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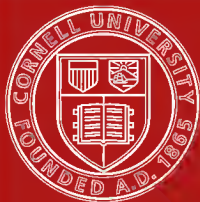
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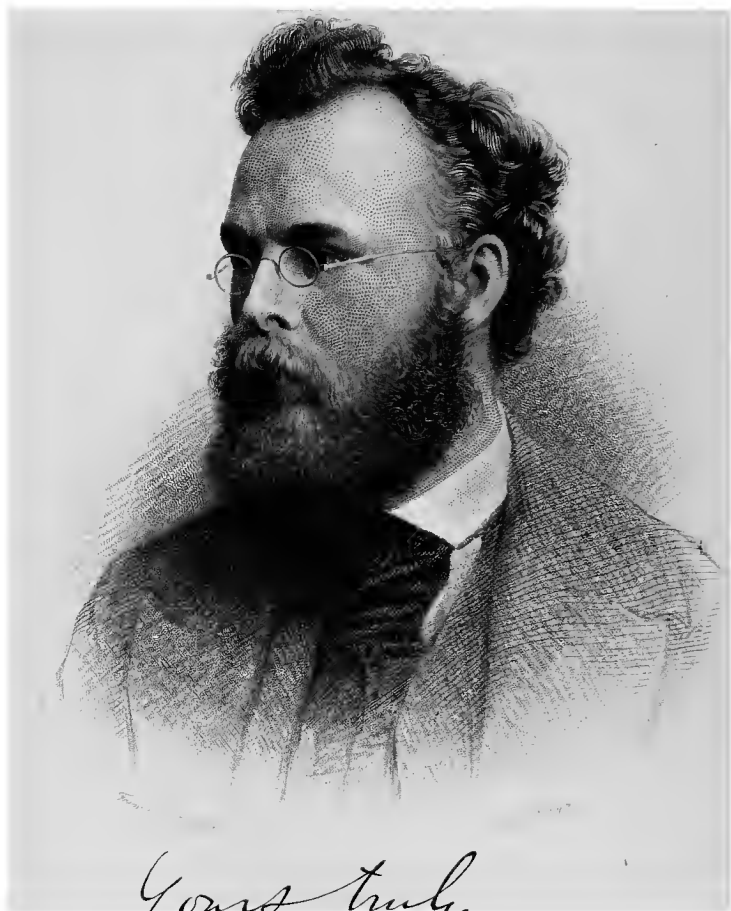
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THE
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OF
ROBERT BUCHANAN



WITH A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR

London
CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1884



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Early Poems.

PASTORAL PICTURES.

I.

DOWN THE RIVER.

How merry a life the little River leads,
Piping a vagrant ditty free from care ;
Now rippling as it rustles through the reeds
And broad-leaved lilies sailing here and there,

Now lying level with the clover meads
And musing in a mist of golden air !
Bearing a pastoral peace where'er it goes,
Narrow'd to mirth or broaden'd to repose :
Through copsy villages and tiny towns,
By belts of woodland singing sweet,
Pausing where sun and shadow meet
Without the darkness of the breezy downs,
Bickering o'er the keystone as it flows
'Neath mossy bridges arch'd like maiden feet ;

And slowly widening as it seaward grows,
Because its summer mission grows complete.

Run seaward, for I follow !

Let me cross
My garden-threshold ankle-deep in moss.
Sweet Stream, your heart is beating and I hear it,

As conscious of its pleasure as a girl's :
O little River, whom I love so well,
Is it with something of a human spirit
You twine those lilies in your sedgy curls ?
Take up the inner voice we both inherit,
O little River of my love, and tell !

The rain has crawled from yonder mountain-side,
And passing, left its footprints far and wide.

The path I follow winds by cliff and scar,
Purple and dark and trodden as I pass,
The foxglove droops, the crocus lifts its star,

And bluebells brighten in the dewy grass.
Over deep pools the willow hangs its hair,
Dwarf birches show their sodden roots and shake

Their melting jewels on my bending brows,
The mottled mavis pipes among their boughs

For joy of five unborn in yonder brake.
The River, narrow'd to a woody glen,
Leaps trembling o'er a little rocky ledge,
Then broadens forward into calm again
Where the gray moor-hen builds her nest of sedge ;

Caught in the dark those willow-trees have made,

Lipping the yellow lilies o'er and o'er,
It flutters twenty feet along the shade,
Halts at the sunshine like a thing afraid,
And turns to kiss the lilies yet once more.

Those little falls are lurid with the rain
That ere the day is done will come again.
The River falters swoll'n and brown,
Falters, falters, as it nears them,
Shuddering back as if it fears them,
Falters, falters, falters, falters,
Then dizzily rushes down.

But all is calm again, the little River
Smiles on and sings the song it sings for ever.

Here at the curve it passes tilth and farm,
And faintly flowing onward to the mill
It stretches out a little azure arm
To aid the miller, aiding with a will,
And singing, singing still.

B

Sweet household sounds come sudden on
mine ear :

The waggons rumbling in the rutted lanes,
The village clock and trumpet Chanticleer,
The flocks and cattle on the marish-plains,
With shouts of urchins ringing loud and
clear ;

And lo ! a Village, breathing breath that
curls

In foam-white wreaths through ancient
sycamores !

A hum of looms comes through the cottage
doors.

I stumble on a group of country girls
Faring afield thro' deep and dewy grass ;
Small urchins rush from sanded kitchen-
floors

To stare with mouths wide open as I pass.

But yonder cottage where the woodbine
grows,

Half cottage and half inn, a pretty place,
Tempts ramblers with the country cheer it
shows ;

Entering, I rob the threshold of a rose,
And meet the welcome on a mother's face.
Come, let me sit. The scent of garden
flowers

Flits through the casement of the sanded
room,

Hitting the sense with thoughts of summer
hours .

When half the world has budded into bloom.
Is that the faded picture of our host
Shading the plate of pansies where I sit—
That lean-limb'd stripling straighter than a
post,

Clad in a coat that seems a sorry fit ?
I drink his health in this his own October,
That bites so sharply on the thirsty tongue ;
And here he comes, but not so slim and sober
As in the days when Love and he were
young.

' Hostess ! ' I fill again and pledge the glory
Of that stout angel answering to my call,
Who changed him from the shadow on the
wall

Into the rosy tun of sack before me !

Again I follow where the river wanders.
The landscape billows into hills of thyme ;
Over the purple heights I slowly climb ;
Till in a glen of birchen-trees and boulders

I halt, beneath a heathery mountain ridge
Clothed on with amher cloud from head to
shoulders,

I wander on and gain a mossy bridge,
And watch the angling of a shepherd boy ;
Below the little river glimmers by,
Touched with a troubled sense of pain or
joy

By some new life at work in earth and sky.
The marshes there steam mist from hidden
springs,

Deep-hidden in the marsh the bittern calls,
And yonder swallow oils its ebon wings
While fluttering o'er the falls.

Below my feet the little budding flower
Thrusts up dark leaves to feel the coming
shower :

I'll trust these weather-signs and creep apart
Beneath this crag until the rain depart,—
'Twill come again and go within an hour.

The moist soft wind has died and fallen now,
The air is hot and hush'd on flower and tree,
The leaves are troubled into sighs, and see !
There falls a heavy drop upon my brow.
The cloudy standard is above unfurl'd ;
The aspen fingers of the blinded Rain
Feel for the summer eyelids of the world
That she may kiss them open once again.
Darker and darker, till with one accord
The clouds pour forth their hoard in gusts
of power,

A sunbeam rends their bowels like a sword
And frees the costly shower !

Fluttering around me and before me,
Stretched like a mantle o'er me,
The rushing shadows blind the earth and
skies,

Dazzling a darkness on my gazing eyes
With troublous gleams of radiance, like the
bright

Pigments of gold that flutter in our sight,
When with shut eyes we strain
Our aching vision back upon the brain.

Across the skies and o'er the plain
Fast fly the swollen shadows of the Rain ;
Blown dusky by,
From hill to hill they fly,
O'er solitary streams and windy downs,
O'er trembling villages and darkened towns !

I crouch beneath the crag and watch the mist
 Move on the skirts of yonder mountains gray
 Until it bubbles into amethyst
 And softly melts away.
 The thyme-bells catch their drops of silver dew,
 And quake beneath the load ;
 The squadron'd pines that shade the splash-
 ing road
 Are glimmering with a million jewels too.
 And hark ! the Spirit of the Rain
 Sings to the Summer sleeping,
 Pressing a dark damp face against the plain,
 And pausing, pausing, not for pain,
 Pausing, pausing, ere the low refrain,
 Because she cannot sing for weeping.
 She flings her cold dim arms about the
 Earth,
 That soon shall wear the blessing she has
 given,
 Then brightens thro' her tears in sunny
 mirth
 And flutters back to heaven.

A fallen sunbeam trembles at my feet,
 And as I sally forth the linnets frame
 Their throats to answer yonder laverock
 sweet.
 The jewell'd trees flash out in emerald flame.
 The bright drops fall with throbs of peace-
 ful sound,
 And melt in circles on the shallow pools
 That glisten on the ground.
 Last, Iris issues from her cloudy shrine,
 Trembling alone in heaven where she rules,
 And arching down to kiss with kisses sweet
 The bright green world that flashes at her
 feet,
 Runs liquid through her many hues divine.

II.

THE SUMMER POOL.

THERE is a singing in the summer air,
 The blue and brown moths flutter o'er the
 grass,
 The stubble bird is creaking in the wheat,
 And perch'd upon the honeysuckle hedge
 Pipes the green linnet. Oh, the golden
 world !
 The stir of life on every blade of grass,
 The motion and the joy on every bough,

The glad feast everywhere, for things that
 love
 The sunshine, and for things that love the
 shade !

Aimlessly wandering with weary feet,
 Watching the wool-white clouds that wander
 by,

I come upon a lonely place of shade,—
 A still green Pool, where with soft sound
 and stir

The shadows of o'erhanging branches sleep,
 Save where they leave one dreamy space of
 blue,

O'er whose soft stillness ever and anon
 The feathery cirrus blows. Here unaware
 I pause, and leaning on my staff I add
 A shadow to the shadows ; and behold !
 Dim dreams steal down upon me, with a hum
 Of little wings, a murmuring of boughs,—
 The dusky stir and motion dwelling here,
 Within this small green world. O'er-
 shadowed

By dusky greenery, tho' all around
 The sunshine throbs on fields of wheat and
 bean,

Downward I gaze into the dreamy blue,
 And pass into a waking sleep, wherein
 The green boughs rustle, feathery wreaths
 of cloud

Pass softly, piloted by golden airs :
 The air is still,—no birds sing any more,—
 And, helpless as a tiny flying thing,
 I am alone in all the world with God.

The wind dies—not a leaf stirs—on the Pool
 The fly scarce moves ; Earth seems to hold
 her breath

Until her heart stops, listening silently
 For the far footsteps of the coming Rain !

While thus I pause, it seems that I have
 gained

New eyes to see ; my brain grows sensitive
 To trivial things that, at another hour,
 Had passed unheeded. Suddenly the air
 Shivers, the shadows in whose midst I stand
 Tremble and blacken—the blue eye o' the
 Pool

Is closed and clouded ; with a sudden gleam,
 Oiling its wings, a swallow darteth past,
 And weedling flowers beneath my feet thrust
 up

Their leaves to feel the fragrant shower. Oh
hark!

The thirsty leaves are troubled into sighs,
And up above me, on the glistening boughs,
Patters the summer Rain!

Into a nook,
Screen'd by thick foliage of oak and beech,
I creep for shelter; and the summer shower
Murmurs around me. Oh, the drowsy
sounds!

The pattering rain, the numerous sigh of
leaves,

The deep, warm breathing of the scented air,
Sink sweet into my soul—until at last
Comes the soft ceasing of the gentle fall,
And lo! the eye of blue within the Pool
Opens again, while with a silvern gleam
Dew-diamonds twinkle moistly on the
leaves,

Or, shaken downward by the summer wind,
Fall melting on the Pool in rings of light!

III.

UP THE RIVER.

BEHIND the purple mountains lies a lake,
Steadfast thro' storm and sunshine in its
place;

Asleep 'neath changing skies, its waters make
A mirror for the tempest's thunder-face;

Thence—singing songs of glee,
Fluttering to my cottage by the sea,
By bosky glen and grove,

Past the lone shepherd, moveless as the rock
Whence stretch'd at length he views his
scatter'd flock,—

Cometh the little River that I love.

To-day I'll bid farewell to books,
And by the River loved so well,
Thro' ferny haunts and flowery nooks,
Thro' stony glen and woody dell,
The rainy river-path I'll take,
Till by the silent-sleeping lake
I hear the shepherd's bell.

The summer bleats from every rocky height,
The bluebell banks are dim with dewy light,

The heavens are clear as infants' eyes
above;

This is no day—you, little River, know it!—

For sage or poet

To localise his love,

In rippling cadence, calm and slow,
Sing, little River, as I go,
Songs of the mountains whence you flow!

The grassy banks are wet with dew that
flashes

Silverly on the Naiad-river's lashes—
The Naiad-river, bright with sunken suns,
Who murmureth as she runs.

Yonder the silver-bellied salmon splashes
Within the spreading circle of blue shade
That his own leaps have made:

And here I stoop, and pluck with tender care
A lily from the Naiad's sedgy hair.

And curling softly over pebble,
Weaving soft waves o'er yellow sands,
Singing her song in tinkling treble,
The mountain Lady thro' the farmer's lands
Slides to the sea, with harvest-giving hands.

Here freckled cowslips bloom unsought,

Like yellow jewels on her light green
train;

And yonder, dark with dreaming of the
rain,

Grows the wood-violet like a lowly thought.
Lightly the mountain Lady dances down,
Dressed maidenly in many a woodland
gem;—

Lo, even where the footprint of the clown
Has bruised her raiment-hem,
Crimson-tipp'd daisies make a diadem.

The little River is the fittest singer

To sound the praises of a day so fair.

The dews, suck'd up thro' pores of sunshine,
linger

As silver cloudlets in mid-air;
And over all the sunshine throws
Its golden glamour of repose.

The Silence listens, in a dream,
To hear the ploughman urge his reeling team,
The trout, that flashes with a sudden gleam,
And musical motions heaved by hills that
bound

The slumberous vales around.

I loiter onward slowly, and the whole
Sweet joy is in my happy fancies drowned.
The sunshine meets the music. Sight and
sound

Are wedded by the Soul.

—Sing, little River, this sweet morn,

Songs of the hills where thou wert born!

For, suddenly, mine eyes perceive
 The purple hills that touch the sky :
 Familiar with the stars of eve,
 Against the pale blue West they lie,
 Netted in mists of azure air,
 With thread-like cataracts here and there.
 Oh hark ! Oh hark !
 The shepherd shouts, and answering sheep-
 dogs bark ;
 And voices, startling Echo from her sleep,
 Are blown from steep to steep.

At yonder falls, the trembling mountain
 Lady
 Clings to the bramble high above me
 lying,
 With veil of foam behind her swift feet
 flying,
 And a lorn terror in her lifted voice,
 Ere springing to the rush-friezed basin
 shady,
 That boils below with noise.
 Then, whirling dizzily for a moment's
 space,
 She lets the sun flash brightly on her face,
 And lightly laughs at her own terror past,
 And floateth onward fast !

Thus wandering onward, ankle deep in
 grass,
 Scaring the cumbrous black cock as I pass,
 I came upon two shepherd boys, who wade
 For coolness in the limpid waves,
 And with their shade
 Startle the troutling from its shallow caves.

Let me lie down upon the bank, and
 drink !

The minnows at the brim, with bellies
 white
 Upturned in specks of silvery light,
 Flash from me in a shower, and sink.
 Below, the blue skies wink
 Thro' heated golden air—a clear abyss
 Of azure, with a solitary bird
 Steadfastly winging thro' the depths un-
 stirred.

The brain turns dizzy with its bliss ;
 And I would plunge into the chasms cool,
 And float to yonder cloud of fleecy wool,
 That floats below me, as I kiss
 The mountain Lady's lips with thirsty
 mouth,

What would parch'd Dives give amid his
 drouth
 For kisses such as this ?

Sing, little River, while I rest,
 Songs of your hidden mountain nest,
 And of the blue sky in your breast !

The landscape darkens slowly
 With mountain shadows ; when I wander
 on,
 The tremulous gladness of the heat seems
 gone,
 And a cool awe spreads round me, sweet
 and holy,—
 A tender, sober-suited melancholy.
 The path rough feet have made me winds
 away
 O'er fenny meadows to the white highway,
 Where the big waggon clatters with its
 load,
 And pushing onward, to the ankles wet
 In swards as soft as silken sarcenet,
 I gain the dusty road.

The air is hotter here. The bee booms by
 With honey-laden thigh,
 Doubling the heat with sounds akin to heat ;
 And like a float ng flower the butterfly
 Swims upw ard, downward, till its feet
 Clin: to the hedgerows white and sweet.
 A black duck rises clumsily with a cry,
 And the dim lake is nigh,
 The road curves upward to a dusty rise,
 Where fall the sunbeams flake on flake ;
 And turning at the curve, mine eyes
 Fall sudden on the silent lake,
 Asleep 'neath hyacinthine skies.

Sing, little River, in your mirth,
 Sing to thyself for joy the earth
 Is smiling on your humble worth ;
 And sing for joy that earth has given
 A place of birth so near to heaven !
 Sing, little River, while I climb
 These little hills of rock and thyme ;
 And hear far-off your tinkling chime !
 The cataracts burst in foamy sheen ;
 The hills slope blackly to the water's brim,
 And far below I see their shadows dim ;
 The lake, so closely hemmed between
 Their skirts of heather and of grass,
 Grows black and cold beneath me as I pass.

The sunlight fades on mossy rocks,
 And on the mountain sides the flocks
 Are split like streams ;—the highway dips
 Down, narrowing to the path where lambs
 Lay to the udders of their dams

Their soft and pulpy lips.

The hills grow closer ; to the right
 The path sweeps round a shadowy bay,
 Upon whose slated fringes, white
 And crested wavelets play.
 All else is still. But list, oh list !
 Hidden by boulders and by mist,
 A shepherd whistles in his fist ;
 From height to height the far sheep bleat
 In answering iteration sweet.
 Sound, seeking Silence, bends above her,
 Within some haunted mountain grot ;
 Kisses her, like a trembling lover—
 So that she stirs in sleep, but wakens not !

Along this rock I 'll lie,
 With face turned upward to the sky.
 A dreamy numbness glows within my
 brain—

It is not joy and is not pain—
 'Tis like the solemn, sweet imaginings
 That cast a shade on Music's golden wings.
 With face turned upward to the sun,
 I lie as indolent as one

Who, in a vision sweet, perceives
 Spirits thro' mists of lotus leaves ;
 And now and then small shadows move
 Across me, cast by clouds so small
 Mine eyes perceive them scarce at all

In the unsullied blue above.
 I hear the streams that burst and fall,
 The straggling shepherd's frequent call,

The kine low bleating as they pass,
 The dark lake stirring with the breeze,
 The melancholy hum of bees,
 The very murmur of the grass.

IV.

SNOW.

I WANDER forth this chill December dawn :
 John Frost and all his elves are out, I see,
 As busy as the elfin world can be,
 Clothing a world asleep with fleecy lawn.
 'Mid the deep silence of the evening hours
 They glimmered dusky down in silent
 showers,

And feately have they laboured all night long,
 Cheering their labour with a half-heard
 rhyme—

Low as the burthen of a milkmaid's song
 When Echo moans it over hills of thyme.

There is a hush of music on the air—
 The white-wing'd fays are faltering every-
 where ;

And here and there,
 Made by a sudden mingling as they fall,
 There comes a softer lullaby than all,
 Swept in upon the universal prayer.
 Mine eyes and heart are troubled with a
 motion

Of music like the moving waves of ocean,
 When, out of bearing, o'er the harbour bars
 They sigh toward the moon and jasper stars.
 The tiny squadrons waver down and thicken,
 Gathering numbers as they fly,
 And nearing earth their thick-set ranks they
 quicken,
 And swim in swarms to die !

But now the clouds are winnowed away :
 The sky above is gray as glass ; below
 The feeble twilight of the dreamy day
 Nets the long landskip hush'd beneath the
 snow.

The arrowy frosts sting keenly as I stray
 Along the rutted lane or broad highway,
 Past wind-swept hedges sighing sharp and
 clear,

Where half the sweetly changeful year
 The scented summer loves to gleam and
 glow.

The new-lain snowy carpet, ankle-deep,
 Crumbles beneath my footsteps as I pass,
 Revealing scanty blades of frozen grass ;
 On either side the chirping sparrows leap,
 And here and there a robin, friendly now,
 From naked bough to bough.

That snow-clad homestead in the river's arm
 Is haunted with the noisy rooks that fly
 Between its leafless beeches and the sky,
 And hailing fast for yonder fallow farm,
 A solitary crow is plunging by.
 Light muffled winds arising high among
 White mountains brooding in their winter
 rest,

Bear from the eastern winter to the West
 The muttered diapason of a song
 Made by the thunder on a mountain's breast.

The sun is hanging in a purple globe,
 'Mid yellow mists that stir with silver breath;
 The quiet landskip slumbers, white as death,
 Amid its naked fields and woody wolds,
 Wearing the winter as a stainless robe
 Low-trailing in a fall of fleecy folds.
 By pasture-gates the mottled cattle swarm,
 Thick'ning the misty air, with piteous eyes
 Fixed ever on the tempest-breeding skies,
 And watch the lingering traces of the storm.
 A feeble sunbeam kisses and illumes
 Yon whitened spire that hints a hidden town,
 And flickering for a space it darkens down
 Above the silence of forgotten tombs.

I gain the shoulder of the woodland now,
 A fledgling's flutter from a small hill's brow.
 I see the hamlet, half a mile below,
 With dripping gables and with crimson
 panes,
 And watch the urchins in the narrow lanes
 Below the school-house, shouting in the
 snow.

The whitened coach comes swiftly round the
 road

With horns to which a dozen hills reply,
 And rattling onward with its laughing load,
 Halts steaming at the little hostelry.
 Hard by the lonely woodman pants and
 glows,

And, wrapt in leather stockings to the thigh,
 Toils with an icicle beneath his nose.
 In yonder field an idle farm-boy blows
 His frozen fingers into tingling flame ;
 The gaunt old farmer, as he canters by,
 Reins in to greet the country clowns by
 name ;

That chestnut pony in the yellow fly
 Draws the plump parson and his leaner dame.

I loiter down the road, and feel the ground
 Like iron 'neath my heel ; the windless air
 Seems lying in a swoond.

Frost follows in its path without a sound,
 And plies his nimble fingers everywhere,
 Under my eyelids and beneath my hair.
 Yon mountain dons once more its helm of
 cloud,

The air grows dark and dim as if in wonder ;
 Once more the heaven is winnow'd, and the
 crowd

Of silken fays flock murmuringly under
 A sky that flutters like a wind-swept shroud.

Through gloomy dimbles, clad with new-
 fall'n snow,
 Back to my little cottage home I go.
 But once again I roam by field and flood,
 Stung into heat where hoar-frosts melt and
 bite,
 What time the fog-wrapt sun drops red as
 blood,
 And Eve's white star is tingling into sight.

TO THE LUGGIE.¹

OH, sweet and still around the hill
 Thy silver waters, Brook, are creeping ;
 Beneath the hill, as sweet and still,
 Thy weary Friend lies sleeping :
 A laurel leaf is in his hair,
 His eyes are closed to human seeming,
 And surely he hath dreams most fair,
 If he, indeed, be dreaming.

O Brook † he smiled, a happy child,
 Upon thy banks, and loved thy crying,
 And, as time flew, thy murmur grew
 A trouble purifying ;
 Till, last, thy laurel leaf he took,
 Dream-eyed and tearful, like a woman,
 And turned thy haunting cry, O Brook !
 To speech divine and human.

O Brook ! in song full sweet and strong,
 He sang of thee he loved so dearly ;
 Then softly creep around his sleep,
 And murmur to him cheerly ;
 For though he knows no fret or fear,
 Though life no more slips strangely
 through him,
 Yet he may rest more sound to hear
 His friend so close unto him.

And when at last the sleepers cast
 Their swathes aside, and, wondering,
 waken,
 Let thy Friend be full tenderly
 In silvern arms uptaken.
 Him be it then thy task to bear
 Up to the Footstool, softly flowing,—
 Smiles on his eyes, and in his hair
 Thy leaf of laurel blowing !

¹ See 'The Luggie and other Poems,' by the
 late David Gray.

FRA GIACOMO.

I.

ALAS, Fra Giacomo,
 Too late! but follow me . . .
 Hush! draw the curtain—so!
 She is dead, quite dead, you see.
 Poor little lady! she lies,
 All the light gone out of her eyes!
 But her features still wear that soft,
 Gray, meditative expression,
 Which you must have noticed oft,
 Thro' the peephole, at confession.
 How saintly she looks, how meek!
 Though this be the chamber of death,
 I fancy I feel her breath,
 As I kiss her on the cheek.
 Too holy for *me*, by far!—
 As cold and as pure as a star,
 Not fashioned for kissing and pressing,
 But made for a heavenly crown! . . .
 Ay, Father, let us go down,—
 But first, if you please, your blessing.

II.

. . . Wine? No! Come, come, you must!
 Blessing it with your prayers,
 You'll quaff a cup, I trust,
 To the health of the Saint upstairs.
 My heart is aching so!
 And I feel so weary and sad,
 Through the blow that I have had!
 You'll sit, Fra Giacomo? . . .

III.

Heigho! 'tis now six summers
 Since I saw that angel and married her—
 I was passing rich, and I carried her
 Off in the face of all comers . . .
 So fresh, yet so brimming with Soul!
 A sweeter morsel, I swear,
 Never made the dull black coal
 Of a monk's eye glitter and glare . . .
 Your pardon—nay, keep your chair!—
 A jest! but a jest! . . . Very true,
 It is hardly becoming to jest,
 And that Saint upstairs at rest—
 Her Soul may be listening, too!
 To think how I doubted and doubted,
 Suspected, grumbled at, flouted

That golden-hair'd Angel, and solely
 Because she was zealous and holy!—
 Night and noon and morn

She devoted herself to piety—
 Not that she seemed to scorn,
 Or shun, her husband's society;
 But the claims of her Soul superseded
 All that I asked for or needed,
 And her thoughts were far away
 From the level of lustful clay,
 And she trembled lest earthly matters
 Interfered with her *aves* and *paters*!
 Sweet dove! she so fluttered, in flying
 To avoid the black vapours of Hell,
 So hent on self-sanctifying,—
 That she never thought of trying
 To save her poor husband as well!
 And while she was named and elected
 For place on the heavenly roll,
 I (heast that I was) suspected
 Her manner of saving her Soul—
 So half for the fun of the thing,
 What did I (blasphemer!) but fling
 On my shoulders the gown of a monk,
 (Whom I managed for that very day
 To get safely out of the way),

And seat me, half-sober, half-drunk,
 With the cowl drawn over my face,
 In the Father Confessor's place . . .
Eheu! benedicite!

In her beautiful sweet simplicity,
 With that pensive gray expression,
 She sighfully knelt at confession,—
 While I bit my lips till they bled,
 And dug my nails in my palm,
 And heard, with averted head,

The horrible words come calm—
 Each word was a serpent's sting;
 But, wrapt in my gloomy gown,
 I sat like a marble thing

As she uttered *your* name. SIT DOWN!

IV.

More wine, Fra Giacomo?
 One cup—as you love me! No?
 Come, drink! 'twill bring the streaks
 Of crimson back to your cheeks.
 Come! drink again to the Saint,
 Whose virtues you loved to paint,
 Who, stretched on her wifely bed,
 With the soft, sweet, gray expression
 You saw and admired at confession—
 Lies *poisoned*, overhead!

V.

Sit still—or, by God, you die !
 Face to face, soul to soul, you and I
 Have settled accounts, in a fine
 Pleasant fashion, over our wine—
 Stir not, and seek not to fly—
 Nay, whether or not, you are mine !
 Thank Montepulciano for giving
 Your death in such delicate sips—
 'Tis not every monk ceases living
 With so pleasant a taste on his lips—
 But lest Montepulciano unsurely should kiss,
 Take this !—and this !—and this !

VI.

. . . Raise him ; and cast him, Pietro,
 Into the deep canal below :
 You can be secret, lad, I know . . .
 And hark you, then to the convent go—
 Bid every bell of the convent toll,
 And the monks say mass, for your mistress's
 soul.

CHARMIAN.

Cleo. Charmian !

Char. Madam ?

Cleo. Give me to drink mandragora !

Antony and Cleopatra.

In the time when water-lilies shake
 Their green and gold on river and lake,
 When the cuckoo calls in the heart o' the
 heat,
 When the Dog-star foams and the shade is
 sweet ;
 Where cool and fresh the River ran,
 I sat by the side of Charmian,
 And heard no sound from the world of
 man.

All was so sweet and still that day !
 The rustling shade, the rippling stream,
 All life, all breath, dissolved away
 Into a golden dream ;
 Warm and sweet the scented shade
 Drowsily caught the breeze and stirred,
 Faint and low through the green glade
 Came hum of bee and song of bird.
 Our hearts were full of drowsy bliss,
 And yet we did not clasp nor kiss,
 Nor did we break the happy spell
 With tender tone or syllable,

But to ease our hearts and set thought free,
 We plucked the flowers of a red rose-tree,
 And leaf by leaf, we threw them, Sweet,
 Into the River at our feet,
 And in an indolent delight
 Watch'd them glide onward, out of sight.

Sweet, had I spoken boldly then,
 How might my love have garner'd thee !
 But I had left the paths of men,
 And sitting yonder, dreamily,
 Was happiness enough for me !
 Seeking no gift of word or kiss,
 But looking in thy face, was bliss !
 Plucking the rose-leaves in a dream,
 Watching them glimmer down the stream,
 Knowing that eastern heart of thine
 Shared the dim ecstasy of mine !

Then, while we linger'd, cold and gray
 Came Twilight, chilling soul and sense ;
 And you arose to go away,
 Full of a sweet indifference !
 I missed the spell—I watch'd it break,—
 And such come never twice to man :
 In a less golden hour I spake,
 And did *not* win thee, Charmian !

For wearily we turned away
 Into the world of everyday,
 And from thy heart the fancy fled
 Like the rose-leaves on the River shed ;
 But to me that hour is sweeter far
 Than the world and all its treasures are :
 Still to sit on so close to thee,
 Were happiness enough for me !
 Still to sit on in a green nook,
 Nor break the spell by word or look !
 To reach out happy hands for ever,
 To pluck the rose-leaves, Charmian !
 To watch them fade on the gleaming River,
 And hear no sound from the world of man !

CLOUDLAND.

UNDER green branches I lie,
 Pensive, I know not why ;
 All is dead calm down here ;
 But yonder, tho' heaven smiles clear,
 Bright winds blow, and silent and slow
 The vaporous Clouds sail by.

For the branches, that here and there
Grow yellow in autumn air,
Are parted ; and through the rent
Of a flower-enwoven tent,
The round blue eye of the peaceful sky
Shows tearless, quiet, and fair.

Face upward, calmly I rest
As the leaf that lies dead on my breast ;
And the only sound I hear
Is a rivulet tinkling near,
And falling asleep in the woodland deep
Like a fluttering bird in a nest.

My mood would be full of grace
As an eremite's peaceful face,
And I should slumber away
The delicate dreamful day,
Save for Shapes that swim thro' the silence
dim
Of the blue ethereal space !

I close my eyes in vain,
In a pensive, poetic pain :
Even then, to the gurgling glee
Of the Brook I cannot see,
Silent and slow they glide and they go
O'er the bright still blank of the brain !

With a motion wind-bequeath'd,
Fantastically wreathed,
They disturb my Soul,—as the beat
Of the pale Moon's silvern feet
Broke the sleep forlorn of the Sea new-born,
Till it audibly stirr'd and breathed.

White as a flock of sheep,
Slender and soft and deep,
With a radiance mild and faint
As the smile of a pictured Saint,
Or the light that flies from a mother's eyes
On the face of a babe asleep !

Yonder with dripping hair,
Is Aphrodite the fair,
Fresh from the foam, whose dress
Enfleeces her loveliness,
But melts like mist from the limbs sun-kiss'd
That are kindling unaware !

One, like a Titan cold,
With banner about him roll'd,
Bereft of sense, and hurr'd
To the wondrous under-world,

And drifting down, with a weedy crown,
Some miraculous River old.

One like a bank of snows,
Which flushes to crimson, and glows ;
One like a goddess tall
In a violet robe ;—and all
Have a motion that seems like the motion
of dreams,—
A dimly disturb'd repose ;—

A motion such as you see
In the pictured divinity
By the touch of an artist thrown
On a Naiad sculptured in stone,
For ever and ever about to quiver
To a frighten'd flush, and flee !

Beautiful, stately, slow,
The pageants changefully grow ;
And in my bewilder'd brain
Comes the distinct refrain
Of the stately speech and the mighty reach
Of Songs made long ago.

Into my heart there throng
Rich melodies worshipp'd long :
The epic of Troy divine,
Milton's majestic line,
The palfrey pace and the glittering grace
Of Spenser's magical song.

Do whatever I may,
I cannot shake them away ;
They are haunting voices that move
Like the wondrous shapes above ;
Stately and slow they come and they go,
Like measured words when we pray.

When the troublous motion sublime
Of the Clouds and the answering rhyme,
Ceasing, leave now and again
A pause in the hush'd heart, *then*
The brook bursts in with a pastoral din,
A gurgling lyrical chime !

Oh ! sweet, very sweet, to lie
Pensive, 'I know not why,
And to fashion magical swarms
Of poet-created Forms
In the pageants dumb that go and come
Above in a windless sky !

For yonder, a dark Ship furls
Sails by an Island of pearls,
And crafty Ulysses steers'
Through the white-tooth'd waves, and hears
The liquid song of the syren throng,
That beckon through golden curls.

'Tis faded away, and lo !
The Grecian tents, like snow,
And a brazen Troy afar,
Whence Helen glitters a star ;
And the tents reveal the glimmering steel
Of the gathering Greeks below !

In fierce, precipitate haste
From a golden gate are chased
A shadowy Adam and Eve ;
And within the Gate they leave,
Doth a sunbeam stand like the angel's brand,
To illumine the azure waste.

The sunbeam fading, behold
A huge Tree tipp'd with gold,
And a naked Eye beneath,
With the apple raised to her teeth ;
While round and round the Snake coils,
wound
In many a magical fold.

Opress'd with fanciful fears,
Trembling with unshed tears,
I droop my eyes, until
The notes of the lyrical rill
Are shaken like rain on my eyelids twain,
And another pageant appears.

Far, far away, snow-white,
Full of a silvern light,
Beauteous, and yet so small
They are scarce perceived at all,
See Una guide her Lamb, by the side
Of the mounted Red-Cross Knight.

Then, to meet a far foe, speeds
The Knight over azure meads,
While threatening Dragons, hordes
Of Satyrs, and traitor swords,
Assail the Maid, but tremble afraid
At the milk-white Lamb she leads !

And she wanders undismay'd
Through vistas of sun and shade ;
Over a mountain's brow
She shines like a star ; and now

She fading is seen in the depths dark-green
Of a mimical forest glade,—

Which, opening flower-like, shows
A Garden of crimson repose,
Of lawns ambrosial,
Streams that flash as they fall,
In the innermost fold an arbour of gold
Like the yellow core of a rose.

On the verge of this fairy land
Doth mailed Sir Guyon stand,
And bending his bloody plume
'Neath portals of snowy bloom,
He enters the place with a pallid face,
Breathless, and sword in hand.

Oh ! is it not sweet, sweet, sweet,
To lie in this green retreat,
In a beautiful dim half-dream
Like a god on a hill ; and seem
A part of the fair strange shapes up there,—
With the wood-scents round my feet ?

But shadows lengthen around,
And the dew is dim on the ground ;
And hush'd, to list to the tune
Of the coming stars and moon,
The brook doth creep thro' the umbrage
deep
With cooler, quieter sound.

Homeward ;—but when the pale
Moon fileth her silver sail,
I shall sit alone with a book
'Neath another heaven, and look
On the spiritual gleam and the cloudy dream
Of Milton's majestic tale ;

Or wandering side by side
With Una, through forests wide,
Watch her beauty increase
To heavenly patience and peace,
While the Lamb of light licks her hand
snow-white,
And watches her face, meek-eyed !

Or, 'mid trumpets murmuring loud,
The waving of banners proud,
And the rattle of horses' hooves,
See the Grecian host—as it moves
Its glittering powers to the Trojan towers,
That dissolve away, as a Clou !

CUCKOO SONG.

O KITTY BELL, 'twas sweet, I swear,
 To wander in the spring together,
 When buds were blowing everywhere,
 And it was golden weather !
 And down the lanes beside the farm
 You roam'd beside me, tripping lightly,—
 Blushing you hung upon my arm,
 And the small gloved hand press'd
 tightly! . . .

And the orchis sprang
 In the scented meadow,
 And the throstle sang
 In the greenwood shadow ;
 And your eyes were bright
 With happy dew,—
 Could I doubt a light
 So divinely blue,
 When you kiss'd and sighed
 ' I will be true? ' . . .
Cuckoo!

Though far and wide
 The brown bird cried—
 ' *Cuckoo! cuckoo! cuckoo!* '

O Kitty Bell, the cry seem'd sweet,
 For you were kind, and flowers were
 springing ;
 The dusty willow in the heat
 Its woolly bells were swinging,
 And in its boll the linnet brown
 Finish'd her nest with wool and feather,
 And *we* had thoughts of nestling down,
 In the farm by the mill, together. . . .
 And over the hill
 The breeze was blowing,
 And the arms of the mill
 Kept coming and going ;
 And who but Love
 Was between us two,
 When around and above
 The flittermice flew,
 And as night drew nigh,
 You swore to be true? . . .
Cuckoo!

I heard the cry
 From woods hard by—
 ' *Cuckoo! cuckoo! cuckoo!* '

O Kitty Bell, 'tis spring again,
 But all the face of things looks iller ;

The nests are built in wood and lane,
 But *you* are nested with the miller.
 And other lovers kiss and swear,
 While I behold in scorn and pity,
 For ' all, ' I cry, ' is false and fair, '
 And curse the cuckoo and Kitty. . . .
 And over the hill

The breeze is blowing,
 And the arms of the mill
 Keep coming and going ;
 And the hidden bird
 Is singing anew
 The warning I heard
 When I trusted you ;
 And I sicken and sigh,
 With my heart thrill'd through . . .

Cuckoo!

Wherever I fly
 I hear the cry—
 ' *Cuckoo! cuckoo! cuckoo!* '

THE WHITE DEER.

THE hunter leaps from slumber,
 And quits his cottage door ;
 Days and nights without number,
 Forth he has fared before.

Still the old quest is sorest,
 The hunter's heart is cold ;
 He seeks the deer of the forest
 With mystical horns of gold.

Dim as a dream it glimmers
 Through the dark forest glades,
 Passes with starlight tremors,
 Trances the sight and fades.

By the dim quiet fountain
 Lies the print of its form ;
 Up mid the cloud of the mountain
 Cries its voice in the storm !

Not a bullet or arrow
 Hath reached its bosom yet,
 And though the ways are narrow,
 It steps through noose and net.

The hunter's cheek is sickly,
 Time hath silvered his hair,
 His weary breath comes quickly,
 He trembleth in despair.

Many a one before him
 Hath been a hunter here,
 Then, with the sad sky o'er him,
 Died in quest of the deer.

See, the day is dying !
 See, the hunter is spent !
 Under the dark trees lying ;
 Perishing ill content.

Ev'n as his sad eyes darken,
 Stirs the boughs of the glade,
 He gathers his strength to hearken,
 Peering into the shade.

And lo, with a soft light streaming,
 Stainless and dimly bright,
 Stands with its great eyes gleaming
 The mystical deer, snow-white !

Closer it comes up creeping,
 With burning beautiful eyes—
 Then, as he falls back sleeping,
 Touches his lips and flies !

II.

The live foot ever fleeing,
 It comes to the dying and dead—
 Oh, hope in the darkness of being !
 Methinks I hear thy tread.

Around, above me, and under,
 God's forest is closing dim ;
 I chase the mystical wonder,
 Footsore and weary of limb.

Down in the dim recesses,
 Up on the heights untrod,
 Eluding our dreams and guesses,
 Slips the secret of God.

Only seen by the dying,
 In the last spectral pain ;
 Just as the breath is flying—
 Flashing and fading again.

White mystery, might I view thee !
 Bright wonder, might we meet !
 Ever as I pursue thee,
 I see the print of thy feet.

Ever those feet are roaming,
 Ever we follow in quest ;
 While thou hauntest the gloaming
 Never a soul shall rest.

CONVENT-ROBBING.

(OLD STYLE.)

MAY MARGARET felt a cold cloud come
 down on her—

They made her a nun and put a black gown
 on her ;

Young Roland went white
 Thro' the winter moonlight,
 Looming tall in the breath of the frost every
 night,

And gazed at the Convent, and plann'd
 how to win her there,
 And his cheek gather'd dew till the dawn,
 and grew thinner there.

' A ruse, ho, a ruse ! ' cried his brother, Clerk
 John, to him,—

When in vain both the monks and the leeches
 had gone to him,—

' Cease to fume and to frown,

Close thine eyes, lie thee down,

Stretch thee straight on a bier in thy chilly
 death-gown ;

The great bell shall ring, and thy house
 gather gloom in it,

While I'll to the Convent, and beg thee
 a tomb in it !'

The Convent bell tolls, hung with black are
 the porches there,

Come tall black pall-bearers and pages
 with torches there,

Then the bier,—and thereon

The pale youth dead and gone !

And behind, grim as Death, weeping sore,
 goes Clerk John !

And the chapel is dark, as the bearers pace
 slow in it,

And all the black nuns stands with lights in
 a row in it.

Ah ! chill is the chapel, the great bell chimes
 weary there,

Black bearers, black nuns, and black pages
 look dreary there ;

The youth lies in death,

Not a syllable saith ;

But the tiny frost-cloud on his lips is his
 breath !—

And the shroud round his limbs hath bright
armour of steel in it
And his hand, gloved in mail, grips the
sword it can feel in it !

Ho, she screameth,—May Margaret ! kneels
by the side of him !—

'White Mary above, be the guardian and
guide of him !

They plighted us twain,

Yet we parted in pain,

And ah ! that so soon I should clasp him
again !'

Wan, wan, is her cheek, with dim torch-
light the while on it—

Does she dream ? . . Has the face changed ?
. . and is there a smile on it ?

She holds his cold hand to her heart, and
doth call on him,

Drop by drop, warm and scented, her tender
tears fall on him ;

The nuns, sable-gown'd,

Chanting low, stand around ;

Clerk John bites his lips, with his eyes on
the ground . .

'Dear heart, that we meet but in woe such
as this again !'

Then she kisses his lips !—Does she dream ?
. . Did he kiss again ?

Who opens the door with a terrible shout
at once ?—

A great wind sweeps in, and the lights are
blown out at once !

The Abbess screams low,

Moan the nuns in a row,

Thro' the porch sweeps the wind and the
sleet and the snow,

But the moon thro' the quaint-colour'd win-
dows is beaming now,—

And wonderful shapes round the bier gather
gleaming now !—

The sable pall-bearers and pages are new-
arrayed,

In armour that glitters like golden dew
arrayed !

How chill the moon glows !

How it blows ! how it snows !

Yet May Margaret's cheek is as red as a
rose !

And 'a miracle,' murmurs the Abbess so
holy now,
For shinningly vested the dead rises slowly
now !

He draweth May Margaret's sweet blushing
cheek to him,

She kisses him softly, yet strives not to speak
to him ;

The nuns sable-gown'd

Shiver dismally round,

As he lifeth the great sable pall from the
ground,

And turneth it deftly, and flingeth it over
her,—

And a mantle of ermine doth clothe her and
cover her !

On the floor of the chapel their foot-falls
sound hollow now,

Clerk John and the rest very silently follow
now . . .

Hark ! is it the beat

Of horses' feet ?

Or the wild wind whistling in snow and in
sleet ?

Down the aisles of the chapel the wild echoes
die away,

While fast in the snow-storm the happy ones
hie away !

'Saints,' crieth the Abbess, 'pour down
your dole on us !

To take our sweet sister the devil hath stole
on us !'

And the nuns, in a row,

Murmur slyly and low—

'Ah ! would he might come unto us also !'
And they look at the bier, with the tingle of
sin on them,

And the moon blushes faintly, still glimmer-
ing in on them.

Ay, fast in the snow-storm gallop the lovers
now !

Young Roland's warm castle their merriment
covers now !

To the bower they have run,

For the bridal is done,

And the jolly old priest hath made them one :

'May all who love true,' cries the youth,
'win such kisses, dear,

Die such death,—and be tomb'd in a bower
such as this is, dear !'

THE BALLAD OF THE WAY-
FARER.

(OLD STYLE.)

O'ER the cheerless common,
Where the bleak winds blow,
Wanders the wan Woman ;
Waysore and weary,
Through the dark and dreary
Drift-bed of the Snow.

On her pale pinch'd features snowing 'tis
and sleeting,

By her side her little Son runs with warm
heart beating,

Clinging to her wet robe, while she wails
repeating :

'Further, my child, further—further let
us go !'

Fleet the Boy doth follow,
Wondering at her woe ;
On, with footfall hollow,
O'er the pathway jagged
Crawls she wet and ragged,
Restless and slow.

'Mother!' now he murmurs, mid the tem-
pest's crying,

'Mother, rest a little—I am faint with flying—
Mother, rest a little!' Still she answers
sighing,

'Further, child, and faster—further let us
go !'

But now she is sitting
On a stone, and lo !
Dark her brows are knitting,
While the Child, close clinging
To her raiment wringing,
Shivers at the snow.

'Tell me of my father! for I never knew
him

Is he dead or living, are we flying to him?'

'Peace, my child!' she answers, and the
voice thrills through him ;

'When we wander further—further!—
thou shalt know.'

(Wild wind of December,
Blow, wind, blow!—)

'Oh, but I remember!
In my mind I gather
Pictures of my father,
And a gallant show.

Tell me, mother, tell me—did we always
wander?

Was the world once brighter? In some
town out yonder

Dwelt we not contented?' Sad she seems
to ponder,

Sighing 'I will tell thee—when we further
go.'

'Oh, but Mother, listen!

We were rich, I know!

(How his bright eyes glisten!)

We were merry people,
In a town with a steeple,

Long, long ago ;

In a gay room dwelling, where your face
shone brightly,

And a brave man brought us food and
presents nightly.

Tell me, 'twas my father?' Now her face
looms whitely,

While she shivers moaning, 'Peace, let
us go !'

How the clouds gather!

How the winds blow!

'Who was my father?

Was he Prince or Lord there,

With a train and a sword there?

Mother, I will know!—

I have dreamt so often of those gallant
places ;

There were banners waving—I could see the
faces—

Take me to my father!' cries he with em-
braces,

While she shivers moaning, 'No, child,
no !'

While the child is speaking,

Forth the moon steals slow,

From the black cloud breaking,

Shining white and eerie

On the wayside weary,

Shrouded white in snow.

On the heath behind them, 'gainst the dim
sky lying,

Looms the Gallows blackly, in the wild
wind sighing.

To her feet the woman springs! with fierce
shriek crying—

'See! Oh, God in heaven! . . . Woe,
child, woe !'

(Blow, wind of December,
Blow, wind, blow!—)
'*Thou* canst not remember—
Thou wert but a blossom
Sucked on my bosom,
Years, years ago!

Thy father stole to feed us; our starving
faces stung him;
In yonder town behind us, they seized him
and they hung him!
They murdered him on Gallows-Tree, and
to the ravens flung him!
Faster, my child, faster—faster let us go!

IN SPRING-TIME.

SWEET, sing a song of the May to me,
Sweeten the lingering hours!
Soft comes her whisper each day to me,
See, thro' the green and the gray, to me;
Thrills the faint flame of the flowers.
For the spell of the winter is ended,
The rainbow is seen thro' the showers,
And the May, by fair spirits attended,
Shall smile up the skies, and be ours. . .
Afar away yonder her foot cometh slow to
us—
She steals up the south, with her cheeks all
aglow, to us!
The blue waters tremble! the rain singeth
low to us!
Green stir the blossoming bowers!

THE FISHERMAN.

THE sea is moaning, the little one cries,
In child-bed sorrow the Mother lies,
And the Fisher fisheth afar away
In the morning gray.

The drift is dark as the dawn appears:
Is it the moan of the wind he hears—
Is it the splash of the ocean foam,
Or a cry from home?

He fisheth there that the babe may eat—
The wind is whistling in shroud and sheet;
He looketh down from the side of his bark
On the waters dark.

Sees he the gleam of the foam-flake there,
Or a white, white face in its floating hair?—

Sea-weeds salt that are shoreward drifted,
Or arms uplifted?

His heart is heavy, his lips are set,
He sighs as he draggeth in his net—
A goodly gift from the waters wild
To Mother and Child!

The Dawn gleams cold as he homeward flies
The boat is laden, the new-born cries,
But the wraith of the mother fades far away
In the morning gray!

THE CHURCHYARD.

(A GENRE PICTURE.)

How slowly creeps the hand of Time
On the old clock's green-mantled face!
Yea, slowly as those ivies climb,
The hours roll round with patient pace;
The drowsy rooks caw on the tower,
The tame doves hover round and round;
Below, the slow grass hour by hour
Makes green God's sleeping ground.

All moves, but nothing here is swift;
The grass grows deep, the green boughs
shoot;
From east to west the shadows drift;
The earth feels heavenward underfoot;
The slow stream through the bridge doth
stray
With water-lilies on its marge,
And slowly, piled with scented hay,
Creeps by the silent barge.

All stirs, but nothing here is loud:
The cushat broods, the cuckoo cries;
Faint, far up, under a white cloud,
The lark trills soft to earth and skies;
And underneath the green graves rest;
And through the place, with slow foot-falls,
With snowy cambric on his breast,
The old gray Vicar crawls.

And close at hand, to see him come,
Clustering at the playground gate,
The urchins of the schoolhouse, dumb
And bashful, hang the head and wait;
The little maidens curtsy deep,
The boys their forelocks touch meanwhile,
The Vicar sees them, half asleep,
And smiles a sleepy smile.

Slow as the hand on the clock's face,
 Slow as the white cloud in the sky,
 He cometh now with tottering pace
 To the old vicarage hard by ;
 Smothered it stands in ivy leaves,
 Laurels and yews make dark the ground ;
 The swifts that built beneath the eaves
 Wheel in still circles round.

And from the portal, green and dark,
 He glances at the church-clock old—
 Gray soul ! why seek *his* eyes to mark
 The creeping of that finger cold ?
 He cannot see, but still as stone
 He pauses, listening for the chime,
 And hears from that green tower intone
 The eternal voice of Time.

SEA-WASH.

WHEREFORE so cold, O Day,
 That gleamest far away
 O'er the dim line where mingle heaven and
 ocean,

While fishing-boats lie netted in the gray,
 And still smooth waves break in their shore-
 ward motion—

Wherefore so cold, so cold ?
 O say, dost thou behold
 A Face o'er which the rock-weed droopeth
 sobbing,

A Face just stirred within a sea-cave old
 By the green water's throbbing ?

Wherefore, O Fisherman,
 So full of care and wan,
 This weary, weary morning shoreward flying
 While stooping downward, darkly thou
 dost scan

That which below thee in thy boat is lying ?
 Wherefore so full of care !

What dost thou shoreward bear
 Caught in thy net's moist meshes, as a token ?
 Ah ! can it be the ring of golden hair
 Whereby my heart is broken ?

Wherefore so still, O Sea ?
 That washest wearilie
 Under the lamp lit in the fisher's dwelling,
 Holding the secret of thy deeps from me,
 Whose heart would break so sharply at the
 telling ?

Wherefore so still, so still ?
 Say, in thy sea-cave chill
 Floats she forlorn with foam-bells round her
 breaking,
 While the wet Fisher lands and climbs the
 hill
 To hungry babes awaking ?

EARTH AND THE SOUL.

'CHILD of my bosom, babe of my bearing ;
 Why dost thou turn from me now thou
 art old ?

Why, like a wild bird for passage preparing,
 Shrink from my touch with a tremor of
 cold ?'

'Mother, I dread thee ! mother, I fear
 thee !

Darkness and silence are hid in thy core ;
 Deep is thy voice, and I tremble to hear
 thee ;

Let me begone, for thou lov'st me no
 more !'

'Love thee not, dearest one, son of my
 splendour,

Love thee not ? How shall I smile thee a
 sign ?

See my soft arms, they are kindly and tender !
 See my fond face, flushing upward to
 thine !'

'Mother, thy face looketh dreadful and
 ghastly !

Mother, thy breath is as frost on my hair !
 Hold me not, stay me not, time speedeth
 fastly,

Look, a kind Hand beckons softly up
 there !'

'Child, yet a while ere thy cruel feet fare on !
 See, in my lap lie the flowers of the May ;

See, in my hair twine the roses of Sharon ;
 See, on my breast gleam the gems of
 Cathay !'

'Mother, I know thou art queenly and
 splendid,

Yet is there death in the blush of thy
 bloom ;

Touch me not, mother—my childhood is
 ended,

Dark is thy shadow and dreadful thy
 doom.'

'Child, 'twas I bare thee! child, 'twas I
fashioned
Those gleaming limbs, and those ringlets
of light,
Made thee a spirit sublime and impassioned,
Read thee the Book of the stars night by
night,
Led thy frail feet when they failed sorrow-
laden,
Whispered thee wonders of death and of
birth,
Made thee the heir of the garden of Aiden,
Child, it was I, thy poor mother, the
Earth!'

'Mother, I know it! and oh, how I loved
thee,
When on thy bosom I leapt as a child,
Shared each still pleasure that filled thee and
moved thee,
Thrilled to the bliss of thy face when it
smiled.
Yea, but I knew not thy glory was fleeing,
Not till that night thou didst read me the
scroll,
Sobbed in my ear the dark secret of Being;
Mother, I wept—thy fair creature, the
Soul!'

'Child, wherefore weep? Since the secret
is spoken,
Lie in mine arms—I will rock thee to rest;
Ne'er shall thy slumber be troubled and
broken,
Low will I sing to thee, held to my breast.
Oh, it is weary to wander and wander;
Child of my fashioning, stay with me
here.'

'Mother, I cannot; 'tis brighter up yonder;
Dark is thy brow with the shadow I fear!'

'Child, yet one kiss! yet one kiss, ere thou
flyest!'

'Nay, for thy lips have the poison of
death!'

'Child, one embrace!' 'Nay, all vainly
thou criest;
I see thy face darken, I shrink at thy
breath.'

'Go, I have wept for thee, toiled for thee,
borne with thee,
Pardoned thee freely each taint and each
stain.

Take the last love of my bosom forlorn with
thee—
Seek the great Void for a kinder in vain!'

'Mother, I go; but if e'er I discover
That which I seek in those regions untrod,
I will come back to thee; softly bend over
Thy pillow, and whisper the secret of God.'
'Child, thou wilt find me asleep in black
ræiment,
Dead by the side of the infinite Sea;
Drop one immortelle above me for payment
Of all the wild love I have wasted on thee!'

A CURL.*

(A BOY'S POEM.)

SEE! what a treasure rare
I hold with fingers aglow!
—'Tis full of the bright
Subdued sunlight
Which shone in the scented hair
Of a maiden I once held fair;
And I puzzle my brains to know
If the heart of the beautiful girl
Hath kept the light of the Long Ago,
As long as the yellow curl?

