bird-Babel of sound?

Thus I questioned in wonder—yet not lacking delight,
As, with all its confusion, his voice charmed me quite;

For the sunshine was in't—then the plashing of rain
Of a sweet April day—then the sunshine again;

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

But, most, the great gladness of spring at the flood—
The quickening gladness one feels in the blood.

So, nearer and nearer I drew, loth to go,
Unacquaint with my minstrel, still singing; when, lo,

(Mirabile dictu!) the bird seemed to talk,
Saying, "How-dy-do, friend, you are out for a walk

"And can't guess who I am—that is easy to trace
From the puzzled expression all over your face.

"I'm a little far north—I'll admit; just the same
A field-lover like you should at once know my name.

"Here's a strain with a somersault in it, or two,
Pray tell me, sir, don't that suggest it to you?—

"Or this, with a movement so much to my taste
I sing it both forward and backward—nor waste

"A note or a syllable doing it,—see?
There—I've mentioned my name, and you missed it—ah, me!

"But I'll give you just one warble more, while you think;—
Ho—you've hit it at last!—au revoir—Bobolink!"

CALEB OF BETHLEHEM

(A Tale of the Night the Christ was Born)

I

THE middle watch had lengthened to its close,
As Caleb, Scribe of Bethlehem, arose
And left the chamber where his child lay dead,
Seeking the silent street, with covered head.

.

Hour after hour, though compassed 'round about
By gloom so deep it whelmed his soul in doubt,
And dimmed his earthen lamp and mocked its light,
Caleb had prayed to heaven alone that night.

But heaven sent no sign, nor heard his cries;
And now his little one—whose wistful eyes
Pled patiently for help—was mute and still;
And Caleb cursed the God of Israel.

Smitten and hopeless through the town he strode,
By darkling path, and court, and narrow road,
Unmindful where, till, blindly driven by pain,
He came—beyond the gates—to Ephrath's plain.

II

The night was clear; above him stretched the wall,
And over that the town, and over all
The great, mysterious, brooding, star-lit sky
That saw but heeded not his misery.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

He paused; went on; then stopped, with listening ear;
For, lo, above the towering palm-trees near,
A rising zephyr seemed to fill the air
With sudden music, sweet beyond compare.

His senses dull, he thought the sound at first
Some phantasy of grief—and deep immersed
In anguish, but half heard. Yet now again
More palpable and sure it throbbed; and then,

Subdued, but measureless, from star to star—
As though some mighty multitude afar
In swift approach by splendid voices led
Sang one great strain—the matchless music spread!

Transfixt, he raised his eyes! . . . And lo, behold,
The blue-encircled zenith blazed with gold!
And there the host appeared, and in the throng
Innumerable children swelled the song.

Down, down they swept! . . . And now, their very words—
“Peace, Christ is come,” “your King,” “the Lord of Lords,”
Dropt glorious where Caleb stood apart,
Like balm of Eden on his wounded heart.

“In Bethlehem, David’s city,” sang they all;
And then, alas, black darkness drew its pall
Across the heavens, and silence quenched the strain,
Night reigned once more, and earth was earth again.

The cadent moon resumed her timorous sway;
A faint, far watch-cry told the coming day;
And insect voices of the dewy ground,
But now forgot, rose one by one around.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

While unto Caleb in that empty place
The consciousness of woe returned apace,
Fell heavily on every quickened sense,
And so dispelled the song's sweet influence,

That, thinking but of him for whom he yearned,
He raised his cloak about his brow and turned
Back by the way he came, and passed within
The city wall, hard by Ben Hadad's inn.

III

Yet here—oh, night of nights!—new radiance shone
Across his pathway as he plodded on;
And, pausing wearily to trace the light,
He saw, enrapt, the world's transcendent sight.

For, whence this radiance proceeded, there,
The Hope of Juda slumbered, wondrous fair,
Low in a manger of that humble spot,
Outcast of men, because men knew him not.

But Caleb, who had heard the angels, felt
His spirit leap at last, his anguish melt;
And falling prostrate, kissed the meagre hay
On which the new-born Prince of Glory lay.

"Oh boundless love," he breathed, "to me is given,
Bereft, disconsolate, the pledge of heaven!
My son is dead, indeed, but Israel
Hath found the Christ, whom prophets did foretell!"

"How can I now lament when this glad sign
Reveals a better dwelling-place than mine!
Ah, host that sang to me, in thy great joy—
That fills this night—keep, keep my little boy!"

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

IV

'Twas gentlest dawn when Caleb turned to go,
Dawn on the hills—dawn shining through his woe,
And pouring peace upon him, though he wept;
And, reaching home, he sought his couch and slept.

