

PS 200
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BEYOND



OR

HERE.



✓ Mandish



ERRATUM.

The poem between the 40th and 49th pages is continuous—nothing has been omitted. A mistake was made in numbering the pages. The 49th page should have been the 41st.

Beyond

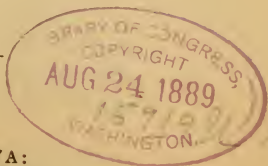
OR

. . . . Here.

A POEM.

By B. H. Standish, author of Among
the Déls, and Shadowlight.

33



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192

BEYOND OR HERE.

PART FIRST.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW.

The day wore on; the sick one slept;
A slippered watch attendants kept;
For, as some statue, fair and white,
But broken when the wind made shift,
And flung upon a winter drift,
So had she lain a day and night.
The sun again had crossed the bridge
That arched above their little world,
And now, upon the western ridge,
Held all his gorgeous flags unfurled;
A single fleecy cloud o'erhead
Seemed anchored all the afternoon,
As if a ship, with ready sail,
'That bore some mark of former gale,
Would take the spirit of the dead,
And journey heavenward with it soon;
The winds had ceased their whisperings,
And hushed their currents to the
springs,
As if they feared that she might take
Her passage, if she should awake.

But just before the twilight gloom
Had dimmed the brightness of the room,
The sleeper filled her lustrous eyes
With sudden light, as of surprise;
They wandered round the narrow place,
And fell at last on Phebe's face;
And then she said, "I had a dream;
It was so strange! it does not seem
Like that; and, yet, it made me feel
So glad I wish it had been real."

As when in days of adorous spring
One sees a landscape that he loves,
And turns, with memory lingering
Upon it till he looks again,
So twixt the hours of changing pain
Her broken memory ever turned
To some bright vision she had seen;
And, piece by piece, the listeners learned
This story, gathered up between.

I dreamed that I had come beside
A rapid river, deep and wide;
Its waters, from an unseen source,
Were surging on an unknown course;
And yet they seemed to be as clear
As waters of a pebbled mere.
I laid me down beside the stream
And fell asleep, as you have seen

Me slumbering beneath this dream;
My mother came—and such a smile
She wore—it was a heavenly smile!
And she was as she used to be,
Save in the substance that was she;
And as a mother lifts her child
She raised me in her outstretched arms,
And seemed to ask me, as she smiled,
If she could place me in the surge—
And all this time her looks were charms.
I did not speak; she did not urge,
But gently let me settle down.
At which I had a brief regret,
Then thought that only this was set
Between us and the future crown.
And as I sank my thoughts were fleet,
From childhood's spring to winter's
sleet,
And all the seasons of my life
Swept by me with their storms of strife;
But when the soft and cooling tide
Had placed me on the other side,
I did not feel my cureless wound;
I lay and listened for a sound.
Upon the steps I seemed to lie,
Before a half transparent door,
Which led into a mansion high,
And such as never seen before.

And while I lay, upon the east
A wondrous morning was released;
A hundred rainbows seemed dissolved
And filtered on the broken sky,
Dark rock-like clouds had risen high,
With mountain passes, twixt whose
yeast

Of sun-lit margins one could see
The glory of the rising sun
Amid the wonders he had done.
The air was tremulous with light
And vapors rising from the hills,
Upon whose sides in silence stood
The drab battalions of the wood,
Whose green plumes seemed to move
with thrills,

As morning bore away the night.
Between me and those hills and slopes,
The mighty river surged and swept;
But I could see where I had slept
Upon the bank with feeble hopes;
And now, across that rapid stream,
The sun flung down his golden plank,
As I have seen the moon's full beam
Across some lake where wild deers
drank.

I could but mark the zephyrs now,

That touched the cheek and laved the
brow;
As soft as any air in June,
When bloom hath scent and birds have
tune,
And yet as bracing and as clear
As at the coming of the year
When o'er the prairies of the west
It wanders, finding little rest;
And as I breathed full measure in —
The measure of new lung and chest,
I did not feel my fell disease,
That which had left life's tie undone,
I felt the throb and faultless ease,
The throb of lover who has won,
The strength of runner who can win.

And so I would have gained my feet,
But now the noiseless palace door
Swung inward, o'er the marble floor;
And one stood there with sandaled feet,
And robes that mortal never wore.
I did not fear; I did not stir;
I could but gaze a little while
Upon the face that wore that smile,
As if I fain would speak to her.
But when she bid me come I rose
As one bewildered from repose,

And followed, trustful as a child—
I could but trust because she smiled.

We passed into an ample room,
Where yellow light o'ercame the gloom;
There, on an elevated place,
And bending o'er a mighty book,
Stood the ideal of my race—
For such was he in form and face,
And kindness dwelt upon his look.
But there was one who lingered near,
As if to guide him as he scanned,
The pages in his quick command,
Or do some task surpassing dear.
And when I saw her standing there,
A great throb burst my very heart;
Was my lost mother waiting here?
I had the unbelieving stare
That came when last we had to part.
But soon I took her outstretched hand,
While from my eyes down fell the tears,
As many as the lonely years
Since she had left that other land.
I could not speak; I could not stir;
I could but stand and gaze at her;
I had no question but would choke
The swollen passage of the throat;
I had no answer, but to stand

And give in pressure of that hand.

At last caressed, she turned again
Unto that being with the pen;
He searched the record for the name,
And seemed to scan the lengthened page,
And note the hour at which I came,
And the death-sickness, and the age;
Then with some word of welcome-home,
He closed the pages of that tome,
And turned and opened wide a door;
And mother took me by the hand,
And led me o'er the marble floor,
To odorous scenes and zephyrs bland.

My mother led me by the hand,
As when I was a little child;
Her language I could understand,
It was the speech of the old land,
And ever as she spoke she smiled.
And those bright eyes that shown on me
Were the bright eyes that used to be;
The same, and not the same, because
More light was there if that could be;
And ever with the speech and pause
Her face was glorious to see.

But now we paused; my faultless sight

Was greeted by a new delight;
A vale whose beauty silenced speech,
Led out as far as eye could reach;
And where the far look ceased its
march—

Where clouds and mist-land seemed to
wait,

Appeared the outlines of an arch,
Above a dimly outlined gate.
And through the valley wound a brook,
Whose green banks seemed but lately
cropped;

O'er which the yellow willow shook
Full wands of verdure, never dropped.
Upon the right a gentle slope
Reached upward toward a mountain
height,

Whose lofty summit gave small hope
To traveler who might seek to climb
To other slope or valley prime
Beyond a ridge so cold and white.
But on that slope was many a grove
And forest that long time had throve,
Checked only by the line of cold
That high up marked the frozen mould.
Upon the left a lofty wall
Sprang from the valley's growth of
grass,

With deep recess and open hall,

To whose dim daylight one might pass,
As to a room whose open door
Had let gray silence in before;
But these were solitudes of pines,
And on the rocks was many a shoot,
Which in the crevices took root,
Bearing aloft the swooning vines.

We stood upon the grassy edge
Of this long vale with double ledge,
When spoke my mother unto me:
"Go seek the gate, and go alone;
Rest by the brook and wall of stone,
As thou wouldst in the days of old."
My heart sprang up, but still I cared
Not now to question, had I dared;
I looked again to that far gate,
To mountain ridge, and wall of stone,
I fain had asked her still to wait,
But spoke not, for I was alone.
Again alone; I did not swoon,
But dimness came upon my eyes;
My heart beat wildly with surprise,
That she should leave me there so soon.
I looked about me and behind;
The palace stood, with many a gleam,
Between me and the mighty stream—
But still I would not go to find

The old way thither if I could,
Trusting the future had more good.
I hurried forth, my eyes intent
On that great arch in cloudland bent,
On that far gate whose shadowy mass
I longed impatiently to pass.

About me, as I onward passed,
Were velvet turf, and blossoms massed;
The old-time beauty that I knew,
The old-time jewels of the dew.
Above me moved the ancient sun,
With cloudy fragments, gray and white,
As if their journey was begun
To seek with me the land of light;
And thither moved the gentle breeze—
Which I could hear among the trees,
As if it fondled them anew,
Before it bid a last adieu.
And as I passed the groves I heard
The song of many a well known bird;
And on the grasses and the mould
The sunlight and the leaves had made
A carpeting whose figures played
Their thousand changes as of old.
And these enticed me as I pressed,
With eyes upon the distant gate;
And then I thought of the behest,

“Beside the brook and meadow wait;”
And so I lingered, sitting down
Upon the grassy bank between
The dark cool forest and the stream,
Just where was mingled many a sound.

Why had she bid me wait and rest?
I was not weary, was not faint;
I had not felt my death-complaint,
But forward still had gladly pressed.
Was there some lesson yet to learn,
Of patience or of sacrifice,
Before the gate of Paradise
Its golden bulk for me would turn?
I did not know, but this I knew,
The thing she bid me do was best;
I trusted her who always true
Must still be true among the blest.

I lingered and I listened there
To mingled voice and whispering air;
I could but think the changes yet
Were not in landscape or in flower,
Were not in bird-song or in bower,
But in the beings I had met.
The little brook that wandered by
Was like some other I had seen,

The grasses had a spring-like green,
In which were insects I had known,
In the old days and the old zone.
Would this be so beyond the gate?
Or did an unknown country wait,
Where everything was new and strange,
And never night and never change?
I did not like to think it so,
For while I yet might love the new,
I loved the old that had been true,
The good that I had learned to know.

And while I mused a golden bee
Went at its labor busily,
To gather up its scattered sweet,
In clover blossoms at my feet.
I heard it hum, as it would flit,
Between the white blooms where it lit;
Till it had gained its little share,
And then it rose up heavily,
With spiral growing in the air,
Until it drew a wavy line,
Into a dark recess of pine.
And then I rose, as if some hand
Had beckoned, saying, "Come with me,
Across the stepping-stones and sand,
And solve a double mystery."

I reached the barrier of stone,
By ferns and mosses overgrown,
Where roots were bulging from the wall,
Support of growth about to fall,
And entered there and stood alone.
Within that dark and deep recess,
The pines reared many a lofty trunk,
Whose veins with cold had never shrunk
Whose boughs were never lopped or less.
Pine-needles underneath were spread,
A day fresh, and a century deep,
Where Nature made her lover's bed,
For rest, or revery, or sleep.
And then, as if she sweetly smiled
And smoothed the couch and bid me
lie,
I lay as passive as a child,
To listen to her lullaby.

High up a little sparrow sung
The braces of its evening song;
Supine I lay and listened long.
And peered between the bows among
The tops where it seemed first and
strong;
But as I followed up the sound
A drowsiness came down on me,

And eyes that looked forgot to see,
And closed at last on all around;
I listened, breathing long and deep,
And listening I fell asleep.



PART SECOND.

THE REUNION.

Awake, awake! I heard the sound
Of music and the soft rebound;
Awake, awake! I heard the call
Of all the senses and of all.
I looked, I listened, and I stirred;
I rose, I breathed, I saw, I heard;
I smiled to think that I had slept,
If long how long I did not know;
I knew I had been safely kept,
Without a dream, without a fear,
Without the memory of a tear,
Without the feeling of a foe.

High up the little sparrow sung
The braces of its morning song;
It gave me pleasure when among
The leafy boughs I found my own.
It sang for what? It sang for me;
It sang the runes of melody,
Which I had heard, on many a morn,
Above the field tree and the corn.
It still was twilight in the nook,
But through the leafy tops the sun

Shot arrows, while the light o'er run
The mountain toward the silver brook.