What matter? Why, little or none!
She is nought to me now, understand;
But I feel less sad
Than tearfully glad,
And a passionate thrill hath run
Through my veins, like a flash of the sun,—
That with so unheeding a hand
I can grasp a small part of the gold
Which dazzled my wits, when I planned
and planned
For the love of that maiden, of old.

See! I crush it with finger and thumb,
Half in cruelty, half in jest.—
As she lies asleep,
Doth a shudder creep
Thro' her heart, and render it numb?
Doth a sorrowful whisper come

* As these verses bear a certain superficial re-
semblance, *in subject*, to Mr. Tennyson's Poem,
'A Ringlet,' it may be as well to state that they
appeared in print several years before the publi-
cation of 'Enoch Arden, and other Poems.'

From afar, while her lord is at rest
By her side, and none else are by ?

Doth she shiver away from her husband's
breast,
And hide her face, and cry ?

Is her heart quite withered and serc ?

Are the pledges forgotten yet,
That, with blushing face,
In a secret place,
She breathed in my burning ear,
In the morning of the year,
When, after long parting, we met
By the Sea, on the shadowy lawn,
And spake till the sunset faded to jet,
And moon and stars made a dawn ?

As she lies in her wifely place,
The wings of her white soul furred,
Does the cheek at rest
On her husband's breast
Grow scorch'd with the hot disgrace
Of the kisses I rain'd on her face,
When the mists of the night upcurled
From the ocean that night of June,
And make a glamour, wherein the world
Seemed close to the stars and moon ?

By this ringlet of yellow hair,
Still full of the light forlorn
Of that parting spot !
Hath she quite forgot
The passionate love she bare,
And the hope she promised to share,
When the ringlet of gold was shorn,
And the flowers felt the sun on the soil,
And the firefly stars went out in the morn,
And I hurried back to my toil ?

I could crush it under my heel !
Hath she forgotten the clear
Vision of fame
That died, when her shame
Made my wild brain totter and reel ?
Hath she a heart to feel ?—
False to her vows in a year !
False and hollow as Hell !
False to the voice that warned in her ear !
And false to her God as well !

This curl that she gave to me
Fell over her brow of snow,
So 'twas near the bright
Spiritual light

That burned in the brain—and see !
I am kissing it tenderly !

She is asking for mercy, I know ;
So I kiss it again and again,
For I know some charm makes the wild
kiss glow
Like fire thro' the woman's brain !

She cannot choose but atone !
By the brow where this curl once gleam'd !
She must in sin thought,
Against him who bought

The heart already mine own,
And left me weeping alone.
'Tis a charm, and my loss is redeemed !
And the sin 'gainst her lord will be—
To remember how close to the stars we
seemed

That night in the mists by the Sea !

She will look on her husband's face,
She will kiss him on the cheek—
She will kiss, she will smile ;
And all the while,
In thought no other may trace,
She'll be back in that perfumed place,
Hearing the words that I speak,
Vowing the vow I believe,
While the sunset dies with a purple streak,
'Neath the whitening star of eve.

And the voice of the waves will bar
All sweeter sounds from her ears,
She'll be under the moon
Of that night of June,
And the motion of moon and star
Will trouble her from afar ;
And then, when the silver spheres
Fade fitfully out of the skies,
And the red dawn breaks, she will wake
in tears,
And shrink from her husband's eyes !

And in time, when again and again
I have kissed the magical gold,
Those same gross eyes
Will be open and wise,
And his heart will be feverish pain,
And a doubt will arise in his brain ;
And ere she is grown very old,
He will know she is frail as foam,—
He will see the light of that night in her
cold

Face,—and my curse strikes home !

For perchance in her yearning she may
 Be bewildered and brought to blame,
 By a new delight
 So like that night

With its mimical glamour of day,
 That she cannot shake it away ;
 And following it once more,
 She will take a path of shame,
 While the man blushes red at his darken'd
 door
 As the children utter her name.

See ! my passionate lips are warm
 On the curl, in a cruel bliss—
 In day or mirk
 The charm would work !—
 While she dreams of that night till her form
 Is caught in the eddies of storm !
 There's a devil impels me to kiss,
 And my blood boils to and fro ;
 She asks for mercy ! shall mercy like this
 Be given my darling ? . . . No !

With the world, as it ebbs and flows,
 My heart is in jarring tune ;
 Let the memory
 Of her beauty be
 Furl'd in a soft repose
 Round my heart, like the leaves of a rose.
 The faith, which has faded too soon,
 I bury with this last cry ;
 For the curl, still bright with that night
 of June,
 Lo ! I tenderly put it by !

LOVE AND TIME.

THIS is the place, as husht and dead
 As when I saw it long ago ;
 Down the dark walk with shadows spread
 I wander slow.

The tangled sunlight, cold and clear,
 Steals frost-white through the boughs
 around.
 There is no warmth of summer here,
 No summer sound.

Darnel and nettle, as I pass,
 Choke the dim ways, and in the bowers
 Gather the weeds and the wild grass
 Instead of flowers.

O life ! O time ! O days that die !
 O days that live within the mind !
 Here did we wander, she and I,
 Together twined.

We passed out of the great broad walk,
 Beyond the emerald lawns we strayed,
 We lingered slow in tender talk
 Along the shade.

And then the great old maze we found,
 And smiling entered it unseen,
 Half sad, half glad, went round and round
 Thro' windings green.

In the bright centre of the maze
 A rose-hush grew, a dial gleam'd ;
 She pluck'd a rose . . . with blissful gaze
 Watch'd it, and dreamed.

O life ! O time ! O days divine !
 O dreams that keep the soul astir !
 That hour eternity was mine,
 Looking at her !

This is the place. I wander slow.
 Dark are the shades of shrub and tree,
 The dial stands, the leaves lie low,
 But where is she ?

O life ! O time ! O birds and flowers !
 O withering leaves upon the hough !
 Alas, she measures not her hours
 With roses now.

The dial stands—the dark days roll—
 From year to year the roses spring—
 Eternity is in my soul,
 Remembering.

The dial stands—the summer goes—
 All changeth, nothing dieth, here !
 And all reneweth like a rose,
 From year to year.

Undertones.

(1864.)

POET'S PROLOGUE.

TO DAVID IN HEAVEN.

'Quo diversus abis?'
'Quem Di diligunt, adolescens moritur.'

I.

Lo! the slow moon roaming
Thro' fleecy mists of gloaming,
Furrowing with pearly edge the jewel pow-
der'd sky!

Lo, the bridge moss-l den,
Arch'd like foot of maiden,
And on the bridge, in silence, looking up-
ward, you and I!

Lo, the pleasant season
Of reaping and of mowing—
The round still moon above,—beneath, the
river duskily flowing!

II.

Violet colour'd shadows,
Blown from scented meadows,
Float o'er us to the pine-wood dark from
yonder dim corn-ridge;

The little river gushes
Thro' shady sedge and rushes,
And gray gnats murmur o'er the pools, be-
neath the mossy bridge;—

And you and I stand darkly,
O'er the keystone leaning,
And watch the pale mesmeric moon, in the
time of gleaners and gleaning.

III.

Do I dream, I wonder?
As, sitting sadly under
A lonely roof in London, thro' the grim
square pane I gaze?

Here of you I ponder,
In a dream, and yonder
The still streets seem to stir and breathe be-
neath the white moon's rays.

By the vision cherish'd,
By the battle bravéd,
Do I but dream a hopeless dream, in the
city that slew you, David?

IV.

Is it fancy also,
That the light which falls so
Faintly upon the stony street below me as I
write,

Near tall mountains passes
Thro' churchyard weeds and grasses
Barely a mower's mile away from that small
bridge, to-night?

And, where you are lying,—
Grass and flowers above you—
Is mingled with your sleeping face, as calm
as the hearts that love you?

V.

Poet gentle-hearted,
Are you then departed,
And have you ceased to dream the dream
we loved of old so well?

Has the deeply cherish'd
Aspiration perish'd,
And are you happy, David, in that heaven
where you dwell?

Have you found the secret
We, so wildly, sought for,
And is your soul enswath'd, at last, in the
singing robes you fought for?

VI.

In some heaven star-lighted,
Are you now united
Unto the poet-spirits that you loved, of
English race?

Is Chatterton still dreaming?
And, to give it stately seeming,
Has the music of his last strong song passed
into Keats's face?

Is Wordsworth there? and Spenser?
Beyond the grave's black portals,
Can the grand eye of Milton see the glory
he sang to mortals?

VII.

You at least could teach me,
Could your dear voice reach me

Where I sit and copy out for men my soul's
 strange speech,
 Whether it be bootless,
 Profitless, and fruitless,—
 The weary aching upward strife to heights
 we cannot reach,
 The fame we seek in sorrow,
 The agony we forego not,
 The haunting singing sense that makes us
 climb—whither we know not.

VIII.

Must it last for ever,
 The passionate endeavour,
 Ay, have ye, there in heaven, hearts to thro' and
 still aspire?
 In the life you know now,
 Render'd white as snow now,
 Do fresher glory-heights arise, and beckon
 higher—higher?
 Are you dreaming, dreaming,
 Is your soul still roaming,
 Still gazing upward as we gazed, of old in
 the autumn gloaming?

IX.

Lo, the book I hold here,
 In the city cold here!
 I hold it with a gentle hand and love it as I
 may;
 Lo, the weary moments!
 Lo, the icy comments!
 And lo, false Fortune's knife of gold swift-
 lifted up to slay!
 Has the strife no ending?
 Has the song no meaning?
 Linger I, idle as of old, while men are reap-
 ing or gleaming?

X.

Upward my face I turn to you,
 I long for you, I yearn to you,
 The spectral vision trances me to utterance
 wild and weak;
 It is not that I mourn you,
 To mourn you were to scorn you,
 For you are one step nearer to the beauty
 singers seek.
 But I want, and cannot see you,
 I seek and cannot find you,
 And, see! I touch the book of songs you
 tenderly left behind you!

XI.

Ay, me! I hend above it,
 With tearful eyes, and love it,
 With tender hand I touch the leaves, but
 cannot find you there!
 Mine eyes are haunted only
 By that gloaming sweetly lonely,
 The shadows on the mossy bridge, the
 glamour in the air!
 I touch the leaves, and only
 See the glory they retain not—
 The moon that is a lamp to Hope, who
 glorifies what we gain not!

XII.

The aching and the yearning,
 The hollow, undiscerning,
 Uplooking want I still retain, darken the
 leaves I touch—
 Pale promise, with much sweetness
 Solemnizing incompleteness,
 But ah, you knew so little then—and now
 you know so much!
 By the vision cherish'd,
 By the battle bravéd,
 Have you, in heaven, shamed the song, by
 a loftier music, David?

XIII.

I, who loved and knew you,
 In the city that slew you,
 Still hunger on, and thirst, and climb, proud-
 hearted and alone:
 Serpent-fears enfold me,
 Syren-visions hold me,
 And, like a wave, I gather strength, and
 gathering strength, I moan;
 Yea, the pale moon beckons,
 Still I follow, aching,
 And gather strength, only to make a louder
 moan, in breaking!

XIV.

Tho' the world could turn from you,
 This, at least, I learn from you:
 Beauty and Truth, tho' never found, are
 worthy to be sought,
 The singer, upward-springing,
 Is grander than his singing,
 And tranquil self-sufficing joy illumines the
 dark of thought.

This, at least, you teach me,
In a revelation :
That gods still snatch, as worthy death, the
soul in its aspiration.

XV.

And I think, as you thought,
Poesy and Truth ought
Never to lie silent in the singer's heart on
earth ;
Tho' they be discarded,
Slighted, unrewarded,—
Tho', unto vulgar seeming, they appear of
little worth,—
Yet tender brother-singers,
Young or not yet born to us,
May seek there, for the singer's sake, that
love which sweeteneth scorn to us!

XVI.

While I sit in silence,
Comes from mile on mile hence,
From English Keats's Roman grave, a voice
that sweetens toil !
Think you, no fond creatures
Draw comfort from the features
Of Chatterton, pale Phæthon, hurled down
to sunless soil ?
Scorch'd with sunlight lying,
Eyes of sunlight hollow,
But, see ! upon the lips a gleam of the
chrism of Apollo !

XVII.

Noble thought produces
Noble ends and uses,
Noble hopes are part of Hope wherever she
may be,
Noble thought enhances
Life and all its chances,
And noble self is noble song,—all this I
learn from thee !
And I learn, moreover,
'Mid the city's strife too,
That such faint song as sweetens Death can
sweeten the singer's life too !

XVIII.

Lo, my Book !—I hold it
In weary hands, and fold it
Unto my heart, if only as a token I aspire ;

And, by song's assistance,
Unto your dim distance,
My soul uplifted is on wings, and beckon'd
higher, nigher.
By the sweeter wisdom
You return unspeaking,
Though endless, hopeless, be the search, we
exalt our souls in seeking.

XIX.

Higher, yet, and higher,
Ever nigher, ever nigher,
To the glory we conceive not, let us toil
and strive and strain !—
The agonizèd yearning,
The imploring and the burning,
Grown awfuller, intenser, at each vista we
attain,
And clearer, brighter, growing,
Up the gulfs of heaven wander,
Higher, higher yet, and higher, to the
Mystery we ponder !

XX.

Yea, higher yet, and higher,
Ever nigher, ever nigher,
While men grow small by stooping and the
reaper piles the grain,—
Can it then be bootless,
Profitless and fruitless,
The weary aching upward search for what
we never gain ?
Is there not awaiting
Rest and golden weather,
Where, passionately purified, the singers
may meet together ?

XXI.

Up ! higher yet, and higher,
Ever nigher, ever nigher,
Thro' voids that Milton and the rest beat
still with seraph-wings ;
Out thro' the great gate creeping
Where God hath put his sleeping—
A dewy cloud detaining not the soul that
soars and sings,
Up ! higher yet, and higher,
Fainting nor retreating,
Beyond the sun, beyond the stars, to the far
bright realm of meeting !

XXII.

O Mystery ! O Passion !
 To sit on earth, and fashion ;
 What floods of music visibled may fill that
 fancied place !
 To think, the least that singeth,
 Aspireth and upspringeth,
 May weep glad tears on Keats's breast and
 look in Milton's face !
 When human power and failure
 Are equalized for ever,
 And the one great Light that haloes all is
 the passionate bright endeavour !

XXIII.

But ah, that pale moon roaming
 Thro' fleecy mists of gloaming,
 Furrowing with pearly edge the jewel-
 powder'd sky,
 And ah, the days departed
 With your friendship gentle-hearted,
 And ah, the dream we dreamt that night,
 together, you and I !
 Is it fashion'd wisely,
 To help us or to blind us,
 That at each height we gain we turn, and
 behold a heaven behind us ?

THE UNDERTONES.

Thou Fame ! who makest of the singer's Life,
 Faint with the sweetness of its own desire,
 A statue of Narcissus, still and fair
 For evermore, and bending evermore
 Over its beauteous image mirror'd
 In the swift current of our human days,
 Eternally in act to clasp and kiss !
 O Fame, teach thou this flesh and blood to love
 Some beauteous counterpart, and while it bends,
 Tremulously gazing on the image, blow
 Thy trump aloud, and freeze it into stone !

I.

PROTEUS ;

OR, A PRELUDE.

1.

INTO the living elements of things
 I, Proteus, mingle, seeking strange dis-
 guise :
 I track the Sun-god on an eagle's wings,
 Or look at horror thro' a murderer's eyes,

In shape of horn'd beast my shadow glides
 Among broad-leav'd flowers that blow 'neath
 Afric tides.

2.

Lo ! I was stirring in the leaves that shaded
 The Garden where the Man and Woman
 smiled :
 I saw them later, raimentless, degraded,
 The apple sour upon their tongues ; be-
 guiled
 By the sweet wildness of the Woman's tears,
 I dropt in dew upon her lips, and stole
 Under her heart, a stirring human Soul,
 The blood within her tingling in mine ears ;
 And as I lay, I heard a voice that cried
 'Lo, Proteus, the unborn, shall wake
 to be
 Heir of the Woman's sorrow, yet a guide
 Conducting back to immortality—
 The spirit of the leaves of Paradise
 Shall lift him upward, to aspire and rise !'
 Then sudden, I was conscious that I lay
 Under a heaven that gleam'd afar away :—
 I heard the Man and Woman w eping,
 The green leaves rustling, and the Serpent
 creeping,
 The roar of beasts, the song of birds, the
 chime
 Of elements in sudden strife sublime,
 And overhead I saw the starry Tree,
 Eternity,
 Put forth the blossom Time.

3.

A wind of ancient prophecy swept down,
 And wither'd up my beauty—where I lay
 On Paris' bosom, in the Trojan town ;
 Troy vanish'd, and I wander'd far away,—
 Till, lying on a Virgin's breast, I gazed
 Thro' infant eyes, and saw, as in a dream,
 The great god Pan whom I had raised and
 praised,
 Float huge, unsinew'd, down a mighty
 stream,
 With leaves and lilies heap'd about his head,
 And a weird music hemming him around,
 While, dropping from his nerveless fingers
 dead,
 A brazen sceptre plunged with hollow
 sound :
 A trackless Ocean wrinkling tempest-wing'd
 Open'd its darkness for the clay unking'd :

Moreover, as he floated on at rest,
 With lips that flutter'd still in act to speak,
 An eagle, swooping down upon his breast,
 Pick'd at his songless lips with golden
 beak.

4.

There was a sound of fear and lamentation,
 The forests wail'd, the stars and moon
 grew pale,
 The air grew cloudy with the desolation
 Of gods that fell from realmless thrones
 like hail ;
 But as I gazed, the great God Pan awaking,
 Lookt in the Infant's happy eyes and
 smiled,
 And smiling died ; and like a sunbeam
 breaking
 From greenwood olden, rose a presence
 mild
 In exhalation from the clay, and stole
 Around the Infant in an auriole—
 When, gladden'd by the glory of the child,
 Dawn gleam'd from pole to pole.

5.

And, lo ! a shape with pallid smile divine
 Wander'd in Palestine ;
 And Adam's might was stately in his eyes,
 And Eve's wan sweetness glimmer'd on
 his cheek,
 And when he open'd heavenly lips to speak,
 I heard, disturbing Pilate into sighs,
 The rustle of those leaves in Paradise !
 Then all was dark, the earth, and air, and
 sky,
 The sky was troubled and the earth was
 shaken,
 Beasts sbriek'd, men shouted, and there
 came a cry—
 ' My God, I am forsaken ! '
 But even then I smiled amid my tears,
 And saw in vision, down the future years,
 What time the cry still rung in heaven's
 dark dome,
 The likeness of his smile ineffable,
 Serenely dwell
 On Raphael, sunn'd by popes and kings at
 Rome,
 And Dante, singing in his Tuscan cell !

6.

Suddenly, from the vapours of the north,
 Ice-bearded, snowy-visaged, Strength burst
 forth,

Brandishing arms in death :
 'Twas Ades, frighted from his seat in Hell
 By that pale smile of peace ineffable,
 That with a sunny life-producing breath,
 Wreathed summer round the foreheads of
 the Dead,
 And troubled Hell's weird silence into joy.
 And with a voice that rent the pole he said,
 ' Lo, I am Thor, the mighty to destroy ! '
 The accents ran to water on his mouth,
 The pole was kindled to a fiery glow,
 A breath of summer floated from the south
 And melted him like snow.

7.

Yea thus, thro' change on change,
 Haunted for ever by the leafy sound
 That sigh'd the Woman and the Man around,
 I, Proteus, range.
 A weary quest, a power to climb and soar,
 Yet never quit life's bitterness and stark-
 ness,
 A groping for God's hand amid the dark-
 ness,
 The day behind me and the night before,
 This is my task for evermore !
 I am the shadow of the inspiration
 Breath'd on the Man ; I am the sense alone,
 That, generation upon generation,
 Empowers the sinful Woman to atone
 By giving angels to the grave and weeping
 Because she knows not whither they are
 going ;
 I am the strife awake, the terror sleeping,
 The sorrow ever ebbing, ever flowing.
 Mine are the mighty names of power and
 worth
 The seekers of the vision that hath fled,
 I bear the Infant's smile about the earth,
 And put the Cross on the aspirant's head,
 I am the peace on holy men who die,
 I waft as sacrifice their fleeting breath—
 I am the change that is not change, for I
 Am deathless, being DEATH.

8.

For, evermore I grow
 Wiser, with humbler power to feel and know ;
 For, in the end I, Proteus, shall cast
 All wondrous shapes aside but one alone,
 And stand (while round about me in the Vast
 Earth, Sun, Stars, Moon, as snowflakes
 melt at last,)

A Skeleton that, shadow'd by the Tree,
Eternity,
Holds in his hands the blossom Time full
blown,
And kneels before a Throne.

II.

ADES, KING OF HELL.

1.

BENEATH the caves where sunless loam
Grows dim and reddens into gold ;
'Neath the fat earth-seams, where the
cold
Rains thicken to the flowery foam
Fringing blue streams in summer zones ;
Beneath the spheres where dead men's
bones
Change darkly thro' slow centuries to marl
and glittering stones ;—

2.

Orb'd in that rayless realm, alone,
Far from the realm of sun and shower,
A palpable god with godlike power,
I, Ades, dwelt upon a throne ;
Much darkness did my eyelids tire ;
But thro' my veins the hid Sun's fire
Communicated impulse, hope, thought, pas-
sion, and desire.

3.

Eternities of lonely reign,
Full of faint dreams of day and night
And the white glamour of starry light,
Oppress'd my patience into pain ;
Upward I sent a voice of prayer
That made a horror in the air :
And 'Ades craves a queen, O Zeus !' shook
heaven unaware.

4.

The gods stopt short in full earouse,
And listen'd. On the streams of Hell
The whole effulgent conclave fell
As in a glass. With soft-arch'd brows,
And wings of dewy-tinctured dye,
Pale Iris listen'd blushingly ;
And Heré sought the soul of Zeus with
coldly eager eye.

5.

Then the clear hyaline grew cold
And dim before the Father's face ;
Gray meditation clothed the place ;
And rising up Zeus cried, 'Behold !'—
And on Olumpos' crystal wall,
A kingly phantom cloudy and tall,
Throned, sceptred, crown'd, was darkly
apparition'd at the call.

6.

'Behold him !' Zeus the Father cried,
With voice that shook my throne for-
lorn :
Pale Hermes curl'd his lips in scorn,
And Iris drew her bow aside :
Artemis paled and did not speak ;
Sheer fear flush'd Aphrodité's cheek ;
And only owl-eyed Pallas look'd with pitying
smile and meek.

7.

A weary night thro' earth and air
The shadow of my longing spread,
And not a goddess answer'd.
All nature darken'd at my prayer ;
Which darkness earth and air did
shroud,
No starrain'd light, but, pale and proud,
With blue-edged sickle Artemis cut her slow
path thro' cloud.

8.

And when the weary dark was done,
Beyond my sphere of realm upsprang,
With smile that beam'd and harp that
sang,
Apollo piloting the Sun ;
And conscious of him shining o'er,
I watch'd my black and watery floor
Wherein the wondrous upper-world is
mirror'd evermore.

9.

When lo, there murmur'd on my brain,
Like sound of distant waves, a sound
That did my godlike sense confound
And kiss'd my eyelids down in pain ;
And far above I heard the beat
Of musically falling feet,
Hurl'd by the echoes of the earth down to
my brazen seat.

10.

And I was 'ware that overhead
Walk'd one whose very motion sent
A sweet immortal wonderment
Thro' the deep dwellings of the Dead,
And flush'd the seams of cavern and
mine
To gleams of gold and diamond shine,
And made the misty dews shoot up to kiss
her feet divine.

11.

By Zeus, the beat of those soft feet
Thrill'd to the very roots of Hell,
Troubling the mournful streams that fell
Like snakes from o'er my brazen seat :
Faint music reach'd me strange and
slow,
My conscious Throne gleam'd pale as
snow,
A beauteous vision vaguely fill'd the dusky
glass below.—

12.

When I beheld in that dark glass
The phantom of a lonely maid,
Who gather'd flowers in a green glade
Knee-deep in dewy meadow-grass,
And on a riverside. Behold,
The sun that robed her round with gold,
Mirror'd beneath me raylessly, loom'd white
and round and cold.

13.

Soft yellow hair that curl'd and clang
Throbb'd to her feet in softest showers,
And as she went she gather'd flowers,
And as she gather'd flowers she sang :
It floated down my sulphurous eaves,
That melody of flowers and leaves,
Of vineyards, gushing purple wines, and
yellow slanted sheaves.

14.

Darkling I mutter'd, 'It were choice
Proudly to throne in solemn cheer
So fair a queen, and ever to hear
Such song from so divine a voice !'
And with the wish I upward breathed
A mist of fire that swiftly seethed
Thro' shuddering earth-seams overhead, and
round her warm knees wreathed.

15.

Whereon the caves of precious stones
Grew bright as moonlight thrown on
death,
And red gold brighten'd, and the breath
Drew greenness moist from fleshless bones ;
And every cave was murmuring :
'O River, cease to flow and sing,
And bear the tall bride on thy banks to the
footstool of thy king !'

16.

Then writhed the roots of forest trees
In tortuous fear, till tremblingly
Green leaves quaked round her. A
sharp cry
Went upward from the Oreades ;
Low murmurs woke in bower and cave,
With diapason in the wave :
The River eddied darkly round, obeying as
a slave.

17.

Half stooping downward, while she held
A flower in loosening fingers light ;
The quick pink fading from the white
Upon her cheek ; with eyes that welled
Dark pansy thoughts from veins that
dart
Like restless snakes round the honied
heart,
And balmy breath that mildly blew her rose-
red lips apart,—

18.

She listen'd—stately, yet dismay'd ;
And dimly conscious of some change
That made the whispering place seem
strange
And awful, far from human aid ;
And as the moaning Stream grew near,
And whirl'd unto her with eddies clear,
She saw my shadow in his waves and shrank
away in fear.

19.

'Small River, flowing with summer sound,
Strong River, solemn Ades' slave,
Flow unto her with gentle wave,
And make an isle, and hem her round,'
The River, sad with gentle worth,
Felt backward to that cave of earth
Where, troubled with my crimson eyes, he
shudder'd into birth.

20.

Him saw she trembling ; but unseen,
 Under long sedges lily-strew'd,
 Round creeping roots of underwood,
 Low down beneath the grasses green
 Whereon she waited wondering-eyed,
 My servant slid with stealthy tide :—
 Then like a fountain bubbled up and foam'd
 on either side.

21.

And shrinking back she gazed in fear
 On his wild hair, and lo, an isle—
 Around whose brim waves rose the while
 She cried, 'O mother Ceres, hear !'
 Then sprang she wildly to and fro,
 Wilder than rain and white as snow.
 'O honour'd River, grasp thy prize, and to
 the footstool flow !'

22.

One swift sunbeam with sickly flare
 On white arms waving high did gleam,
 What time she shriek'd, and the strong
 Stream
 Leapt up and grasp'd her by the hair.
 And all was dark. With wild heads
 bow'd
 The forest murmur'd, and black cloud
 Split speumy on the mountain tops with fire
 and portent loud !

23.

Then all was still as the Abyss,
 Save for the dark and bubbling water,
 And the far voice. 'Bear Ceres' daughter
 Unto the kingly feet of Dis !'
 Wherefore I rose upon my throne,
 And smote my kingdom's roof of stone ;
 Earth moan'd to her deep fiery roots—Hell
 answer'd with a groan.

24.

When swiftly waving sulphurous wings
 The Darkness brooded down in fear
 To listen. I, afar, could hear
 The coming River's murmurings ;
 My god-like eyes with flash of flame
 Peer'd up the chasm. As if in shame
 Of his slave-deed, darkly and slow, my
 trembling servant came.

25.

The gentleness of summer light,
 This stream, my honour'd slave pos-
 sessed :
 The blue flowers mirror'd in his breast,
 And the meek lamps that sweeten night,
 Had made his heart too mild to
 bear
 With other than a gentle care,
 And slow sad solemn pace, a load so violet-
 eyed and fair !

26.

Him saw I, as, thro' looming rocks,
 He glimmer'd like a serpent gray
 Whose moist coils hiss ; then, far
 away,
 Lo, the dim gleam of golden locks,
 Lo, a far gleam of glinting gold,
 Floating in many a throbbing fold,
 What time soft ripples panted dark on
 queenly eyelids cold.

27.

Silently, with obeisance meet,
 In gentle arms escorting well
 The partner of eternal Hell,
 Thus flow'd, not halting, to my feet
 The gracious River with his load :
 Her with dark arm-sweep he bestow'd
 On my great footstool—then again, with
 sharp shriek, upward flow'd.

28.

So fair, so fair, so strangely fair,
 Dark from the waters lay my love ;
 And lo, I, Ades, stoop'd above,
 And shuddering touch'd the yellow hair
 That made my beaded eyeballs close—
 Awful as sunshine. Cold as snows,
 Pale-faced, dank-lidded, proud, she lay in
 wonderful repose.

29.

And all the lesser Thrones that rise
 Around me, shook. With murmurous
 breath,
 Their Kings shook off eternal death,
 And with a million fiery eyes
 Glared red above, below, around,
 And saw me stooping fiery-crown'd ;
 And the white faces of the damn'd arose
 without a sound.

30.

As if an awful sunbeam, rife
 With living glory, pierced the gloom,
 Bringing to spirits blind with doom
 The summers of forgotten life,—
 Those pallid faces, mad and stern,
 Rose up in foam, and each in turn
 Roll'd downward, as a white wave breaks,
 and seem'd to plead and yearn.

31.

What time this horror loom'd beyond,
 Her soul was troubled into sighs :
 Stooping, throned, crown'd, I touch'd
 her eyes
 With dim and ceremonial wand ;
 And looking up, she saw and knew
 An awful love which did subdue
 Itself to her bright comeliness and gave her
 greeting due !

32.

'Welcome !'—The rocks and chasms and
 caves,
 The million thrones and their black
 kings,
 The very snakes and creeping things,
 The very damn'd within the waves,
 Groan'd 'welcome ;' and she heard—
 with light
 Fingers that writhed in tresses bright,—
 But when I touch'd her to the soul, she
 slowly rose her height.

33.

While shadows of a reign eterne
 Quench'd the fine glint in her yellow
 hair,
 She rose erect more hugely fair,
 And, dark'ning to a queenhood stern,
 She gazed into mine eyes and thence
 Drew black and subtle inference,
 Subliming the black godhead there with
 sunnier, sweeter sense.

34.

Low at her feet, huge Cerberus
 Crouch'd groaning, but with royal look
 She stooping silenced him, and took
 The throne sublime and perilous
 That rose to hold her and upstream'd
 Vaporous fire : the dark void scream'd,
 The pale Eumenides made moan, with eyes
 and teeth that gleam'd.

35.

Behold, she sits beside me now,
 A weighty sorrow in her mien,
 Yet gracious to her woes—a queen ;
 The sunny locks about her brow
 Shadow'd to godhead solemn, meet ;
 Throned, queen'd ; but round about
 her feet,
 Sweeten'd by gentle grass and flowers, the
 brackish waves grow sweet.

36.

And surely, when the mirror dun
 Beneath me mirrors yellowing leaves,
 And reapers binding golden sheaves,
 And vineyards purple in the sun,
 When fulness fills the plenteous year
 Of the bright upper-world, I hear
 The voice among the harvest-fields that
 mourns a daughter dear.

37.

'Lo, Ceres mourns the bride of Dis,'
 The old Earth moans ; and rocks and
 hills,
 'Persephóné ;' sad radiance fills
 The dripping horn of Artemis
 Silverly shaken in the sky ;
 And a great frost-wind rushing by—
 'Ceres will rob the eyes of Hell when seed-
 time draweth nigh.'

38.

And in the seed-time after snow,
 Down the long caves, in soft distress,
 Dry corn-blades tangled in her dress,
 The weary goddess wanders slow—
 The million eyes of Hell are bent
 On my strange queen in wonderment,—
 The ghost of Iris gleams across my waters
 impotent !

39.

And the sweet Bow bends mild and
 bland
 O'er rainy meadows near the light,
 When fading far along the night
 They wander upward hand-in-hand ;
 And like a phantom I remain,
 Chain'd to a throne in lonely reign,
 Till, sweet with greenness, moonlight-kiss'd,
 she wanders back again.

40.

But when afar thro' rifts of gold
 And caverns steep'd in fog complete,
 I hear the beat of her soft feet,
 My kingdom totters as of old ;
 And, conscious of her sweeter worth,
 Her godhead of serener hirth,
 Hell, breathing fire thro' flowers and leaves,
 feels to the upper-earth.

III.

P A N.

IT is not well, ye gods, it is not well !
 Yea, hear me grumble—rouse, ye sleepers,
 rouse

Upon thick-carpeted Olumpos' top—
 Nor, faintly hearing, murmur in your sloth
 ' 'Tis but the voice of Pan the malcontent !'
 Shake the sleek sunshine from ambrosial
 locks,

Vouchsafe a sleepy glance at the far earth
 That underneath ye wrinkles dim with cloud,
 And smile, and sleep again !

ME, when at first
 The deep Vast murmur'd, and Eternity
 Gave forth a hollow sound while from its
 voids

Ye blossom'd thick as flowers, and by the
 light

Beheld yourselves eternal and divine,—
 ME, underneath the darkness visible
 And calm as ocean when the cold Moon
 smooths

The palpitating waves without a sound,—
 Me, ye saw sleeping in a dream, white-hair'd,
 Low-lidded, gentle, aged, and like the shade
 Of the eternal self-unconsciousness
 Out of whose law YE had awaken'd—gods
 Fair-statured, self-apparent, marvellous,
 Dove-eyed, and inconceivably divine.

Over the ledges of high mountains, thro'
 The fulgent streams of dawn, soft-pillow'd
 On downy clouds that swam in reddening
 streaks

Like milk wherein a crimson wine-drop
 melts,

And far beyond the dark of vague low lands,
 Uprose Apollo, shaking from his locks
 Ambrosial dews, and making as he rose
 A murmur such as west winds weave in June.

Wherefore the darkness in whose depth I sat
 Wonder'd : thro' newly-woven houghs, the
 light

Crept onward to mine eyelids unaware,
 And fluttering o'er my wrinkled length of
 limb

Like tremulous butterflies above a snake,
 Disturb'd me,—and I stirr'd, and open'd
 eyes,

Then lifted up my eyes to see the light,
 And saw the light, and, seeing not myself,
 Smiled !

Thereupon, ye gods, the woods and lawns
 Grew populously glad with living things.

A rod of stone beneath my heel grew bright,
 Writhing to life, and hissing drew swift coils
 O'er the upspringing grass ; above my head
 A birch unbound her silver-shimmering hair,
 Brightening to the notes of numerous birds ;
 And far dim mountains hollow'd out them-
 selves

To give forth streams, till down the moun-
 tain-sides

The loosen'd streams ran flowing. Then a
 voice

Came from the darkness as it roll'd away
 Under Apollo's sunshine-sandall'd foot,
 And the vague voice shriek'd ' Pan !' and
 woods and streams,

Sky-kissing mountains and the courteous
 vales,

Cried ' Pan !' and earth's reverberating roots
 Gave forth an answer, ' Pan !' and stooping
 down

His fiery eyes to scorch me from my trance,
 Unto the ravishment of his soft lyre

' Pan !' sang Apollo : when the wide world
 heard,

Brightening brightlier, till thro' murmurous
 leaves

Pale wood-nymphs peep'd around me
 whispering ' Pan !'

And sweeter faces floated in the stream
 That gurgled to my ankle, whispering
 ' Pan !'

And, clinging to the azure gown of air
 That floated earthward dropping scented
 dews,

A hundred lesser spirits panted ' Pan !'
 And, far along an opening forest-glade,
 Beating a green lawn with alternate feet,
 ' Pan !' cried the satyrs leaping. Then all
 sounds

Were hush'd for coming of a sweeter sound ;
And rising up, with outstretch'd arms, I,
Pan,
Look'd eastward, saw, and knew myself a
god.

It was not well, ye gods, it was not well !
Star-guiders, cloud-compellers—ye who
stretch

Ambrosia-dripping limbs, great-statured,
bright,

Silken and fair-proportion'd, in a place
Thick-carpeted with grass as soft as sleep ;
Who with mild glorious eyes of liquid depth
Subdue to perfect peace and calm eterne
The mists and vapours of the nether-world,
That curl up dimly from the nether-world
And make a roseate mist wherein ye lie
Soft-lidded, broad-foreheaded, stretch'd
supine

In awful contemplations—ye great gods,
Who meditate your forms and find them
fair—

Ye heirs of odorous rest—it was not well !—
For, with Apollo sheer above, I, Pan,
In whom a gracious godhead lived and
moved,

Rose, glorious-hearted, and look'd down ;
and lo,

Goat-legs, goat-thighs, goat-feet, uncouth
and rude,

And, higher, the breast and bowels of a
beast,

Huge thews and twisted sinews swoll'n like
cords,

And thick integument of bark-brown skin—
A hideous apparition masculine !

But in my veins a new and natural youth,
In my great veins a music as of boughs
When the cool aspen-fingers of the Rain
Feel for the eyelids of the earth in spring,
In every vein quick life ; within my soul
The meekness of some sweet eternity

Forgot ; and in mine eyes soft violet-thoughts
That widen'd in the eyeball to the light,
And peep'd, and trembled chilly back to the
soul

Like leaves of violets closing.

By my lawns,
My honey-flowing rivers, by my woods
Grape-growing, by my mountains down
whose sides

The slow flocks thread like silver streams at
eye,

By the deep comfort in the eyes of Zeus
When the soft murmur of my peaceful dales
Blows like a gust of perfume on his cheek,
There where he reigns, cloud-shrouded—by
mEEK lives

That smoothe themselves like wings of doves
and brood

Over immortal themes for love of me—
I swear it was not well.

Ay, ay, ye smile ;—

Ye hear me, garrulous, and turn again
To contemplation of the slothful clouds
That curtain ye for sweetness. Hear me,
gods !

Not the ineffable stars that interlace
The azure panoply of Zeus himself,
Have surer sweetness than my hyacinths
When they grow blue in gazing on blue
heaven,

Than the white lilies of my rivers when
In leafy spring Selené's silver horn
Spills paleness, peace, and fragrance.—And
for these,

For all the sensible or senseless things
Which swell the sounds and sights of earth
and air,

I snatch some glory which of right belongs
To ye whom I revile : ay, and for these,
For all the sensible or senseless things
Which swell the sounds and sights of earth
and air,

I will snatch fresher glory, fresher joy,
Robbing your rights in heaven day by day,
Till from my dispensation ye remove
Darkness, and drought that parches thirsty
skins,

The stinging alchemy of frost, the agues
That rack me in the season of wet winds—
Till, bit by bit, my bestial nether-man
Peels off like bark, my green old age shoots
up

Godhead apparent, and I know myself
Fair—as becomes a god !

Ay, I shall do !

Not I alone am something garrulous, gods !
But the broad-bosom'd earth, whose count-
less young

Moan 'Pan !' most piteously when ye
frown

In tempests, or when Thunder, waving
wings,

Groans crouching from your lightning
spears, and then

Springs at your lofty silence with a shriek !
Not I alone, low horror masculine,

But earthquake-shaken hills, the dewy dales,
Blue rivers as they flow, and boughs of trees,

Yea, monsters, and the purblind race of men,
Grow garrulous of your higher glory, gods ;

Yearning unto it moan my name aloud,
Climbing unto it shriek or whisper ' Pan ! '

Till from the far-off verdurous depths, from
deep

Impenetrable woods whose wondrous roots
Blacken to coal or redden into gold,

I, stirring in this ancient dream of mine,
Make answer—and they hear.

In Arcady

I, sick of mine own envy, hollow'd out
A valley, green and deep ; then pouring
forth

From the great hollow of my hand a stream
Sweeter than honey, bade it wander on

In soft and rippling lapse to the far sea.

Upon its banks grew flowers as thick as
grass,

Gum-dropping poplars and the purple vine,
Slim willows dusty like the thighs of bees,

And, further, stalks of corn and wheat and
flax,

And, even further, on the mountain sides
White sheep and new-year'd lambs, and in
the midst

Mild-featured shepherds piping. Was not
this

An image of your grander ease, O gods ?
A faint sweet picture of your bliss, O gods ?

They thank'd me, those sweet shepherds,
with the smoke

Of crimson sacrifice of lambkins slain,
Rich spices, succulent herbs that savour
meats ;

And when they came upon me ere aware,
Walk'd sudden on my presence where I piped

By rivers lorn my mournful ditties old,
Cried ' Pan ! ' and worshipp'd. Yet it was

not well,
Ye gods, it was not well, that I, who gave

The harvest to these men, and with my
breath

Thicken'd the wool upon the backs of sheep,
I, Pan, should in these purblind mortal

forms
Witness a loveliness more gently fair,

Nearer to your dim loveliness, O gods !
Than my immortal wood pervading self,—
Carelessly blown on by the rosy Hours,
Who breathe the quick breath and smile before
they die—

Goat-footed, horn'd, a monster—yet a god.

By wanton Aphrodite's velvet limbs,
I swear, ye amorous gods, it was not
well !—

Down the long vale of Arcady I chased
A wood-nymph, unapparell'd and white-
limb'd,

From gleaming shoulder unto foot a curve
Delicious, like the bow of Artemis :

A gleam of dewy moonlight on her limbs ;
Within her veins a motion as of waves

Moon-led and silver-crested to the moon ;
And in her heart a sweetness such as fills

Uplooking maidens when the virgin orb
Witches warm bosoms into snows, and gives

The colourable chastity of flowers
To the tumultuous senses curl'd within.

Her, after summer noon, what time her foot
Started with moonlight motion milk-blue
stalks

Of hyacinths in a dim forest glade,—

Her saw I, and, uplifting eager arms,
I rush'd around her as a rush of boughs,
My touch thrill'd thro' her, she beheld my
face,

And like a gnat it stung her, and she fled.

Down the green glade, along the verdur-
ous shade,

She screaming fled and I pursued behind :
By Zeus, it was as though the forest moved

Behind her, following ; and with shooting
boughs,

And bristling arms and stems, and murmur-
ous leaves,

It eddied after her—my underwood
Of bramble and the yellow-blossom'd furze

Flung its thick growth around her waist, my
trees

Dropt thorns before her, and my growing
grass

Put forth its green and sappy oils and slid
Under her feet ; until, with streaming hair

Like ravell'd sunshine torn 'mid scars and
cliffs,

Pale, breathless, and long-throated like a
swan,

With tongue that panted 'tween the foamy lips

As the red arrow in a tulip's cup,
She, coming swiftly on the river-side,
Into the circle of a sedgy pool
Plunged knee-deep, shrieking. Then I,
thrusting arms

To grasp her, touch'd her with hot hands
that clung

Like burrs to the soft skin ; while, writhing
down

Even as a fountain lessens gurglingly,
She cried to Artemis, ' Artemis, Artemis,
Sweet goddess, Artemis, aid me, Artemis !'
And o'er the laurels on the river-side,
Dark and low-fluttering, Daphne's hidden
soul

Breathed fearful hoar-frost, echoing ' Ar-
temis ' ;

When lo, above the sandy sunset rose
The silver sickle of the green-gown'd witch
Which flicker'd thrice into a pallid orb,
And thrice flash'd white across the forest
leaves,

And—lo, the change ye wot of: melting
limbs

Black'ning to oozy sap of reeds, white hands
Waving aloft and putting forth green shoots,
The faint breath-bubbles circling in a pool,
Last, the sharp voice's murmur dying away
In the low lapping of the rippling pool,
The melancholy motion of the pool,
And the faint undertone of whispering reeds.

By Latmos and its shepherd, was it well?
By smooth-chinn'd Syrinx, was it well, O
gods?

Yet mark. What time the pallid sickle
wax'd

Blue-edged and luminous o'er the black'ning
west,

I, looming hideous in the smooth pool,
stooped

And pluck'd seven wondrous pipes of brittle
reeds

Wherein the wood-nymph's soul still flutter'd
faint ;

And these seven pipes I shaped to one,
wherein

I, Pan, with ancient and dejected head
Nodding above its image in the pool,
And large limbs stretch'd their length on
shadowy banks,

Did breathe such weird and awful ravish-
ment,

Such symmetry of sadness and sweet sound,
Such murmurs of deep boughs and hollow
cells,

That neither bright Apollo's hair-strung lute,
Nor Heré's queenly tongue when her red
lips

Flutter to intercession of love-thoughts
Throned in the counsel-keeping eyes of Zeus,
Nor airs from heaven, blow sweetlier. Hear
me, gods !

Behind her veil of azure, Artemis
Turn'd pale and listen'd ; mountains, woods,
and streams,

And every mute and living thing therein,
Marvell'd, and hush'd themselves to hear
the end—

Yea, far away, the fringe of the green sea
Caught the faint sound and with a deeper
moan

Rounded the pebbles on the shadowy shore.
Whence, in the season of the pensive eve,
The earth plumes down her weary, weary
wings ;

The Hours, each frozen in his mazy dance,
Look scared upon the stars and seem to
stand

Stone-still, like chisell'd angels mocking
Time ;

And woods and streams and mountains,
beasts and birds,

And serious hearts of purblind men, are
hush'd ;

While music sweeter far than any dream
Floats from the far-off silence, where I sit
Wondrously wov'n about with forest
boughs—

Through which the moon peeps faintly, on
whose leaves

The unseen stars sprinkle a diamond dew—
And shadow'd in some water that not flows,
But, pausing, spreads dark waves as smooth
as oil

To listen !

Am I over-garrulous, gods ?

Thou pale-faced witch, green-kirtled,—thou
whose light

Troubles the beardless shepherd where he
sleeps

On Latmos,—am I over-garrulous ?

Nay, then, pale huntress of my groves, I
swear

The lily and the primrose 'neath thy heel
Savour as fair as thee, as pure as thee,
Drinking the lucid glamour of thy speed ;
And on the cheeks of marriageable maids
Dwelleth a pallor enviably sweet,
Sweet as thy sweetest self, yet robb'd from
thee.

Snow-bosom'd lady, art thou proud?—Then
hark . . .

When last in the cool quiet of the night
Thou glimmeredst dimly down with thy
white nymphs

And brush'd these dewy lawns with buskin'd
foot,

I, Pan the scorn'd, into an oak-tree crept,
And holding between thumb and finger—
thus—

A tiny acorn, dropt it cunningly
In the small nest beneath thy snow-heap'd
breasts,

And thou didst pause in tumult, cried aloud,
Then reddened like a rose from breast to
brow,

Sharp-crimson like a rose from breast to
brow,

And trembled, aspen-hearted, timorous
As new-year'd lambs, and with a young
doe's cry

Startled amazed from thine own tremulous
shade

Faint-mirror'd in the dark and dewy lawn !

Ha, turn your mild grand eyes, O gods,
and hear !

Why do I murmur darkly, do ye ask?

What do I seek for, yearn for?—Why, not
much.

I would be milky-limb'd and straight and
tall

And pleasant-featured, like Apollo there !

I would be lithe and fair as Hermes is ;

And, with that glittering sheath of god-like
form,

Trust me, could find for it a wit as keen

As that which long ago did prick and pain
The thin skin of the Sun-God. I would be

Grand and fine-statured as becomes a god,

A slight divine conceived harmoniously,

A stately incarnation of my sweet

Pipings in lonely places. There's the worm !

Ay, ay, the mood is on me—I am aged,
White-bearded, and my very lifted hands

Shake garrulously—and ye bear, and smile.
By the faint undertone of this blind Earth,
Swooning towards the pathway of the Sun
With flowery pulses, leafy veins, when'er
She hears in intercession of new births
My voice miraculous melancholy old,—
I swear not I alone, a sensible god,
Shall keep these misproportions, worse than
beast's ;

While woods and streams, and all that dwell
therein,

And merest flowers, and the starr'd coils of
snakes,

Yea, purblind mortal men, inhale from
heaven

Such dews as give them heavenly seemliness,
Communicably lovely as the shapes

That doze on high Olumpus.

Is it well?

Ye who compel the very clouds to forms
Beauteous and purely beauteous, ere my rain
Rends their white vestments into flowers to
make

My peaceful vales look lovely,—gods, great
gods,

I ask ye, is it well?—Ye answer not.

But Earth has answer'd, and all things that
grow,

All things that live, all things that feel or see
The interchanges of the sun and moon ;

And with a yearning palpable and dumb,

Yet conscious of some glory yet unborn,

Of unfulfill'd mysteries, I, Pan,

Prophecy.

In the time to come,—in years

Across whose vast I wearily impel

These ancient, blear'd, and humble-lidded
eyes,—

Some law more strong than I, yet part of
me,

Some power more piteous, yet a part of me,

Shall hurl ye from Olumpus to the depths,
And bruise ye back to that great darkness

whence

Ye blossom'd thick as flowers ; while I—I,
Pan —

The ancient haunting shadow of dim earths,
Shall slough this form of beast, this wrinkled
length,

Yea, cast it from my feet as one who shakes

A worthless garment off ; and lo, beneath,

Mild-featured manhood, manhood eminent,
Subdued into the glory of a god,

Sheer harmony of body and of soul,
Wondrous, and inconceivably divine.

Wherefore, ye gods, with this my prophecy
I sadden those sweet sounds I pipe unseen.
From dimly lonely places float the sounds
To haunt the regions of the homeless air,
Whatever changeful season ye vouchsafe
To all broad worlds which, hearing, whisper,
'Pan!'

And thence they reach the hearts of lonely
men,
Who wearily bear the burthen and are pain'd
To utterance of fond prophetic song,
Who singing smile, because the song is
sweet,
Who die, because they cannot sing the end.

It is my care to keep the graves of such
Thick-s:rown and deep with grass and
precious flowers

Such as ye slumber on ; and to those graves,
In sable vestments, ever comes the ghost
Of my forgot and dumb eternity,
Mnemosyne ; but what she broods on there
I know not, nor can any wholly know,
Mortal or god. The seasons come and go,
In their due season perish rocks and trees,
In thcir due season are the streams drain'd
dry ;

Earth dumbly changes, and those lonely
men,
Less blind than purblind mortals, sing and
die ;

But still, with hooded and dejected head,
Above those graves ponders Mnemosyne ;
While I remain to pipe my ditties old,
And my new prophecy, in ancient woods
And by the margins of unfortunate pools,—
My wondrous music dying afar away
Upon the fringes of the setting sun,

IV.

THE NAIAD.

I.

DIAN white-arm'd has given me this cool
shrine,
Deep in the bosom of a wood of pine :
The silver-sparkling showers
That close me in, the flowers
That prink my fountain's brim, are hers
and mine ;

And when the days are mild and fair,
And grass is springing, buds are blowing,
Sweet it is, 'mid waters flowing,
Here to sit, and know no care,
'Mid the waters flowing, flowing, flow-
ing,
Combing my yellow, yellow hair.

2.

The ounce and panther down the mountain-
side
Creep thro' dark greenness in the eventide ;
And at the fountain's brink
Casting great shades they drink,
Gazing upon me, tame and sapphire-eyed ;
For, awed by my pale face, whose light
Gleameth thro' sedge and lilies yellow,
They, lapping at my fountain mellow,
Harm not the lamb that in affright
Throws in the pool so mellow, mellow,
mellow,
Its shadow small and dusky-white.

3.

Oft do the fauns and satyrs, flusht with play,
Come to my coolness in the hot noon-day.
Nay, once indeed, I vow
By Dian's truthful brow,
The great god Pan himself did pass this way,
And, all in festal oak-leaves clad,
His limbs among these lilies throwing,
Watch'd the silver waters flowing,
Listen'd to their music glad,
Saw and heard them flowing, flowing,
flowing,
And ah ! his face was worn and sad !

4.

Mild joys around like silvery waters fall ;
But it is sweetest, sweetest far of all,
In the calm summer night,
When the tree-tops look white,
To be exhaled in dew at Dian's call,
Among my sister-clouds to move
Over the darkness earth bedimming,
Milky-robed thro' heaven swimming,
Floating round the stars above,
Swimming proudly, swimming, proudly
swimming,
And waiting on the Moon I love.

5.

So tenderly I keep this cool green shrine,
Deep in the bosom of a wood of pine ;

Faithful thro' shade and sun,
 That service due and done
 May haply earn for me a place divine
 Among the white-robed deities
 That thread thro' starry paths, attending
 My sweet Lady, calmly wending
 Thro' the silence of the skies,
 Changing in hues of beauty never ending,
 Drinking the light of Dian's eyes.

V.

THE SATYR.

I.

THE trunk of this tree,
 Dusky-leaved, shaggy-rooted,
 Is a pillow well suited
 To a hybrid likc me,
 Goat-bearded, goat-footed ;
 For the boughs of the glade
 Meet above me, and throw
 A cool pleasant shade
 On the greenness below ;
 Dusky and brown'd
 Close the leaves all around ;
 And yet, all the while,
 Thro' the boughs I can see
 A star, with a smile,
 Looking at me.

2.

Full length I lie,
 On this mossy tree-knot,
 With face to the sky,
 The vast blue I see not ;
 And I start in surprise
 From my dim half-dream,
 With the moist white gleam
 Of the star in mine eyes :
 So strange does it seem
 That the star should beam
 From her crystal throne
 On this forest nook
 Of all others, and look
 Upon me alone :
 Ay, that yonder divine
 Soft face
 Should shine
 On this one place ;
 And, when things so fair
 Till the earth and air,

Should choose to be,
 Night after night,
 The especial light
 Of a monster like me !

3.

Why, all day long,
 I run about
 With a madcap throng,
 And laugh and shout.
 Silenus grips
 My ears, and strides
 On my shaggy hips,
 And up and down
 In an ivy crown
 Tipsily rides ;
 And when in a doze
 His eyelids close,
 Off he tumbles, and I
 Can his wine-skin steal,
 I drink—and feel
 The grass roll—sea-high !
 Then with shouts and yells,
 Down mossy dells,
 I stagger after
 The wood-nymphs fleet,
 Who with mocking laughter
 And smiles retreat ;
 And just as I clasp
 A yielding waist,
 With a cry embraced,
 —Gush ! it melts from my grasp
 Into water cool,
 And—bubble ! trouble !
 Seeing double !
 I stumble and gasp
 In some icy pool !

4.

All suborn me,
 Flout me, scorn me !
 Drunken joys
 And cares are mine,
 Romp and noise,
 And the dregs of wine ;
 And when'er in the night
 Diana glides by
 The spot where I lie,
 With her maids green-dight,
 I must turn my back
 In a rude affright,
 And blindly fly
 From her shining track !

Or if only I hear
Her bright foot-fall near,
Fall with face to the grass,
Not breathing for fear
Till I feel her pass.

5.

I am—
I know not what :
Neither what I am,
Nor what I am not—
I seem to have rollick'd,
And frolick'd,
In this wood for ay,
With a beast's delight
Romping all day,
Dreaming all night !
Yet I seem
To remember awaking
Just here, and aching
With the last forsaking
Tender gleam
Of a droll strange dream.—
When I lay at mine ease,
With a sense at my heart
Of being a part
Of the grass and trees
And the scented earth,
And of drinking the bright
Subdued sunlight
With a leafy mirth :
Then behold, I could see
A wood-nymph peeping
Out of her tree,
And closer creeping,
Timorously
Looking at me !
And still, so still,
I lay until
She trembled close to me,
Soft as a rose to me,
And I leapt with a thrill
And a shout, and threw
Arms around her, and press'd her,
Kiss'd her, caress'd her,—
Ere she scream'd, and flew.

6.