Nor found God's mercy scant; but dreamed there stood
By his belovéd, in the solitude,
Still dim and pale, of that first Christmas-tide,
One with celestial beauty glorified.

Who, bending low a moment, gravely smiled,
As some fond mother loth to wake her child.
Yet took his hand at length; and, at a word,
Behold, the dead—to life and health restored,

Arose, and, as the presence vanished, came
Close to his father's side and lisp'd his name! . . .
Then Caleb woke, and found him there, and knew
That by sweet grace of heaven the dream was true.

MADRIGAL

MINSTRELS of the morning air,
Jubilant with song,
Summon to my Love's dear window
All your merry throng;

And from out the apple blooms
In her garden wall,
With melodious insistence,
Call, call, call!

Call her till she hears the music
Thro' her dreamless sleep;
Till you see her from her lattice
Peep, peep, peep!

Then invite her to the pathway
That she loves so well;
To the path beneath the maples,
With its sun-lit dell.

Whisper—that the flowers, expectant,
Her dear name repeat;
Tell her heaven and earth are waiting
For her happy feet!

Say that Spring's glad nymph, this moment—
Sweet Persephoné—
Came with blue-bells for her breast, and
Left them here with me.

Minstrels of the morning air,
Hasten thro' the dew!
Seek her till you find, and, finding
Bring her back with you.

“MOUNT MISERY AND MOUNT JOY”

HAIL, heaven-appointed hills, engirt with snow!
Pillar and shaft may pass away, but ye—
Till time hath ended in eternity,
Erect, immutable, shall stand, I know.
Hither my feet have led again, and, lo,
Still sweep your lofty winds from tree to tree
That fanned and fed the camp-fires of the free
Close-kindled on these heights long years ago;
And still their voices, undenied, proclaim
To all the splendid silence, everywhere
Abiding 'round about, his deathless name
Who once attained such strength 'mid this pure air,
He liveth here unmatched of earthly fame—
Her lion at bay in Liberty's own lair!

A FAREWELL FOR ONE PLEDGED TO THE NORTH
COUNTRY

AMONG the violet winds that blow—
Fair bride of spring, fair bride of spring,
That morning thou dost rise to go
Upon thy wedded way,
May there be one—one may there be!—
All April-glad and blossoming,
To whisper very tenderly
This message of the day:—

“Whither thou journeyest to dwell
Hath sped before, in ardent flight,
A company invisible
Of wistful thoughts, a-wing,
(Loosed, dove-like, from thy native place)
To woo the skies to golden light
Of welcome for thy shining face,
O winsome bride of spring!”

TO A WHITE-THROATED SPARROW IN MARCH

BRAVE singer of a tranquil song,
Though winter smite thee to the face;
Thy gentleness hath made me strong
With true and heavenly grace!

I know that melody! Thou art
But palmer and a pilgrim here;
Yet treasurest within thine heart
A faith that smiles at fear.—

A faith that helps thee once again
To make thy hardsome journey home
A sign to all the sons of men
Who, like thyself, must roam.

Who, like thyself, are wise to bring
Along with them—by night, by day,
What glory of approaching spring
They gather by the way.

Remembering that whence they came—
God's better land beyond the snow,
Is not a dream, but still the same
As that toward which they go.

And have, when traveling is past,
A joy that nevermore abates;
Nor empty-handed stand at last
Within the golden gates!

LOVE'S DEATHLESS VOTARY

THOU art far, far away, my love, my own,
I cannot go to thee;
But, lo, a wind from the Southland blown
Hath set thy spirit free!

Dark winter days may keep concealed,
Within their stern embrace,
Thine hallowed form, and to me yield
No vision of thy face.

But at sound of the robin's song I hear
The voice I have ne'er forgot,
And then I know that thou art near
By a faith that doubteth not.

Through every blossoming branch I see
A path for thee, my Sweet;
While the virgin leaves make melody
For the coming of thy feet.

The sunbeams that kiss my lips reveal
The touch of thy bonnie hair;
And with well remembered joy I feel
Thy breath on the balmy air.

And even a dearer boon I win
When up to the vernal skies
I lift my face, and there drink in
The love-light of thine eyes!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

While grassy field and woodland dell,
All jubilant and bright,
Thy tender presence with me tell
To breezes of the night.

Nor shall I mourn life's distant goal
While springtide comes between
The passing years, to bear thy soul
On deathless wings, unseen.

For thus, though we be kept apart,
Yet, joined by her dear hand,
We still may journey, heart to heart,
Till we reach a fairer land.

