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BY
HESTER A. BENEDICT.



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Dedication.

TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER.

LOVINGLY, AS YOU GUARDED MY INFANCY, TRULY AND TENDERLY AS, LATER, YOU SHELTERED ME IN THE STORM, TAKE AND CARE FOR THESE CHILDREN OF MY SOUL; NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE WORTHY YOUR DEAR AND HONORED NAMES, BUT THAT, THROUGH ALL PRAISE AND CENSURE OF THE WORLD, I MAY CATCH THE COMFORTING CADENCE OF YOUR APPROVAL, AND SO REMAIN CONTENT.

HESTER A. BENEDICT.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 1, 1872.





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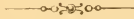
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VESTA.



I.

WITH the dews of the morning fresh and fair
The blossoming boughs are dripping,
And into the depths of each dainty cup
That the hands of the twilight folded up,
The lips of the bees are dipping :
Hither and thither they sway in the wind,
Beautiful blossoms of every hue,
Snowy, and crimson, and violet-blue —
Fair as the Orient isles ever knew,
Peeping from lichens shrunken and old,
With a grace that can never be sung or told,
While over their bosoms, brighter than gold,
The feet of the fairies are tripping.

Blossoms! they garland the maiden's hair
When her marriage-bells are ringing;
And they cover the young child's waxen breast
When its little white feet have gone to rest,
And its lips have ceased their singing!
Blossoms, fresh blossoms! from wood and vale
They are gathered in, and the gilded vase
By the couch of the dying gives them place;
And a smile steals over the thin, wan face,
While the sufferer dreams of the chiming streams
That mirror the gold of the morning's beams
Where God's own glory forever gleams,
And the flowers are ever springing.

O, beautiful blossoms, and fair, I ween,
To valley and wood are given!
But the rarest flower under the sun,
And the sweetest, too, is the little one
That was wafted to us from heaven.
And what, I pray, is the world to me?
And what to my Love the shadowy skies?
The light of our world is the soul that lies
Half hid in the depths of our darling's eyes.
And sweeter and dearer, as time glides on,
Is our wildwood flower, our bird of song —
Our Paradise-blossom that yester-dawn
Was wafted to us from heaven.

II.

COME to my arms, my baby!

My bonnie beautiful girl!

My little white lamb with the restless feet,

My blossom of blossoms dainty and sweet,

My lily, my rose, my pearl!

Come to my arms, my baby!

The dews are over the grass,

That nods to the buttercups, gold as your hair,

And the hands of the shadows, purple and bare,

Are parted to let you pass.

Whither away, my baby!

Kissing your wee white hand,

And tossing it back, like a flake of snow,

Toward the roses clustering low

By the terrace where I stand?

Whither away, my baby?

After the bumble-bee,

When the little brown bird that taught you to sing

Is asleep with her bright head under her wing,

High in the sycamore-tree?

Oh, your white feet over the grasses,

My darling, are fleet as the fawn's;

And your face is fairer than days in June,
And your song is sweeter than any tune
Of robins in roseate dawns.

Come to my arms, my baby!
My bonnie beautiful girl!
For my lips are heavy with kisses sweet
For your dimpled face and your dimpled feet,
My lily, my rose, my pearl!

Ah, I have you, I have you, darling!
Sweet shall your slumber be,
The long bright night, while the starbeams hold
Their hands with mine in your locks of gold,
And shadows are over the sea.

Soft and sweet while the night goes by —
And what is the night to us?
And what if the moon go under a cloud,
And what if the wind cry long and loud,
If I have, and hold you thus?

This is your world, my baby!
And what is the world to me,
But the pretty wee lamb that is mine, my sweet,
From the curly crown to the cunning feet?
What else is the world to me?

There! hide your face, my baby,
Down in the snow of my breast;

For the gates of heaven may be ajar,
And the light of your beautiful eyes, my star,
 Might trouble an angel's rest.

Hark to the sea! he singeth
 A lullaby soft and low;
And the moon it shines through the jasmine vines,
And shivers with joy as it creeps and climbs,
 My sweet, to your lids of snow.

Sleep, little darling, sleep!
 Sleep, for the starbeams are falling;
 Sleep, for the bluebird is calling
Her roving mate back to her nest.
 Calm is the blue sky above thee,
 Proud are the young hearts that love thee;
 Ever so brightly,
 Ever so lightly,
Sleep, love, and sleeping find rest.

Dream, little darling, dream!
 Peaceful and light is thy slumber;
 Never a care can encumber
Thy pure little spirit so blest.
 Smile where sweet silence reposes,
 Walk 'mid the lilies and roses;
 Ever so brightly,
 Ever so lightly,
Dream, love, and dreaming find rest.

III.

BUTTERCUPS and daisies,
 Buttercups and daisies !
 Shining in the meadow where the strawberries grow !
 Lifting sunny faces,
 From their happy places,
 Giving to us greeting as we gayly go.
 By the shining river,
 With its waves a-quiver,
 You and I, my Daisy ! sweetest that I know !
 And its O ho and heigh-ho !
 Bobolink and I where the strawberries grow !
 And its O ho, heigh-ho !
 Down among the buttercups, singing as we go.

 Butterflies and humming-birds,
 Butterflies and humming-birds,
 Sipping all the honey from the blossoms sweet.
 All the breezes laden
 In the land of Aiden
 Shaking out their web of sweets at my darling's feet ;
 And to all their ringing,
 And to all their singing,
 Little dainty Daisy, how our pulses beat !
 And its O ho, heigh-ho !
 Bobolink and I where the strawberries grow !
 And its O ho and heigh-ho !
 Down among the buttercups, singing as we go.

IV.

WHAT is it that mars the morning?

What is it that freights the air
With a whisper as if of warning,
With a whisper as if of prayer?

O, what so troubles the river

That flows through my heart and my brain?
And why do my pale lips shiver
As if they were stricken of pain?

What have they done with their voices gay —

The bells that are chiming seven?
Is anything wrong on the earth, I pray,
Or anything wrong in heaven?

I cover my face, and I hush my breath,

As a white-faced nun at prayer,
For a voice that talks to my soul of death,
Throbs through the sorrowful air.

But why do you come to me, O friend!

To me, with affrighted looks?
My blossom is bloomful as those that bend
To the wind in the woodland nooks.

“Fever?” Nay! ’t is the rosy flush
Of a slumber happy and long,
Or maybe a memory, brought from the hush
Of dreamland to sweeten her song.

“Dying?” *My* child? Why, man, do you mean
I shall credit your speech for a minute?
Are you stricken with madness? or fresh from a dream
With the plague of delirium in it?

“*Dying?*” *My* child? that last evening was queen—
Crowned queen of the blossoming May?
Whose feet were the lightest of feet on the green,—
But an hour my own, do you say?

An hour? just one? and never again
To rock her to sleep on my bosom?
To cover her hair with my kisses, as rain
Covers all the fair leaves of a blossom?

Hush! speak not! or say you deceive me!
Is Azrael stronger than I?
Can the Father that loves me bereave me?
Unheeding the mother’s wild cry?

Come to my bosom! come to my bosom!
Mother will save you, little white blossom!
Mother will hold you so close to her heart,
That the demon of death cannot tear us apart:

Mother's hot breath on your little cold face
 Will bring back the rose to its blossoming place:
 And mother's strong, worshipful love will yet save
 Her darling's bright head from the damps of the grave.

There, sweet! nestle closer! Under their breath
 They are whispering *I cannot save you from death,*
 And they think *I will leave you alone in the strife,*
 To drift like a feather-flake out of my life.

Cling to me, cling to me —
 Death shall not have you!
 Cling to me, cling to me —
 Mother will save you!

Mother will hide you her life's long day,
 Where never a sorrow may find its way;
 She will cry to the demon whose biting breath
 Brings to the blossoms decay and death;
 Call to him, cry to him, hearing his feet
 In the vines that shelter our nest, my sweet!
 Avaunt! avaunt! from my bower so gay,
 Fiend of the furies, away, away!
 Back to your cavern in chaos wild,
 And leave me the life of my innocent child;
 For I swear to you, swear by the pulse in my heart,
 Not all the death-demons shall tear us apart!
 By seraphim holy, by cherubim sweet,
 In the heavens above, do my lips repeat:

That within and without she is mine — the whole
Life of my life and soul of my soul!
And I swear to you, swear by the pulse in my heart,
Not all the death-demons shall tear us apart!

V.

AH, the clouds they close about me,
Black with thunder and with storm!
All within, and all without me,
Wails the little broken form
Lying whitely on my bosom,
Snow on snow the warm spring day,
Calm and still, my life's one blossom
Fading from my sight away.

Does she hear the shadows shiver
In the valley cold and low?
Or the rushing of the river
Where her baby feet must go?
Does she know I bend above her
With a hunted eagle's cry?
God of heaven! if I love her,
Let her answer, ere she die!

Let the hand in mine that lieth,
E'er so lightly press my palm;

Let her lip on mine that crieth,
Drop its kisses' tender balm.
Only once! I will not murmur,
If I may but hear again
One low word, like song of summer
Through the beating of the rain!

Hearken to me, O my darling!
Lift but once from off your eyes
The two fringed lids that cover
All I know of Paradise.
Give me sign, or give me token,
Death will never hide from you
How I wail the chalice broken —
How my heart is broken too.

Christ! The shadows gray are creeping
Round the lips that glowed as wine,
And I hear nor bound nor beating,
In the heart I hold to mine.
O my soul! in vain thy crying!
Vain thy love and vain thy prayer,
For the dews of death are lying
In my darling's golden hair.

Touch her not! my pale rose-blossom
Stricken of untimely blight!

Lip to lip and breast to bosom,
 I will hold her through the night.
 I will hold her till my pulses
 Throbbing closely thrill her own,
 Underneath the cloud that crushes,
 Making never cry or moan.

VI.

WAKE, little darling one, out of your sleep!
 It is I, your mother, that call to you,
 Leaning, with never a tear to weep,
 Over your violets wet with dew.
 Come! for the heaven is fair with stars,
 The winds are sweet in the churchyard grass,
 And the bars between us, the sanded bars,
 Will lean and lighten to let you pass.

O! they hid you down here in the dark to-day,
 And said you would sleep till the morning light —
 When the gold of your tresses was never away
 From mamma's caresses a single night.
 I knew you would stir in your gossamer gown,
 And reach your fingers to find my face,
 To feel where the fringe of my hair swept down,
 Crying out, if you missed me out of my place.

And so, when the servants were fast asleep,
 And the lights were dim in the cottage hall,

When my love had forgotten to watch and weep,
And none could follow my footstep's fall,
I crept like a ghost through the garden gate,
And over the hills like a fawn I flew :
But the moon is low, and the hour is late,
And the arms are empty that reach for you.

Wake, O my Beautiful! What do you there —
In the heart of a mystery hidden from me —
With your shadowy eyes as dreamful and rare
As *our* Italy's skies, or the sheen of her sea?
What do you there, when the bosom is bare
That aches for the touch of your delicate head?
And how can your sleep be so calm and so sweet,
When I am alone with the dews and the dead?

Did you call me, darling? I thought I heard
Your sweet voice throb through the day-dawn air,
And it seemed, for a moment, my white robe stirred
To the old-time touch of your fingers fair.
Come! what can you find in the underground calms
That cling to your bosom, and cover your face,
And what in the sweetness of echoless psalms,
Stronger to hold than your mother's embrace?

Forgive me! Leaving your dreams behind,
You would leap with a low laugh out of the sod,

If you saw me now — but your eyes are blind
 To the reach of my hand, as the eyes of God!
 But your couch, my darling, is long and wide,
 The sands of your pillow are soft for two ;
 And its broken story my life shall hide
 Under the starlight, under the dew.

VII.

THE wind sweeps southward freighted with tears
 From the sad, sweet face of the sea ;
 The night it is drear, and the night it is cold,
 And ah, ah me!
 For the shiver of moans in the lonesome wold,
 For the sorrow of sighs where the frosts are piled
 Over the face of the desolate wild ;
 And ah, ah me!
 That the black clouds floating under the moon,
 To the terrible time of the tempest's tune,
 Lean to my wildwood haunts ; for lo,
 All that I worship'd is under the snow !

Into my life as I sit to-night,
 Face to face with my sorrowful soul —
 Into my life, ah me, ah me !
 The beak of a dolorous darkness dips,
 And the rose-red vanishes out of my lips ;
 And white with affright
 I lean to the night,

As the downs lean cold to the sea —
As the cold downs lean to the sea!
And the throb of voices I deemed were dead,
Cries as the wind cries over my head,
And the heart in my bosom, it lies like lead,
As the dead lie deep in the sea.

My heart! my heart!
Drowned in the blood of a murdered hope,
And bound and wound and sepulchred up
In a shroud and a tomb of silences sweet,
As the dead are folded from head to feet —
The drowned low down in the sea,
That lie so still in the sea,
The sobbing, sorrowful sea!

What is the flowing that mocks my pain?
Why are the ghosts of my dead astir,
Filling my heart and filling my brain
With fire of longing for days that were?
Shall I go back to the time of blossom?
The fair green season of ruinless days,
Or ever the pulse was a-wail in my bosom,
For grievous things in my life's dull ways?
Can I forget that my lips have tasted
The lees of death in the wine of love?
Can I forget that my cries were wasted,
As drowning cries where the mute ships move?
Can I remember the old-time beating
Of hearts as light as the pulse of a rose?

And my faded lips, can they smile repeating
The song that never an angel knows?

Never again, ah, never again!

And the night it is drear and the night it is cold,
And out of the heart of the desolate wold,
The moans come creeping over my breast —
Over my breast that will never find rest —

And never nrepenthe of pain

Till, still and cold as the dead in the sea,
It lieth as calm as the dead may be.

Ah me! alone with my sorrowful soul,

I cross my hands, and I lean my face

Where rivers of rain from the black clouds roll,

And the night is wild in her wildest place.

O for the heart and the tireless feet

And the strong swift wing of the hurricane fleet!

O for the passionless soul of the storm,

With never a care for a human form —

Never to wail for the lost that lies

With lids close shut over violet eyes,

And cold white forehead turned to the sea,

Forever and ever away from me.

What is the flowing that mocks my pain?

Why are the ghosts of my dead astir,

Filling my heart and filling my brain

With fire of longing for days that were?

There will never be singing of birds any more,

Like the singing that held me in thrall —
That bonded me, body and soul, where the winds,
Floating up from the sea, fluttered soft through the
pines,

And light in my hair that was loosened and bare,
Save for anemones clustering there —

And sweet in each dainty diaphanous fold,
That clung, as a bee to the jessamine's gold,

Close to my bosom, sung to the tune

And the time of the sea, the long afternoon,
Blending their words with the chime of the birds,

That I never shall hear any more, any more,

Though I listen and wait at the opening gate

Of the day and the night-time early and late ;

Though I cross my forehead and fold my palms

At the holiest shrine of the midnight calms ;

Though I waken from slumber, my lips astir

With a pulse of a cry for the days that were —

Will they hearken or answer me? never again,

Though years shall blossom and years shall wane !

Yet I say to my soul, be glad, be glad,

For through the dark of all desolate things

Thy cry has pierced unto Him who sees

The upward reach of thy broken wings :

And still, alone with my sorrowful soul,

I cross my hands, and I lean my face

Where rivers of rain from the black clouds roll,

And the night is wild in her wildest place.

And I cry, ah me! for the sweet, sweet eyes,
 Where the greatening gloom of a shadow lies,
 For the cold white forehead turned to the sea,
 Forever and ever away from me!

VIII.

BEAUTIFUL waves! beautiful waves!
 Dancing ashore with such happy tread,
 What is the song that you sing to me,
 With voices merry as merry can be?
 Do you sing of the living or sing of the dead?
 Beautiful waves! beautiful waves!
 Tripping along with a fairy's tread,
 To the gray old rock where my tired head,
 Bared to the cool wind, lies like lead.
 Harken, and answer me! Where have you been
 All the days and nights of your journeying?
 What have ye seen in the lands afar,
 Under the gleaming of sun and star?
 Ye come, ye come, with laughter and dance,
 Beautiful waves! beautiful waves!
 And find me like one in an agony-trance,
 Waiting and watching with eagerest glance
 For the winds or the waters to bear to me,
 From the land that lieth across the sea,
 The volume lost from my life's romance.
 I am changed! I am changed! Can ye love me still?
 May I catch, if I listen, the old-time trill,

In the comforting voices, low and sweet,
That ripple the waters down at my feet ?