Then I was 'ware
Of a power I had—
To drink the air,
Laugh and shout,
Run about,

And be consciously glad—
So I follow'd the maiden
'Neath shady eaves,
Thro' groves deep-laden
With fruit and leaves,
Till, drawing near
To a brooklet clear,
I shuddering fled
From the monstrous shape
There mirror'd—
Which seem'd to espy me,
And grin and gape,
And leap up high
In the air with a cry,
And fly me !

7.

Whence I seem to have slowly
Grown conscious of being
A thing wild, unholy,
And foul to the seeing.—
But ere I knew aught
Of others like me,
I would lie, fancy-fraught,
In the greenness of thought,
Beneath a green tree ;
And seem to be deep
In the scented earth-shade
'Neath the grass of the glade,
In a strange half-sleep :
When the wind seem'd to move me,
The cool rain to kiss,
The sunlight to love me,
The stars in their bliss
To tingle above me ;
And I crept thro' deep bowers
That were sparkling with showers
And sprouting for pleasure,
And I quicken'd the flowers
To a joy without measure—
Till my sense seem'd consuming
With warmth, and, upspringing,
I saw the flowers blooming,
And heard the birds singing !

8.

Wherever I range,
Thro' the greenery,
That vision strange,
Whatsoever it be,
Is a part of me
Which suffers not change.—

The changes of earth,
 Water, air, ever-stirring,
 Disturb me, conferring
 My sadness or mirth :
 Wheresoever I run,
 I drink strength from the sun ;
 The wind stirs my veins
 With the leaves of the wood,
 The dews and the rains
 Mingle into my blood.
 I stop short
 In my sport,
 Panting, and cower,
 While the blue skies darken
 With a sunny shower ;
 And I lie and hearken,
 In a balmy pain
 To the tinkling clatter,
 Pitter, patter,
 Of the rain
 On the leaves close to me,
 And sweet thrills pass
 Thro' and thro' me,
 Till I tingle like grass.
 When lightning with noise
 Tears the wood's green ceiling,
 When the black sky's voice
 Is terribly pealing,
 I hide me, hide me, hide me,
 With wild averted face,
 In some terror-stricken place,
 While flowers and trees beside me,
 And every streamlet near,
 Darken, whirl, and wonder,
 Above, around, and under,
 And murmur back the thunder
 In a palpitating fear !

9.

Ay ; and when the earth turns
 A soft bosom of balm
 To the darkness that yearns
 Above it, and grows
 To dark, dewy, and calm
 Repose, —
 I, apart from rude riot,
 Partake of the quiet
 The night is bequeathing,
 Lie, unseen and unheard,
 In the greenness just stirr'd
 By its own soft breathing—
 And my heart then thrills
 With a strange sensation

Like the purl of rills
 Down moonlit hills
 That loom afar,
 With a sweet sensation
 Like the palpitation
 Of yonder star !

10.

Thro' yonder bough
 Her white ray twinkles ;
 And on my brow
 She silently sprinkles
 A dewy rain,
 That lulls my brain
 To a dream of being
 Under the ground,
 Blind to seeing,
 Deaf to sound,
 Drinking a dew
 That drops from afar,
 And feeling unto
 The sweet pulse of a star,
 Who is beckoning me
 Though I cannot see !
 And of suddenly blooming
 Up into the air,
 And, swooning, assuming
 The shape I wear !
 While all fair things
 Fly night and day from me,
 Wave bright wings,
 And glimmer away from me !

11.

—She shines above me,
 And heareth not,
 Though she smiles on this spot
 And seems to love me.
 Here I lie aloof,
 Goat-footed, knock-kneed,
 A monster, indeed,
 From horns to hoof ;
 And the star burns clearly
 With pearl-white gleam—
 Have I merely
 Dream'd a dream ?

12.

—Did she hear me, I wonder ?—
 She trembles upon
 Her throne—and is gone !
 The boughs darken under,

Then thrill, and are stirr'd
 By the notes of a bird,
 The green grass brightens
 With pearly dew,
 And the whole wood whitens
 As the dawn creeps thro'.—
 'Hoho!'—that shout
 Flung the echoes about
 The boughs, like balls!
 Who calls?—
 'Tis the noisy rout
 Of my fellows upspringing
 From sleep and dreaming,
 To the birds' shrill singing,
 The day's soft beaming:
 And they madly go
 To and fro,
 Though o' nights they are dumb.
 Hoho! hoho!
 I come! I come!
 Hark!—to the cry
 They reply:
 'Ha, there, ha!'
 'Hurrah!'—'hurrah!'
 And startling afraid
 At the cries,
 In the depths of the glade
 Echo replies—
 'Ho, there!'—'ho, there!'—
 By the stream below there
 The answer dies.

VI.

VENUS ON THE SUN-CAR.

+

TELL me, thou many-finger'd Frost,
 Coming and going like a ghost
 In leafless woods, forsaken—
 O Frost that o'er him lying low
 Drawest the garment of the snow
 From silver cloud-wings shaken,
 And round bare boughs with strange device
 Twinest fantastic leaves of ice—
 When will Adon waken?
 Lo, dawn by dawn I rise afar
 Beside Apollo in his car,
 And, far below us wreathing,
 Thy fogs and mists are dusky curl'd
 Round the white slumber of the world,
 Like to its own deep breathing;

But crimson thro' the mist our light
 Foameth and freezeth, till by night
 Snow-bosom'd hills we fade on—
 The pallid god, at my desire,
 Gives unto thee a breath of fire
 To reach the lips of Adon.

2.

Tell me, thou bare and wintry World,
 Wherein the wing'd flowers are curl'd
 Like pigmy spirits dozing—
 O World, within whose lap he lies,
 With thy quick earth upon his eyes,
 In dim unseen reposing,
 Husht underneath the wind and storm,
 Still rosy-lipt in darkness warm—
 Are Adon's eyes unclosing?
 Lo, dawn by dawn I rise afar
 Beside Apollo in his car,
 Thro' voids of azure soaring,
 And gazing down on regions dead,
 With golden hair dishevell'd,
 And clasp'd hands imploring.
 Wonderful creatures of the light
 Hover above thee, hanging bright
 Faint pictures glen and glade on:
 The pallid god, at my desire,
 Hideth in glimmering snows his fire,
 To reach the sleep of Adon.

3.

Tell me, thou spirit of the Sun,
 Radiant-lock'd and awful one,
 Strong, constant, unforsaking—
 Sun, by whose shadier side I sit
 And search thy face, and question it,
 Conferring light and taking—
 Whose fiery westward motion throws
 The shadow-hours on his repose,—
 Is my Adon waking?
 Lo, dawn by dawn I rise afar
 Beside thee in thy flaming car,
 Thou ever-constant comer!
 And flashing on the clouds that break
 Around our path thy sunbeams make
 A phantom of the summer.
 O breathe upon the Moon, that she
 May use her magic witchery
 When snowy hills we fade on,
 That, in the dark, when thou art gone,
 She speed the resurrection,
 And stir the sleep of Adon!

4.

Tell me, O silver-wing'd Moon,
That glidest to melodious tune
Ice-sparkling skies on skies up,—
O Moon, that to the sunset gray,
Drinking faint light that fades away,
Lifest immortal eyes up,
And walking on, art thro' the night
Troubled to pain by that strange light,—
When will Adon rise up?
Lo, dawn by dawn I rise afar
Beside Apollo in his car,
Imploring sign or token
But night by night such pale peace beams
Upon his slumber, that it seems
Too beauteous to be broken!
O gentle goddess, be not cold—
But, some dim dawn, may we behold
New glory hill and glade on,
The leaves and flowers alive to bliss,
And, somewhat pale with thy last kiss,
The smiling face of Adon!

VII.

SELENE THE MOON.

1.

I HIDE myself in the cloud that flies
From the west and drops on the hill's gray
shoulder,
And I gleam through the cloud with my
panther-eyes,
While the stars turn paler, the dews grow
colder;
I veil my naked glory in mist,
Quivering downward and dewily glistening,
Till his sleep is as pale as my lips unkit,
And I tremble above him, panting and
listening.
As white as a star, as cold as a stone,
Dim as my light in a sleeping lake,
With his head on his arm he lieth alone.
And I sigh 'Awake!
Wake, Endymion, wake and see!
And he stirs in his sleep for the love of me;
But on his eyelids my breath I shake:
'Endymion, Endymion!
Awaken, awaken!
And the yellow grass stirs with the mystic
moan,
And the tall pines groan,
And Echo sighs in her grot forsaken
The name of Endymion!

2.

A foamy dew from the Ocean old,
Whence I rise with shadows behind me
flying,
Drops from my sandals and glittereth cold
On the long spear-grass where my love is
lying;
My face is dim with departed suns,
And my eyes are dark from the depths of
ocean,
A starry shudder throughout me runs,
And my pale cloud stirs with a radiant
motion,
When the darkness wherein he slumbers
alone
Ebbs back from my brightness, as black
waves break
From my shining ankle with shuddering tone;
And I sigh 'Awake!
Wake, Endymion, wake and hear!
And he stirs in his sleep with a dreamy fear,
And his thin lips part for my sweet sake:
'Endymion, Endymion!
Awaken, awaken!
And the skies are moved, and a shadow is
blown
From the Thunderer's throne,
And the spell of a voice from Olumposshaken
Echoes 'Endymion!'

3.

Then under his lids like a halmy rain
I put pale dreams of my heavenly glory;—
And he sees me lead with a silver chain
The tamed Sea-Tempest white-tooth'd and
hoary;
And he sees me fading thro' forests dark
Where the leopard and lion avoid me in
wonder,
Or ploughing the sky in a pearly bark,
While the earth is dumb with my beauty
under!
Then he brightens and yearns where he lies
alone,
And his heart grows dumb with a yearning
ache,
And the thin lips part with a wondering moan,
As I sigh 'Awake!
Wake, Endymion, wake and see
All things grow bright for the love of me,
With a love that grows gentle for thy sweet
sake!
Endymion, Endymion!

Awaken, awaken !'
 And my glory grows paler, the deep woods
 groan,
 And the waves intone,
 Ay, all things whereon my glory is shaken
 Murmur 'Endymion !'

4.

Ai ! The black earth brightens, the Sea
 creeps near
 When I swim from the sunset's shadowy
 portal ;
 But he will not see, and he will not hear,
 Though to hear and see were to be im-
 mortal :
 Pale as a star and cold as a stone,
 Dim as my ghost in a sleeping lake,
 In an icy vision he lieth alone,
 And I sigh 'Awake !
 Wake, Endymion, wake and he
 Divine, divine, for the love of me !'
 And my odorous breath on his lids I shake :
 'Endymion, Endymion !
 Awaken, awaken !'
 But Zeus sitteth cold on his cloud-shrouded
 throne
 And heareth my moan,
 And his stern lips form not the hope-forsaken
 Name of Endymion.

VIII.

IRIS THE RAINBOW.

1.

'MID the cloud-enshrouded haze
 Of Olumpos I arise,
 With the full and rainy gaze
 Of Apollo in mine eyes ;
 But I shade my dazzled glance
 With my dripping pinions white
 Where the sunlight sparkles dance
 In a many-tinctured light :
 My foot upon the woof
 Of a fleecy cloudlet small,
 I glimmer thro' the roof
 Of the paven banquet-hall,
 And a soft pink radiance dips
 Thro' the floating mists divine,
 Touching eyes and cheeks and lips
 Of the mild-eyed gods supine,
 And the growing glory rolls
 Round their foreheads, while I stain,

With a blush like wine, the bowls
 Of transparent porcelain :
 Till the whole calm place has caught
 A deep gleam of rosy fire—
 When I darken to the thought
 In the eyes of Zeus the Sire.

2.

Then Zeus, arising, stoops
 O'er the ledges of the skies,
 Looking downward, thro' the loops
 Of the starry tapestries,
 On the evident dark plain
 Speck'd with wood and hill and stream,
 On the wrinkled tawny main
 Where the ships, like snowflakes, gleam ;
 And with finger without swerve,
 Swiftly lifted, swiftly whirl'd,
 He draws a magic curve
 O'er the dark low-lying world ;
 When with waving wings display'd,
 On the Sun-god's threshold bright
 I upleap, and seem to fade
 In a flash of golden light ;
 But I plunge thro' vapours dim
 To the dark low-lying land,
 And I tremble, float, and swim,
 On the strange curve of the Hand :
 From my wings, that drip, drip, drip,
 With cool rains, shoot jets of fire,
 As across green capes I slip
 With the thought of Zeus the Sire.

3.

Thence, with drooping wings bedew'd,
 Folded close about my form,
 I alight with feet unview'd
 On the ledges of the storm ;
 For a moment, cloud-enroll'd,
 Mid the murmurous rain I stand,
 And with meteor eyes behold
 Vapoury ocean, misty land ;
 Till the thought of Zeus outsprings
 From my ripe mouth with a sigh,
 And unto my lips it clings
 Like a shining butterfly ;
 When I brighten, gleam, and glow
 And my glittering wings unfurl,
 And the melting colours flow
 To my foot of dusky pearl ;
 And the ocean mile on mile
 Gleams thro' capes and straits and bays,

And the vales and mountains smile,
 And the leaves are wet with rays,—
 While I wave the humid Bow
 Of my wings with flash of fire,
 And the Tempest, crouch'd below,
 Knows the thought of Zeus the Sire.

IX.

ORPHEUS THE MUSICIAN.

I SAT of old beside a stream new-born
 From loamy loins of mountains cold,
 And it was garrulous of dreams forlorn
 And visions old :

Wherefore the legends of the woods and caves
 With that faint melody were blended ;
 And as the stream slid down to ocean-waves,
 I comprehended.

Into a dreary silence dim and deep
 I sank with drowsy sighs and nods :
 Then sang—my blue eyes dark and wise
 from sleep—
 The birth of gods.—

A gleaming shoulder cut the stream, and lo !
 I saw the glistening Naiad rise :
 She floated, like a lily white as snow,
 With half-closed eyes.

And suddenly, thronging the boughs around,
 Came forest faces strange and glad,
 That droopt moist underlips and drank the
 sound
 Divinely sad.

Far down the glade, where heavy shadows
 slept,
 Stole, purple-stain'd by the vine,
 Silenus,—thro' whose blood my music crept
 Like wondrous wine :

Tiptoe, like one who fears to break a spell,
 He came, with eyeballs blank as glass—
 Not drawing breath till, at my feet, he fell
 Prone on the grass.

Then, leaning fork'd chin upon his hand,
 He listen'd, dead to tipsy strife,
 And lo ! his face grew smooth and soft and
 bland
 With purer life

Goat-footed fauns and satyrs one by one,
 With limbs upon the greensward thrown,
 Gather'd, and darken'd round me in the sun,
 Like shapes of stone :

Between the sunset and the green hillside
 Quaint pigmy spirits linger'd bright,
 Till heaven's one star swam dewy, opening
 wide
 To the delight,—

While sunlight redden'd, dying, and below
 All heark'd—like shapes upon a cup,
 By ski'd Heré, in the ambrosial glow,
 Held rosily up.

Then twilight dusky gloam'd upon the place,
 Full of sweet odour and cool shade,
 But music made a lamp of every face
 In the forest-glade :

Till swiftly swam, in showers of pearly beams,
 Selené to her azure arc,
 Scattering silence, light, and dewy dreams
 On eyelids dark.

The music sadden'd, and the greenwood
 stirr'd,
 The moonlight clothed us in its veil,
 As stooping down the dove-eyed goddess
 heard,
 Smiled, and grew pale :

For as they listen'd, satyrs, nymphs, and
 fauns
 Conceived their immortality—
 Yea, the weird spirits of the woods and lawns,
 Gross, vile, to see—

Whence her pure light disturb'd them, and
 they strove
 To shake away the sweet strange charm ;
 But the light brighten'd, shaken from above
 With pearly arm.

They could not fly, they could not cry nor
 speak,
 It held them like a hand of strength,—
 They hid their faces, wild, abash'd and weak,
 And writhed full length.

The Naiad lifted up her dewy chin,
 And knew, and saw the light with love,
 Made peaceful by a purity akin
 To hers above,

And countless beauteous spirits of the shade
 Knew their own souls and felt no fear ;
 While Echo, nestling in her thyme-cave,
 made
 An answer clear.

Till, when I ceased to sing, the satyr-crew
 Rush'd back to riot and carouse ;
 Self-fearful faces blushingly withdrew
 Into leafy boughs ;

Lastly, Silenus to his knees upcrept,
 Rubb'd eyelids swollen like the vine,
 Stared blankly round him, vow'd that he had
 slept,
 And bawl'd for wine.

X.

POLYPHEME'S PASSION.

Ho, Silenus !—no one here !
 The kitchen empty, the flocks in stalls,
 The red fire flickering over the walls,
 And—a young kid spitted—dainty cheer !
 Ho, Silenus !—tipsy old reveller,
 Soft - zone - unloosener, bright - hair - dis-
 heveller,
 Where are you hiding, you tipsy old hound
 you,
 With your beard of a goat and your eyes of
 a lamb ?

SILENUS.

Ho, Cyclops !

POLYPHEME.

He mocks me! Where are you, confound you?

SILENUS.

Patience, sweet master, here I am !—

POLYPHEME.

Rise ! or with my great fist I'll put an end
 to thee ;
 The dregs of my great flagon have been
 warming thee —
 Thou'rt drunk, sow-ears. I find there's no
 reforming thee,
 Tho' six round moons I've tried to be a
 friend to thee.
 Once more divinely warming those old veins,
 Chirping like grasshoppers at every pore,

Foaming as warm as milk among thy brains,
 Gushing like sunshine in thine heart's dry
 core,
 Runs the pink nectar of my vines. It stains,
 Flowing from that bald bead, this grassy
 floor—
 Too sweet for earth to drink, unmeet for
 thee,
 Fit only to be quaffed by gods like me !

SILENUS.

Cyclops !

POLYPHEME.

Jump up, then, quickly. Nay, no more.
 Follow me to this rocky eminence,
 Cool-cushion'd with the yellow moss, from
 whence
 We can at ease behold
 The cloud-stain'd greenness of the ocean
 sleek,
 Rounding its glassy waves into the creek,
 Speckled with sparkling jewels manifold,
 And, far away, one melting patch of gold.
 Now, sit !—Nay, nearer, higher—here,
 above
 My shoulder. Turn thy face to mine,
 Silenus !
 Fear not :—being fill'd with the sweet milk
 of Venus,
 Thou'rt a fit counsellor for one in love ;
 And, as I'm in a talking humour, why—
 Suppose we chat a little at our leisure.

SILENUS.

With pleasure !

The subject ?

POLYPHEME.

One alone beneath the sky,
 Old man, is worthy of the conversation
 And serious consideration
 Of such a god as I !
 Now, guess the name of that sweet thing ?

SILENUS.

With ease.

Bacchus, the god to whom these aged knees
 Bend gloriously impotent so often,
 And in whose luscious pool
 I dip hot mouth and eyes, and soak and
 soften
 The yoke of thy strong rule.

POLYPHEME.

A thing a thousand times more beautiful !

SILENUS.

I know no thing more beautiful than he
When, dripping odours cool,
Deep-purpled, like a honey-bosom'd flower
For which the red mouth buzzes like a bee,
He bursts from thy deep caverns gushingly,
And throws his pleasure round him in a
shower,
And sparkles, sparkles, like the eyes that see,
In sunshine, murmuring for very glee
And bursting beaded bubbles until sour
Lips tremble into moist anticipation
Of his rich exultation !

POLYPHEME.

Has little Bacchus, whom ye praise so, power
To unnerve these mighty limbs, make this
one Eye
Rain in potent tears, hurl this gigantic bulk
Down on its stubborn knees—nay, make me
skulk
And fume and fret, and simper oaths,
and sigh,
Like tiny mortal milking-maids who sulk
In dairies, frothing yellow like their
cream ?
Could Bacchus, once let loose to fight and
fly,
Do all these things to sinewy Polypheme ?

SILENUS.

Assuredly !

POLYPHEME.

By this right hand, you lie !—
I am a god, great-statured, strong, and born
Out of Poseidon's nery loins divine !
I laugh the wrath of Zeus himself to scorn ;
And when I rise erect on Aetna's horn
My shadow on the faint sea-hyaline
Falls like a cloud wherein the winds drop
still
And white-wing'd ships move slowly without
will.
Shall bulk so wondrous and so grand as mine
Yield to the miserable god of wine ?

SILENUS.

Certainly not,

POLYPHEME.

Never !—by Pallas' spear,
At whose sharp touch the plump god leaps
and flies,
While startled-Revel shrieks with haggard
eyes !
Never, by Hermes, whom the drunken
fear,
But whose quick fingers pilfer not the wise !

SILENUS.

Whom shall we praise, O Cyclops ?

POLYPHEME.

Thou shalt hear—
Tell me, didst thou ever see a,—
Ever see a, ever hear a,—
Either far away or near, a—
Nymph so sweet as Galatea ?

SILENUS.

Never !

POLYPHEME.

'Tis false, old man ! she is not fair ;—
Those weeds that under ocean rot at ease
Into dark dreams o' the flowery earth, and
there
Put purples in the sea-nymph's sunny hair
Are fairer : she is changeable as these.
She is as wanton as the perfumed fays
That dimple on the windless sea and dally,
Musically,
With the puff'd sails of ships becalm'd for
days.

SILENUS.

True, Cyclops, she is fickle ; and by her
Whose amorous breath blew the Greek host
to Troy,
I have seen fairer !

POLYPHEME.

Dotard ! Driveller !
Not her the false Idalian shepherd-boy,
With silken string, like a tame heifer,
led—
Nay, not lush Aphroditè, whose blue eyne,
Pink-lidded, smiled on their unhallow'd
bed—
Is half so fair, so precious, so divine,
As Galatea !

SILENUS.

Exactly what I said,

POLYPHEME.

Her voice hath gentle sweetness, borrow'd
 From soft tide-lispings on the pebbly sand,
 'Tis like the brooding doves in junipers ;
 White as a shell of ocean is her hand,
 Wherein, with rosy light, the pink blood
 stirs !
 Her hair excels the fruitage of the beech
 Wherein the sun runs liquid gleam on gleam ;
 Her breasts are like two foaming bowls of
 cream,
 A red straw-berry in the midst of each !
 And the soft gold-down on her silken chin
 Is like the under side of a ripe peach—
 A dimple dipping honeyly therein !

SILENUS.

Her eyes—

POLYPHEME.

Profane them not !—For their sweet fire is
 Wondrous and various as the Bow
 Drawn over rainy ledges dripping low
 By many-colour'd Iris—
 From whose bright end, plunged the dark
 waters under,
 Woven with the tapestries of her sea-cave,
 And dying hue by hue on the green wave,
 They may have drunk a portion of their
 wonder.

But oh, what tongue can tell
 Their glory inexpressible ?
 You seem to see the music of the ocean
 Folded within them, as within a shell,
 And gently stirring with a violet motion,
 Until it drops unto the lips, and there
 Flutters in perfumed accents on the air ;
 Nor this alone. They change as the sea
 changes,

In hues as various as the ringdove's dyes :
 Whatsoever sweet and strange is
 Flashes across them with a quick surprise.
 Now, in their troubled orbs rise multiform
 Wild pictures of sky-tempest and sea-storm ;
 And her wild eyes droop brightly on her breast
 Till it is troubled like a thing distrest ;
 But in their softest mood
 You watch the pale soul tremulously brood
 On those bright orbs whose fire the dark
 sea cools,

And there it trembles, as the moonlight flows
 On seas just stir'd by their own deep repose,
 And throbbing, throbbing, into silver pools !

SILENUS.

O eloquent Cyclops, pause, and breathe a
 space !—
 Few eyes save thine, few eyes of earth, have
 plainly
 Seen this immortal Galatea's face ;
 For she thou lovest is of that fair race
 Whom mortal vision dreams of, but seeks
 vainly—
 For they comb and they comb
 Their yellow locks,
 Under the foam,
 Among weedy rocks !
 And they sing unseen
 In their sea-caves green,
 And gaze at the white sun overhead
 Whose pale ray saddens their dripping
 curls,
 Or the moon that glimm'ring in ocean's
 bed
 Leaves her light for ever in pools of
 pearls !

POLYPHEME.

Chirrup not, wine-sponge !—Am not I a
 god ?
 Cannot this eye peer to Olumpos' helm ?
 Does not the great sea, trembling at my nod,
 Hush itself humbly around this my realm ?

SILENUS.

It does, O Cyclops I

POLYPHEME.

Save, of course, when I
 Hurl rocks and trees down on the shudder-
 ing ships,
 And, while I loom above the waves, my lips
 Roar terrible defiance at the sky.

SILENUS.

Precisely.

POLYPHEME.

Ask not, then, the when and how ;
 But turn thine ancient gaze
 On the broad wonder of my brow,
 Thence drop it, in a natural amaze,
 Down the steep mountain to my sinewy feet,
 Round which the lambs, as small as snow-
 flakes, bleat ;
 Now, tell me—am I fair ?

SILENUS.

Most fair !

POLYPHEME.

Thy fears

Lie to my strength a hollow lie, Silenus !

SILENUS.

By all the love that there exists between us,
By doves that perch on Bacchus' vine-
wreath'd ears,

I swear thou art most beautiful !

POLYPHEME.

Again :

Have those blurr'd eyeballs noticed that of
late

Mine air has grown more solemn, more
sedate,

More bountiful to those I hold in chain
To watch my flocks, and more compassion-
ate ;

As if I struggled underneath the weight
Of some indefinite pain ?

That I have learn'd to tremble and to blush,
To droop this eyelid modestly, to flush
All over at the tiniest whispering sound,

To pick small dainty steps upon the ground
As if I saw and seeing fear'd to crush

Some crawling insect or the crimson-crown'd
Small daisy-flower that, whensoever I pass,
Shuts up its little leaves upon the grass

And thinks the shadowy eve has stolen down !

SILENUS.

Cyclops !—These things I saw, but fear'd to
question ;

Nay, with a blush I own it—do not frown !—
I set thy trouble down as indigestion.

For neither dainty kids, nor lambs stall-
fed,

Nor sucking-swine with pippins in their
teeth,

Nor ox-thighs with green herbs engarlanded,
Nor foamy curds wherein hot apples seethe

Nay, not the parsley-flavour'd tongues of
sheep,

Could tempt o' late thy dainty appetite ;

But lying on the mountain out of sight

Of melancholy thou hast drunken deep ;

While down among the yellow pastures
moaning

With lambs new-yeen'd, where thy cool
streamlets run,

We saw thee loom above us, mighty one !
And heard thee, like the monstrous seas

intoning,

Melodiously groaning !

POLYPHEME.

Ay me ! ay me !

SILENUS.

Be calm, sweet Polypheme !

The eagle poised o'er yonder cropping lamb
Flew scared, at that big cry.

POLYPHEME.

Ay me ! I am

Lost, swallow'd up, absorbed into a dream !
Thro' the swift current of my frame gigantic
Eddies a frantic

Consuming fire. I am not what I seem.

For Galatea I refuse all food,

For Galatea I grow weak and wild

And petulant-featured as a sickly child ;

For Galatea I, in desperate mood,

Seek out green places in this solitude,

And close my eyes, and think I am a curl

Tingling, tingling, lightly

Against the snow-heap'd bosom swelling
whitely !

SILENUS.

One should not break his heart for any girl.

POLYPHEME.

Ay me ! I close my eyes in a sweet woe,

And dream that I am little, fair, and sweet,

For a small goddess's embraces meet,

Nor huge, nor rough. It was not always so !

Of old, Silenus, this great awful Me

Was swoll'n with glory at the contemplation

Of its enormity in yonder sea ;

I revell'd in the roar and consternation,

When, grasping rocks with frantic acclama-
tion,

Round this frowning, Ætna-crowning head

I whirl'd them,

Tremendously, stupendously, and hurl'd
them

On the passing fleets below ;

And from under came the thunder of vessels
crush'd asunder,

And the shriek, faint and weak, of the
mortals in their wonder,

And th' sea rolled underneath, and the winds
 began to blow,
 And above the desolation, drunk with rage,
 I took my station,
 With my waving arms expanded and my
 crimson eye aglow,
 And to earth's reverberation,
 Roar'd ' Ho ! ho ! ho !'

SILENUS.

Cyclops ! sweet Cyclops !—

POLYPHEME.

Fear not !

I am as weak as the eagle's callow young ;
 Yet listen, mild old man, and interfere not.
 One summer day, when earth and heaven
 rung
 With thunders, and the hissing lightning
 stung
 With fork'd meteor tongue
 The green smooth living ocean till it
 shriek'd—
 I stood aloft on Ætna's horn and wreak'd
 My cruel humour with a monstrous glee :
 When lo ! from out the rainy void did flit
 Bright Iris, and with tremulous foot alit
 On this my mountain, touching even me
 With her faint glory : for a moment, she
 Paused shudd'ring high above me : then
 with fleet
 Footstep slid downward till she reach'd my
 feet ;
 And there, with many-tinctured wings
 serene,
 She waved the seas to silence, and, beguiled
 By her mild message, the dark ocean
 smiled—
 A palpitating lapse of oily green,
 With silvery glimmers here and there be-
 tween
 The shadows of the clouds that, dewy and
 mild,
 Parted and flutter'd :—when, with radiant
 head
 Plunging among the mountain mists, she
 fled.
 But, as the vapours fleam'd away, behold !
 I saw far down upon the brown sea-strand
 A nymph who held aloft in pearly hand
 A white-tooth'd comb, and comb'd her locks
 of gold
 Over a dank and ship-wreck'd sailor-lad,—

On whose sad eyelids a faint radiance lay,
 Robb'd from some little homestead far away,
 Some silent hearth that wearily would wait,
 For that faint smile which left it desolate,
 And hush itself and watch and yearn and
 pray.

Oh ! tenderly she comb'd her locks of gold,
 Over that gently-sleeping sailor-lad,
 Stretch'd 'mid the purple dulse and rock-
 weed cold ;
 And all the while she sang a ditty sad,
 To deep division of the wave that roll'd
 Up to her feet, like a huge snake that springs
 At two bright butterflies with golden wings :

Marinere, O Marinere,

Waken, waken !

Sleep-o'ertaken,

Look upon me, with no fear,
 Look, and see, and bear :
 Underneath the white-tooth'd waves,
 Sleep your comrades in their caves ;
 Coral grottoes are their bed,
 Purple plants stir overhead,
 All around black weeds are twined,
 Frozen still without a wind ;
 And the sea-nymphs in distress
 Pluck dark flowers all odourless,
 Growing deep in caverns clear,
 Gently to bestrew their bier.
 Under the sea
 They sleep—ah me !
 They have slept for many a year.

Marinere, O Marinere,

Wake not, wake not,

Slumber break not,

Close your eyelids with no fear,
 Do not see, nor hear !
 Far above the silence deep,
 Where your gentle comrades sleep,
 Rolls the sea and foams the storm,
 Horrors thicken, terrors swarm,
 And the sea-nymphs, lightning-led,
 Flash about white-garmented ;
 But below the Storm-god's frown,
 Sleep the shipwreck'd fathoms down—
 Ocean-flowers are on the bier,
 Foam-bells hang in every ear !
 Under the sea
 They sleep—ah me !
 They shall sleep for many a year,

SILENUS.

That was the song she sang ?

POLYPHEME.

It was. But ill

Those tender accents fill
This rocky breast, whose distant roar
Frightens those white waves seaward from
the shore.

For they trembled, tinkling, twining,
For melodious combining,
While her yellow locks fell shining
To her knees,

While the Storm, with bright eyes glistening,
Thro' its cloud-veil looking at her,
Hung breathlessly and listening
On the seas :

And in the sun she sat her,
While her voice went pitter-patter,
Pitter-patter, like the clatter

Of bright rain on boughs of trees !
Then ho ! with my great stride,
Down the steep mountain side,

I sprang unto her, with mine arms extended !
Her bright locks gleam'd afraid,
Like a sunbeam trapt in shade,

In my deep shadow, and the music ended :
And she rose erect to fly,
Panting, moaning, and her cry
Met the lifted cry of Ocean, and they blended !

While earth reel'd under,
Downward I bore,
With step of thunder,
On to the shore ;

And in shrieking amaze,
With eyes fasten'd in fear—
Like a star's firm gaze

When a cloud draws near—
On the horror that came
With an eye of flame,
She leapt to the water,
All woehegone ;

And her bright locks shone
And tript and distraught her,
But the water caught her
And push'd her on !

From billow to billow,
With wild locks streaming
And tangling oft ;

From billow to billow,
Dark-green, or gleaming
Like doves' wings soft,

From billow to billow,
Panting and screaming,
With white hands beaming
And waving aloft !

Then, coming hideous
On to the tide,

I spurn'd the perfidious
Foam aside,

And follow'd her, dashing
Thro' storm sublime,

Flashing, crashing,
Splashing-splashing

On the seaweed's slippery slime !

The billows clomb up,

With flash of foam up,
My loins and thighs ;

Till they gleam'd and fleam'd,

With clangor and anger,

And around me upstream'd

With their wild white eyes !

Till panting, choking,

Dripping and soaking,

With nostrils smoking,

I halted, spitting,

Spurting, chin-deep,

And saw her sitting

Where gulls were flitting

Far out on the deep ;

And all around her with gentle motion

One smooth soft part of the murmurous
ocean

Had gone to sleep !

Then waving her hands,

And shaking her locks,

To the ocean sands,

To the purple rocks

Under the foam,

To the sea-caves brown,

She sank to her home,

Down ! down ! down ! down !

And the sea grew black

In her shining track,

And the waters green

Darken'd afar ;

And the one thing seen

Was the steadfast star

Of my round Eye red,

Rolling immense

With a pain intense

In my rocky head,

Mid the white foam wreathing

Around wind-led,

And the great sea scething

Down to deep breathing,
Like a monster panting, on its sandy bed !

SILENUS.

Most musical Cyclops !

POLYPHEME.

Hush !—Unto the beach
I wearily strode, with great head bow'd, and
dragg'd

Foot-echoes after me ; and with no speech,
On yonder shore, weedy and wet and cragg'd,
I stood, and in an agony of pain
Look'd out with widening eyeball on the
main.

Lo ! far away a white wind glided dim
O'er the cloud-cover'd bright'ning ocean-rim,
And violet shadows here and there were
trail'd

Over the waters ; then behold the sun
Flasht pale across the waste, and one by one,
Like sea-gulls dripping rain, rose ships
white-sail'd.

All else was silence, save monotonous moan
Of the broad-chested billows, till the warm
Light kindled all things, and I loomed
alone—

The one huge cloud remaining of the storm ;
And in the awfulness of that strange hour
A change came over my big throbbing breast,
And the soft picture of the calm had power
To move my mountainous bulk with vague
unrest !—

SILENUS.

Weep not, O Cyclops—lest thy tears should
roll

Down oceanward and brain the grazing
sheep !

POLYPHEME.

Ay me, ay me, the passion in my soul !
Ay me, her glory haunts me, and I weep !—
O, I would give away the world to be
As soft, as sweet, as fleecy-limb'd as she,
As tiny and as tender and as white
As her mild loveliness !
With two soft eyes such as mere men possess,
Two pretty little dewy eyes, that might
Interpret me aright !

SILENUS.

Amazement !—Polypheme, whom vast Pos-
eidon
Spawn'd upon Thoosa in the salted brine,

Thou who canst strangle fleets, and sit astride
on

Ætna and roar thine origin divine !
Wrong not thyself, thy beauty, and thy sire !
See ! where thy mighty shadow stretches
wide

Down the steep mountain side,
And see ! that eyeball of immortal fire !
Had wanton Helen, Paris' love-sick toy,
Beheld thee, Polypheme,
Hill-baunting Echo had not found a theme
In ruin and the ten years' war of Troy !

POLYPHEME.

And is it so ?

SILENUS.

By Ganymede bright eyed,

By—by—

POLYPHEME.

Enough—let us return. I stood,
When she had flown, in meditative mood ;
Then, raising up my resinous hands, I cried:
' O thou from whose huge loins I darkling
came,

King of all ocean and its wondrous races,
Return, return, the nymph to my embraces,
Or, thro' thy lips ooze-dripping, name her
name !'

And o'er the sands did a low murmur creep,
Whispering ' Galatea ;' and, deep-pain'd,
I vaguely knew, like one who dreams in
sleep,

She was a goddess of the sacred deep,
Not to be lightly woo'd or roughly gain'd.

SILENUS.

O pitiful ! and you—

POLYPHEME.

In the dim birth
Of the strange love that stirs my hid blood's
fountains,
As unborn earthquakes trouble springs in
mountains,
I look'd abroad upon the fair green earth ;
And lo, all things that lived, all things that
stirr'd,

Unto the very daisy closing up
In my great shade its crimson-tipp'd cup,
And the small lambs, and every little bird
Seem'd to abhor and dread, avoid and fear
me ;

And in an agony of hate for all,
I cried 'How can a thing so sweet, so small,
So gentle, love me—or be happy near me?'
Whereon I sadly clomb the cliffs and made
A looking-glass of yonder ocean, where
Startled by my long shade
The silver-bellied fishes rose afraid;
But with a lover's hand I smooth'd my hair
To sleekness, parting it with care,
And husht the rugged sorrow of my brow—
Then, stooping softly o'er the dimpled mirror,
I shaped my face to a sweet smile—as now!

SILENUS.

O agony! help, help, ye gods! O terror!
Hide me!

POLYPHEME.

What ails thee? Ha!

SILENUS.

O Ocean's child—
Cyclops! My heart, with admiration rent,
Fainted and cried with its deep ravishment;
Because you look'd so beautiful when you
smiled!

POLYPHEME.

Thou liest!—and (ay me) you shrunk in fear
As silly younglings shrink at something
hateful;
Yet tremble not:—to a lorn lover's ear,
Ev'ën flattery so base as thine is grateful.
Ay me, ay me—I am
A great sad mountain in whose depths doth
roam
My small soul, wandering like a gentle lamb
That bleats from place to place and has no
home;
But prison'd among rocks
Can just behold afar
A land where honey-flowing rivers are
And gentle shepherds with their gentle flocks:
For even so my timid soul looks round
On beautiful living things—that creep and
seen,
To this vast Eye, like insects on the ground—
From whose companionship 'tis shut and
bound
Within this mountain of a PolypHEME!

SILENUS.

Most melancholy Cyclops, be consoled!

POLYPHEME.

My heart is like those blubbery crimson blots
That float on the dank tide in oozy spots;
It is as mild as patient flocks in fold.
I am as lonely as the snowy peak
Of Dardanos, and, like an eagle, Love
Stoops o'er me, helpless, from its eyrie above,
And grasps that lamb, my Soul, within its
beak.

Nay, on the margin of the waters where
She comes and goes like a swift gull, I sit
Above these flocks, and rake my little wit
To pipe upon the misty mountain air
Ditties as tender as a shepherd man,
Perch'd on a little hillock, half asleep,
Surrounded by his silly stainless sheep,
Pipes with mild pleasure and no definite plan
In fields Arcadian. [*He sings.*]

White is the little hand of Galatea,
That combs her yellow locks with dainty
care;

Bright is the fluttering hand of Galatea,
When tangled, like a dove, in sunny
hair.

Sweet is Galatea—sweet is Galatea—
Ay, so sweet!

Complete is Galatea, from her feathery
fingers fair

To her small white mice of feet!

The billows huge and hoar cease to rumble
and to roar,

When the white bands wave above them,
like doves that shine and soar,

And, as gentle, from the shore, I adore, and
implore Galatea!

Ho, that these limbs were meet for Galatea
With soft pink kisses sweetly to enfold!

Ho, had I two small eyes, that Galatea
Might there my gentle gentle heart
behold!

Dear is Galatea—dear is Galatea—
Ay, so dear!

No peer has Galatea, but her bosom is so
cold

And her eyes so full of fear!

When the great seas wildly rise, there is
terror in her eyes,

And she trembles in sweet wonder, like a
bird that storms surprise,—

And before my tender cries, and my sighs,
swiftly flies Galatea!

Under the white sea-storm sits Galatea,
While overhead the sea-birds scream in
flocks,

In deep-green darkness sitteth Galatea,
Combing out sunshine from her golden
locks !

Fair sits Galatea—fair sits Galatea—
Ay, so fair !

Ho, there sits Galatea, in the shade of
purple rocks,

Mid the fountain of her hair !

Ho, would I were the waves, on whose crest
the tempest raves,

So might I still the tempest that my raging
bulk outbraves,

For the dark-green stillness laves, and en-
slaves, and encaves Galatea !

SILENUS.

Comfort, O Cyclops, comfort ! There is
sure

Some remedy for such a wound as this :

Red wine, I say again : the plump God's
kiss

Is sweeter far than honey, rich and pure.

POLYPHEME.

Alas, not he whose temples Artemis
Bound with weird herbs and poison-snakes
that hiss

But sting not—wise Asclepius—could cure !
For evermore, Silenus, when my brain
Lies in a dream just conscious of its pain,
And my full heart throbs tenderly and rock-
ingly,

Far out upon the bosom of the main
She flashes up, green-kirtled, and laughs
mockingly.

Thrice has her smile enticed me to the chin
Thro' the great waves that round me bite
and bark,

And gleam'd away and left me in the dark.

Alas, that I must woo and never win !

Alas that I am foul while she is fair !

Alas, that this red Eye, my only one,

Like a brown lizard looking on the sun,

Turns green in her bright mist of yellow
hair !

SILENUS.

Majestic Cyclops ! Heir of the huge Sea !
God-like,—like those great heavens that
oversheen us !

One-eyed, like the bright Day ! Wilt thou
by me,

Thy servant, be advised ?

POLYPHEME.

Speak on, Silenus.

SILENUS.

Behold !—Beneath the many-tinctured west
hid,

Fades Phoibos crimson-crested,

And the faint image of his parting light

On the deep Sea broad-breasted

Fades glassily ; while down the mountain
height

Behind us, slides the purple shadow'd Night.

Come in !—and from your cellar iced by
springs

Drag forth the god of wine,

And listen to him as he chirps and sings

His songs delicious, dulcet, and divine :

Throned in the brain, magnificently wise,

And blowing warmly out thro' kindled eyes

All vapours vapid, vague, and vain.

Seek the god's counsel, Cyclops, I beseech
thee ;

'Tis he alone, if once his magic reach thee,
Can cure Love's panting heat or shivering
pain.

POLYPHEME.

He cannot make me fair !

SILENUS.

Phoo !—He will teach thee

To lift thy dreamy gaze from the soft sod,
And rise erect, big-hearted, self-reliant,
On Ætna's horn—with leathern lungs de-
fiant—

No minnow-hearted grampus of a god !

And—then in the quick flush and exultation

Of that proud inspiration,

Wine in his nostrils, Polypheme will be

In Polypheme's own estimation

A match for any girl on land or sea.

Then, furiously, gloriously rash,

Grasp Opportunity, that, passing by

On the sheet-lightning with a moment's flash,

Haunts us for ever with its meteor eye ;

And—grasp the thing thou pantest for in
vain,

Ay, hold her fast, and for a space entreat
her—

But, if she still be deaf to thy sad pain,

Why, hearken to the mad god in thy brain,

And make a meal of trouble—that is, eat her !

XI.

PENELOPE.

WHITHER, Ulysses, whither dost thou roam,
Rolled round with wind-led waves that render dark

The smoothly-spinning circle of the sea ?
Lo, Troy has fallen, fallen like a tower,
And the mild sunshine of degenerate days
Sleeps faintly on its ruins. One by one,
Swift as the sparkle of a star, the ships
Have dipt up moistly from the under-world,
And plum'd warriors, standing in their
prows,

Stretching out arms to wives and little ones
That crowd with seaward faces on the beach,
Have flung their armour off and leapt and
swam

Ere yet the homeward keels could graze the
sand.

And these—the gaunt survivors of thy
peers—

Have landed, shone upon by those they love,
And faded into happy happy homes ;
While I, the lonely woman, hugging close
The comfort of thine individual fame,
Still wait and yearn and wish towards the
sea ;

And all the air is hollow of my joy :
The seasons come and go, the hour-glass
runs,

The day and night come punctual as of old ;
But thy deep strength is in the solemn dawn,
And thy proud step is in the plum'd noon,
And thy grave voice is in the whispering eve ;
And all the while, amid this dream of thee,
In restless resolution oceanward,
I sit and ply my sedentary task,
And fear that I am lonelier than I know.

Yea, love, I am alone in all the world,
The past grows dark upon me where I wait,
With eyes that hunger seaward and a cheek
Grown like the sampler coarse-complexion'd.
For in the shadow of thy coming home
I sit and weave a weary housewife's web,
Pale as the silkworm in the cone ; all day
I sit and weave this weary housewife's web,
And in the night with fingers swift as frost
Unweave the weary labour of the day.
Behold how I am mock'd !—Suspicion

Mumbles my name between his toothless
gums ;

And while I ply my sedentary task,
They come to me, mere men of hollow clay,
Gross-mouth'd and stain'd with wine they
come to me,

And whisper odious comfort, and upbraid
The love that follows thee where'er thou art,
That follows, and perchance, with thy moist
check,

Dips on the dozy bottom of the world.
They come, Ulysses, and they seek to rob
Thy glory of its weaker wearer half.
They tell me thou art dead ; nay, they have
brought

To these cold ears that bend above the web
Whispers that thou, no wiser than thy peers,
Hast pluckt upon the windy plain of Troy
A flower thou shrinest in a distant land,
A chamber'd delicacy drowsy-eyed,
Pink-lidded, wanton, like the queen who
witch'd

The fatal apple out of Paris' palm.

And I—and I—ah me, I rise my height,
In matron majesty that melts in tears,
And chide them from me with a tongue that
long

Hath lost the trick of chiding : what avails ?
They heed me not, rude men, they heed me
not ;

And he thou leftest here to guard me well,
He, the old man, is helpless, and his eyes
Are yellow with the money-minting lie
That thou art dead. O husband, what avails ?
They gather on me, till the sense grows cold
And huddles in upon the steadfast heart ;
And they have dragged a promise from my
lips

To choose a murderer of my love for thee,
To choose at will from out the rest one man
To slay me with his kisses in the dark,
Whene'er the weary web at which I work
Be woven : so, all day, I weave the web ;
And in the night with fingers like a thief's
Unweave the silken sorrow of the day.

The years wear on. Telemachus, thy son,
Grows sweetly to the height of all thy hope :
More woman-like than thee, less strong of
limb,
Yet worthy thee ; and likest thy grave mood,

When, in old time, among these fields, thine
 eye
 Would kindle on a battle far away.
 And thy proud nostrils, drinking the mild
 breath
 Of tannèd haycocks and of slanted sheaves,
 Swell suddenly, as if a trumpet spake.
 Hast thou forgotten how of old he loved
 To toy with thy great beard, and sport with
 thee,
 And how, in thy strong grasp, he leapt and
 seem'd
 A lambkin dandled in a lion's paw ?
 But change hath come, Troy is an old wife's
 tale,
 And sorrow stealeth early on thy son,
 Whom sojourn with my weeping woman-
 hood
 Hath taught too soon a young man's gentle-
 ness.
 Behold now, how his burning boy-face turns
 With impotent words beyond all blows of
 arm
 On those rude men that rack thy weary wife !
 Then turns to put his comfort on my cheek,
 While sorrow brightens round him—as the
 grey
 Of heaven melts to silver round a star !

Return, Ulysses, ere too late, too late :
 Return, immortal warrior, return :
 Return, return, and end the weary web !
 For day by day I look upon the sea
 And watch each ship that dippeth like a gull
 Across the long straight line afar away
 Where heaven and ocean meet ; and when
 the winds
 Swoop to the waves and lift them by the hair,
 And the long storm-roar gathers, on my
 knees
 I pray for thee. Lo, even now, the deep
 Is g'rrulous of thy vessel tempest-tost ;
 And on the treeless upland gray-eyed March,
 With blue and humid mantle backward
 blown,
 Plucks the first primrose in a blustering
 wind.
 The keels are wheel'd unto the ocean sand
 And eyes look outward for the homeward
 bound.
 And not a marinere, or man or boy,
 Scum'd and salt-blooded from the boisterous
 sea,

Touches these shores, but straight I summon
 him,
 And bribe with meat and drink to tell good
 news,
 And question him of thee. But what avails ?
 Thou wanderest ; and my love sits all alone
 Upon the threshold of an empty hall.

My very heart has grown a timid mouse,
 Peeping out, fearful, when the house is still.
 Breathless I listen thro' the breathless dark,
 And hear the cock counting the leaden hours,
 And, in the pauses of his cry, the deep
 Swings on the flat sand with a hollow clang ;
 And, pale and burning-eyed, I fall asleep
 When, with wild hair, across the weary wave
 Stares the sick Dawn that brings thee not
 to me.

Ulysses, come ! Ere traitors leave the
 mark
 Of spread wine-dripping fingers on the
 smooth
 And decent shoulders that now stoop for
 thee !
 I am not young or happy as of old,
 When, awed by thy male strength, my face
 grew dark
 At thy grave footfall, with a serious joy,
 Or when, with blushing backward-looking
 face,
 I came a bride to thine inclement realm,
 Trembling and treading fearfully on flowers.
 I am not young and beauteous as of old ;
 And much I fear that when we meet thy face
 May startle darkly at the work of years,
 And turn to hide a disappointed pang,
 And then, with thy grave pride, subdue itself
 Into such pity as is love stone-dead.
 But thou, thou too, art old, dear lord—thy
 hair
 Is threaded with the silver foam—thy heart
 Is weary from the blows of cruel years ;
 And there is many a task thy wife can do
 To soothe thy sunset season and make calm
 Thy journey down the slow descent to Sleep.

Return, return, Ulysses, ere I die !
 Upon this desolate, desolate strand I wait,
 Wearily stooping o'er the weary web—
 An alabaster woman, whose fix'd eyes
 Stare seaward, whether it be storm or calm.
 And ever, evermore, as in a dream,

I see thee gazing hither from thy ship
 In sunset regions where the still seas rot,
 And stretching out great arms whose
 shadows fall
 Gigantic on the glassy purple sea ;
 And ever, evermore, thou lingerest,
 And evermore thy coming far away
 Aches on the burning heartstrings,—ever-
 more
 Thou comest not, and I am tired and old.

XII.

SAPPHO :

ON THE LEUCADIAN ROCK.

I.

O SWEET, sweet, sweet !
 While the Moon, with her dove's eyes fair,
 And her beautiful yellow hair,
 And the Sea-Snake coiling round her sil-
 vern feet,
 Walk'd dumbly up above in the jewell'd air
 Waving her luminous wings,
 To sit upon this crag above the sea
 Clasp'd close, so close, to thee,
 Pale with much yearning, while the mur-
 murings
 Of the great waters seem'd to waft to me
 The name of Phaon,
 To whisper Phaon, Phaon,
 Phaon, Phaon, Phaon, with deep intonin-
 g,
 Hushfully, hushfully moaning !

2.

O bliss, bliss, bliss !
 Though the Moon look'd pale in the sky,
 On thy passionate heart to lie,
 To cling to thy burning lips with kiss on
 kiss,
 Faintly watching the butterfly stars swim by
 In the track of that queenly Moon ;
 And in a dream, clasp'd close, so close, to
 thee,
 To list and seem to be
 A portion of the faint monotonous tune
 Made for its mistress by the serpent sea,
 That whisper'd Phaon,
 Phaon, Phaon, Phaon,
 Phaon, Phaon, Phaon, while Dian darken-
 ing
 Stoop'd hushfully, hushfully, harkening !

3.

O pain, pain, pain !
 While the Moon, in a sky as clear
 As of old, walks on, and I hear
 Her palpitating foot on the living main,
 While, under her feet, the green sea-snake
 creeps near
 Hissing with scales that gleam,
 To stand upon this crag beside the sea
 And dream, and dream, of thee—
 With clenched white hands, set teeth, and
 robes that stream
 Behind me in the wind, while audibly
 The waves moan Phaon,
 Shriek Phaon, Phaon, Phaon,
 Phaon, Phaon, Phaon, with deep intoning,
 Mournfully, mournfully, moaning !

4.

O rest, rest, rest !—
 While the Moon with her virgin light
 Thro' eternities of night
 Dumbly paces on to the east from the
 west,—
 To mingle with the waves that under the
 height
 Murmur along the shore,
 To mix my virgin love, my agony,
 Into the serpent sea
 That Dian seeks to silence evermore,
 To cling to those white skirts and moan of
 thee,
 O Phaon, Phaon,
 Restless for love of Phaon,
 Phaon, Phaon, Phaon, with ceaseless motion
 Soothed by the soother of Ocean !

XIII.

THE SYREN.

AH, kiss me, Sweetest, while on yellow sand
 Murmurs the breaking billow,
 And smoothe my silken ringlets with thy
 hand,
 And make my breast thy pillow ;
 And clasp me, Dearest, close to lip and cheek
 And bosom softly sighing,
 While o'er the green sea, in one orange streak,
 The summer day is dying !
 Kiss, kiss, as one that presses to his mouth
 A vine-bunch bursting mellow,

In this lone islet of the sleepy south
 Fringed with smooth sands yellow :
 A twilight of fresh leaves endusks us round,
 Flowers at our feet are springing,
 And wave on wave breaks smoothly to the
 sound
 Of my sweet singing !

EUMOLPUS.

Is it the voice of mine own Soul I hear ?
 Or some white sybil of the spherèd ocean ?
 And are these living limbs that lie so near,
 Stirring around me with a serpent-motion ?
 Is this a tress of yellow yellow hair,
 Around my finger in a ring enfolden ?
 Whose face is this, so musically fair,
 That swoons upon my ken thro' vapours
 golden ?
 What sad song withers on the odorous air ?
 Where am I, where ?
 Where is my country and that vision olden ?

THE SYREN.

I sang thee hither in thy bark to land
 With deftly warbled measure,
 I wove a witch's spell with fluttering hand,
 Till thou wert drunken, Dearest, with
 much pleasure.
 At hush of noon I had thee at my knee,
 And round thy finger pink I wound a curl,
 And singing smiled beneath with teeth of
 pearl,
 Of what had been, what was, and what
 should be
 Sang dying ditties three !
 And lo ! thy blood was ravish'd with the
 theme,
 And lo ! thy face was pale with drowsy dream,
 While stooping low, with rich lips tremulous,
 I kiss thee thus !—and thus !

EUMOLPUS.

Thy kisses trance me to a vision wan
 Of what hath been and never more will be.
 O little fishing-town Sicilian,
 I can behold thee sitting by the sea !
 O little red-tiled town where I was born !
 O days ere yet I sail'd from mortal ken !
 Why did I launch upon the deep forlorn,
 Nor fish in shallow pools with simple men ?
 It was a charm ; for while I rockt at ease
 Within our little bay,

There came a melody across the seas
 From regions far away ;
 And ah ! I fell into a swooning sleep,
 And all the world had changed before I
 knew,—
 And I awoke upon a glassy deep
 With not a speck of land to break the view,
 And tho' I was alone, I did not weep,
 For I was singing too !
 I sang ! I sang ! and with mine oars kept time
 Unto the rude sweet rhyme,
 And went a-sailing on into the west
 Blown on by airs divine,
 Singing for ever on a wild-eyed quest
 For that immortal minstrel feminine ;
 And night and day went past, until I lost
 All count of time, yet still did melodise ;
 And sun and stars beheld me from their
 skies ;
 And ships swam by me, from whose decks
 storm-tost
 Rudeseamen gazed with terror-glazèd eyes.
 And still I found not her for whom I sought,
 Yet smiled without annoy,
 To ply the easy oar, and take no thought,
 And sing, was such sweet joy !—
 Then Tempest came, and to and from the sky
 I rose and fell in that frail bark of mine,
 While the snake Lightning, with its blank
 bright eye,
 Writhed fierily in swift coils serpentine
 Along the slippery brine ;
 And there were days when dismal sobbing
 Rain
 Made melancholy music for the brain,
 And hours when I shriek'd out and wept in
 woe
 Prison'd about by chilly still affright,
 While all around dropt hush'd flakes of Snow
 Melting and mingling down blue chasms
 of night.
 Yet evermore, I heard that voice sublime
 Twining afar its weirdly woven song,
 And ever, ever more, mine oars kept time,
 And evermore I utter'd in song
 My yearnings sad or merry, faint or strong.
 Ah me ! my love for her afar away,
 My yearning and my burning night and day !
 In dreams alone, I met her in still lands,
 And knelt in tears before her,
 And could not sing, but only wring mine
 hands,
 Adore her and implore her !