Her native land!—with beauty crowned,
Where love eternal dwells,
And we at last shall hear the sound
Of heaven's marriage bells.

AT BREAK OF BATTLE

ALONE YET NOT ALONE

GOD, God almighty, stand aside—
But lend thy power divine!
Our ears have heard the voice that cried,
We know that voice was thine.
Too long, inactive, we have looked
Like cowards unto thee!
Too long, unwilling, we have brooked
Man's shame and infamy!

God, God almighty, stand aside—
But grant thy flaming sword!
We now come forth (whom they deride)
Obedient at thy word.
The fires now leap in us that slept,
We rise at last new-born;
Thy shrines have seen our vigil kept,
We go to face the morn.

Yes, stand aside, Lord God, do thou—
But guide us as the day!
Our spirits that were naught are now
A multitude at bay.
We clung as weaklings to thy feet
And, pitiful, denied
The gage we now advance to meet:
Lord God—stand thou aside!

HE LIVETH

HE liveth, aye, He liveth,
The lowly One, and meek,
Victorious—and giveth
Great joy to them that seek!

What though His cross still standeth
On Calvary's sullen brow;
The Crucified commandeth—
And morning answers now!

Obedient and beautiful,
Her chariots ride forth!
Sing, O ye south-wind, dutiful;
Join thou the song, O north!

And, woman, with His pardon
Still trembling in your heart,
Behold, in Joseph's garden,
Amid the flowers apart,

Unharm'd of death and still the same,
The tender Nazarene;
List, even now, He names thy name,
Thrice blessed Magdalene!

Thy name—and lo, the early breeze
Is radiant with His voice;
And all the snow-white almond trees
Burn incense and rejoice!

He liveth, aye, He liveth,
The lowly One, and meek,
Victorious—and giveth
Great joy to them that seek!

AH ME HOW BRIGHT

AH me, how bright is this
May day!—and rich with bloom,
This sunlit day on which we take
Our darling to the tomb.

O Lord of little boys,
Thy heaven must be most fair,
That thou should'st call him up to it
From this sweet-scented air!—

Surpassing fair—O Christ,
More fair than tongue can tell;
Else thou would'st never let him leave
These fields he loved so well.

And our tear-blinded eyes
And hearts that fail us so
Do hope—O Lord of little boys!—
Do hope—yes, Lord, do know

Thou hast already found,
Who lov'st, as he, each flower,
Some place for him beneath the trees
This same elysian hour.

Some place—close, close by thee,
To nestle in, and sleep,
And rest, and dream, and smile with peace,
This very hour we weep.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And, after while, awake
With wonderment to find
The trees so like the trees at home,
And thee so very kind.

And feel no fear with thee,
But deep contentment, and
The joy he felt with us, at thy
Caressing of his hand.

And muse, and marvel much
That heaven should be so near,
With such a little way to come
For us he still holds dear.

And sometimes lean from thee,
O Lord, and look afar—
Thinking of us—with wistful eyes,
Toward Earth's soft-shining star.

And yet with tranquil mind,
Nor tire. They never tire
With waiting!—who have found thy heaven
And heard its white-robed choir!

O Lord of little boys,
Help thou our unbelief!
And grant to us (as unto him)
Good patience in our grief.

THE STARRY CLEMATIS

The creeping vine known as the *Clematis Paniculata*, which bears a pure white flower in great profusion and of delicate fragrance, is beautifully transformed by the first frost in the fall, its petals as they drop off leaving the new seed-pods in the form of perfect stars, each with a long filament radiating like a thin gray beam of light from every point.

WHEN Winter came at length to this
My sweet, perennial Clematis,
And took its garniture of white,
So wondrous wrought, so rich bedight
With softer pearls and rarer lace
Than ever wreathed a lady's face,
And trailed and trod it on the ground
And cast it, torn in shreds, around:
Nor that alone, but—ruthless—e'en
Despoiled it of its robe of green,
And quenched its fragrance quite, and then
Returned to mar its robe again—
As Winter only spoils and mars;
Then, pausing, mocked its hapless plight:
Behold!—from out the encircling night,
'Twas given a panoply of stars!
Oh, treasure of the destitute,
Voice, myriad-spoken, of the mute!—
My Clematis, all dauntless yet,
Was there renewed with stars, thick-set
For every flower, on every stem:
Nor queen in jewelled diadem
E'er shone more beautiful than this—
My brave, transfigured Clematis,
Now wrapped, as by some splendid cope,
In raiment radiant with hope—

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Such hope as heaven makes secure
With sense of life, serene and sure;
While Winter stood abased—outdone
By mine, the meek, transcendent one!