Hark! Surely a voice that is human,
A voice of man or of woman,
A voice full of pleading calls to me.
The sea-gull is crying,
The thick clouds are lying
Blackly and wrathfully close to the sea ;
And over these, more than these,
Sharp through the swelling breeze,
Cometh the voice of a warning to me !

I know, for the dear winds are teaching,
What blessed lips, white with beseeching,
From the darkness and danger would woo me :
Yet closer and closer I cling, I cling,
To my time-worn rock ! and I sing, I sing
To the wayward waves that have fretful grown,
Calling them ever, forever my own !
To the waves whose merriment dies in a moan,
As they leap to the breast of my old gray stone ;
And throbbingly, sobbingly, mournfully sweet,
Breaks the voice of their melody down at my feet.

I am hidden ! I am hidden !
Ye call to me in vain,
And ye seek me on the rocky shore,
And seek me in the glen !

But, ha! ha! ye cannot find me!
I am wild as wild can be;
Close to the heart of the beautiful storm,
To the soul of the beautiful sea.

IX.

I AM waiting in the darkness,
In the cooling, tender rain,
For a little clinging soft caress,
And I shall not wait in vain.
For my darling loved the shoreland,
Loved the leaping of the waters,
Loved the shouting of the billows,
More than Music's merry daughters;
And her soul was wild with greeting,
For the tempest and the thunder,
For the black cloud up in heaven,
And the lightning leaping under.

She will come, my little maiden,
From the happy land of Aiden,
With her golden-gleaming tresses,
With the olden tenderesses,
And with clinging arms about me,
Say she cannot sing without me!
That the eternal day is lonely!
That she waits and watches only;

For my coming at the portal
Of the land we call immortal.

Be still, O my soul! there's a voice on the air,
And it is not of wailing, it is not of prayer :
Lovingly, soothingly, over the deep,
It comes like a whisper I've heard in my sleep ;
And, through the dark night, I am outlining faintly
A cheek and a snowy hand dimpled and saintly.

Nearer, come nearer, beautiful one!
The storm is about me, yet I am alone!
Your little bright head, with its clustering tresses,
No impress will take of my own earthlinesses,
If, just for a moment, pure Paradise blossom,
You lay it close down to my death-wounded bosom.
If just for a moment, your pretty, white fingers,
Like snow-flakes, in silence drop over my hair,
The brown hair I love so! for O there yet lingers
Amid it the breath of your last evening prayer.

O the joy of that evening! How redly the sun had
set

Back of the green woods we loved from afar!
How you loop'd back my curls with a vine and a
violet,

Laughing aloud when I called you my star!

O away to your dreaming, I kissed and caress'd you,
 Gliding about with a mute mother-tread,
 And singing low songs till you slept, and I blessed you,
 Unheeding the thunderbolt over my head!

Stoop and touch me, holy angel!
 I am but a broken reed!
 All my boasted strength has failed me,
 In my hour of sorest need.
 Can you float a little nearer?
 Can you soothe me, if you will?
 Though you are a crowned immortal,
Am I not your mother still?
 I am hungry for your kisses!
 I am fainting for your breath!
 I am clinging to a precipice,
 And underneath is death!
 Stoop and touch me, holy angel!
 Let me reach your wondrous locks,
 For my wail is on the waters,
 And my blood upon the rocks!

She heedeth the calling, my maiden divine!
 There are lights on the incoming billow;
 And goldenest tresses are mingled with mine,
 O'er the gray of my adamant pillow.
 Cling closer, cling closer, O white arms restored to me!
 Smile on me, eyes never shadowed with weeping!

O lips ! warble forth the rare song ye pour'd to me
Ere mine kissed ye low to your last quiet sleeping !

Be glad, O my soul ! there's a voice on the air,
And it is not of wailing, it is not of prayer :
'Tis the voice that enthralled me in days full of fleet-
ness,
That thrilled me and filled me with heaven's own
sweetness,
When the life I so cling to was music's completeness.

O, it floats upon the water,
And it thrills the golden sheaves ;
It rouses to a raptured dance
The sunny summer leaves ;
It steals along the shoreland,
Where the water-cresses quiver,
And they sweep from sobbing into song
With a dear delicious shiver.
O daisies in the dainty dell !
O mosses 'mid the mountains !
O songs, that sweeten as ye swell
From faintly-flowing fountains !
O Zephyr, pausing in your flight
To far-off wildernesses ;
And willows tossing to the night
Your torn and tangled tresses,

Ye have new life, because the wing
 Of an angel passed above ye !
 The wing of a little child that used
 In the old, old days to love ye !

Cling closer, cling closer, O Paradise Beauty !
 Shine through me, eyes never shadowed with weep-
 ing !
 O lips ! say I trod well the wine-press of duty ;
 And then kiss my lids to their last happy sleeping.

X.

O HAPPY mothers in all the land,
 Wakened from slumber this Christmas morn,
 By the dancing of feet that are nimble and fleet,
 By the clinging of kisses, caressing and sweet ;
 Or by the loud " Mamma, awake, and see
 What Santa Claus brought in the night to me !"
 Do you dream that any one sits forlorn
 In the greatening glow of Christmas morn ?

O happiest mothers in all the land !
 My heart sends greeting across the sea,
 Blending its rhymes with the Christmas chimes
 That rouse up the phantoms of happier times ;
 And seeming to see you, just now, as you stand
 With dimpled white fingers shut close in your hand :

Glad in your gladness, wherever ye be,
I send to you greeting! — But who greets *me*?

Who calls *me* “Mamma”? Who leaps with a laugh
To the warmth of *my* breast with the Christmas dawn?
What rose-lips, ashine, are clinging to mine,
Bringing me dreams of a day divine?
What pretty white feet, with patter as sweet [meet,
As a brooklet’s where mountain and meadow-land
Are light on *my* hearth, as snows on the lawn,
In the crimson glow of the Christmas dawn?

Oh! white grows my face, like the face of the dead,
Waiting for kisses it claimed of old;
And my lips wail aloud of a coffin and shroud,
As I watch from my window the hurrying crowd,
And hear the glad shouting of girls and of boys
Down on the street with their gay Christmas toys;
For the eyes of *my* idol are calm and cold,
And shadows are locked in her locks of gold.

I listen and wait, but the chamber is still
That echoed with laughter a year ago;
There’s a dear little head cannot rise from its bed;
There are sweet lips closed, with their prayers all said;
There are delicate feet deep-dimpled and sweet,
Held closely where slumber and solitude meet,
And the heart of *my* darling no greeting can know
Under the sheen of the pitiless snow.

Yet somebody calls me "Mamma" still!
A sweet little spirit let loose from the clay;
And I think in her dream by the Paradise stream,
Where the amethyst and the sapphire gleam,
That she hears my voice — that she knows my call;
And that some time over the jasper wall
She will lean, and lift me from death and decay
To the calm of a happier Christmas day.

So, not without hope is my waiting heart,
And not without comfort! God understands
Why I hear no more, at my chamber-door,
A child's low laugh as in days of yore,
Why my arms are empty that used to hold
A wee lamb close in their sheltering fold,
And wherefore the grave by the soft sea sands;
Enough that the Infinite understands.

XI.

I RISE from the arms of the lonesome night,
And lean from the terrace above the bay,
To watch on the mountain's purple height
Where the pines are nodding, the dawn of day.
Sweet from the heart of the forest aisles
Ripples the song of the early thrush,
And nothing has wakened, and nobody smiles,
Only we two in the morning hush.

Over my bosom and into my hair

The dew falls sweet from the fluttering leaves,
And down at my feet, where the grasses are,

The wind in a vanishing passion grieves;
Grieves for the face of the fair North Star,

Fading away from the soft gray sky;
But the wind — it is fickle as lovers are,
And wails not long for the loves that die.

Hark! where the billows are breaking low

On the shoreland edges, he woos again,
And the water-cresses are waking slow

To the might of a loving that bringeth pain.
And still, as we listen, — the thrush and I, —

The downs grow fair, and the morning glow
Greatens all over the gladdening sky,
That laughs as my lips laughed long ago.

Ah me! was ever a life too fair

For the beating rain and the blinding snow?
For the poisoned arrows sharp and bare,

And the high sea's angriest overflow?
Was ever a hope too sweet to die,

Or ever a heart too strong to break?
Ah me! ah me! that the noon is nigh —
And nobody answers for love's sweet sake.

XII.

BUT I sit and think of a morning fair,
Whose dawn dies not from the hill-tops green,
Of valleys where ever the sunbeams are,
And rivers that ripple bright lengths between.
And I know, I know — though there comes no sign
Save in my dreams from that far-off sphere ;
And never a voice with a spell divine
And sweetest assures for my human ear, —
That my darling, my darling, my bonnie wee girl,
Whom the angels bore from my love and me,
Will shine on my bosom the perfectest pearl
That happiest angels ever may see.
Brighter than buds by the Life-river growing,
Sweeter than winds o'er the palm-branches blowing,
Rosy-red-lipped, and ringlets a-flowing :
Mother of Christ ! could I think of *thy* Son,
In the dawn of that day, with my own little one
Close in the arms that had missed her so long ?
Close to the heart that was broken as thine,
When it called, and the First-Born replied not ?
Could I reach the key-note of the rapturous song
That only the ransomed may climb to, if first
My lips had not scattered their shower of sweets,
Saved surely for her, the nestling I nursed,
Ere my beautiful hopes were broken, as fleets
Upon shipwrecking rocks in a tempest ?

Could I joy for aught else, with her bright head astir
On my breast, where the thorns and the thunderbolts
were ?

O fair virgin Mother! O Mother divine!
If I hear, see, and know in that morning
Whose dawn lights the valley before me,
Whose dawn lights the Heaven that is o'er me,
No voice like the voice of my child,
No face like the face of my child,
No love like the love of my child.

Remember, sweet Mother of Christ! who hast known
In thy heart all the thrice bitter woes of my own;
Remember the silence, the sorrow, the tears,
And thy travail of soul all the wearisome years
Till the time of re-union, and chide not
The might of the spell which hath bound me.

XIII.

HOLY Mother! blessed Virgin!
Hear me while I cry to thee,
For the day I loved is dying,
And the night creeps o'er the sea.

Soft and low the winds are sighing
In the sandy, sheltered cove,
And my heart, my heart is crying
As a wounded mother-dove —

Crying low, and calling softly
For a dream that comes no more,
Never more upon the earthland,
On the sea, or on the shore.
Soft and low the winds are sighing,
Sighing where the blooms are hid,
And my heart, my heart is crying,
And a something makes replying,
Like the sobbing and the sounding
Clay upon a coffin lid:
Like the moan of troubled waters
Over Love's unhappy daughters,
Like the break and like the bounding
Of a billow on the beach,—
On the craggy coast up-looming,
That the *living* never reach.

Soft and low the winds are sighing,
Holy Mother, hear my prayer!
For the whip poor will is crying,
And the heavy dews are lying
In the meshes of my hair.
All around me and about me,
All above and underneath —
All within and all without me
Leans to darkness and to death.
Holy Mother! blessed Virgin!
Heed my cry and hear my prayer,

For the night is on my bosom
With a weight I cannot bear.

Tell me, tell me, holy Mother,
Ere my hope hath perished quite,
When will lift the heavy shadows?
When will break the morning light?
When from off thy gentle bosom
Wilt thou give again to me,
Fairer than of yore, the Blossom
That the angels bore from me?
For my soul, it faints in bondage,
And its wings are crimsoned o'er —
All their snowy plumage crimsoned
With a murdered passion's gore.

Ah! the sweet, blind winds, they shiver
Where the water-lily grows,
And mine eyelids droop and quiver
Whiter than the Alpine snows.
All the pines upon the mountains
Toss their moanings to the night,
And the fays by starlit fountains
Shrink and tremble with affright:
Yet, O yet, my troubled spirit
Hears the stir of holy strings,
And a peace that saints inherit
Settles softly on her wings.

Still, where sea-birds' nests are hidden,
All the winds are low and sweet;
Still the happy waves, unhidden,
Lave the gray rocks' naked feet.
And I hear, above the sobbing
Of the pines that cannot rest,
Something sweet thro' moonlight throbbing
To the beating of my breast;
Something sweet and something nameless,
That the heart alone may know,
Dropping, balmfully and blameless,
To the deeps of human woe.

XIV.

BLESSED Mother! thou hast hearkened
To my bosom's bitter cry;
Thou hast rent the clouds that darkened
All the azure of my sky.
I shall sleep — the starlight falling
Where my downless pillow lies;
I shall wake to cheeriest calling
Where the morning never dies;
I shall hear, above the river's
Happy ebb and happy flow,
All the voices' tender quivers
That I clung to long ago.

So I trim my breast with roses,
White, and luminous, and rare,
And an amaranth bud uncloses
All its sweetness in my hair.
So my heart its life is lifting
To the hope that shines above,
Strong from out the shadows drifting
O'er the Heaven of its love.
Yet I hear, above the sobbing
Of the pines that cannot rest,
Only something nameless throbbing
To the beating of my breast.





MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.





MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



INVOCATION.

BREAK, O sunshine, over my face,
Through the mist of this mystical time,
Till I catch your sparkle and strength and grace
And weave them into my rhyme ;
For, under the passionate pulse of my feet,
The rapturous roses grow,
And life is sweeter than all things sweet
That ever the seraphim know ;
For how can they guess what Paradise means,
Who never its calm heights gained
Through clash of cruelest battle-scenes,
Where the chalice of death was drained ?

Break, O sunshine, where smiles belong !
And beat, O beautiful sea,

The happiest time of a happier song
Than ever of old to me!
And leave your moaning, as I leave mine,
In the dark of desolate years;
Leaping with laughter to life divine,
Forgetful of treasons and tears!
Sing, O billows! and while I dream
In the new-born, summery time,
Let me weave your grandeur and grace and gleam
With the threads of a rollicking rhyme.

Merrily pipe your merriest notes,
O bonnie bright birds, to me,
Till I catch the tenderest tune that floats
Between the sun and the sea.
Lean from your far-away fathomless place,
O luminous, limitless skies,
Till I catch the grace of my little one's face,
And the glow of her glorious eyes;
So shall my soul soar, singing in glee,
Where never a bird may climb,
And something sweeter than sun or sea
Shall shine through my rapturous rhyme.





THE AUTUMN DAYS.

THE autumn days have come again,
With sheen and song and story ;
Their breath is on the gathered grain,
And on the hills their glory.

Their bright hues cover all our bowers ;
Their winds are filled with sweetness,
And freighted are their dreamful hours
With fragrance and with fleetness.

Our weary feet are out again,
Where tangled ways are brightest,
Where light leaves thrill through happy pain,
To tenderest touch and lightest.

But from them all, some perfect good
Seems lost, with song and sweetness ;
And something lifted from the wood
That crowned it with completeness.

Where are the hands we clasped last year,
On just such days as this is?
The rosy lips that clung to ours
In love's divinest kisses?

Where are the feet that gayly trod
These golden ways and quiet?
The brown eyes, greatening as they watched
The leaves in harmless riot?

Where are the hearts whose merriment,
Through laugh and song and chatter,
Floated to all this wilderment
Like leaves the wild winds scatter?

We glide adown the balmful days
Like wrecks upon a river,
With fainting hearts and faded eyes,
And hands that ache and shiver,

To touch again the golden sheen
Of locks that fluttered from us,
When the thunder-roll was in our ear,
And the lightning-flash upon us!

And still the bright days come and go,
And fair nights fill our dreaming
With many a white robe's saintly flow,
And many a fond eye's gleaming.

But never through the autumn days
Will the dear ones walk beside us,
For death's dark vale with mystic ways,
And a shadowy stream divide us.