I moved, I walked; my heart beat
strong;
I wondered if I were too late,
Since I had slept outside the gate,
I wondered if I had been long.
But, lo! the outlines of that mass,
Which had been dim and far to pass,
Were bright and beautiful, and grand,
Surpassing bright, and near at hand.
I looked away where lately stood
The palace, beautiful and bright;
It still was there, and not less good,
But dim and distant on the sight.
The mountain ridges, cold and vast,
Reached down the valley of the brook,
And all the memory of the past
Rushed on me, as I turned to look;
The voice of her I longed to see
Came in that vision back to me,
"Go seek the gate and go alone."
I looked, I listened, I obeyed;
I listened, and was not afraid
To seek the gate and go alone.

He who had searched the mighty book,

Now stood beside that wondrous gate;
I saw he knew me by his look—
He beckoned when I fain would wait;
I came, he came, and took my hand,
And said a friend awaited me—
One I had loved in labor-land,
Had loved, and lost, and now would see.
I followed, and he lead the way,
Out of the daylight into day,
With fear, with pain, with doubt at end,
Into the presence of a friend.

Like ribs diverging in a fan
Unnumbered paths before me ran,
Into a meadow green and fair,
Where sunlight fell through balmy air.
Here blossoms waving in their prime
Showed every path a different clime,
And bird inhabitants of these
Made music in the varied trees;
So any, waiting friendly hand,
Might take the path that lead apart,
And smiling follow with glad heart,
As if into his native land.

Which choose ye? this I choose be-
cause
The old association draws;

It needs must lead to those who wait,
For yonder blossoms when a child
I gathered in the woodland wild,
And now I find them past the gate;
And yonder birds, I know them well,
This is no stranger-land or path,
On this my friends would choose to
 dwell,
I follow, follow; lead the way,
I follow, follow, if I may.

 Each step brought back fond memo-
 ries,
The things that I had learned are good
Came to me if I walked or stood,
The old true pleasure still could please.
And as we journeyed on in talk,
Of kindsmen and of former friends,
Of common losses and their ends,
We often would forget to walk,
In wonder at the full amends.
And I was going now to meet
Those snatched away in days of old,
Whose memory still to me was sweet,
Whose love and mine were never cold.
And this was gladness now to me,
That I could love them still as then —
That I could love as men with men,

And still be what I seemed to be.
Behold a miracle! I stood,
Devoid of flesh, with passion lost,
With intellect, and sense not crossed,
And all of self that had been good;
New body, yet the same old form—
A friend would know me if we met,
Old love without the baser storm,
New currents in my being set;
And all the senses, all the five,
Perfected, present, and alive;
And faith was knowledge, knowledge
 bliss,
And hope was safe and sure to find—
It still was hope as well as this,
And memory itself was kind.

The path now widened to a road,
With hill, with valley, and with plain,
Where field, and brook, and forest
 showed
Old prospects that were mine again.
And many a cottage now appeared,
Embodiment of old ideal,
That which life's labor had not reared,
Stood beautiful, and bright, and real.

At one near home a happy man

Was pruning vines beside the road;
We paused to mark the heavy load
Of fruitage, following his plan;
And note if still they needed care,
In this new realm as they had there.
And when he spoke I marked his ways,
The kindness of the tone and word;
They were the same in other days,
When these without a fault were heard.
He smiled and said, what had been care
In former days perplexed no more; *
He knew the secrets—so called there,
And this was why they throve and bore;
Indeed, conditions were the same—
Or much the same, and so the soil,
But he had knowledge, since he came,
And full dominion over toil.
“And have you seasons here,” I asked,
“You have no winter; have you spring?”
His answer lifted half the mask
That hid a yet mysterious thing.
And then he brought us luscious fruit,
The mellow pear and purple grape,
And all that grew was first to suit
In size and coloring and shape.
He bid us eat—what marvel still!
We had not felt the pangs for food,
Or such as came against our will

In days of waste, and needy blood.
And then he led us through his ground,
Where grew the world's collected trees,
Perfected since his knowledge bound
Their native faults and tendencies.
And there were lesser vines and shoots,
The humble growth, and earth-bound
fruits,
And blossoms, many-hued, whose bloom
Filled all the garden with perfume.
And she who in laborious days
Had been companion of his ways,
Within a lovely garden stood—
First flower of flowers, fair womanhood.
Her hands were full from many a bed,
But learning we had lately come,
She wished to question us, she said,
Of former friends, and led us home.

She led us to a faultless home,
The dwelling of a faultless pair;
I marveled that a foot could roam
That ever found a welcome there;
And yet, I doubt not that of old
There were some homes as bright as this,
The memory of which was bliss,
To haunt us in the common cold.
She gave us seats of perfect ease,

Then for a little while she hung
About an easel, that upbore
A bust to which her full heart clung,
From which she won it by degrees,
Then came and looked at it no more.
But when she turned I saw such glance
As lovers have whose eager eyes
Have sought the shrine they idolize,
Yet questioning the public chance.

“In the far land from which you came,
I have a son—an only child,
A great musician, flush in fame,
Of him I ask,” she said, and smiled;
“A precious boy! the name he bore
Is on this rug, and on our gate,”
She tapped her slipper on the floor,
“For him it is we watch and wait.”
I looked where lay her offspring’s name,
As deeply colored as a flame;
I read, but dared not make reply,
I looked, but fain had shunned her eye.
“But he was great,” she said, “or men
Grudged not to name his greatness then;
But, haply, I have magnified
Somewhat his greatness, in my pride;
But he was beautiful, and dear;
And had you ever seen, you might

Recall him by a second sight—
Come see my latest painting here.”
We stepped before the easel's load
While here bright eyes looked deep for
 sign

Of recognition—half in fear,
As we beheld the work divine.
“I knew him not; perhaps because
I knew but few musicians there;
My lot was humble, where applause
For that was seldom flung in air.”
'Twere twice a day in Paradise
Could I recalled that face and brought
The happy message that she sought,
Winning the sadness from her eyes.

“Thou hast great skill, methinks, in
 paint;
A skill beyond the canvas taint,
Where that same mood which thou dost
 seek
Springs to the lips that may not speak.”
“The master touched it where my skill
Had failed to bring it to my will.”
“And dost thou have a master here?”
“They who were such in other days,
And one First Master great and dear
Who leads us ever in new ways.”

“In other days didst thou do this?”
“I mixed some color with despair,
But my best work was all amiss.
Because the masters were not there.”

She pointed where upon the wall
A fair and faultless painting hung;
Which showed a humble home among
The grouping trees that half hid all.
“My dear old home has memories,
Too deep to be forgotten quite;
And I have hung it there you see,
Where it may always meet our sight;
The new home gives us true delight,
But tender memories linger there,
Of love, of labor, and of care,
Surrounded by a roseate light.
But still we cannot here forget,
It was the home of toil and death,
Where terror froze, and pain took
breath—
These have we not forgotten yet.
And so we do not wish to go,
We would not have the old days back;
The happy present with bright show
Leads forth upon an endless track.”

And then she brought us food and

drink,
And talked of former mysteries;
And as we talked we could but think
We should have seen what was to be;
We should have seen, we did see oft,
And then some doubt hung up its veil
Before our sight, which needs must fail
Because we held it not aloft,
And with a calm and steady eye,
Looked out into the cloudless sky.

Adieu we bid the lady queen,
Adieu we bid her faultless mate,
Then sought the highway where of late
We dropped the quest of the unseen.
And as I thought of friends, light feet
Made quick and quicker their repeat,
As one who wanders long alone
Returning quickens near his own.
But there were others on the road.
Who greeted us with friendly talk,
And kept our way light-footed walk,
And tireless, since it had no load.
We learned of these, that close at hand,
A great assembly now was set,
With camp where wood and water met--
A lovely spot of lake and land,
And thither they had cast their fate,

And now they journeyed to attend,
Where many met as friend with friend,
And heard the voices of the great.

And as we walked, with joy intense,
The leafy water-grove was seen,
Where stood a thousand thousand tents,
A city of the white and green.
And as we neared a chorus-song,
From an unseen and earnest throng,
Sent out its music and its thrills,
Across the landscape to the hills.
It ceased, and soon the busy air,
In all that lovely grove stood still.
We felt the silence everywhere,
As one may feel a twilight chill.
Our steps were light, and when anear,
Again that solid chorus rose;
All faultless to a faultless ear,
And rising to a faultless close.

HYMN.

Praise the Father; praise the Brother;
Praise the Father, and the Son;
Praise the Spirit; praise the Father;
Praise him that the old is done.

Let us praise him, and still praise him;
Praise him for the now and this;

Praise him that the old-time graces,
Brought us to the present bliss.

Praise him that the old-time losses,
Come to us no more forever;
Praise him that the old-time crosses,
Bear upon us never, never.

Praise the Brother; praise the Father;
Praise him with loud melody;
Praise the Spirit; praise the Father;
Nothing now is mystery.

As we approached the singing ceased;
And in a great pavilion there,
A countless host that still increased
Were bowing low, as if in prayer.
Upon the rostrum far away,
From which the seatage took its rise,
A being sat with such surplice
As had no counterpart that day;
And when he rose, and forward came,
He said a traveler now would speak—
And then he gave the traveler's name,
Who through the worlds around of old
Had journeyed far and long to seek
The things which *Earth* had never told.
And then a tall and hoary man
Came down upon the level stage,
And he was manhood twinned with age,

The outcome of a perfect plan.
He said his travels had begun
Upon the planet known as *Mars*,
The fiery marvel, earthward spun,
First neighbor of the old-time stars.
A traveler there, of second birth,
Might think that by some fault un-
known

He had regained his native *Earth*,
But in some country not his own.
The people were advanced, refined;
The government, correct and kind;
From pole to pole, from sea to sea,
It was one great democracy.
They once had war, but science grew,
And won the battles from the brave;
'They ceased because the soldiers knew
A child might dig an army's grave;
And all the petty and the great
United in a common state;
And all the soldiers that had been—
'The millions and the hungry men,
Turned plowmen, and it was a crime
'To be too prodigal of time.

'Twas evening at the quiet town
Of that first planet's capital,
When, coming thither, I stepped down
Into their busy labor's lull;

I stood upon the river's bank,
Which through the close and narrow
land,
Of their dear ruler's idle sand,
Wound to a present sea and sank.
I saw the lights among the trees,
Shine from hand numbered palaces;
I stood in shadows where I caught
The new impressions that all brought.
And then I heard a double step,
From toward the ruler's window gleam;
And two bright lovers hither came,
With form and feature without blame,
And through their veins the currents
leapt,
As they came downward to the stream.
They paused upon the moon-lit bank,
Beside a boat, half hid in shade—
I marveled at his soldier rank,
And that he wore a soldier's blade:
And as they reached the river's sand,
I saw him pause and take her hand,
Then with emotion this he said:
"Speak, Eveline, ere all too late!
Thy father's lights gleam through the
trees;
I am an idler of the seas—
A branded idler, with fixed fate;

My home, my hope, my lands, my all,
Is yonder ship thy sire abhors;
The last survivor of old wars,
Whose greatness fill with war's great
fall;

Wouldst thou abandon all, and fly,
For such as this, for such as I?"
The maiden threw one long sad look,
To those bright candles through the
trees;

The moon danced on her or she shook
In struggle with fond memories;
She thought of her great father's pain,
Her common loss, her human gain;
Then dropped her eyes upon the sand,
Nor did she raise them once above,
Till putting in his own her hand,
She dared to say, "I will for love."
Then lip touched lip, and smiles were
bland,

As lightly down into that boat,
Upon the river's silver light,
Went manhood firm, and lady bright,
Out to their wandering home to float.