L'ENVOI

Spirit within me!—seeing how
This sign is wrought—oh mayest thou,
Thou too be clad, when night draws nigh
(And thou must lay earth's raiment by)
With brighter glory from the sky!

THE WILLOW AND HER BROOD

OH, what is it the Willow hears,
To let her tender brood
Come forth alone amidst the snow
And icy solitude?
And with what mystic word are these,
Her children, all endued?

A vernal beauty blooms beneath
Their silken, swaddling clothes,
Warm as the pink of apple buds,
Or blush of wilding rose,
With an ethereal tinge of gold
And green—that comes and goes.

Oh, hath the Willow's waiting heart,
In touch with mother earth,
Caught, as an echo from afar
Of deep, elusive mirth,
The first faint breath of ecstasy
In which the spring finds birth?

And, thrilling to that secret sound,
Sent these she loveth well,
To whisper it among their kin
From every nut-brown cell?
Oh, is it this the Willow hears?—
And this, her children tell?

MORNING HYMN

LORD of angels, God almighty,
At the rising of the sun,
To the glory gates of morning,
Swift and jubilant I run;
And thy host of heav'n advancing,
Meets me in the way,
Meets and whelms me with the splendor
Of the flooding light of day.

Every blade of grass about me,
Every shining leaf above,
Every blossom, every flower,
Is transfigured with thy love.
If they will—ah, let men slumber,
All my soul beats high
At thy thought of me, dear Father,
Quickening—crimsoning earth and sky.

Here, my longing to behold thee,
Finds fruition, far and wide;
Here, desire, supremely answered,
Lifts my spirit to thy side,
Where, with perfect touch and tender,
Thou hast gone before,
That my feet may follow after,
And approach thee more and more.

Lord of angels, lead me on,
Through the morning to thy throne!

MY MEADOW-BROOK IN WINTER

IMPRISONED by an icy hand,
My meadow-brook has ceased to flow,
And all its merry borderland
Is weighted down with snow;
Above it now no voices sing;
And yet, from out its wintry tomb,
Still, still sweet promises of spring
Call to me as I come!

For once this meadow-brook and I,
Led onward by a little boy,
Found heaven beneath the open sky;
And since that hour my joy
Continues here (though he is gone),
No matter how distraught the day;
And never do I walk alone
Along its winding way.

THE ANGEL OF THE SHEEPFOLD

MYSTIC bloom above the mountains,
Brightening the snow;
Subtle, shining tenderness;
Glad, immortal glow!—

Once again the starry gates
Wide asunder swing
At thy touch, O holy Seraph,
Fairer than the spring!

And the world beneath awakens,
Secretly aware
Of the old, melodious music
Falling thro' the air!

Ah, how silently we listen!
Time is less than naught,
As of ancient thou descendest,
And the gloom is fraught

With the far delight of Eden
From those hours that were;
Breath of almond buds and balsam,
Frankincense and myrrh!

Look, my soul (oh, happy vision!)
How the passing throng,
Golden-winged, have left the trees
Garlanded with song!

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Weep—thy tears are but of triumph
And with laughter kissed!
See—the skies they cross are all
Rose and amethyst!

Holy Seraph, still returning
Thro' the vast of days,
Myriads still, as little children,
Sing—thy—praise!

OH COMRADE KEEP THEE

O H, comrade, keep thee conscience-clean, heart-pure!
No strength of life is like the strength of these,
That make it sweet to labor and endure—
Whatever earth decrees.

With these—high heaven above is always near,
And heaven's host, to help thee and to bless,
And give thy mind serenity—and clear,
Deep sense of happiness.

Thy fellows 'round about may be forespent
With battle stress and heavy weight of care;
But thou—with these—wilt ever find content,
And well thine harness wear!

The rugged road, which bears thee far and wide
From paths of ease, shall gentler faith impart;
And poverty itself be angel-guide,
To lead to nature's heart.

Night after night shall bring its balm of rest
To lovingly upon thine eyelids lay;
And every morning waken thee refreshed,
And thankful for the day!

And thou shalt own thy hard couch wondrous good,
And blithesome as the cradle of a child,
Where sound of singing fills the solitude
From fountains undefiled.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And even in defeat—if these remain,
A sense of victory shall lift thy soul
Betimes to some still height, where thou shalt gain
Glimpses of God's great goal,

Revealed alone to noble-minded men,
Of vision to pierce the mists that lie between
This land—and that! Oh, comrade, keep thee then
Heart-pure and conscience-clean!

JAMES MY BOY—MY BOY

JAMES, my boy—my boy!—
Tell me, how is it in heaven?
Is there sunlight?—is there joy?
Is there song of birds at even?