She glisten'd past me as a crane that sails
Above the meeting of the ocean-gales,

With waft of broad slow wing to regions
new ;

And tho' I follow'd her from place to place,
She held her veil dew-spangled to her face,

And I could merely feel her eyes of blue
Steadfastly gazing thro' !

Wherefore my heart had broken quite,—but
then

I would awake again,—

To see the oily water steep'd in rest

While, glistening in many-colour'd flakes
Harming me not, lay brooding on its breast

Leviathan and all the ocean-snakes,

And on the straight faint streak afar the round

Moist eye of morning lookt thro' dewy air,

And all was still, a joyous calm profound,—
And I would break the charm with happy
sound

To find the world so fair !

And lo ! I drank the rain-drops and was glad,
And smote the bird of ocean down and ate ;

And ocean harm'd me not, and monsters sad

That people ocean and the desolate

Abysses spared me,—charm'd by the song
warbled wildly as I went along.

Yet day and night sped on, and I grew old
Before I knew ; and lo !

My hands were wither'd, on my bosom cold
There droopt a beard of snow,—

And raising hands I shriek'd, I cried a curse
On that weird voice that twin'd me from
home ;

And echoes of the awful universe
Answer'd me ; and the deep with lips of
foam

Mock'd me and spat upon me ; and the things
That people ocean rose and threaten'd ill,

Yea also air-born harpies waving wings,
Because I could not sing to charm them
still.

I was alone, the shadow of a man,
Haunting the trackless waste of waves
forlorn,

Blown on by pitiless rains and vapours wan,
Plaining for that small town Sicilian,
Where, in the sweet beginning, I was born !

THE SYREN.

Ah, weep not, Dearest ! lean upon my breast,
While sunset darkens stilly,

And Dian poises o'er the slumberous west
Her silver sickle chilly ;

The eyes of heaven are opening, the leaves
Fold dark and dewy round the closing
roses,

In lines of foam the breaking billow heaves,
Each thing that gladdens and each thing
that grieves

Dip slow to sweet repose.

EUMOLPUS.

O voice that lured me on, I know thee now !

O melancholy eyes, how bright ye beam !

O kiss, thy touch is dewy on my brow !

Sweet Spirit of my dream !

THE SYREN.

Name thy love, and I am she,

Name thy woe, and look on me,

Name the weary melody

That led thee hither o'er the sea,—

Then call to mind my ditties three

Of what hath been, what is, and what shall be !

EUMOLPUS.

Ah woe ! ah woe !

I see thee and I clasp thee, and I know !

Sing to me, Sweetest, while the shadows
grow—

Sing low ! sing low !

Oh, sweet were slumber now, at last, at last,

For I am sick of wandering to and fro,

And ah ! my singing-days are nearly pass'd—

Sing low ! sing low ! sing low !

THE SYREN.

Love with wet cheek, Joy with red lips apart,

Hope with her blue eyes dim from looking
long,

Ambition with thin hand upon his heart—

Of which shall be the song ?

Of one, of one,

Who loved till life was done,

For life with him was loving, tho' she slew
his love with wrong.

Then, on a winter day,

When all was lost and his young brow was
gray,

He knelt before an Altar pil'd proud

With bleach'd bones and fruits and garlands
gray,

And cried aloud :—

'Have I brought Joy, and slain her at thy feet?

Have I brought Peace, for thy cold kiss to kill,

Have I brought Youth crown'd with wild-flowers sweet,

With sandals dewy from a morning hill,
For thy gray solemn eyes to fright and chill?

Have I brought Scorn the pale and Hope the fleet,

And First-Love in her lily winding-sheet?
And art thou pitiless still?

O Poesy, thou nymph of fire,
Grandest of that fair quire
Which in the dim beginning stoop'd and fell,—

So beauteous yet so awful, standing tall
Upon the mountain-tops where mortals dwell,

Seeing strange visions of the end of all,
And pallid from the white-heat glare of Hell!
Is there no prophecy, far-seeing one,

To seal upon these lips that yearn to sing?
Can nought be gain'd again? can nought be won?

Is there no utterance in this suffering,

Is there no voice for any human thing?'

Then, smiling in the impotence of pain,
His sweet breath at the Altar did he yield,—
While she he loved, afar across the main,
Stoop'd down to break a weary people's chain,
And crown a hero on a battle-field!

EUMOLPUS.

Ah no! ah no!

So sad a theme is too much woe!

Sing to me sweetlier, since thou lovest me
so—

Sing low; sing low!

THE SYREN.

Sisters we, the syrens three,
Fame and Love and Poesy!
In the solitude we sit,
On the mountain-tops we flit,
From the islands of the sea
Luring man with melody;
Sisters three we seem to him
Foating over waters dim,—
Syrens, syrens three, are we—
Fame and Love and Poesy!

EUMOLPUS.

Ah woe! ah woe!

That is the song I heard so long ago!

That is the song

That lured me long:

Those were the three I saw, with arms of snow

And ringlets waving yellow, beckoning,

While on the violet deep I floated slow,

With little heart to sing;

And lo! they faded as I leapt to land,

And their weird music wither'd on the air,

And I was lying drowsy on the sand

Smiling and toying with thy yellow hair!

THE SYREN.

Sisters we, the syrens three,

Fame and Love and Poesy,

Sitting singing in the sun,

While the weary marinere

Passes on or faints in fear,—

Sisters three, yet only one,

When he cometh near!

Charm'd sight and charm'd sound

Hover quietly around,

Mine are dusky bowers and deep,

Clos'd lids and balmy sleep,

Kisses cool for fever'd cheeks and warmth
for eyes that weep!

EUMOLPUS.

Sing low! sing low!

Thou art more wondrous fair than mortals
know.

Bringest thou, Beautiful, or peace or woe?

Close up each eyelid with a warm rich kiss

And let me listen while the sunlights go.

I cannot bear a time so still as this,

Unbroken by thy voice's fall and flow.

Sing to me, Beautiful! Sing low, sing
low, sing low!

THE SYREN.

Love with wet cheek, Joy with red lips apart,
Hope with her blue eyes dim from looking
long,

Ambition with thin hand upon his heart—

Of which shall be the song?

Ah, woe! ah, woe!

For Love is dead and wintry winds do blow.

Yea, Love is dead; and by her funeral bier

Ambition gnaws the lip and sheds no tear;

And in the outer chamber Hope sits wild,
 Watching the faces in the fire and weeping ;
 And at the threshold Joy the little child
 With rosy cheeks runs leaping,
 And stops,—while in the misty distance
 creeping
 Down western hills the large red sun sinks
 slow—
 To see Death's footprints on the still white
 snow.
 Ah, Love has gone, and all the rest must go.
 Sing low ! sing low ! sing low !

EUMOLPUS.

It is a song that slays me. Sing no more.

THE SYREN.

Ah, Sweet, the song is o'er !—
 The ocean-hum is hush'd, 'tis end of day,
 The long white foam fades faintly,
 The orange sunset dies into the gray
 Where star on star swims saintly.
 Hast thou not sung ? and is not song enough ?
 Hast thou not loved ? and is not loving all ?
 Art thou not weary of the wayfare rough,
 Or is there aught of life thou wouldst recall ?
 Ah no, ah no !
 The life came sweetly—sweetly let it go !
 Mine are dusky bowers and deep,
 Clos'd eyes and balmy sleep,
 Kisses cool for fever'd cheeks and warmth
 for eyes that weep !

EUMOLPUS.

Thou art the gentle witch that men call
 Death !
 Ah, Beauteous, I am weary, and would
 rest !

THE SYREN.

Lie very softly, Sweet, and let thy breath
 Fade calmly on my breast !
 Call me Love or call me Fame,
 Call me Death or Poesy,
 Call me by whatever name
 Seemeth sweetest unto thee :—
 I anoint thee, I caress thee ;
 With my dark reposes bless thee,
 I redeem thee, I possess thee !
 I can never more forsake thee !
 Slumber, slumber, peacefully,
 Slumber calm and dream of me,
 Till I touch thee, and awake thee !

EUMOLPUS.

Diviner far than song divine can tell !
 Thine eyes are dim with dreams of that
 awaking !
 Yea, let me slumber, for my heart is
 breaking
 With too much love. Farewell ! farewell !
 farewell !

THE SYREN.

Charm'd sight and charm'd sound
 Close the weary one around !
 Charm'd dream of charm'd sleep
 Make his waiting sweet and deep !
 Husht be all things ! Let the spell
 Dusky on his eyelids dwell !

EUMOLPUS.

Farewell ! farewell ! farewell !

THE SYREN.

O melancholy waters, softly flow !
 O Stars, shine softly, dropping dewy
 balm !
 O Moon walk on in sandals white as snow !
 O Winds, be calm, be calm !
 For he is tired with wandering to and fro,
 Yea, weary with unrest to see and know.
 O charm'd sound
 That hoverest around !
 O voices of the Night ! Sing low ! sing low !
 sing low !

XIV.

A VOICE FROM ACADEME.

OVER this azure poplar glade
 The sunshine, fainting high above,
 Ebbs back from woolly clouds that move
 Like browsing lambs and cast no shade ;
 And straight before me, faintly seen
 Thro' emerald boughs that intervene,
 The visible sun turns white and weaves
 Long webs of silver thro' the leaves.
 The grassy sward beneath my foot
 Is soft as lips of lambs and beeves.
 How cool those harebells at the root
 Of yonder tree, that dimly dance
 Thro' dews of their own radiance !

Yonder I see the river run,
 Half in the shade, half in the sun ;

And as I near its shallow brink
The sparkling minnows, where they lie
With silver bellies to the sky,
Flash from me in a shower and sink.
I stand in shadows cool and sweet,
But in the mirror at my feet
The heated azure heavens wink.

All round about this shaded spot,
Whither the sunshine cometh not,
Where all is beautiful repose—
I know the kindled landskip glows ;
And further, flutter golden showers
On proud Athenai white with towers,
And catching from the murmurous sea,
[Stain'd with deep shadows as of flowers
And dark'ning down to purple bowers
Thro' which the sword-fish darts in glee,]
A strife that cometh not to me.

For in this place of shade and sound,
Hid from the garish heat around,
I feel like one removed from strain
And fever of the happy brain—
Where thoughts thrill fiery into pain :
Like one who, in the pleasant shade
The peaceful pulseless dead have made,
Walking in silence, just perceives
The gaudy world from which he went
Subdue itself to his content,
Like that white globe beyond the leaves !

XV.

PYGMALION THE SCULPTOR.

'Materiem superabat opus.'

I. SHADOW.

UPON the very morn I should have wed
Death put his silence in a mourning house ;
And, coming fresh from feast, I saw her lie
In stainless marriage samite, white and cold,
With orange blossoms in her hair, and
gleams
Of the ungiven kisses of the bride
Playing about the edges of her lips.

Then I, Pygmalion, kiss'd her as she slept,
And drew my robe across my face whereon
The midnight revel linger'd dark, and
pray'd ;
And the sore trouble hollow'd out my heart

To hatred of a harsh unhallow'd youth
As I glode forth. Next, day by day, my soul
Grew conscious of itself and of its fief
Within the shadow of her grave : therewith,
Waken'd a thirst for silence such as dwells
Under the ribs of death : whence slowly grew
Old instincts that had transcend me to tears
In mine unsinew'd boyhood, sympathies
Full of faint odours and of music faint
Like buds of roses blowing ;—till I felt
Her voice come down from heaven on my
soul,
And stir it as a wind that droppeth down
Unseen, unfelt, unheard, until its breath
Troubles the shadows in a sleeping lake.

And the voice said, 'Pygmalion,' and
'Behold,'
I answer'd, 'I am here ;' when thus the
voice :
'Put men behind thee—take thy tools, and
choose

A block of marble white as is a star,
Cleanse it and make it pure, and fashion it
After mine image : heal thyself : from grief
Comes glory, like a rainbow from a cloud.
For surely life and death, which dwell apart
In grosser human sense, conspire to make
The breathless beauty and eternal joy
Of sculptured shapes in stone. Wherefore
thy life
Shall purify itself and heal itself
In the long toil of love made meek by tears.'

I barr'd the entrance-door to this my tower
Against the hungry world, I hid above
The mastiff-murmur of the town, I pray'd
In my pale chamber. Then I wrought, and
chose

A rock of marble white as is a star,
And to her silent image fashion'd clay,
And purified myself and heal'd myself
In the long toil of love made meek by tears.

2. THE MARBLE LIFE.

THE multitudinous light oppress'd me not,
But smiled subdued, as a young mother
smiles,
When fearful lest the sunbeam of the smile
Trouble the eyelids of the babe asleep.

As Ocean murmurs when the storm is past
And keeps the echoed thunders many days,

My solitude was troublous for a time :
Wherefore I should have harden'd ; but the
clay

Grew to my touch, and brighten'd, and
assumed

Fantastic images of natural things,
Which, melting as the fleecy vapours melt
Around the shining cestus of the moon,
Made promise of the special shape I loved.
Withdrawing back, I gazed. The unshaped
stone

Took outline in the dusk, as rocks unhewn
Seen from afar thro' floating mountain mists
Gather strange forms and human lineaments.
And thus mine eye was filled with what I
sought

As with a naked image, thus I grew
Self-credulous of the form the stone would
wear,

And creeping close I strove to fashion clay
After the vision. Day and night, I drew
New comfort from my grief ; my tears became
As honey'd rain that makes the woodbine
sweet,

Until my task assumed a precious strength
Wherewith I fortified mine inner ear
Against the pleadings of the popular tongue
That babbled at my door ; and when there
dawn'd

A hand as pure as milk and cold as snow,
A small white hand, a little radiant hand,
That peep'd out perfect from the changing
mass,

And seem'd a portion of some perfect shape
Unfreed, imprison'd in the stone,—I wept
Warm tears of utter joy, and kiss'd the
hand,

As sweet girl-mothers kiss the newly born,
Weak as a mother. Then I heard no more
The murmurous swarm beneath me, women
and men ;

But, hoarded in my toil, I counted not
The coming and the going of the sun :
Save when I swoon'd to sleep before the
stone,

And dream'd, and dreaming saw the perfect
shape

Emblazon'd, like the rainbow in a stream,
On the transparent tapestry of sleep.

Ah me, the joy, the glory, and the dream,
When like a living wonder senseless stone
Smiles to the beating of a heart that hangs

Suspended in the tumult of the blood !
To the warm touch of my creating hand
The marble was as snow ; and like the snow
Whereon the molten sunshine gleams as
blood,

It soften'd, glow'd, and changed. As one
who stands

Beneath the cool and rustling dark to watch
The shadow of his silently beloved
Cross o'er the lighted cottage blind and feel
The brightness of the face he cannot see,
So stood I, trembling, while the shape
unborn

Darken'd across the white and milky mass
And left the impress of its loveliness
To glorify and guide me. As I wrought
The Past came back upon me, like the ghost
Of the To-Come. Whate'er was pure and
white,

Soft-shining with a snow-like chastity,
Came back from childhood, and from that
dim land

Which lies behind the horizon of the sense,
Felt though forgotten ; vanishings divine
Of the strange vapours many-shaped and fair
Which moisten sunrise when the eye of
heaven

Openeth dimly from the underworld :
Faint instincts of the helpless babe that
smiles

At the sweet pictures in its mother's eyes
And lieth with a halo round its head
Of beauty uncompleted : memories
Of young Love's vivid heaven-enthron'd
light,

By whose moist rays the pensive soul of
youth

Was troubled at the fountains, like a well
Wherein the mirror'd motion of a star
Lies dewy and deep ;—and, amid all, there
dwelt

A vaguer glory, deeper sense of power,
Scarce conscious of itself yet ruling all,
Like the hid heart which rocks the jaded
blood,

Brightens the cheek, throbs music to the
brain.

Yet dwells within the breast scarce recog-
nised,

Save when our pulses warn us and in fear
We pause to listen.—Even so at times
Those visions tranced me to a dumb dismay,
And, sudden music thronging in mine ears,

I hearken'd for that central loveliness
Whose magic guided and created all.

Then languor balmier than the blood i'
the veins
When youth and maiden mingle and the
moon
Breathes on the odorous room wherein they
lie
Chamber'd as in a folded rose's leaves,
Oppress'd me, and a lover's rapture fill'd
My soul to swooning. Lo, I kiss'd the stone,
And toy'd with the cold hand, and look'd
for light

In the dim onward-looking marble eyes,
And smooth'd the hair until it seem'd to
grow

Soft as the living ringlets tingling warm
Against a heaving bosom. At her feet
I knelt, and tingled to the finger-tips
To gaze upon her breathless loveliness—
Like one who, shuddering, gazes on a shrine
From human eyes kept holy.

Then at last
Fair-statured, noble, like an aw'ful thing
Frozen upon the very verge of life,
And looking back along eternity
With rayless eyes that keep the shadow
Time,

She rose before me in the milky stone,
White-limb'd, immortal; and I gazed and
gazed

Like one that sees a vision, and in awe
Half hides his face, yet looks, and seems to
dream.

3. THE SIN.

BLUE night. I threw the lattice open wide,
Drinking the odorous air; and from my
height

I saw the watch-fires of the town and heard
The gradual dying of the murmurous day.
Then, as the twilight deepen'd, on her limbs
The silver lances of the stars and moon
Were shatter'd, and the shining fragments
fell

Resplendent at her feet. The Cyprian star
Quiver'd to liquid emerald where it hung
On the ribb'd ledges of the darkening hills,
Gazing upon her; and, as in a dream,
Methought the marble, underneath that
look,

Stirr'd—like a bank of stainless asphodels
Kiss'd into tumult by a wind of light.

Whereat there swam upon me utterly
A drowsy sense wherein my holy dream
Was melted, as a pearl in wine: bright-eyed,
Keen, haggard, passionate, with languid
thrills

Of insolent unrest, I watch'd the stone,
And lo, I loved it: not as men love fame,
Not as the warrior loves his laurel wreath,
But with preclusion of a passionate joy
That threw me from the height whereon I
stood

To grasp at Glory, and in impiousness
Of sweet communing with some living Soul
Chamber'd in that cold bosom. As I gazed,
There was a buzz of revel in mine ears,
And tinkling fragments of a song of love,
Warbled by wantons over wine-cups, swam
Wildly within the brain.—Then I was
shamed

By her pale beauty, and I scorn'd myself,
And standing at the lattice dark and cool
Watch'd the dim winds of twilight enter in,
And draw a veil about that loveliness
White, dim, and breathed on by the common
air.

But, like a snake's moist eye, the dewy star
Of lovers drew me; and I watched it grow
Large, soft, and tremulous; and as I gazed
In fascinated impotence of heart,
I pray'd the lifeless silence might assume
A palpable life, and soften into flesh,
And be a beautiful and human joy
To crown my love withal; and thrice the
prayer

Blacken'd across my pale face with no word.
But thro' the woolly silver of a cloud
The cool star dripping emerald from the
baths

Of Ocean brighten'd in upon my tower,
And touch'd the marble forehead with a
gleam

Soft, green, and dewy; and I said 'the prayer
Is heard!'

The live-long night, the breathless
night

I waited in a darkness, in a dream,
Watching the snowy figure faintly seen,
And oft-times shuddering when I seem'd to
see

Life, like a taper burning in a skull,
Glean thro' the rayless eyes : yea, wearily
I hearken'd thro' the dark and seem'd to hear
The low warm billowing of a living breast,
Or the slow motion of anointed limbs
New-stirring into life ; and, shuddering,
Fearing the thing I hoped for, awful eyed,
On her cold breast I placed a hand as cold
And sought a fluttering heart.—But all was
still,

And chill, and breathless ; and she gazed
right on

With rayless orbs, nor marvell'd at my touch :
White, silent, pure, ineffable, a shape
Rebuking human hope, a deathless thing,
Sharing the wonder of the Sun who sends
His long bright look thro' all futurity.

When Shame lay heavy on me, and I hid
My face, and almost hated her, my work,
Because she was so fair, so human fair,
Yea not divinely fair as that pure face
Which, when mine hour of loss and travail
came,

Haunted me, out of heaven. Then the
Dawn

Stared in upon her : when I open'd eyes,
And saw the gradual Dawn encrimson her
Like blood that blush'd within her,—and
behold

She trembled—and I shriek'd !

With haggard eyes,
I gazed on her, my fame, my work, my love !
Red sunrise mingled with the first bright
flush

Of palpable life—she trembled, stirr'd, and
sigh'd—

And the dim blankness of her stony eyes
Melted to azure. Then, by slow degrees,
She tingled with the warmth of living blood :
Her eyes were vacant of a seeing soul,
But dewily the bosom rose and fell,
The lips caught sunrise, parting, and the
breath

Fainted thro' pearly teeth.

I was as one
Who gazes on a goddess serpent-eyed,
And cannot fly, and knows to look is death.
O apparition of my work and wish !
The weight of awe oppress'd me, and the
air

Swung as the Seas swing around drowning
men.

4. DEATH IN LIFE.

ABOUT her brow the marble hair had clung
With wavy tresses, in a simple knot
Bound up and braided ; but behold, her eyes
Droop'd downward, as she wonder'd at
herself,

Then flinch'd to see her naked loveliness,
And trembled, stooping downward ; and the
hair

Unloosening fell, and brighten'd as it fell,
Till gleaming ringlets tingled to the knees
And cluster'd round about her where she
stood

As yellow leaves around a lily's bud,
Making a fountain round her such as clips
A Naiad in the sunshine, pouring down
And throwing moving shadows o'er the floor
Whereon she stood and brighten'd.

Wondering eyed,
With softly heaving breast and outstretch'd
arms,

Slow as an eyeless man who gropes his way,
She thrust a curving foot and touch'd the
ground,

And stir'd ; and, downcast-lidded, saw not
me.

Then as the foot descended with no sound,
The whole live blood grew pink within the
veins

For joy of its own motion. Step by step,
She paced the chamber, groping till she
gain'd

One sunlight-slip that thro' the curtain'd
pane
Crept slant—a gleaming line on wall and
floor ;

And there, in light, she pausing sunn'd her-
self

With half-closed eyes ; while flying gleams
of gold

Sparkled like flies of fire among her hair,
And the live blood show'd brightlier, as wine
Gleams thro' a curd-white cup of porcelain.

There, stirring not, she paused and sunn'd
herself,

With drooping eyelids that grew moist and
warm,

What time, withdrawn into the further dark,
I watch'd her, nerveless, as a murderer
stretch'd

Under a nightmare of the murder'd man.

And still she, downcast-lidded, saw me not ;
 But gather'd glory while she sunn'd herself,
 Drawing deep breath of gladness such as
 earth
 Breathes dewily in the sunrise after rain.

Then pray'd I, lifting up my voice aloud.
 'O apparition of my work and wish !
 Thou most divinely fair as she whose face
 Haunted me, out of heaven ! Raise thine
 eyes !
 Live, love, as thou and I have lived and
 loved !
 Behold me—it is I—Pygmalion.
 Speak, Psyche, with thy human eyes and
 lips,
 Speak, to Pygmalion, with thy human soul !'

And still she, downcast-lidded, saw me not,
 But gather'd glory as she sunn'd herself.
 Yet listen'd murmuring inarticulate speech,
 Listen'd with ear inclined and fluttering lids,
 As one who lying on a bed of flowers
 Harkeneth to the distant fall of waves,
 That cometh muffled in the drowsy hum
 Of bees pavilion'd among roses' leaves
 Near to the ears that listen. So she stood
 And listen'd to my voice, framing her lips
 After the speech ; nay, when the sound had
 ceased,
 Still listen'd, with a shadow on her cheek—
 Like the Soul's Music, when the Soul has
 fled,
 Fading upon a dead Musician's face.

But, stooping in mine awe, with out-
 stretch'd arms,
 I crept to her ; nor stirr'd she, till my breath
 Was warm upon her neck : then raised she
 eyes
 Of dewy azure, ring in ring of blue
 Less'ning in passionate orbs whereon my
 face
 Fell white with yearning wonder ; when a
 cry
 Tore her soft lips apart, the gleaming orbs
 Widen'd to silvery terror, and she fled,
 With yellow locks that shone and arms that
 waved,
 And in the further darkness cower'd and
 moan'd,
 Dumb as a ringdove that with fluttering
 wings
 Watches a serpent in the act to spring.

What follow'd was a strange and wondrous
 dream

Wherein, half conscious, wearily and long
 I wooed away her fears with gentle words,
 Smooth gestures, and sweet smiles,—with
 kindness such

As calms the terror of a new-year'd lamb,
 So pure, it fears its shadow on the grass ;
 And all the while thick pulses of my heart
 Throng'd hot in ears and eyelids,—for my
 Soul

Seem'd swooning, deaden'd in the sense,
 like one

Who sinks in snows, and sleeps, and wakes
 no more.

Yet was I conscious of a hollow void,
 A yearning in the tumult of the blood,
 Her presence fill'd not, quell'd not ; and I
 search'd

Her eyes for meanings that they harbour'd
 not,

Her face for beauty that disturb'd it not.
 'Twas Psyche's face, and yet 'twas not her
 face,

A face most fair, yet not so heavenly fair,
 As hers who, when my time of travail came,
 Haunted me, out of heaven. For its smile
 Brought no good news from realms beyond
 the sun,

The lips framed heavenly nor humanspeech,
 And to the glorious windows of the eyes
 No Soul clomb up—to look upon the stars,
 And search the void for glimpses of the peaks
 Of that far land of morning whence it comes.

Then, further, I was conscious that my
 face

Had lull'd her fears ; that close to me she
 came

Tamer than beast, and toy'd with my great
 heard,

And murmur'd sounds like prattled infants'
 speech,

And yielding to my kisses kissed again.
 Whereat, in scorn of my pale Soul, I cried,
 'Here will I feast in honour of this night !'
 And spread the board with meats and fruits
 and wine,

And drew the curtain with a wave of arm
 Bidding the sunlight welcome : lastly,
 snatch'd

A purple robe of richness 'rom the wall,

And flung it o'er her while she kiss'd and smiled,
Girdling the waist with clasp and cord of gold.

Then sat we, side by side. She, queenly stoled,
Amid the gleaming fountain of her hair,
With liquid azure orbs and rosy lips
Gorgeous with honey'd kisses ; I, like a man
Who loves fair eyes and knows they are a fiend's,
And in them sees a heav'n he knows is hell.
For, like a glorious feast, she ate and drank,
Staining her lips in crimson wine, and laugh'd
To feel the vinous bubbles froth and burst
In veins whose sparking blood was meet to be
A spirit's habitation. Cup on cup
I drain'd in fulness—careless as a god—
A haggard bearded head upon a breast
In tumult like a sun-kist bed of flowers.

But ere, suffused with light, the eyes of Heaven
Widen'd to gaze upon the white-arm'd Moon,
Stillter than stone we reign'd there, side by side.
Yea, like a lonely King whose Glory sits
Beside him,—impotent of life but fair,—
Brightly apparell'd I sat above
The tumult of the town, as on a throne,
Watching her wearily ; while far away
The sunset dark'd like dying eyes that shut
Under the waving of an angel's wing.

5. SHADOW.

THREE days and nights the vision dwelt
with me,
Three days and nights we dozed in dreadful state,
Look'd piteously upon by sun and star ;
But the third night there pass'd a homeless sound
Across the city underneath my tower,
And lo ! there came a roll of muffled wheels,
A shrieking and a hurrying to and fro
Beneath, and I gazed forth. Then far below
I heard the people shriek ' A pestilence !'

But, while they shriek'd, they carried forth
their Dead,
And flung them out upon the common ways,
And moaning fled : while far across the hills
A dark and brazen sunset ribb'd with black
Glared, like the sullen eyeballs of the plague.

I turn'd to her, the partner of my height :
She, with bright eyeballs sick with wine,
and hair
Gleaming in sunset, on a couch asleep.
And lo ! a horror lifted up my scalp,
The pulses plunged upon the heart, and fear
Froze my wide eyelids. Peacefully she lay
In purple stole array'd, one little hand
Bruising the downy cheek, the other still
Clutching the dripping goblet, and the light,
With gleams of crimson on the ruinous hair,
Spangling a blue-vein'd bosom whence the robe
Fell back in rifed folds ; but dreadful change
Grew pale and hideous on the waxen face,
And in her sleep she did not stir, nor dream.
Therefore, it seem'd, Death pluck'd me by
the sleeve,
And, sweeping past, with lean forefinger
touch'd
The sleeper's brow and smiled ; when,
shrinking back,
I turn'd my face away, and saw afar
The brazen sullen sunset ribb'd with black
Glare on her, like the eyeballs of the
plague !

O apparition of my work and wish !
Shrieking I fled, my robe across my face,
And left my glory and my woe behind,
And sped, thro' pathless woods, o'er moon-
lit peaks,
Toward sunrise ;—nor have halted since
that hour,
But wander far away, a homeless man,
Prophetic, orphan'd both of name and fame.
Nay, like a timid Phantom evermore
I come and go with haggard warning eyes ;
And some, that sit with lemans over wine,
Or dally idly with the glorious hour,
Turn cynic eyes away and smile aside ;
And some are saved because they see me
pass,
And, shuddering, yet constant to their task,
Look up for comfort to the silent stars,

XVI.

ANTONY IN ARMS.

Lo, we are side by side!—One dark arm
furls

Around me like a serpent warm and bare ;
The other, lifted 'mid a gleam of pearls,
Holds a full golden goblet in the air ;
Her face is shining through her cloudy curls
With light that makes me drunken un-
aware,

And with my chin upon my breast I smile
Upon her, darkening inward all the while.

And thro' the chamber curtains, backward
roll'd

By spicy winds that fan my fever'd head,
I see a sandy flat slope yellow as gold
To the brown banks of Nilus wrinkling red
In the slow sunset ; and mine eyes behold
The West, low down beyond the river's
bed,

Grow sullen, ribb'd with many a brazen bar,
Under the white smile of the Cyprian star.

A bitter Roman vision floateth black
Before me, in my dizzy brain's despite ;
The Roman armour brindles on my back,
My swelling nostrils drink the fumes of
fight :

But then, she smiles upon me!—and I lack
The warrior will that frowns on lewd
delight,

And, passionately proud and desolate,
I smile an answer to the joy I hate.

Joy coming uninvoked, asleep, awake,
Makes sunshine on the grave of buried
powers ;

Oftimes I wholly loathe her for the sake
Of manhood slipt away in easeful hours :
But from her lips mild words and kisses
break,

Till I am like a ruin mock'd with flowers ;
I think of Honour's face—then turn to hers—
Dark, like the splendid shame that she con-
fers.

Lo, how her dark arm holds me!—I am
bound

By the soft touch of fingers light as leaves :
I drag my face aside, but at the sound

Of her low voice I turn—and she perceives
The cloud of Rome upon my face, and round
My neck she twines her odorous arms and
grieves,
Shedding upon a heart as soft as they
Tears 'tis a hero's task to kiss away !

And then she loosens from me, trembling
still

Like a bright throbbing robe, and bids
me 'go!'—

When pearly tears her drooping eyelids fill,
And her swart beauty whitens into snow ;
And lost to use of life and hope and will,
I gaze upon her with a warrior's woe,
And turn, and watch hersidelong in annoy—
Then snatch her to me, flush'd with shame
and joy !

Once more, O Rome ! I would be son of
thine—

This constant prayer my chain'd soul ever
saith—

I thirst for honourable end—I pine
Not thus to kiss away my mortal breath.
But comfort such as this may not be mine—
I cannot even die a Roman death :
I seek a Roman's grave, a Roman's rest—
But, dying, I would die upon her breast !

XVII.

FINE WEATHER ON THE
DIGENTIA.

HORATIUS COGITABUNDUS.

4.

FAVONIUS changes with sunny kisses
The spring's ice-fetters to bands of flowers,
And the delicate Graces, those thin-skinn'd
Misses,
Are beginning to dance with the rosy
Hours ;
The Dryades, feeling the breeze on their
bosoms,
Thro' tuby branches are blowing out blos-
soms ;
The naked Naiad of every pool,
Lest the sunshine should drive her to playing
the fool,
Lies full length in the water and keeps her-
self cool ;

Pan is piping afar, 'mid the trees,
His ditty dies on the dying breeze,
While a wood-nymph leaneth her head on
his knees,

In a dream, in a dream, with her wild eyes
glistening,

Her bosom throbbing, her whole soul list-
ening !

In fact, 'tis the season of billing and cooing,
Amorous flying and fond pursuing,
Kissing, and pressing, and mischief-doing ;
And pleasant it is to take one's tippie

In the mild warm breath of the spicy South,
And deftly to fasten one's lips to the mouth
Of a flasket warmer than Venus' nipple !

Pleasant, pleasant, at this the season
When folly is reason and reason treason,
When nought is so powerful near or far

As the palpitating
Titillating

Twinkle, twinkle, of the Cyprian star !

2.

But what has a shaky quaky fellow,
Full of the sunshine but over-mellow,
To do with the beautiful Lesbian Queen,
The pink-eyed precious with locks of yellow,
The goddess of twenty and sweet eighteen,
Whose double conquest o'er Pride and Spleen
In the Greek King's bed put a viper green
And darken'd these seas with the Grecian force?

Nothing, of course !

Well, even I have of joy my measure
And can welcome the newborn Adonis with
pleasure ;

For since at Philippi, worst of scrapes,
I saved my skin for the good of the nation,
And made my pious asseveration

To scorn ambition and cultivate grapes,
I've found by a curious convolution

Of physical ailments and heavenly stars,
And of wisdom wean'd on the blood-milk
of Mars,

That my pluck is surpass'd by my elocution—
And learnt, in fine,

That rosy wine

And sunshine agree with my constitution !

(*Bibit.*)

3.

Pleasant it is, I say, to sit here,

Just in the sunshine without the threshold,
And, with fond fingers and lips, caress old
Bacchus' bottle, the source of wit, here !

Drowsily hum the honey-bees,
Drowsily murmur the birds in the trees,
Drowsily drops the spicy breeze,
Drowsily I sit at mine ease.

4.

An idle life is the life for me,—
Idleness spiced by philosophy !
I care not a fig for the cares of business,
Politics fill me with doubt and dizziness,
Pomps and triumphs are simply a bore to
me,

Crude ambition will come no more to me,
I bate the vulgar popular cattle,
And I modestly blush at the mention of
battle.

No !—Here is my humble definition
Of a perfectly happy and virtuous condition :
A few fat acres aroundabout,

To give one a sense of possession ; a few
Servants to pour the sweet Massic out ;

Plenty to eat and nothing to do ;
A feeling of cozy and proud virility ;

A few stray pence ;—

And the tiniest sense

Of self-conserving responsibility !

5.

For, what is Life?—or, rather ask here,
What is that fountain of music and motion

We call the Soul?—As I sit and bask here,
I confess that I haven't the slightest notion.

Yet Plato calls it eternal, telling
How its original lofty dwelling
Was among the stars, till, fairly repining
At eternally turning a pivot and shining,

Heaven it quitted

To dwell unpitied

In a fleshly mansion of wining and whining;
Aristotle, I don't know why,

Believes that, born up above in the sky
The moment that Body is born on the earth,

'Tis married to Body that moment of birth ;
Hippo and others, whose heads were a
muddle,

Affirm 'tis compounded of water—puddle !
Fire, not a few, with Democritus, swear ;

While others—chameleons—reduce it to Air ;
Water and fire, cries Hippocrates !

No, water and earth, cries Xenophanes !

Earth and fire, cries Parmenides !

Stop ! cries Empedocles,—all of these !

Ennius follow'd Pythagoras, thinking
 The transmigration of spirits a truth ;—
 A doctrine I choose to apply in sooth
 To the spirit that lies in the wine I'm drink-
 ing ;
 Speculation, muddle, trouble,
 Some see obliquely, others double,
 While under their noses,
 Which smell not the roses,
 Truth placidly bursts like a spangled bubble.

6.

Altogether, they puzzle me quite,
 They all seem wrong and they all seem right.
 The puzzle remains an unsatisfied question ;
 But Epicurus has flatly tried
 To prove that the soul is closely allied
 To wine, and sunshine, and good digestion.
 For without any prosing, head-racking, or
 preaching,

That's the construction I put on his teaching !
 'Tis simple : the Soul and the Body are one,
 Like the Sun itself and the light of the Sun,
 Born to change with all other creations,
 Homunculi, qualities, emanations,
 To pass thro' wondrous and strange gradations ;

And if this be the case, our best resource
 Is to make the most of our time, of course,
 Nor grumble and question till hoary and
 hoarse.

And I slightly improve upon Epicurus,
 Who shirk'd good living, as some assure us,
 And assert, from experience long and rare,
 That body and soul can be perfectly snug,
 With sunshine, fresh air,
 And no physical care,
 In a garden that never requires to be dug.

7.

I, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, am learning
 From the tuneful stars in my zenith turning,
 From my bachelorhood, which is wide
 awake,

That the sum of good is a life of ease,
 A friend or two, if the humour please,
 And not a tie it would pain you to break.
 Call me selfish, indolent, vain,
 But I don't and won't see the virtue of pain,
 Be it of body or he it of brain ;
 Philippi finish'd my education,
 For it taught me the doctrine of self-preser-
 vation.

I hate the barking of Scylla's dogs,
 Round Charybdis your sailor may spin,
 but not I :—

In short, I am one of those excellent hogs
 That grunt in the Grecian epicure's sty.

Day by day, my delight has grown wider
 Since I learnt that wine is a natural good,
 And the stubborn donkey called Fortitude
 Has a knack of upsetting the bile of its rider.
 All creeds that vex one are mere vexation ;
 But I firmly believe, and no man dare doubt
 me,

In Massic taken in moderation,
 And I like to dwell where no fools can flout
 me—

Sans physical care,
 In the sunny air,
 And to sing—when I feel the fresh world
 about me !

(Bibit.)

8.

Bear witness, Flower!—One's sense perceives
 The rich sap lying within your leaves,
 Which lusciously swoon to a soft blood-red
 As the sunlight woos them from overhead !
 Now, here is a parallel worth inspection
 Of body and blood in perfect connexion
 With what some call Soul, that obscure
 abstraction

Which I have proved to my satisfaction
 To be Body in lesser or greater perfection.
 The perfect parts of the perfect flower
 Were nourish'd by sunshine for many an
 hour,

Till the sunshine within them o'erflowing—
 hence

The juice whose odorous quintessence,
 Though sweetly expressing the parts and the
 whole,

Is simply a part of the whole, and still
 inseparate from the general will.

The Flower is the Body, the Scent is the
 Soul !

See ! I press a thorn in the milky stalk :
 The small thing droops o'er the garden walk,
 The soft leaves shiver, the sap runs dry,
 And never more will the flower's mild eye
 Drink the breath of the moon—it will linger,
 and die.

But the scent of the flower, some would cry,
 is the sweeter ;

True, but the scent, every moment, grows
 less,

And, further observing, they would confess,
That the flower, as a flower, is the incompleter!

Well, between my fingers I sharp press
The delicate leaves, and thro' every vein
The perfect anatomy shrinks with pain,

And the flower with its odorous quintessence

Will never, 'tis clear, be perfection again.

Bah! I pluck it, I pluck it, and cast it hence,

As Death plucks humanity body and brain!
But the odour has not yet flown, you cry,
It sweetens the air, tho' the flower doth die!
Of course; and the feelers and stem and leaves,

And the sap and the odour it interweaves,
No longer perfect and gastronomic,
Are in common resolving themselves, one perceives,

Back to first principles—say atomic;
And whatever destination your fine
Hard-headed philosophers choose to assign
To the several parts, they are reft of their power,

And, so far as concerns its true functions
—to scent

The soft air, and look fair—and its first sweet intent,

'Tis clear that the whole is no longer a Flower.

9.

Take that bulky and truly delectable whole,
The egotistic disciple of Bacchus,
With small hare's-eyes and gray hairs on his poll,

Myself—good Quintus Horatius Flaccus!
There's a Body! There's a Soul!

Many a year, over Rome's dominions,
Has he vaunted his Epicurean opinions:
He may be wrong, he may be right,
So he roars his creed in no mad heroics,—
Since down in the grave, where all creeds unite

Even Epicureans are changed to Stoics.

(*Bibil.*)

10.

Humph, the grave!—not the pleasantest prospect, affirms

This quiet old heart starting up with a beat—

Well, 'tis rather hard that liquor so sweet
Goes simply to flavour a meal for worms!

After all, I'm a sensible man,

To render my span

As happy and easeful as ever I can.

To-morrow may mingle, who knows, who knows,

The Life that is Dream with the Death that is Sleep,

And the grass that covers my last repose

May make a sward where the lambkins leap

Round a mild-eyed mellifluous musical boy
Who pipes to his flock in a pastoral joy,
While the sun that is shining upon him there
Draws silver threads thro' his curly hair,
And Time with long shadows stalks past the spot,

And the Hours pass by, and he sees them not!
Instead of moping and idly rueing it,
Now, this is the pleasantest way of viewing it!—

To think, when all is over and done,
Of insensately feeling one's way to the sun,
Of being a part of the verdure that chases
The mild west-wind into shady places,
While one's liver, warming the roots of a tree,
Creeps upward and flutters delectably
In the leaves that tremble and sigh and sing,
And the breath bubbles up in a daisy ring,
And the heart, mingling strangely with rains and snows,

Bleeds up thro' the turf in the blood of a rose.

11.

Which reminds me, here, that the simile drawn

From the flower that is withering on the lawn,

May, by a stretch of the thought, apply
To the universe—ocean, earth, air, and sky;
And dividing the whole into infinite less,
First principles, atomies numberless,

We find that the sum of the universe strange
Suffers continual mystical change;

While the parts of the whole, tho' their compounds range

Thro' all combinations from men down to daisies,

Are eternal, unchangeable, suffer no phases.
So that Death, to the dullest of heads so

unsightly,

Is (here I improve Epicurus slightly)

Is but the period of dissolution
 Into some untraceable constitution
 Of the several parts of the Body and Soul,—
 And the total extinction of Man as a whole.
 As to Time—mere abstraction ! With even
 motion
 Like waves that gathering foamy speech
 Grow duskily up on a moonlit beach,
 And seem to increase the huge bulk of the
 ocean,
 Hours roll upon hours in the measureless sea
 Of eternity :
 Never ceasing, they seem increasing ;
 But the parts of the Infinite, changing never,
 Increase not, tho' changing, the Whole, the
 For Ever.
 Time ? Call it a compound, if you please,
 A divisible drop in eternal seas,
 An abstract figure, by which we men
 Try to count our sensations again and again,
 And then you will know, perceiving we
must
 Nourish some compound with dust of dust,
 And seeing how short our sensations and
 powers,
 Why I am one,
 Who sits in the sun,
 Whose Time is no limited number of hours,
 But wine ever-present, in nectarine showers.

12.

O Mutability, dread abstraction,
 Let me be wise in the satisfaction
 Of my moderate needs in a half-inaction !
 While Propertius grows love-sick and weary
 and wan,
 While thou, Virgil, singest of arms and the
 man,
 While assassins on Cæsar sharpen their eyes,
 While Agrippa stands grimly on blood-
 stained decks,
 While Mæcenas flirts with the female sex,
 Teach me to sport and philosophize !
 O Mutability, lasting ever,
 Changing ever, yet changing never,
 Teach me, O teach me, and make me
 wise !—
 In the dreadful depth of thy eyeballs dumb,
 Strange meanings flutter and pass to
 nought,
 And beautiful images fade as they come,
 Thro' an under-trouble of shady thought !

13.

Yonder, yonder, the River doth run,
 From sun to shade, and from shade to sun,
 Shaking the lilies to seed as it flows,
 Under the willow-trees taking a doze,
 And waking up in a flutter of fun !
 Could you look at the leaves of yonder tree !
 The wind is stirring them as the sun is stir-
 ring me !
 The woolly clouds move quiet and slow,
 In the pale blue calm of the tranquil skies,
 And their shades that run on the grass below
 Leave purple dreams in the violet's eyes !
 The vine droops over my head with bright
 Clusters of purple and green—the rose
 Breaks her heart on the air—and the
 orange glows
 Like golden lamps in an emerald night.*
 While I sit, with the stain of the wine on
 my lip,
 Shall nature and I part fellowship ?
 No, by Bacchus ! This view from the thresh-
 hold of home
 Is as glad to the core, and as sorrow-
 despising,
 As Aphrodité when fresh from the foam
 That still on her bosom was falling and
 rising,
 While the sunshine crept thro' her briny
 hair
 And mingled itself with the shadows there,
 And her deepening eyes drank their azure
 from air,
 And she blush'd a new beauty surpassingly
 fair !

14.

'Tis absurd to tell me to ruffle a feather,
 Because there may soon be a change of
 weather.
 When the Dog-Star foams, I will lie in the
 shade,
 And watch the white sun thro' an emerald
 glade ;
 When winter murmurs with rain and storm,
 I will watch my hearth smile to itself, and
 keep warm ;
 And for Death, who having fulfilled his task
 Leaves his deputy Silence in houses of
 mourning,—

* Golden lamps in a green night.—ANDREW
 MARVEL.

Well, I hope he no troublesome questions
will ask,

But knock me down, like an ox, without
warning.

Like the world, I most solemnly promise
devotion

To pleasure commingled of light, music,
motion.

I like (as I said) to sit here in my mirth,
To be part of the joy of the sweet-smelling
earth,

To feel the blood blush like a flower with its
glee,

To sing like a bird, to be stirr'd like a tree,
Drowsily, drowsily, sit at mine ease,
While the odd rhymes buzz in my brain like
bees,

And over my wine-cup to chirp and to nod,
Ay to sit—till I fall

Like that peach from the wall—

Self-sufficient, serene, happy-eyed,—like a
GOD!
(*Bibit.*)

15.

Ay, crop the corn with the crooked sickle,

Sow harvest early and reap too late,
Prove Fortune friendly or false or fickle,

Blunder and bother with aching pate,

Attempting to conquer chance or fate,

Struggle, speculate, dig, and bleed,

Rap the whirlwind of Venus' seed,

O senseless, impotent human breed!

What avails! what avails! Were ye less
intent

On your raking and digging, perchance
ye'd behold

The fleecy vapours above you roll'd
Round the dozing Deities dead to strife,
With their mild great eyes on each other bent
Enchanting a wisdom indifferent
To the native honours of death and life.
Sober truths of a pleasure divine
Keep them supine!

The grand lazy fellows have nothing to do
With the hubble and trouble of me or of you,
The stars break around them in silver foam,
And they calmly amuse themselves, some-
times, by stealing

A peep at us pigmies, with much the same
feeling

With which, from the candour and quiet of
home,

I glance at the strife of political Rome.

Serene, happy-eyed, self-sufficient, they rest
On the hill where the blue sky is leaning her
breast:—

Jove seated supreme in the midst, at his side
Apolo the Sun and Selene the Moon,
Juno half dozing, her foot of pride
On the neck of Venus the drowsy-eyed,
And Pallas humming the spheric tune.

16.

Flash!

Lightning, I swear!—there's a tempest
brewing!

Crash!

Thunder, too—swift-footed lightning pur-
suing!

The leaves are troubled, the winds drop
dead,

The air grows ruminant overhead—

Splash!

That great round drop fell pat on my nose.

Flash! crash! splash!—

I must run for it, I suppose.

O what a flashing and crashing and
splashing,

The earth is rocking; the skies are riven—
Jove in a passion, in god-like fashion,
Is breaking the crystal urns of heaven.

XVIII.

FINE WEATHER BY BAIÆ.

VIRGIL TO HORACE.

1.

SWEET is soft slumber, Horace, after toil,
To him who holds the glebe and ploughs
the fruitful soil,

Sweet to salt-blooded mariners, on decks
washed red with storm,

Deep sleep wherein past tempest and green
waves

Make shadows multiform;

2.

Sweet 'tis to Cæsar, when the red star, grown
Swart with war's dust, doth fade, to loll
upon a throne

Dispensing gifts, while on his lips a crafty
half-smile dies,

And the soft whispers of approving Rome
Fan his half-closed eyes!

3.

Sweet to Tibullus, sick and out of tune,
 What time his elegies like wolves howl at
 the moon,
 Comes Pity loos'ning Delia's zone as breezes
 part a cloud ;
 And sweet to thee a wine-cup rough with
 sleep,
 After the tawny crowd.

4.

And further, sweetly comes a scroll from thee,
 To Virgil where he dwells at Baiæ near the
 sea—
 For, sick with servile snakes of state that
 twine round Cæsar's foot,
 He welcomes thy moist greeting and thy
 thought
 Poetically put.

5.

Such alternation of unrest and rest,
 All fitful peace and passion of the yearning
 breast,
 Deepen the meanings flashing swift in Joy's
 pink-lidded eyne,
 And help the Hours to juggle with the fruits
 Of easy creeds like thine.

6.

The time-glass runs, the seasons come and
 go,
 After the rain, the flowers, after the flowers,
 the snow ;
 This Hour is pale and olive-crown'd, that
 splash'd with rebel-mud—
 This, flusht to gaze on Cæsar's laurell'd
 brows,
 That, drunk with Cæsar's blood !

7.

Shall merest mortal man with drowsy nod
 Sit under purple vine and doze and ape the
 god ?
 Wave down the everlasting strife of earth
 and air, and sea ?
 And, like a full-fed fruit that gorges light,
 Grow rotten on the tree ?

8.

Leave the grand mental war that mortals
 keep ?
 Eat the fat ears of corn, yet neither sow nor
 reap ?

Loll in the sunshine, sipping sweets, what
 time the din of fights
 Quenches the wind round Troy, and very
 gods
 Feel dizzy on their heights ?

9.

Nay, friend !—For such a man each hour
 supplies
 Portents that mock his ease, affright his
 languid eyes :
 The very elements are leagued to goad him
 blood and brain,
 The very Sun sows drouth within his throat
 Until it raves for rain !

10.

Methinks I see thee sitting in the sun,
 Whose kisses melt thy crusty wrinkles one
 by one :
 Thy lips droop darkly with a worm of
 thought, half sad, half wroth,
 Which stirs the chrysalis mouth, then, ripe
 with wine,
 Bursts like a golden moth.

11.

Unfaith is with thee, Horace. Sun and wind
 Disturb the tranquil currents of thy heart
 and mind ;
 In midst of Joy, comes pigmy doubt, prick-
 pricking like a flea,
 Till, wide awake, you rack your brains to
 prove
 Your perfect bliss to me.

12.

O better far, if Man would climb, to range
 Thro' sun and thunder-storm tempestuous
 paths of change,
 To mingle with the motion huge of earth
 and air and main,
 And lastly, fall upon a bed of flowers
 When wearied down by pain.

13.

Deep, deep, within Man's elemental parts—
 Earth, water, fire, and air that mix in human
 hearts,—
 Subsists Unrest that seeketh Rest, and
 flashes into gleams
 That haunt the soul to action, and by night
 Disturb our sleep with dreams.

14.

And thus we fashion with a piteous will
 The gods in drowsy mildness seated on a hill,
 The day before them evermore, the starry
 night behind,—
 Inheritors of the divine repose
 We seek and cannot find.

15.

Woe, woe, to him, who craving that calm
 boon
 Falleth to sleep on beds of poppy flowers
 too soon !
 The elements shall hem him in and fright
 his shrieking soul,
 And, since he asks for light, Lightning itself
 Shall scorch his eyes to coal !

16.

My Horace !—I am here beside the deep,
 Weaving at will this verse for Memory to
 keep :
 I share the sunshine with my friend, and
 like a lizard bask ;
 But I, friend, doubt this summer joy,—and
 you
 Shall answer what I ask.—

17.

Bluff March has blown his clarion out of
 tune,
 Gone is the blue-edged sickle of the April
 moon ;
 Faded hath fretful May behind a tremulous
 veil of rain,—
 But I would the boisterous season of the
 winds
 And snows were here again !

18.

For I am kneeling on the white sea-sand,
 Letting the cold soft waves creep up and
 kiss my hand ;
 A golden glare of sunshine fills the blue air
 at my back,
 And swims between the meadows and the
 skies,
 Leaving the meadows black.

19.

All is as still and beautiful as sleep :
 Nay, all is sleep—the quiet air, the azure
 deep ;

The cool blue waves creep thro' my fingers
 with a silver gleam,
 As, lost in utter calm, I neither think
 Nor act, but only dream.

20.

This is the poetry of Heart's repose,
 For which my spirit yearn'd thro' drifting
 winds and snows—
 Only the tingling coolness on my hand seems
 part akin
 To that bleak winter warring when the
 dream
 Of peace arose within.

21.

What time I dream'd of this, the winds, cast
 free,
 Swoop'd eagle-like and tore the white bowels
 of the sea ;
 The winter tempest moved above, and storm
 on storm did frown ;—
 I saw the awful Sea bound up in cloud
 And then torn hugely down.

22.

Within my blood arose the wild commo-
 tion,
 My soul was battling abroad with winds and
 ocean ;
 But in the centre of the wrath, all nature,
 sea and sky,
 Call'd out aloud for peace divine as this,
 And lo, I join'd the cry.

23.

And calm has come, and June is on the
 deep,
 The winds are nested, and the earth takes
 mellow sleep ;
 Yet, friend, my soul, though hush'd in awe,
 feels peace so still is pain,—
 And the monotonous yearning voice within
 Calls out for war again !

24.

For hark ! into my dream of golden ease
 Breaketh the hollow murmur of untroubled
 seas ;
 And behold, my blood awakens with a thrill
 and sinks and swells,
 As when low breezes die and rise again
 On beds of asphodels.

25.

Ay, now, when all is placid as a star,
My soul in incompleteness longs for active
war ;
Amid its utter happiness, it sighs imperfectly
In answer to the beautiful unrest
Within the sleeping sea.

26.

Unsatisfied, I hunger on the land,
Only subdued by this bright water on my
hand ;
The beating heart within my breast for
louder utterance yearns—
I listen, and the sympathetic sea
Its endless moan returns.

27.

Quiet, monotonous, breathless, almost
drown'd,
Inaudibly audible, felt scarce heard, cometh
the sound,
Monotonous, so monotonous, but oh ! so
sweet, so sweet,
When my hid heart is throbbing forth a
voice,
And the two voices meet.

28.

The void within the calm for which I
yearned,
Until this moment was imperfectly dis-
cerned ;
But now I feel to the roots of life an inner
melody,
That harmonises my unquiet heart
With the unquiet sea.

29.

Hear I the crawling movements of the main ?
Or hear I dim heart-echoes dying in the
brain ?
Is there but one impatient moan, and is it
of the sea ?
And, if two voices speak, which voice
belongs
To ocean, which to me ?

30.

The sounds have mingled into some faint
whole,
Inseparate, trembling o'er the fibres of my
soul ;

And the cool waves have a magic all my
swooning blood to quell ;
The sea glides thro' and thro' me, and my
soul
Keeps sea-sound like a shell.

31.

Ah, the monotonous music in my soul,
Enlarging like the waves, murmuring with-
out control !—
Is it that changeful nature can rest not night
nor day ?
And is the music born of this lorn Man,
Or Ocean,—Horace, say ?

32.