I lingered in those idle grounds,
But when I passed their narrow bounds,
I saw the dome and massive walls,

That marked their legislative halls;
The windows were ablaze with light,
And many feet were going there;
I followed up the marble stair,
And reached a chamber's galleried
height.

The hall was wide, with little show;
'The chosen of the nation's great,
It seems were gathered there below,
In the first council of the state.
A special message from the head
Of the one realm was being read;
And while I listened to the sounds,
I could but think that those I saw,
Out in the ruler's idle grounds,
Were someway mingled with the law.
"No one in all the land may wed
Outside of his own proper sphere;
No idle man may be the head
Of any household, far or near;
And none who cling to outcast ways
May take a daughter of the land;
And none shall come with empty hand
To lead her into needy days;
And age shall wed no more with youth,
The fool shall sort not with the wise,
And the extremes in taste and size
Shall break no more harmonious truth;

The vain, the fickle, and the false,
May never wed, may never bear—
To crop the wings of common care
We must begin far back with faults.
And all the makers of the law
Responded, when their lips were free,
“It is his will; we find no flaw;
It is his will, so let it be.”

And while I listened and was still,
A neighboring door, that stood unfast,
Swung inward o'er its marble sill,
And I arose and thither passed.
Another chamber showed its length,
Like that from which I lately came;
As vast, as airy, and as tame,
And all its lines were lines of strength;
And round about on every hand
Hung maps of many a stranger world,
And globes on gilded trestles whirled,
With unknown sea, and unknown land.
The state astronomers it chanced,
From all the Mars-world now were met,
That they might still new courage get,
And their great science be advanced.
It seems reports were being made,
Where special work had once been laid,
And one great scholar, with gray head,

Arose and with emotion said:
"While our relations with the far
And neighboring planets pleasant are,
And while our knowledge daily grows
Of their diverse inhabitants,
And while each eager answer shows
They understand our ways and wants,
A single planet, right at hand,
Has baffled wisdom half divine,
It does not seem to understand
A single signal or a sign;
And yet we know the people there
Are not all ignorant and base,
We see their cities glassy glare,
Their armies in the old disgrace,
Their ships beyond barbarian ease
Go forth upon the public seas;
And we still hope that there may be
Some earnest in astronomy,
And that ere long they too may heed
Our signals, and may learn to read."

He ceased, and then a lesser man
Arose in haste, in haste he said:
"It is no use, but better plan
To blot them from our thought as dead!
It is at best a barbarous race,
In war, in ignorance, and base;

Turn we to many a better star;
They are but base; none baser are."
And all the wise men answered, "Nay,
They are our brothers; we must wait;
We cannot leave them to their fate;
We once were ignorant as they."

The speaker paused, and in the close
Of that vast tabernacle's ring,
The great and listening host arose,
And with one voice began to sing.
And while they sung I stood all dumb,
Beneath the splendid melodies
That wallowed in the upper seas,
Above the echoes that would come
From hills away beyond the trees.
But near the closing of the song,
My friend laid hand upon my sleeve,
And said, "We must not linger long,
Thy friends await; come let us leave."
And with a brief half felt regret,
Our faces from the camp were set.

Within the chambers of the west
The sun had found a curtained rest,
When to a once familiar gate
My dear companion turned to wait,
But smiling that I showed amaze,

And came with rapid beating heart,
To find the place the counterpart,
Or else the home of former days.
I dared not trust my voice as yet;
I wondered if it were a dream,
And wondered if time's mighty stream
Had once again with childhood set.
But now my friend drew near and said,
"Believe thine eyes, thine hopes, and me,
Believe the things you seem to see;
Thou art not longer dumb, or dead.
They who were thine, akin and near,
They who are thine are waiting here;
They open arms to welcome you;
I come again; to-night adieu."
And ere I could call up a tone
To make reply I stood alone.

Alone I stood, but soon and near
A once familiar voice I heard,
It spoke the language that was dear,
And memory's depth again was stirred.
My father came and took my hand,
He took my hand and bid me come,
It seemed as if the glass with sand
Had scarcely turned since just like this,
In other days, when days were bliss,
He pressed it in another land,

And with that voice bid welcome home.
But now emotion broke his bliss,
Emotion broke the brief reply;
He could not trust his voice for this,
And my own voice scarce trusted I.
And then he led me up the walk,
Beneath the wide and well-known trees;
And mother with light footed walk
Came out to meet me and to seize;
And they who in the distant days
Had been of these as I of these,
Came round me like a dash of seas,
And with light hearts and happy ways,
They bore me in a merry mood,
Within a re-united brood,
Into the home we once adored,
Into the old home, now restored.

Ah that reunion was not such
As in departed days we tried,
When hearts had sorrow, and he sighed
Who thought upon his own too much;
No grief came round to touch the mirth,
No smile was mingled with a pain,
No thought of some who tried in vain
To reach once more the parent hearth;
But all had come, and some from far
In travels on a distant star;

And some from quiet country homes,
Or where were mingled spires and
 domes;
And out of halls where science led
The growing mind in ways of truth;
And out of fields where pleasure fed
The cravings of an endless youth.
Each had his own, his full ideal,
Surpassing all the old and real.
But they had wished the old for this,
And anniversaries to come;
They asked where asking was the sum
Of all the labor for such bliss.

 Upon that home fell happy night,
A night of stars and haloed light,
Into whose flying hours we kept
Such converse as with time had slept.
We talked and listened, many, each,
With bliss sometimes too deep for
 speech.
When memory swept the halls of eld,
Or hope clasped endless time and held;
And many things I once had thought
Were hard and wrong, were set aright,
And mystery became as naught
Beneath the new far-reaching light.
The realm to which I now had come

I learned was not a single star;
A million million near and far
Marked not the bounderies of home;
And there were systems and degrees,
Beyond the faults of seeming chance,
Where endless time kept open seas,
O'er whose calm blue we might advance,
And by advancing we would find
The One Embodiment of Good,
Whose ways were scarcely understood
In the old days when faith was blind;
And faith was blind; but now the Son
Was with the many and the few;
His kinship and his great love drew
Still closer than it first had done.

And still in talk we lingered late,
And looked in faces long unseen,
In hearts and thoughts without a
screen,
On morrows fearing not their fate.
Then spake my brother, who on Earth
Was first in death, as first in birth,
And since that time had traveled far,
To many a planet, many a star,
And for this welcome just had come
Through leagues and leagues of space
alone,

And said, with downcast eyes, he came,
Returning, by a world in flame,
Some planet whose long course was
done,
Now burning like a burning sun.
Then mirth went down in all who heard,
And many said the good night word,
And took their lamps, while silence
deep
Crept to the chambers of our sleep.



PART THIRD.

WHICH IS BETTER.

This tooth-white flower has petals
seven,
(A number strange for bloom like this)
Were each a day of happiness,
Nay, more! were each a day of heaven,
This flower, by dropping one by one,
Its ripened petals on the loam,
Might count the days of cloudless sun
We lingered at the dear old home.
Each then unto his own repaired—
The new that better pleased the eye,
If one might lay old memories by,
Or if for such he little cared.
For each was center, or was part,
Of other home as bright as this,
Where other memories made bliss,
And other households shared the heart;
And each had duties given to do,
That barred the useless waste of time;
Some message to a different clime,
Some work in science or in art,
Some work of hand or work of heart,
By doing which he throve and grew.

Beside a village fair to see,
With open gate and ample grounds,
Upbearing many a fruitful tree,
Where breezes brought their changeful
 sounds,
Swinging the voiceless bells of bloom,
My father's other home found room.
As we approached, that summer morn,
And gazed upon it standing there,
(Their home and mine—for I alone
Had never household of my own;
And now I came back to their care,
A grown-up child, but newly born.)
A home it seemed where one might stop
And see time's ancient ocean drop
Its day-spheres bright into that sea
Which filing never full shall be.

We entered in—we three alone,
And wandered on through room and
 hall,
And marked the beauty over all,
And felt the harmony of tone.
And ever as some new surprise
Sprang up to lips, or shown in eyes,
It gave them pleasure little less,
To know that they had guessed aright
Anticipating my delight,

And wishing for my happiness.
Fair paintings hung upon the wall,
Some showing scenes of sorrow-land,
And some I did not understand,
Because I had not yet seen all.
And instruments stood round whose
 keys
Brought scales of tones that could but
 please;
And strings were waiting for the touch
Of hands that ever loved them much.
And there were rooms designed for me,
Arranged with all a mother's care,
Through whose broad windows nature
 fair
Loked in to see a rival realm.

Ah, it was heaven to sit and rest,
With such surroundings as were there;
Or lay the head on parent breast,
And weep above the thoughts of care,
Above the thoughts of needy life,
Above the arrow, and the knife,
In love like this, in home so fair!
And it was heaven to wander forth,
Out through the walks of garden bloom,
Where every long-renewed perfume
Came to a sense of greater worth;

Out where the ranks of evergreens
Held many a mazy walk in screens;
Where eyes might look and weary not,
And feet might wander on forgot;
Out where the birds sang songs in truth,
To ears more quick and hard to suit;
Out where the ripe delicious fruit
Brought back the uncloyed taste of
youth.

While wandering through those odor-
ous grounds,
On that first day of new delight,
I heard a bell, whose puffy sounds
Came o'er the many-steepled height
Of that clean village on whose bounds
I now was standing with clear sight.
And when I asked what this might be,
My father answered, that a car
Was starting for some neighboring star,
Or system of immensity.
I then learned travelers went on these
Around the universe of light,
As once they went on watery seas
Around a world of day and night.

That evening when I sought my rest
Light slumbers on my eyelids pressed

And ever when I tried to hear
I heard bell-music, faint or near,
And fancied that I traveled far.
To mysteries of many a star,
Through light and night and through
the haze
That wrapped them in the olden days.
And, thinking, I resolved to see
These planets that to flesh were dumb—
If this would be permitted me,
One who was yet but newly come.

The passing days new pleasures lent
Yet thoughts of travel came and went.
Thrice had I sought the landing-place,
From which those bright aerial cars
Shot outward into common space,
And disappeared like shooting stars.
And ever as I saw them go
The memory of a vanquished law
Came on me, with delight and awe,
But that seemed past, and better so.
And every day when I would turn
My footsteps from that port of space,
I went with head bowed from the place,
To think where I would move and learn.

One morning when the songster-horde

Made music for all ears to share,
I bid farewell, and stepped aboard,
For *Saturn* and the fields of air,
One empty glass it seemed, no more;
But day was gone, and night was there,
When near a city's gloom and glare
I landed on a sloping shore,
Where waters lap, and seafoes soar.
(The belt about that planet seen
In days of old by many a glass,
Is but the boundary between
The good and bad; and soon I saw
The outcome of a common law.)

I walked up through a gloomy street,
Deserted by the wear of feet,
Where all the buildings stood in gloom—
Save one, which had a feeble light,
That flickered from an open room,
Across the pavement in the night.
Here misery dwelt, and poverty
Was tyrant ruler one could see.
When near I paused because I heard
A voice that struggled with its breath,
As if to give some final word
Of counsel ere the choke of death.
A youth was standing near the door,
As if his hand and heart were stone,

And he would leave, as all before,
The dying man to be alone.
Alone he was for none bent down
To touch the locks of tangled hair,
Alone, indeed, because he found
No sympathy, no love, no care!
But while I looked, upon his bed
He turned his withered form and said:

“My son, come near and take my hand,
That dying I may counsel thee;
I have no ships, no stocks, no land,
To leave behind, no public name
That might a noisy catch-word be,
To help you on to wealth and fame;
But in their stead I leave in trust
This dagger, which if used aright
Will give thee half the world, if not,
It will but give thee instant night—
Deliverance from the common lot.
No counter dagger shall be thrust
Into the dumb and lifeless dust,
And never is the past set right.