And thro' the brightly-broidered hours
That pass with song and story,
We sit and dream of fadeless flowers
In far-off fields of glory.

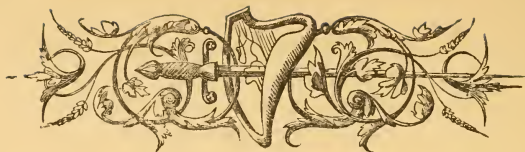
And we catch the rhythmic flow of tunes
That chime with Love's own calling,
When into happiest of swoons
The dainty days are falling.

O, in the land that leaneth down
To the eternal river,
Our lives will wear their olden crown
Forever and forever!

And days will come, and days will go,
And calmful dreams will reach us,
For the lips we vainly cry for now,
God's tenderest love will teach us.

5*





AFLOAT.

CROWNED as you crowned me, my darling, of
old,

In the clasp of the breezes that love me,
I'm alone and afloat in my little gay boat,
With our own rocky arches above me.
Alone and afloat where the chattering waves
Are telling their tender romances,
And charming the pain of my heart and my brain,
To fetters of happiest fancies.

My little boat nods in a dream, like a lily
Rock'd on the breast of a billow,
And down at my feet there is laughter asleep,
With a little white wave for a pillow.
Hark! how it leaps at the touch of my oar!
How it flutters away like a feather,
To hide in the rocks that the hurricane shocks
Have hollowed and parted forever.

And I dream — O, I dream of an hour enthroned
In the heart of a day you remember,
When two were afloat in my pretty white boat,
And the breezes that rocked them were tender —
As tender and light as the touch of your hand,
When you twined the sea-weed with my tresses,
And brought for my bosom a leaf and a blossom
Away from the water's caresses.

Ah! how in the tumult of town can you tarry
When I am out here on the billow,
Alone and afloat in my little gay boat,
Where the fluttering fringes of willow
Lean from the clasp of a purple-black shadow
High amid rocks that I cling to,
With heart keeping time to a fanciful rhyme,
And only a sea-gull to sing to?

How can you linger, if still you remember
The thrice-blesséd charm of our dreaming?
How the waves at our feet chanted arias sweet,
And rivalled the skies in their gleaming!
O, friend! if the old time is sweet to you yet,
As rain to the famishing heather,
Haste away to the rocks that the hurricane shocks
Have hollowed and parted forever!

And I — I will give to you glimpses of sea,
With glory on every billow,

Where my soul is afloat in a memory-boat,
With a beautiful faith for a pillow.
I will tell you how tender the breezes all are
That rock me from morn until even ;
How they sing in my dreams till I see the bright
gleams
That wrap the green highlands of Heaven.

Come, friend ! for the sunset is over the deep ;
The bee to the blossom is humming ;
And still at my feet there is laughter asleep,
That will leap into life at your coming.
So haste, if the old time is sweet to you yet,
As rain to the famishing heather,
Haste away to the rocks that the hurricane shocks
Have hollowed and parted forever !





FOREVER.

FOREVER and ever! My lips may be mute,
And song be safe-sheltered with me,
Yet gushing unheard from my life's broken lute
Will the wail of my lost gladness be.
I shall see but thy form in the worshipful throng,
Thy face in the stars' gentle beams;
And, shut from thee, waking, my whole life long,
I will fly to thee bird-like in dreams.

In dreams! Pale phantoms that mock us by day
Are the vanishing visions of night;
But I smile as they waft me away, away,
Over billows of blackness and blight,
To the mystical music of moonlighted bowers,
Where angels their holy watch keep;
And my heart sings a low in its loneliest hours:
"Thou art mine, my beloved, in sleep!"

Forever and ever! When standing alone
With the soft sunny waves at your feet,

You will wander in fancy afar to your own,
And her name you will fondly repeat.
I ask for no token — I seek for no sign —
I bind thee with never a vow ;
For I know that thy spirit will answer to mine
In the far-away future — as now.

A smile sad and tender, a low wailing song —
A sigh that is freighted with tears —
A moan that will murmur of deathfulest wrong,
Will find you from out the lost years,
And eyes full of pleading will seek for the light
Half hid in the deeps of thine own,
Until thou shalt know that at noonday or night
Thou canst not be wholly alone.

Forever and ever! Soul leapeth to soul,
Defying all dooms that divide
Poor palms and pale faces! as wild waters roll
'Twixt daisies the dew-fall denied.
So I ask for no token — I seek for no sign —
I bind thee with never a vow ;
For I know that thy spirit will answer to mine
Forever and ever — as now.





THE ISLE OF SONG.

I KNOW an island, serenely bright,
Unswept by tempest, and storm, and strife,
That lieth, deluged with floods of light,
Somewhere in the sea of our restless life ;
And oft, when the billows are dark and high,
The oar drops down from my nerveless hand,
And I watch for a gleam of the golden sky
And the shining shore of that holy land.

'Tis the Isle of Song ! From its temples grand,
Sweet voices come in the night's still hours,
And I know for aye with that minstrel band
Seraphim walk in the starlit bowers ;
I know they are there with their radiant brows,
Whose hearts' deep breathings of hope and trust
Have lightened the weight of the harsh world's blows,
And lifted my spirit from gloom and dust.

Oh, ebb and flow of the surging tide!

Oh, clouds that are black with the coming storm!

Oh, breath of the billows wild and wide!

Are ye bearing thither my shrinking form?

The kind winds waft me many a strain

From its blossoming valleys fresh and fair;

But, above them, I hear the clank of the chain

That bindeth my soul to the sea of care!

Oh, beautiful isle! sweet island afar!

Oh, murmuring fountains of rosiest wine!

Oh, eyes, shining out as a luminous star

On my frail bark shut from the light divine!

I can hear, I can hear, as the night grows deep,

A sound of song from the passionless pines;

But phantoms of gloom from the echoes creep,

And dangerous darknesses vex the winds.

Ah, few are the spirits whose own true home

Is the calm, pure isle where the soft skies glow,

And few are the feet that have right to roam

Where the beautiful rivers of nectar flow.

But I know, I know of a fairer isle,

Beyond the river whose name is Death,

Where the sad, sad eyes shall forever smile,

And song will hallow each floating breath.

To that blossoming Isle my bark glides on

Forever away o'er the stormful sea;

Onward through darkness that knows no dawn,
 To the harbor fair as the fair may be.
 And oft, when the billows are wild and high,
 And the oar is broken under my hand,
 My sad eyes catch a gleam of the sky
 That leaneth low to the Infinite Land!

And I hear — or seem to hear — as I list,
 Of saintliest raiment a summery stir;
 And light on my forehead are lips I kissed
 In the delicate dawning of dreams that were!
 So little I reckon of the broken oar —
 The strained oar — broken under my hand;
 Enough that I'm nearing the beautiful shore —
 The blossoming shore of the Infinite Land!

JALOUX.

IF I should lean across the jasper wall,
 With heaven's own lilies on my bosom now,
 And, white and radiant, let my kisses fall
 Through voiceful calms upon your earthly brow;
 If my low cries should reach you from the sky,
 With moans for touches of your kingly palm;
 Say! would you know how wholly true am I
 That kneel beside you now so still and calm?

Or if before you I should stand to-day,
Where seraphim are standing fair and sweet,
And, with my breath upon your eyelids, say :
“ The way was long and lonely for my feet
What time I walked without you ! ” would you read
The secret of my secret soul aright —
As *He* has read, who gladly giveth meed
Of tenderest love to lives of little light ?

I dare believe it ! To my wounded heart
I take this consolation : when at last
The tidal-waves that drifted us apart
For aye on earthly seas have kindly cast
Us safe on heaven's own shoreland, you will know
How much you wronged the soul that keepeth
white
And clean its raiment for thy sake ! So,
Till that dear day dawneth, sweet, — Good-night.





I DO NOT WEEP FOR THEE.

I DO not weep for thee, O angel, lost
From these wild-woodland aisles, so lovely still ;
I only sit with thin hands meekly crossed,
And say, in broken murmurs, As God will !

I bring no wail into these solitudes —
No voice of sobbing through the echoing grove
Breaks rudely, startling the young bird that broods,
Through calm and storm, the objects of her love.

Nay, nay ! I will not weep ! The sun goes down ;
I watch the light clouds purpling in the west —
The gold and amber of the dead day's crown —
Smiling to know that thou art free and blest.

And yet, as twilight deepens, and the night
Steals o'er the valleys with a noiseless tread,
I whisper low — with lips grown strangely white —
The tender name by which I call my dead.

My own fair dead! The angels twine with flowers
The brow my kisses covered, and their eyes
Are feasting, through the long, delicious hours,
Upon the radiance that about him lies;

While I — that dreamed of heaven when he was near,
That loved him with a love they cannot know —
Sit with bowed head, and hush my heart to hear
If but his own light breathing come and go.

In vain, in vain! my soul sinks back in gloom
From its one moment's hoping, and the Night,
The royal Night, walks o'er my darling's tomb,
Mocking my sorrow with her calm delight.

Still, still I do not weep, O angel, lost
From these wild woodland aisles, so lovely still;
I only sit with thin hands meekly crossed,
And say, in broken murmurs, As God will!





AT REST.

I AM come back, mother, through the sunset's
glory,
With feeble steps, and weary, fainting frame,
To kneel as in my childhood's days before thee,
And hear thy sweet lips syllable my name.
I have been here in my feverish dreaming
Beneath the splendor of our own fair skies,
That ever, in their ceaseless, ceaseless gleaming,
Bend to the brook's low-murmured melodies.
And I have felt the soft thrill of thy fingers
Through all the brownness of my tangled hair,
And to my soul the voice where music lingers
Floated through song and charmed me from my
care.

'T was but a dream. Into my silent chamber
Laughter broke sweetly with the summer dawn,

And round the trellis, where my rose-vines clamber,
Bird-notes were trembling; but I missed thy song.
And so, when jewelled hands I touched in greeting,
And Beauty's lips were lightly pressed to mine,
I smiled, some low and gentle words repeating,
Yet turned away to hush a cry for thine.
And now, weary of the glare and splendor
That filleth all the land beside the sea,
And wild with longing for thy touches tender,
I come, I come, sweet mother, unto thee.

You mind what time from out its gilded prison
My bird escaped with sweetest of sweet trills,
And fluttered, singing, where the sun just risen
Trailed golden raiment o'er the eastern hills,
You said: "Rejoice, rejoice, my child!" and, mother,
Remembering now your look and tone and words,
I think that he and I are like each other,
Only my heart is lighter than the bird's.
And the green hills where daisy-buds are blowing,
The lowland meadow where I used to play,
The dark wood, and the clear brook's flowing
Are dearer for my bondage far away.

But tell me, mother, if the martin builded
Her nest this year up underneath the eaves,
And reared her young where the soft sunshine gilded,
Just as of yore, the pine-trees' whispering leaves;

If the meek kine are in the valley feeding,—
The valley with the wild, deep wood behind,—
And the white lambkins in the long lane leading
Where waves keep well the secret of the wind.
And tell me (lower lean and whisper lightly)
Of that which lieth o'er the hills away, —
The shelly mound, where dreamily and whitely
My little lamb sleeps all the summer's day.

Ah, mother mine! in all the great world's bustle
There is no place so beautiful as this;
No sound so soothing as thy garments' rustle;
No song so thrilling as thy lightest kiss;
No love so kind, so true, so tender
As that which lures to the old home hearth
And holds me, in the moonlight's softened splendor,
A happy captive from the halls of mirth.
Nay, hold me closer! Do not, weeping, leave me:
Kiss my pale eyelids till they close in sleep,
For nothing sorrowful can vex or grieve me,
If loving vigil by my side you keep.





UNTIL DEATH.

O MY lover, my lover afar,
With the salt sea under your feet,
Turn your face to the pale North Star,
And whisper my name, my sweet!
For I kneel in its tremulous light,
Asaying the dear words o'er
That you said to my heart the night
We two were alone on the shore.

You remember? We stayed and we sat,
As happy as happy could be,
Atalking of this and of that,
Till we saw the moon's face in the sea;
And I whispered: "Good-night, Tom!" and you:
"Not yet — for the birds are awake,
And something must prelude adieu;
One moment, Janet, for *my* sake!"

And so — no matter! *We* know
What only the blue waves heard —
What the moon saw, hovering low
And gray, as a great sea-bird!
And I — O my darling! your breath
Seems still in my shadowy hair;
And I hear your low words, “Until death!”
And my life is as sweet as a prayer.

And I say to the winds, “Be calm,
For the ship’s sake ploughing the deep;
And bear to his hammock the balm
Of my lilies, to sweeten his sleep!”
And I say to the years, “Be swift
As swiftest of years may be,
Till the winds and the blue waters drift
My sailor-lad safely to me!”

And so — O my lover afar,—
Turn your face, with the sea-spray wet,
And your bonnie brown bosom this way,
And whisper, “I love you, Janet!”
For I kneel in the happy moonlight,
Asaying the sweet words o’er
That you said to my heart the night
We two were alone on the shore.





MY JOHN.

MY John, we are lonely, your mother and I,
In the cabin beside the old mill,
And slowly and sadly the hours go by
While we wait for thy step on the hill.
The laborers, weary and worn out with care,
Are gone to their rest-giving sleep,
And the breeze going by seems to whisper a prayer,
While we sit in the shadows and weep.

O! the long years have brought us great sorrow, my
boy,
Since you left us in anger and scorn —
The nights have been dreary, and never a joy
Has come to our hearts with the morn!
And, O! if you dream of the days that are gone,
For sake of that vision so bright,
And for love of the mother that loves you, my John,
Come back to the cabin to-night.

You would shudder, I know, could you look at her
now :

There's a tear in her sunken brown eye,
And the hand is too nerveless that covers her brow :
My John, she is waiting to die!
Yet she lists for thy foot-fall — she starts as the winds
Rattle loud the loose boards on the gate;
And bravely she hushes her moans when she finds
She has longer to weep and to wait.

My John, we are calling and loving you yet,
Though you've hurried us down to the grave;
And we plead with the Father to never forget
The child that He suffered to save!
The cabin will miss us, next summer, my John,
And O! on the evergreen plain,
Where the weary grow glad in the infinite dawn,
Shall we watch for thy coming in vain?





LIEBEHEISS.

A LONE she kneels in the Temple of Night,
Her soft robe sweeping the transept old,
Her face aflush, and her hands awHITE,
Tenderly clasping a cross of gold.
Never the whisper of winds that stir
The hemlock branches heavy with ice,
Through the heart of the silence reaches her,
My Lady of Beauty — Liebeheiss.

What doth she there, with the world asleep,
Under the shelter of moon and star?
Do the sweet proud eyes that are lifted weep
For a hand that holdeth "The Gates Ajar"?
The sea it is sad, and the heart in her breast,
Doth it rise and fall with the pulse of the sea?
Is it hungry under its velvet vest,
As only a woman's heart may be?

Doth she cry for hopes that a dear day gave
When Life had blossomed and Love was young?
For beautiful dreams in a hidden grave,
And glad, grand anthems for aye unsung?
Nay, nay! On her cheek is the crimson glow
Of a love that seraphim seek in vain;
And her high heart's happiest overflow
Needeth not cover of curb or chain.

Over the Night's most royal aisle,
Over the diamonds that mark the cross,
The moonlight creeping clings to her smile,
And hides in her tresses finer than floss.
There's a flow of raiment that is not hers,
And the sound of harp-strings, never the winds,
Sweeps from the arches above and stirs
To holiest melody all the pines.

And so in the clasp of the tender Night,
Her great soul bare as the slumbering sod,
Glad in her crowning, and pure and white,
The lady kneeleth alone with God.
And never the whisper of winds that stir
The hemlock branches heavy with ice,
Through the soul of the solitude reaches her,
My Lady of Beauty — Liebeheiss.





HE AND I.

WE were happiest of lovers,
He and I,
Long ago,
Walking 'mid the wild white roses,
Where the beach with billow closes,
Where delight with morn reposes,
And with even ;
Plighting troth with coyest kisses,
Whisp'ring shyly of the blisses,
Of a day the May-time misses,
Not below :
Fond and foolish lovers,
He and I,
That sweet even.