Is the Christ as kind and good
As on earth he used to be?
Did he bid them where you stood
“Let that dear one come to me”?

Did he take you, as of old,
Quickly, warmly to his breast?
Tell me, James, till all is told,
Tell me this and all the rest.

James, my boy—my boy,
It is dark and silent here,
Where I sit with your last toy,
Come and tell me, soft and clear.

James, my boy—my boy,
Kind we were, maybe, but you!
Ah, what words can we employ!—
James so gentle, brave and true.

James, my boy—my boy,
“Now I lay me down to sleep,”
E'en as thou didst.—Lord destroy
All my doubt! Keep, keep him—keep!

SIGHTING THE GOLDEN DAY

I HAVE not filled my soul in vain
With funded treasure of the past,
But find it an eternal gain
With many a joy forecast;
To which I turn from all without
And, visioning the future, see
Its glory time shall bring about—
The things that ought to be!

And I am prophet then, in truth,
Amidst a heavenly estate;
And heir of an immortal youth
The years shall not abate;
But, lifting me above my doubt,
Lead ever toward earth's destiny,
Its glory time shall bring about—
The things that ought to be!

DAYBREAK

A NEW YEAR CAROL

BEHOLD—the morning! Wake, arise!
Bright heralds on the hills appear,
The forces of another year
Unfurl their standard to the skies.

Come forth from out the dark array
That struggles in the gloom of night;
And join the glorious hosts of light
That line the battlements of day.

Turn!—linger not where still abound
The silent shades of blind despair.
Fly!—on the radiant morning air,
The bugle-calls of hope resound.

Gird on thy strength!—brave heart and free,
That fought undaunted to the last,
The buried beauty of the past
Shall some day live again for thee!

The way before thee, yet untrod,
May quickly reach a blessed goal;
And ere the evening, lo, thy soul
May pass the gates that lead to God!

Behold—the morning! Wake, arise,
Bright heralds on the hills appear,
The forces of another year
Unfurl their standard to the skies!

BOY OF BYGONE DAYS

BOY of bygone days, I knew
You would come!—and when you came

I would find you still the same! . . .

Tell me—is it really you?

Ah, what foolishness of fear,

I should doubt you when so near!—

Standing with me face to face

In this old, familiar place! . . .

Boy of bygone days, 'twas I,

Out beneath the open sky,

Kept you as the years went by;

Kept you faithful, true, unspoiled,

At your play, or when you toiled,

In your sorrow, in your joy—

It was I, brave little boy!

It was I who dreamed the dream,

Following this woodland stream,

That surrounded you with love,

Pure as heav'n above!

What although we never met

Since we waded it together

In the early April weather,

I was sure you'd not forget! . . .

But, what need have we for words!—

We, so safely home again!

Hark, they call!—our happy birds!

Quick, your hand!—our brook is singing;

Let us seek it, just as then,

All our gladness bringing!

THINK NOT GOD'S HAND IS HOLDEN

1914

THINK not God's hand is holden from this war
To which the centuries have come at last!
Somewhere His chariots gather as before;
Somewhere His die of destiny is cast
Within the heavens above, while these below—
Some, some of them (what age hath ever known
Whom God doth choose!) are verily His own—
His kings and captains, in their bitter woe!
Among these ranks (ah, who of us may tell!)
Some, some are fighting here the powers of Hell.
And somewhere—everlasting Death is ranged,
And Fraud and Ignorance, on one dark side!
And somewhere—Righteousness, that hath not changed,
And Truth, whom Hell hath once again defied—
(Great Truth, immortal, with her flaming sword!)
These also stand, in answer to the Lord!
Oh, little children, bow your heads and pray!
And, praying, lean ye close, that ye may hear!
This midnight may but mean God's judgment-day,
His time of final reckoning may be near.

THE NASTURTIUM

O BRIGHT Nasturtium, frailest of the frail,
Yet most uncareful, too—dost thou not fear
To lift thy colors still, when through the vale
The winter frosts have come, and even here—
In this sweet garden spot, that stands apart,
Seek stealthily to pierce thy tender heart?

Or is thy life so perfect and complete
That fear is utter alien unto thee?—
Who hast no thought in thy serene retreat
How close its end earth's little year may be:
But to the last continuest blithe and fair,
And pourest perfume on the darkening air.

For some good while thy radiant face alone
Hath looked to me, of all the happy brood
Of them that once luxuriantly shone
About this place, to cheer my solitude.
All—all are gone; but thou dost still remain,
And with each lessening day new lustre gain.