“Look on this ragged poverty;
Look on this room; be warned of me!
Thou hast a heel; be ground or grind;
Thou hast a dagger; die or kill;

Revenge is sweet, and might makes
right;

Get power, get gold, feed self its fill;
The grave ends all; no one shall find,
A paradise beyond its night."

He ceased to speak; his form grew
still;

His offspring held the the keen knife
fast,

As if it strengthened his weak will,
And out into the dark night passed.
I shrunk and trembled, as with fear,
Till silence hovered o'er the street,
Behind his fleetly falling feet,
Then followed I, but not too near.
At last we reached an avenue
Where misty daylight seemed restored,
By many a strange devise that threw
The glare on structures many floored;
But here he paused as if in doubt,
And while he paused a woman's voice
Came through the vines and trees about
A well lit dwelling, high and choice;
With not unpleasing tones it gave
The music that enwrapped this stave:

*"Come, thou cold-blood, come and tarry;
Do not pass my chamber by;*

*Let us eat, and drink, and marry,
For to-morrow we must die."*

And through the windows I could see
The forms of men and women pass,
And I could hear the clink of glass,
When wine touched lips that loudly
laughed,

And still more loudly as they quaffed;
And music made voluptuous glee
To celebrate a ribald mass.

And as I gazed I felt afraid,
Lest this one, too, might enter there;
I looked where he had lately stayed,
But he was gone; I knew not where.

Now wending slowly down the street
I marked the doors had locks and
chains,

And heavy bars of iron beat
Made ribs above the window-panes.
And many a dark far-reaching mass
Of solid masonry stood near,
Within I fancied I could hear
The clank of chains as I would pass;
While through each eyeless arch of
stones

I felt a tide of human groans.
And many a well lit hall I saw,
Where men took drink which made

them mad,
Then rushing forth, with maudlin
speech,
They cursed the people and the law.

At last I reached a public place,
Where all the city's sleek and great,
Assorted, seemed to congregate,
To gossip, or show foot and face.
A little group attention drew,
Where one, more free in word or jest,
Had gained the silence of the rest,
To speak his loud blasphemy through;
And when his bold tones reached my ear
I could but pause awhile and hear.

“The age is one of progress great;
The center we; the hour is noon;
Our commerce bears the flag of state:
Fair business rules, and wealth comes
soon.

The law had never firmer grip—
And mine is mine; let hunger hate!
The headsman has a busy time;
To-day he let a hundred slip
Into that darker, damper clime;
He is our chamber-maid, who makes
The bed of fools, and tucks them in;
Fear puts its thumb upon its chin

And does like this; while villainy
quakes.

But death is sleep; there is no life
Beyond the grave, save that of worms;
And worms must die; give me quick
knife,

Or that for which my fancy yearns.
For who shall take the offal dust,
Call up the wandering soul, and wed
It to the bones whose powdered rust
The winds of boisterous time has fed,
Place me upon my feet and say,
Look you, this is a man again!
We who have reason mixed with clay
Have sense to know we are but men.

“This legend of a god, who rules
The affairs of men, is infant talk —
But fit for such as they, and fools
Whose purposes illfortunes balk.
Who brings good luck and bad; who
knocks
The bottoms from our ships, and tears
Our sails; is't he, or winds and rocks
Which meddle with a man's affairs?
I hate the cause what e'er it be!
Who made the stars, the moons, the
sun?

This legend says he made each one;
Then who made him say we?
Come, let us reason; all is chance;
And we are bubbles on a sea,
That float, and sink, as we advance."

Thus spoke he with uplifted hand,
And eyes all fire, and rounded word,
As anxious they should understand
The deep philosophy they heard.
They listened through, and silent kept;
Some smiled and nodded their assent,
Some waited still, in reverence bent,
As if they had a half-fed greed,
To hear again their common creed,
While I in silence turned, and wept.

Now let us leave the starless night
Of Saturn's darkened hemisphere,
And seek the purer atmosphere,
Beyond the belt which long has stood
Between the wicked and the good,
Keeping a realm of cloudless light,
And see a great heredity.
The evil, evil bear; the good
May keep their many-centuried blood
As pure as when it first ran free;
For every tree shall bear its kind,

And every generation find
Our parents over still are we.

'Twas springtime of the long, long
year,
And twilight of the brief, brief day,
When first that balmy atmosphere
Played on my cheek, and wiped away
The traces of the fear and pain
That late had shadowed o'er my brain.
Ah, what a splendid, splendid sight,
Was that all-calm, majestic night!
Behind me rose that wall-like band,
Which still the sun made silver bright,
Above the shadows of the night,
Supremely fair, divinely grand!
Before, afar, great belts of cloud
Made ribs across the firmament,
Through which the twilight day was
sent,
Upon a world with youth endowed;
And in the mighty field of heaven,
Bright Titan, with his sisters seven,
Held up each one its full-faced moon,
Like eight great silver suns at noon.
And while their splendor could but
please,
Their mysteries upon me brought

A sudden longing, and I thought
That sometime I would visit these.

About my feet great blossoms grew,
Which changed their outlines and their
hue
E'en while my long-delighted gaze
Was wandering amid their blaze.
And from the trees festoons of flowers
Let down their shade of swinging bow-
ers,
In which strange insects ever bore
Their handleless lights through arch and
door,
Till one might think the groves were
camps,
With green tents lit by wandering
lamps.
And many a night-bird piped about
Its half bewildering melody,
Which seemed to hasten in and out
Of vales no human eye could see;
And soft brooks made an undertone
Of teasing music all their own.
And as I dallied with the score
I heard a distant bell whose sound
Approached the listening world around
As when a sudden hand has thrown

Upon a placid pool a stone
The lessening waves approach the shore.
But soon o'er all the hills and dells
Arose the voice of answering bells,
As watchmen through the silent hours
Might call quick answers from their
towers.

Sweet sounds of holiness and peace!
Sweet sounds that give close thoughts
release,

And lead them gently out from care
Into an atmosphere of prayer!
Ah, bells thou wert designed for this,
In the eternal right of things,
The fitness, as the brook to springs—
First handmaid thou of holy bliss.

Before the bells would be forgot,
I heard hymn-voices, not yet clear,
That rose from many a windowed cot,
Within a little village near.
In one of these, where trees grew dark,
The door was open, and the light
Flung out its tresses on the night,
Across the highway, toward a park.
As I approached the singing ceased;
And then, as if in needy prayer,
A voice whose earnestness increased

Came out upon the evening air;
It asked for patience, and for strength,
To bear it o'er life's common care;
For holiness, and heaven at length,
In which its fellow-kind might share;
And then it asked for heart to give
Full grasp of kindness and of love
Where deeds of daily life must live;
And reverence for the things above.
I listened, but it ceased at last,
And as I moved and onward passed,
I caught a glimpse of the inside,
Where sat a sire in manhood's pride,
And smiling stroked the flowing hair
Of lovely childhood standing there.

The dwellings round on every hand
Seemed much alike; no narrow stalls
Where hunger dwelt; no palace grand,
To fling the shade on common walls;
It seemed as if the rich had shared
Their fortunes with the less-possessed,
Till all were rich, and all were blessed,
Because extremes no longer stared.
And I beheld the people all
Responding to the calling bells;
With happy looks and hurrying feet
They gathered in from every street

Where I could see three steeples tall
Upon the summit of green swells.

The children of this happy throng
In one of these fair structures went,
And I could hear their chorus-song,
Which filled the building's hollow bent,
As sunlight fills the firmament.
Another held the white-haired old,
Where soon the shepherd of the fold
Came out to lead them, while they said
Their words of thanks for daily bread.
But when the middle-aged passed,
Into a long and splendid room,
I followed to a nook of gloom,
Where I could note the structure vast,
And hear the worship-song again,
Between the words of holy men.



PART FOURTH.

EARTH'S MIRROR.

As one who stands upon the top
Of some vast mountain-ridge alone,
With silence round, and air and stone,
And one quick heart that will not stop,
And sees the tumbled world below,
With hills and vales and forests dim,
And feels an awe that chills like snow,
And says, these are the works of Him,
Look once again ere thou dost go!
So on that happy hemisphere
I looked with mingled awe and fear,
When I had gained the airy car
Which journeys round the realms of
light,
And was to bear me soon and far
To *Mercury*, the warm and bright.

But when within, no more alone;
For there were others who like me
Had hither come to seek and see
A universe as yet unknown.
And it was not as when of old
We turned from those our eyes beheld,

Because, through customs that were
 cold,
The proffered hand might be repelled.
And as we glided on through space,
Without a noise, without a jar,
Emboldened by the smiling face
Of him who ruled the thought-swift
 pace
Of that divine aerial car,
I sought to learn who he might be;
And ere we reached the planet's shore
I found his first-life history,
And talked and learned of many more.

Not long before, as we had grown
To look upon the flight of years,
Within the land of death and tears
This man had lived and dwelt alone.
In youth he wandered in the lanes
Which lead unto devices new,
And as their small proportions grew,
They filled his days with happy gains,
And while his comrades played, he
 planned;
And while he slept some unseen hand
Seemed fashioning his boyish thought
For that great field wherein he wrought;
And ere his manhood he had grown

To be as one who walks alone,
The world unknowing and unknown.
But through his days one great desire
Burned in his heart and warmed him
through;

It lit his dreamy eyes with fire,
And kept him to one purpose true;
Through want, through poverty,
through pain,

Here rose his hopes and here they set,
And when he seemed about to gain,
Despair reached out and said, "Not yet!"
While children laughed as he went by,
And tapped their heads, and to their
kind

They whispered, with a knowing eye,
"He had an airy ship to try,
And it has sailed off with his mind."
Thus passed his day in helpless gain,
And when they covered up his clay
Men said his life had been in vain,
And turned with heavy hearts away;
But springing up to realms of light,
By these forgotten, he attained
That which life's labor had not gained,
His chief desire and soul delight.

Before me sat a thoughtful pair,

On whom would rest the wandering
sight,
The lady was divinely fair,
And he was courteous as a knight;
But it was ages since the leaven
Of human love had filled their veins,
For now they dwelt in higher heaven
Than that which first the comer gains;
And through this system's field, it
chanced,
That they were passing, on this car,
'To some more glorious realm afar,
To which their worth had been ad-
vanced.

There is a river whose soft name
Still stands for beauty and for fame
Around the wide historic world;
Above her silver and her sand,
On many a lofty height still stand
Her mighty towers whose flags are
furled;
The traveler looks with bated breath
Upon these monuments of death,
Which time has crumbled to the fall;
He seems to see the knight again,
And hear the shout of maddened men,
Who charged upon the stubborn wall.

In such a land, in such an age,
These two were actors on life's stage.

In one of these gray castles dwelt
A great proprietor, whose land
Stretched far away on every hand,
And all the common people felt
A rule that ground them neath its heel,
With rack, with dungeon, and with steel.
A little state, where men were free,
Lay on the border of his realm,
He looked upon it grudgingly,
Then hither marched to overwhelm.
Within this state a man revered
Was he who by his birth was lord,
For he had raised the common hord,
Who loved that which they once had
feared.