Heaven was glad when we were wedded,
He and I,
This we know ;

For there swept a sweeter splendor
Over all the valleys tender,
Over all the poplars slender,
 Down the way,
When we whispered: "Should there sorrow
Come with coming of the morrow,
We will Hope from sweet Love borrow
 Ever;" so,
With dear Love we wedded,
 He and I,
 That dear day.

We had daintiest of blossoms,
 He and I,
 Long ago.
Ah, we sit to-night and ponder
Why it lieth over yonder,
Where the birds and breezes wander
 At their will ;
Why so far away the forehead,
And the breast like marble moulded ;
Why two little hands are folded
 Down so low —
How Death found our blossom,
 He and I
 Marvel still.

But we hold each other dearer,
 He and I,
 Dearer far,

For the dark of days forsaken,
 For the dream that death has taken,
 From our souls of Sorrow shaken
 As a pall :
 For the chill of wintry weather,
 For the storms we've braved together,
 For the low grave where the heather
 Blossoms are ;
 Know each other dearer,
 He and I,
 For them all.

We shall wake some blessed morning,
 He and I,
 Haply wake,
 Glad for all the lonely gleaning,
 In the land to darkness leaning,
 Wake, and sorrow's mystic meaning
 Understand !
 And, in that thrice-blesséd hour,
 God will give us back the Flower
 Kept alive in Eden-bower
 For our sake ;
 So we wait for morning,
 He and I,
 Hand in hand.





“HAPPY NEW YEAR.”

OUT from my lattice, with lips aglow,
I lean at the break of day,
Saying the sweet words lightly and low
To my little one far away —
So far that the lights of her dwelling-place
I only may hope to see,
When I cross my forehead and lift my face
Where the sweet-eyed seraphim be.

If she hears my whisper, I may not know ;
If she answers, I may not hear ;
For over my lone life lieth the snow
Of a tempest that dulls my ear.
Yet I think her tender, tropical eyes
Look over the gates of gold,
Beholding how darkly my pathway lies
Mid earthland marshes and mould.

And I can but feel that her wine-red lips
Are holding my kisses yet,
Where never a glory may know eclipse,
And never the sun may set.
That her pulse to a tenderer rhythm leaps,
In the dawn of the Infinite Year ;
For the tryst that my soul with the morning keeps,
And the words that I whisper here.

EVENING.

THE long, long day of toil and care is over,
The weary laborer has sought his home,
And from wild woods and waving fields of clover,
To greet the twilight, bird and bee are come.
O'er yonder valley, how the shades are creeping !
From yonder hillside how the red lights fade !
And, oh, how calmly rests the young child, sleeping
Amid the blossoms where all day she played !
Sweet silence o'er the tired earth is stealing,
Only a bird's low song is on the air ;
And thoughtfully we sit, and solemn, feeling
God's love about us — His quiet — everywhere !

O! in such hours as these, how we remember
The eyes that thrilled us with their earnest gaze,

Long ere the heart's tempestuous December
Dropp'd moaning from the Indian-summer days,
How silently from out the land of shadows
They come again, the beautiful, the true,
Who roamed with us in green and growing meadows,
When all life's blossoms heavy hung with dew ;
Who sat with us beside the hearthstone lowly,
Who knelt with us beside the cottage bed
A few brief years, and then, with faces holy,
Went down to sleep with the remembered dead !

Ah ! God, forgive us, if sometimes — forgetful
His ways are just — of our fair home we dream,
Listing the rustle of its palms, regretful
That years, perchance, are lying dim between !
Forgive us, if sometimes we reach out blindly
For some great joy to bless our solitude,
And cannot feel it is withholden kindly
By Him who knoweth 't is not perfect good ;
If sometimes, when, as now, the twilight lieth
Upon low mounds our love has tended long,
We kneel in its deep shade, with heart that crieth
Against *His* will, “ who doeth nothing wrong ! ”

Still darker grow the shadows in the valley,
Touching, with reverent hands, the buds of June
In their green graves ; but, where the wan winds
dally
With sweet sea-lilies, shines the fair, full moon.

Her bright face, mirrored in the slumbering waters,
 Smiles up to ours, serene and calm, as though
 She had not seen earth's fairest, frailest daughters
 Sink but last night, forsaken, down below!
 Sweet silence o'er the happy earth is stealing,
 No song comes thrilling through the perfumed air,
 And silently we sit, and solemn, feeling
 God's love about us — His heaven — everywhere!

TO THEE.

THE wind comes wailing down the purple moun-
 tains

Whose great brows gloom betwixt thy face and
 mine;
 The sea is sorrowful, and all my fountains
 Cry low, as I, for but a star's faint shine.

With pale hands crossed, as nuns', who may not falter,
 Though bruised and broken all the weary way,
 I turn toward the Night's sepulchral altar,
 Barring behind me all the gates of Day.

Ah me! From seas unseen floats up the laughter
 Of black, blind billows that no boat may cross,
 And sounds of sighing follow, follow after,
 From souls that wail of shipwreck and of loss.

And still, with low-bent face and lips that quiver,
With hands held tightly o'er my fainting heart,
I lean, catch breath and voice from o'er the river,
That sings and shines, belovéd, where thou art.

And soul to soul, though heath and hill divide us,
We quaff the cup that hath nor lies nor lees,
Content to brave whatever may betide us,
Since ships are ours that sail celestial seas.

Since, nearer than we know, by swinging portal
Stands evermore the conscious Christ, our Friend ;
Since life is infinite, and love immortal ;
Since weariness and waiting soon will end.

DECREVI.

WHY did you seek me, and why did I care for you,
In the still summer whose sweetness has fled ?
Why was my life but a lingering prayer for you
All the lost hours I name with my dead ?
I, that could mate you as high minds are mated,
I, that am crown'd with the blackness of night,
Pray but to hate you as wild winds are hated
By maidens gone mad over wrecked ships in sight !

Go your own way where the gay throng is going;
 Smile in the revel and swing in the dance;
 Drain the full chalice where light song is flowing;
 Bow and be broken by bright Beauty's glance!
 Still, still and forever I doom ye to more than this:
 High in the heaven or low in the hell
 Of loving or loathing — know ye how sore it is
 Ever with demons of darkness to dwell!

GOOD-NIGHT.

GOOD-NIGHT, dear friend! I say good-night to
 thee
 Across the moonbeams, tremulous and white,
 Bridging all space between us! It may be —
 Lean low, sweet friend! — *it is* the last good-night.

For, lying mute upon my couch and still,
 The fever-flush vanished from my face,
 I heard them whisper softly, "'T is His will:
 Angels will give her happier resting-place!"

And so, from sight of tears that fell like rain,
 And sound of sobbing smothered close and low,
 I turned my white face to the window-pane,
 To say good-night to thee before I go.

Good-night, good-night ! I do not fear the end,
The conflict with the billows dark and high ;
And yet, if I could touch thy hand, my friend,
I think it would be easier to die :

If I could feel, through all the quiet waves
Of my deep hair, thy tender breath athrill,
I could go downward to the place of graves .
With eyes ashine, and pale lips smiling still ;

Or it may be that if, through all the strife
And pain of parting, I should hear thy call,
I should come singing back to sweet, sweet life,
And know no mystery of death at all.

It may not be. Good-night, dear friend, good-night !
And when you see the violets again,
And hear, through boughs with swollen buds awhite,
The gentle falling of the April rain,

Remember her whose young life held thy name
With all things holy, in its outward flight,
And turn sometimes from haunts of Love and Fame
To hear again her low Good-night, good-night !





PICTURES.

NEAREST my oriel-window seat,
A low bough where a young bird clings
With little, tender, creamy feet,
And golden-brown impatient wings ;
He nestles 'mid the cool green leaves,
As violets where the shadows be,
And all the dreamful hours he weaves
A fairy woof of song for me.

Farther away — the “land-locked bay,”
And hand-locked lovers on the shore,
And sweet-eyed children at their play,
Counting the white shells o'er and o'er ;
And fashion-queens, in lace and pearls,
Not half so purely sweet and fair,
As little ones that toss their curls
With hands where only dimples are.

Beyond — the silvery gleam of oars
That rouse the slumb'rous waves to song,
And bear from off the jewelled floors
The threads of seaweed, soft and long ;
White sails that will not swell nor stir ;
A quiet cave, and rocks that know
Where fiercest winds and lightnings were
Through storms a century ago.

And farther yet — the sun that sinks
In voiceless melody from view,
Tossing the happy water-brinks
A crimson-lettered billet-doux,
And covering the many isles
With glory ere it fades from sight,
Leaving the earthland robed in smiles,
Upon the bosom of the Night.

Beyond? I know not ! for the mist
Creeps to my eyes that strain to see
The low-dropped bars of amethyst,
And brows of immortality ;
And vainly, vainly still my hand
Reaches, as if from out a dream,
For the faint outlines of the land
Lying beyond the sun's last gleam.

Ah, me ! Upon the breast of Night
My soul lies shivering, as a bird

That dares too far, too high a flight,
 And sinks — its little cry unheard —
 Where moon and star their secrets keep,
 With but the ripple of a wave
 To whisper, when the night grows deep,
 The story of a nameless grave.

O mother Night! than sea to bird,
 Be kinder far to me, thy child;
 Hush on thy breast the wail unheard,
 And soothe the pulses quick and wild:
 But give not death, sweet mother Night —
 Not death that opes the Eden-gate,
 For with the morning cometh light,
 And morn is near me — I can wait.

WHAT ARE THE PINE-TREES SAYING?

WHAT are the pine-trees saying to-night,
 Down by the harbor where lie the ships,
 Where the waves keep singing for aye, despite
 The deathful calm on their sleepers' lips?
 Why do they thrill, like a bell that tolls
 The terrible night of a mourner's woe?
 And why do they shiver and moan, like souls
 That into the black of eternity go?

Why do they shrink from the wind's light touch,
As though caresses were worse than vain?
Distrustful pines! have they learned so much
Of human passion, of human pain?
O dallying wind! away! away
With your tender tone and your light caress!
Ye have toyed with the pine-trees all the day;
But their night will be lonely, nevertheless.

I know what the pines are whispering there
By the harbor — close to the white-winged ships;
I know what they say of a maiden fair
Whose life went out in her love's eclipse!
I know why they shrink when the light wind's breath
Touches the sheen of their glittering leaves;
And I know — *do* I know they whisper of death?
Or is it a dream that my fancy weaves?

I sat in their shadows the live-long day —
The scent of their boughs in my loosened hair —
And wept, when the waters grew black in the bay,
For the mother who taught me my evening prayer:
But the darkness passed, and the royal moon
Arose from her couch like a lonely queen;
And wildly I reached for my life's lost June,
Forgetting the years that are lying between.

O sorrowful pines! through the sorrowful night
Ye talk to my heart, and it makes reply;

And ye tell me tales in the dreamful light
 Would startle the winds, if the winds were nigh.
 I list your moaning, the silent hours,
 And watch the beck of your shadowy hands,
 Reaching my own for the balmful flowers
 Blooming in radiant Memory-lands.

Ah! beautiful pines — they are far away!
 Sob on by the billows that laugh in glee!
 There cometh truly the morning's gray,
 But never its crimson to you or to me.
 And yet, O tenderest, humanest friends!
 I give ye love for your love divine,
 And only ask for my life — when it ends,
 To shadow its resting — a royal pine.

DRIFTING.

WE are out together on Life's sweet sea,
 But a hungry pain is hard in my heart,
 For I know, belovéd, I know it must be
 We are drifting farther and farther apart.

O! I clasp my oars, and I strive to stay
 The outward sweep of my fragile bark;
 But the tide is high, and I float away
 Over the billows — into the dark!

Is it an hour or is it a year,
Since under the heaven of stars we stood?
And you whispered: "Though it may not be clear
To your faith, my Isabel, God is good!"

Is it an hour or is it a year?
The words fell slow from your quivering lips,
And I marvelled much if you knew I was near
The terrible gloom of the soul's eclipse!

I call to you now! Have you whisperings bland,
And soothingest balm for this hope's decay?
Would you dare to say that our Father's hand
Is bearing my bark from your own away?

Nay, nay! 't is only the pitiless winds
Dropp'd out of the clouds of our destiny;
Only a merciless Fate that binds
To weariest waiting you and me!

Still, still I am drifting away, away,
Nearer and nearer the shipwrecking rocks!
Can I calm my spirit enough to pray
In the heart of the horrible thunder-shocks?

Is heaven above me? Is God still there?
I see but the black of a bending cloud,
And the face of a starlet, far and fair,
Cold in its calmness, and white as a shroud.

Ah me! for my bark by the storm is driven!
 Will never a calm come over the sea?
 Will never the sun shine up in heaven,
 And a sweet wind carry me back to thee?

Aye! for a voice's tenderest tone
 Steals into the soul of my solitude:
 "God's hand is leading you, weary one,
 Though you will not see it — and God is good."

IN HOPE.

DEAR friend! I know not but the years may be
 Slow-told by heart-beats, and in weary scores,
 Ere, free from earthliness, I sit with thee
 Where soft lights creep along the eternal shores,
 Learning the secrets of the Land of Saints.
 Yet, O beloved! with such blessed hope
 Hid in my bosom from all human seers,
 How would my soul, grown strong, go smiling up
 The barren mountains of a thousand years,
 And down their greenless sloping, where the taints
 Of tears are lying ever!

Enough that at the last we two shall stand
 Crowned with the glory of an endless day;

Stand soul to soul! and, as you lift my hand
And touch my forehead, you will smile, and say :
“ It was not much — that little morning hour ! ”
And so, belovéd, I can wait. No weak,
Wan plaint shall throb through all my life
To make its love unworthy thee. My cheek
Shall wear a flush of joy through all the strife
As, bright with balm, a little broken flower
Shines sometimes by a river.

UNDER THE STARS.

WANDERING wind of the fair May night,
Sweet from the land leaning down to the sea,
Pause as you pass o'er the green meadow grass,
Lightly and purely as maiden to mass ;
Pause where my lilies the moonbeams are holding,
Pause where my roses the dew-drops are folding,
And close to my bosom where hyacinths blossom,
In the white raiment that floats to my feet
Fold up your balmy invisible pinions,
And, hiding, talk to me, my darling, my sweet,
And say to me, wind of the beautiful night,
That hast haunted the steps of my love all day,
Say to me softly, that no one may hear,
Over and over the name of my dear,

Over and over the words of my lover,
 Sweeter than sweetest of blossoming clover ;
 And I shall grow glad as the silverest river
 That holds in its ripples the voices of birds ;
 Glad as the night is, and radiant as morning,
 Setting to music your low-murmured words.

Beautiful moon of the fair May night,
 Lighting the cottage that looks to the sea,
 Tell me if ever, by rock or by river,
 Or in the bright bower where asphodels quiver,
 Or down by the forest's embroideréd edges,
 Where the gay zephyrs run wild in the hedges,
 Thou 'st seen from thy palace the joy-brimming
 chalice

The angel of destiny holdeth for me,
 And envied me all the sweet love of my lover,
 Slumbering far to the lull of the sea.
 Beautiful moon of the beautiful night,
 Set your white fingers adrift in his hair,
 And tenderly — so that he will not awake —
 Kiss the bright flow of its waves for my sake,
 and drop your rare gleaming into his dreaming,
 Till he shall know all the mystical meaning
 Of proud eyes that haunt the dreamland where he
 wanders,
 Of silences sweeter than sweetest of words,
 And I shall exult, as the soft-flowing river
 That hides in its ripples the voices of birds.

Tenderest Father, and Lover of night,
Guarding the shoreland and guarding the sea,
Be Thou the keeper of singer and sleeper,
While the stars shine and the night groweth deeper.
Close to the pulse of Thine infinite bosom,
Hold us, as dew in the heart of a blossom,
Till the morn breaketh afar o'er the billow,
Till the bird-voices are glad in the glen ;
And guide Thou our feet where the valleys are sweet,
Till their ways wind together — but leave us not
then.