What faith is thine!—how quiet, yet how glad!
Its deep, warm joyance, richly aureoled
With courage for the fainting soul and sad
In all thy wondrous hues of red and gold!
Ah, may some flame of it in me be born,
Ere I behold thee stricken and forlorn!

I BREATHE THY NAME

I BREATHE thy name, and, lo, it seems
To bear fulfilment of my dreams!
At sound of it the shades of night
Stir with a sweet, celestial light—
A bloom of asphodel and rose,
Increasing till the darkness glows
Transcendently, and in the midst
Thou standest—as of old thou didst,
A pure, embodied flame!—
Pink as Persephoné at dawn
In golden-walled Illyria;
White as the doves that woke the morn
In Eden beyond Syria!
My joy, my life—returned to me,
Who did but dare, and tremblingly,
To breathe again thy name.

Oh, Love, so quick to meet with fire
The still, small voice of my desire,
How nigh thou art!—how warmly near,
How eager to dispel my fear!
The veil between—it hideth not
Thy gentle figure unforgot,
But circleth thee, before my gaze,
Bride-like—as in the former days,
With gladness from the stars!
And still I find thee kin to earth,
As some entrancing fountain-sprite;
And merry with a noble mirth,
As music on a mountain-height;

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

And, in communion—deep, divine,
I share the glory that is thine,
From these imprisoning bars.

DAFFODILS

DAFFODILS, daffodils!
Oh, the golden joy of God
That from out the winter sod,
Touched by love divine,
Bright and beautiful can bring
For the gonfalon of Spring
Victory like thine!

THE DAWNING CENTURY

(Written January 1, 1900)

THE eyes of countless millions turn to thee—
Great scion of the ages, on whose brow,
Uplifted o'er the everlasting hills,
Encircling clouds of destiny repose:
Aye, touched with awe, they turn and fain would pierce
The deep, unfathomed mysteries of God
That hide thy face.

Hath heaven's tocsin struck
Amidst thy bells?—Is thine the giant arm
'Neath which, inspired by power omnipotent,
The gods of greed shall meet their final doom?
Shall Freedom, shackled by her very sons,
Totter, unseen, to thee—to thee at last,
And at thine altars find herself avenged?

Thy shield and buckler and thy mighty front,
The tried and tempered falchion at thy side,
Thy towering strength, thy majesty of mien,
Seem quick with answer; while, athwart the skies,
Thy gonfalon, inscribed with Equity,
Is like the hand of Him who holds aloft
The dreadful balances that test and weigh
Each empire in its turn.

O Prince of Time!—
Portentous century, in splendor clad,
Behold, Earth's multitudes, with bated breath,
Uplift, afar, one universal prayer:—
That ere thou goest Justice may attain
In every land her bright, millennial reign!

FAITH

TO journey on in peace from day to day,
Not fretful over distance or delay,
Nor vainly anxious for the untried way—
Its perils or its length:

But seeing secretly each course I win
That God hath gone before—and breathing in
The very atmosphere where He hath been,
And something of His strength:

And finding joy at morn and rest at night;
And deeper, sweeter hope, with every sight
Of love divine revealed in such clear light
As 'luminates the soul:

All this, faith maketh possible for me:
Aye, more than this!—to know that I shall be
Still led securely when I cannot see
Nor falter at the goal!

THE STAR OF THE MAGI

STAR in the East—dread guide of ancient sages,
Led on by love divine,
Across the gloom of sin-beclouded ages
Thy tender rays still shine!

. . . .

Afar from royal tents, 'mid drought and danger,
Through Araby the Blest,
The wondering Magi hasten toward a manger
That broods beneath thy breast.

Grown old in years with ever-deepening sadness,
But hopeful to the end,
Scarce now they yield their hearts the solemn gladness
The evening shades portend.

And when, above the dim horizon glowing,
Their eager, watchful eyes,
That waited through the day, still find thee throwing
Thy torch against the skies,

They are uplifted by the lucent splendor,
More beautiful than day;
And, hastening on in joy, glad homage render
To Him who points the way.

Night after night the desert dark and lonely
Hath naught of pain or fear
For them, unmindful of its gloom, if only
Thy glorious light appear.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

What though the pilgrimage be long and dreary,
They fly from morn to morn!
What though their bodies are grown faint and weary,
The Christ—the Christ is born!

And when, still steadfast to its holy mission,
Thy clear, resplendent blaze
Flames high on Juda's hills, and full fruition
Of longing meets their gaze,

They own the lowly One and bow before Him,
And worship at His feet,
'Lumined of thee!—and there in love adore Him,
And count their joy complete.

. . . .