And now, with all his loyal band,
He pressed the thick invaders back,
Till resting in the battle's slack
They rallied on his small command,
And broke it like a wall of reeds
Before the ocean's mane-white steeds.
Then raged the lawless conquerer;
And women shrieked, and men were
speared;
And all the flood of barbarous war

O'erran the homes that these had reared;
But in the mountain regions wild,
The few survivors of that night,
Urged on the long unequal fight,
For home, for parent, or for child.
The beautiful and loyal wife
Of him who once had ruled the free,
Was borne out from her happy life,
To dungeons and to misery;
Then tried as such as she were tried—
Where justice never sat nor came,
From which men went to lives of shame,
Or for their principles they died.
Then came the gibbet and the rack,
From which her steadfast soul escaped
And her bruised body was flung back
On those whose lives her love had
shaped.
Then broken was the people's pride;
And one who yielded not to tears,
Rushed forth upon invading spears,
And breaking through, he fought and
died.

The car was slackening its speed,
For round was many an asteroid,
Like islands on a stretch of sea,
Which crossing mariners avoid,

And change their course if they have
 need,
Until the sought-for port is gained;
So, sailing through immensity,
Our ship avoided many a shore,
Among these worlds where worlds had
 waned,
For Flora which lay just before.
Full many a traveler changes here
Who journeys to the starry space,
Beyond this system's narrow place,
Where new celestial realms are dear.
The lady and her gentle knight
Would stop on this convenient shore;
They said good-bys with faces bright,
And then I never saw them more.

But in their stead a woman came,
Attended by a single friend;
And when we heard the woman's name,
We all arose, I knew not why,
Save that unto the farther end
Of this long car they did as I.
But neither beautiful nor great,
Was she to whom we showed respect,
Save in the greatness of her fate,
And in the beauty deeds had decked,
In that brief life upon the Earth,

When fellow-man had learned her
worth.

This is the record beautiful;
These are the deeds which heaven re-
wards;
And justice sounds harmonious chords,
To which no listening ears are dull!

A fisherman, in labor-land,
Who lived beside the sea, grew ill;
For three long days his nets were still;
For three long nights his idle boat
Upon the rising tide would float
Then pant between the brine and sand.
And like a boat, with broken oar,
That rolls upon a restless sea
And dips and turns alternately,
Until it sinks and is no more,
So on his couch, from side to side,
In pain he strove, with waning strength,
Until he yielded up at length,
And with a feeble moaning died.
And they who heard the tidings said,
"It cannot be; he was so strong;
But three days back he was in song,
And now they say that he is dead."
But they would give him burial.

When they had done with this, and
turned

Unto their homes, his wife and all
Of their descent grew ill, and burned
With fever's fire, from side to side
Upon their beds, three days, then died.
The people now put looks in eyes
And said the thing was strange as sad,
And others heard it with surprise,
And said some curse the household had.

But when about that home disease
Reached out its frightful spider-legs,
A mortal terror seemed to seize
Society unto its dregs;
They said it is the dreaded pest,
And dropped their busy cares and fled;
The sick, the feeble, and the dead,
Remained, deserted by the rest.
Then like an angel in the night
One gentle woman hither came,
The world abroad knew not her name,
Nor might have guessed her motives
right;
And in that field of pain and death
She moved with never-ceasing care,
They felt her presence everywhere,
And blessed it with departing breath;

Through all the winter of that blight
She nursed the sick and comforted,
And folded hands above the dead,
Then, like a flower that blooms at night,
When o'er the region lone and wide
The morning broke, with certain light,
She folded up her hands and died.

And now I learned the maiden fair
Who came with her as friend with
friend,
Was one who had been stricken there,
And found the stranger's bootless care,
Until her deep distress had end.
And since, in changeless gratitude,
It seemed her chief delight to be
With one who by her couch had stood
In that long hour of misery.
And as we journeyed on I marked
The kindnesses of each to each,
For one received with thoughtful
speech,
And one with deep contentment harked.
But soon our brief and tireless flight
Was slackened, for the burdened shore
Of *Mercury* was just before,
Where man and nature groaned in
night.

There was a time when they who
dwelt

On all this planet's fertile length,
Were prosperous and full of strength,
And honor lived, and worship knelt;
But with their strong and prosperous
days

Came vices and their sure decays;
And honor came to be unknown;
No man was honest or sincere;
And none had reverence or fear,
Or wish above his earthly own;
And virtue, from its mighty fall,
Had not an advocate or friend;
Philosophy taught death the end,
And common leveler of all.

Then came a stranger to their courts,
Beseeching them to turn and live,
And ask of Him who might forgive
To free them from their dark reports.
He came, but they received him not,
He preached, and went, and was forgot;
But soon o'er all that fertile land,
A frightful and mysterious blight
Fell on them in a single night,
And rotted food in field and hand;
And then arose the sudden cry

Of all the people in despair,
For hunger pinched them everywhere,
Unto that pain of which men die.
But, ere their last distress, appeared
A leafy shrub, upbearing food
For all the hungry multitude,
Who saw the miracle and feared.

Again they prospered and forgot
The fearful warning of the rot,
And scarce a knee in reverence bent
In any isle or continent;
And mammon ruled, and wickedness
Made hideous life and unclean hand,
And through the fields of sea-washed
land
No resting-place had righteousness.
The prophet came again to preach,
Again the people could but hear,
But empty was the public ear
As soon as he had ceased to teach.
Then suddenly a foul disease
Swept o'er the living to the seas,
And humbled was the people's pride,
And nations wept, for many died.

But when again the prophet came,
To speak of righteous punishment,

The heart was hardened where he went,
For men would shift the common blame;
Then, following, the rabble cried,
And stoned him till he fell and died.
And then they said, "There is an end
Of breaking in upon our ease,
And bringing famine, and disease,
And stirring up the people's fears,
By teaching them to turn and mend,
Before a drouth of forty years."
But, lo! the noonday sun stood still;
The dews of evening fell no more;
The ocean clouds refused to fill
Their aprons for the thirsty shore;
And there was never any sleep;
And neither was there birth, nor death;
But he who labored still must reap
Unfinished fields, in oven-breath;
And nature changed no more her face
Than does a landscape set in paint;
And beast and bird lost not their place,
Because of death, in all that faint.

Down in the midst of human toil,
Within a valley, by a wood,
I stepped upon the desert soil,
And through a flight of moments stood I
To mark the world whose myriad mouth

Moaned out the misery of drouth.
The sun was hung at changeless noon,
And through the brazen atmosphere,
Above the all-pervading swoon,
Sent down repeated waves of fire,
Which danced along the line of hills,
And sucked for moisture in the mire,
Where loaves were baked, unground by
mills.

The grass about me, harsh and dry,
For many a year had drank no sup,
And every thirsty blossom-cup
Was filled with dust, but could not die;
And where the brook had bathed their
feet,

And sung its staves of changing tones,
Was but a winding path of stones,
As dusty as a summer street;
And in the woods the faded leaves
Were sapless as a shock of sheaves,
For all the veins of life were shrunk,
And long since empty in the trunk;
The birds had lost their vocal powers,
Save those that by the curse must sing,
And panting hid in tattered bowers,
From which came never willing wing;
The wildest beasts were not afraid,
But with their bloodshot eyes they

stared,
And fought their battles for a shade,
In which the panting victors glared.
And like a weather-beaten house
Long standing in a field of weeds,
Deserted save by slug or mouse,
Where reckless time has sown its seeds,
And reaped a harvest year by year,
So seemed the weather-beaten sphere.

I wandered through a lifeless grove,
Up through a farmer's dusty lane,
Where once a field of corn had throve,
But at the budding of the ears
It now reached down its roots in vain.
Herein two weary men had toiled
The fruitless round of many years,
And they were dark with soot and
soiled,
With faces pitiful to see.
They had not worked unceasingly,
But with the pause distracting pain
Came on them till they worked again.

I stood beside a hollow trunk
That flung its shade across the lane,
And heard the elder speak in pain
Of that dark deed from which he

shrunk

As he recalled the dying groans
Of him who had been stoned with
stones.

Whereat the younger urged him still,
And asked if he had thought him then
One greater than a mob could kill—
One greater than a man of men.
He said, "I heard him preach that day
On which the rabble did the deed,
I heard him prophecy and pray,
And tell us of our common need,
And with the word, and all I saw,
I was but moved—I found no flaw.
But when he prophecied of drouth,
Recalling famine and disease,
The people fell upon their knees
As if they fain would supplicate,
But murmured with concerted mouth,
And one could see the tide of hate,
For they would let him speak no more,
But growing bold o'ercame his tones,
Until he passed out through the door,
And then they struck him down with
stones."

"O, father, terrible is this!
To labor through the changeless years,

And taste the constant brine of tears
Which never have been shed amiss;
To weary be and find no rest;
To pass the hours of night at noon;
To feel the grave to be a boon
By which we may not yet be blest.
But dost thou think that when the curse
Is lifted from this weary world,
And death shall soothe us like a nurse,
We shall to direr woes be hurled?"

"I know not what for us may wait
In that as yet uncertain land
To which we enter by the gate
That men call death, but this I know
The loosened soul will gladly go
When it receives the last command;
For through these years of punishment
We do but suffer and repent
To find a springing hope of heaven;
And he who smote us does forgive;
For did he not once send the food
To the repentant multitude
That they might take and eat and live?
There is a boundary between
The realms of justice and revenge,
Put thou thy trust in Him whose range
Is infinite, whose sense is keen."

“Oh, father, do not bid me trust,
For I am weary unto death;
I only toil because I must,
I only breathe unwilling breath!
No day, no evening, and no night!
No moment but this furnace-noon
In which we labor to the swoon,
Beneath a constant storm of light;
No clouds are in the changeless sky;
No rain to cleanse the air of dust;
The look is sorrow to the eye;
I only live because I must
And living on from year to year,
We know not season, month, or day,
If rest for us be far away
We know not that, or be it near.”
Now came upon them sudden pain,
For that forbidden line was crossed,
They moved away in labor’s strain,
Until their scattered words were lost.
I watched them through the dusty cloud
Which ever wove their living shroud,
Then turned away as to depart,
But looked again with heavy heart.

Within a once delightful grove,
As I approached a village near,
I heard melodious strains which strove

Across the hot fields to mine ear;
And then one voice with varying range
Called out the dancer's measured
change;
And I could hear the noise between
Of feet upon the sounding floor,
And through the tattered leafy screen
Catch sight of dancers, four and four.
And as I passed the open gate
I saw a man who writhed in pain,
Without the bower's close domain,
For he had matched himself with fate
With purpose not to dance again;
And as he lay among the leaves
And clutched his flesh in misery,
It was a piteous sight to see,
From which one turns away and grieves;
And many a dancer sadly turned
Upon him who defied the curse,
Because he made his lot the worse,
And this was useless they had learned;
And often as they passed me by
I heard them say with saddened voice,
"He soon must yield; he has no choice;
He suffers death, but cannot die."

The bower was in a sunless nook
Where once perhaps the hermit thrush

Had built her careful nest and sung,
And round it was a wall of brush,
On which the tattered leaves still clung,
And in the heated breezes shook.
Within this wall a single seat
Reached round the level dancing-floor,
Where many sat with weary feet,
Until their pains forbid them more.
Upon the farther side a band
Of dark musicians idly played,
The bow seemed weary in the hand
And often into discord strayed;
And never yet upon a floor
Was such confusion seen before;
For some went round in reeling waltz,
And some were shuffling noisy feet,
And some, in sets, where couples meet
Went back and forth, in changes false.
But through the labor and the close
Of that unloved and lifeless dance,
No maiden smiled to galant's glance,
No bosom with emotion rose.