Is there a climbing element in life
Which is at war with rest, alternates strife
with strife,
Whereby we reach eternal seas upon whose
shores unstirr'd .
Ev'n Joy can sleep,—because no moan like
this
Within those waves is heard ?

XIX.

THE SWAN-SONG OF APOLLO.

1.

O LYRE ! O Lyre !
Strung with celestial fire !
Thou living soul of sound that answereth
These fingers that have troubled thee so
long,
With passion, and with music, and with
breath
Of melancholy song,—
Answer, answer, answer me,
With thy withering melody !
For the earth is old, and strange
Mysteries are working change,
And the Dead who slumber'd deep
Startle troubled from their sleep,
And the ancient gods divine,
Pale and haggard o'er their wine,
Fade in their ghastly banquet-halls, with
large eyes fixed on mine !

2.

Ah me ! ah me !
The earth and air and sea

Are shaken ; and the great pale gods sit still,
The roseate mists around them roll
away :—

Lo ! Hebe listens in the act to fill,
And growth wan and gray ;
On the banquet-table spread,
Fruits and flowers grow sick and dead,
Nectar cold in every cup
Gleams to blood and withers up ;
Aphrodité breathes a charm,
Gripping Pallas' bronzed arm ;
Zeus the Father clenches teeth,
While his cloud-throne shakes beneath ;
The passion-flower in Heré's hair melts in a
snowy wreath !

3.

Ah, woe ! ah, woe !
One climbeth from below, —
A mortal shape with pallid smile divine,
Bearing a heavy Cross and crown'd with
thorn, —
His brow is moist with blood, his strange
sweet eyne
Look piteous and forlorn :
Hark, O hark ! his cold foot-fall
Breaks upon the banquet-hall !
God and goddess start to hear,
Earth, air, ocean, moan in fear ;
Shadows of the Cross and Him
Dark the banquet-table dim,
Silent sit the gods divine,
Old and haggard over wine,
And slowly to thy song they fade, with large
eyes fixed on mine !

4.

O Lyre ! O Lyre !
Thy strings of golden fire
Fade to their fading, and the hand is chill
That touches thee ; the great bright brow
grows gray—
I faint, I wither, while that conclave still
Dies wearily away !
Ah, the prophecy of old
Sung by us to smilers cold !—
God and goddess droop and die,
Chilly cold against the sky,
There is change and all is done,
Strange look moon and stars and sun !
God and goddess fade, and see !
All their large eyes look at me !
While woe ! ah, woe ! in dying song, I fade,
I fade, with thee !

POET'S EPILOGUE.

TO MARY ON EARTH.

'Simplex munditiis.'

1.

So ! now the task is ended ; and to-night,
Sick, impotent, no longer soul-sustain'd,
Withdrawing eyes from that ideal height
Where, in low undertones, those Spirits
plain'd,
Each full of special glory unattain'd,—
I turn on you, Sweet-Heart, my weary
sight.—
Shut out the darkness, shutting in the light:
So ! now the task is ended. What is gain'd?

2.

First, sit beside me. Place your hand in
mine.
From deepest fountain of your veins the
while
Call up your Soul ; and briefly let it shine
In those gray eyes with mildness feminine.
Yes, smile, Dear !—you are truest when you
smile.

3.

My heart to-night is calm as peaceful
dreams.—
Afar away the wind is shrill, the culver
Blows up and down the moors with windy
gleams,
The birch unlooseneth her locks of silver
And shakes them softly on the mountain
streams,
And o'er the grave that holds my David's
dust
The Moon uplifts her empty dripping horn :
Thither my fancies turn, but turn in trust,
Not wholly sadly, faithful though forlorn.
For you, too, ove him, mourn his life's
quick fleeting ;
We think of him in common. Is it so?—
Your little hand has answer'd, and I know
His name makes music in your heart's soft
beating ;
And—well, 'tis something gain'd for him
and me—
Him, in his heaven, and me, in this low spot,
Something his eyes will see, and joy to see—
That you, too, love him, though you knew
him not.

4.

Yet this is bitter. We were boy and boy,
 Hand link'd in hand we dreamt of power
 and fame,
 We shared each other's sorrow, pride, and
 joy,
 To one wild tune our swift blood went and
 came,
 Eyes drank each other's hope with flash of
 flame.
 Then, side by side, we clomb the hill of life,
 We ranged thro' mist and mist, thro' storm
 and strife ;
 But then,—it is so bitter, now, to feel
 That his pale Soul to mine was so akin,
 Firm-fix'd on goals we each set forth to win,
 So twinly conscious of the sweet Ideal,
 So wedded (God forgive me if I sin !)
 That neither he, my friend, nor I could steal
 One glimpse of heaven's divinities—alone,
 And flushing seek his brother, and reveal
 Some hope, some joy, some beauty, else
 unknown ;
 Nor, bringing down his sunlight from the
 Sun,
 Call sudden up, to light his fellow's face,
 A smile as proud, as glad, as that I trace
 In your dear eyes, now, when my work is
 done.

5.

Love g ins in giving. What had I to give
 Whereof his Poet-Soul was not possesset ?
 What gleams of stars he knew not, fugitive
 As lightning-flashes, could I manifest ?
 What music fainting from a clearer air ?
 What lights of sunrise from beyond the grave ?
 What pride in knowledge that he could not
 share ?—
 Ay, Mary, it is bitter ; for I swear
 He took with him, to heav'n, no wealth I
 gave.

6.

No, Love, it is not bitter ! Thoughts like
 those
 Were sin these songs I sing you must adjust.
 Not bitter, ah, not bitter !—God is just ;
 And, seeing our one-knowledge, just God
 chose,
 By one swift stroke, to part us. Far above
 The measure of my hope, my pride, my
 love,

Above our seasons, suns and rains and
 snows,—

He, like an exhalation, thus arose ;
 Hearing in a diviner atmosphere
 Music we only see, when, dewy and dim,
 The stars thro' gulfs of azure darkness swim,
 Music we seem to see, but cannot hear.
 But evermore, my Poet, on his height,
 Fills up my Soul with sweetness to the brim,
 Rains influence, and warning, and delight ;
 And now, I smile for pride and joy in him !

7

I said, Love gains by giving. And to know
 That I, who could not glorify my Friend,
 Soul of my Soul, although I loved him so,
 Have power and strength and privilege to
 lend
 Glimpses of heav'n to Thee, of hope, of bliss !
 Power to go heavenward, pluck flowers and
 blend
 Their hues in wreaths I give you with a kiss—
 You, Love, who climb not up the heights
 at all !
 To think, to think, I never could upcall
 On his dead face, so proud a smile as this !

8.

Most just is God : who bids me not be sad
 For his dear sake whose name is dear to thee,
 Who bids me proudly climb and sometimes
 see
 With joy a glimpse of him in glory clad,
 Who, further, bids your life be proud and
 glad,
 When I have climb'd and seen, for joy in me.
 My lowly-minded, gentle-hearted Love !
 I bring you down his gifts, and am sustain'd :
 You watch and pray—I climb—he stands
 above.
 So, now the task is ended, what is gain'd ?

9.

This knowledge.—Better in your arms to rest,
 Better to love you till my heart should break,
 Than pause to ask if he who would be blest
 Should love for more than his own loving's
 sake.
 So closer, closer still ; for (while afar,
 Mile upon mile towa'd the polar star,
 Now in the autumn time our Poet's dust
 Sucks back thro' grassy sods the flowers it
 thrust

To feel the summer on the outer earth)
I turn to you, and on your bosom fall.
Love grows by giving. I have given my all.
So, smile—to show you hold the gift of
worth.

10.

Ay, all the thanks that I on earth can render
To him who sends me such good news from
God,
Is, in due turn, to thy young life to tender
Hopes that denote, while blossoming in
splendour,
Where an invisible Angel's foot hath trode.

So, Sweet-Heart, I have given unto thee,
Not only such poor song as here I twine,
But Hope, Ambition, all of mine or me,
My flesh and blood, and more, my soul
divine.

Take all, take all! Ay, wind white arms
about

My neck and from my breath draw bliss for
thine :

Smile, Sweet-Heart, and be happy—lest
thou doubt

How much the gift I give thee makes thee
mine !

Idyls and Legends of Inverburn.

(1865.)

Fly to the city, Spirit of the Spring,
Breathe softly on the eyes of those who read,
And make a gentle picture of the scene
Wherein these men and women come and go :
The clachan with its humming sound of looms,
The quaint old gables, roofs of turf and thatch,

THE LOWLAND VILLAGE.

SEVEN pleasant miles by wood, and stream,
and moor,
Seven miles along the country road that
wound
Uphill and downhill in a dusty line,
Then from the forehead of a hill, behold—
Lying below me, sparkling ruby-like—
The village!—quaint old gables, roofs of
thatch,
The glimmering spire that peep'd above the
firs,
The sunset lingering orange-red on all,
And nearer, tumbling thro' a mossy bridge,
The river that I knew! No wondrous peep
Into the faëry land of Oberon,
Its bowers, its glowworm-lighted colonnades
Where pigmy lovers wander two by two,
Could weigh upon the city wanderer's heart
With peace so pure as this! Why, yonder
stood,
A fledgling's downward flight beyond the
spire,
The gray old manse, endear'd by memories

The glimmering spire that peeps above the firs,
The stream whose soft blue arms encircle all,—
And in the background heathery norland hills,
Hued like the azure of the dew-berrie,
And mingling with the regions of the rain !

Of Jean the daughter of the minister ;
And in the cottage with the painted sign,
Hard by the bridge, how many a winter night
Had I with politicians sapient-eyed
Discuss'd the county paper's latest news
And read of toppling thrones!—And nought
seem'd changed !

The very gig before the smithy door,
The barefoot maiden with the milking pail
Pausing and looking backward from the
bridge,

The last rook wavering homeward to the
wood,

All seem'd a sunset-picture, every tint
Unchanged, since I had bidden it farewell.
My heart grew garrulous of olden times,
And my face sadden'd, as I saunter'd down.
Then came a rural music on my ears,—
The waggons in the lanes, the waterfall
With cool sound plunging in its wood-nest
wild,

The rooks amid the windy rookery,
The shouts of children, and more far away
The crowing of a cock. Then o'er the bridge
I bent, above the river gushing down

Thro' mossy boulders, making underneath
Green-shaded pools where now and then a
trout

Sank in the ripple of its own quick leap ;
And like some olden and familiar tune,
Half humm'd aloud, half tinkling in the
brain,

Troublously, faintly, came the buzz of looms.

And here I linger'd, nested in the shade
Of Peace that makes a music as she grows ;
And when the vale had put its glory on
The bitter aspiration was subdued,

And Pleasure, tho' she wore a woodland
crown,

Look'd at me with Ambition's serious eyes.
Amid the deep green woods of pine, whose
boughs

Made a sea-music overhead, and caught
White flakes of sunlight on their highest
leaves,

I foster'd solemn meditations ;

Stretch'd on the sloping river banks, fresh
strewn

With speedwell, primrose, and anemone,
I watch'd the bright king-fisher dart about,
His quick small shadow with an azure gleam
Startling the minnows in the pool beneath ;
Or later on the moors, where far away
Across the waste the sportsman with his gun
Stood a dark speck across the azure, while
The heath-hen tower'd with beating wings
and fell,

I caught the solemn wind that wander'd down
With thunder-echoes heaved among the hills.

Nor lack'd I, in the balmy summer nights,
Or on the days of rain, such counterpoise
As books can give. The honey-languaged
Greek

Who gently piped the sweet bucolic lay,
The wit who raved of Lesbia's loosens'd zone
And loved divinely what was less than earth,
Were with me ; others, of a later date :

The eagle-eyed comedian divine ;
The English Homer, not the humpback'd
one

Who sung Belinda's curl at Twickenham,
But Chapman, master of the long strong line ;
Moreover, those few singers who have lit
The beacon-lights of these our latter days—
Chief, young Hyperion, who setting soon
Sent his pale look along the future time,
And the tall figure on the hills, that stoopt
To see the daisy's shadow on the grass.

WILLIE BAIRD.

'An old man's tale, a tale for men gray-hair'd,
Who wear, thro' second childhood, to the Lord.

'Tis two-and-thirty summers since I came
To school the village lads of Inverburn.

My father was a shepherd old and poor,
Who, dwelling 'mong the clouds on norland
hills,

His tartan plaidie on, and by his side
His sheep-dog running, redden'd with the
winds

That whistle southward from the Polar seas:
I follow'd in his footsteps when a boy,
And knew by heart the mountains round our
home ;

But when I went to Edinglass, to learn
At college there, I look'd about the place,
And heard the murmur of the busy streets
Around me, in a dream ;—and only saw
The clouds that snow around the mountain-
tops,

The mists that chase the phantom of the
moon

In lonely mountain tarns,—and heard the
while,

Not footsteps sounding hollow to and fro,
But winds sough-soughing thro' the woods
of pine.

Time pass'd ; and day by day those sights
and sounds

Grew fainter,—till they troubled me no more.

O Willie, Willie, are you sleeping sound ?
And can you feel the stone that I have placed
Yonder above you ? Are you dead, my doo ?
Or did you see the shining Hand that parts
The clouds above, and becks the bonnie
birds,

Until they wing away, and human eyes,
That watch them till they vanish in the blue,
Droop and grow tearful ? Ay, I ken, I ken,
I'm talking folly, but I loved the child !
He was the bravest scholar in the school !
He came to teach the very dominie—
Me, with my lyart locks and sleepy heart !

O weel I mind the day his mother brought
Her tiny trembling tot with yellow hair,
Her tiny poor-clad tot six summers old,

And left him seated lonely on a form
Before my desk. He neither wept nor
gloom'd ;

But waited silently, with shoeless feet
Swinging above the floor ; in wonder eyed
The maps upon the walls, the big black
board,

The slates and books and copies, and my
own

Grey hose and clumpy boots ; last, fixing
gaze

Upon a monster spider's web that fill'd
One corner of the whitewash'd ceiling,
watch'd

The speckled traitor jump and jink about,
Till he forgot my unfamiliar eyes,
Weary and strange and old. 'Come here,
my bairn !'

And timid as a lamb he seed'ed up.
'What do they call ye?' 'Willie,' coo'd
the wean,

Up-peeping slyly, scraping with his feet.
I put my hand upon his yellow hair,
And cheer'd him kindly. Then I bade him
lift

The small black bell that stands behind the
door

And ring the shouting laddies from their
play.

'Run, Willie !' And he ran, and eyed the
bell,

Stoop'd o'er it, seem'd afraid that it would
bite,

Then grasp'd it firm, and as it jingled gave
A timid cry—next laugh'd to hear the
sound—

And ran full merry to the door and rang,
And rang, and rang, while lights of music lit
His pallid cheek, till, shouting, panting
hard,

In ran the big rough laddies from their play.

Then rapping sharply on the desk I drove
The laddies to their seats, and beckon'd up
The stranger—smiling, bade him seat him-
self

And hearken to the rest. Two weary hours
Buzz-buzz, boom-boom, went on the noise
of school,

While Willie sat and listen'd open-mouthed ;
Till school was over, and the big and small
Flew home in flocks. But Willie stay'd
behind.

I beckon'd to the mannock with a smile,
And took him on my knee and crack'd and
talk'd.

First, he was timid ; next, grew bashful ;
next,

He warm'd and told me stories of his home,
His father, mother, sisters, brothers, all ;
And how, when strong and big, he meant
to buy

A gig to drive his father to the kirk ;
And how he long'd to be a dominie :
Such simple prattle as I plainly see
You smile at. But to little children God
Has given wisdom and mysterious power
Which beat the mathematics. *Quæere*

Verum in sylvis Academi, Sir,
Is meet for men who can afford to dwell
For ever in a garden, reading books
Of morals and the logic. Good and weel !
Give me such tiny truths as only bloom
Like red-tipt gowans at the hallanstone,
Or kindle softly, flashing bright at times,
In fuffing cottage fires !

The laddie still
Was seated on my knee, when at the door
We heard a sound of scraping : Willie
prick'd

His ears and listened, then he clapt his
hands—

'Hey ! Donald, Donald, Donald !' [See !
the rogue

Looks up and blinks his eyes—he kens his
name !]

'Hey, Donald, Donald !' Willie cried. At
that

I saw beneath me, at the door, a Dog—
The very collie dozing at your feet,
His nose between his paws, his eyes half
closed.

At sight of Willie, with a joyful bark
He leapt and gamboll'd, eying *me* the while
In queer suspicion ; and the mannock peep'd
Into my face, while patting Donald's back—
'It's Donald ! he has come to take me
home !'

An old man's tale, a tale for men gray-
hair'd,

Who wear, thro' second childhood to the
grave !

I'll hasten on. Thenceforward Willie came

Daily to school, and daily to the door
Came Donald trotting ; and they homeward
went

Together—Willie walking slow but sure,
And Donald trotting sagely by his side.
[Ay, Donald, he is dead ! be still, old man !]

What link existed, human or divine,
Between the tiny tot six summers old,
And yonder life of mine upon the hills
Among the mists and storms ? 'Tis strange,
'tis strange !

But when I look'd on Willie's face, it seem'd
That I had known it in some beauteous
life

That I had left behind me in the north.
This fancy grew and grew, till oft I sat—
The buzzing school around me—and would
seem

To be among the mists, the tracks of rain,
Nearing the awful silence of the snow.
Slowly and surely I began to feel

That I was all alone in all the world,
And that my mother and my father slept
Far, far away in some forgotten kirk—
Remember'd but in dreams. Alone at nights,
I read my Bible more and Euclid less.
For, mind you, like my betters, I had been
Half scoffer, half believer ; on the whole,
I thought the life beyond a useless dream,
Best left alone, and shut my eyes to themes
That puzzled mathematics. But at last,
When Willie Baird and I grew friends, and
thoughts

Came to me from beyond my father's grave,
I found 'twas *pleasant* late at e'en to read
My Bible—haply, only just to pick
Some easy chapter for my pet to learn—
Yet night by night my soul was guided on
Like a blind man some angel hand convoys.

I cannot frame in speech the thoughts that
fill'd

This gray old brow, the feelings dim and
warm

That soothed the throbbings of this weary
heart !

But when I placed my hand on Willie's head,
Warm sunshine tingled from the yellow hair
Thro' trembling fingers to my blood
within ;

And when I look'd in Willie's stainless eyes
I saw the empty ether floating gray

O'er shadowy mountains murmuring low
with winds !

And often when, in his old-fashion'd way,
He question'd me, I seem'd to hear a voice
From far away, that mingled with the cries
Haunting the regions where the round redsun
Is all alone with God among the snow !

Who made the stars ? and if within his
hand

He caught and held one, would his fingers
burn !

If I, the gray-hair'd dominie, was dug
From out a cabbage garden such as *he*
Was found in ? if, when bigger, he would
wear

Gray homespun hose and clumsy boots like
mine,

And have a house to dwell in all alone ?
Thus would he question, seated on my knee,
While Donald (wheesh, old man !) stretch'd
lyart limbs

Under my chair, contented. Open-mouth'd
He hearken'd to the tales I loved to tell
About Sir William Wallace and the Bruce,
And the sweet lady on the Scottish throne,
Whose crown was colder than a band of ice,
Yet seem'd a sunny crown when'er she
smiled ;

With many tales of genii, giants, dwarfs,
And little folk that play at jing-a-ring
On beds of harebells 'neath the silver moon ;
Stories and rhymes and songs of Wonder-
land :

How Tammas Ercildoune in Elfland dwelt,
How Galloway's mermaid comb'd her golden
hair,

How Tammas Thumb stuck in the spider's
web,

And fought and fought, a needle for his
sword,

Dyeing his weapon in the crimson blood
Of the foul traitor with the poison'd fangs !

And when we read the Holy Book, the
child

Would think and think o'er parts he loved
the best ;

The draught of fish, the Child that sat so
wise

In the great Temple, Herod's cruel law
To slay the bairns, or—oftenest of all—
The crucifixion of the Good Kind Man

Who loved the weans and was a wean himself.

He speir'd of Death ! and were the sleepers
cold

Down in the dark wet earth? and was it
God

That put the grass and flowers in the kirk-
yard?

What kind of dwelling-place was heaven
above?

And was it full of flowers? and were there
schools

And dominies there? and was it far away?
Then, with a look that made your eyes
grow dim,

Clasping his wee white hands round
Donald's neck,

'Dodoggies gang to heaven?' he would ask;
'Would Donald gang?' and keek'd in
Donald's face,

While Donald blink'd with meditative gaze,
As if he knew full brawly what we said,
And ponder'd o'er it, wiser far than we !
But how I answer'd, how explain'd these
themes

I know not. Oft I could not speak at all.
Yet every question made me think of things
Forgotten, puzzled so, and when I strove
To reason puzzled me so much the more,
That, flinging logic to the winds, I went
Straight onward to the mark in Willie's way.
Took most for granted, laid down premises
Of Faith, imagined, gave my wit the reins,
And oft on nights at e'en, to my surprise,
Felt palpably an angel's glowing face
Glimmering down upon me, while mine eyes
Dimm'd their old orbs with tears that came
unbid

To bear the glory of the light they saw !

So summer pass'd. Yon chestnut at the
door

Scatter'd its burnish'd leaves and made a
sound

Of wind among its branches. Every day
Came Willie, seldom going home again
Till near the sunset : wet or dry he came :
Oft in the rainy weather carrying
A big umbrella, under which he walk'd—
A little fairy in a parachute
Blown hither, thither, at the wind's wild
will.

Pleased was my heart to see his pallid cheeks

Were gathering rosy-posies, that his eyes
Were softer and less sad. Then, with a
gust,

Old Winter tumbled shrieking from the hills,
His white hair blowing in the wind.

The house

Where Willie's mother lives is scarce a mile
From yonder hallan, if you take a cut

Before you reach the village, crossing o'er
Green meadows till you reach the road again;
But he who thither goes along the road

Loses a reaper's mile. The summer long
Wee Willie came and went across the fields :
He loved the smell of flowers and grass, the
sight

Of cows and sheep, the changing stalks of
wheat,

And he was weak and small. When winter
came,

Still caring not a straw for wind or rain
Came Willie and the collie ; till by night
Down fell the snow, and fell three nights and
days,

Then ceased. The ground was white and
ankle-deep ;

The window of the school was threaded o'er
With flowers of hueless ice—Frost's unseen
hands

Prick'd you from head to foot with tingling
heat.

The shouting urchins, yonder on the green,
Play'd snowballs. In the school a cheery
fire

Was kindled every day, and every day
When Willie came he had the warmest seat,
And every day old Donald, punctual, came
To join us, after labour, in the lowe.

Three days and nights the snow had
mistily fall'n.

It lay long miles along the country-side,
White, awful, silent. In the keen cold air

There was a hush, a sleepless silentness,
And mid it all, upraising eyes, you felt
God's breath upon your face ; and in your
blood,

Though you were cold to touch, was flaming
fire,

Such as within the bowels of the earth
Burnt at the bones of ice, and wreath'd them
round

With grass ungrown.

One day in school I saw,
Through threaded window - panes, soft
snowy flakes

Fall with unquiet motion, mistily, slowly,
At intervals ; but when the boys were gone,
And in ran Donald with a dripping nose,
The air was clear and gray as glass . An hour
Sat Willie, Donald, and myself around
The murmuring fire, and then with tender
hand

I wrapt a comforter round Willie's throat,
Button'd his coat around him close and warm,
And off he ran with Donald, happy-eyed
And merry, leaving fairy prints of feet
Behind him on the snow. I watch'd them
fade

Round the white curve, and, turning with a
sigh,

Came in to sort the room and smoke a pipe
Before the fire. Here, dreaming all alone,
I sat and smoked, and in the fire saw clear
The norland mountains, white and cold with
snow

That crumbled silently, and moved, and
changed,—

When suddenly the air grew sick and dark,
And from the distance came a hollow sound,
A murmur like the moan of far-off seas.

I started to my feet, look'd out, and knew
The winter wind was whistling from the
clouds

To lash the snow-clothed plain, and to my-
self

I prophesied a storm before the night.
Then with an icy pain, an eldritch fear,
I thought of Willie ; but I cheer'd my heart,
' He's home, and with his mother, long ere
this !'

While thus I stood the hollow murmur grew
Deeper, the wold grew darker, and the snow
Rush'd downward, whirling in a shadowy
mist.

I walk'd to yonder door and open'd it.
Whirr ! the wind swung it from me with a
clang,

And in upon me with an iron-like crash
Swoop'd in the drift ! With pinch'd sharp
face I gazed

Out on the storm ! Dark, dark, was all !
A mist,

A blinding, whirling mist, of chilly snow,
The falling and the driven ; for the wind

Swept round and round in clouds upon the
earth,

And birm'd the deathly drift aloft with moans,
Till all was dreadful darkness. Far above
A voice was shrieking, like a human cry !

I closed the door, and turn'd me to the
fire,
With something on my heart—a load—a
sense

Of an impending pain. Down the broad lum
Came melting flakes that hiss'd upon the
coal ;—

Under my eyelids blew the blinding smoke,
And for a time I sat like one bewitch'd,
Still as a stone. The lonely room grew dark,
The flickering fire threw phantoms of the
snow

Along the floor and on the walls around ;
The melancholy ticking of the clock

Was like the beating of my heart. But,
hush !

Above the moaning of the wind I heard
A sudden scraping at the door ; my heart
Stood still and listen'd ; and with that there
rose

An awsome howl, shrill as a dying screech,
And scrape-scape-scape, the sound beyond
the door !

I could not think—I could not breathe—a
dark,

Awful foreboding gript me like a hand,
As opening the door I gazed straight out,
Saw nothing, till I felt against my knees
Something that moved and heard a moaning
sound—

Then, panting, moaning, o'er the threshold
leapt

Donald the dog, alone, and white with snow.

Down, Donald ! down, old man ! Sir,
look at him !

I swear he knows the meaning of my words,
Ar. I tho' he cannot speak, his heart is full !
See now ! see now ! he puts his cold black
nose

Into my palm and whines ! he knows, he
knows !

Would speak, and cannot, but he minds
that night !

The terror of my heart seem'd choking me.
Dumbly I stared and wildly at the dog,

Who gazed into my face and whined and
moan'd,

Leap'd at the door, then touched me with
his paws,

And lastly, gript my coat between his teeth,
And pull'd and pull'd—whiles growling,
whining whites—

Till fairly madden'd, in bewilder'd fear,
I let him drag me through the banging door
Out to the whirling storm. Bareheaded,
wild,

The wind and snow-drift beating on my face
Blowing me hither, thither, with the dog,
I dash'd along the road. What follow'd
seem'd

An eerie, eerie dream!—a world of snow,
A sky of wind, a whirling howling mist
Which swam around with hundred sickly
eyes;

And Donald dragging, dragging, beaten,
bruised,

Leading me on to something that I fear'd—
An awful something, and I knew not what!
On, on, and farther on, and still the snow
Whirling, the tempest moaning! Then I
mind

Of groping blindly in the shadowy light,
And Donald by me burrowing with his nose
And whining. Next a darkness, blank and
deep!

But then I mind of tearing thro' the storm,
Stumbling and tripping, blind and deaf and
dumb,

And holding to my heart an icy load
I clutch'd with freezing fingers. Far away—
It seem'd long miles on miles away—I saw
A yellow light—unto that light I tore—
And last, remember opening a door
And falling, dazzled by a blinding gleam
Of human faces and a flaming fire,
And with a crash of voices in my ears
Fading away into a world of snow.

When I awaken'd to myself, I lay
In my own bed at home. I started up
As from an evil dream and look'd around,
And to my side came one, a neighbour's wife,
Mother to two young lads I taught in school.
With hollow, hollow voice I question'd her,
And soon knew all: how a long night had
pass'd

Since, with a lifeless laddie in my arms,
I stumbled horror-stricken, swooning, wild

Into a ploughman's cottage: at my side,
My coat between his teeth, a dog; and how
Senseless and cold I fell. Thence, when the
storm

Had pass'd away, they bore me to my home.
I listen'd dumbly, catching at the sense;
But when the woman mention'd Willie's
name,

And I was fear'd to phrase the thought that
rose,

She saw the question in my tearless eyes
And told me—he was dead.

'Twould weary you
To tell the thoughts, the fancies, and the
dreams

That weigh'd upon me, ere I rose in bed,
But little harm'd, and sent the wife away,
Rose, slowly drest, took up my staff and went
To Willie's mother's cottage. As I walk'd,
Though all the air was calm and cold and
still,

The blowing wind and dazzled snow were
yet

Around about. I was bewilder'd like!
Ere I had time to think I found myself
Beside a truckle bed, and at my side
A weeping woman. And I clench'd my
hands,

And look'd on Willie, who had gone to sleep.

In death-gown white, lay Willie fast asleep,
His blue eyes closed, his tiny fingers clench'd,
His lips apart a wee as if he breathed,
His yellow hair kaim'd back, and on his face
A smile—yet not a smile—a dim pale light
Such as the snow keeps in its own soft wings.
Ay, he had gone to sleep, and he was sound!
And by the bed lay Donald watching still,
And when I look'd, he whined, but did not
move.

I turn'd in silence, with my nails stuck deep
In my clench'd palms; but in my heart of
hearts

I pray'd to God. In Willie's mother's face
There was a cold and silent bitterness—
I saw it plain, but saw it in a dream,
And cared not. So I went my way, as grim
As one who holds his breath to slay himself,
What follow'd that is vague as was the rest:
A winter day, a landscape hush'd in snow,
A weary wind, a small white coffin borne

On a man's shoulder, shapes in black, o'er
all

The solemn clanging of an iron bell,
And lastly me and Donald standing both
Beside a tiny mound of fresh-heap'd earth,
And while around the snow began to fall
Mistily, softly, thro' the icy air,
Looking at one another, dumb and cold.

And Willie's dead!—that's all I compre-
hend—

Ay, bonnie Willie Baird has gone before :
The school, the tempest, and the eerie pain,
Seem but a dream,—and I am weary like.
I begged old Donald hard—they gave him
me—

And we have lived together in this house,
Long years, with no companions. There's no
need

Of speech between us! Here we dumbly
bide,

But ken each other's sorrow,—and we both
Feel weary. When the nights are long and
cold,

And snow is falling as it falleth now,
And wintry winds are moaning, here I dream
Of Willie and the unfamiliar life

I left behind me on the norland hills!
'Do doggies gang to heaven?' Willie ask'd;
And ah! what Solomon of modern days
Can answer that? Yet here at nights I sit,
Reading the Book, with Donald at my side;
And stooping, with the Book upon my knee,
I sometimes gaze in Donald's patient eyes—
So sad, so human, though he cannot speak—
And think he knows that Willie is at peace,
Far far away beyond the norland hills,
Beyond the silence of the untrodden snow.

LORD RONALD'S WIFE.

I.

LAST night I toss'd upon my bed,
Because I knew that she was dead :
The curtains were white, the pane was blue,
The moon peep'd through,
And its eye was red—
'I would that my love were awake!' I said.

II.

Then I rose and the lamp of silver lit,
And over the rushes lightly step,

Crept to the door and open'd it,
And enter'd the room where my lady slept;
And the silver lamp threw a feeble ray
Over the bed on which she lay,
And sparkled on her golden hair,
Smiled on her lip and melted there,
And I shudder'd because she look'd so fair;—
For the curtains were white and the pane was
blue,

And the moon look'd through,
And its eye was red :
'I will hold her hand, and think,' I said.

III.

And at first I could not think at all,
Because her hand was so thin and cold ;
The gray light flicker'd along the wall,
And I seem'd to be growing old ;
I look'd in her face and could not weep,
I hated the sound of mine own deep
breath,

Lest it should startle her from the sleep
That seem'd too sweet and mild for death.
I heard the far-off clock intone

So slowly, so slowly—
Afar across the courts of stone,
The black hound shook his chain with a
moan,

As the village clock chimed slowly,
slowly, slowly.

I pray'd that she might rise in bed,
And smile and say one little word,
'I long to see her eyes!' I said . . .
I should have shriek'd if she had
stirr'd.

IV.

I never sinn'd against thee, Sweet !
And yet last night, when none could see . . .
I know not . . . but from head to feet,
I seem'd one scar of infamy :
Perhaps because the fingers light
I held had grown so worn and white,
Perhaps because you look'd so fair,
With the thin gray light on your golden hair!

V.

You were warm, and I was cold,
Yet you loved me, little one, I knew—
I could not trifle—I was old—
I was wiser, carefuller, than you ;
I liked my horse, I liked my hound,
I liked to hear the trumpet sound,

Over my wine I liked to chat,
 But soberly, for I had mind :
 You wanted that, and only that,
 You were as light as is the wind.
 At times, I know, it fretted me—
 I chid thee mildly now and then—
 No fault of mine—no blame to thee—
 Women are women, men are men.
 At first you smiled to see me frown,
 And laughing leapt upon my knee,
 And kiss'd the chiding shadow down,
 And smooth'd my great beard merrily ;
 But then a change came o'er you, Sweet !
 You walk'd about with pensive head ;
 You tried to read, and as you read
 Patted your small impatient feet :—
 'She is wiser now !' I smiling said . .
 And ere I doubted—you were dead.

VI.

All this came back upon my brain
 While I sat alone at your white bedside,
 And I remember'd in my pain
 Those words you spoke before you died—
 For around my neck your arms you flung,
 And smiled so sweet though death was near—
 'I was so foolish and so young !
 And yet I loved thee !—kiss me, dear !'
 I put aside your golden hair,
 And kiss'd you, and you went to sleep
 And when I saw that death was there,
 My grief was cold, I could not weep ;
 And late last night, when you were dead,
 I did not weep beside your bed,
 For the curtains were white, and the pane
 was blue,
 And the moon look'd through,
 And its eye was red—
 'How coldly she lies !' I said.

VII.

Then loud, so loud, before I knew,
 The gray and black cock scream'd and crew,
 And I heard the far-off bells intone
 So slowly, so slowly,
 The black hound bark'd, and I rose with a
 groan,
 As the village bells chimed slowly,
 slowly, slowly.
 I dropp'd the hand so cold and thin,
 I gazed, and your face seem'd still and
 wise,

And I saw the damp dull dawn stare in
 Like a dim drown'd face with oozy eyes ;
 And I open'd the lattice quietly,
 And the cold wet air came in on me,
 And I pluck'd two roses with fingers chill
 From the roses that grew at your window-
 sill,

I pluck'd two roses, a white and a red,
 Stole again to the side of your bed,
 Raised the edge of your winding fold,
 Dropp'd the roses upon your breast,
 Cover'd them up in the balmy cold,
 That none might know—and there they
 rest !

And out at the castle-gate I crept
 Into the woods, and then . . I wept !
 But to-day they carried you from here,
 And I follow'd your coffin with tearless
 cheek—

They knew not about the roses, dear !—
 I would not have them think me weak.

VIII.

And I am weary on my bed
 Because I know you are cold and dead ;
 And I see you lie in darkness, Sweet !
 With the roses under your winding-sheet ;
 The days and nights are dreary and cold,
 And I am foolish, and weak, and old.

POET ANDREW.

O Loom, that loud art murmuring,
 What doth he hear thee say or sing ?
 Thou hummest o'er the dead one's songs,
 He cannot choose but hark,
 His heart with tearful rapture throngs,
 But all his face grows dark.

O cottage Fire, that burnest bright,
 What pictures sees he in thy light ?
 A city's smoke, a white white face,
 Phantoms that fade and die,
 And last, the lonely burial-place
 On the windy hill hard by.

'Tis near a year since Andrew went to
 sleep—

A winter and a summer. Yonder bed
 Is where the boy was born, and where he
 died,

And yonder o'er the lowland is his grave :
 The nook of grass and gowans where in
 thought

I found you standing at the set o' sun . .
The Lord content us—'tis a weary world.

These five-and-twenty years I've wrought
and wrought

In this same dwelling ;—hearken ! you can
hear

The looms that whuzzle-whazzle ben the
house,

Where Jean and Mysie, lassies in their teens,
And Jamie, and a neighbour's son beside,
Work late and early. Andrew who is dead
Was our first-born ; and when he crying
came,

With beaded een and pale old-farrant face,
Out of the darkness, Mysie and mysel
Were young and heartsome ; and his smile,
be sure,

Made daily toil the sweeter. Hey, his kiss
Put honey in the very porridge-pot !
His smile strung threads of sunshine on the
loom !

And when he hung around his mother's neck,
He deck'd her out in jewels and in gold
That even ladies envied ! . . Weel ! . . in time
Came other children, newer gems and gold,
And Andrew quitted Mysie's breast for mine.
So years roll'd on, like bobbins on a loom ;
And Mysie and mysel' had work to do,
And Andrew took his turn among the rest,
No sweeter, dearer ; till, one Sabbath day,
When Andrew was a curly-pated tot
Of sunny summers six, I had a crack
With Mister Mucklewraith the Minister,
Who put his kindly hand on Andrew's head,
Call'd him a clever wean, a bonnie wean,
Clever at learning, while the mannikin
Blush'd red as any rose, and peeping up
Went twinkle-twinkle with his round black
een ;

And then, while Andrew laugh'd and ran
awa',

The Minister went deeper in his praise,
And prophesied he would become in time
A man of mark. This set me thinking, sir,
And watching,—and the mannock puzzled
me.

Would sit for hours upon a stool and draw
Droll faces on the slate, while other lads
Were shouting at their play ; dumbly would
lie

Beside the Lintock, sailing, piloting,
Navies of docken-leaves a summer day ;

Had learn'd the hymns of Doctor Watts by
heart
And as for old Scots songs, could lilt them
a'—

From Yarrow Braes to Bonnie Bessie Lee—
And where he learn'd them, only Heaven
knew ;

And oft, altho' he feared to sleep his lane,
Would cower at the threshold in a storm
To watch the lightning,—as a birdie sits,
With fluttering fearsome heart and dripping
wings,

Among the branches. Once, I mind it weel,
In came he, running, with a bloody nose,
Part tears, part pleasure, to his fluttering
heart

Holding a callow mavis golden-bill'd,
The thin white film of death across its een,
And told us, sobbing, how a neighbour's son
Harried the birdie's nest, and how by chance
He came upon the thief beside the burn
Throwing the birdies in to see them swim,
And how he fought him, till he yielded up
This one, the one remaining of the nest ;—
And 'O the birdie's dying !' sobb'd he sore,
'The bonnie birdie's dying !'—till it died ;
And Andrew dug a grave behind the house,
Buried his dead, and cover'd it with earth,
And cut, to mark the grave, a grassy turf
Where blew a bunch of gowans. After that,
I thought and thought, and thick as bees
the thoughts

Buzz'd to the whuzzle-whazzling of the
loom—

I could make naething of the mannikin !
But by-and-by, when Hope was making hay,
And web-work rose, I settled it and said
To the good wife, 'Tis plain that yonder lad
Will never take to weaving—and at school
They say he beats the rest at all his tasks
Save figures only : I have settled it :
Andrew shall be a minister—a pride
And comfort to us, Mysie, in our age :
He shall to college in a year or twa
(If fortune smiles as now) at Edinglass.'
You guess the wife open'd her een, cried
'Foosh !'

And call'd the plan a silly senseless dream,
A hopeless, useless castle in the air ;
But ere the night was out, I talk'd her o'er,
And here she sat, her hands upon her knees,
Glow'ring and hear'ning, as I conjured up,
Amid the fog and reek of Edinglass

Life's peaceful gloaming and a godly fame,
So it was broach'd, and after many cracks
With Mister Mucklewraith, we plann'd it a',
And day by day we laid a penny by
To give the lad when he should quit the
bield.

And years wore on ; and year on year was
cheer'd
By thoughts of Andrew, drest in decent
black,
Throned in a Pulpit, preaching out the
Word,

A house his own, and all the country-side
To touch their bonnets to him. Weel, the lad
Grew up among us, and at seventeen
His hands were genty white, and he was tall,
And slim, and narrow-shoulder'd : pale of
face,

Silent, and bashful. Then we first began
To feel how muckle more he *knew* than we,
To eye his knowledge in a kind of fear,
As folk might look upon a crouching beast,
Bonnie, but like enough to rise and bite.
Up came the cloud between us silly folk
And the young lad that sat among his hooks
Amid the silence of the night ; and oft
It pain'd us sore to fancy he would learn
Enough to make him look with shame and
scorn

On this old dwelling. 'Twas his *manner*,
sir !

He seldom lookt his father in the face,
And when he walkt about the dwelling,
seem'd

Like one superior ; dumbly he would steal
To the burnside, or into Lintlin Woods,
With some new-farrant book,—and when I
peep'd,

Behold a book of jingling-jangling rhyme,
Fine-written nothings on a printed page,
And, press'd between the leaves, a flower
perchance,

Anemone or blue forget-me-not,
Pluckt in the grassy woodland. Then I
look'd

Into his drawer, among his papers there,
And found—you guess?—a heap of idle
rhymes,

Big-sounding, like the worthless printed
book :

Some in old copies scribbled, some on scraps
Of writing paper, others finely writ

With spirls and flourishes on big white
sheets.

I clench'd my teeth, and groan'd. The
beauteous dream

Of the good Preacher in his braw black dress,
With house and income snug, began to fade
Before the picture of a drunken loon

Bawling out songs beneath the moon and
stars,—

Of poet Willie Clay, who wrote a book
About King Robert Bruce, and aye got fou,
And scatter'd stars in verse, and aye got fou,
Wept the world's sins, and then got fou,
again,—

Of Ferguson, the feckless limb o' law,—
And Robin Burns, who gauged the whisky-
casks

And brake the seventh commandment. So
at once

I up and said to Andrew, ' You're a fool !
You waste your time in silly senseless verse,
Lame as your own conceit : take heed ! take
heed !

Or, like your betters, come to grief ere long !'
But Andrew flusht and never spake a word,
Yet eyed me sidelong with his beaded een,
And turn'd awa', and, as he turn'd, his
look—

Half scorn, half sorrow—stang me. After
that,

I felt he never heeded word of ours,
And tho' we tried to teach him common-
sense

He idled as he pleased ; and many a year,
After I spake him first, that look of his
Came dark between us, and I held my
tongue,

And felt he scorn'd me for the poetry's sake.
This coldness grew and grew, until at last
We sat whole nights before the fire and spoke
No word to one another. One fine day,
Says Mister Mucklewraith to me, says he,
' So ! you've a Poet in your house !' and
smiled ;

' A Poet ? God forbid !' I cried ; and then
It all came out : how Andrew slyly sent
Verse to he paper ; how they printed it
In Poet's Corner ; how the printed verse
Had ca't a girdle in the callant's head ;
How Mistress Mucklewraith they thought
half daft

Had cut the verses out and pasted them

In albums, and had praised them to her friends.

I said but little ; for my schemes and dreams
Were tumbling down like castles in the air,
And all my heart seem'd hardening to stone,
But after that, in secret stealth, I bought
The papers, hunted out the printed verse,
And read it like a thief ; thought some were
good,

And others foolish havers, and in most
Saw naething, neither common-sense nor
sound—

Words pottle-bellied, meaningless, and
strange,

That strutted up and down the printed page,
Like bailies made to bluster and look big.

'Twas useless grumbling. All my silent
looks

Were lost, all Mysie's flyting fell on ears
Choke-full of other counsel ; but we talk'd
In bed o' nights, and Mysie wept, and I
Felt stubborn, wrothful, wrong'd. It was to
be !

But mind you, though we mourn'd, we ne'er
forsook

The college scheme. Our sorrow, as we saw
Our Andrew growing cold to homely ways,
And scornful of the hield, but strengthen'd
more

Our wholesome wish to educate the lad,
And do our duty by him, and help him on
With our rough hands—the Lord would do
the rest,

The Lord would mend or mar him. So at
last,

New-clad from top to toe in homespun cloth,
With books and linen in a muckle trunk,
He went his way to college ; and we sat,
Mysie and me, in weary darkness here ;
For tho' the younger bairns were still about,
It seem'd our hearts had gone to Edinglass
With Andrew, and were choking in the reek
Of Edinglass town.

It was a gruesome fight,
Both for oursel's at home, and for the hoy,
That student life at college. Hard it was
To scrape the fees together, but beside,
The lad was young and needed meat and
drink.

We sent him meal and bannocks by the train,
And country cheeses ; and with this and that,

Though sorely push'd, he throve, though
now and then

With empty wame : spinning the siller out
By teaching grammar in a school at night.
Whiles he came home : weary old-farrant
face

Pale from the midnight candle ; bringing
home

Good news of college. Then we shook awa'
The old sad load, began to build again
Our airy castles, and were hopeful Time
Would heal our wounds. But, sir, they
plagued me still—

Some of his ways ! When here, he spent his
time

In yonder chamber, or about the woods,
And by the waterside,—and with him books
Of poetry, as of old. Mysel' could get
But little of his company or tongue ;
And when we talkt, atweel, a kind of frost,—
My consciousness of silly ignorance,
And worse, my knowledge that the lad
himself

Felt sorely, keenly, all my ignorant shame,
Made talk a torture out of which we crept
With burning faces. Could you understand
One who was wild as if he found a mine
Of golden guineas, when he noticed first
The soft green streaks in a snowdrop's inner
leaves ?

And once again, the moonlight glimmering
Thro' watery transparent stalks of flax ?
A flower's a flower ! . . . But Andrew
snooved about,

Aye finding wonders, mighty mysteries,
In things that ilka learless cottar kenn'd.
Now, 'twas the falling snow or murmuring
rain ;

Now, 'twas the laverock singing in the sun,
And dropping slowly to the callow young ;
Now, an old tune he heard his mother lilt ;
And aye those trifles made his pallid face
Flush brighter, and his een flash keener far,
Than when he heard of yonder storm in
France,

Or a King's death, or, if the like had been,
A city's downfall.

He was born with love
For things both great and small : yet seem'd
to prize

The small things best. To me, it seem'd
indeed

The callant cared for nothing for itsel',
 But for some special quality it had
 To set him thinking, or at least bestow
 A tearful sense he took for luxury.
 He loved us in his silent fashion weel ;
 But in our feckless ignorance we knew
 'Twas when the humour seized him—with a
 sense

Of some queer power we had to waken up
 The poetry—ay, and help him in his rhyme!
 A kind of patronising tenderness,
 A pitying pleasure in our Scottish speech
 And homely ways, a love that made him note
 Both ways and speech with the same curious
 joy
 As fill'd him when he watch'd the birds and
 flowers.

He was as sore a puzzle to us then
 As he had been before. It puzzled us,
 How a big lad, down-cheek'd, almost a man,
 Could pass his time in silly childish joys . . .
 Until at last, a hasty letter came
 From Andrew, telling he had broke awa'
 From college, pack'd his things, and taken
 train

To London city, where he hoped (he said)
 To make both fortune and a noble fame
 Thro' a grand poem, carried in his trunk ;
 How, after struggling on with bitter heart,
 He could no longer bear to fight his way
 Among the common scholars ; and the end
 Bade us be hopeful, trusting God, and sure
 The light of this old home would guide him
 still

Amid the reek of evil.

Sae it was !

We twa were less amazed than you may
 guess,

Though we had hoped, and fear'd, and
 hoped, so long !

But it was hard to bear—hard, hard, to hear !
 Our castle in the clouds was gone for good ;
 And as for Andrew—other lads had ta'en
 The same mad path, and learn'd the bitter
 task

Of poverty and tears. She grat. I sat,
 In silence, looking on the fuffing fire,
 Where streets and ghaistly faces came and
 went,

And London city crumbled down to crush
 Our Andrew ; and my heart was sick and cold.

Ere long, the news across the country-side
 Speak quickly, like the crowing of a cock
 From farm to farm—the women talkt it o'er
 On doorsteps, o'er the garden rails ; the men
 Got fu' upon it at the public-house,
 And whisper'd it among the fields at work.
 A cry was quickly raised from house to
 house,

That all the blame was mine, and canker'd
 een

Lookt cold upon me, as upon a kind
 Of upstart. 'Fie on pride !' the whisper said,
 'The fault was Andrew's less than those who
 taught

His heart to look in scorn on honest work,—
 Shame on them !—but the lad, poor lad,
 would learn !'

O sir, the thought of this spoil'd many a web
 In yonder—tingling, tingling, in my ears,
 Until I fairly threw my gloom aside,
 Smiled like a man whose heart is light and
 young,

And with a future-kenning happy look
 Threw up my chin, and had them wait and
 see . . .

But, night hy night, these een lookt London-
 ways,

And saw my laddie wandering all alone
 'Mid darkness, fog, and reek, growing afar
 To dark proportions and gigantic shape—
 Just as the figure of a sheep-herd looms,
 Awful and silent, thro' a mountain mist !

You may be ken the rest. At first, there came
 Proud letters, swiftly writ, telling how folk
 Now roundly call'd him 'Poet,' holding out
 Bright pictures, which we smiled at wearily—
 As people smile at pictures in a book,
 Untrue but bonnie. Then the letters ceased,
 There came a silence cold and still as frost,—
 We sat and hearken'd to our beating hearts,
 And pray'd as we had never pray'd before.
 Then lastly, on the silence broke the news
 That Andrew, far awa', was sick to death,
 And, weary, weary of the noisy streets,
 With aching head and weary hopeless heart,
 Was coming home from mist and fog and
 noise

To grassy lowlands and the caller air.

'Twas strange, 'twas strange !—but this,
 the weary end

Of all our bonnie higgins in the clouds,

Came like a tearful comfort. Love sprang up
Out of the ashes of the household fire,
Where Hope was fluttering like the loose
white film ;

And Andrew, our own hoy, seemed nearer
now

To this old dwelling and our aching hearts
Than he had ever been since he became
Wise with book-learning. With an eager
pain,

I met him at the train and brought him
home ;

And when we met that sunny day in hairst,
The ice that long had sunder'd us had
thaw'd,

We met in silence, and our een were dim.
Ah !—I can see that look of his this night !
Part pain, part tenderness—a weary look
Yearning for comfort such as God the Lord
Puts into parents' een. I brought him here.
Gently we set him down beside the fire,
And spake few words, and hush'd the noisy
house ;

Then eyed his hollow cheeks and lustrous
een,

His clammy hueless brow and faded hands,
Blue vein'd and white like lily-flowers. The
wife

Forgot the sickness of his face, and moved
With light and happy footstep but and ben,
As though she welcomed to a merry feast
A happy guest. In time, out came the truth :
Andrew was dying : in his lungs the dust
Of cities stole unseen, and hot as fire
Burnt—like a deil's red een that gazed at
Death.

Too late for doctor's skill, tho' doctor's skill
We had in plenty ; but the ill had ta'en
Too sure a grip. Andrew was dying, dying :
The beauteous dream had melted like a mist
The sunlight feeds on : a' remaining now
Was Andrew, bare and barren of his pride,
Stark of conceit, a weel-belovèd child,
Heipless to help himsel', and dearer thus,
As when his yaumer *—like the corn-craik's
cry

Heard in a field of wheat at dead o' night—
Brake on the hearkening darkness of the
bield.

And as he nearer grew to God the Lord,

* *Yaumer*, a child's cry.

Nearer and dearer ilka day he grew
To Mysie and mysel'—our own to love,
The world's no longer. For the first last
time,

We twa, the lad and I, could sit and crack
With open hearts—free-spoken, at our ease ;
I seem'd to know as muckle then as he,
Because I was sae sad.

Thus grief, sae deep
It flow'd without a murmur, brought the
balm

Which blunts the edge of worldly sense and
makes

Old people weans again. In this sad time,
We never troubled at his childish ways ;
We seem'd to *share* his pleasure when he sat
List'ning to birds upon the eaves ; we felt
Small wonder when we found him weeping
o'er

His old torn books of pencill'd thoughts and
verse ;

And if, outhye, I saw a bonnie flower,
I pluckt it carefully and bore it home
To my sick boy. To me, it somehow seem'd
His care for lovely earthly things had
changed—

Changed from the curious love it once had
been,

Grown larger, bigger, holier, peacefuller ;
And though he never lost the luxury
Of loving beauteous things for poetry's sake,
His heart was God the Lord's, and he was
calm.

Death came to lengthen out his solemn
thoughts

Like shadows to the sunset. So we ceased
To wonder. What is folly in a lad
Healthy and heartsome, one with work to
do,

Befits the freedom of a dying man. . .
Mother, who chided loud the idle lad
Of old, now sat her sadly by his side,
And read from out the Bible soft and low,
Or lilted lowly, keeking in his face,
The old Scots songs that made his een so
dim !

I went about my daily work as one
Who waits to hear a knocking at the door,
Ere Death creeps in and shadows those that
watch ;

And seated here at e'en i' the ingleside,

I watch'd the pictures in the fire and smoked
My pipe in silence ; for my head was fu'
Of many rhymes the lad had made of old
(Rhymes I had read in secret, as I said),
No one of which I minded till they came
Unsummon'd, murmuring about my ears
Like bees among the leaves.

The end drew near.

Came Winter moaning, and the Doctor said
That Andrew couldna live to see the Spring ;
And day by day, while frost was hard at
work,

The lad grew weaker, paler, and the blood
Came redder from the lung. One Sabbath
day—

The last of winter, for the caller air
Was drawing sweetness from the barks of
trees—

When down the lane, I saw to my surprise
A snowdrop blooming underneath a birk,
And gladly pluckt the flower to carry home
To Andrew. Ere I reach'd the bield, the
air

Was thick wi' snow, and ben in yonder room
I found him, Mysie seated at his side,
Drawn to the window in the old arm-chair,
Gazing with lustrous een and sickly cheek
Out on the shower, that waver'd softly down
In glistening siller glamour. Saying nought,
Into his hand I put the year's first flower,
And turn'd awa' to hide my face ; and he . .
. . He smiled . . and at the smile, I knew
not why,

It swam upon us, in a frosty pain,
The end of a' was come at last, and Death
Was creeping ben, his shadow on our hearts.
We gazed on Andrew, call'd him by his
name,

And touch'd him softly . . and he lay awhile,
His een upon the snow, in a dark dream,
Yet neither heard nor saw ; but suddenly,
He shook awa' the vision wi' a smile,
Raised lustrous een, still smiling, to the sky,
Next upon us, then dropt them to the flower
That trembled in his hand, and murmur'd
low,

Like one that gladly murmurs to himsel'—
' Out of the Snow, the Snowdrop—out of
Death

Comes Life ;' then closed his eyes and made
a moan,

And never spake another word again.

. . And you think weel of Andrew's book ?
You think

That folk will love him, for the poetry's
sake,

Many a year to come ? We take it kind
You speak so weel of Andrew !—As for me,
I can make naething of the printed book ;
I am no scholar, sir, as I have said,
And Mysie there can just read print a
wee.

Ay ! we are feckless, ignorant of the world !
And though 'twere joy to have our boy again
And place him far above our lowly house,
We like to think of Andrew as he was
When, dumb and wee, he hung his helpless
arms

Round Mysie's neck ; or—as he is this
night—

Lying asleep, his face to heaven—asleep,
Near to our hearts, as when he was a bairn,
Without the poetry and human pride
That came between us to our grief, langsyne!

WHITE LILY OF WEARDALE- HEAD.

THE ELVES.

ALL day the sunshine loves to dwell
Upon the pool of Weardale Well ;
But when the sunbeams shine no more
The Monk stalks down the moonlit dell :
His robe is black, his hair is hoar,
He sits him down by Weardale Well ;
He hears the water moan below,
He sees a face as white as snow,
His nightly penance there is done,
And he shall never see the sun.

THE MONK.

Hear them, old Anatomy !
Down the glade I see them flee—
White-robed Elfins, three times three !

THE ELVES.

Night by night, in pale moonlight,
The Monk shall tell his story o'er,
And the grinning Gnome with teeth of white
Hearkeneth laughing evermore ;
His nightly penance thus is done—
And he shall never see the sun !

THE GNOME.

Ever new and ever old,
Comrade, be thy story told,
While the face as white as snow
Sighs upon the pool below.