Star in the East—thy luster never waning
Still floods the earth with light
Each holy Christmastide; to us remaining
A radiance in the night.

A shining radiance, that ever goeth,
Before us till it bring
Them that are wise to Bethlehem and showeth
Their everlasting King.

SONNET

MY heart says—thank you, dear, a thousand times!
And never stops to think “for what”; ah, no!
Because all heaven above and earth below,
The music of the sky—the merry rhymes
That stir in bird and brook, the golden chimes
Of leaf and flower, the violet winds that blow
With melodies of love where'er I go,
Are mixed with thee! and thy sweet soul sublimes
The simplest of them, so they seem, somehow,
Thine own—thy gracious gift, each one, to me;
To me, unquestioning ever but that thou
Hast come from God and made mine eyes to see,
And ears to hear, and set upon my brow
A living garland of divinity!

VIOLET AND THE WEST WIND

YESTER-EVEN from the west
Zephyr came upon a quest,
Calling—faintly calling;
Over pallid copse and plain,
Into a dell and out again,
Calling still—but still in vain,
“Violet, oh, Violet,
Where art thou?—I love thee yet.
Hear'st thou not the voice thou knewest
Once so well, ah, sweetest, truest
Maiden mine—of gentle face,
Why is it I find no trace
Of thy presence—far or nigh?
Answer, dear one, lest I die.
Violet, hath Winter slain thee?
Shall I nevermore regain thee?
Look, the yellow Sun hath set,
Violet—oh, Violet,
And above the purple verge,
See, his slumber-star emerge!
I have come as I was bidden,
Tell, ah tell where thou art hidden!
Speak, for now the meadow-lark,
That was glad
Groweth sad,
And is silent in the dark!—
For that thou hast given no sign
To this weary heart of mine—
To thy wanderer, who for rest
All unanswered and unblest,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Now must seek the empty wood
With its cheerless solitude:
 Violet, oh, Violet,
 Fare-thee-well, I love thee yet!"

So cried Zephyr till he slept,
 And his grief
 Found relief,
Tho' the earth its secret kept.

But, behold, at break of day,
 'Neath the very birchen tree
By a brook, where Zephyr lay—
Bright and beautiful—adreaming,
 Flora, with a golden key,
Came and knelt awhile, agleaming,
 And unlocked a mossy prison;
 Then beside
 Zephyr cried
 "Wake, oh, wake, thy Love is risen!
 Zephyr, wake, thy Love is near!
 Drowsy dreamer, dost thou hear?"
 Thus—till from a nestling glen
 Came a dove's first call, and then—
 All the earth was young again!
For, with this, sweet Zephyr stirred,
And awakening smiled and heard,
 And a hearing rose and saw
 Violet, his own once more.
Then, as they twain kept their tryst,
Pearl and pink and amethyst
 Flamed on high
 Thro' the sky
 Where the hills of April lie!

THE GOING FORTH OF SUMMER

STARK hills and barren heather,
And precious paths untrod;
And signs of solemn weather—
But earth at peace with God!

Sweet summer overtaken
And wounded unto death,
But lovelier (though forsaken)
With each expiring breath.

Her face lit with desire
Of splendid sacrifice;
Her garments like a flaming fire
From altars in the skies.

Vanquished, and yet victorious;
Proceeding to her tomb
With stately head—all glorious
Above the gathering gloom!

I see night's gates eternal
Enfold her with the years;
But floods of joy supernal
Well up amidst my tears.

Stark hills and barren heather
And precious paths untrod,
And signs of solemn weather—
But earth at peace with God!

MY MAN OF ARCADY

O COMRADE of the goodly land,
With milk and honey flowing,
I saw not till I took thy hand,
But dwelt a-neighbor, unknowing;
By every high and holy place
Thou helped'st me discover
Since then, I thank thee to thy face,
My heaven-sent field-lover!

O spirit of the open air
And meadow-brooks and mountains,
That findest beauty everywhere,
From never-failing fountains;
I count thee this—a man of men,
Who, dauntless, didst recover
My faith, my hope, my joy again,
Thou heaven-sent field-lover.

With thee to walk beside, behold,
The sprites of song and story
Throng forth to me from gates of gold
And fill the earth with glory:
Pale Dian, and Persephoné,
And nymphs of old Illyria,
And e'en an angel company
From Eden beyond Syria!

A bright, immortal multitude,
Afar and wide upspringing,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

They come, until the solitude
Stirs wondrously with singing.
'Round many a shrine thy heart hath made,
At dawn, by night, they hover,
And answer to me unafraid,
My heaven-sent field-lover.