When, gazing, I had weary grown,
And was returning to the street,
I heard a cry as if of pain,
And turning where the man had lain
Among the leaves, with sobbing moan,

I saw him struggle to his feet,
And hurry to the dancing-floor,
To which I watched him till he whirled
Out through the dance which round
 him curled,
And then I turned, and looked no more

Now wandering down the village
 street

I marked the teams that toiling went,
In dust that hid them like a tent,
Where forms were shadows over feet;
The wanes protested far away,
From noisy hub or loosened tire,
That knew no other food or fire
Than grit of dirt and blaze of day;
And every plant and leaf and fruit
Had hid its color in the dust,
Till all beneath the growing rust
Was common as a miller's suit;
And in the gardens where had grown
The blossoms of a hundred hues,
Was but the sameness that was shown
On every hand, for dust was dew.
But what I saw of toil and woe
Within that village as I passed,
'Twere better that no man should know
Because its memory would last.

PART FIFTH.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

As one who sadly turns to roam
Out from a dwelling, not a home—
Because in it is discontent
(Life's eating misery, whose breath
Is ever held to welcome death,
If painlessly it may be sent)
But knowing this, and looking back,
He says there should be happiness,
A tideless joy instead of this—
Instead of night so cold and black;
So turned, I with such thoughts as these,
As out from Mercury I went,
Upon that car which had been sent
To bear me over ether seas.

Dark *Vulcan* lay upon our route,
That barren and mysterious shore
Which men would ever name with
doubt
And naming it would say no more.
Here life was in its glorious prime
Ere Adam oped his wondering eyes
Upon the bloom of Paradise

And breathed the scent of rose and
thyme;

And ere the Christ of Galilee
Had done his miracles on Earth,
Upon this planet death and birth
Were finished, and had ceased to be;
For empty were the mighty seas,
And every busy stream ran dry,
'The atmosphere was in its lees,
No cloud inhabited the sky;
And every green thing drooped and
died,

And fell upon a blackened crust,
To mingle with the common dust
That once was man or else his pride.

So idly wheeled this empty sphere,
Where human works were but a scar
Upon a surface without cheer,
When passing, our aerial car
Came hither for a little space,
To seek an ancient resting place.
We touched the desert of that world
Where once the great metropolis
Had breathed the fragrance of her bliss,
And waved her banners, quickly furled.

We who within had journeyed here

Stepped down upon the dusty sphere,
To walk with wonder and with awe,
Up through the streets which long ago
Had reared aloft laborious show
Which time had scythed to stubble-
straw.

We reached the summit of a hill,
Where once the capitol, no doubt,
Of some great empire, laid its sill,
Within the vacant square about;
But centuries before, the last
Of all the marble in that wall
Had tumbled, with defacing fall,
Upon the rubbish of the past.
Here lay the columns that had stood
Within the lofty portico,
All crushed like stems of hollow wood,
And scattered in a fenceless row;
And many a window stone embossed,
And every slab of ornament,
Had crumbled in the great descent,
Until its wealth was all but lost.
Within the basement was bebris
Of what had been the lofty dome,
Whose gilded hight the eye could see,
In better days, from many a home.
But they who once had trod the floor,
And in these marble halls had name,

And spoke their fine orations o'er,
To party praise, or jealous blame,
Had gone, and left their splendid halls
To eating time, and bruising falls.

We passed within the ancient mart,
By fountain basins, strangely wrought,
Where ample aqueducts had brought
The crystal waters from the heart
Of distant mountains whose sure
streams
Came cool and sweet from rocky seams.
Here many a building, made of stone,
Of wood, of marble, or of brick,
On which were letters all unknown,
How storied high, how wisely thick,
We might not know save by the squares
Of rubbish mingling their snares.
Perchance within these ruined walls
The tradesman, with habitual pains,
Had daily counted o'er his gains,
To hoard them in his cellar stalls;
And here a theatre, perchance,
Once flung ajar its nightly door,
Where people breathed as in a trance,
To see their daily lives played o'er;
This splendid wreck of stone and glass
May once have been a house of prayer,

That yonder where we soon must pass
A rival or a sister fair.
But gone were they who toiled and
 laughed,
We found their footprints on the sand,
We saw the ruins of their craft,
And walked along a world unmanned.

 Upon a distant slope with mounds
I saw great rows of bleaching stone,
To which I wandered out alone,
And found the city's burial grounds.
But not as when the living kept
The sacred chambers of the dead.
Neglect had hid the words that said
The names of those whose bodies slept;
The fallen slabs unlifted lay
Above the sink of many a grave,
The coatings that the centuries gave
No careful hand had wiped away;
And stone from stone each monument
Lay prone upon the blackened crust,
Neglectful of the first intent
Which reared it o'er the buried dust.

 And as I looked I seemed to see
The funeral train of long ago,
With measured step, and passage slow,

Seek out the prison of this lea,
And one by one place in their cells
The forms of which the marble tells.
But when the great catastrophe
Swept o'er the land and drunk the sea
They quickly came and quickly went,
Through all that night of punishment,
Until the last man turned and wept,
Above the last mound that could be,
Then fainting in his misery,
Within a roofless chamber slept.

And as I wandered through the ground,
And sought the name and readless
rhyme,
Full many a token still I found
That had escaped the wreck of time.
Upon a slab, the road-way nigh,
Which lay upon the sooty sand,
Two palms were clasped to say good-by,
Or else the living still would hold
For ever more some faithful hand,
Forgetful that it now was cold;
It showed me customs that had been,
Where hands were servants of the heart,
That they who had been long apart,
Held touch till they could meet again.

A monument not far away

Across its crumbled coping lay,
It seemed a faultless shaft of stone,
But broken, with its high half shown—
As if some worthy man had died,
With half a useful life untried.
Upon its face a gloveless hand
Was reaching out a world's reprieve,
To which, as eager to receive,
Was pressing on a countless band.
And wondering still at last I went,
Not knowing what the symbol meant;
Some statesman or philanthropist,
Whom all the common people missed,
Perhaps had left his body-dust
To mingle with this marble's rust.

Well back within the burial field
A greater work in ruins lay,
By which a fellow-traveler kneeled,
And seemed to weep, or else to pray.
Before him on the grassless ground
A fallen statue held a lyre,
On which the hand, as if for sound,
Reached out to many a perished wire;
But when I wandered near he turned
As one might turn from closet prayer,
Surprised, with features wrought with
care,

To know his secret had been learned;
But when I fain had turned away,
He rose and beckoned, saying, "Come,
This is the closet of my clay;
I kneeled above my wasted home."
Then looking long at him I asked,
If he upon this sphere had dwelt,
When fields had bloom, and turf had felt,
And people wore the body-mask.
He answered, pointing with his hand,
Where in the trough of sinking sand
The marble statue fall lay,
"Here is the closet of my clay;
I visit this my mournful home,
And from the pleiades I come."
"And wert thou to thy vanished race
What this bruised marble emblem
meant
When standing in its lofty place
It seemed to touch the chords long
spent;"
From this he turned and then replied,
"I lived, I touched the chords, and died;
Be this thy answer, this marred lyre,
This pile of marble that you see,
Upbuilt by a wide desire,
To mark the dust once borne by me."
Upon a block of ample girth

I saw thick names writ on the side,
Of those who fashioned, when he died,
This monument to mark his worth;
And round about was many a vase,
Half hid in dust and strangely wrought,
Where once the schools of people
brought

Bloom tribute to his resting-place.

“Then why wert thou with fallen eyes?
These tokens to thy spirit tell
That they who followed loved the well,
And worshiped where thy body lies.”

“But I am sad to see the sphere
That was of old so full of moods,
A grassless grave of what was here,
Drunk of its streams, and shorn of
woods;

The flower is gone, the bird is dead,
And gone the bough on which it sung,
The very odors that were hung
Above the green fields now are fled.

I came in memory of the clay
I bore among my fellow-men,
I see the wrecks and turn away,
And do not care to come again.”

Since he was so I too grew sad;
Then slowly toward the car we walked,

Across the black fields, once so glad,
And as we journeyed on we talked,
He like a guide who goes before,
To traveler in an unknown land,
And pointing with a willing hand,
To things of eld, he named them o'er;
And doing this he seemed to lose
The sadness that had marred his tones,
For every ruined square of stores
Had memories from which to choose.

As one outstepping from a vault
May feel his spirits long at fault,
So out from gloomy Vulcan's shore
Were we some moments and no more.
Our course was through the shining
field
Where hangs the ever glorious *Sun*,
To Jupiter that younger one
On which no human knee hath kneeled.

As we proceeded now we rode
Through prismsy mists and vapors
bright,
Neath which a sea of gorgeous light
In thicker vapors ebbed and flowed.
Great waves of flame dashed through
the air,

And flung on high their leagues of spray,
Which spattered all the misty gray
With beauty, many hued and rare;
And then some arm of crimson light
Would reach its vast proportions out,
And sweep the miracle from sight,
And wave flame-banners round about.
Beneath the vapors we could see
Great yawning caverns where a world
To dark oblivian might be hurled,
And feed the fire's intensity.
And island colors, dark and light,
Were floating on the brazen flood,
And flaring candle-flames did stud
These color-islands with their light.

Less swiftly through this field we went
That we might see each mighty change
Which stirred the flood, and raging spent
Its fury in the visions range.
Here twisting winds made waterspouts,
Where league on league the upright
flames
Pursued the spiral of their routes
Then spread in splendors without names;
And there some mighty column burst
And stormed its glory on the sea,
Which clapped its flamy hands in glee,

Then rolled triumphant as at first;
And out from dim uncertain ground
Bright streams of wonder swiftly
 flowed,
Until commingling they glowed
Like all the molten spread around.
Oh change on change divine! perchance
A hurricane would pass our car,
And rave and lash a wild advance,
Dragging its fury from afar;
Or else its wind-made water-wheels
Would whirl on high their dripping
 fans,
And sprinkle all the misty fields
With glittering beads and burning
 sands;
But through the silence and the hush,
Of that divine, o'erpowering sight,
No word was spoken, and no gush
Of empty whispers marred delight.
At last the eye was satisfied,
And like a child that long has tried
The charm of his kaleidoscope,
We put it from us, while the car
Shot forward to that mighty star
To which we looked with eager hope.

There is a placid little bay,

Scarce bigger than a human hand,
Where *Jupiter* in early day
First called the waters from the land;
Unto the dark and ancient shore
That dips and dalleys to the edge
Of this warm bay, with many a ledge,
Our noiseless car its burden bore.
Upon a path unused by feet,
Which slanted like a mountain road,
Down where the land and water meet,
Upon the virgin soil I trode.
The air was hot and full of smoke,
And all the landscape veiled and dun,
Through whose thick haze no sunlight
broke,
For only painted seemed the sun;
And every breath was filled with scent
Of vegetation growing rank,
From far fields where no blossom bent,
And forests where no sunlight drank;
Along the damp and miry beach
Great rows of seaweeds rose and fell,
And one could see their fingers reach
Up through each slow incoming swell.
Upon the right a mountain ridge,
Hid all that portion of the sky,
Along whose roof-like top the light
Of many colored flames shot high;

Upon the left great sappy trees
Were crowded to the watery shore,
Their neighbors hid in misty seas
From which the sight could learn no
more;

And all about were flag and fern,
And rushes standing like a tree,
In whose dark tangle one could see
No flitting bird, no blossom burn.

The while I gazed my Vulcan friend
Approached the slope on which I stood,
He glanced in turn upon the wood
And that high ridge which seemed to
send

A greeting gush of green and red
As he outstretched his hand and said,
"This does not seem to be the same
That I beheld when first I came."
And then I learned that in the past,
Before that mountain reared its brow,
Before this forest dark and vast,
Had root, he came as I came now.
This slope was then a muddy flat;
Where yonder grows those mighty trees,
Pale moss and paler lichens sat,
Forever sprayed by heated seas;
And over all the atmosphere

Shut closer down, on fields more drear,
In which the dim discolored sun
Had its round outlines scarce begun.