THE MONK.

'I love the sunshine,' said
White Lily of Weardale-head.

And underneath the greenwood tree,
She wander' free, she wander'd bold ;
The merry sun smiled bright to see,
And turn'd her yellow hair to gold :
Then the bee, and the moth, and the
butterfly
Hunting for sweets in the wood-bowers
fair,

Rose from the blooms as she wander'd by,
And played in the light of her shining hair.
She sat her down by Weardale Well,
And her gleaming ringlets rustled and fell,
Clothing her round with a golden glow,
And her shadow was light for the pool below ;
Then the yellow adder fold in fold
Writhed from his lair in the grass and roll'd
With glittering scales in a curl o' the gold :
She stroked his head with her finger light,
And he gazed with still and glistening eye ;
And she laugh'd and clapt her hands of white,
And overhead the sun went by
Thro' the azure gulfs of a cloudless sky ;
'All things that love the sun, love me,
And O but the sun is sweet to see,
And I love to look on the sun,' said she.

But the Abbess gray of Lintlin Brae
Hated to look on the light of day ;
She mumbled prayers, she counted beads,
She whipt and whipt her shoulders bare,
She slept on a bed of straw and reeds,
And wore a serk of horse's hair.
By candle-light she sat and read,
And heard a song from far away,
She cross'd herself and raised her head—
'Who sings so loud?' said the Abbess
gray.

I, who sat both early and late
A shadow black at the Abbey gate,
'Mater sacra, it is one
Who wanders evermore in the sun,

A little maiden of Weardale-head,
Whose father and mother have long been
dead,
But she loves to wander in greenwood
bowers,
Singing and plucking the forest flowers.'
The Abbess frown'd, half quick, half dead,
'There is a sin !' the Abbess said.

I found her singing a ditty wild,
Her gleaming locks around her roll'd ;
I seized her while she sang and smiled,
And dragged her along by the hair of gold ;
The moth and butterfly, fluttering,
Follow'd me on to Lintlin Brae,
The adder leapt at my heart to sting,
But with sandall'd heel I thrust it away ;
And the bee dropt down ere I was 'ware
On the hand that gript the yellow hair,
And stang me deep, and I cursed aloud,
And the sun went in behind a cloud !

THE ELVES.

Nightly be his penance done !
He shall never see the sun !

THE MONK.

The cell was deep, the cell was cold,
It quench'd the light of her hair of gold ;
One little loop alone was there,
One little eye-hole letting in
A slender ray of light as thin
As a tress of yellow hair.

'Oh for the sunshine !' said
White Lily of Weardale-head ;
And in the dark she lay,
Reaching her fingers small
To feel the little ray
That glimmer'd down the wall.

And while she linger'd white as snow
She heard a fluttering faint and low ;
And stealing thro' the looplet thin
The moth and butterfly crept in—
With golden shadows as they flew
They waver'd up and down in air,
Then dropping slowly ere she knew,
Fell on her eyes and rested there :
And O she slept with balmy sighs,
Dreaming a dream of golden day,
The shining insects on her eyes,
Their shadows on her cheeks, she lay ;

And while she smiled on pleasant lands,
 On the happy sky and wood and stream,
 I, creeping in with outstretch'd hands,
 Murder'd the things that brought the
 dream.
 She woke and stretch'd her hands and
 smiled,
 Then gazed around with sunless eyes,
 Her white face gloom'd, her heart went wild,
 She sank with tears and sighs.
 'Oh for the sunshine!' said
 White Lily of Weardale-head.

And while she lay with cries and tears,
 There came a humming in her ears;
 And stealing through the looplet thin
 The yellow honey-bee crept in,
 And hover'd round with summer sound
 Round and around the gloomy cell;
 Then softly on her lips he fell,
 And moisten'd them with sweetness found
 Among the flowers by Weardale Well;
 And O she smiled and sang a song,
 And closed her eyelids in the shade,
 And thought she singing walkt among
 The lily-blooms in the greenwood glade.
 I heard the song and downward crept,
 And enter'd cold and black as sin,
 And slew, although she raved and wept,
 The bee that brought the sweetness in:
 'Oh for the sunshine!' said
 White Lily of Weardale-head.

And while she lay as white as snow
 She heard a hissing sad and low;
 And writhing through the looplet thin
 The little yellow snake crept in:
 His golden coils cast shadows dim,
 With glistening eye he writhed and crept,
 And while she smiled to welcome him,
 Into her breast he stole, and slept;
 And O his coils fell warm and sweet
 Upon her heart and hush'd its beat,
 And softest thrills of pleasure deep
 Ran through her, though she could not sleep,
 But lay with clos'd eyes awake,
 Her little hand upon the snake—
 'All things that love the sun, love me,
 And O but the sun is sweet to see!
 And I long to look on the sun,' said she.

Then down, on sandall'd foot, I crept,
 To kill the snake that heal'd the pang,

But up, with waving arms, she leapt,
 And out across the threshold sprang,
 And up the shadowy Abbey stairs,
 Past the gray Abbess at her prayers,
 Through the black court with leap and
 run,
 Out at the gate, and into the sun!
 There for a space she halted, blind
 With joy to feel the light again,
 But heard my rushing foot behind
 And sped along the Abbey lane;
 The sunshine made her strong and fleet,
 As on she fled by field and fold,
 Her shining locks fell to her feet
 In ring on ring of living gold;
 But the sun went in behind a cloud,
 As I gript her by the shining locks,
 I gript them tight, I laugh'd aloud,
 The echoes rang through woods and
 rocks;
 Moaning she droopt, then up she sprang,
 The adder leapt at my heart and stang,
 And like a flash o' the light she fell
 Into the depths of Weardale Well!
 The adder stang with fatal fang,
 Around I whirl'd and shriek'd and sprang,
 Then tell and struggled, clenching teeth;
 Then to the oozy grass I clang,
 And gazed upon the pool beneath;
 The white death-film was on mine eye,
 Yet look'd I down in agony;
 And as I look'd in throes of death,
 In shining hubbles rose her breath
 And burst in little rings of light,
 And upward came a moaning sound;
 But suddenly the sun shone bright,
 And all the place was gold around,
 And to the surface, calm and dead,
 Uprose White Lily of Weardale-head:
 Her golden hair around her blown
 Made gentle radiance of its own;
 Her face was turn'd to the summer sky
 With smile that seem'd to live and speak,
 The golden moth and butterfly,
 With glowing shadows, on her cheek;
 And lying on her lips apart
 The honey-bee with wings of gold,
 And sleeping softly on her heart
 The yellow adder fold in fold;
 And as I clos'd mine eyes to die,
 Overhead the sun went by
 Through the azure gulfs of a cloudless
 sky!

THE ELVES.

All day the sunshine loves to dwell
 Upon the sleep of Weardale Well ;
 All day there is a gentle sound,
 And little insects pause and sing,
 The butterfly and moth float round,
 The bee drops down with humming wing,
 And all the pool lies clear and cold,
 Yet glittering like hair of gold.
 All day the Monk in hollow shell
 Lies dumb among the Abbey-tombs,
 While, in the grass and foxglove-blooms,
 The adder basks by Weardale Well ;
 But the adder stings his heart by night :
 His tale is told, his penance done,
 His eyes are dark, they long for light,
 Yet they shall never see the sun !

THE ENGLISH HUSWIFE'S
GOSSIP.

A ploughman's English wife, bright-eyed, sharp-
 speech'd,
 Plump as a pillow, fresh as clothes new-bleach'd :
 The firelight dancing ruddy on her cheeks,
 Irons Tom's Sunday linen as she speaks.

AT three-and-forty, simple as a child,
 Soft as a sheep yet curious as a daw,
 Wise, cunning, in a fashion of his own,
 Queer, watchful, strange, a puzzle to us
 all :—
 That's John !

My husband's brother—seven years
 Younger than Tom. When we were newly
 wed,
 John came to dwell with Tom and me for
 good,
 And now has dwelt beside us twenty years,
 But now, at forty-three, is breaking fast,
 Grows weaker, brain and body, every day.
 At times he works, and earns his meat and
 drink,
 At times is sick, and lies and moans in bed,
 Beside the noisy racket up and down
 He makes when he is glad. A natural !
 Man-bodied, but in many things a child ;
 Unfinish'd somewhere—where, the Lord
 knows best

Who made and guards him ; wiser, craftier,
 Than Tom, or any other man I know,
 In tiny things few men perceive at all ;
 No fool at cooking, clever at his work,
 Thoughtful when Tom is senseless and un-
 kind,
 Kind with a grace that sweetens silent-
 ness,—
 But weak when other working-men are
 strong,
 And strong where they are weak. An angry
 word
 From one he loves,—and off he creeps in
 pain—
 Perhaps to ease his tender heart in tears.
 But easy-sadden'd, sir, is easy-pleas'd !
 Give him the babe to nurse, he sits him
 down,
 Smiles like a woman, and is glad at heart.

Crazed? There's the question ! Mister
 Mucklewraith,
 Your friend—and John's as well—will answer
 'No !'

And often has he scolded when I seem'd
 To answer 'Yea.' Of late the weary limbs
 Have tried the weary brain, that every day
 Grows feebler, duller ; yet the Minister
 Still stands his friend and helps him as he
 can.

'Tender of heart,' says Mister Muckle-
 wraith,
 'Tender of heart, goodwife, is wise of head :
 If John is weak, his heart is to be blamed ;
 And can the erring heart of mortal be
 O'er gentle?' Hey, 'tis little use to talk !
 The Minister is soft at heart as he !

Talk of the . . . John ! and home again
 so soon ?
 The children are at school, the dinner o'er,
 Tom still is busy working at the plough.
 Weary ?—then sit you down and rest awhile.
 John fears all strangers—is ashamed to
 speak—
 But stares and counts his fingers o'er as now,
 Yet—trust him !—when you vanish he will
 tell
 The colour of your hair, your hat, your
 clothes,
 The number of the buttons on your coat—
 Eh, John ?—he laughs—as sly as sly can be !

Now, run to Tom—as quickly as you can—
Say he is wanted by the gentleman
[Tom knows the name] from Mister Muckle-
wraith's.

Off, like an arrow from a bow, you see !
That's nothing ! John would run until he
dropt

For me, and need no thanking but a smile,
Would work and work his fingers to the
bone,

Do aught I asked, without or in the house,—
And just because I cheer him merrily
And speak him kindly. Tom he little likes,
And would not budge a single step to serve,
For Tom is rough, and says I humour him,
And mocks him for his silly childish ways.
And Tom has reason to be wroth at times !
But yesterday John sat him on a stool,
And ripp'd the bellows up, to find from
where

The wind came ! slowly did it bit by bit,
As sage as Solomon, and when 'twas done
Just scratch'd his head, still puzzled, creep-
ing off

To some still corner in the meadow, there
To think the puzzle out in peace alone !
There is his weakness—curiosity !

Those watchful, prying, curious eyes of his,
That like a cat's see better in the dark,
Are ne'er at rest ; his hands and eyes and
ears

Are eager getting knowledge,—when 'tis
got

Lord knoweth in what corner of his head
He hides it, but it ne'er sees light again !

Oft he reminds me of a painter lad
Who came to Inverburn a summer since,
Went poking everywhere with pallid face,
Thought, painted, wander'd in the woods
alone,

Work'd a long morning at a leaf or flower,
And got the name of clever. John and he
Made friends—a thing I never could make
out ;

But, bless my life ! it seem'd to me the lad
Was just a John who had learnt to read and
paint !

He buys a coat : what does he first, but
count
The pockets and the buttons one by one—

A mighty calculation sagely summ'd ;
Our eldest daughter goes to Fdinglass,
Brings home a box—John eyes the box with
greed,

And next, we catch him in the lassie's room,
The box wide open, John upon the floor,
And in his hand a bonnet, eyed and eyed,
Turn'd o'er and o'er, examined bit by bit,
Like something wondrous as a tumbled start
Our youngest has a gift—a box of toys,
A penny trumpet—not a wink for John
Till he has seen the whole, or by and by
He gives the child a sixpence for the toy,
And creeps away and cuts it up to bits
In wonder and in joy. It makes me cry
For fun to watch his pranks, the natural !
But think not, sir, that he was ever so :—
Nay ! twenty years ago but few could tell
That he was simpler than the rest of men—
His step was firm, he kept his head erect,
Could hold his tongue, because he knew full
well

That he was not so clever as the rest.—
Now, when his wits have gone so fast asleep,
He thinks he is the wisest man of men !
Yet, sir, his heart is kindly to the core,
Tho' sensitive to touch as fly-trap flowers :
He loves them best that seem to think him
wise,

Consult him, notice him, and those that
mock

His tenderness he never will forgive.
Money he saves to buy the children gifts—
Clothes, toys, whate'er he fancies like to
please—

And many of his ways so tender are,
So gentle and so good, it fires my blood
To see him vex'd and troubled. Just a child !
He weeps in silence, if a little ill ;
A cold, a headache—he is going to die ;
But then, again, he can be trusted, sir !
(Ye cannot say the like of many men !)
Tell him a secret,—torture, death itself,
Would fail to make him whisper and betray.

Nay, sit you down—and smoke ? Ay,
smoke your fill :
Both John and father like their cutty-pipe ;
Tom will be here as fast as he can come ;
And I can chat and talk as well as work.

John, simple as he is, has had his cares ;
They came upon him in his younger days

When he was tougher-hearted, and I think
 They help'd to make him silly as he is :
 Time that has stolen all his little wits,
 By just a change of chances, might have
 made
 Our John another man and strengthen'd
 him ;
 The current gave a swirl, and caught the
 straw,
 And John was doom'd to be a natural !
 Oft when he sits and smokes his pipe and
 thinks,
 I know by his downcast eyes and quivering
 lips
 His heart is aching ; but he ne'er complains
 Of *that*—the sorest thought he has to bear.
 I know he thinks of Jessie Glover then ;
 But let him be, till o'er his head the cloud
 Passes, and leaves a meekness and a bush
 Upon the heart it shadow'd. Jessie, sir?—
 She was a neighbour's daughter in her teens,
 A bold and forward hizzie, tho' her face
 Was pretty in its way : a jet-black eye,
 Red cheeks, black eyebrows, and a comely
 shape
 The petticoat and short-gown suited well.
 In here she came and stood and talk'd for
 hours
 [Her tongue was like a bell upon a sheep—
 Her very motion seem'd to make it jing]
 And, ere I guess'd it, John and she were
 friends.
 She pierced the silly with her jet-black eye,
 Humour'd him ever, seem'd to think him
 wise,
 Was serious, gentle, kindly, to his face,
 And, ere I guess'd, so flatter'd his conceit
 That, tho' his lips were silent at her side,
 He grew a mighty man behind her back,
 Held up his head in gladness and in pride,
 And seem'd to have an errand in the world.
 At first I laugh'd and banter'd with the rest—
 'How's Jessie, John?' and 'Name the
 happy day ;'
 And, 'Have ye spoken to the minister?'
 Thinking it just a joke ; and when the lass
 Would sit by John, her arm about his neck,
 Holding his hand in hers, and humour him,
 Yet laugh her fill behind the silly's back,
 I let it pass. I little liked her ways—
 I guess'd her heart was tough as cobbler's
 wax—
 Yet what of that?—'Twas but a piece of fun.

A piece of fun !—'Twas serious work to
 John !
 The hizzie lured him with her wicked eyes,
 And danced about him, ever on the watch,
 Like pussie yonder playing with a mouse.
 I saw but little of them, never dream'd
 They met unknown to me ; but by and by
 The country-side was ringing with the talk
 That John and she went walking thro' the
 fields,
 Sat underneath the slanted harvest sheaves
 Watching the glimmer of the silver moon,
 Met late and early—courted night and day—
 John earnest as you please, and Jess for fun.
 I held my peace awhile, and used my eyes !
 New bows and ribbons upon Jessie's back,
 Cheap brooches, and a bonnet once or twice,
 Proved that the piece of fun paid Jessie well,
 And showed why John no longer spent his
 pence
 In presents to the boys. I saw it all,
 But, pitying John, afraid to give him pain
 I spake to Jessie, sharply bade her heed,
 Cried 'shame' upon her, for her heartless-
 ness.
 The hizzie laugh'd and coolly went her way,
 And after that came hither nevermore
 To talk and clatter. But the cruel sport
 Went on, I found. One day, to my surprise,
 Up came a waggon to the cottage door,
 John walking by the side, and while I stared
 He quickly carried to the kitchen here,
 A table, chairs, a wooden stool, a broom,
 Two monster saucepans, and a washing tub,
 And last, a roll of blankets and of sheets.
 The waggon went away, here linger'd John
 Among the things, and blushing red says he,
 'I bought them all at Farmer Simpson's
 sale—
 Ye'll keep them till I need them for myself !'
 And then walk'd out. Long time I stood
 and stared,
 Puzzled, amazed ; but by-and-by I saw
 The meaning of it all. Alas for John !
 The droll beginning of a stock in trade
 For *marriage* stood before me ! Jessie's eyes
 And lying tongue had made him fairly
 crazed,
 And ta'en the little wits he had to spare.
 With flashing face, set teeth, away I ran
 To Jessie—found her washing at a tub,
 Covered with soap-suds—and I told her all ;
 And for a while she could not speak a word

For laughter. 'Shame upon ye, shame,
shame, shame!

Thus to misuse the lad who loves ye so!
Mind, Jessie Glover, folks with scanty brains
Have hearts that can be broken!' Still she
laugh'd!

While tears of mirth ran down her crimson
cheeks

And mingled with the frothy suds of soap;
But, trust me, sir, I went not home again
Till Jessie's parents knew her wickedness;
And last, I wrung a promise from her lips
From that day forth to trouble John no more,
To let him know her fondness was a joke,
Pass by him in the street without a word,
And, though perhaps his gentle heart might
ache,

Shake him as one would shake a drunken
man

Until his sleepy wits awoke again.

I watch'd that Jessie Glover kept her word.

That night, when John was seated here
alone,

Smoking his pipe, and dreaming as I guess'd
Of Jessie Glover and a wedding ring,
I stole behind him silently and placed
My hand upon his shoulder: when he saw
The shadow on my face, he trembled,
fnsh'd,

And knew that I was sad. I sank my voice,
And gently as I could I spake my mind,
Spake like a mother, told him he was wrong,
That Jessie only was befooling him
And laugh'd his love to scorn behind his
back,

And last, to soothe his pain, I rail'd at her,
Hoping to make him angry. Here he sat,
And let his pipe go out, and hung his head,
And never answer'd back a single word.

'Twas hard, 'twas hard, to make him under-
stand!

He could not, would not! All his heart was
wrapt

In Jessie Glover; and at twenty-three
A full-grown notion thrusts its roots so deep,
'Tis hard indeed to drag it up without
Tearing the heart as well. Without a word,
He crept away to bed. Next morn, his eyes
Were red with weeping—but 'twas plain to
see

He thought I wrong'd both Jessie and him-
self.

That morning Jessie pass'd him on the
road:

He ran to speak—she toss'd her head and
laugh'd—

And sneering pass'd him by. All day he
wrought

In silence at the plough—ne'er had he borne
A pang so quietly. At gloaming hour
Home came he, weary: here was I alone:
Stubborn as stone he turn'd his head away,
Sat on his stool before the fire and smoked;
Then while he smoked I saw his eyes were
wet:

'John!' and I placed my hand upon his arm.
He turn'd, seem'd choking, tried in vain to
speak,

Then fairly hid his face and wept aloud,—
But never wept again.

The days pass'd on.

I held my tongue, and left the rest to time,
And warn'd both father and the boys. My
heart

Was sore for John! He was so dumb and
sad,

Never complaining as he did of old,
And toiling late and early. By-and-by,
'Jenny,' says he, as quiet as a lamb,
'Ye'll keep the things I bought at Simpson's
sale—

I do not need them now!' and tried to smile,
But could not. Well, I thank'd him cheerily,
Nor seem'd to see his heart was aching so:
Then after that the boys got pence from
John,—

The smaller playthings, and the bigger
clothes:

He eased his heart by spending as of old
His money on the like.

Well may you cry

Shame, shame on Jessie! Heartless, grace-
less lass!

I could have whipt her shoulders with a
staff!—

But One above had sorer tasks in store.
Ere long the village, like a peal of bells,
Rang out the tale that Jessie was a thief,
Had gone to Innis Farm to work a week,
And stolen Maggie Fleming's watch and
chain—

They found them in her trunk with scores
of things

From poorer houses. Woe to Jessie then
If Farmer Fleming had unkindly been,
Nor spared her for her sickly father's sake !
The punishment was spared—she kept the
shame !

The scandal rose, with jingling-jangling din,
And chattering lasses, wives, and mothers
join'd.

At first she saw not that the sin was guess'd ;
But slowly, one by one, her lassie friends,
Her very bosom-gossips, shook her off :
She heard the din, she blush'd and hid her
face,

Shrinking away and trembling as with cold,
Like Eve within the garden when her mouth
Was bitter with the apple of the Tree.

One night, when John returned from
work and took
His seat upon the stool beside the fire,
I saw he knew the truth. For he was
changed !

His look was dark, his voice was loud, his
eyes

Had lost their meekness ; when we spoke
to him,

He flush'd and answer'd sharply. He had
heard

The tale of Jessie's shame and wickedness,—
What thought he of it all ? Believe me, sir,
He was a riddle still : in many things
So peevish and so simple, but in one—

His silly dream of Jessie Glover's face—
So manly and so dumb,—with power to hide
His sorrow in his heart and turn away
Like one that shuts his eyes when men pass
by

But looks on Him. 'Twas natural to think
John would have taken angry spiteful joy
In Jessie's fall,—for he was ever slow
Forgetting and forgiving injuries ;

But no ! his voice was dumb, his eyes were
fierce,

Yet chiefly when they mention'd Jessin scorn,
He seem'd confused and would not under-
stand,

Perplexed as when he breaks the children's
toys.

Now, hold as Jessie was, she could not
bear

The shame her sin had brought her, and
whene'er

We met she tingled to the finger-tips ;
And soon she fled away to Edinglass
To hide among the smoke. It came to pass,
The Sabbath after she had flitted off,
That Mister Mucklewraith (God bless him !)
preach'd

One of those gentle sermons low and sad
Wherewith he gathers wheat for Him he
serves :

The text—let him who is sinless cast the first
Stone at the sinner ; and we knew he preach'd
Of Jessie Glover. Hey ! to hear him talk
Ye would have sworn that Jessie was a saint,
An injured thing for folk to pet and coax !
But tho' ye know 'twas folly, springing up
Out of a heart so kindly to the core,
Your eyes were dim with tears while hearken-
ing—

He spake so low and sadly. John was there.

And early down the stairs came John next
day

Drest in his Sabbath clothes. 'I'm going
away,'

He whispers, 'for a day or maybe two—
Don't be afraid if I'm away at night,
And do not speak to Tom ;' and off he ran
Ere I could question. When the evening
came,

No sign of John ! Night pass'd, and not
a sign !

Tom sought him far and near without avail.
The next night came, and we were sitting here
Weary and pensive, wondering, listening,
To every step that pass'd, when in step John,
And sat beside the fire, and when we ask'd
Where he had been, he snapt us short and
crept

Away to bed.

But by-and-by, I heard
The truth from John himself—a truth indeed
That was and is a puzzle, will remain
A puzzle to the end. And can ye guess
Where John had been ? Away in Edinglass,
At Jessie Glover's side, holding her hand
And looking in her eyes !

'Jessie !' he said ;
And while she stared stood scraping with his
shoes,

And humm'd and haw'd and stammer'd out
a speech,

Whose sense, made clear and shorten'd,
came to this :

The country folk that call'd her cruel names
And mock'd her so, had done the same by
him!

He did not give a straw for what they said!
He did not give a straw, and why should she?
And tho' she laugh'd before, perchance
when folk

Miscall'd her, frighten'd her from home and
friends,

She'd turn to simple John and marry him?
For he had money, seven pound and more,
And yonder in his home, to stock a house,
The household things he bought at Simp-
son's sale;

John Thomson paid him well, and he could
work,

And, if she dried her eyes and married him,
Who cared for Tom and Jennie, and the
folk

That thought them crazed? . . . John, then
and now ashamed,

Said that she flung her arms about his neck,
And wept as if her heart was like to break,
And told him sadly that it could not be.

He scratch'd his head, and stared, and
answer'd nought—

His stock of words was done, but last, he
forced

His money in the weeping woman's hand,
And hasten'd home as fast as he could run.

He feels it still! it haunts him night and
day!

Ay, silly tho' he be, he keeps the thought
Of Jess still hidden in his heart; and now,
Wearing away like snowdrift in the sun,
If e'er he chance to see, on nights at home,
One of the things he bought at Simpson's
sale

(I keep them still, tho' they are worn and
old,)

His eyes gleam up, then glisten,—then are
dark.

THE FAËRY FOSTER-MOTHER.

I.

BRIGHT Eyes, Light Eyes! Daughter of a
Fay!

I had not been a married wife a twelvemonth
and a day,

I had not nurst my little one a month upon
my knee,

When down among the blue-bell banks rose
elfins three times three,

They gript me by the raven hair, I could
not cry for fear,

They put a hempen rope around my waist
and dragg'd me here,

They made me sit and give thee suck as
mortal mothers can,

Bright Eyes, Light Eyes! strange and weak
and wan!

II.

Dim Face, Grim Face! lie ye there so still?
Thy red red lips are at my breast, and thou
may'st suck thy fill;

But know ye, tho' I hold thee firm, and rock
thee to and fro,

'Tis not to soothe thee into sleep, but just
to still my woe?

And know ye, when I lean so calm against
the wall of stone,

'Tis when I shut my eyes and try to think
thou art mine own?

And know ye, tho' my milk be here, my
heart is far away,

Dim Face, Grim Face! Daughter of a Fay!

III.

Gold Hair, Cold Hair! Daughter to a King!
Wrapt in bands of snow-white silk with
jewels glittering,

Tiny slippers of the gold upon thy feet so
thin,

Silver cradle velvet-lined for thee to slumber
in,

Pigmy pages, crimson-hair'd, to serve thee
on their knees,

To bring thee toys and greenwood flowers
and honey bags of bees,—

I was but a peasant lass, my babe had but
the milk,

Gold Hair, Cold Hair! raimented in silk!

IV.

Pale Thing, Frail Thing! dumb and weak
and thin,

Altho' thou ne'er dost utter sigh thon'rt
shadow'd with a sin;

Thy minnie scorns to suckle thee, thy minnie
is an elf,

Upon a bed of rose's-leaves she lies and fans
herself;

And though my heart is aching so for one
afar from me,
I often look into thy face and drop a tear
for thee,
And I am but a peasant born, a lowly cotter's
wife,
Pale Thing, Frail Thing ! sucking at my life !

v.

Weak Thing, Meek Thing ! take no blame
from me,
Altho' my babe may fade for lack of what I
give to thee ;
For though thou art a stranger thing, and
though thou art my woe,
To feel thee sucking at my breast is all the
joy I know,
It soothes me tho' afar away I hear my
daughter call,
My heart were broken if I felt no little lips
at all !
If I had none to tend at all, to be its nurse
and slave,
Weak Thing, Meek Thing ! I should shriek
and rave !

vi.

Bright Eyes, Light Eyes ! lying on my knee !
If soon I be not taken back unto mine own
countree,
To feel my own babe's little lips, as I am
feeling thine,
To smoothe the golden threads of hair, to
see the blue eyes shine,—
I'll lean my head against the wall and close
my weary eyes,
And think my own babe draws the milk with
balmy pants and sighs,
And smile and bless my little one and sweetly
pass away,
Bright Eyes, Light Eyes ! Daughter of a Fay !

THE GREEN GNOME.

A MELODY.

RING, sing ! ring, sing ! pleasant Sabbath
bells !
Chime, rhyme ! chime, rhyme ! through the
dales and dells !
Rhyme, ring ! chime, sing ! pleasant Sab-
bath bells !
Chime, sing ! rhyme, ring ! over fields and
fells !

And I gallop'd and I gallop'd on my palfrey
white as milk,
My robe was of the sea-green woof, my serk
was of the silk,
My hair was golden yellow, and it floated
to my shoe,
My eyes were like two harebells bathed in
shining drops of dew ;
My palfrey, never stopping, made a music
sweetly blent
With the leaves of autumn dropping all
around me as I went ;
And I heard the bells, grown fainter, far
behind me peal and play,
Fainter, fainter, fainter, fainter, till they
seem'd to die away ;
And beside a silver runnel, on a lonely heap
of sand,
I saw the green Gnome sitting, with his
cheek upon his hand ;
Then he started up to see me, and he ran
with cry and bound,
And drew me from my palfrey white, and
set me on the ground :
O crimson, crimson, were his locks, his face
was green to see,
But he cried, ' O light-hair'd lassie, you are
bound to marry me !'
He claspt me round the middle small, he
kissed me on the cheek,
He kissed me once, he kissed me twice—I
could not stir or speak ;
He kissed me twice, he kissed me thrice—
but when he kissed again,
I called aloud upon the name of Him who
died for men !
Ring, sing ! ring, sing ; pleasant Sabbath
bells !
Chime, rhyme ! chime, rhyme ! through the
dales and dells !
Rhyme, ring ! chime, sing ! pleasant Sab-
bath bells !
Chime, sing ! rhyme, ring ! over fields and
fells !
O faintly, faintly, faintly, calling men and
maids to pray,
So faintly, faintly, faintly, rang the bells
afar away ;
And as I named the Blessed Name, as in
our need we can,
The ugly green green Gnome became a tall
and comely man !

His hands were white, his beard was gold,
his eyes were black as sloes,
His tunic was of scarlet woof, and silken
were his hose ;

A pensive light from Faëryland still linger'd
on his cheek,

His voice was like the running brook, when
he began to speak :

' O you have cast away the charm my step-
dame put on me,
Seven years I dwelt in Faëryland, and you
have set me free !

O I will mount thy palfrey white, and ride
to kirk with thee,
And by those sweetly shining eyes, we twain
will wedded be !'

Back we gallop'd, never stopping, he before
and I behind,

And the autumn leaves were dropping, red
and yellow, in the wind,

And the sun was shining clearer, and my
heart was high and proud,

As nearer, nearer, nearer, rang the kirk-
bells sweet and loud,

And we saw the kirk before us, as we trotted
down the fells,

And nearer, clearer, o'er us, rang the wel-
come of the bells !

Ring, sing ! ring, sing ! pleasant Sabbath
bells !

Chime, rhyme ! chime, rhyme ! through the
dales and dells !

Rhyme, ring ! chime, sing ! pleasant Sab-
bath bells !

Chime, sing ! rhyme, ring ! over fields and
fells !

HUGH SUTHERLAND'S PANSIES.

The aged Minister of Inverburn,
A mild heart hidden under features stern,
Leans in the sunshine on the garden-pale,
Pensive, yet happy, as he tells this tale ;—
And he who listens sees the garden lie
Blue as a little patch of fallen sky.

' THE lily minds me of a maiden brow,'
Hugh Sutherland would say ; ' the marigold
Is full and sunny like her yellow hair,
The full-blown rose her lips with sweetness
tupt ;

But if you seek a likeness to her eyes—
Go to the pansy, friend, and find it there !'
' Ay, leeze me on the pansies !' Hugh would
say—

Hugh Sutherland, the weaver—he who
dwelt

Here in the white-wash'd cot you fancy so—
Who knew the learn'd names of all the
flowers,

And recognised the lily, tho' its head
Rose in a ditch of dull Latinity !

Pansies? You praise the ones that grow
to-day

Here in the garden : had you seen the place
When Sutherland was living ! Here they
grew,

From blue to deeper blue, in midst of each
A golden dazzle like a glimmering star,
Each broader, bigger, than a silver crown ;
While here the weaver sat, his labour done,
Watching his azure pets and rearing them,
Until they seem'd to know his step and
touch,

And stir beneath his smile like living things !
The very sunshine loved them, and would
lie

Here happy, coming early, lingering late,
Because they were so fair.

Hugh Sutherland

Was country-bred—I knew him from the
time

When on a bed of pain he lost a limb,
And rose at last, a lame and sickly lad,
Apprenticed to the loom—a peevish lad,
Mooning among the shadows by himself.
Among these shadows, with the privilege
Of one who loved his flock, I sought him
out,

And gently as I could I won his heart ;
And then, tho' he was young and I was old,
We soon grew friends. He told his griefs
to me,

His joys, his troubles, and I help'd him on ;
Yet sought in vain to drive away the cloud
Deep pain had left upon his sickly cheek,
And lure him from the shades that deepen'd
it.

Then Heaven took the task upon itself
And sent an angel down among the flowers !
Almost before I knew the work was done,
I found him settled in this but and ben,

Where, with an eye that brighten'd, he had
found
The sunshine loved his garden, and begun
To rear his pansies.

Sutherland was poor,
Rude, and untutor'd ; peevish, too, when
first

The angel in his garden found him out ;
But pansy-growing made his heart within
Blow fresh and fragrant. When he came
to share

This cottage with a brother of the craft,
Only some poor and sickly bunches bloom'd,
Vagrant, though fair, among the garden-
plots ;

And idly, carelessly, he water'd these,
Spread them and train'd them, till they grew
and grew

In size and beauty, and the angel thrust
Its bright arms upward thro' the bright'ning
sod,

And clung around the sickly gardener's
heart.

Then Sutherland grew calmer, and the cloud
Was fading from his face. Well, by-and-by,
The country people saw and praised the
flowers,

And what at first had been an idle joy
Became a sober serious work for fame.
Next, being won to send a bunch for show,
He gained a prize—a sixth or seventh rate,
And slowly gath'ring courage, rested not
Till he had won the highest prize of all.
Here in the sunshine and the shade he toil'd
Early and late in joy, and, by-and-by,
Rose high in fame ; for not a botanist,
A lover of the flowers, poor man or rich,
Came to the village, but the people said
'Go down the lane to Weaver Sutherland's,
And see his pansies !'

Thus the summers pass'd,
And Sutherland grew gentler, happier ;
The angel God had sent him clung to him :
There grew a rapturous sadness in his tone
When he was gladdest, like the dewiness
That moistens pansies when they bloom the
best ;
And in his face there dawn'd a gentle light
Like that which softly clings about a flow'r,
And makes you love it. Yet his heart was
glad

More for the pansies' sakes than for his own:
His eye was like a father's, moist and bright,
When they were praised ; and, as I said,
they seem'd

To make themselves as beauteous as they
could,
Smiling to please him. Blessings on the
flowers !

They were his children ! Father never
loved

His little darlings more, or for their sakes
Fretted so dumbly ! Father never bent
More tenderly above his little ones,
In the still watches of the night, when sleep
Breathes balm upon their eyelids ! Night
and day

Poor Hugh was careful for the gentle things
Whose presence brought a sunshine to the
place

Where sickness dwelt : this one was weak
and small,

And needed watching like a sickly child ;
This one so beauteous, that it shamed its
mates

And made him angry with its beauteousness.
'I cannot rest !' cried Hughie with a smile,
'I scarcely snatch a moment to myself—
They plague me so !' Part fun, part earnest,
this :

He loved the pansies better than he knew.
Ev'n in the shadow of his weaving-room
They haunted him and brighten'd on his
soul :

Daily while busy working at the loom
The humming seem'd a mystic melody
To which the pansies sweetly grew and
grew—

A leaf unrolling soft to every note,
A change of colours with the change of
sound ;

And walking to the door to rest himself,
Still with the pleasant murmur in his ears,
He saw the flowers and heard the melody
They make in growing ! Pleasure such as
this,

So exquisite, so lonely, might have pass'd
Into the shadowy restlessness of yore ;
But wholesome human contact saved him
here,

And kept him fresh and meek. The people
came

To stir him with their praise, and he would
show

The medals and the prizes he had got—
As proud and happy as a child who gains
A prize in school.

The angel still remain'd
In winter, when the garden-plots were bare,
And deep winds piloted the wandering snow:
He saw its gleaming in the cottage fire,
While, with a book of botany on his knee,
He sat and hunger'd for the breath of spring.
The angel of the flowers was with him still!
Here beds of roses sweeten'd all the page;
Here lilies whiter than the falling snow
Crept gleaming softly from the printed lines;
Here dewy violets sparkled till the book
Dazzled his eyes with rays of misty blue;
And here, amid a page of Latin names,
All the sweet Scottish flowers together grew
With fragrance of the summer.

Hugh and I
Were still fast friends, and still I help'd him
on;

And often in the pleasant summer-time,
The service over, on the Sabbath day,
I join'd him in the garden, where we sat
And chatted in the sun. But all at once
It came upon me that the gardener's hand
Had grown less diligent; for tho' 'twas June
The garden that had been the village pride
Look'd but the shadow of its former self;
And ere a week was out I saw in church
Two samples fairer far than any blown
In Hughie's garden—blooming brighter far
In sweeter soil. What wonder that a man,
Loving the pansies as the weaver did—
A skilful judge, moreover—should admire
Sweet Mary Moffat's sparkling pansy-eyes?

The truth was out. The weaver play'd
the game
(I christen'd it in sport that very day)
Of 'Love among the Pansies!' As he
spoke,
Telling me all, I saw upon his face
The peevish cloud that it had worn in youth;
I cheer'd him as I could, and bade him hope:
'You both are poor, but, Sutherland, God's
flowers
Are poor as well!' He brighten'd as I
spoke,
And answer'd, 'It is settled! I have kept
The secret till the last, lest "nay" should
come

And spoil it all; but "ay" has come instead,
And all the help we wait for is your own!'

Even here, I think, his angel clung to him.
The fairies of his garden haunted him
With similes and sympathies that made
His likes and dislikes, though he knew it
not.

Beauty he loved if it was meek and mild,
And like his pansies tender ev'n to tears;
And so he chose a maiden pure and low,
Who, like his garden pets, had love to spare,
Sunshine to cast upon his pallid cheek,
And yet a tender clinging thing, too weak
To bloom uncared for and unsmiled upon.

Soon Sutherland and she he loved were
one,—

And bonnily a moon of honey gleam'd
At night among the flowers! Amid the
spring

That follow'd, blossom'd with the other buds
A tiny maiden with her mother's eyes.
The little garden was itself again,
The sunshine sparkled on the azure beds;
The angel Heaven had sent to save a soul
Stole from the blooms and took an infant
shape;
And wild with pleasure, seeing how the
flowers

Had given her their choicest lights and
shades,

The father bore his baby to the font
And had her christen'd PANSY.

After that
Poor Hugh was happy as the days were long,
Divided in his cares for all his pets,
And proudest of the one he loved the best.
The summer found him merry as a king,
Dancing the little one upon his knee
Here in the garden, while the plots around
Gleam'd in the sun, and seem'd as glad as he.

But moons of honey wane, and summer
suns

Of wedlock set to bring the autumn in!
Hugh Sutherland, with wife and child to
feed,

Wrought sore to gain his pittance in a world
His pansies made so fair. Came Poverty
With haggard eyes to dwell within the
house;

When first she saw the garden she was glad,
And, seated on the threshold, smiled and span.

But times grew harder, bread was scarce as gold,

A shadow fell on Pansy and the flowers ;
And when the strife was sorest, Hugh received

An office—lighter work and higher pay—
To take a foreman's place in Edinglass.

'Twas hard, 'twas hard, to leave the little place

He loved so dearly ; but the weaver look'd
At Mary, saw the sorrow in her face,
And gave consent,—happy at heart to think
His dear ones would not want. To Edinglass

They went, and settled. Thro' the winter hours

Bravely the weaver toil'd ; his wife and child
Were happy, he was heartsome—tho' his taste

Was grassy lowlands and the caller air.

The cottage here remain'd untenanted,
The angel of the flowers forsook the place,
The sunshine faded, and the pansies died.

Two summers pass'd ; and still in Edinglass

The weaver toil'd, and ever when I went
Into the city, to his house I hid—

A welcome guest. Now first, I saw a change
Had come to Sutherland : for he was pale

And peevish, had a venom on his tongue,
And hung the under-lip like one that doubts.

Part of the truth I heard, and part I saw—
But knew too late, when all the ill was done !

At first, poor Hugh had shrunk from making
friends,

And pored among his books of botany,
And later, in the dull dark nights he sat,

A dismal book upon his knee, and read :
A book no longer full of leaves and flowers,

That glimmer'd on the soul's sweet consciousness,

Yet seem'd to fill the eye,—a dismal book,—
Big-sounding Latin, English dull and dark,

And not a breath of summer in it all.
The sunshine perish'd in the city's smoke,

The pansies grew no more to comfort him,
And he began to spend his nights with those

Who waste their substance in the public-house :

The flowers had lent a sparkle to his talk,
Which pleased the muddled wits of idle men ;

Sought after, treated, liked by one and all,
He took to drinking ; and at last lay down

Stupid and senseless on a rainy night,
And ere he waken'd caught the flaming fire,

Which gleams to white-heat on the face and burns

Clear crimson in the lungs.

But it was long,

Ere any knew poor Hughie's plight ; and, ere

He saw his danger, on the mother's breast
Lay Pansy withering—tho' the dewy breath

Of spring was floating like a misty rain
Down from the mountains. Then the tiny

flower

Folded its leaves in silence, and the sleep
That dwells in winter on the flower-beds

Fell on the weaver's house. At that sad hour
I enter'd, scarcely welcomed with a word

Of greeting : by the hearth the woman sat
Weeping full sore, her apron o'er a face

Haggard with midnight watching, while the man

Cover'd his bloodshot eyes and cursed himself.

Then leaning o'er, my hand on his, I said—
'She could not bear the smoke of cities,
Hugh !

God to His Garden has transplanted her,
Where summer dwells for ever and the air

Is fresh and pure !' But Hughie did not speak ;

I saw full plainly that he blamed himself ;
And ere the day was out he bent above

His little sleeping flower, and wept, and said :

'Ay, sir ! she wither'd, wither'd like the rest,
Neglected !' and I saw his heart was full.

When Pansy slept beneath the churchyard grass

Poor Hughie's angel had return'd to Heaven,
And all his heart was dark. His ways grew

strange,
Peevish, and sullen ; often he would sit

And drink alone ; the wife and he grew cold,
And harsh to one another ; till at last

A stern physician put an end to all,
And told him he must die.

No bitter cry,
No sound of wailing rose within the house
After the Doctor spoke, but Mary mourn'd
In silence, Hughie smoked his pipe and set
His teeth together, at the ingleside.
Days pass'd; the only token of a change
Was Hughie's face—the peevish cloud of
care

Seem'd melting to a tender gentleness.
After a time, the wife forgot her grief,
Or could at times forget it, in the care
Her husband's sickness brought. I went
to them

As often as I could, for Sutherland
Was dear to me, and dearer for his sin.
Weak as he was he did his best to toil,
But it was weary work! By slow degrees,
When May was breathing on the sickly
bunch

Of mignonette upon the window-sill,
I saw his smile was softly wearing round
To what it used to be, when here he sat
Rearing his flowers; altho' his brow at
times

Grew cloudy, and he gnaw'd his under lip.
At last I found him seated by the hearth,
Trying to read: I led his mind to themes
Of old langsyne, and saw his eyes grow dim:
'O sir,' he cried, 'I cannot, cannot rest!
Something I long for, and I know not what,
Torments me night and day!' I saw it all,
And sparkling with the brilliance of the
thought,

Look'd in his eyes and caught his hand, and
cried,

'Hugh, it's the pansies! Spring has come
again,

The sunshine breathes its gold upon the air
And threads it through the petals of the
flowers,

Yet here you linger in the dark!' I ceased
And watch'd him. Then he trembled as he
said,

'I see it now, for as I read the book
The lines and words, the Latin seem'd to bud,
And they peep'd thro'.' He smiled, like
one ashamed,

Adding in a low voice, 'I long to see
The pansies ere I die!'

What heart of stone
Could throb on coldly, Sir, at words like
those?

Not mine, not mine! Within a week poor
Hugh

Had left the smoke of Edinglass behind,
And felt the wind that runs along the lanes,
Spreading a carpet of the grass and flowers
For June the sunny-hair'd to walk upon.
In the old cottage here he dwelt again:
The place was wilder than it once had been,
But buds were blowing green around about,
And with the glad return of Sutherland,
The angel of the flowers came back again.
The end was near and Hugh was wearied
out,

And like a flower was closing up his leaves
Under the dropping of the gloaming dews.

And daily, in the summer afternoon,
I found him seated on the threshold there,
Watching his flowers, and all the place, I
thought,
Brighten'd when he was nigh. Now first I
talk'd

Of heavenly hopes unto him, and I knew
The angel help'd me. On the day he died
The pain had put its shadow on his face,
The words of doubt were on his tremulous
lips:

'Ah, Hughie, life is easy!' I exclaim'd,
'Easier, better, than we know ourselves:
'Tis pansy-growing on a mighty scale,
And God above us is the gardener.
The fairest win the prizes, that is just,
But all the flowers are dear to God the Lord:
The Gardener loves them all, He loves them
all!'

He saw the sunshine on the pansy-beds
And brighten'd. Then by slow degrees he
grew

Cheerful and meek as dying man could be,
And as I spoke there came from far-away
The faint sweet melody of Sabbath bells.
And 'Hugh,' I said, 'if God the Gardener
Neglected those he rears as you have done
Your pansies and your Pansy, it were ill
For we who blossom in His garden. Night
And morning He is busy at His work.

He smiles to give us sunshine, and we live:
He stoops to pluck us softly, and our hearts
Tremble to see the darkness, knowing not
It is the shadow He, in stooping, casts.

He plucked your Pansy so, and it was well.
But, Hugh, though some be beautiful and
grand,

Some sickly, like yourself, and mean and poor,

He loves them all, the Gardener loves them all !'

Then later, when he could no longer sit
Out on the threshold, and the end was near,
We set a plate of pansies by his bed
To cheer him. 'He is coming near,' I said,
'Great is the garden, but the Gardener
Is coming to the corner where you bloom
So sickly !' And he smiled, and moan'd,
'I hear !'

And sank upon his pillow wearily.
His hollow eyes no longer bore the light,
The darkness gather'd round him as I said,
'The Gardener is standing at your side,
His shade is on you and you cannot see :
O Lord, that lovest both the strong and weak,

Pluck him and wear him !' Even as I pray'd,

I felt the shadow there and hid my face ;
But when I look'd again the flower was pluck'd,

The shadow gone : the sunshine thro' the blind

Gleam'd faintly, and the widow'd woman wept.

THE DEAD MOTHER.

I.

As I lay asleep, as I lay asleep,
Under the grass as I lay so deep,
As I lay asleep in my cotton serk
Under the shade of Our Lady's Kirk,
I waken'd up in the dead of night,
I waken'd up in my death-serk white,
And I heard a cry from far away,
And I knew the voice of my daughter May :
'Mother, mother, come hither to me !
Mother, mother, come hither and see !
Mother, mother, mother dear,
Another mother is sitting here :
My body is bruised, and in pain I cry,
On straw in the dark afraid I lie,
I thirst and hunger for drink and meat,
And mother, mother, to sleep were sweet !'
I heard the cry, though my grave was deep,
And awoke from sleep, and awoke from sleep.

II.

I awoke from sleep, I awoke from sleep,
Up I rose from my grave so deep !
The earth was black, but overhead
The stars were yellow, the moon was red :
And I walk'd along all white and thin,
And lifted the latch and enter'd in,
And reach'd the chamber as dark as night,
And though it was dark my face was white :
'Mother, mother, I look on thee !
Mother, mother, you frighten me !
For your cheeks are thin and your hair is gray !'

But I smiled, and kiss'd her fears away,
I smooth'd her hair and I sang a song,
And on my knee I rock'd her long :
'O mother, mother, sing low to me—
I am sleepy now, and I cannot see !'
I kiss'd her, but I could not weep,
And she went to sleep, she went to sleep.

III.

As we lay asleep, as we lay asleep,
My May and I, in our grave so deep,
As we lay asleep in the midnight mirk,
Under the shade of our Lady's Kirk,
I waken'd up in the dead of night,
Though May my daughter lay warm and white,
And I heard the cry of a little one,
And I knew 'twas the voice of Hugh my son :

'Mother, mother, come hither to me !
Mother, mother, come hither and see !
Mother, mother, mother dear,
Another mother is sitting here :
My body is bruised and my heart is sad,
But I speak my mind and call them had ;
I thirst and hunger night and day,
And were I strong I would fly away !'
I heard the cry, though my grave was deep,
And awoke from sleep, and awoke from sleep !

IV.

I awoke from sleep, I awoke from sleep,
Up I rose from my grave so deep,
The earth was black, but overhead
The stars were yellow, the moon was red ;
And I walk'd along all white and thin,
And lifted the latch and enter'd in.

'Mother, mother, and art thou here?
 I know your face, and I feel no fear;
 Raise me, mother, and kiss my cheek,
 For oh I am weary and sore and weak.'
 I smooth'd his hair with a mother's joy,
 And he laugh'd aloud, my own brave boy;
 I raised and held him on my breast,
 Sang him a song, and bade him rest.
 'Mother, mother, sing low to me—
 I am sleepy now and I cannot see!
 I kiss'd him, and I could not weep,
 As he went to sleep, as he went to sleep.

v.

As I lay asleep, as I lay asleep,
 With my girl and boy in my grave so deep,
 As I lay asleep, I awoke in fear,
 Awoke, but awoke not my children dear,
 And heard a cry so low and weak
 From a tiny voice that could not speak;
 I heard the cry of a little one,
 My bairn that could neither talk nor run,
 My little, little one, uncaress'd,
 Starving for lack of the milk of the breast;
 And I rose from sleep and enter'd in,
 And found my little one pinch'd and thin,
 And croom'd a song and hush'd its moan,
 And put its lips to my white breast-bone;
 And the red, red moon that lit the place
 Went white to look at the little face,
 And I kiss'd and kiss'd, and I could not
 weep,
 As it went to sleep, as it went to sleep.

vi.

As it lay asleep, as it lay asleep,
 I set it down in the darkness deep,
 Smooth'd its limbs and laid it out,
 And drew the curtains around about;
 Then into the dark, dark room I hid
 Where he lay awake at the woman's side,
 And though the chamber was black as
 night,
 He saw my face, for it was so white;
 I gazed in his eyes, and he shriek'd in pain,
 And I knew he would never sleep again,
 And back to my grave went silently,
 And soon my baby was brought to me;
 My son and daughter beside me rest,
 My little baby is on my breast;
 Our bed is warm and our grave is deep,
 But he cannot sleep, he cannot sleep!

THE WIDOW MYSIE.

AN IDYL OF LOVE AND WHISKY.

Tom Love, a man 'prepared for friend or foe,
 Whisker'd, well-featured, tight from top to toe.'

O WIDOW MYSIE, smiling, soft, and sweet!
 O Mysie, buxom as a sheaf of wheat!
 O Mysie, Widow Mysie, late Monroe,
 Foul fall the traitor-face that served me
 so!

O Mysie Love, a second time a bride,
 I pity him who tosses at your side—
 Who took, by honied smiles and speech
 misled,
 A beauteous bush of brambles to his bed!

You saw her at the ploughing match, you
 ken,

Ogling the whisky and the handsome men:
 The smiling woman in the Paisley shawl,
 Plump as a partridge, and as broad as
 tall,

With ribbons, bows, and jewels fair to see,
 Bursting to blossom like an apple-tree,
 Ay, that was Mysie,—now two score and
 ten,

Now Madam Love of Bungo in the Glen!
 Ay, that was Mysie, tho' her looks no more
 Dazzle with beams of brightness as of
 yore!—

The tiny imps that nested in her eyes,
 Winning alike the wanton and the wise,
 Have ta'en the flame that made my heart
 forlorn

Back to the nameless place, where they were
 born.

O years roll on, and fair things fade and
 pine!—

Twelve sowings since and I was twenty-nine:
 With ploughman's coat on back, and plough
 in hand,

I wrought at Bungo on my father's land,
 And all the neighbour-lassies, stale or fair,
 Tried hard to net my father's son and heir.
 My heart was lightsome, cares I had but
 few,

I climb'd the mountains, drank the moun-
 tain dew,

Could sit a mare as mettlesome as fire,
 Could put the stone with any in the shire,

Had been to college, and had learn'd to
dance,
Could blether thro' my nose like folks in
France,
And stood erect, prepared for friend or foe,
Whisker'd, well-featured, tight from top to
toe.

'A marriageable man, for every claim
Of lawful wedlock fitted,' you exclaim?
But, sir, of all that men enjoy or treasure,
Wedlock, I fancied, was the driest pleasure.
True; seated at some pretty peasant's side,
Under the slanted sheaves I loved to hide,
Lilting the burthen of a Scottish tune,
To sit, and kiss perchance, and watch the
moon,
Pillow'd on breasts like beds of lilies white
Heaving and falling in the pale moonlight;
But rather would have sat with crimson face
Upon the cutty-stool with Jean or Grace,
Than buy in kirk a partner with the power
To turn the mother-milk of Freedom sour.

I loved a comely face, as I have said,
But sharply watch'd the maids who wish'd
to wed,—
I knew their arts, was not so cheaply won,
They loved my father's Siller, not his Son.
Still, laughing in my sleeve, I here and there
Took liberties allow'd my father's heir,
Stole kisses from the comeliest of the crew,
And smiled upon the virgin nettles too.
So might the game have daunder'd on till
this,
And lasted till my father went to bliss,—
But Widow Mysie came, as sly as sin,
And settled in the 'William Wallace' Inn.

The Inn had gone to rack and loss complete
Since Simpson drown'd himself in whisky
neat;
And poor Jock Watt, who follow'd in his
shoes,
Back'd by the sourest, gumliest of shrews,
(The whisky vile, the water never hot,
The very sugar sour'd by Mistress Watt,)
Had found the gossips, grumbling, groaning,
stray
To Sandie Kirkson's, half a mile away.
But hey! at Widow Mysie's rosy face,
A change came o'er the spirits of the place,

The fire blazed high, the shining pewter
smiled,
The glasses glitter'd bright, the water boil'd,
Grand was the whisky, Highland born and
fine,
And Mysie, Widow Mysie, was divine!

O sweet was Widow Mysie, sweet and sleek!
The peach's blush and down were on her
cheek,
And there were dimples in her tender chin
For Cupids small to hunt for kisses in;
Dark-glossy were her ringlets, each a prize,
And wicked, wicked were her beaded eyes;
Plump was her figure, rounded and com-
plete,
And tender were her tiny tinkling feet!
All this was nothing to the warmth and light
That seem'd to hover o'er her day and
night;—
Where'er she moved, she seem'd to soothe
and please
With pleasant murmurs as of humble-bees;
Her small plump hands on public missions
flew
Like snow-white doves that flying croon and
coo;
Her feet fell patter, cheep, like little mice;
Her breath was soft with sugar and with
spice;
And when her finger—so!—your hand
would press,
You tingled to the toes with loveliness,
While her dark eyes, with lessening zone in
zone,
Flasht sunlight on the mirrors of your own,
Dazzling your spirit with a wicked sense
That seem'd more heavenly-born than inno-
cence!

Sure one so beauteous and so sweet had
graced
And cheer'd the scene, where'er by Fortune
placed;
But with a background of the pewter bright,
Whereon the fire cast gleams of rosy light,
With jingling glasses round her, and a scent
Of spice and lemon-peel where'er she went,
What wonder she should to the cronies seem
An angel, in a cloud of toddy steam?
What wonder, while I sipt my glass one
day,
She, and the whisky, stole my heart away?