Tenderest Father, and Monarch of night,
Let the dear angel Thou lovest the best
Speedily glide through the Paradise bars,
And find where he dreams by the light of the stars ;
And in through the willow that shadeth his pillow,
Bear all the brightness of bud and of billow —
All the rare sweets of the sea and the shoreland,
All the faint echoes of seraphim song,
And let the soft splendor of eyes that are tender
Shine through his dreaming the whole night long.





IF.

IF we could dream, when still and sad beside us
Our loved ones sit through silent summer eves,
Of days when blessedness will be denied us,
And life be as a wan, weak wind that grieves,
What tender speech would give them joy of living,
As winds wild roses that the dews forsake,
And into what sweet pæans of thanksgiving
The harps of solitary souls would break.

If we could hear above the mounds where mosses
Lie like small vales with violets inlaid,
Above the shadow of the Parian crosses
A little stir by seraph-pinions made,
How swiftly would the olden, wine-red flushes
Leap to our lips where no red flush has been
Since, in the saddest of September hushes,
We touched warm hearts that held no pulse within.

We know not till the summer-time is over,
And something sweet is missing from the air,

How our large lives were wedded to the clover
And to the buds that brightened everywhere!
And oh! we know not till from off our bosoms,
Fainting, we miss a flow of fragrant hair,
How silently amid the summer blossoms
God's angels walked beside us unaware.

JUST OVER THE RIVER.

IT'S only just over the river,"
I She said, whom we christened Lenore,—
Her face, like the face of an angel,
Full-framed in the half-opened door:
"Only over the river; and, mamma,
The trusty old boatman, Deloss,
Is waiting down there by the ferry
To carry me safely across.

"It's only just over the river,
Such a beautiful, bright little way;
And sweet in the woody, wild hollows
The lilies are swinging, they say.
I'm sick of the noise of the city,
I'm tired, a bit, of my books,
And I want to run wild with the fairies
That laugh with their lovers the brooks.

“ And it’s only just over the river —
 O mamma, please say I may go ! ”
 I nodded, and quick, like a sunbeam,
 She sped to the boatman below.
 All the long day she sang in the woodland ;
 But sweet through our low cottage-door,
 With the gold-sandalled feet of the sunset,
 Came the feet of our darling Lenore.

“ It’s only just over the river,”
 She said, whom we christened Lenore,
 Her hands in the hands of the boatman
 That rows to the heavenly shore.
 We marvelled such pitiful pleading
 Should burden the young child’s breath,
 When her feet had crossed over the valley
 That borders the river of Death.

“ Only over the river ! and, mamma,
 It is not the boatman Deloss,
 But *another*, that waits in the midnight
 To carry me safely across :
 His hair is as white as the lilies
 I found in the forest to-day ; —
 And this is the death-night of April ;
 To-morrow, I think, is the May ;

“ Blesséd May-day over the river ! ”
 Ah ! in through our low cottage-door

Came again the gold feet of the sunset,
 But not the white feet of Lenore ;
 For the boatman, whose bosom hath never
 A pulse nor of passion nor pain,
 Took our little one over the river,
 And forgot to return her again.

GOING HOME.

YOU are going first, O sister sweet,
 To our beautiful home in the land divine ;
 I tell by your tired, trembling feet,
 And your white hand dropping aloose from mine ;
 And I know by your blue eyes grown too bright,
 And the far-off look that your face puts on,
 I shall waken from slumber, some moonful night,
 Crying out for your kisses, and find you — gone !

Let me linger awhile ere I bid you adieu —
 The morning may find us divided, you know ;
 And I've messages many to send by you
 To the loved who went from us long ago.
So long ! Ah, darling ! my heart is aged
 Since they went away ; and I can't tell why,
 If one of us goes, like a bird uncaged,
 To our Father's mansion, it is n't I.

For, freighted with sweetness and flooded with song
Your life sweeps royally out of its June,
And your feet, with the soft rose-sandals on,
Are turning away from the earth too soon!
For me — my path lies far from the dew,
Wherever the darkliest shadows be;
And the messenger, waiting, my love, for you,
Hath never a token of pity for me.

Over my bosom your hyacinth hair,
Like sheen of the sea-weed, flutters and floats;
And your pale lips, chiding my dumb despair,
Stir to the swell of triumphal notes.
O darling! out to the great Unknown
My thoughts are drifting like wrecks at sea,
And my sad lips break with a bitter moan,
For my dead are nearer to you than to me.

You will go to them soon. There is one, you know,
Who called me sister — who calls me still,
Though over his grave-couch, years ago,
The wild birds chattered and sung at will.
You will say to him, sweet, that I sit sometimes,
In the dim, deep forests we loved of old,
And weave his bright name into my rhymes,
With voice grown sadder a thousand-fold.

And she whose footsteps were feeble and slow,
Whose life was a long, long day of toil,

Yet full of God's goodness, and lifted so
From the mire of earth that it could not soil
Her pure, white soul, you will find *her* there ;
But how you will know her I cannot say,
If the silver is lost from her shining hair,
And the furrows washed from her face away.

And there is another — my voice breaks here
Like a wave on the rockiest reach of land,
And a mist is before me! I can't see clear —
Though I know it is near me — the Infinite land.
And I can't tell why, when there bloomed but one,
One blossom alone for my love and me,
It was lifted out of the dew and the sun
To the fair green height of Eternity.

O hearts that forever in darkness dwell!
O lonesome hearth by the lonesome sea!
O love! that the angels loved too well,
And fairer than ever the angels be!
Tell her that, wounded, we weep and wait,
Watching for aye, from the drear earthland,
For the inward swing of the golden gate,
And the outward reach of her beckoning hand.

And say to the Father who loveth us all,—
Though you are this moment most surely his own,—

That I wait for His angels, and list for His call ;
 For the sun has gone down, and I want to go
 home!
 Good-night, dear! The threads of your hyacinth
 hair
 Drop from my bosom, and slumber is nigh ;
 Maybe you will wake where our Beautiful are,
 And my kisses will miss you! good-night — and
 good-by!

DERELICTUS.

IN the noonday sun I am faint, I am blind,"
 A pale little Lily said ;
 " Where are the lips of my loyal Wind
 To kiss me back from the dead ?

" He is my lover tender and true ;
 He dwells by the singing sea ;
 And swift he would haste, if he knew, *if he knew* ;
 For he loves no one but me !"

Kneeling, I whispered : " Beautiful flower,
 Cling to your beautiful faith !
 For O, it will gladden your life's last hour
 And sweeten the way to death."

But aside: "Ah, pretty forgotten flower,
'T is better to cease to be;
For your lover woos in the Rose's bower,
With never a thought of thee!"

AFTER BETROTHAL.

GIRDLE and laces are laid aside,
Bracelets and rings in their casket lie,
And the sheeny folds of the crimson robe
Lie in the moonlight silently.

In soft, white raiment, that flutters and floats
Over her bosom, and down to her feet,
By her pearl of a couch the lady kneels —
And what is the prayer that her lips repeat?

"Christ, keep my darling!" (his name held close,
Lest the angels, listening, learn too much,)
"And hold him safe from the wind that blows,
And hold him safe from the Reaper's touch."

"For *my* sake, Father!" the pleading face
Flushing to crimson, that even in prayer
So much be said, and her hand astray
Where a breath hides still in her perfumed hair.

“For *my* sake, Father! whose inmost life
Finds holiest strength in his guiding love;
And lead us each in thine own sweet time
To the perfect peace of the saints above.”

A delicate flutter of all the snow
That covers her bosom and hideth her feet,
And the lady lieth, with lips aglow,
Where scents of lavender linger sweet.

And sinking there to her happy dreams,
Circled by moonbeams weird and dim,
She whispers softly: “My love will know,
By the peace in his heart, that I prayed for him.”

AFTER THE BATTLE.

THIS is the hour he said he would come;
This is the hour, I know it well; —
Eight o'clock by the beating drum,
Eight o'clock by the convent-bell.
So, where the roses crimson and white
Lean timidly in from the clasp of the night,
From the dew of the heaven daintily-starred,
In through the lattice silvery-barred,
Where the pale moonbeams drop at my feet,
And over the snow of my soft robe creep,

I have folded my arms expectant, dumb,
To wait for a voice's musical hum,
And to hear it repeat, softly and sweet,
Over and over, "Elaine!"

For in every dream that my soul hath been,
By murmuring stream or shadowy glen,
He has called to me; and I soon shall hear,
Through my bower of blossoms ringing clear,
The old familiar strain:

"I am coming home, darling, coming to-night,
To the cottage beside the sea,
Where blue eyes bright, in the glad moonlight,
Are watching alone for me."

It is past the hour he said he would come;
It is past the hour, I know it well;—
Nine o'clock by the beating drum,
Nine o'clock by the convent-bell.

No harm can come to my darling, I know;—
Why do my thin hands tremble so?
Why is the blood leaping up to my brow,
And purpling my cheek with its quick'ning flow?
I shall rest me soon by my warrior's side,
And his hands will clasp the hands of his bride,
And his eyes will beam with a tenderer glow
Than lighted their depths in the long ago;
And his lips will repeat, softly and sweet,
Over and over, "Elaine!"

While by the roses, crimson and white,
 Together we sit in the hush of the night; —
 Hark! — was it the voice of the wind I heard,
 Bearing me tenderly, word for word,
 The old, familiar strain?

“I am coming home, darling, coming to-night,
 To the cottage beside the sea,
 Where blue eyes bright, in the glad moonlight,
 Are watching alone for me.”

I count the hours one by one;
 Each length'ning moment my pulses tell!
 Ten o'clock by the beating drum,
 Ten o'clock by the convent-bell.
 Out from the roses crimson and white,
 Into the clasp of the beautiful night,
 Where the blue waves leap to the shore, I kneel,
 And over my forehead the moonbeams steal,
 And my bridal robe with the dew is wet
 As a shoreland washed by the surge, and yet —
 O God! must I wait till the quickening morn
 Is heralded in by the huntsman's horn,
 Ere I hear him repeat, softly and sweet,
 Over and over, “Elaine!”
 Ere I stand in my pride by my soldier's side,
 And his brown hands circle the hands of his bride?
 Hark! hark! there are steps in the shadowy lane;
 I have not waited and watched in vain,
 Not waited and prayed in vain!

I am coming back, Roland: swift is my flight,
From my lone watch by the sea;
For I know, in the light of the moonbeams bright,
Thou'rt waiting, love, for me!

.
Only the smile that he used to wear,
Changeless and fixed on the lips of clay;
Only the same soft wave of the hair
Over whose brightness my fingers stray.

How I have prayed through the nights and the days,
That God would watch over his perilous ways!
Still, where the roses crimson and white
Lean timidly in from the clasp of the night,
Stung by my sorrow, transfixed I stand,
Just touching the ice of my soldier's hand,
And think how he loved me in days that are gone,
And how I shall yearn, in the dusk and the dawn,
To hear him repeat, softly and sweet,

Over and over "Elaine!"

Why have ye borne me away from his side,
O friends of the soldier's sorrowful bride?
Under the roses lay me to rest,
Let my long hair wave o'er my warrior's breast,
While the night hours slowly wane.

I am coming home, Roland, coming to-night,
To our mansion beyond the sea,
Where dark eyes bright, through the Eden-light,
Are watching for me — for me.



BETWEEN TWO YEARS.

A SONG, a song for the glad New Year!
How our pulses quicken and leap
As the sound of his hurrying feet we hear,
Where our lilies are lying asleep.
Asleep — yet holding a dream of winds,
Of wantonest winds, and low;
And breaking billow that sings and shines —
In their bright breasts under the snow.

O sweet, sweet Earth! We have drained the wine
Of the Old Year's bacchanal feasts,
Have eaten of fruits that we deem'd divine,
In the populous palace of priests;
Of priests that ministered marvellous things,
And goodly, to you and to me;
But the past *is past*, and the New Year sings
In the ear of the sun and the sea.

We have laughed and have loved, have labored and
lost,
Have clung to the green grave-bands

That held, and are holding, the pale palms crossed,
But a bloom's breadth out of our hands.
And still there struggles one truth divine,
From the wreck of pitcher and bowl:
From cruelest crosses there drips the wine
Of saintliest strength for the soul!

And so, flash up, through your covers of snow,
A face full of laughter, O Earth!
With brows of beauty, and lips aglow
With nectar of music and mirth!
And shake, from the soul of your sealless seas,
A measureless murmur of waves,
That shall sweeten the death in your chalice of lees,
And greaten the green of your graves.

For, darling, *my* darling, the New Year brings
New life to the rivers that vein
Your own bright body, and under his wings
Is balm for *my* bosom and brain!
And lilies will lighten, and birds and bees
Will be fluttering fair and far,
Where winds are wild in the tangled trees,
And where the still buttercups are.

Then a song, a song for the glad New Year!
Let the bells in belfry and tower
Peal madly and merrily, cheer upon cheer,
For the king who is crowned this hour!

There's a sweep of raiment, a swoop of wings,
 And there's comfort for you and me;
 For *the past is past*, and the New Year sings
 In the ear of the sun and the sea.

IS THERE LOVE BEYOND THE GRAVE?

NO voice upon the twilight! there was none
 I well remember on that eve ago:
 Nor sound of bird or bee the vines among,
 Nor childhood's laugh, nor gentle maiden's song.
 But the winds wailed like lovers madly parted,
 Even as now they moan about my bower:
 One name alone — the name of the true-hearted —
 Their burden then, as in this lonely hour.

It is not meet, I know, this backward turning
 Unto the ruin of those sacred years;
 Nor yet this fond and ceaseless, ceaseless yearning
 To mark the glory that my angel wears;
 Yet ever, at this twilight hour's returning,
 Amid the throng, or watching thus alone,
 The tired soul which memory haunts is burning
 To greet its idol in the rest unknown.

I know not that this *ever* may be so;
 I know not but in heaven my darling's eyes

Will calmly look in mine, and with no glow
Of recognition; but the sweet Paradise
I learned to pray for by the household hearth,
To hope for when the hopes of life were new,
Though pure and fair, will not be sweet as earth,
As earth was once, if this mad thought be true.

I have heard lips, trembling with emotion,
Say oft to me, "Our love must yield to death,"
And have *some* friends, true in their devotion,
Would rob me fain of my divinest faith.
O angels, circling softly round about me,
Lay your white wings upon my heart, and say
If heaven can be heaven to *her* without me,
If still she watches where my footsteps stray.

There was a time when her glad voice was ringing
Through these deep aisles in which the shadows
rest;
A time when her young feet were lightly springing
O'er the green valleys by the winds caressed.
Still, her bright face from every faded flower
Looks, and is woven with my every rhyme,
And her sweet voice, through every passing hour,
Calls tenderly, as in that far-off time.

Angels! is there no land of fadeless lustre
Beyond the surging of the river cold?

No island where the fragrant blossoms cluster,
Where she will love me as she loved of old?
Angels! too long I've wandered, wandered blindly;
My bark has been too long upon the sea;
Set the death seal upon my forehead kindly,
And let me greet her there, or, dying, cease to be.

WHAT I NAME YOU.

IT may be, my friend, I am going
From off the green shore where you stand,
And that in the morn I shall waken
Beyond the sad reach of your hand.
I know not: my pulses are sinking,
Like breezes from languidest climes,
And scarce have I strength left for weaving
Your blesséd name into my rhymes.

But, Ada, the sound of your raiment,
The stir of your breath in my hair,
The touch of your hand on my forehead
Where mournfulest mysteries are,
Is enough of the sweetness of living,
O life of my innermost life!
Enough of God's graciouslest giving
To hallow death's bitterest strife.

And, here in the shadows, my darling,
I call you no longer my queen,
My poet, with song never written,
My seraph, with scroll never seen ;
But I name you Beloved of the Father !
Crown-jewel, revealing His light
To the feeble, the faint, the forsaken,
Who perish in perils of night.

And, naming you thus, I am dreaming
Of mornings with melody rife,
When together we two shall be learning
The mystical meaning of life ;
Of life, and of love that outliveth
The tragical terror of Time,
That leaneth low into the darkness,
That soareth where saints cannot climb.