Out through the noon of twilight day
We saw great fish upon the bay,
Leap forth, pursuing or pursued,
And blood from many a fight unviewed
Made pools of crimson in the gray;
And there were dorsal fins and heads
Asleep upon the lazy tide,
And shapes, with paddles reaching wide,
Moved slow, or slept in miry beds.
Aerial reptiles, vile and black,
Made shadows like a passing cloud.
Through foggy leagues their screams
were loud,
And caverns sent their answers back;
And now and then a dragon flew
From cave to cave along the shore,
Or from some jungle, wet with dew,
Thrust out its head, then was no more.

Upon the cliffy mountain side,
Where many midnight caverns hide,
I saw a single giant bat,
That slumbered as at watch he sat;
And while I looked, a monster vile

(In shape and shell a crocodile,
Which long had seemed to be asleep,
With half its body in the deep,
Raised higher his protruding head
And looked about, then o'er the beach
Crawled slowly up, with stealthy reach,
Dragging his body from its bed;
But when the interval was passed,
Between the water and the perch,
I saw that with a thrust and lurch
He compassed it, and held him fast;
Then screamed the victim hoarse and
 long,
And every neighboring rocky cave
About that perch its answer gave,
And huge bats gathered in a throng;
They circled round, some lighting near,
While others made a bold attack
At barrel eye, or scaly back,
Until he shrunk in pain and fear,
Adown into his watery bed,
Streaking the flood around with red.

My comrade plucked me by the sleeve,
And turned and spoke, when this was
 done,
"Life's drama here has just begun;
Man has no part; come, let us leave."

And as we wandered slowly back
I could but wonder what would be;
Would sturdy races, white or black,
Build on these hills, and tame this sea?
Or was this great world framed and set
For purposes I knew not yet?
Of one thing I was satisfied,
This princely planet incomplete,
Was like the ones where men had died,
Before prepared for human feet.



PART SIXTH.

LOVER'S LAMP.

Nay, tell me not, with bated breath,
There is no house unknown to death;
There is a planet on whose side
Man long hath lived, but never died.
The living live without disease,
The dying sleep without decay,
The sleeping wake again to day
In lands still washed by native seas.
To *Venus* the divinest star
We guide the palace of our car.

'Twas morning when we neared the
shore
Of that near-neighbor world of old,
Alighting on the leafy floor
Of some dark forest, thick with mould.
Before, as far as eye could see,
A winding valley, dug by time,
Whose scenes no doubt were called sub-
lime,
Lay deep as an unfathomed sea;
And o'er the green uneaven sweep
Of forest stretching far away,

Were silences and twilight gray
As if the world was yet asleep.

Into this solemn wilderness
I walked and wandered to explore,
But found no path from its recess,
No foot-marks on the leafy floor;
The trees were maples spiced with
 beech,
And some unknown but like the oak,
And evergreens made endless reach
Where in the wood the valley broke;
I saw some stalks of columbine,
And some strange plants I did not know,
And many a violet and vine
That in the old world used to grow;
Among the tree tops squirrels played,
And birds went by on pigeon wing,
And as I passed a leafy glade,
A thrush struck up as if to sing;
And if I walked or if I stood
I felt the spirit of the wood.

At last I saw a lily flower,
As red as any poppy bloom,
Where sunlight slanted to a bower,
As open as a roofless room.
About was many a whip-like shoot

That round the secret nook took root,
As if to hide, in leafy screen,
The chamber of some woodland queen.
I turned aside and crowded through
This growth, still wet with rain or dew,
And, lo! a mother and her child
Here lay as if they were asleep,
The youngster to the mother smiled,
The mother seemed as if to weep;
And o'er their faces, like the dead,
That crimson lily hung its head.
But one could see that they had slept
A changeless sleep, perchance for years,
For o'er their bodies vines had crept,
And sapless grasses leaned their spears.
I marked that twixt their persons grew
A tuft of vetch with blossoms blue,
And climbing swings about them clung
In which a child had never swung.
A shoe was wanting and a hat,
By this I knew that they were lost,
Before they sunk upon this plat,
Which grape and creeper since had
crossed.

Not soon deciding what to do,
And while beside the two I stood,
I saw, approaching through the wood,

A man who bore that hat and shoe.
His thoughts seemed mostly on the
ground,
But he would often turn these o'er,
And look, and look, and turn once more,
As if they were but lately found;
And then I fancied that a light
(Almost a smile) would flash across
His features, stricken as by blight,
Or darkened as by years of loss;
And with each pause he seemed to gain
New courage and new strength from
these,
As one who turns from thoughts that
please
To labor that had else been pain.
As he approached the little bower
I stepped behind a growth of birch,
Then breaking from his patient search
He came abruptly toward that flower.
Now could I see keen hope and fear
Upon his face, as he drew near,
And, as a child to nest he feared,
Within the little open peered;
He looked, he flushed, then looked again;
He looked at both, and noticed all;
And then I thought that he would fall
Outcoming from his years of pain.

With careful arms the growth he
pressed

And stepped upon the plat of land,
Then kneeled and took the woman's
hand,

Which lay all white upon her breast,
A moment held it in his own
(I turned away and did not hear
The words he whispered at her ear,
Or see him touch that cheek of stone)
But when I looked again she stirred,
And life was rolling neath each lid,
As when a sleeper hears a word
Whose meaning to the sense is hid;
And then he called her wife, and cried,
"Awake, awake, for I am come!"
At which she sat up open-eyed,
And looked at him no longer dumb;
And then he woke the sleeping child—
I heard no words, nor saw his charms,
But three were one in folding arms,
The older wept, the younger smiled.

I saw approaching through the trees,
My Vulcan friend, and straightway
went

Out from this little sunlit dent
'To tell him of the joy of these;

But looking back I saw him lead
The mother from that sluggish bower;
She leaning on him in her need,
The boy held high, now with his flower.
We watched them down a doorless hall,
Where green boughs bent and blossoms
grew,
Until they disappeared from view,
Then followed, but I know not why,
Perhaps we caught a glimpse of sky,
Or heard afar some human call.

At last a wood-surrounded lake,
In quiet beauty met our eyes;
Its level waters seemed to make
Partition glass between two skies,
Dividing sun, and cloud, and blue,
From that within its daily view.
Midway between the leafy shores
I marked a boat, with idle oars,
In which a single diver stood,
Then disappeared within the flood.
We looked into each others eyes,
Then heard a bird cry loud and long,
And wander through a brace of song,
Before we saw the diver rise.
We marked him clamber in the boat,
And dash the water from his eyes,

And breathe the breath of swimmer's
sighs,

Then leave again his dancing float.

At this my comrade spoke and said,

"Hast thou yet heard of him and this ?

He once had love and happiness,

But in a great catastrophe

His lady sunk beneath this sea,

And joined the planet's sleeping dead,

It is to rescue her he tries."

And while we looked out through the
trees,

And saw his waves bell-out and fall,

I asked that he would tell me all

That he had heard concerning these.

"Some years ago (and long it seems
No doubt to him whose lady dreams),
Two pleasure boats were wont to play
Upon the waters of this lake,
And neighboring towns were free to
make

Excursions many a holiday;

On one of these excursions came

Two lovers, fair to look upon,

Save that the maid was somewhat wan,

And speechless often as a dame —

For she had dreamed, three nights and

more,
Of great disaster on this day,
And that upon the watery floor
Of this fair lake she long would lay;
But every morning when she woke
She put it from her without worth,
Nor of it to her lover spoke,
Though now it weighed upon her mirth.
But he all day with lover's wiles
Had tried to win her to herself,
And led through bowers and forest
aisles,
Where nightly dance the woodland elf,
And spirits linger all the day
To steal the thoughts of care away.

“But many a time she sighed in smile,
And once she raised her eyes and said,
‘If I were gone a long, long while,
Would you forget me, love, and wed
Some maiden comlier than I?
(I being gone; she being nigh).
But with a word he parried this,
Because it hurt to have her doubt
His constancy, and more breathe out
The fears he knew to be amiss;
But still she spoke again and said,
‘Maidens are fair, and men forget!’

To which he said, 'No maiden yet
Has e'er forgotten she is fair!
Then when her cheeks grew rosy red
He kissed one blossom of the pair.

"At last they sought the wooden pier
Where neighbors gathered to embark,
And then came back her vision dark
To wake her half-forgotten fear.
At this she said, 'I must not go,
I had a dream—I dare not; no!'
And then her young associates
Came round her in an eager throng,
And bore her in their midst along,
Less merry than her merry mates.

"Soft was the air, and clear the day,
The lake was level as a glass,
And on the steamers bunting gay
Was twined and looped in many a mass;
Along the shore the double bank
Held trees that made a double rank,
And those who cast below their eyes
Saw that they swam between two skies.
But there was rivalry between
The steamers, and they tried their speed,
And 'kerchiefs waved, and voices
cheered,

Till one in turning falsely steered
(Men said the helmsman lost control)
And struck the other, like a steed
That blindly wheels about a goal;
Then, while the people screamed of
fright,
The steamer filled and passed from sight
“Of those who sunk upon that day
But one has never yet been found,
She sleeps her sleep on unknown ground,
On rocky bed or weedy clay;
But they who searched, searched long
and well,
Nor would they give their labors o'er
Till thrice they hunted all that floor
And dragged in every shelly dell.
But still her faithful lover strives;
From sun to rising sun he weeps,
From sun to setting sun he dives,
Nor breaks the vigil that he keeps.”

The while my comrade spoke we saw
The swimmer striking toward the shore,
Some burden in his grasp he bore,
As one a heavy weight would draw.
And while we looked our hearts stood
still;
We saw the form he strove to save,

For when he reached the shallows near,
He raised it from its watery grave,
And bore it dripping with the wave,
Up o'er a slope that once was sheer,
And layed it on a sun-warm hill.
We saw him kneel, and heard him call
A name that made melodious sound.
To which she rose up pale and tall,
And with bewildered look gazed round;
And as the sleepers of the night
Know not the hours at which they wake,
So neither knew she, but in fright
Turned from the memory of the lake;
Then like two bathers, hand in hand,
That hurry from a ghastly shore,
Where waves fling wrecks upon the
sand,
They hurried and were seen no more.

Beyond the lake we soon approached
A plain on which the wood encroached,
Whereon a city, large and fair,
Showed guardian spires and portly
domes,
Far flanked by park and leafy squares,
In which were roofs of countless homes.
Between the city and the wood
Were level fields of sodded grass,

In one of which great buildings stood,
With banners gay, and bright with glass.
And every neighboring public way
Its share of people seemed to yield,
As if some cherished holiday
Brought out the city to the field;
Then through a lane of peaceful shade
We neared and learned a famous show
Was being held from day to day,
Where all who came might see and
know
The progress that the world had made.

And so we passed a Gothic door,
Which led to one of these apart,
And found a gallery of art,
With paintings thick from arch to floor.
Awhile we stood and looked at these—
A bust was here, a full form there,
Some landscape beautiful with trees,
A wrecking storm on tossing seas,
With sea-gulls tilted in the air;
And ships that leaned before the gale,
But moved not heavy hulk nor sail.