She was not loath I—for, while her comely
face

Shone full on other haunTERS of the place,
From me she turn'd her head and peep'd
full sly

With just the corner of her roguish eye,
And blush'd so bright my toddy seem'd to
glow

Beneath the rosy blush and sweeter grow ;
And once, at my request, she took a sip,
And nectar'd all the liquor with her lip.
'Take heed! for Widow Mysie's game is
plain,'

The gossips cried, but warn'd me all in vain:
Like sugar melting at the toddy's kiss,
My very caution was dissolved in bliss,
Fear died for ever with a mocking laugh,
And Mysie's kisses made his epitaph.

Kisses? Ay, faith, they follow'd score on
score,

After the first I stole behind the door,
And lingered softly on these lips of mine
Like Massic whisky drunk by bards divine.
But O ! the glow, the rapture, and the glee,
That night she let me draw her on my knee—
When bliss thrill'd from her to my finger-
tips,

Then eddied wildly to my burning lips,
From which she drank it back with kisses
fain,

Then blush'd and glow'd and breathed it
back again—

Till, madden'd with the ecstasy divine,
I clasp'd her close and craved her to be mine,
And thrilling, panting, struggling up to fly,
She breathed a spicy 'Yes' with glistening
eye,

And while my veins grew fire, my heart
went wild,

Fell like a sunbeam on my heart, and smiled!

The deed thus done, I hied me home, you
say,

And rued my folly when I woke next day?
Nay ! all my business was to crave and cry
That Heaven would haste the holy knot to tie,
Though 'Mysie lass,' I said, 'my gold and
gear

Are small, and will be small for many a year,
Since father is but fifty years and three,
And tough as cobbler's wax, though spare
and wee !'

'Ah, Tam,' she sigh'd, 'there's nothing
there to rue—

The gold, the gear, that Mysie wants is you !'
And brightly clad, with kisses thrilling
through me,

Clung like a branch of trembling blossoms
to me.

I found my father making up his hooks,
With yellow eyes and penny-hunting looks.
'Father,' I said, 'I'm sick of single life,
And will, if you are willing, take a wife.'

'Humph,' snapt my father, '(six and four
are ten,

And ten are twenty)—Marry? who? and
when?'

'Mistress Monroe,' I said, 'that keeps the
inn.'

At that he shrugg'd his shoulders with a
grin :

'I guess'd as much ! the tale has gone the
round !

Ye might have stay'd till I was underground!
But please yourself—I've nothing to refuse,
Choose where you will—you're old enough
to choose ;

But mind,' he added, blinking yellow eye,
'I'll handle my own guineas till I die !

Frankly I own, you might have chosen
worse,

Since you have little siller in your purse—

The Inn is thriving, if report be true,
And Widow Mysie has enough for two !'

'And if we wait till he has gone his way,
Why, Mysie, I'll be bald, and you'll be gray,'
I said to Mysie, laughing at her side.

'Oh, let him keep his riches,' she replied,

'He's right ! there's plenty here for you
and me !

May he live long ; and happy may he be !'

'O Mysie, you're an angel,' I return'd,

With eye that glisten'd dewily and yearn'd.
Then running off she mixed, with tender
glee,

A glass of comfort—sat her on my knee—

'Come, Tam !' she cried, 'who cares a fig
for wealth—

Ay, let him keep it all, and here's his
health !'

And added, shining brightly on my breast,

'Ah, Tam, the siller's worthless—Love is
best !'

O Widow Mysie, wert thou first sincere,
When tender accents trembled on mine ear,
Like hees that o'er a flower will float and
fleet,

And ere they light make murmurs soft and
sweet?

Or was the light that render'd me unwise,
Guile's—the sly Quaker with the downcast
eyes?

O Widow Mysie, not at once are we
Taught the false scripture of Hypocrisy!
Even pink Selfishness has times, I know,
When thro' his fat a patriot's feelings glow;
Falschood first learns her nature with a sigh,
And nurses bitterly her first-born Lie!

Days pass'd; and I began, to my amaze,
To see a colder light in Mysie's gaze;
Once when, with arm about her softly
wound,

I snatch'd a kiss, she snapt and flusht and
frown'd;

But oftener her face a shadow wore,
Such as had never darken'd it before;
I spoke of this, I begg'd her to explain,—
She tapt my cheek, and smiled, and mused
again.

But, in the middle of my love-alarm,
The Leech's watch went 'tick' at Bungo
Farm;

My father sicken'd, and his features cold
Retain'd the hue, without the gleam, of
gold.

Then Mysie soften'd, sadden'd, and would
speak

Of father's sickness with a dewy cheek;
When to the Inn I wander'd, unto me,
Lightly, as if she walk'd on wool, came she,
And 'Is he better?' 'Is he changed at all?'
And 'Heaven help him!' tenderly would
call.

'So old—so ill—untended and alone!
He is your father, Tam,—and seems my
own!'

And musing stood, one little hand of snow
Nestling and fluttering on my shoulder—so!
But father sicken'd on, and then one night,
When we were sitting in the ingle-light,
'O Tam,' she cried, 'I have it!—I should
ne'er

Forgive myself for staying idly here,
While he, your father, lack'd in his distress

The love, the care, a daughter's hands
possess—

He knows our troth—he will not say me nay;
But let me nurse him as a daughter may,
And he may live, for darker cases mend,
To bless us and to join us in the end!
'But, Mysie—' 'Not a word, the thing is
plann'd,'

She said, and stopt my mouth with warm
white hand.

She went with gentle eyes that very night,
Stole to the chamber like a moonbeam
white;

My father scowl'd at first, but soon was
won—

The keep was carried, and the deed was
done.

O Heaven! in what strange Enchanter's den
Learnt she the spells wherewith she con-
quer'd men?

When to that chamber she had won her way,
The old man's cheek grew brighter every
day;

She smooth'd the pillows underneath his
head,

She brought sweet music roundabout his
bed,

She made the very mustard-blister glow
With fire as soft as youthful lovers know,
The very physic bottles lost their gloom
And seem'd like little fairies in the room,
The very physic, charm'd by her, grew fine,
Rhubarb was nectar, castor-oil was wine.

Half darkly, dimly, yet with secret flame
That titillated up and down his frame,
The grim old man lay still, with hungry
eye

Watching her thro' the room on tiptoe fly;—
She turn'd her back—his cheek grew dull
and dim!

She turn'd her face—its sunshine fell on
him!

Better and better every day grew he,
Colder and colder grew his nurse to me,
Till up he leapt, with fresher new life astir,
And only sank again—to kneel to her!

'Mysie!' I cried, with flushing face, too late
Stung by the pois'nous things whose names
I hate,

Which in so many household fires flit free,
The salamanders, Doubt and Jealousy,—

'Mysie !'—and then, in accents fierce and bold,
Demanded why her looks had grown so cold?

She trembled, flush'd, a tear was in her eye,
She dropt her gaze, and heaved a balmy sigh,

Then spoke with tender pauses low and sad:

Had I a heart? She knew full well I had.
Could I without a conscience-qualm behold
My white-hair'd father, weak, untended,
old,

Who had so very short a time to live,
Reft of the peace a woman's hands can give?
'Mysie !' I shriek'd, with heart that seem'd
to rend,

With glaring eyes, and every hair on end.
Clasping her little hands, 'O Tam,' she
cried,

'Save for my help your father would have
died ;

Bliss ! to have saved your filial heart that
sorrow !

But for my help, why, he may die to-morrow.
Go, Tam !—this weak warm heart I cannot
trust

To utter more—he generous ! be just !
I long have felt—I say it in humility—
A sort of—kind of—incompatibility !
Go, Tam ! Be happy ! Bless you ! Wed
another !

And I shall ever love you !—as a mother !'

Sir, so it was. Stunn'd, thunder-stricken,
wild,

I raved, while father trembled, Mysie smiled ;
O'er all the country-side the scandal rang,
And ere I knew, the bells began to clang ;—
And shutting eyes and stopping ears, as
red

As ricks on fire, I blushing turn'd and fled.
Twelve years have pass'd since I escaped
the net,

And father, tough as leather, lingers yet,
A gray mare rules, the laugh has come to
me,

I sport, and thank my stars that I am free !
If Mysie likes her bargain ill or well,
Only the Deil, who won it her, can tell ;
But she, who could so well his arts pursue,
May learn a trick to cheat her Teacher too.

THE MINISTER AND THE ELFIN.

I.

'O WHO among you will win for me
The soul of the Preacher of Woodilee?
For he prays, he preaches, he labours sore,
He cheats me alike of rich and poor,
And his cheek is pale with a thought divine,
And I would, I would that he were mine ?'
'O surely I will win for thee
The Minister of Woodilee ;
Round and around the elfin tree,
Where we are fleeting in company,
The Minister of Woodilee,
Laughing aloud, shall dance with me !'

II.

The Minister rode in the white moonshine,
His face was pale with his thought divine,
And he saw beneath the greenwood tree
As sweet a maiden as well could be :
My hair of gold to my feet fell bright,
My eyes were blue, and my brow was white,
My cheeks were fresh as the milk of kine
Mingled with drops of red red wine,
And they shone thro' my veil o' the silk
with gleam
Like a lover's face thro' a thin light dream ;
But the sickness of death was in mine ee,
And my face was pallid and sad to see,
And I moaned aloud as the man came near,
And I heard him mutter a prayer in fear !

III.

But the Minister, when he look'd on me,
Leapt down and set my head on his knee,
Wet my lips with the running stream,
And I open'd my eyes as in a dream,
I open'd my eyes and look'd on him,
And his head whirl'd round and his cheek
grew dim !
I kiss'd him twice, I kiss'd him thrice,
Till he kiss'd again with lips of ice,
Till he kiss'd again with lips of stone,
And clasped me close to his cold breast-
bone ;
And tho' his face was weary and sad,
He laugh'd aloud and seem'd mad, so mad.
Then up to my feet I leapt in glee,
And round and round and around went we,
Under the moonlit greenwood tree !

IV.

He leapt on his steed and home rode he,
The Minister of Woodilee ;
And when at the door of the manse he rein'd,
With blood his lips were damp'd and stain'd,
And he pray'd a prayer for his shame and
sin,

And dropt a tear as he enter'd in,
But the smile divine from his face had fled,
When he laid him down on his dying bed.

V.

'O thanks, for thou hast won for me
The Minister of Woodilee,
Who nevermore, O nevermore,
Shall preach and pray and labour sore,
And cheat me alike of rich and poor,
For the smile divine no more wears he—
Hasten and bring his soul to me !'

VI.

Oh, off I ran his soul to win,
And the gray gray manse I enter'd in,
And I saw him lying on his bed,
With book and candle at his head ;
But when he turn'd him, weary and weak,
A smile and a tear were on his cheek,
And he took my hand and kiss'd it thrice,
Tho' his lips were clammy cold as ice.
'O wherefore, wherefore, dost thou
One who has stolen thy soul from bliss ?'
Then over his face so pale with pain
The thought divine came back again,
And 'I love thee more for the shame,' he
said,

'I love thee more on my dying bed,
And I cannot, cannot love thee less,
Tho' my heart is wae for its wickedness ;
I love thee better, I love thee best,
Sweet Spirit that earnest and wanderest ;
Colder and colder my blood doth run,
I pray for thee, pray for thee, little one !'
Then I heard the bell for the dying toll,
And I reach'd out hands to seize his soul,
But I trembled and shriek'd to see as he
died

An angel in white at his bedside !
And I fled away to the greenwood tree,
Where the elves were fleeting in company,
And I hate my immortality,
And 'twere better to be a man and dee !

VILLAGE VOICES.

I.

JANUARY WIND.

i.

THE wind, wife, the wind ; how it blows,
how it blows ;
It grips the latch, it shakes the house, it
whistles, it screams, it crows,
It dashes on the window-pane, then rushes
off with a cry,
Ye scarce can hear your own loud voice, it
clatters so loud and high ;
And far away upon the sea it floats with
thunder-call,
The wind, wife, the wind, wife ; the wind
that did it all !

II.

The wind, wife, the wind ; how it blew, how
it blew ;
The very night our boy was born, it whistled,
it scream'd, it crew ;
And while you moan'd upon your bed, and
your heart was dark with fright,
I swear it mingled with the soul of the boy
you bore that night ;
It scarcely seems a winter since, and the
wind is with us still,—
The wind, wife ; the wind, wife ; the wind
that blew us ill !

III.

The wind, wife, the wind ; how it blows,
how it blows !
It changes, shifts, without a cause, it ceases,
it comes and goes ;
And David ever was the same, wayward,
and wild, and bold—
For wilful lad will have his way, and the
wind no hand can hold ;
But ah ! the wind, the changeful wind, was
more in the blame than he ;
The wind, wife ; the wind, wife, that blew
him out to sea !

IV.

The wind, wife ; the wind ; now 'tis still, now
'tis still ;
And as we sit I seem to feel the silence
shiver and thrill,

'Twas thus the night he went away, and we
sat in silence here,
We listen'd to our beating hearts, and all
was weary and drear ;
We long'd to hear the wind again, and to
hold our David's hand—
The wind, wife ; the wind, wife, that blew
him out from land !

V.

The wind, wife, the wind ; up again, up
again !
It blew our David round the world, yet
shriek'd at our window-pane ;
And ever since that time, old wife, in rain,
and in sun, and in snow,
Whether I work or weary here, I hear it
whistle and blow,
It moans around, it groans around, it
comes with scream and cry—
The wind, wife ; the wind, wife ; may it
blow him home to die !

II.

APRIL RAIN.

I.

SHOWERS, showers, nought but showers,
and it wants a week of May,
Flowers, flowers, summer flowers, are hid
in the green and the gray ;
Green buds and gray shoots cover their
sparkling gear,
They stir beneath, they long to burst, for
the May is so near, so near,—
While I spin and I spin, and the fingers of
the Rain
Fall patter, pitter, patter, on the pane.

II.

Showers, showers, silver showers, murmur
and softly sing,
Flowers, flowers, summer flowers, are
swelling and hearkening ;
It wants a week of May, when my love and
I will be one,
The flowers will burst, the birds will sing,
as we walk to church in the sun.
So patter goes my heart, in a kind of
pleasant pain,
To the patter, pitter, patter of the Rain.

III.

SUMMER MOON.

I.

SUMMER Moon, O Summer Moon, across
the west you fly,
You gaze on half the earth at once with
sweet and steadfast eye ;
Summer Moon, O Summer Moon, were I
aloft with thee,
I know that I could look upon my boy who
sails at sea.

II.

Summer Moon, O Summer Moon, you
throw your silver showers
Upon a glassy sea that lies round shores of
fruit and flowers,
And on the blue tide's silver edge drop
blossoms in the breeze,
And the shadow of the ship lies dark near
shades of orange-trees.

III.

Summer Moon, O Summer Moon, now
wind and storm have fled,
Your light creeps thro' a cabin-pane and
lights a flaxen head :
He tosses with his lips apart, lies smiling in
your gleam,
For underneath his folded lids you put a
gentle dream.

IV.

Summer Moon, O Summer Moon, his head
is on his arm,
He stirs with balmy breath and sees the
moonlight on the Farm,
He stirs and breathes his mother's name, he
smiles and sees once more
The Moon above, the fields below, the
shadow at the door.

V.

Summer Moon, O Summer Moon, across
the lift you go,
Far south you gaze and see my Boy, where
groves of orange grow !
Summer Moon, O Summer Moon, you turn
again to me,
And seem to have the smile of him who
sleeps upon the sea !

IV.

DECEMBER SNOW.

I.

THE cold, cold snow ! the snow that lies so white !

The moon and stars are hidden, there is neither warmth nor light—

I wonder, wife—I wonder, wife—where Jeanie lies this night ?

II.

'Tis cold, cold, cold, since Jeanie went away,
The world has changed, I sit and wait, and listen night and day, .

The house is silent, silent, and my hair has grown so gray—

'Tis cold, cold, cold, wife, since Jeanie went away.

III.

And tick ! tick ! tick ! the clock goes evermore,

It chills me, wife—it seems to keep our bairn beyond the door ;

I watch the firelight shadows as they float upon the floor,
And tick ! tick ! tick ! wife, the clock goes evermore !

IV.

'Tis cold, cold, cold !—'twere better she were dead,

Not that I heed the Minister, and the bitter things he said,—

But to think my lassie cannot find a place to lay her head—

'Tis cold, cold, cold, wife—better she were dead !

V.

The cold, cold snow ! the snow that lies so white !

Beneath the snow her little one is hidden out of sight,

But up above, the wind blows keen, there's neither warmth nor light,

I wonder, wife—I wonder, wife—where Jeanie lies this night !

London Poems.

(1866—70.)

Greift nur hinein in's volle Menschenleben !

Ein jeder lebt's, nicht vielen ist's bekannt,

Und wo ihr's packt, da ist's interessant.

Faust—Vorspiel auf dem Theater.

BEXHILL, 1866.

Now, when the catkins of the hazel swing
Wither'd above the leafy nook wherein
The chaffinch breasts her five blue speckled eggs,

All round the thorn grows fragrant, white
with may,

And underneath the fresh wild hyacinth-bed

Shimmers like water in the whispering wind ;
Now, on this sweet still gloaming of the spring,

Within my cottage by the sea, I sit,
Thinking of yonder city where I dwelt,
Wherein I sicken'd, and whereof I learn'
So much that dwells like music on my brain,

A melancholy happiness is mine !
My thoughts, like blossoms of the muschattel,

Smell sweetest in the gloaming ; and I feel
Visions and vanishings of other years,—
Faint as the scent of distant clover meadows—

Sweet, sweet, though they awaken serious cares—

Beautiful, beautiful, though they make me weep.

The good days dead, the well-belovéd gone

Before me, lonely I abode amid
The buying, and the selling, and the strife
Of little natures ; ye there still remain'd

Something to thank the Lord for,—I could live!

On winter nights, when wind and snow were out,

Afford a pleasant fire to keep me warm ;
And while I sat, with homeward-looking eyes,

And while I heard the humming of the town,
I fancied 'twas the sound I used to hear
In Scotland, when I dwelt beside the sea.
I knew not how it was, or why it was,
I only heard a sea-sound, and was sad.
It haunted me and pain'd me, and it made
That little life of penmanship a dream !
And yet it served my soul for company,
When the dark city gather'd on my brain,
And from the solitude came never a voice
To bring the good days back, and show my heart

It was not quite a solitary thing.

The purifying trouble grew and grew,
Till silentness was more than I could bear.
Brought by the ocean murmur from afar,
Came silent phantoms of the misty hills
Which I had known and loved in other days ;
And, ah ! from time to time, the hum of life
Around me, the strange faces of the streets,
Mingling with those thin phantoms of the hills,

And with that ocean-murmur, made a cloud
That changed around my life with shades
and sounds,

And, melting often in the light of day,
Left on my brow dews of aspiring dream.
And then I sang of Scottish dales and dells,
And human shapes that lived and moved
therein,

Made solemn in the shadow of the hills.
Thereto, not seldom, did I seek to make
The busy life of London musical,
And phrase in modern song the troubled
lives

Of dwellers in the sunless lanes and streets.
Yet ever I was haunted from afar,
While singing ; and the presence of the
mountains

Was on me ; and the murmur of the sea
Deepen'd my mood ; while everywhere I saw,
Flowing beneath the blackness of the streets,
The current of sublimer, sweeter life,
Which is the source of human smiles and
tears,

And, melodised, becomes the strength of
song.

Darkling, I long'd for utterance, wherehy
Poor people might be holpen, gladden'd,
cheer'd ;

Bright'ning at times, I sang for singing's
sake.

The wild wind of ambition grew subdned,
And left the changeful current of my soul
Crystal and pure and clear, to glass like
water

The sad and beautiful of human life ;
And, even in the unsung city's streets,
Seem'd quiet wonders meet for serious song,
Truth hard to phrase and render musical.
For ah ! the weariness and weight of tears,
The crying out to God, the wish for slumber,
They lay so deep, so deep ! God heard
them all ;

He set them unto music of His own ;
But easier far the task to sing of kings,
Or weave weird ballads where the moon-dew
glistens,

Than body forth this life in beauteous sound.
The crowd had voices, but each living man
Within the crowd seem'd silence-smit and
hard :

They only heard the murmur of the town,
They only felt the dimness in their eyes,
And now and then turn'd startled, when they
saw

Some weary one fling up his arms and drop,
Clay-cold, among them,—and they scarcely
grieved,

But hush'd their hearts a time, and hurried
on.

'Twas comfort deep as tears to sit alone,
Haunted by shadows from afar away,
And try to utter forth, in tuneful speech,
What lay so musically on my heart.
But, though itsweeten'd life, it seem'd in vain.
For while I sang, much that was clear be-
fore—

The souls of men and women in the streets,
The sounding sea, the presence of the hills,
And all the weariness, and all the fret,
And all the dim, strange pain for what had
fled—

Turn'd into mist, mingled before mine eyes,
Roll'd up like wreaths of smoke to heaven,
and died :

The pen dropt from my hand, mine eyes
grew dim,
And the great roar was in mine ears again,
And I was all alone in London streets.

Hither to pastoral solitude I came,
Happy to breathe again serener air
And feel a purer sunshine ; and the woods
And meadows were to me an ecstasy,
The singing birds a glory, and the trees
A green perpetual feast to fill the eye
And shimmer in upon the soul ; but chief,
There came the murmur of the waters,
sounds

Of sunny tides that wash on silver sands,
Or cries of waves that anguish'd and went
white

Under the eyes of lightnings. 'Twas a bliss
Beyond the bliss of dreaming, yet in time
It grew familiar as my mother's face ;
And when the wonder and the ecstasy
Had mingled with the beatings of my heart,
The terrible City loom'd from far away
And gather'd on me cloudily, dropping dews,
Even as those phantoms of departed days
Had haunted me in London streets and
lanes.

Wherefore in brighter mood I sought again
To make the life of London musical,
And sought the mirror of my soul for shapes
That linger'd, faces bright or agonised,
Yet ever taking something beautiful
From glamour of green branches, and of
clouds
That glided piloted by golden airs.

And if I list to sing of sad things oft,
It is that sad things in this life of breath
Are truest, sweetest, deepest. Tears bring
forth

The richness of our natures, as the rain
Sweetens the smelling brier ; and I, thank
God,

Have anguish'd here in no ignoble tears—
Tears for the pale friend with the singinglips,
Tears for the father with the gentle eyes
(My dearest up in heaven next to God)
Who loved me like a woman. I have
wrought

No garland of the rose and passion-flower,
Grown in a careful garden in the sun ;
But I have gather'd samphire dizzily,
Close to the hollow roaring of a Sea.

Far away in the dark
Breaketh that living Sea,
Wave upon wave ; and hark !
These voices are blown to me ;
For a great wind rises and blows,
Wafting the sea-sound near,
But it fitfully comes and goes,
And I cannot always hear ;
Green boughs are flashing around,
And the flowers at my feet are fair,
And the wind that bringeth the ocean-sound
Grows sweet with the country air.

THE LITTLE MILLINER ;

OR, LOVE IN AN ATTIC.

With fairy foot and fearless gaze
She passes pure through evil ways ;
She wanders in the sinful town,
And loves to hear the deep sea-music
Of people passing up and down.

Fear nor shame nor sin hath she,
But, like a sea-bird on the Sea,
Floats hither, thither, day and night :
The great black waters cannot harm her,
Because she is so weak and light !

My girl hath violet eyes and yellow hair,
A soft hand, like a lady's, small and fair,
A sweet face pouting in a white straw
bonnet,
A tiny foot, and little boot upon it ;
And all her finery to charm beholders
Is the gray shawl drawn tight around her
shoulders,

The plain stuff-gown and collar white as
snow,

And sweet red petticoat that peeps below.
But gladly in the busy town goes she,
Summer and winter, fearing nobodie ;
She pats the pavement with her fairy feet,
With fearless eyes she charms the crowded
street ;
And in her pocket lie, in lieu of gold,
A lucky sixpence and a thimble old.

We lodged in the same house a year ago :
She on the topmost floor, I just below,—
She, a poor milliner, content and wise,
I, a poor city clerk, with hopes to rise ;
And, long ere we were friends, I learnt to
love
The little angel on the floor above.

For, every morn, ere from my bed I stirr'd,
Her chamber door would open, and I
heard,—

And listen'd, blushing, to her coming down,
And palpitated with her rustling gown,
And tingled while her foot went downward
slow,

Creak'd like a cricket, pass'd, and died
below ;

Then peeping from the window, pleased and
sly,

I saw the pretty shining face go by,
Healthy and rosy, fresh from slumber
sweet,—

A sunbeam in the quiet morning street.
All winter long, witless who peep'd the while,
She sweeten'd the chill mornings with her
smile :

When the soft snow was falling dimly white,
Shining among it with a child's delight,
Bright as a rose, though nipping winds
might blow,

And leaving fairy footprints in the snow !

And every night, when in from work she
tript,

Red to the ears I from my chamber slipt,
That I might hear upon the narrow stair
Her low ' Good evening,' as she pass'd me
there.

And when her door was closed, below sat I,
And hearken'd stilly as she stirr'd on high,—
Watch'd the red firelight shadows in the
room,

Fashion'd her face before me in the gloom,
And heard her close the window, lock the
door,

Moving about more lightly than before,
And thought, ' She is undressing now ! ' and
oh !

My cheeks were hot, my heart was in a glow !
And I made pictures of her,—standing bright
Before the looking-glass in bed-gown white,
Upbiding in a knot her yellow hair,
Then kneeling timidly to say a prayer ;
Till, last, the floor creak'd softly overhead,
' Neath bare feet tripping to the little bed,—
And all was hush'd. Yet still I hearken'd
on,

Till the faint sounds about the streets were
gone ;

And saw her slumbering with lips apart,
One little hand upon her little heart,

The other pillowing a face that smiled
In slumber like the slumber of a child,
The bright hair shining round the small
white ear,

The soft breath stealing visible and clear,
And mixing with the moon's, whose frosty
gleam

Made round her rest a vaporous light of
dream.

How free she wander'd in the wicked place,
Protected only by her gentle face !

She saw bad things—how could she choose
but see?—

She heard of wantonness and misery ;
The city closed around her night and day,
But lightly, happily, she went her way.
Nothing of evil that she saw or heard

Could touch a heart so innocently stirr'd,—
By simple hopes that cheer'd it through the
storm,

And little flutterings that kept it warm.
No power had she to reason out her needs,
To give the whence and wherefore of her
deeds ;

But she was good and pure amid the strife,
By virtue of the joy that was her life.

Here, where a thousand spirits daily fall,
Where heart and soul and senses turn to
gall,

She floated, pure as innocent could be,
Like a small sea-bird on a stormy sea,
Which breasts the billows, wafted to and
fro,

Fearless, uninjured, while the strong winds
blow,

While the clouds gather, and the waters
roar,

And mighty ships are broken on the shore.

And London streets, with all their noise
and stir,

Had many a pleasant sight to pleasure
her.

There were the shops, where wonders ever
new,

As in a garden, changed the whole year
through.

Oft would she stand and watch with laughter
sweet

The Punch and Judy in the quiet street ;

Or look and listen while soft minnets

Play'd the street organ with the marionettes ;

Or joined the motley group of merry folks
Round the street huckster with his wares
and jokes.

Fearless and glad, she join'd the crowd that
flows

Along the streets at festivals and shows.

In summer time, she loved the parks and
squares,

Where fine folk drive their carriages and
pairs ;

In winter time her blood was in a glow,
At the white coming of the pleasant snow ;
And in the stormy nights, when dark rain
pours,

She found it pleasant, too, to sit indoors,
And sing and sew, and listen to the gales,
Or read the penny journal with the tales.

Once in the year, at merry Christmas
time,

She saw the glories of a pantomime,
Feasted and wonder'd, laugh'd and clapp'd
aloud,

Up in the gallery among the crowd,
Gathering dreams of fairyland and fun
To cheer her till another year was done ;
More happy, and more near to heaven, so,
Than many a lady in the tiers below.

And just because her heart was pure and
glad,

She lack'd the pride that finer ladies had :
She had no scorn for those who lived
amiss,—

The weary women with their painted bliss ;
It never struck her little brain, be sure,
She was so very much more fine and pure.
Softly she pass'd them in the public places,
Marvelling at their fearful childish faces ;
She shelter'd near them, when a shower
would fall,

And felt a little frighten'd, that was all,
And watch'd them, noting as they stood
close by

Their dress and fine things with a woman's
eye,

And spake a gentle word if spoken to,—
And wonder'd if their mothers lived and
knew ?

Her look, her voice, her step, had witchery
And sweetness that were all in all to me !

We both were friendless, yet, in fear and
doubt,

I sought in vain for courage to speak out.
Wildier my heart could ne'er have throbb'd
before her,

My thoughts have stoop'd more humbly to
adore her,

My love more timid and more still have
grown,

Had Polly been a queen upon a throne.
All I could do was wish and dream and sigh,
Blush to the ears whene'er she pass'd me by,
Still comforted, although she did not love
me,

Because—her little room was just above me!

'Twas when the spring was coming, when
the snow

Had melted, and fresh winds began to blow,
And girls were selling violets in the town,
That suddenly a fever struck me down.

The world was changed, the sense of life
was pain'd,

And nothing but a shadow-land remain'd ;
Death came in a dark mist and look'd at
me,

I felt his breathing, though I could not see,
But heavily I lay and did not stir,
And had strange images and dreams of *her*.

Then came a vacancy : with feeble breath,
I shiver'd under the cold touch of Death,
And swoon'd among strange visions of the
dead,

When a voice call'd from Heaven, and he
fled ;

And suddenly I waken'd, as it seem'd,
From a deep sleep wherein I had not
dream'd.

And it was night, and I could see and hear,
And I was in the room I held so dear,
And unaware, stretch'd out upon my bed,
I hearken'd for a footstep overhead.

But all was hush'd. I look'd around the
room,

And slowly made out shapes amid the
gloom.

The wall was redden'd by a rosy light,
A faint fire flicker'd, and I knew 'twas night,
Because below there was a sound of feet
Dying away along the quiet street,—

When, turning my pale face and sighing
low,

I saw a vision in the quiet glow :
A little figure, in a cotton gown,
Looking upon the fire and stooping down,
Her side to me, her face illumed, she eyed
Two chestnuts burning slowly, side by
side,—

Her lips apart, her clear eyes strain'd to see,
Her little hands clasp'd tight around her
knee,

The firelight gleaming on her golden head,
And tinting her white neck to rosy red,
Her features bright, and beautiful, and pure,
With childish fear and yearning half demure.

Oh, sweet, sweet dream ! I thought, and
strain'd mine eyes,
Fearing to break the spell with words and
sighs.

Softly she stoop'd, her dear face sweetly
fair,

And sweeter since a light like love was there,
Brightening, watching, more and more elate,
As the nuts glow'd together in the grate,
Crackling with little jets of fiery light,
Till side by side they turn'd to ashes white,—
Then up she leapt, her face cast off its fear
For rapture that itself was radiance clear,
And would have clapp'd her little hands in
glee,

But, pausing, bit her lips and peep'd at me,
And met the face that yearn'd on her so
whitely,

And gave a cry and trembled, blushing
brightly,

While, raised on elbow, as she turn'd to flee,
'Polly !' I cried,—and grew as red as she !

It was no dream !—for soon my thoughts
were clear,

And she could tell me all, and I could hear :
How in my sickness friendless I had lain,
How the hard people pitied not my pain ;
How, in despite of what bad people said,
She left her labours, stopp'd beside my bed,
And nursed me, thinking sadly I would die ;
How, in the end, the danger pass'd me by ;
How she had sought to steal away before
The sickness pass'd, and I was strong once
more.

By fits she told the story in mine ear,
And troubled all the telling with a fear
Lest by my cold man's heart she should be
chid,

Lest I should think her bold in what she did ;
But, lying on my bed, I dared to say,
How I had watch'd and loved her many a
day,

How dear she was to me, and dearer still
For that strange kindness done while I was
ill,

And how I could but think that Heaven
above

Had done it all to bind our lives in love.
And Polly cried, turning her face away,
And seem'd afraid, and answer'd 'yea 'nor
'nay ;'

Then stealing close, with little pants and
sighs,

Look'd on my pale thin face and earnest
eyes,

And seem'd in act to fling her arms about
My neck, then, blushing, paused, in flutter-
ing doubt,

Last, sprang upon my heart, sighing and
sobbing,—

That I might feel how gladly hers was
throbbing !

Ah ! ne'er shall I forget until I die
How happily the dreamy days went by,
While I grew well, and lay with soft heart-
beats,

Heark'ning the pleasant murmur from the
streets,

And Polly by me like a sunny beam,
And life all changed, and love a drowsy
dream !

'Twas happiness enough to lie and see
The little golden head bent droopingly
Over its sewing, while the still time flew,
And my fond eyes were dim with happy
dew !

And then, when I was nearly well and
strong,

And she went back to labour all day long,
How sweet to lie alone with half-shut eyes,
And hear the distant murmurs and the cries,
And think how pure she was from pain and
sin,—

And how the summer days were coming in !
Then, as the sunset faded from the room,
To listen for her footstep in the gloom,

To pant as it came stealing up the stair,
To feel my whole life brighten unaware
When the soft tap came to the door, and
when

The door was open'd for her smile again !
Best, the long evenings !—when, till late at
night,

She sat beside me in the quiet light,
And happy things were said and kisses won,
And serious gladness found its vent in fun.
Sometimes I would draw close her shining
head,

And pour her bright hair out upon the bed,
And she would laugh, and blush, and try to
scold,

While ' Here, ' I cried, ' I count my wealth
in gold ! '

Sometimes we play'd at cards, and thrill'd
with bliss,

On trumping one another with a kiss.
And oft our thoughts grew sober and found
themes

Of wondrous depth in marriage plans and
schemes ;

And she with pretty calculating lips
Sat by me, cautious to the finger-tips,
Till, all our calculations grown a bore,
We summ'd them up in kisses as before !

Once, like a little sinner for transgression,
She blush'd upon my breast, and made con-
fession :

How, when that night I woke and look'd
around,

I found her busy with a charm profound,—
One chestnut was herself, my girl confess'd,
The other was the person she loved best,
And if they burn'd together side by side,
He loved her, and she would become his
bride ;

And burn indeed they did, to her delight,—
And had the pretty charm not proven right ?
Thus much, and more, with timorous joy,
she said,

While her confessor, too, grew rosy red,—
And close together press'd two blissful faces,
As I absolved the sinner, with embraces.

And here is winter come again, winds
blow,
The houses and the streets are white with
snow ;

And in the long and pleasant eventide,
Why, what is Polly making at my side ?
What but a silk-gown, beautiful and grand,
We bought together lately in the Strand !
What but a dress to go to church in soon,
And wear right queenly 'neath a honey-
moon !

And who shall match her with her new
straw bonnet,

Her tiny foot and little boot upon it,
Embroider'd petticoat and silk-gown new,
And shawl she wears as few fine ladies do ?
And she will keep, to charm away all ill,
The lucky sixpence in her pocket still !

And we will turn, come fair or cloudy
weather,

To ashes, like the chestnuts, close together !

LIZ.

The crimson light of sunset falls

Through the gray glamour of the murmuring
rain,

And creeping o'er the housetops crawls
Through the black smoke upon the broken pane,
Steals to the straw on which she lies,

And tints her thin black hair and hollow cheeks,
Her sun-tann'd neck, her glistening eyes,—
While faintly, sadly, fitfully she speaks.

But when it is no longer light,
The pale girl smiles, with only One to mark,
And dies upon the breast of Night,
Like trodden snowdrift melting in the dark.

I.

AH, rain, rain, rain !
It patters down the glass, and on the sill,
And splashes in the pools along the lane—
Then gives a kind of shiver, and is still :
One likes to hear it, though, when one is
ill.

Rain, rain, rain, rain !
Ah, how it pours and pours !
Rain, rain, rain, rain !
A dismal day for poor girls out-o'-doors !

II.

Ah, don't ! That sort of comfort makes me
cry.

And, Parson, since I'm bad, I want to die.
The roaring of the street
The tramp of feet,
The sobbing of the rain,
Bring nought but pain ;

They're gone into the aching of my brain ;
And whether it be light,
Or dark dead night,

Wherever I may be, I hear them plain !
I'm lost and weak, and can no longer bear
To wander, like a shadow, here and there—
As useless as a stone—tired out—and
sick !

So that they put me down to slumber
quick,

It does not matter where.

No one will miss me ; all will hurry by,
And never cast a thought on one so low ;
Fine gentlemen miss ladies when they go,
But folk care nought for such a thing as I.

III.

'Tis bad, I know, to talk like that—too bad!
Joe, though he's often hard, is strong and
true—

[And there's the baby, too !—

But I'm so tired and sad.

I'm glad it was a boy, sir, very glad.

A man can fight along, can say his say,
Is not look'd down upon, holds up his
head,

And, at a push, can always earn his bread:
Men have the best of it, in many a way.

But ah ! 'tis hard indeed for girls to keep
Decent and honest, tramping in the
town,—

Their best but bad—made light of—
beaten down—

Wearying ever, wearying for sleep.

If they grow hard, go wrong, from bad to
badder,

Why, Parson dear, they're happier being
blind :

They get no thanks for being good and
kind—

The better that they are, they feel the sadder!

IV.

Nineteen ! nineteen !

Only nineteen, and yet so old, so old ;—
I feel like fifty, Parson—I have been

So wicked, I suppose, and life's so cold !

Ah, cruel are the wind, and rain, and snow,
And I've been out for years among them
all :

I scarce remember being weak and small
Like baby there—it was so long ago.

It does not seem that I was born. I woke,
One day, long, long ago, in a dark room,
And saw the housetops round me in the
smoke,

And, leaning out, look'd down into the
gloom,

Saw deep black pits, blank walls, and broken
panes,

And eyes, behind the panes, that flash'd
at me,

And heard an awful roaring, from the lanes,
Of folk I could not see ;

Then, while I look'd and listen'd in a dream,
I turn'd my eyes upon the housetops gray,

And saw, between the smoky roofs, a gleam
Of silver water, winding far away.

That was the River. Cool and smooth and
deep,

It glided to the sound o' folk below,

Dazzling my eyes, till they began to grow
Dusty and dim with sleep.

Oh, sleepily I stood, and gazed, and
hearken'd !

And saw a strange, bright light, that
slowly fled,

Shine through the smoky mist, and stain
it red,

And suddenly the water flash'd,—then
darken'd ;

And for a little time, though I gazed on,
The river and the sleepy light were gone ;

But suddenly, over the roofs there lighten'd
A pale, strange brightness out of heaven
shed,

And, with a sweep that made me sick and
frighten'd,

The yellow Moon roll'd up above my
head ;—

And down below me roar'd the noise o'
trade,

And ah ! I felt alive, and was afraid,
And cold, and hungry, crying out for
bread.

V.

All that is like a dream. It don't seem *true* !
Father was gone, and mother left, you
see,

To work for little brother Ned and me ;

And up among the gloomy roofs we grew,—
Lock'd in full oft, lest we should wander
out,

With nothing but a crust o' bread to eat,

While mother char'd for poor folk round
 about,
 Or sold cheap odds and ends from street
 to street.
 Yet, Parson, there were pleasures fresh and
 fair,
 To make the time pass happily up there :
 A steamboat going past upon the tide,
 A pigeon lighting on the roof close by,
 The sparrows teaching little ones to fly,
 The small white moving clouds, that we
 espied,
 And thought were living, in the bit of
 sky—
 With sights like these right glad were
 Ned and I ;
 And then, we loved to hear the soft rain
 calling,
 Pattering, pattering, upon the tiles,
 And it was fine to see the still snow falling,
 Making the housetops white for miles on
 miles,
 And catch it in our little hands in play,
 And laugh to feel it melt and slip away !
 But I was six, and Ned was only three,
 And thinner, weaker, wearier than me ;
 And one cold day, in winter time, when
 mother
 Had gone away into the snow, and we
 Sat close for warmth and cuddled one
 another,
 He put his little head upon my knee,
 And went to sleep, and would not stir a limb,
 But look'd quite strange and old ;
 And when I shook him, kiss'd him, spoke
 to him,
 He smiled, and grew so cold.
 Then I was frighten'd, and cried out, and
 none
 Could hear me ; while I sat and nursed
 his head,
 Watching the whiten'd window, while the
 Sun
 Peep'd in upon his face, and made it red.
 And I began to sob ;—till mother came,
 Knelt down, and scream'd, and named the
 good God's name,
 And told me he was dead.
 And when she put his night-gown on, and,
 weeping,
 Placed him among the rags upon his bed,
 I thought that brother Ned was only sleep-
 ing,

And took his little hand, and felt no fear.
 But when the place grew gray and cold
 and drear,
 And the round Moon over the roofs came
 creeping,
 And put a silver shade
 All round the chilly hed where he was laid,
 I cried, and was afraid.

VI.

Ah, yes, it's like a dream ; for time pass'd
 by,
 And I went out into the smoky air,
 Fruit-selling, Parson—trudging, wet or
 dry—
 Winter and summer—weary, cold, and
 bare.
 And when old mother laid her down to die,
 And parish buried her, I did not cry,
 And hardly seem'd to care ;
 I was too hungry, and too dull ; beside,
 The roar o' streets had made me dry as
 dust—
 It took me all my time, how'er I tried,
 To keep my limbs alive and earn a crust ;
 I had no time for weeping.
 And when I was not out amid the roar,
 Or standing frozen at the playhouse door,
 Why, I was coil'd upon my straw, and
 sleeping.
 Ah, pence were hard to gain !
 Some girls were pretty, too, but I was plain :
 Fine ladies never stopp'd and look'd and
 smiled,
 And gave me money for my face's sake.
That made me hard and angry when a child ;
 But now it thrills my heart, and makes
 it ache !
 The pretty ones, poor things, what could
 they do,
 Fighting and starving in the wicked town,
 But go from bad to badder—down, down,
 down—
 Being so poor, and yet so pretty, too ?
 Never could bear the like of that—ah, no !
 Better have starved outright than gone so
 low !

VII.

But I've no call to boast. I might have
 been
 As wicked, Parson dear, in my distress,
 But for your friend—you know the one I
 mean?—

The tall, pale lady, in the mourning dress.
Though we were cold at first, that wore
away—

She was so mild and young,
And had so soft a tongue,
And eyes to sweeten what she loved to say.
She never seem'd to scorn me—no, not she ;
And (what was best) she seem'd as sad as
me !

Not one of them that make a girl feel base,
And call her names, and talk of her disgrace,
And frighten one with thoughts of flaming
hell,

And fierce Lord God with black and
angry brow ;

But soft and mild, and sensible as well ;
And oh, I loved her, and I love her now.
She did me good for many and many a
day—

More good than pence could ever do, I
swear,

For she was poor, with little pence to
spare—

Learn'd me to read, and quit low words,
and pray.

And, Parson, though I never understood
How such a life as mine was meant for good,
And could not guess what one so poor and
low

Would do in that sweet place of which
she spoke,

And could not feel that God would let me
go

Into so bright a land with gentlefolk,
I liked to hear her talk of such a place,

And thought of all the angels she was
best,

Because her soft voice soothed me, and her
face

Made my words gentle, put my heart at
rest.

VIII.

Ah, sir ! 'twas very lonesome. Night and
day,

Save when the sweet miss came, I was
alone,—

Moved on and hunted through the streets
of stone,

And even in dreams afraid to rest or stay.
Then, other girls had lads to work and strive
for ;

I envied them, and did not know 'twas
wrong,

And often, very often, used to long
For some one I could like and keep alive for.
Marry? Not they !

They can't afford to be so good, you know ;
But many of them, though they step astray,
Indeed don't mean to sin so much, or go
Against what 's decent. Only—'tis their way.
And many might do worse than that, may be,
If they had ne'er a one to fill a thought—
It sounds half wicked, but poor girls like me
Must sin a little, to be good in aught.

IX.

So I was glad when I began to see

Joe Purvis fancied me ;

And when, one night, he took me to the play,
Over on Surrey side, and offer'd fair

That we should take a little room and
share

Our earnings, why, I could not answer
'Nay !'

And that's a year ago ; and though I'm
bad,

I've been as true to Joe as girl could be.
I don't complain a bit of Joe, dear lad,

Joe never, never meant but well to me ;

And we have had as fair a time, I think,
As one could hope, since we are both so
low.

Joe likes me—never gave me push or blow,
When sober : only, he was wild in drink.

But then we don't mind beating when a man
Is angry, if he likes us and keeps straight,

Works for his bread, and does the best he
can ;—

'Tis being left and slighted that we hate.

X.

And so the baby's come, and I shall die !

And though 'tis hard to leave poor baby
bere,

Where folk will think him bad, and all's
so drear,

The great LORD GOD knows better far
than I.

Ah, don't !—'tis kindly, but it pains me so !
You say I'm wicked, and I want to go !

'God's kingdom,' Parson dear? Ah nay,
ah nay !

That must be like the country—which I
fear :

I saw the country once, one summer day,
And I would rather die in London here

XI.

For I was sick of hunger, cold, and strife,
 And took a sudden fancy in my head
 To try the country, and to earn my bread
 Out among fields, where I had heard one's
 life
 Was easier and brighter. So, that day,
 I took my basket up and stole away,
 Just after sunrise. As I went along,
 Trembling and loath to leave the busy
 place,
 I felt that I was doing something wrong,
 And fear'd to look policemen in the face.
 And all was dim : the streets were gray and
 wet
 After a rainy night : and all was still ;
 I held my shawl around me with a chill,
 And dropt my eyes from every face I
 met ;
 Until the streets began to fade, the road
 Grew fresh and clean and wide,
 Fine houses where the gentlefolk abode,
 And gardens full of flowers, on every side.
 That made me walk the quicker—on, on,
 on—
 As if I were asleep with half-shut eyes,
 And all at once I saw, to my surprise,
 The houses of the gentlefolk were gone,
 And I was standing still,
 Shading my face, upon a high green hill,
 And the bright sun was blazing,
 And all the blue above me seem'd to melt
 To burning, flashing gold, while I was
 gazing
 On the great smoky cloud where I had dwelt.

XII.

I'll ne'er forget that day. All was so bright
 And strange. Upon the grass around my
 feet
 The rain had hung a million drops of light ;
 The air, too, was so clear and warm and
 sweet,
 It seem'd a sin to breathe it. All around
 Were hills and fields and trees that trem-
 bled through
 A burning, blazing fire of gold and blue ;
 And there was not a sound,
 Save a bird singing, singing, in the skies,
 And the soft wind, that ran along the
 ground,
 And blew so sweetly on my lips and eyes.

Then, with my heavy hand upon my chest,
 Because the bright air pain'd me, trem-
 bling, sighing,
 I stole into a dewy field to rest,
 And oh, the green, green grass where I
 was lying
 Was fresh and living—and the bird sang
 loud,
 Out of a golden cloud—
 And I was looking up at him and crying !

XIII.

How swift the hours slipt on!—and by and by
 The sun grew red, big shadows fill'd the sky,
 The air grew damp with dew,
 And the dark night was coming down, I
 knew.
 Well, I was more afraid than ever, then,
 And felt that I should die in such a
 place,—
 So back to London town I turn'd my face,
 And crept into the great black streets again ;
 And when I breathed the smoke and heard
 the roar,
 Why, I was better, for in London here
 My heart was busy, and I felt no fear.
 I never saw the country any more.
 And I have stay'd in London, well or ill—
 I would not stay out yonder if I could.
 For one feels dead, and all looks pure and
 good—
 I could not bear a life so bright and still.
 All that I want is sleep,
 Under the flags and stones, so deep, so deep!
 God won't be hard on one so mean, but He,
 Perhaps, will let a tired girl slumber sound
 There in the deep cold darkness under
 ground ;
 And I shall waken up in time, may be,
 Better and stronger, not afraid to see
 The great, still Light that folds Him round
 and round !

XIV.

See ! there's the sunset creeping through the
 pane—
 How cool and moist it looks amid the rain !
 I like to hear the splashing of the drops
 On the house-tops,
 And the loud humming of the folk that go
 Along the streets below !
 I like the smoke and noise—I am so bad—
 They make a low one hard, and still her
 cares. . . .

There's Joe! I hear his foot upon the stairs!—
 He must be wet, poor lad!
 He will be angry, like enough, to find
 Another little life to clothe and keep.
 But show him baby, Parson—speak him
 kind—
 And tell him Doctor thinks I'm going to
 sleep.
 A hard, hard life is his! He need be strong
 And rough, to earn his bread and get along.
 I think he will be sorry when I go,
 And leave the little one and him behind.
 I hope he'll see another to his mind,
 To keep him straight and tidy. Poor old
 Joe!

THE STARLING.

I.

The little lame tailor
 Sat stitching and snarling—
 Who in the world
 Was the tailor's darling?
 To none of his kind
 Was he well-inclined,
 But he doted on Jack the starling

II.

For the bird had a tongue,
 And of words good store,
 And his cage was bung
 Just over the door.
 And he saw the people,
 And heard the roar,—
 Folk coming and going
 Evermore,—
 And he look'd at the tailor,—
 And swore.

III.

From a country lad
 The tailor bought him,—
 His training was bad,
 For tramps had taught him;
 On alehouse benches
 His cage had been,
 While louts and wenches
 Made jests obscene,—
 But he learn'd, no doubt,
 His oaths from fellows
 Who travel about

With kettle and bellows,
 And three or four,
 The roundest by far
 That ever he swore,
 Were taught by a tar.
 And the tailor heard—
 'We'll be friends!' said he,
 'You're a clever bird,
 And our tastes agree—
 We both are old,
 And esteem life base,
 The whole world cold,
 Things out of place,
 And we're lonely too,
 And full of care—
 So what can we do
 But swear?

IV.

'The devil take you,
 How you mutter!—
 Yet there's much to make you
 Swear and flutter.
 You want the fresh air
 And the sunlight, lad,
 And your prison there
 Feels dreary and sad,
 And here I frown
 In a prison as dreary,
 Hating the town,
 And feeling weary:
 We're too confined, Jack,
 And we want to fly,
 And you blame mankind, Jack,
 And so do I!
 And then, again,
 By chance as it were,
 We learn'd from men
 How to grumble and swear;
 You let your throat
 By the scamps be guided,
 And swore by rote—
 All just as I did!
 And without beseeching,
 Relief is brought us—
 For we turn the teaching
 On those who taught us!'

V.

A haggard and ruffled
 Old fellow was Jack,
 With a grim face muffled
 In ragged black,

And his coat was rusty
 And never neat,
 And his wings were dusty
 With grime of the street,
 And he sidelong peer'd,
 With eyes of soot,
 And scowl'd and sneer'd,—
 And was lame of a foot !
 And he long'd to go
 From whence he came ;—
 And the tailor, you know,
 Was just the same.

VI.

All kinds of weather
 They felt confined,
 And swore together
 At all mankind ;
 For their mirth was done,
 And they felt like brothers,
 And the swearing of one
 Meant no more than the other's ;
 'Twas just a way
 They had learn'd, you see,—
 Each wanted to say
 Only this—' Woe 's me !
 I'm a poor old fellow,
 And I'm prison'd so,
 While the sun shines mellow,
 And the corn waves yellow,
 And the fresh winds blow,—
 And the folk don't care
 If I live or die,
 But I long for air,
 And I wish to fly !'
 Yet unable to utter it,
 And too wild to bear,
 They could only mutter it,
 And swear.

VII.

Many a year
 They dwelt in the city,
 In their prisons drear,
 And none felt pity,
 And few were sparing
 Of censure and coldness,
 To hear them swearing
 With such plain boldness ;
 But at last, by the Lord,
 Their noise was stopt,—
 For down on his board
 The tailor dropt,

And they found him dead,
 And done with snarling,
 And over his head
 Still grumbled the Starling ;
 But when an old Jew
 Claim'd the goods of the tailor,
 And with eye askew
 Eyed the feathery railer,
 And, with a frown
 At the dirt and rust,
 Took the old cage down,
 In a shower of dust,—
 Jack, with heart aching,
 Felt life past bearing,
 And shivering, quaking,
 All hope forsaking,
 Died, swearing.

JANE LEWSON.

Clasping his knee with one soft lady-hand,
 The other fingering his glass of wine,
 Black-raimented, white-hair'd, polite, and bland,
 With mellow voice discourses Doctor Vine :
 He warms, with deep eyes stirr'd to thoughtful
 light,
 And round about his serious talk the while,
 Kindly, yet pensive—worldly wise, yet bright,
 Like bloom upon the blackthorn, blows his smile.

Ah, strong and mighty are we mortal men !
 Braving the whirlwind on a ship at sea,
 Facing the grim fort's hundred tongues of
 fire,
 Ay, and in England, 'neath the olive branch,
 Pushing a stubborn elbow through the
 crowd,
 To get among the heights that keep the
 gold ;
 But there is might and might,—and in the
 one
 Our dames and daughters shame us. Come,
 my friend,
 My man of sinews,—conscious of your
 strength,
 Proud of your well-won wrestles with the
 world,—
 Hear what a feeble nature can endure !

A little yellow woman, dress'd in black,
 With weary crow's-feet crawling round the
 eyes,

And solemn voice, that seem'd a call to
prayer ;

Another yellow woman, dress'd in black,
Sad, too, and solemn, yet with bitterness
Burn'd in upon the edges of her lips,
And sharper, thinner, less monotonous
voice ;

And last, a little woman auburn-hair'd,
Pensive a little, but not solemnised,
And pretty, with the open azure eyes,
The white soft cheek, the little mindless
mouth,

The drooping childish languor. There they
dwelt,

In a great dwelling of a smoky square
In Islington, named by their pious friends,
And the lean Calvinistic minister—
The Misses Lewson, and their sister Jane.

Miss Sarah, in her twenty-seventh year,
Knew not the warmer passions of her sex,
But groan'd both day and night to save her
soul ;

Miss Susan, two years younger, had regrets
Her sister knew not, and a secret pain
Because her heart was withering—whence
her tongue

Could peal full sharp at times, and show a
sting ;

But Jane was comely—might have cherish'd
hopes,

Since she was only twenty, had her mind
Been hopefuller. The elders ruled the
house.

Obedience and meekness to their will
Was a familiar habit Jane had learn'd
Full early, and had fitted to her life
So closely, 'twas a portion of her needs.
She gazed on them, as Eastern worshippers
Gaze on a rayless picture of the sun.

Her acts seem'd other than her own ; her
heart

Kept melancholy time to theirs ; her eyes
Look'd ever unto them for help and light ;
Her eyelids droop'd before them if they chid.
A woman weak and dull, yet fair of face !
Her mother, too, had been a comely thing—
A bright-hair'd child wed to an aged man,
A heart that broke because the man was
hard,—

Not like the grim first wife, who brought
the gold,
And yielded to his melancholy kiss

The melancholy virgins. Well, the three,
Alone in all the world, dwelt in the house
Their father left them, living by the rents
Of certain smaller houses of the poor.
And they were stern to wring their worldly
dues—

Not charitable, since the world was base,
But cold to all men, save the minister,
Who weekly cast the darkness of his blessing
Over their chilly table.

All around

The life of London shifted like a cloud,
Men sinned, and women fell, and children
cried,

And Want went ragged up and down the
lanes ;

While the two hueless sisters dragg'd their
chain

Self-woven, pinch'd their lives complexion-
less,

Keeping their feelings quiet, hard, and pure.
But Jane felt lonesome in the world ; and
oft,

Pausing amid her work, gazed sadly forth
Upon the dismal square of wither'd trees,
The dusty grass that grew within the
rails,

The garden-plots where here and there a
flower

Grew up, and sicken'd in the smoke, and
died ;

And when the sun was on the square, and
sounds

Came from the children in the neighbouring
streets,

She thought of happy homes among the
fields,

And brighter faces. When she walk'd
abroad,

The busy hum of life oppress'd her heart
And frighten'd her : she did not raise her
eyes,

But stole along,—a sweet shape clad in
black,

A pale and pretty face, at which the men
Stared vacant admiration. Far too dull
To blame her gloomy sisters for the shape
Her young days took, she merely knew the
world

Was drear ; and if at times she dared to
dream

Of things that made her colour come and go,

And dared to hope for cheerier, sunnier days,
She grew the wanner afterwards, and felt
Sad and ashamed. The dull life that she
wore,

Like to a gloomy garment, day by day,
Was a familiar life, the only life
She clearly understood. Coldly she heard
The daily tale of human sin and wrong,
And the small thunders of the Sunday nights
In chapel. All around her were the streets,
And frightful sounds, and gloomy sunless
faces.