Soul to soul we shall wander together,
Through sunshine and splendor — we two
Who have loved in the wild, wintry weather,
In the dark, and the dawn, and the dew !
And so, in slow whispers, that only
Our God and His angels may keep,
I name you Beloved of the Father !
And — naming you thus — let me sleep.





INDEPENDENCE HALL.

SITTING with the silent people in the olden State-
House Hall,
With the silent pictured people open-eyed against
the wall,
Where beneath the shining arches a prophetic silence
broods
Over all the softened splendor of the mystic solitudes,
With the lamplight and the moonlight and the star-
light on my cheek,
What has thrilled me, what has filled me with a
dread I scarce may speak?

Not the sighs of silent sorrow, not the whisper of the
breeze
Telling all its piteous passion to the spirits of the
seas;
Not the song of birds, not billows echoing amid the
rocks
That have dared and faced the fury of a million
tempest-shocks;

Not the chattering of rivers through the forest's
fretted halls,
Where the faithful ivy clingeth mutely to the moul-
dering walls ;
Not the chime of merry voices, nor the sound of
merry feet
Fluttering to the Waltz of Weber in the night so
fair and fleet :
None of these hath overswept me, bid my pulses rise
and fall,
Like the voices breathing round me in the olden
State-House Hall.

For, with lingering murmurs stealing through the
silences profound,
Comes the phantom of a whisper from a statue laurel-
crowned ;
And my soul from out its prison leans — as lilies to
the sea —
In the starlight weird and witching, to the voice of
phantasy,
Calling, calmly but commanding, as a king's from
royal throne :
“Cease your dreaming by the lattice, watcher with
the night alone !
Leave the moonlight and the starlight ! Bring your
heart from broken reefs
Beaten by the bold blind billows of the stormful sea
of griefs ;

Call your soul from days disastrous, from the cruel
 calm of lips

Holding evermore your kisses in the sepulchre of
 ships!

What is that you clasp and cling to? weeds that
 wither, Mays that moan.

Leave the dark of dreams decaying, watcher with
 the night alone!

I, the Father of your country — ‘first in war, and
 first in peace’ —

Give you from the bitter bondage of the *Present*
 swift release.”

Lo, a sound, through all the silence, of a bugle’s
 ringing call!

Lo, a stir of all the people quaintly quartered on
 the wall!

See, a mighty column timing footsteps to the beating
 drum!

Hear the opening cannon’s crashing and the devas-
 tating bomb!

There is flash of sword and glittering of serried
 bayonet,

And redder grows th’ invaded land with blood of
 heroes wet.

Still the column moveth forward over friend and
 foeman slain, [pain;

Till the sombre sky is shaken and the air alive with

But about me and above me blazing banners are
 unfurled
 That will herald Hope forever to the bondmen of
 the world ;
 And through all the clash and clangor of the iron
 storm of war
 I can hear the onward rolling of the mighty Free-
 dom-car ;
 Hear the pæan of a nation, and the pealing of a
 Bell
 Ringing in a people's triumph, tolling forth Oppres-
 sion's knell ;
 For a despot rules no longer o'er the patriot pioneer,
 And the voices of thanksgiving wake the echoes far
 and near.

Swiftly and with echoing murmurs down the music-
 haunted aisles
 Of the royal night's cathedral, where the pensive
 moonlight smiles,—
 From beneath the shining arches where prophetic
 silence broods
 Over all the greatening splendor of the mystic soli-
 tudes,
 Where the crystal dewes are hanging, and an incense
 lingers yet,
 Like a song we heard in childhood, and can never
 more forget,—

Comes *again* the sweep of raiment, comes again the
 sound of feet,
Comes the rush of starry ensigns that the Northland
 flies to meet ;
For in splendor-girdled cities, in the valleys of the
 South,
Falls an insult on our banner from a roaring rabble's
 mouth,
Mingled with a wail of anguish from the deeps of
 human lives,
From the captives crushed and lowly in their mana-
 cles and gyves,
Till the Northern heart is bitter, and the Northern
 blood aflame,
And avenging hosts sweep southward in eternal
 Freedom's name.

Ah, I follow, follow after, on a fearful way of fire,
Past my blessed heroes lying dead together, son and
 sire —
Follow, with my pulses beating time to tempests
 quick with pain,
Where again the skies are shaken, and the red blood
 drips as rain.
Yet about me and above me waves the banner of the
 brave,
Witness of a nation's fealty to Mount Vernon's lonely
 grave ;

And the heart within my bosom leaps responsive to
the Bell
Ringing in our land's redemption, tolling forth
Oppression's knell.

It is past. The smoke of battle fadeth o'er the silent
sea,
And the shoreland bears the vintage of the vine of
Liberty:
All the sweet earth hears the rolling of immortal
Freedom's car,
That shall bear the hopes of freedmen through the
centuries afar;
But I feel, above the beating of my breast that breaks
the calm,
Something floating round me softly, like the swelling
of a psalm;
And before me in the midnight, with evangel-rai-
ment on,
Crowned with amaranth and laurel, Lincoln stands
with Washington.
Hand in hand they bend toward me, till their breath
is on my cheek,
And I bow myself in homage heark'ning to the words
they speak:
"Tell the people we are leaning ever o'er the emerald
gate
Which the seraphim are guarding, anxious for the
nation's fate,

Praying that its peace be broken nevermore by battle-
hail —

Praying that the Right may prosper and the plans
of Faction fail —

That we know with true devotion they will guard the
flag we won,

While they keep their faith with Lincoln and their
love of Washington.”

Oh, the picture that is lifted evermore from out the
Hall!

Oh, the silent, silent people open-eyed against the
wall!

Oh, the still, unruffled plumage of the eagle over-
head!

Oh, the joy within my bosom, where a sorrow lay
like lead!

Hushed the bell and furled the banner, hushed the
voices on the air!

Gone the fairy from the fountain, gone the perfume
from the prayer!

Dreams the young bird of the summer and the nest
upon the bough —

Dreams the maid of him who won her and the near-
ing marriage-vow;

And the mother in her slumber lightly smiles and
lightly stirs,

As her darling's bright head nestles close and closer
unto hers.

But a glory still is floating lightly round my lifted
 head,
 Brighter than the storied splendor of the Ages that
 are dead —
 Sweeter than the songs that quiver through the hush
 of summer eves,
 From the rapid rippling river laden with the lealand
 leaves ;
 And to Memory's Te Deum all my pulses rise and
 fall
 As I go from out the silence of the sacred State-
 House Hall.

COME BACK !

COME back to me, darling! Moonbeam and star-
 beam
 Steal to the wood, where the shadow-beds be,
 Softly and lightly, through faint breath of roses,
 That keep a sweet time to the wind's melody.
 Come! from our own hills the daylight is creeping ;
 Come! in their low nest our robins are sleeping ;
 Silence repositeth on shoreland and sea,
 And I have grown weary, love, waiting for thee.

Come back to me, darling! Light as a zephyr
 Flutters thy voice through the heart of my dreams,

Waking or sleeping ; and sweeter its cadence
 Than chatter or chiming of Paradise streams.
 Gone from my life is the glitter and glory —
 Gone, like the sweetness of love's early story :
 And never, oh, darling! the day-dawn for me,
 Till, out of my prison, I waken with thee!

A LETTER.

I HAVE read every word — as young children
 Read faces in sweetness complete —
 Every word bringing memories olden,
 Every line breathing hopes that are golden,
 In this missive from over the deep.

And 't is strange that this bit of white paper,
 With its fiery, passionate words,
 Writ by a woman, so thrills me ; and strange
 That sitting in quiet here at "*The Grange*,"
 Where the tenderest carol of birds

Breaks with the breath of the morning, I hear
 Only the solemn, mysterious flow
 Of waters far distant, and see but the foam
 Of billows that dashed on the shore of my home
 In the days of the long ago.

I wander : forgive me, sweet lady ; you know
One loses the joy or the pain
Of a letter, sometimes, for a minute,
When some sentence we look on within it
Calls up the dead hours again !

And we sit with the dainty, white paper
Dropp'd carelessly down at our feet,
Or crushed to the red of the blossoms
We nervously snatch from our bosoms,
Half wild with some memory sweet,

Or bitter, perchance ; no matter ! we all
Have Edens far back in the Past,
From which we were thrust ; and it may be
A serpent was there ! But, lady,
I turn to your letter at last.

You say — and you say it in sadness,
I think, for your delicate hand
Shook slightly just there — you say I can dare,
With the scent of her vines in my hair,
Forget the fair Isle where you stand.

To forget — with her sweet, purple wines
Scarce dry on my lips, and my brow
Still flush'd with their richness — and ask
If my soul does not deem it a task
To call up these memories now.

You think I've forgotten? You mock me,
O Lady alone by the sea,
When you say I've forgotten! for, darling,
Do you dream that your poor, prison'd starling
Forgets when and where he was free?

Or that I — that so cling to and worship'd
Each nook of your spell-woven land —
Sitting under *these* skies, and unheeding
Their calm, quiet beauty, am needing
This letter just dropp'd from my hand,

To carry my wild, truant fancies
Away o'er the slumberless main,
To the land where each breath is devotion?
Or, to call up this tide of emotion,
O'erwhelming my heart and my brain?

O Lady, far over the billows!
O queen of that magical Isle!
You think I've forgotten the splendor
Of eyes that, so saint-like and tender,
Beamed on me with look and with smile?

Forgotten the dreams that came to me,
When, down on the shell-woven strand,
I watched the white sails that were dripping
With surge, and the black shadows tripping
All over the sea and the land.

Ah! little you know, how, aweary
Of dust, and of toil, and of strife,
I sought, when the earth was in blossom,
Your Eden, and found in its bosom
The one crowning joy of my life!

And still, O still I remember
How swiftly that rosy-wing'd hour
Flew by, when we watch'd the returning
Of sails, with a strange, eager yearning
Unwhisper'd to blossom or bower.

And still, still my lone heart is thrilling,
As a lute that is swept by the breeze;
And still in my slumberless dreaming
I seem to be under the gleaming
Of skies that are clearer than these.

And we, O! again we are roaming
Far down on the wet, rocky shore,
And 'round us the white spray is falling,
And o'er us the sea-gull is calling
Her young, that will come — nevermore!

But alas for this sweetest of dreaming!
This wayward, wild fancy of mine!
And alas! that no gladness of beauty
I find in the land to which duty,
Stern duty, has called me from thine.

Perchance, when the Spring's gentle pulses
Shall quicken, on hill-side and plain,
When the robins return with their singing,
And your vales with soft echoes are ringing,
I'll kneel in your bower again!

Perchance I shall tread the dear pathway
Around which my memory clings,
The pathway made sacred and holy
By dreams of our love, and that slowly
Winds down where the Sea-Spirit sings.

O friend! at this thought how my pulses
Leap up with a life that is new!
We shall kneel where sweet melody gushes,
We two, in the eve's tender hushes —
Until then, gentle lady, adieu!





CAGED.

LITTLE white bird in your beautiful prison,
Fluttering lonesomely all the long day,
Beating the bars till your plumage is crimson,
Why do ye murmur, and what do you say?
“ Low laughs my love from the heart of a blossom ;
Free are *her* pinions to furl or to fly ;
Light lies the dew on the down of her bosom — ”
And *you* are in fetters? So, darling, am I!

Gilded, like yours, are the bars of my prison ;
Weary, like yours, with their waiting, my wings ;
And far, far away, in the calm and the crimson
Of morning eternal, *my* Beautiful sings !
Yet O, when the daylight the buttercup misses,
I lean from my lattice that looks to the seas,
And catch the rare sweets of her comforting kisses,
Out from the hold of a paradise breeze.

Hush, pretty prisoner! I know all your sorrow!

I know how your pulses quiver and ache!

How your heart, with no hope for the coming to-morrow,

In the wine-press of anguish is ready to break!

And nobody opens the door of *my* prison,

Beautiful darling! as I open thine,

Bidding thee fly with thy bosom of crimson,

Far to the freedom that cannot be mine.

BY THE SEA.

A MAIDEN kneels where the blue waves reach
 Through the sunset gleams to caress the beach,
 And back from her forehead, divinely fair,
 The winds are tossing her nut-brown hair —
 Tossing it gleefully to and fro,
 Over the shoulders white as snow;
 Tossing it tenderly, tress by tress,
 From the beautiful bosom's perfectness,
 And whispering words that are new and sweet,
 As they fold her in fragrance from head to feet.

Why is the maid on the wind-swept beach?

Why do her arms to the blue waves reach?

Wherefore the light in her eager eye,

As the sun goes down and the night comes nigh?

“Dance, dance, dance,
O beautiful sea!” she sings.
“And south winds bless with a kind caress,
And lend to the good ship wings!
Hush, hush, hush,
O eagerly-longing heart —
Only the blue of waves that are few
Keepeth two lovers apart.

“Bring to me blossoms richly rare;
Bring me a chalice of wine;
The sweetest sweets must lie in my hair,
And the bonniest bloom be mine!
Clasp ye the folds of my floating dress,
With a girdle of lilies white,
And soft in the sweep of each wayward tress
Let an amaranth gleam to-night.
Sing, sing, sing,
Your happiest songs, O sea!
And still as a grave be every wave
That beareth my love to me!”

.

Over the living and over the dead,
The night glides on with mysterious tread,
And down through her dim, translucent bars
Droppeth a gleam of the amber stars,
Lighting the face of the maiden fair,
Lighting the brown of her tangled hair,

Kissing the lily-buds, drooped and dead,
 And the beautiful arms that are dropp'd like lead,
 Never again from the wind-swept beach
 To the trembling blue of the waves to reach;
 For, answering back her passionate call,
 Came a line, "Forgive me!" — that was all.
 And the wind's sad whisper of "Dust to dust"
 Blends with a wail for the young who trust!

DAYBREAK.

DAYBREAK is folding the fair, faint sky;
 Quiet is compassing sea and shore;
 Only a delicate, dolorous sigh
 Stirs where my Saintliest sails no more.

Here, last summer, at dusk and dawn,
 I kissed her asleep, and I kissed her awake;
 And lightly my low laugh leaped to the lawn,
 Claspng her close for my sweet love's sake.

Ah, me! for Weariness walks the way
 My feet must follow to find their rest;
 And a cry is crushed in my heart, to-day,
 For a something missing from off my breast.

Whence is it taken? What calmful clime
Thrills to the wooing, wonderful tone,
Whose sweets were woven with every rhyme
My soul sent sailing from zone to zone.

In the days departed? If I could reach
My helpless hands where the high harps be,
If my feet were firm on the evergreen beach —
Would the long-lost comfort come back to me?

Aye, for a daybreak waits for the dark
Of my sorrowful soul, *somewhere*, I know,
Where, soaring and singing, as never the lark,
I shall be glad for the gloom below.

OUR DARLING.

OVER the bars of a dainty cage
She bent with a shivering cry and moan,
Tossing her white arms to and fro,
For the door was ajar, and her bird had flown.

Close to my bosom I held the child;
I told her a tale and I sang her a song;
But the sorrowful wind and my sorrowful heart
Echoed her moaning the whole day long.

And ah! from her feverish lips that night
There broke, like the cry of the lonesome sea,
A pitiful wailing that haunts me yet :
“ Birdie, my birdie, come back to me!”

Over the snow of a dainty cot
I bent with a shivering cry and moan,
For, ah! by somebody’s hand, somewhere,
A door was ajar, and my bird had flown.

Deep in my bosom I hide my pain ;
I smile for my love and I sing him a song ;
But the tenderest tissues of heart and of brain
Are broken with wailing the whole day long.

And at night, at night, from my hungry lips,
Pallid and cold as the dead may be,
A wail floats up to the shore unseen :
“ Birdie, my Birdie, come back to me!”





LAST YEAR.

I SANG you a song, O silvery Sea,
Last year in the summery weather,
When, here by the cliffs, where the gray gulls be,
We chatted and laughed together ;
And my soul swept, swelling through all the song,
In rollicking, rapidest marches,
As you swept gaily and grandly along
Under the cool cliffs' arches.