And thus the waning years have brought
A thousand sweets elysian
To eyes so sad they never thought
To gain such happy vision;
And traveling onward toward the west
I know, till life is over,
Each added day shall prove the best,
My heaven-sent field-lover.

AT NORRITON CHURCH-YARD

BEAUTIFUL at every turn, indeed, upon auspicious days, is the old Germantown road in southeastern Pennsylvania, after it leaves Philadelphia and stretches northward over hill and dale to the open country beyond.

But when, having passed its twentieth milestone, it surmounts the last knoll below the little Norriton Meeting House, then especially does this historic highway, drawn like a broad white ribbon through the rich verdure of field and forest, become absolutely inspiring.

Those who have grown weary and turned back before reaching this point in its winding course have fallen short of a rare experience; for, with Valley Forge and its twin summits in the distance and a thousand other visual delights lying between, the view is one never to be forgotten.

But, beside these rewards, the full journey is worth far more than any fatigue it may occasion, simply for the opportunity of spending a few quiet moments at the quaint, one-story church so illustrious in the annals of the Revolution, whose floors, the blacksmith just across the way will tell you (pausing for a moment at his fire) still show blood-stains where wounded patriots lay, who were crowded into the building for such hospital shelter as it afforded, following the battle of Germantown.

While even the scattering graveyard, which closely

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

encircles the church itself, abounds with solemn interest for every heart athrob with love of God and native land.

Some of the bravest and best of earlier days—a few of them buried even prior to 1776—are represented upon these white marble memorials; and no one of thoughtful mind can linger here even in a casual way without going forth the better for it.

One Spring morning an inscription that had escaped the writer's notice during previous visits fixed itself more deeply upon him than any he had yet deciphered.

Carved upon a broad, smooth stone, laid flat, and without ornamentation, it was all quite legible in the clear sunlight, notwithstanding nearly a century of exposure, and it is here given exactly as it reads:

Christopher Stuart Patterson,
Obiit 12 December 1826 Anno Aetatis 24
Cito moriuntur amati Deorum.

No display of words can add to the charms of the elegant mind and amiable disposition thus early lost to the world; and the worth which adorned them will long be remembered without the aid of praise and eulogy.

The best and brightest earth can show
Are ever first to pass away,
And death still deals his fatal blow
Among the lovely and the gay.

But though we shed the bitter tear,
We will not yield to vain regret;
'Tis but the casket that lies here;
The gem that filled it shineth yet.

What an unusual tribute this to a mere boy!—even though, perchance, he was the offspring of some fine,

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

Colonial sire who, it may be, came in personal contact with Washington himself—that noblest of American gentlemen of the old school.

The lines are so full of fresh, genuine affection they might have been penned but yesterday; and as we turn from them the goodly spirit of the lad long dead, seems to move out with us toward the road, to say bon voyage for the journey home again.

And thus, as we go, we dream a bit; and wistfully, despite a cloudless sky above and the regal landscape 'round about. And, so doing, some of the dream runs this wise:

“WHOM THE GODS LOVE”

Fair stripling, he who wrote thine epitaph
Is, like thyself, quite unbeknown to me;
Yet, as I read, my quickening soul leaps half
To him—and half to thee!

To thee, because a vision rare and fine
Of thy sweet face, for all succeeding days,
Glow gently here above the graven line
That faithful speaks thy praise.

And then to him who, thoughtless of his tears,
So wreathed that vision in a mist of pain,
That even after four-score sunlit years
Its shadows still remain.

I see him linger at thy new-made tomb,
When all the silent multitude is gone;
And then, reluctant, leave it in the gloom
To take thy path, alone.

NEW SONGS OF NATURE

The meadow path that led thee to his door!—
He winds it now with unuplifted head,
Until it brings him in where nevermore
Thy blithesome feet shall tread.

Then, later, at his evening lamp bent low,
Again I see him setting down thy worth
For this broad stone, that they who pass may know
Its jewel hid in earth.

His wound still fresh and quivering, he writes
With grief so all-absorbed and unconcealed,
That thou and he, as well, in tenderest lights
Of kinship stand revealed.

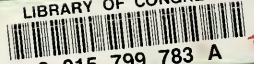
His—were the scholar's silver locks, perchance;
Thine—golden curls, turned brown beneath the sun;
He, slow of step; thou, quick to seek the dance—
And yet ye twain were one!

And he hath joined thee since, in dreamless sleep!
I know not where; haply he had no friend
To mark the spot; and yet thy stars shall keep
Watch o'er it to the end!

.

Oh, native hearts, that mother earth takes home,
Dust unto dust, till God at length shall call;
Though centuries wane, love's everlasting dome
Still shines above them all!

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