As stranger bird in stranger room,
That flits, and lights, and flits again,
So went the eye from glare to gloom,

O'er needy works of common men,
Until, returning when it passed,
It settled on its own at last.
And as I looked I seemed to read
A chapter from their history,
Condensed and beautified for me,
And all who would but give it heed.
Upon a level stretch of sand,
With desolation scarce unchanged,
Two steeds were lying close at hand,
With costly trappings disarranged;
Between them leaned a fallen knight,
His helmet taken from his head,
The scales upon his armor bright
Were torn away and stained with red:
Beside him there a lady kneeled
Who seemed just stretching forth her
hand

To wake him on this foreign field,
And lead him to his native land.
Long looking I forgot all things,
Its meaning slowly dawned on me,
And even now, on memory's wings,
My eyes beneath it rise to see;
But saddened some I turned away,
For in that picture I beheld
Earth's wars and giant wrongs of old,
Whose victims came not back to day.

Unto a larger hall we came,
Alive with birds and swimming fish,
And all that hungry eye could wish,
Or human tongue could hope to name.
Herein were rows on rows of squares,
In which were various groups of men,
Which showed the customs and the
wares

That on this planet once had been.
Their Adam of the ancient time,
Beside his Eve herein now stood,
A faultless man and womanhood,
But ripened from their glorious prime
We heard them speak to those beside,
He telling often how it seemed
When first the sunlight on him streamed
And he awoke to consciousness,
With man's full thought and power for
bliss,

With all of life as yet untried;
The trees, the blossom and the bird,
All things he saw, the sounds he heard,
Had strange effect on ear and eye,
And pleased him, but he knew not why.
Then, turning to his modest wife,
He said that he remembered still,
When first he saw her through the dim
And flowery woodland, full of life,

Approaching slow and pausing nigh,
He thought his image from the rill
Had risen and had followed him.

Within a cheerless neighboring square
Sat sullenly their eldest son,
His manners showed he did not care
The world should know what he had
done—

Perhaps he was another Cane,
Whose memory still to him was pain.
A shepherd's crook was in his hand,
To which he leaned upon his seat,
And from his shoulders to his feet
Was many a rude and wooly band;
And just beside him, on the floor,
Lay shepherd dog and quiet sheep,
One dreaming of the upland shore,
The other imitating sleep;
And looking at the sire and son,
We thought from these that we had
learned
The wheels of progress must have
turned

All wrongly when they first begun;
Nor did we, as we passed along,
See equal of that noble pair,
With face as cheery, form as strong,

For many a dark uneasy square;
But ere that lengthened row was passed
We reached the gladiator mould,
Where man was strong and woman cold,
And children showed a faultless cast;
Here rose physiques of matchless hights,
Surmounted by the faultless head,
And one of these I heard it said
Was victor of a hundred fights.

In passing on among these squares
We met a man bent down with years,
Or else he bore a load of cares
Whose burden made him fit for tears;
And while we gazed upon his plight
A youth came up with footsteps light,
And said, "Thy daughter who was
drowned
Desires thee; she has just been found."
He gazed a moment on the boy
As if he had not heard it all,
Then, with a sudden throb of joy,
He hurried from the crowded hall.
Then said my comrade unto me,
"Come let us follow where they go;
Perchance the rescued may be she
Of whom we do already know."
And so we passed out through the door,

And stood beneath the open sky,
And many a street that wandered by
We searched, but never saw them more.

At last we neared a wasting cot
That stood upon the city's bounds,
Where voices sang, we knew not what,
Save that they made delightful sounds;
And many a neighbor came and went,
As we moved slowly up the way,
Who looked as if some glad event,
Had made him happy for a day;
We paused a moment near the door,
And saw the mother and the child
Whom I had seen that day before,
Asleep within the pathless wild;
And while we lingered we could hear
The hum of gladness that was there,
And when we were no longer near
Their voices followed on the air.



PART SEVENTH.

THE CITY OF THE CLOUD.

As one who fares for bird or bloom,
In wooded waste or meadow-fields,
Until he sees the evening star—
The jewel ere mulatto gloom—
Then filled with memories homeward
wheels,

So we returned to find our car,
I learned that we would touch the shore
Of Flora as we outward went,
To which my Vulcan friend was bent,
And then would be with us no more.
He came and took the seat by me,
And mentioned that he now must go,
And then, as if I did not know
The home in which he soon would be,
He asked if I remembered yet,
When on the earth and day was set,
A group of stars o'er ether seas
That men had called the pleiades.
There in a quiet world he dwelt,
In scenes of which he now was fond,
And seldom went, or yearning felt
To see the vast untouched beyond;

And then inviting me to come—
When it would be permitted me,
To leave this younger system's sea,
And pay him visit at his home—
He pressed my hand and said farewell,
For we were now upon that shore
Where once in haste we touched before
Since first I followed out this bell.
As toward *Uranus* now the car
Shot forward through the fields afar
I felt the old earth-known regret
Because his face from mine was set.

The day was breaking in the sky
When first I gained observer's stand
Within that far and unknown land,
And looked about (I know not why,
But looking, half afraid was I).
Before me lay a rippled sea,
In which dark rocks half hid their forms,
Where many a ship, no doubt, in storms
Had come in haste and ceased to be.
I marked the changeless line of sand
Between the water and the beach,
From which abruptly rose the land
As distant as the eye could reach;
For inland, parallel to this,
Arose a solid wall of cloud,

Whose right and left were hid in shroud,
And whose high tops was evenness;
Beyond this wall rose dome and spire,
As if this were a city's screen,
Whose many hights alone were seen,
They flashing with reflected fire;
Within that wall I saw a gate
Its arch was cloud-like, but ideal,
And through its long and open bars
Appeared the light of crowded stars,
Or sunlight golden through a grate;
Between the ocean and that wall
The space seemed common-place and
 real,
A little valley stole away,
On whose near slope a village lay,
But silence hovered o'er it all;
Behind the village and its trees,
Upon a hill, all terraced round,
I saw a lofty burial ground,
Whose monuments outnumbered ease.

And while I looked upon these things
I heard a noise that moved the earth,
As, haply, when a mountain springs
Above an ocean to its birth;
And underneath went many a thrill,
Before again the land stood still.

Upon a cliff, beside the sea,
I saw the figure of a man,
Whose robes were beautiful and free,
And down upon his sandals ran;
With motionless uncovered head
He waited, doubtless, some command,
Whose whispers now were being said,
Then raised the sceptre in his hand,
And stretched it out above the deep,
Commanding those who were asleep,
As if he said come forth and stand;
And then he stretched it o'er the shore,
And bid the sleepers sleep no more.

Then suddenly there was a sound
Of shuffling underneath the ground,
The while a moaning seemed to be
Upon the deep and laboring sea,
And all the air grew dark as night,
And shivered as a man with fright;
And then I marked the distant blaze
Of that far city, past the wall,
The light therein was over all,
As if it had a noonday rays;
But while I looked the sun again
Came back upon the world of men.

Within the water I could see

Strong swimmers striking toward the
shore,

And in the shallows many more
Were walking with their bodies free,
Then clustering on the sandy beach
I saw their signs and heard their speech,
As if they were as yet in doubt,
Of what they heard and saw about;
At last a man whose head was white,
To whom I marked they came in tears,
Calmed down their voices and their
fears,

As parents calm their children's fright,
Then climbed the steep and rocky hill,
Where stood the sceptered being till;
Approaching near, as to the great,
He asked some question that was brief,
Whose answer seemed to give relief,
And lead his eyes to seek the gate;
And when he found it, and the wall,
He gazed awhile upon it all,
Then hurried downward to the shore,
While his companions crowded near,
And listened speechless and in fear,
To what he said, nor needed more
But followed up the rocky hight,
From which the wonder was in sight.

I stood and watched them as they

went,
Some hurried gladly o'er the steep,
Some seemed to linger, and to weep,
But all their steps were hither bent;
But ere the distant gate was neared
I turned and crossed the narrow space,
And climbed the high and terraced
place,
And in their burial-ground appeared.

Upon this lately peopled hill
But few were they who lingered now,
And I could see them going still,
In many an eager group and pair.
Beyond the border of the field
A matron, with a lofty brow,
Before a monument was kneeled,
As if in sorrow, or at prayer;
But as I neared I saw she read
The record of the buried dead
In-written on this lofty stone,
And then not heeding me she said,
"They gave me grandure for my own,
But left me here to sleep alone."
And then I scanned the marble page,
And read her name, and saw her age,
And his whose wifely name she bore,
Imprinted there, with many a son,

Nor age, nor death, nor one thing more
The record said of any one;
And when I asked her why she wept
Still grievingly she made reply,
And said she knew not where they
 slept,
Or why her body had been left,
Of all of its own kind bereft.
I said, "Perchance they did not die,
But in the twinkling of an eye
The final change to them had come."
To this she stood a moment dumb
And then she said, "If that were so
Then they would seek me here I know."
"Perhaps on foreign land or sea
They perished and are far from thee;
Come, let us journey toward the gate,
I doubt not we shall learn their fate."

A moment still she seemed to grieve,
Them glancing at the monument,
As if to take a final leave,
She turned away and with me went.
In silence for a while we walked,
She scarcely looking toward the wall,
As if her thoughts were centered all,
On those of whom she briefly talked;
By this I learned that ere she died

The sons, of whom she mostly thought,
To manhood's full estate were brought,
All worthy of a mother's pride.

As we approached a public park,
Within the village, where were trees,
And walks, and bowers, and seats of
ease,

The matron said she could but mark
On every hand was sign of change,
And this was wholly new and strange.
The while we looked I saw a man
Approaching from the farther side,
And while she look she spoke and ran,
All open-armed and open-eyed,
And meeting him, their joy or grief
Seemed tongueless to its own relief.

Not wishing to intrude on these
I wandered out among the trees,
But paused beside a bower at last,
Because I heard within a voice
That caught my ear, and held me fast,
As one who listens without choice;
Then glancing through my eyes beheld
Two lovers, by a shaded seat,
She sitting, he upon his feet,
As if some passion fiercely swelled;

And as I looked she spoke and said,
"If you in life had told me this—
Nay only half—then happiness
Were mine unto my dying bed."

"Thou wert of state; it might not be;
But that is past, and now we know;
And where thou goest I must go,
Defying all to follow thee."

"But thou forgettest, lover true,
We are no longer in the flesh;
A threat is idle; life is fresh;
But spirits we; what would'st thou do?"
'What would'st I do? behold this knife;
A spirit still is more than air;
It is a presence bearing life,
To be a devil if it dare."

"Thou frightest me; be calm, be still;
Come let us hope, and forward fare;
The day is deep with mystery."
Then arm in arm they walked away,
She pleading as a woman may,
He yielding as a lover will.

And as I looked a being fair
Approached this solitary pair,
And paused and said, "Why linger thou?
'Thy kinsmen are already past;
Make haste and go; thou art the last.'

To this the lover straightway said,
"We stand in doubt; we linger here
Because we have been long apart.
We are just risen from the dead."
At this the messenger came near,
And answered them, I know not what,
But something, doubtless, of their fate,
For when he ceased, with fears forgot,
They ran all gladly, hand in hand,
Out toward the brown uneven land,
That lay between them and the gate.

I looked but stood as in a trance,
I heard no sound, and saw no man,
I only saw their swift advance,
As through the billowy fields they ran;
But ere they passed the gated wall
I saw him pause and turn and fling,
To distant sands, some glittering thing,
Then as a bird to love-note call,
If on a passing spray it swing,
Will hasten forward to its mate
So now he hastened as with wing,
And hand in hand they passed the gate,
While darkness fell again o'er all.
The wind about me made its moan,
The stars looked down as if at night,
And it was solemn there alone

Until again came back the light;
But filled with memories of the day,
And knowing more was not for me,
All sadly now I turned away,
And dared not look again to see.

THE END.



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