I told you a tale, O beautiful Sea,
Last year under shadowy cover,
Of stars growing sorrowful, envying me
The one great love of my lover.
And I said : " O darling ! my heart is light
As the down of a fluttering feather ;"
But ah, ah me for my heart to-night,
And I wish we were dead together.

I wish you had wrapped me from forehead to feet,
With your wide waves under and over,
While the tide of my passionate pulse yet beat
With faith in the love of my lover!
Sweet had my sleep been, beautiful sea,
And happy my dreaming forever;
But to-night, for my heart, it is ah, ah me!
And faith will come back to it never.

SATURDAY NIGHT.

THO castle and cottage the night comes down,
With sombre visage and shadowy vest,
And, happily, out from the dusty town,
The weary are hastening home to rest.
The dew falls soft where the buds had birth;
The sunset splendor is shut from sight;
And hearts, all over the beautiful earth,
Are glad for the coming of Saturday Night.

Placid and peaceful the sweet sea lies,
Braided with bountiful breaths of balm,
Darkling and daring as dangerous eyes,
Languid from laughter and cruel with calm.
The winds are asleep where the bird-notes were,
And loneliest lilies, that leant to the light
From slumberous solitudes, thrill as they stir
In the dusk and the dew-fall of Saturday Night.

O, the Saturday Night! To hamlet and hall,
Where life is lonely, or love is sweet,
It beareth a tenderer grace for all —
Repose for the bosom, repose for the feet.
And the tired heart and the tired brain
Will rise from slumber afresh and new,
When morning has climbed to the hills again,
And Sabbath is drinking the dawn and the dew.

I sit and I think of a happier dawn,
That waits to gladden my yearning sight,
When, fairer than fairy, and fleetier than fawn,
My life leaps free from its Saturday Night!
From the deluging dark and the ruinous rain:
From the phantoms of rest in the restless way;
With never the pulse of a passionate pain
Beating my bosom to dull decay!

And oft, when the weary have sunk to sleep,
And silences over the earth are gone,
I watch through the night-time, heavy and deep,
For a fairer than ever an earthly dawn —
For a glimpse of the jasper bars dropped down,
And the beautiful break of a Sabbath's light,
That waits on the emerald hills to crown
The close of my life's last Saturday Night.

And I hear, sometimes, where the billows are,
The feet of my Beautiful, gone before,

And smile to remember it is not far

From the reach of my hands to the saintly shore,
Nor long till my kisses will cover *her* face,

Fair in the flood of Eternity's light —
And I shall forget, in her truest embrace,

The dream and the danger of Saturday Night!

THE MAID OF THE ROCKS.

A MAIDEN sitteth with laughing lips
Alone in her rocky arbor,
Watching the heavily-freighted ships
Go drifting into the harbor.

Into the harbor — for day is done,

And the birds and the bees are sleeping,
And the purple shadows, one by one,
Over the waves are creeping.

Rare is the Maid of the Rocks, and rare

The song on her lips of coral;
And the sea-weed dripping against her hair,
Is better than bay or laurel.

“Better than laurel or bay” she says,

As she leans to the face in the water,
And smiles at a dream of the olden days,
That the fluttering vine hath brought her.

The odorous winds from the south south-east
Come rollicking over the billows,
Telling of fairies that frolic and feast
'Mid the dews of the high-hung willows;
The high-hung willows, the willows afar,
That swing like a fringe from the ledges,
And prison the glimmer of sun and of star
From the shoreland's shadowy edges.

And fair from the heaven of the maiden's dream
Where the sprites of the old time hover,
Where the rose and the lily of memory gleam,
Looketh the face of her lover;
Her boyish lover whose bride she will be, —
She blushes, yet smiles to remember,
When his ship comes gayly, across the sea,
In the dawn of the next September.

O maid of the Rocks! dream on, dream on,
With the weeds and the winds in your tresses,
But dream of the beautiful days agoe,
And the sweets of the old caresses!
The old caresses! for never again
Will his ship come over the billow,
And your hands will cover in vain, in vain,
With blossoms the bridal pillow.

For he slumbers well by night and by day,
Lulled by the light waves flowing,

And the word that his parted lips would say,
 Is surely beyond your knowing ;
 Beyond your knowing, though low ye lean
 To list what the waves are telling ;
 And your heart would break, could you know they
 mean
 But a low funereal knelling.

Yet dream, dream on, fair maid of the Rocks,
 With the May-time blooms about you!
 But the mermaids toy with your lover's locks,
 And his rest is sweet without you ;
 Is sweet without you, who may not be
 A bride in the next September,
 For close to the passionate heart of the Sea
 He slumbers too well to remember.

MADLINE.

WHEN the gold of a new day lieth
 Over the jubilant East,
 And bees out of heathery hollows
 Haste to their flowery feast,
 With amber aglow in her tresses,
 With hyacinths hid in her eyes,
 To her play in the quaint old kitchen,
 Merry-lipped Madeline hies.

She knows where the sunshine leapeth
First from its mother, the Dawn,
With pulses alive with laughter,
And feet like the feet of a fawn ;
And low to herself, while watching
Her bubbles that soar and shine,
She sings, " I am merry, as merry
As bees in my jessamine vine."

O! her life may be ever as lowly
As lily-buds blossoming sweet,
Where winds to the passionate waters
The whispers of birds repeat.
She never may thrill to kisses
That fall from the lips of Fame,
And my song may of earthly record
Be all that will hold her name ;

But I smile to think how a finger
Is writing her, up above,
" Beloved of the pure Evangel,
Beloved of the God of love ! "
And I seem to hear, as I listen,
The seal of a kiss divine
Through sun and through silence falling
To the lips of our Madeline.



BLOSSOMS.

BY the forest that edges the red-clover meadow,
Where bird-notes are merriest, brightly they
grew,
And, kneeling low down in the maple's soft shadow,
A-smiling and singing, I plucked them for you.

Could I sing, do you think, if my blue billows broke
not

Glad from their fetters at touches of Spring?
Or smile, if my sweet water-lilies awoke not,
Fairily fanned by a humming-bird's wing?

And when but this morning, where loving leaves
rimple,

I found the faint traces of two little feet,
Could my heart have throb'd on, had I known not
they dimple

To-day the gold sands of the heavenly street?

Nay, nay! and I said, though my tremulous fingers
Ached to be lost in the darling's bright hair,
"The Father knows best! I can smile while there
 lingers
The print of her head in the laces I wear."

One time far away in the past, I remember,
She flew to my arms in a passion of woe,
Crying out that the morn was as bleak as December,
And all her fair flowers were under the snow.

Then kissing her wet eyes, I lingered to teach her
How Spring would bring bloom to her blossoms
 again,
But never a gleam from my logic could reach her,
And words of sweet wisdom were uttered in vain.

But when the bleak days of the winter were over,
And sunshine was warming the heath and the hills,
She clung to my breast as a bee to the clover,
Saying softly, "I think it is best as God wills."

So we — when we touched the pale eyelids that oped
 not,
And scents of a coffin were filling our room —
How madly we shut from our poor hearts that hoped
 not,
Each ray of the wisdom that gildeth the tomb!

But afterward, when the swift lightning that blinded
 us
 Faded away o'er life's storm-shaken hills,
 We knew that God still was in heaven and minded
 us,
 When we said humbly — *'Tis best as He wills!*

DREAM-LAND.

I DREAMED of my cottage home last night,
 I 'Way down on the Tennessee shore,
 Where for hours I've sat, in the sunshine bright,
 And mocked at the water's roar;
 Dreamed that I heard the soft wind sigh
 In the forest, leafy and dark,
 When unto my bower the morn brought nigh
 The song of the musical lark.

I gathered the lilies that grew in the vale,
 And the roses that dotted the lea,
 And drank from the fountain that watered the dale
 With streams unpolluted and free;
 And when the fair moonlight was lifting the shade
 From the brow of the mystical Even,
 My mother's soft hand on my forehead was laid,
 While she taught me "Our Father in Heaven."

I sang in the dream-land! but gone is the light
That gilded its crystalline shore,
And mildewed and blighted the beauty so bright
Of the home I shall see never more!
I have wakened, alas! but the sunshine is cold,
And the northern winds shriek as they fly;
I am longing my arms in sweet silence to fold
By the Tennessee waters, and die.

ALL TOGETHER AGAIN.

ALL together again,
'Neath the happy homestead roof,
Where the sunshine comes down, without shadow or
frown,
To the cot from the wayside aloof.
O glad are the faces we meet,
And sweet are the smiles that we greet,
As we gather in mirth round the dear cottage hearth,
And the tale of our wand'rings repeat.

All together again!
We'll banish all sorrow and pain,
For the days will be long ere, with laughter and
song,
We come back to the cottage again.

We'll think not of joys that are fled,
Of the hopes that are faded and dead,
But be merry all day as the child at its play,
Or the blue bird that sings overhead.

O happy are we!
Too weary yet longer to roam,
Who gladly come back to the old beaten track,
And sit down with the dear ones at home.
The wind coming over the sea,
The lambkins asleep on the lea,
And the robin-redbreast in her soft swinging nest,
Shall all start at the sound of our glee.

We will think of to-day,
When in distance again we shall roam;
But only in dreams, when the summer moon gleams,
Shall we all be together at home.

Sweet home, where the wind never grieves
As it rustles the soft shining leaves,
And where all the day long steals a low rippling
song
From the swallow's nest under the eaves.

Chorus. All together again!

Let our voices ring out in their glee,
For the sunshine that falls on the blessed old walls
Sees nothing so happy as we.



BIRD OF THE SNOWY WING.

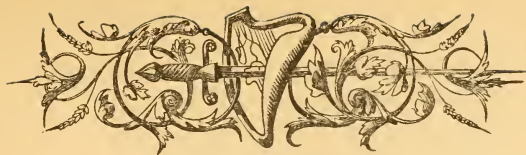
BIRD of the snowy wing, wanderer from heaven,
Bearing the breath of the Paradise blooms,
Singing a song of the loved and forgiven,
 Furling thy pinion in lone forest glooms;
Bird, fair and fetterless! tell me if ever,
 When the calm splendor of noonday is near,
The worshipp'd, the nameless, over the river,
 Think of and love us the same as when here?

Tell me if ever, with holy lips trembling,
 They cross their calm breasts where the cool rivers
 glow,
Remembering those who, with spirits dissembling,
 Grope their blind way in the blackness below?
Bird of the snowy wing, tortureless, tameless!
 Tell them, at morning, at noon, and at night,
We watch for the hand of the worshipped, the name-
 less —
 The hand that shall lift us at length to the light.

Tell them the earth hath no gladness nor beauty
Since they departed, and left us in tears ;
Proudly we walk in the highway of duty,
Scorning the clasp of the wearisome years ;
Yet, in our bosoms the pulses are throbbing
Slowly and heavily all the long days ;
And ever, forever, the wan winds are sobbing —
Even as we — for their love-laden ways.

Bird of the spirit-land, wanderer from heaven !
Hasten afar through the cloud-covered blue,
And tell them we'll wait, when the mystical Even
Laves the low lids of the daisies with dew —
Wait for the step of the worshipped, the nameless,
Eyes that will smile in the old tender way,
Lips that will lure us to life that is blameless —
Bird of the snowy wing, hasten away !





COMMENCEMENT SONG.

A WAY from this sheltering, safe retreat,
This isle in the great life-ocean,
Where dews are swinging in censers sweet,
And fair young lilies are under our feet,
We are turning slowly away, away,
With a smothered sigh on our lips to-day,
Pluming our wings as the sea-birds do,
For a voyage over the waters blue,
And hiding the heart's emotion.

The winds are sweet, and the winds are low,
Down where the ships are lying ;
We see the beckoning waves that glow
Where the white sails come, and the white sails go ;
We hear, as we listen, a tender call
In the billows' rise and the billows' fall,
And our pulses beat to the beat of the sea !
But the hearts are wedded to memory,
That make to the sea replying.

We smile, and we sigh ; take palm from palm,
To be by the world-winds drifted —
Some where the waters are cool and calm,
To be folded ever in breaths of balm ;
Some amid terrible thunder-shocks
To be clashed and crashed on the rose-covered rocks ;
And some, with lilies on brow and breast,
Into Eternity's beautiful rest
To be by evangels lifted.

Others will wait at the harbor-bar
Some beautiful boat's returning ;
Will watch for a shimmer of sails afar,
Fairer than ever the morning star,
For the glow and the gleam of an amber tress
Hiding a young brow's loveliness ;
Yet still forever in vain, in vain !
And still forever, till life shall wane,
Life's bitterest lesson learning.

And yet, above us the infinite sky
Of the infinite land is shining ;
No blossoms fall from the bowers high,
No whispered word on the wind comes nigh ;
But soft through our dreaming a melody floats,
An aria tender — a softness of notes
That holds us all mute, in the heart of a calm,
As wavelets are held in the midsummer's balm,
The source of their peace divining.

And so do we smile, reach hands and part,
To be by the world-winds drifted ;
Praying, " God shelter each proud high heart
From the luring of earth, from its pitiless art ;
And pilot us over the waves that glow
Where the white sails come and the white sails go ;
Till fair before us the glad hills rise,
And up to the harbor of Paradise
We from the deeps are lifted."

WHAT WILL YE ANSWER ?

OVER the hill, through the solemn night,
In a cottage browned by the drifting years,
Lieth a maiden still and white
As the death-robe wet by the watcher's tears.
And over the sea, in a palace grand,
Whose base is swept by the murmurous tide,
The resistless charm of that far-off' land,
Is the false and the faithless Allen Clyde.

Over the hill where the elm-trees grow,
Where the wind glides with its tenderest tread,
Rocking her thin form to and fro,
Sitteth a mother alone with her dead !

Age has not silvered the brown, wavy hair,
 Nor ploughed in her forehead the furrows deep;
 Yet from her bosom is wailing the prayer,
 "Give me forgetfulness, Father, in sleep!"

Over the river that lieth between
 The land of tears and the city of light —
 Over the river, by hands unseen,
 Mother and maiden were carried to-night.
 It is well: we are glad that the struggle is o'er:
 We shall stand by the white throne side by side,
 And God will ask, *Who murdered Lenore?*
 And what will ye answer, Allen Clyde?

LITTLE GRACE.

MAMMA, darling, let me sketch you,
 Sitting in your easy-chair,
 With the fingers of the sunset
 Toying with your tawny hair.
 Such a picture you will make me,
 With your sweet eyes all aglow,
 And your cheeks like reddest roses —
 Mamma, let me sketch you so."

And I sat the while my darling,
 Dainty little darling Grace,

With her wondrous skilful fingers
Drew the outlines of my face.
And I said, my pulses beating
As a queen's upon a throne,
"She will make a better artist
Than the world has ever known."

Slumber's seal to-night is lying
O'er her happy hazel eyes ;
But the raining of my kisses
Cannot reach her where she lies,
With her snowy fingers folded
O'er a picture of my face,
And above her, carved in marble,
"Angels keep our little Grace."

Thrice the spring has waked the rivers,
Thrice the summer buds had birth,
Thrice the autumn's splendor faded,
Since we missed her from the earth.
Still, I think that up in heaven
She hath found an artist's place,
And that underneath my picture
Is the name of little Grace.





IMMORTAL.

THE good die not ! We heap above their bosoms
The clay of valleys, or the seaside sands ;
And violets twine, fair anemone blossoms,
To crown their resting with our trembling hands.
Around their names we wreath sweet memory's
laurel ;
And poet-voices set their deeds to song ;
And to our lives, flushed rosier than coral,
The sweetnesses of happier days belong.

For O, we hear above the river's flowing,
And through the mists that wrap the shadowy
shore,
A sound of well-known footsteps, coming, going,
Across the eternal valleys, evermore !
And sometimes, when the birds and bees are sleeping
In the deep shadows of the budding wold,
We thrill at touches through our loose hair creeping,
And lost arms 'round us, as in nights of old.

Perchance we dream: I know not. If the vision
Comforts and calms, I deem it from above;
Content to wait until the gate Elysian
Shall open widely at the touch of Love!
And so, O true hearts sealed with seal of slumber!
O white souls greateuing in your outward flight!
We weave your names into no mournful number,
For with the morning, lo! there cometh light.

THE EXILE'S SONG TO THE SHIPS.

N EARER and nearer ye come, ye come,
Like birds of beauty, o'er waves of foam!
And I, outlining your silvery sails,
With an eye that dims and a cheek that pales,
Send lover's greeting across the free,
Unquiet billows 'twixt you and me.

'Tis lonesome here with my heart alone!
The winds creep over the rocks with a moan,
And shuddering, whisper: "It is not fair!"
As they lift from my forehead the curtaining hair.
Ah! nobody ever called *me* "fair."
O my ships, I love you! but who loves me?
The sweet young mother across the sea
In her grave, too narrow, alas! for me?

Aye, only she! she would stir in her shroud,
If she heard me moaning but half aloud,
And rise from her grave, in a wild surprise,
If she saw the death in my hungry eyes.

But what, O ships, with your shining sails!
As homeward ye glide in the friendly gales,
Are ye bearing to me? What from the streams
That water the land of my happiest dreams?
What from the grotto, the hill, and the shore,
That smile under skies I shall see nevermore?
Nearer, come nearer, beautiful ships!
Till I touch your sails with my lonesome lips,
Till I tread your decks; for I come, I come
With bare feet laved in the white sea foam,
To ground most holy! and veil my face
Like a nun who findeth worshipping place
Apart from her cloister; for have ye not been
Where my memory liveth fresh and green?
Is not the scent of my father's pines
In every strand of your tightened lines?
And the breath of the roses, too, that wave
In the wind that caresses my mother's grave?
Shall I not see on each glittering spar
A gleam of the splendor I worship afar?

O pitiful Christ! to the pitiless deep
I would barter my life, for an hour to weep

With my famishing heart and my shelterless head,
Crushing the daisies that cover my dead!

Yet nearer, come nearer, beautiful ships!
Till I dimple your sails with my unkissed lips.
Nearer and nearer, until I can stand
Caressing your masts with my clinging hand;
Wrapping about them tenderly
The gold of my tresses, bright as the sea,
And leaving, for love of the old, old years,
In their shadows the sheen of an Exile's tears.

AT THE BALL.

O BUT the scene was a fairy scene!
You, as knightly a "Bedivere"
As tossed "Excalibur" glittering keen
Through the moonlight into the "middle mere;"
And twice your "favors" were over my heart;
Twice we swung in the waltz together,
Talking of battles, of books, and art,
A little, too, of the biting weather;
And you never guessed, when you said: "My sword
I would give, sweet lady! to see your face,"
That the heart whose wealth at your feet is poured,
You clasped through its cover of ancient lace.

Did I know you? If, in a time to come —
 Deeming you yet in the lower land —
 I wander far from the wearying hum
 Of worldly voices, reaching my hand
 To toy with the grass of a nameless grave,
 And bending my brows to the tender dew
 O' the daisy cups; I shall know, my brave,
 If the grass and the daisies cover *you*.
 And I think or ever my lips are weaned
 From the barren breasts of our mother Earth,
 I shall need no aid of seraph or fiend
 To find *you*, sweet, in the sweet, new birth.

So I knew and claimed you, last night, at the ball—
 The “ball of the season;” aye, of years;
 A wonder of wonders; and over all
 The blaze of a thousand chandeliers.
 But blind were you, till the midnight bell
 Struck, and the masks were laid aside:
 How your blue eyes brightened! Well, ah! well,
 To another feast you will lead your bride,
 And her true soul, bared to your searching gaze
 Under the palms of the Perfect Land,
 Will find content — for the dusky days
 Shall blind no more. You will understand.





THE RIVER OF DEATH.

THERE'S many a holy and rapturous strain
Floating over the river of death
To the weary, who wait, like the ripened grain,
For the touch of the Reaper's breath.
There are flashes of light on each lifted wave,
As it glides from the farther shore
To the shadowy border our tear-drops lave
In the lull of the waters' roar.
And they hear the music, solemn and grand,
But heed not the eddying tide,
For they catch a gleam of the forms that stand
By the stream on the other side.
And we see a light on each calm, white brow,
Like the glow of a roseate dawn,
But never the lips on the lids of snow,
All the night that we deem so long ;
And we only know, when we hear no moan,
As we watch for the passing breath,

That angels are tenderly lifting them down
The banks of the river of Death ;
Only know that their footsteps are pressing the sands
That are washed by the wandering waves ;
And that over the billows outstretched are their hands,
Tow'rd the shoreland that shelters and saves.
And over their bosoms fresh garlands we lay,
And lilies we twine in their hair ;
“ Fit emblems of beauty new-blighted,” we say,
“ These garlands and lily-buds are ! ”

I call it not blighted ; I deem them not dead,
Who pass thus away in their bloom,
For they rest in their beauty where tears are not shed
O'er the darkness and blight of the tomb.
And oft, leaning low from my lattice, alone,
I list, if perchance I may hear,
Through the dark of my willows, that sway and moan
Like mute mourners over a bier,
The flutter of sails, and the wooing of waves,
And the plash of an odorous oar,
As the Silent comes from his coralline-caves,
To carry me safe to the shore.
And I cry for the swoop of a seraphim-wing,
For the clasp of a seraphim-hand,
For the flowing of songs that my Beautiful sing
In the light of the luminous land !
But, alas ! I listen and cry in vain ;
Yet I know that my faltering feet

Will wander ere long from the valley of Pain
 To the tide where two mysteries meet ;
 That I shall grow glad as the gods below,
 And calm as the Christ above,
 Blind to the beat of the blinding snow,
 Secure on the bosom of Love :
 Of love that is infinite, love that will bear
 Me far to the fair and the free,
 Where fadeless, light lilies and immortelles are,
 Where my missing are waiting for me.

HE CANNOT CALL WHEN I WILL NOT
 ANSWER.

HE cannot call when I will not answer —
 Maurice my darling, Maurice my king !
 For he smiled down on my lone life's desert,
 And, lo ! amid blossoms the birds did sing,
 And cool dews fell where the fires of sorrow
 Burned through the brightness of body and brain,
 And up to the purples of loyalest living
 My life leaped free from its sepulchre-chain.

He cannot call when I will not answer !
 'Round me forever, wherever I go,
 Is the spell of a beautiful day evanished,
 And sound of a deep voice whispering low :

“I have named you mine! I shall claim you ever,
Despite all demons under the sea,
Or passions of earth, or praises of heaven;
And God’s own angels will envy me.”

O’er us an ominous cloud divided;
Glad from his palace the sun beamed through,
Crowning my lover my king forever,—
Crowning the hour of our adieu.
And into the amber of all my tresses,
That never another’s breath can cross,
His kisses fell, as a rain that blesses
The growing glooms of the moorland-moss.

He cannot call when I will not answer!
If he cried from Heaven’s remotest rim,
Or out from the deeps of Hades, straightway
My life would listen and leap to him.
Through flashes of fire and sword, or moaning
Of thunder that hides in the tempest’s den,
Mad with delight, I would fly, unheeding
The pity of saints or the scorn of men.

He cannot call when I will not answer —
Maurice my darling, Maurice my king!
For he smiled down on my lone life’s desert,
And, lo! amid blossoms the birds did sing.

I have named him mine ! I shall claim him ever,
Despite all demons under the sea,
Or passions of earth, or powers of heaven ;
And God's own angels will envy me.

AT THE LAST.

GIVE me something sweet to drink,
Earth, my friend ;
For life's skein is wound, I think,
To the end.
All the threads were sorely tangled,
It is true,
By the Winder roughly handled,
Though but few ;
And my soul is wild with fever
Of unrest
For a burden lifted never
From my breast.
Therefore, therefore, ere I sink
At your feet,
Give me something sweet to drink,
Something sweet.

Thou hast fed my life with aloes,
Earth, my friend,

Given me wine of myrrh and aloes
 To the end.
 Love me now with tenderest loving
 At the last,
 And my soul shall hide its loathing
 With the past.
 Hide its memory of hisses
 And of wounds,
 Underneath your calmful kisses,
 At the tombs.
 Hark! the sound of billows breaking
 At my feet;
 Quick, O Earth! my leave I'm taking!
 Something sweet!

FORSAKEN.

THIS is the hour we said "good-by,"
 Only a month ago,
 Under the roses, you and I;
 The white moon laughing up in the sky,
 The river laughing below.

This is the hour! My cheek is white
 As the winter's icicle sleet;
 For a terrible terror mocks the night;
 A cloud has hidden the moon from sight;
 The river cries at my feet!

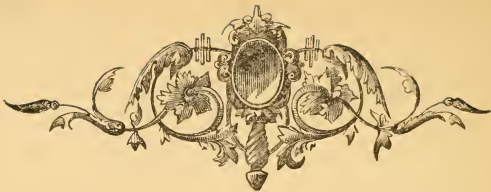
My heart is heavy down in the dark
That never a dawn can reach :
I cross my hands, and wearily hark —
The beat, beat of a broken bark
On the sands of a desolate beach !

And the beat, beat of a soul that lies
With face turned bare to the west ;
With hunger-gleams in the barren eyes,
And bosom torn with bitterest cries
For the cover of royal rest.

This is the hour we said "good-by,"
Only a month ago,
Under the roses, you and I ;
The white moon laughing up in the sky,
The river laughing below.

This is the hour, oh, sweet, sweet love !
The day and the night-time meet ;
But I cry in my bower as a wounded dove ;
For your ear is deaf as the heaven above,
And my heart is under your feet !





SUMMER DAYS.

THE sound o' your singing sinks and swells,
Over the growing green o' the hills,
And your laughter leaps like a chime of bells,
From the happy heart of the rippling rills,
Like a chime of busiest bridal-bells
Swinging aloft in an ancient tower ;
And I list the music that sinks and swells,
Till my soul grows dark as the lonesome hour.

Merry and glad are the songs you sing,
Trailing your robes o'er the purple land ;
Is it nothing to you that the promise-ring
Hath fallen loose from my darling's hand ?
Nothing at all ! On her wasting cheek
Your breath will brighten the hectic glow ;
And I— my spirit is wild and weak !
Shall I curse you now for the coming blow ?

I listened to-night, and I heard them say :

“She will gather strength when the Summer is
shed !”

I know that your kisses will bring decay,

And that your caresses will leave her — dead !

I know that your odorous buds will shine

On the snow of her bosom grown too cold ;

And the heart, the young heart wedded with mine,

Will be hurried away to the churchyard mould.

Therefore I hate you, both body and soul !

And therefore I fling you my curses deep !

Over the hills do ye hear them roll ?

Or down by the sea are ye lying asleep ?

Ye should sleep forever, if I were He

Who guides, they tell me, our winding ways,

Forever and well by the wailing sea,

O cruelest, cruelest summer days !

They say I am mad, and they coyly watch

If away from my prison I chance to stir ;

And they listen well, but they cannot catch

The sound of my feet when I fly to her.

I hie me away in the wild midnight,

When the ghosts are out in the churchyard wet ;

And my fingers glide through her tresses bright,

Till the stars go out and the moon is set.

She is mine! You may hurry across the dell,
 O passionate Summer, and kiss and kill;
 But the soul of the maiden that loves me well,
 With my own is wedded for good or ill,
 And forever and aye! So, in bitterest scorn
 Of your limited power, O days of gloom!
 I wait for your tread in the tasselling corn,
 And your lengthening shade o'er my darling's
 tomb.

A PRAYER.

FATHER in heaven! the whispering hours
 Smile in the sunlight on shoreland and sea;
 Bird-songs are glad in the far forest bowers;
 Nature is great in her glory of thee!
 Billows and breezes Te Deums are blending;
 Myriad voices thy praises repeat;
 So let our souls' grateful incense ascending
 Mix with the music of saints at thy feet.

Father in heaven! — when storms are about us,
 When the sweet sunlight is shut from our sight,
 When foes from within, and foes from without us,
 Fold us in fetters of blackness and blight,

Listening kindly to all our complaining,
Lighting the dark of the dangerous way,—
Be thou the rock of our spirits' sustaining,
Be thou our shelter by night and by day.

Father in heaven! when lightly upon us
Lie all the coronal kisses of Death,
When, like a vision, dear faces fade from us,
And all of earth fails with our fluttering breath,
Shine thou, serene, from the Paradise-portal,
Over the black of the billows we cross,
And bear us to bowers of beauty immortal,
Stained with no shadow of love or of loss.

A-GENOUX.

LET me lie at your feet, my queen,
In the heart of a rose-red trance;
Your lips have my kisses between;
Your hair with the summer's romance
Is alive, and your body, wax-white,
That never the breath of a sin
Crosses over to stain, is alight
With flame from Love's altar within.

You are fairer to me, my queen,
Than ever the day is fair;

You whisper ; I listen and lean
Where Love's tender amaranths are,
And I say to the gods, She is mine,
And sweeter than seraph or saint !
And, drunken with royalest wine,
I am deaf to dull Duty's complaint.

The face of the moon turned from me,
Or ever the long days were done,
You came, and dawn was upon me,
Sweeter than heaven had won.
If I miss you, there's nothing to gladden ;
If I lose you, nothing to gain ;
Your love will not mock me, nor madden
The pulses of body or brain.

Let me die at your feet, my queen !
Close eyes and hush breath where you stand,
With my kisses laid lightly between
The snows of your forehead and hand :
Full-orbed and full-throated, above me,
As stars to the river-brinks, lean,
And whisper again that you love me,
Belovéd Cassandra, my queen !





VIOLETS.

VIOLETS! violets! bring me blue violets!
Violets wild as my own mountain air;
Bring them from shadow-nook,
Down by the meadow-brook,
Some for my bosom, and some for my hair.

Violets! violets! bring me blue violets!
Violets wet with the sweet-shining dew;
Low where the zephyrs pass,
Gay o'er the growing grass,
Lift they their faces, love, waiting for you.

Violets! violets! bring me blue violets!
Violets fresh from the shadowy wood;
Life holds them slenderly,
Gather them tenderly;
I would have no other gems, if I could.

Violets! violets! bring me blue violets!
 Violets bright from the far-forest gloom;
 She of the golden hair
 Sought for them everywhere,
 Only to garland herself for the tomb.

So they are dear to me, timid, wild violets!
 Dearer than diamonds the costliest are;
 Bring them with tender hand
 Up from the shadow-land,
 Some for my bosom, and some for my hair.

IN TRANSITION.

CLOSER fold your arms around me,
 Sing a low some twilight tune,
 For the night, beloved, hath found me
 At the tender time of noon.

Say the old words softly over,
 All the words of sweetest worth;
 You have been so long my lover —
 Truest lover on the earth!

What to me were storms of morning,
 With your low voice in my ear?

What is now Death's early warning,
Since it haply finds me here ?

Here, with all my wavelike tresses
On your bosom flowing free !
Folded in the fond caresses
That are all of earth to me !

Grieve not, as a wind that misses
Something sweet from hill-side sod ;
I am going from your kisses
To the loving arms of God.

And what time His wondrous fingers
Find your soft sighs in my hair,
I shall say : " Alone *he* lingers ;
Give to *him* thy kindest care."

Nearer ! — lean a little nearer ;
Something dark between us lies ;
I shall surely see you clearer
From the heights of Paradise.

Fondest, truest, *best* I name you —
Nay, my darling, let me go ;
I shall call you, I shall claim you :
Kiss me — it is better so.



JUBILATE.

O BEAUTIFUL dream, bringing brightness and bloom,

Broken off at your sweetest by demon of doom!

O sails that were shattered, O ships that were hurled,
Unwarned, to the deeps of a desolate world!

O swift-soaring soul, struggling up unalarmed,
From a furnace that never thy raiment has harmed,
Wake the silence with singing! for happier dreams
Than thy dead dreams await thee, and goldener
gleams!

And there's splendor of living, and love that outlasts
The tenure of Time with its faiths and its fasts;

There is wine of wild kisses and dew of delight
On the lips ye have thirsted for morning and night;

There is grandeur and glory forever and aye

For thee and for thine! soar, singing, away

Through the dusks and the dawns, O soul! that hast
known

And *can* know no shipwreck! God knoweth His own.



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