And thus with tacit dolour she resign'd
Her nature to the hue upon the cheeks
Of her cold sisters. Yet she could not pray
As they pray'd, could not wholly feel and
know

The blackness of mankind, her own heart's
sin ;

But when she tried to get to God, and
yearn'd

For help not human, she could only cry,
Feeling a loveless and a useless thing,
Thinking of those sweet places in the fields,
Those homes whereon the sun shone plea-
santly,

And happy mothers sat at cottage doors
Among their children.

Save for household work,
She would have wasted soon. From week
to week

The burthen lay on her,—the gloomy twain
Being too busy searching for their souls,
And begging God above to spare the same.
Yet she was quiet thus, content and glad
To silent drudgery, such as saved her heart
From wilder flutterings. The Sabbath day
Was drearest : drest in burial black, she sat
Those solemn hours in chapel, listening,
And scarcely heeding what she heard, but
watching

The folk around, their faces and their dress,
Or gazing at the sunshine on the floor ;
And service over, idly pined at home,
And, looking from the window at the
square,

Long'd for the labour of the coming day.
Her sisters watch'd her warily, be sure ;
And though their hearts were pure as pure
could be,
They loved her none the better for her face.

Love is as cunning as disease or death,
No doctor's skill will ward him off or cure,
And soon he found this pale and weary girl,
Despite the cloud of melancholy life
That rain'd around her. In no beauteous
shape,

In guise of passionate stripling iris-eyed,
Such as our poets picture in their songs,
Love came ;—but in a gloomy garb of one
Whom men call'd pious, and whose holy
talk

Disarm'd the dragons. 'Twere but idle,
friend,

To count the wiles by which he won his way
Into her heart ; how she vouchsafed him all
The passion of a nature not too strong ;
How, when the first wild sunshine dazzled
her,

The woman loved so blindly, that her
thoughts

Became a secret trouble in the house ;
And how at last, with white and frighten'd
face,

She glided out into the dark one night,
And vanish'd with no utterance of farewell.

The sisters gave a quick and scandal'd
cry,

And sought a little for the poor flown bird ;
Then, thinking awful things, composed
their hearts

In silence, pinch'd their narrow nat-ures
more,

And waited. 'This is something strange,'
they thought,

'Which God will clear ; we will not think
the worst,

Although she was a thing as light as straw.'
Nor did they cry their fear among their
friends,

Hawking a secret shame, but calmly waited,
Trusting no stain would fall upon their chill
And frosty reputations. Weeks pass'd by ;
They pray'd, they fasted, yellowing more
and more,

They waited sternly for the end, and heard
The timid knock come to the door at last.

It was a dark and rainy night ; the streets
Were gleaming watery underneath the
lamps,

The dismal wind scream'd fitfully without,
And made within a melancholy sound ;

And the faint knock came to the door at last.
 The sisters look'd in one another's faces,
 And knew the wanderer had returned again,
 But spoke not ; and the younger sister rose,
 Open'd the door, peer'd out into the rain,
 And saw the weary figure shivering there,
 Holding a burthen underneath her shawl.
 And silently, with wan and timid look,
 The wanderer slipt in. No word of greeting
 Spake either of the sisters, but their eyes
 Glean'd sharply, and they waited. White
 and cold,
 Her sweet face feehly begging for a word,
 Her long hair dripping loose and wet, stood
 Jane
 Before them, shivering, clasping tight her
 load,
 In the dull parlour with the cheerless fire.
 Till Susan, pointing, cried in a shrill voice,
 'What are you carrying underneath your
 shawl,
 Jane Lewson?' and the faint despairing
 voice,
 While the rain murmur'd and the night-wind
 blew,
 Moan'd, 'It's my *Baby!*' and could say no
 more,
 For the wild sisters scream'd and raised their
 hands,
 And Jane fell quivering down upon her
 knees,
 The old shawl opening show'd a child asleep,
 And, trebling terror with a piteous cry,
 The child awaken'd.

Pointing to the door,
 With twitching lips of venom, Susan said—
 'Go!' and the elder sister echo'd her
 More sadly and more solemnly. But Jane,
 Clinging to Sarah's skirts, implored and
 moan'd,
 'Don't turn me out! my little girl will die!
 I have no home in all the world but here;
 Kill me, but do not drive from the house!
 'Jane Lewson,' Susan cried, as white as
 death,
 'Where is the father of this child?' and Jane
 Moan'd, 'Gone, gone, gone;' and when
 she named his name,
 And how, while she who spake in sickness
 lay,
 He secretly had fled across the seas,
 They shiver'd to the hair. Holding her hand

Upon her heart, the elder sister spake
 In dull monotonous voice—'Look up!
 look up!
 Perhaps 'tis not so ill as we believed.
 Are you a wedded woman?' The reply
 Was silentness and heavy drooping eyes,
 Yet with no blush around the quivering lids;
 And Sarah, freezing into ice, spake on
 In dull monotonous voice—'Your sin has
 brought
 Shame on us all, but they who make their
 beds
 Must sleep upon them; go away, bad
 woman!
 The third of what our father left is yours,
 But you are not our sister any more.'
 Still moaning, shuddering, the girl begg'd
 on,
 Nor ceased to rock the babe and still its
 cries,
 'Kill me, but do not drive me from the
 house!
 Put any pain upon me that you please,
 But do not, do not, drive me forth again
 Into the dreadful world! I have no friends
 On all the earth save you!' The sisters
 look'd
 At one another, and without a word
 Walk'd from the room.

Jane sat upon the floor,
 Soothing the child, and did not rise, but
 waited;
 The agony and terror dried her tears,
 And she could only listen, praying God
 That He would soften them; and the little
 one
 Look'd in her face and laugh'd.

A weary hour
 Pass'd by, and then, still white, and stern,
 and cold,
 The sisters enter'd, and the elder one
 Spake without prelude: 'We have talk'd it
 o'er,
 Jane Lewson, and have settled how to act;
 You have a claim upon us: will you take
 The third of what our father left, and find
 Another home?' But Jane cried, 'Do not,
 do not,
 Drive me away; I have no friends save you;
 And I am sorry.' Trembling, for her heart
 Was not all cold, the elder icicle

Resumed : 'Take what is left you, and be gone,

And never see our faces any more ;
Or if you will, stay with us here, but only
On these conditions : For the infant's sake,
And for the sake of our good name, our
friends

Must never know the miserable child
Is yours ; but we will have it given out
That, being lonely and unwedded here,
We have adopted a poor tenant's child,
With view to bring it up in godliness.'

Jane answer'd, with a feeble thrill of hope,
'Anything, anything,—only leave me not
Alone in the dark world.' 'Peace !' Susan
said,

'You do not understand : the child herself
Must never know Jane Lewson is her
mother :

Neither by word nor look nor tender folly,
Must you reveal unto the child her shame,
And yours, and ours !' Then, with a bitter
cry,

And a wild look, Jane cried, 'And must my
babe

Not know me ?' 'Never,' Sarah Lewson
said :

'For the babe's sake, for yours, for ours,
the shame

Must not be utter'd. See, you have your
choice :

Take what our father gave you, and depart,
Or stay on these conditions. We are firm.
We have decided kindly, not forgetting
You were our sister, nor that this poor
child

Is blameless, save that all the flesh is sin,
But not forgetting, either, what we owe
To God above us.' Weeping o'er the child,
Not rising yet, Jane answer'd, 'I will stay ;
Yes, gladly, for the little baby's sake,
That folk may never call it cruel names.'

And the stern sisters took from off the shelf
The great old Bible, placed it in her hands
And made her kiss it, swearing before God
Never to any one in all the world,
Not even to the child itself, to tell
She was its sinful mother. Wild and dazed,
She swore upon the Book. 'That is
enough,'

Said Sarah ; 'but, Jane Lewson, never again
Speak to us of the evil that has pass'd ;
Live with us as you used to do, and ask

The grace of God, who has been kinder far
Than you deserved.'

Thus, friend, these icicles
Dealt their hard measure, deeming that they
did

A virtuous and a righteous deed ; and Jane,
The worn and mindless woman, sank again
Into submission and house-drudgery,
Comforted that she daily saw her child,
And that her shame was hidden from the
world,

And that the child would never suffer scorn
Because a sinner bore it. But her heart
Was a bruised reed, the little sunny hue
Had gone from all things ; and when'er
she pray'd,

She thought the great cold God above her
head

Dwelt on a frosty throne and did not hear.

II.

Yet He, the Almighty Lord of this our
breath,

Did see and hear, and surely pitied too,
If God can pity,—but He works as God,
Not man, and so we cannot understand.

No whisper of reproach, no spoken word,
Troubled with memories of her sinfulness
The suffering woman ; yet her daily life
Became a quiet sorrow. In the house
She labour'd with her hands from morn to
night,

Seeing few faces save the pensive ones
Whose yellow holiness she bow'd before ;
And tacitly they suffer'd her to sink
Into the household drudge,—with privilege
Upon the Sabbath day to dress in black,
Sit in the sunless house or go to prayer,—
So idle, that her thoughts could travel back
To shame and bitterness. Her only joy
Was when she gave her little girl the breast,
(They dared not rob her weary heart of that,)
When, seated all alone, she felt it suck,
And, as the little lips drew forth the milk,
Felt drowsily resign'd, and closed her eyes,
And trembled, and could feel the happy
tears.

There came a quiet gathering in the house,
And by the gloomy minister the child
Was christen'd ; and the name he gave to her

Was 'Margaret Lewson.' For the sisters
said,
'Her mother being buried, as it were,
The girl shall take our name.' And Jane
sat by,
And heard the pious lie with aching heart,
And ever after that her trouble grew.

Soon, when the sound of little feet were
heard

In the dull dwelling, and a baby-voice
Call'd at the mother's heart, Jane thrill'd
and heard,

But even as she listen'd the sweet sounds
Would seem to die into the cloud that hid
The great cold God above her. Margaret
Grew to a little wildling, quick and bright,
Black-eyed, black-hair'd, and passionate
and quick,

Not like its mother ; fierce and wild when
child,

So that the gloomy sisters often thought,
'There is a curse upon it ;' yet they grew
To love the little wildling unaware,
Indulged it in their stern and solemn way,
More cheer'd than they believed by its shrill
laugh

Within the dismal dwelling. But the child
Clung most to Jane, and though, when first
it learn'd

To call her by her Christian name, the sound
Bruised the poor suffering heart, that wore
away ;

And all the little troubles of the child,
The pretty joys, the peevish fits, the bursts
Of passion, work'd upon her nature so,
That all her comfort was to snatch it up,
And cover it with kisses secretly.

Wilful and passionate, yet loving too,
Grew Margaret,—an echo in a cave
Of human life without ; clinging to Jane,
Who never had the heart to fondle it
Before her sisters ; not afraid at times
To pinch the thin, worn arms, or pull the
hairs

Upon the aching head, but afterwards
Curing the pain with kisses and with tears.
So that as time wore on the mother's heart
Grew tenderer to its trouble than before.

Then later, when the little girl went forth
To school hard by, the motion and the light

Hied from the house ; and all the morning
hours

The thin face came and went against the
panes,

Looking out toward,—till the little shape
Appear'd out of the cloud, and pale eyes
grew

Dim to its coming. As the years went on,
The mother, with the agony in her heart
She could not utter, quietly subdued
Her nature to a listening watchfulness :
Her face grew settled to expectant calm,
Her vision penetrated things around
And gazed at something lying far beyond,
Her very foot linger'd about the house,
As if she loiter'd hearkening for a sound
Out of the world. For Margaret, as she
grew,

Was wilder and more wilful, openly
Master'd the gloomy virgins, and escaped
The pious atmosphere they daily breathed
To gambol in a freer, fresher air ;
And Jane would think, 'Twill kill me, if
my child

Should turn out wicked.' Mindless though
she was,

And feeble, yet the trouble made her sense
Quick, sharp, and subtle to perceive and
watch.

A little word upon the girlish tongue
Could sting her,—nay, a light upon the face,
A kindling of the eye, a look the child
Wore when asleep, would trouble her for
days,

Carrying strangest import. So she waited,
Watching and listening,—while the young
new life

Drew in the air, and throve, absorbing hues
Out of a thousand trivial lights and shades
That hover'd lightly round it. Still to Jane
The habit of submission clung : she watch'd
The wiser sterner faces oftentimes,
Trembling for confirmation of her fears ;
And nightly pray'd that God, who was so
just,

So hard to those who went astray at all,
Would aid her sisters, helping them to make
The little Margaret better as she grew,—
Waking her secret trouble evermore
With countless, nameless acts of help and
love,

And humble admonition,—comforted
By secret fondlings of the little arms,

Or kisses on the tiny, wilful mouth
Apart in childish slumber.

Thus the years
Pass'd over her like pensive clouds, and
melted

Into that dewy glimmer on the brain,
Which men call Memory. Wherefore recount
The little joys and sorrows of the time :
The hours when sickness came, and thought
itself

Tick'd like a death-watch,—all the daily
hopes

And impulses and fears? Enough to tell,
That all went onward like a troubled stream,
Until the sisters, worn and growing old,
Felt the still angel coming nearer, nearer,
Scattering sleep-dust on uplooking eyes ;
And Jane, though in her prime, was turning
gray ;

And Margaret was a maiden flower full-
blown.

A passion-flower!—a maiden whose rich
heart

Burn'd with intensest fire that turn'd the
light

Of the sweet eyes into a warm dark dew ;
One of those shapes so marvellously made,
Strung so intensely, that a finger-press,
The dropping of a stray curl unaware
Upon the naked breast, a look, a tone,
Can vibrate to the very roots of life,
And draw from out the spirit light that
seems

To scorch the tender cheeks it shines upon ;
A nature running o'er with ecstasy

Of very being, an appalling splendour
Of animal sensation, loveliness
Like to the dazzling panther's ; yet, withal,
The gentle, wilful, clinging sense of love,
Which makes a virgin's soul. It seem'd,
indeed,

The gloomy dwelling and the dismal days,
Gloaming upon her heart, had lent this
show

Of shining life a melancholy shade
That trebled it in beauty. Such a heart
Needed no busy world to make it beat :
It could throb burningly in solitude ;
Since kindly Heaven gave it strength
enough

To rock the languid blood into the brains
Of twenty smaller natures.

Then the pain,
The wonder, deepen'd on the mother's
heart,—

Her mother, her worn mother, whom she
knew not

To be her mother. As she might have
watch'd

A wondrous spirit from another world,
Jane Lewson watch'd her child. Could this
fair girl,—

This wild and dazzling life, be born of
her?—

A lightning flash struck from a pensive cloud
The wan still moon is drinking? Like a
woman

Who has been sick in darkness many days,
And steps into the sunshine, Jane beheld
Her daughter, and felt blind. A terror
grew

Upon her, that the smother'd sense of pride
Lack'd power to kill. She pray'd, she
wept, she dream'd,

And thought, if Margaret's had been a face
More like the common faces of the streets,
'Twould have been better. With this feel-
ing, grew

The sense of her own secret. Oftentimes
A look from Margaret brought the feeble
blush

Into the bloodless cheek ;—creeping away
Into her chamber, Jane would wring her
hands,

Moaning in pain, ' God help me ! If she
knew !

Ah, if she knew !' And then for many days
Would haunt the dwelling fearfully, afraid
To look on what she loved,—till once again,
Some little kindness, some sweet look or
tone,

A happy kiss, would bring her courage back
And cheer her.

Nor had Margaret fail'd to win
The hard-won sisters ; oft their frosty eyes
Enlarged themselves upon her and grew
thaw'd—

In secret she was mistress over both—
And in their loveless way, they also felt
A frighten'd pleasure in the beauteous thing
That brighten'd the dull dwelling.

Oftentimes,
The fiery maiden-nature flashing forth

In wilful act or speech or evil looks,
Deepen'd Jane's terror. Margaret heeded
not

The sisters' pious teachings, did not show
A godly inclination,—nay, at times
Mock'd openly. Ah, had she guess'd the
pain,

The fear, the agony, such mockings gave
Her mother, her worn mother, whom she
knew not

To be her mother! In her secret heart
Jane deem'd her own deep sorrows all bad
come

Because she had not, in her dreary youth,
Been godly; and as such flashes as she
saw

Gleam from her girl, seem'd wicked things
indeed;

And at such times the weary woman's eyes
Would seek the sunless faces, searching
them

For cheer or warning.

In its season came
That light which takes from others what it
gives

To him or her who, standing glorified,
Awaits it. 'Tis the old, sad mystery:
No gift of love that comes upon a life
But means another's loss. The new sweet
joy,

That play'd in tender colours and mild fire
On Margaret's cheek, upon the mother's
heart

Fell like a firebrand.

For to Jane, her friend,
Her dearest in the household from the first,
Her mother, her worn mother, whom she
knew not

To be her mother, Margaret first told
The terror—how she loved and was beloved;
And seated at Jane's feet, with eyes upturn'd,
Playing with the worn fingers, she exclaim'd,
'I love him, Jane! and you will love him
too!

I will not marry any other man!
And suddenly Jane felt as if the Lord
Had come behind her in the dark and
breathed

A burning fire upon her. For she thought,
'My child will go away, and I shall die!
But only murmur'd, 'Marry, Margaret?

You are too young to marry!'—and her
face

Was like a murder'd woman's.

And the pain,
The agony, deepen'd, when the lover's face
Came smiling to the dwelling, young and
bright

With pitiless gladness. Jane was still, and
moan'd,

'My child will go away, and I shall die!
And look'd upon her sisters, and could see
They pitied her; but their stern faces said,
'This is God's will! the just God governs
all!

How should we cross such love?' adding,
'Beware,—

For our sakes, for your own, but chief of all
For her sake whom you love, remember
now!

Pray, and be silent!' And the wounded
heart

Cried up to God again, and from the sky
No answer came; when, crush'd beneath
her pain,

The woman sicken'd, lay upon her bed,
And thought her time was come.

Most tenderly
Her daughter nursed her; little fathoming
The meaning of the wild and yearning look
That made the white face sweet and beau-
tiful;

For Jane was saying, 'Lord, I want to die!
My child would leave me, or my useless life
Would turn a sorrow to her, if I stay'd:
Lord, let me die!' Yea, the dull nature
clung

Still into silence, with the still resolve
Of mightier natures. Thinking she would
die,

Jane lay as in a painless dream, and watch'd
The bright face stir around her, following
The shape about the room, and praying still
For strength—so happy in her drowsy
dream,

That she went chill at times, and felt that
thoughts

So tranquil were a sin. A darker hour
Gloom'd soon upon her brain. She could
not see

The face she loved; murmur'd delirious
words;

And in the weary watches of the night,
 Moaning and wringing hands, with closed
 eyes,
 Cried 'Margaret! Margaret!' Then the
 sisters sought
 To lead the girl away, lest she should hear
 The secret; but she conquer'd, and re-
 main'd;
 And one still evening, when the quiet fire
 Was making ghosts that quiver'd on the
 floor
 To the faint time-piece ticking, Jane awoke,
 Gazed long and strangely at the shining
 face,
 Waved her thin arms, cried, 'Margaret!
 Margaret!
 Where are you, Margaret? Have you gone
 away?
 Come to your mother!' The wild cry of
 pain
 Startled the maiden, but she only thought
 The fever'd woman raved. Twining her
 arms
 Around Jane's neck, she murmur'd, 'I am
 here!
 Weeping and kissing; but the woman sigh'd
 And shiver'd, crying feebly, 'Let me die!
 My little girl has gone into the town,
 And she has learn'd to call me wicked
 names,
 And will not come again!'

When, wearied out,
 Jane sank to troubled sleep, her child sat
 still,
 Thinking of those strange words; and
 thought at last
 She shut them from her thought as idle
 dream,
 Their pain return'd upon her. The next
 day
 She spake unto the sisters of the same,
 Adding, in a low voice, 'She talk'd of me,
 And moan'd out loudly for a little child—
 Has she a child?' The first quick flash of
 fear
 Died from the yellow visages unseen,
 And they were calm. 'Delirium!' Sarah
 said;
 'But you, my child, must watch her sick-
 bed less—
 You are too young, too weak, to bear such
 things.'

And this time Margaret did not say a word,
 But yielded, thinking, 'It is very strange!—
 There is a mystery, and I will watch:
 Can Jane have had a child?'

That very day
 The dark mists roll'd from the sick woman's
 brain,
 And she awoke, remembering nought, and
 saw
 The sisters watching her. Two days they
 watch'd;
 And spake but very little, though they saw
 The wan eyes wander with a hungry look,
 Seeking the face they loved. Then Sarah
 took
 Jane's hand, and spake more gently, sisterly,
 (Such natures, friend, grow kinder as they
 age.)
 Than she had done for many years, and
 told
 Of those wild words utter'd while she was ill;
 Jane moan'd and hid her face; but Sarah
 said,
 'We do not blame you, and perchance the
 Lord
 Spake through you! We have thought it
 o'er, and pray'd:
 Now listen, Jane. Since that unhappy
 night,
 We have not spoken of your shame, yet
 know
 You have repented.' With her face still hid,
 Jane falter'd, 'Let me die!' but Sarah said,
 'We do not think, Jane Lewson, you will
 live;
 So mark me well. If, ere you go away,
 You feel that you could go more cheerfully,
 If you are certain that it is not sin,
 Poor Margaret shall know she is your child;
 We will not, now you die, deny you this;
 And Margaret will be silent of the shame,—
 And, lest you break your oath upon the
 Word,
 Our lips shall tell her.' Still Jane Lewson
 hid
 Her face; and all was quiet in the room,
 Save for a shivering sound and feeble crying.
 But suddenly Jane lifted up her face,
 Beauteous beyond all beauty given to joy,
 And quickly whispering, press'd the chilly
 hand—
 'I will not speak! I will not hurt my child'

So cruelly!—the child shall never know!
 And I will go in silence to my grave,
 Leaving her happy,—and perhaps the Lord
 Will pardon me!’ Then, for the first last
 time,
 The sisters look’d on Jane with different
 eyes,
 Admiring sternly, with no words of praise,
 Her they had scorn’d for feebleness so long.

Even then the watchers in the chamber
 heard
 A sound that thrill’d them through,—a rust-
 ling dress,
 A deep hard breathing as of one in pain;
 And pointing with her hand Jane scream’d
 aloud;
 And turning suddenly the sisters saw
 A face as white as marble, yet illumed
 By great eyes flashing with a terrible flame
 That made them quail. And in a dangerous
 voice,
 As low as a snake’s hissing, Margaret said,
 ‘I have heard all!’ Then the great eyes
 were turn’d
 On Jane, and for a moment they were
 cold;
 But all at once the breathless agony
 Of recognition struck upon her heart,
 The bosom heaved and moan’d, the bright
 tears burst,
 And Margaret flung herself upon the bed,
 Clasp’d her shivering mother; and at first
 Jane shrank away,—but soon the wondrous
 love
 Master’d her,—she could smile and kiss and
 cry—
 And hear the dear wild voice cry, ‘Mother,
 mother!’
 And see the bright face through her tears,
 and feel
 That Love was there.

After the first strange bliss
 Of meeting, both were stiller. Jane could
 weep,
 And bear to feel so happy. Margaret
 Clang to her mother, breathed her bliss upon
 her,
 Fondling the silver’d tresses, covering
 The thin hard hand with kisses and with
 tears,

Trying to say a thousand merry things
 That died in sobs and tears, and only say-
 ing,
 For all the utterance of her speechful heart,
 ‘Mother, my mother!’ Suddenly her
 shame
 Came back upon the woman, and she
 turn’d
 To seek her sisters’ faces piteously,
 But they had stolen from the happy room;
 Whereon again she murmur’d, ‘Let me die!
 I am a wicked woman, Margaret!
 Why did you listen?’ But a second burst
 Of love and blissful pain, and bitter things
 Hurl’d at the cruel sisters, answer’d her;
 And more tears flow’d, and more fond kisses
 brush’d
 The tears away,—until at last Jane cried,
 ‘Dear, I could go away not weeping now—
 God is so gentle with me!’

But He, who drew
 Thus from His cloud at last and look’d so
 kind,
 Will’d that Jane Lewson should not die so
 soon.
 The agony did not kill her, and the joy
 Sent a fresh life into her languid blood
 And saved her. So that soon she rose from
 bed,
 To see the sunshine on her daughter’s face,
 To see the sunless sisters, who again
 Look’d cold as ever.

But a burning fire
 From Margaret scorch’d them to the heart,
 because
 They loved the girl; she heap’d upon their
 heads
 Rage and reproaches, mockery and scorn,
 Until they cried, ‘You are a wicked girl!
 Jane Lewson’s shame is on you. After this
 We cannot dwell together any more.’
 And Margaret would have answer’d fiercelier
 still,
 But that her feeble mother, piteously
 Gazing at them to whom in spite of all
 Her heart was humble, begg’d her on her
 knees
 For silence; and, thus conquer’d, Margaret
 Answer’d her aunts with kisses and with
 tears
 Shower’d on her mother’s face.

That evening,
Margaret held her mother round the neck,
And led her to her lover in the house,
And with her lips set firm together, saying,
'This is my dear, dear mother,' told him
all,
Concealing nothing. For a time, the man
Look'd startled and appall'd; but being
made
Of clay not base, he smiling spake at last,
And stooping softly, kiss'd the thin worn
hand—
'She is my mother, too,—and we will dwell
Together!'

And they dwelt together,—leaving
The dismal dwelling in the smoky square,
To dwell within a cottage close to town;
But Jane lived with them only for a year,
And then, because the heart that had been
used
To suffering so long could not endure
To be so happy, died; worn out and
tired,
Kissing her child; and as her dying
thoughts
Went back along the years, the suffering
seem'd
Not such a thankless suffering after all,
But like a faded garment one has learn'd
To love through habit;—and the woman
cried
On her stern sisters with her dying breath.

LANGLEY LANE.

A LOVE POEM.

IN all the land, range up, range down,
Is there ever a place so pleasant and
sweet,
As Langley Lane, in London town,
Just out of the bustle of square and
street?
Little white cottages, all in a row,
Gardens, where bachelors'-buttons grow,
Swallows' nests in roof and wall,
And up above the still blue sky,
Where the woolly-white clouds go sailing
by,—
I seem to be able to see it all!

For now, in summer, I take my chair,
And sit outside in the sun, and hear
The distant murmur of street and square,
And the swallows and sparrows chirping
near;
And Fanny, who lives just over the way,
Comes running many a time each day,
With her little hand's-touch so warm and
kind;
And I smile and talk, with the sun on my
cheek,
And the little live hand seems to stir and
speak,—
For Fanny is dumb and I am blind.

Fanny is sweet thirteen, and she
Has fine black ringlets, and dark eyes
clear,
And I am older by summers three,—
Why should we hold one another so dear?
Because she cannot utter a word,
Nor hear the music of bee or bird,
The water-cart's splash, or the milkman's
call.
Because I have never seen the sky,
Nor the little singers that hum and fly,—
Yet know she is gazing upon them all.

For the sun is shining, the swallows fly,
The bees and the blue-flies murmur low,
And I hear the water-cart go by,
With its cool splash-splash down the
dusty row;
And the little one, close at my side, per-
ceives
Mine eyes upraised to the cottage eaves,
Where birds are chirping in summer
shine,
And I hear, though I cannot look, and
she,
Though she cannot hear, can the singers
see,—
And the little soft fingers flutter in mine.

Hath not the dear little hand a tongue,
When it stirs on my palm for the love of
me?
Do I not know she is pretty and young?
Hath not my soul an eye to see?
'Tis pleasure to make one's hosom stir,
To wonder how things appear to her,
That I only hear as they pass around;

And as long as we sit in the music and
light,
She is happy to keep God's sight,
And *I* am happy to keep God's sound.

Why, I know her face, though I am
blind—

I made it of music long ago :
Strange large eyes, and dark hair twined
Round the pensive light of a brow of
snow ;

And when I sit by my little one,
And hold her hand, and talk in the sun,
And hear the music that haunts the
place,

I know she is raising her eyes to me,
And guessing how gentle my voice must
be,
And *seeing* the music upon my face.

Though, if ever Lord God should grant me
a prayer,

(I know the fancy is only vain,)

I should pray : Just once, when the weather
is fair,

To see little Fanny and Langley Lane ;
Though Fanny, perhaps, would pray to
hear

The voice of the friend that she holds so
dear,

The song of the birds, the hum of the
street,—

It is better to be as we have been,—

Each keeping up something, unheard, un-
seen,

To make God's heaven more strange and
sweet.

Ah ! life is pleasant in Langley Lane !

There is always something sweet to
hear ;

Chirping of birds, or patter of rain ;

And Fanny, my little one, always near ;
And though I am weak, and cannot live
long,

And Fanny, my darling, is far from strong,
And though we can never married be,—

What then?—since we hold one another so
dear,

For the sake of the pleasure one cannot
hear,

And the pleasure that only one can see?

EDWARD CROWHURST ;

OR, 'A NEW POET.'

I.

Potts, in his dusty chamber, writes,
A dilettante lord to please :
A ray of country sunshine lights
The foggy region ruled by these ;
Flock, kind advisers, critics sage,
To damn the simple country clown,—
The mud of English patronage
Grows round his feet, and keeps him down.

'THIS little mean-faced duodecimo,
"Poems by Edward Crowhurst, La-
bourer,"

This coarsely-printed little book of rhymes,
Contains within the goodliest gift of song
The gods have graced us with for many a
day :

A crystal clearness, as of running brooks.
A music, as of green boughs murmuring,
A peeping of fresh thoughts in shady
places

Like violets new-blown, a gleam of dew-
drops,

A sober, settled, greenness of repose,—
And lying over all, in level beams,
Transparent, sweet, and unmistakable,
The light that never was on sea or land.

*

'Let all the greater and the lesser lights
Regard these lines upon a Wood in
Spring,

Or those which follow, call'd "the Barley-
Bird,"

And then regard their laurels. Melody
More sweet was never blown through pas-
toral pipe

In Britain, since the Scottish Ramsay died.
Nor let the squeamish dreamers of our
time,

Our rainbow bards, despise such song as
this,

Wealthy in images the poor man knows,
And household chords that make the women
weep.

Simply yet subtly, Edward Crowhurst
works :

Singing of lowly truths and homely things—
Death snatching up a cotter's child at
play,

Light flashing from far worlds on dying
eyes

That never saw beyond their native fields,
The pathos and the power of common life ;
And while, perchance, his deeper vein runs
on

Less heeded, by a random touch is waken'd
A scent, a flower-tint, a wave of wings,
A sense of rustling boughs and running
brooks,

Touch'd by whose spell the soul is stirr'd,
and eyes

Gaze on the dark world round them, and
are dim.

*

'This Mister Crowhurst is a poor young
man,

Uneducated, doom'd to earn his bread
By working daily at the plough ; and yet,
Sometimes in midst of toil, sometimes at
night,

Whenever he could snatch a little time,
Hath written down (he taught himself to
write !)

His simple verses. Is it meet, we ask,
A nature so superb should languish thus ?
Nay, he deserves, if ever man deserved,
The succour of the rich and high in place,
The opportunity to labour less,
And use those truly wondrous gifts of his
In modest competence ; and therewithal,
Kindness, encouragement, and good ad-
vice,

Such as the cultured give. Even now, we
hear,

A certain sum of money is subscribed,
Enough to furnish well his present needs.
Among the donors, named for honour
here,

We note the noble Earl of Chremiton,
Lord Phidippus, Lord Gnathos, Lady Dee,
Sir Charles Toroon. But more must yet
be done.

We dare to put the case on public grounds,
Since he who writes so nobly is, indeed,
A public benefactor,—with a claim
On all who love to listen and to look,
When the fresh Saxon Muse, in homespun
gear,

The free breeze blowing back her loosen'd
hair,
Wanders barefooted through the dewy
lanes

And sings aloud, till all the valleys ring
For pleasure, and the echoes of the hills
Make sweet accord !'

—*Conservative Review.*

II.

AFTER TEN YEARS.

A homely matron, who has once been fair,
In quiet suffering old, yet young in years ;
Soft threads of silver in her auburn hair,
And lines around the eyes that tell of tears ;
But on her face there trembles peaceful light,
That seems a smile, and yet is far less bright,—
To tell of watchings in the shade and sun,
And melancholy duty sweetly done.

What, take away my Teddy ? shut him up
Between stone walls, as if he was a thief ?
You freeze my blood to talk of such a thing !
Why, these green fields where my old man
was born,

The river, and the woodland, and the lanes,
Are all that keep him living : he was ever
O'er fond of things like those ; and now,
you see,

Is fonder of them than he was before,
Because he thinks so little else is left.
Mad ? He's a baby ! Would not hurt a
fly !

Can manage him as easy as our girl !
And though he was a poet and went wrong,
He could not help his failings. Ah, True
Heart,

I love him all the deeper and the dearer !
I would not lose him for the whole wide
world !

It came through working lonely in the
fields,
And growing shy of cheerful company,
And worrying his wits with idle things
He saw and heard when quiet out o' doors.
For, long ere we were wedded, all the place
Knew Teddy's ways : how mad he was for
flowers

And singing birds ; how often at the plough
He used to idle, holding up his head
And looking at the clouds ; what curious
stuff

He used to say about the ways of things ;
How week-days he was never company,
Nor tidy on a Sunday. Even then
Folk call'd him stupid : so did I myself,

At first, before his sheepishness wore off ;
 And then, why I was frighten'd for a time
 To find how wondrous brightly he could look
 And talk, when with a girl, and no one by.
 Right soon he stole this heart of mine away,
 So cunningly I scarcely guess'd 'twas gone,
 But found my tongue at work before I knew,
 Sounding his praises. Mother shook her
 head ;
 But soon it was the common country talk
 That he and I were courting.

After that

Some of his sayings and his doings still
 Seem'd foolish, but I used to laugh and say,
 'Wait till we marry! I shall make him
 change!'

And it was pleasant walking after dark,
 In summer, wandering up and down the
 lanes,
 And heark'ning to his talk ; and pleasant,
 too,

In winter, to sit cuddling by the fire,
 And whispering to the quiet firelight sound
 And the slow ticking of the clock. Ere long,
 I grew to care for many things he loved.
 He knew the names of trees, and birds, and
 flowers,

Their races and their seasons ; named the
 stars,

Their comings and their goings ; and could
 tell

Strange truths about the manners of the
 clouds.

Set him before a hedgerow in a lane,
 And he was happy all alone for hours.

The woods and fields were full of joy to him,
 And wonders, and fine meanings ever new.
 How, at the bottom of the wayside well,
 The foul toad lies and purifies the drink ;
 How twice a year red robin sings a song,
 Once when the orchis blows its bells in
 spring,

Once when the gold is on the slanted
 sheaves ;

How late at night the common nightingale
 Comes in the season of the barley-sowing,
 Silently builds her nest among the boughs,
 And then sings out just as the roses blow,
 And it is sweet and pleasant in the moon.
 Why, half his courtship lay in talk like that,
 And, oh ! the way he talk'd fill'd high my
 heart

With pleasure. Then, o' quiet winter nights,
 With wild bright eyes and voice that broke
 for joy,

He often read aloud from books of songs ;
 One I remember, that I liked the best,
 A book of pictures and of love-tales, call'd
 'The Seasons.' I was young, and did not
 think :

I only felt 'twas fine. Yet now and then
 I noticed more, and took a sober fit,
 And tried to make him tidy in his clothes,
 And could not, though I tried ; and used to
 sigh

When mother mutter'd hints, as mothers
 will,

That he should work more hard and look
 ahead,

And save to furnish out a house for me. . . .
 For Teddy smiled, poor lad, and work'd
 more hard,

But save . . . not he ! Instead of laying
 by,

Making a nest to rear the young ones in,
 He spent his hard-won cash in buying
 books,—

Much dusty lumber, torn and black and
 old,

Long sheets of ballads, bundles of old
 rhyme,—

And read them, one by one, at home o'
 nights,

Or out aloud to me, or at the plough.
 I chid at first, but quickly held my tongue,
 Because he look'd so grieved ; and once he
 said,

With broken voice and dew-light in his
 eyes,

'Lass, I'm a puzzle to myself and you,
 But take away the books, and I should
 die !'

His back went bare for books, his stomach
 starved

To buy them,—nay, he pawn'd his jacket
 once,

To get a dreary string of solemn stuff
 All about Eve and Adam. More and more
 He slacken'd at his toil ; and soon the lad,
 Who turn'd the cleanest furrow, when he
 pleased,

Of all the ploughmen, let his work go
 spoil,

And fairly led an idle thriftless life
 In the green woods and on the river side.

And then I found that he himself made
verse
In secret,—verse about the birds and
flowers,
Songs about lovers, rhymes about the stars,
Tales of queer doings in the village here,—
All writ on scraps of paper out-o'-doors,
And hidden in an old tin coffee-pot
Where he had kept his cash. The first I
heard
Was just a song all about him and me,
And cuddling in the kitchen while 'twas
snowing ;
He read it to me, blushing like a girl,
And I was pleased, and laugh'd, and
thought it fine,
And wonder'd where he learn'd to make the
words
Jingle so sweetly. Then he read me more,
Some that I liked, some that I fancied poor ;
And, last of all, one morn in harvest-time,
When all the men were working in the
fields,
And he was nearly ragged, out it came—
'They're reaping corn, and corn brings
gold, my lass ;
But I will reap gold, too, and fame beside,—
I'm going to print a Book !'

I thought him mad !
The words seem'd dreadful—such a fool
was I ;
And I was puzzled more when he explain'd :
That he had sent some verses by the post
To a rich man who lived by selling songs
Yonder in London city ; that for months
No answer came, and Teddy strain'd his
eyes
Into the clouds for comfort ; that at last
There came a letter full of wondrous praise
From the great man in London, offering
Poor Teddy, if he sent him verse enough
To make a pretty little printed book,
To value it in money. Till I die,
I'll ne'er forget the light on Teddy's face—
The light, the glory, and the wonder there :
He laugh'd, and read the letter out aloud,
He leapt and laugh'd and kiss'd me o'er and
o'er,
And then he read the letter o'er again,
And then turn'd pale, and sank into a chair,
And hid his bright face in his hands, and
cried.

Bewilder'd though I was, my heart was
glad
To see his happy looks, and pleased beside
That fine folk call'd him clever. I said
nought
To mother—for I knew her ways too well—
But waited. Soon came other wondrous
news :
The scraps of verse had all been copied out
On fine white sheets, written in Teddy's
hand,
Big, round, and clear, like print ; and word
had come
That they were read and praised by other
folk,
Friends of the man in London. Last of all,
One night, when I was ironing the clothes,
And mother knitting sat beside the fire,
In Teddy came—as bright and fresh and
gay
As a cock starling hopping from the nest
On May-day ; and with laughing eyes he
cried,
'Well, mother, when are Bess and I to
wed ?'
'Wed ?' mother snapt, as sour as butter-
milk,
'Wed ? when the birds swim, and the fishes
fly,
And the green trees grow bread and cheese
and butter
For lazy loons that lie beneath and yawn !'
Then Teddy laugh'd aloud, and when I
frown'd
And shook my head to warn him, laugh'd
the more ;
And, drawing out his leathern ploughman's
pouch,
'See, mother, see !' he cried,—and in her
lap
Pour'd thirty golden guineas !

At the first,
I scream'd, and mother look'd afraid to
touch
The glittering gold,—and plain enough she
said
The gold, she guess'd, was scarcely honest
gain ;
Then Teddy told her all about his book,
And how those golden guineas were the
price
The great rich man in London put upon 't.

She shook her head the more ; and when
 he read
 The great man's letter, with its words of
 praise,
 Look'd puzzled most of all ; and in a dream,
 Feeling the gold with her thin hand, she
 sat,
 While Teddy, proud dew sparkling in his
 eyes,
 Show'd me in print the little song he made
 Of cuddling in the kitchen while 'twas
 snowing,—
 'And, Bess,' he cried, 'the gold will stock
 a house,
 But little 'tis I care about the gold ;
 This bit of printed verse is sweeter far
 Than all the shining wealth of all the
 world !'
 And lifted up the paper to his mouth
 And kiss'd the print, then held it out at
 length
 To look upon 't with sparkling, happy eyes,
 And folded it and put it in his pouch,
 As tenderly and carefully, I swear,
 As if it were a note upon a bank
 For wealth untold. Why linger o'er the
 tale?—
 Though now my poor old man is weak and
 ill,
 Sweet is the telling of his happy time.
 The money stock'd a house, and in a month
 We two were man and wife.

Teddy was proud

And happy,—busy finishing the book
 That was his heart's delight ; and as for
 me,
 My thoughts were merry as a running
 brook,
 For Teddy seem'd a wise man after all ;
 And it was spring-time, and our little home
 Was hung with white clematis, porch and
 wall,
 And wall-flower, candiduft, and London
 pride,
 All shining round a lilac bush in bloom,
 Sweeten'd the little square of garden ground ;
 And cozy as a finch's mossy nest
 Was all within ; the little sleeping-room
 And red-tiled kitchen ; and, made snug and
 fine
 By chairs and tables cut of bran-new deal,
 The little parlour,—on the mantel-piece

Field-flowers and ferns and bird's-egg neck-
 laces,
 Two pretty pictures pasted on the walls,
 (The portraits of one Milton and one Burns,)
 And, in the corner Teddy loved the best,
 Three shelves to keep the old, black, thumb-
 mark'd books.

And if my heart had fever, lest the life
 Begun so well was over-bright to last,
 Teddy could cheer me ; for he placed his
 arm
 Around me, looking serious in his joy,
 When we were wed three days ; and ' Bess,'
 he said,
 ' The Lord above is very kind to me ;
 For He has given me this sweet place and
 you,
 Adding the bliss of seeing soon in print
 The verse I love so much.' Then, kissing
 me,
 ' I have been thinking of it all,' he said,
 ' Holpen a bit by lives of other folk,
 Which I have read. Now, many men like
 me
 Grow light o' head and let their labour go ;
 But men can't live by writing verses, Bess.'
 ' Nay, nay,' cried I, 'twere pity if they
 could,
 For every man would try the easier task,
 And who would reap the fields or grind the
 corn?'
 And Teddy smiling, said, ' 'Tis so ! 'tis so !
 Pride shall not puff my wits, but all the day
 I will toil happily in the fields I love ;
 And in the pleasant evenings 'twill be fine
 To wander forth and see the world with you,
 Or read out poems in the parlour here,
 Or take a pen and write, for ease o' heart,
 Not praise, not money.' I was glad ten-
 fold,—
 Put all my fears aside, and trusted him,—
 And well he kept his word.

Yet ill at ease,

Restless and eager, Teddy waited on,
 Until the night a monster parcel came
 From London : twelve brown volumes, all
 the same,
 Wide-printed, thin, and on the foremost
 page,
 ' Poems by Edward Crowhurst, Labourer.'
 The happiest hour my Teddy ever knew !

He turn'd the volumes o'er, examined each,
 Counted the sheets, counted the printed
 lines,
 Stared at his name in print, held out the page
 At arm's length, feasting with his mouth and
 eyes.

I wonder'd at his joy, yet, spite o' me,
 I shared it. 'Twas so catching. The old
 tale!

A little thing could make my Teddy's heart
 Gay as a bunch of roses, while a great
 Went by unheeded like a cannon-ball.
 The glowworm is a little common grub,
 Yet what a pretty gleam it often sheds ;
 And that same poor, small, common-looking
 book,

Set on our table, kept around its leaves
 A light like sunshine.

When his joy grew cool,
 Teddy took up a book to read it through ;
 And first he show'd me, next the foremost
 page,

A bit of writing called the ' Author's Life,'
 Made up of simple things my man had told—
 How he was but a lowly labourer,
 And how the green fields work'd upon his
 heart

To write about the pretty things he saw—
 All put together by a clever man
 In London. For a time he sat and read
 In silence, looking happy with his eyes ;
 But suddenly he started up and groan'd,
 Looking as black as bog-mud, while he flung
 The book upon the table ; and I gript
 His arm, and ask'd what ail'd him. ' Bess,'
 he said,

' The joy o' this has all gone sudden sour,
 All through the cruel meddling of a fool :
 The story of my life is true enough,
 Despite the fine-flown things the teller sticks
 Around it—peacock's feathers stuck around
 The nest of some plain song-bird ; but the
 end

Is like the garlic flower,—looks fine at first,
 But stinks on peeping nearer. Bess, my lass,
 I never begg'd a penny in my life,
 I sought the help of no man, but could work,
 What then? what then? O Bess, 'tis hard,
 'tis hard!

They make me go a-begging, book in hand,
 As if I were a gipsy of the lanes
 Whistling for coppers at an alehouse door !'

I, too, was hurt, but tried to comfort him ;
 'Twas kindly meant, at least, I thought and
 said ;

But Teddy clench'd his teeth, and sat him
 down,

And wrote, not rudely, but as if in grief,
 To him in London. Till the answer came,
 The printed poems cheer'd him, though the
 book

Had lost a scent that ne'er would come
 again ;

And when the answer came, 'twas like the
 words

A mother murmurs to a silly child—
 A smiling, pitying, quiet kind of tone,
 That made him angrier than violent speech ;
 And at the end a melancholy hint
 About ingratitude. Teddy must trust
 In those who had his fortune most at heart,
 Nor rashly turn his friends to enemies,
 Nor meddle with the kindly schemes of those
 Who knew the great world better far than
 he.

Oh, Teddy's eyes were dim with bitter dew !
 ' Begging is begging, and I never begg'd !
 Shame on me if I ever take their gold !'
 I coax'd him to be silent ; and though soon
 The bitter mood wore off, his gladness lost
 The look of happy pride it wore of old.

'Twas happy, happy, in the little home,
 And summer round about on wood and field,
 And summer on the bit of garden ground.
 But soon came news, like whiffs of colour'd
 smoke,

Blown to us thickly on the idle wind,
 And smelling of the city. For the land
 Was crying Teddy's praises ! Every morn
 Came papers full of things about the Book,
 And letters full of cheer from distant folk ;
 And Teddy toil'd away, and tried his best
 To keep his glad heart humble. Then, one
 day,

A smirking gentleman, with inky thumbs ;
 Call'd, chatted, pried with little fox's eyes
 This way and that, and when he went away
 He wrote a heap of lying scribble, styled
 ' A Summer Morning with the Labourer
 . Bard !'

Then others came: some, mild young
 gentlemen,

Who chirp'd, and blush'd, and simper'd,
 and were gone ;

Some, sallow ladies wearing spectacles,
And pale young misses, rolling languid eyes,
And pecking at the words my Teddy spake
Like sparrows picking seed ; and, once or
twice,

Plump merry gentlemen who talk'd no stuff,
But chatted sensibly of common things,
And made us feel at home. Ay, not a day
But Teddy must be sent for, from the fields,
To meet with fine-clad strangers from afar.
The village folk began to open eyes
And wonder, but were only more afraid
Of Teddy, gave him hard suspicious looks,
And shunn'd him out-o'-doors. Yet how
they throng'd,

Buzzing like humble bees at swarming time,
That morn the oil'd and scented gentleman
(For such we thought him) brought a little
note

From Lord Fitzalbot of Fitzalbot Tower,
Yonder across the moorland. 'Twas a line
Bidding my Teddy to the Tower, and he
Who brought it was the footman of my lord.
Well, Teddy went, was many bours away,
And then return'd with cat's-claws round
his lips.

' See ! ' Teddy cried, and flung a little purse
Of money in my lap ; and I, amazed,
Counted ten golden guineas in my palm,
Then gazed at Teddy, saw how pale he was,
And ask'd what ail'd him. ' 'Tis the money,
lass,'

He answer'd, groaning deep. ' He talk'd,
and seem'd

Right kindly ; ask'd about my home, and
you ;

Spoke of the poems, smiled, and bow'd
farewell ;

And, dropping that same money in my hat,
Bade me go dine below. I burn'd like fire,
Felt choking, yet was fearful to offend,
And took the money, as I might have took
A blazing cinder, bow'd, and came away.

O Lord ! O Lord ! this comes of yonder
loon,

Who sent the book a-begging ! ' Then he
talk'd—

How fiercely and how wildly, clenching
hands :

' Was not a poet better than a lord ?

Why should the cruel people use him so ?

Why would the world not leave his home
in peace ?'

And last, he vow'd to send the money back
But I, though shamed and troubled, thought
him wrong,

And vow'd my lord was kind, and meant
us well,

And won him o'er at last to keep the purse.
And ah ! we found it useful very soon,

When I lay in, and had a dreadful time,
And brought our girl. Then Teddy put
aside

All grief and anger ; thought of us alone ;
Forgot, or nearly, all the praise and blame
Of loveless strangers ; and was proud and
glad,

Making fond rhymes about the babe and me.

Ah ! had the folk but let my man alone,
All would be happy now. He loved his
work,

Because it kept him in the fields ; he loved
The babe and me ; and all he needed more,
To keep his heart content, was pen and ink,
And now and then a book. And as for
praise,

He needed it no more than singing birds ;
And as for money, why, he wanted none ;
And as for prying strangers in the house,
They brought a clumsy painful sense of pride
That made him restless. He was ever shy
Of company—he loved to dream alone—
And the poor life that he had known so long
Was just the kind of life he suited best.

He look'd a fine straight man in homespun
gear,

But ne'er seem'd easy in his Sunday coat.

What should his fine friends do at last,
but write,

Bidding my man to London,—there to meet
A flock o' gentlefolk, who spent their days
In making books !—Though here we dwell
so near,

That northward, far away, you see the sky
Black with the smoky breathing of the city,
We ne'er had wander'd far away from home,
Save once or twice, five miles to westward
yonder,

To Kersey Fair. Well, Teddy fix'd to go ;
And seeing him full bent, I held my tongue.

And off he set, one day, in Sunday black,
A hazel staff over his shoulder flung,
His bundle swinging,—and was sped by
train

To London town. Two weeks he stay'd
away ;
And, when he came from London, he was
changed.
His eyes look'd wild, his cheek was pale,
his step
Unsteady ; when he enter'd, I could smell
Drink in his breath. Full pain'd, and sick
at heart,
I question'd him ; but he was petulant,
And snapt me short ; and when I brought
the child,
He push'd her from him. Next day, when
he rose,
His face was pallid ; but his kindly smile
Came back upon it. Ere the day was out,
He told me of his doings, of the men
And places he had seen, and when, and how.
He had been dull in dwellings of the rich,
Had felt ashamed in great grand drawing-
rooms,
And angry that the kindly people smiled
As if in pity ; and the time, he said,
Would have gone drearily, had he lack'd
the cheer
He chanced to find among some jovial folk
Who lived by making books. Full plain I
saw
That something had gone wrong. His
ways were strange,
He did not seem contented in his home,
He scarcely glinted at the poor old books
He loved so dearly. In a little time,
Teddy grew more himself, at home, a-field,
And though, from that day forward, he
began
To take a glass and smoke a pipe at night,
I scarcely noticed. Thus the year wore
on ;
And still the papers praised him far away,
And still the letters came from distant folk.

And Teddy had made friends : folk who
could talk
About the things he loved, and flatter him,
Ay, laugh aloud to see him drink his glass,
And clap his back, and shake him by the
hand,
How wild soe'er he talk'd. For by degrees
His tongue grew freer, he was more at ease
With strangers. Oft he spent the evening
hours
With merry-makers in the public-house,

And totter'd home with staring, dazzled
eyes.
The country people liked him better now,
And loved to coax him out to drink at
night,
And, gaping, heark'd to the strange things
he said.
Ah, then my fear grew heavy, though his
heart
Was kindly still, his head still clear and
wise,
And he went wastering only now and then.

But soon his ways grew better, for his
time
Was spent in finishing another book.
Yet then I found him changed in other
things ;
For once or twice when money as before
Was sent or given him, he only laugh'd,
And took it, not in anger. And, be
sure,
Money grew needful in the little home—
Another babe was coming. Babe and
book
Were born together, but the first was born
Quiet and breathless. 'Twould be idle
talk
To speak about the book. What came of
that,
Was much the same as what had come
before :
The papers praised it over all the land,
But just a shade more coolly ; strange folk
wrote,
But not so oft. Yet Teddy was in glee,
For *this* time fifty golden guineas came
From the rich man in London.

Once again,
They coax'd him up to London ; once
again,
Home came he changed,—with wilder words
of wit,
And sharper sayings, on his tongue. He
toil'd
Even less than ever : nay, his idle friends,
Who loved to drain the bottle at his side,
Took up his time full sorely. We began
To want and pinch : more money was sub-
scribed,
And taken :—till at last my man grew sick
Of working in the open fields at all

And just as work grew hardest to his mind,
 The Lord Fitzalbot pass'd him on the road,
 And turn'd his head away. A change had come,
 As dreadful as the change within himself.
 The papers wrote the praise of newer men,
 The strange folk sent him letters scarce at all ;
 And when he spake about another book,
 The man in London wrote a hasty ' No !'
 And said the work had little chance to sell.
 Those words were like a sunstroke. Wild and scared,
 My Teddy stared at London—all his dreams
 Came back upon him—and with bitter tongue
 He mock'd and threaten'd. 'Twas of no avail !
 His fine-day friends like swallows wing'd away,
 The summer being o'er ; the country folk
 Began to knit their foreheads as of old,
 Save one or two renown'd as ne'er-dowells ;
 And, mad with pride, bitten with shame and fear,
 Teddy drank deeper at the public-house.

Teddy to blame? Teddy to blame? Ah, nay !
 The blame be theirs who broke his simple pride
 With money, beggar'd him against his will.
 The blame be theirs who flatter'd him from home,
 And led him out to make his humble ways
 An idle show. The blame be theirs who smiled
 Whene'er he play'd a wrong and foolish part,
 Because he had skill to write a bit of verse.
 The blame be theirs who spoil'd him like a child,
 And, when the newness of his face was gone,
 Turn'd from him scornfully and smiled elsewhere.
 Teddy to blame !—a silly, ignorant man,
 Not learn'd, not wise, not cunning in the world !

But hearken how I changed him yet once more,
 One day when he was sick and ill with pain.
 I spake of all our early courting days,
 Full low and tender, of the happy time
 When I brought forth our girl, and of the words
 He spake when we were happy ; last of all,
 ' Teddy,' I said, ' let people be unkind,
 The whole world hard, you cannot heal your pain
 Wasting, idling ; think of merrier days,
 Of me, and of our girl, and drink no more.'
 He gazed at me full long, his bosom rose
 And flutter'd, and he held my hand in his,
 And shivering, moaning, sank into a chair ;
 And, looking at the bookshelf at his side,
 And at the common-looking thumb-mark'd books,
 He promised, promised, with his poor cheeks wet,
 And his voice broken, and his lips set firm.

True Heart, he kept his word. The public-house
 Knew him no longer ; in the fields he toil'd
 Lonely once more ; and in the evenings
 Read books and wrote,—and all he wrote,
 I know,
 Was sad, sad, sad. Bravely he work'd all day,
 But not so cheerfully. And no man cared
 To brighten him with goodly words. His face
 Was stale with gentlefolk, his heart too proud
 To mix with coarse, low men. Oft in the fields
 They saw him turn his poor eyes London-wards,
 And sigh ; but he was silent of the pain
 That grew upon him. Slowly he became
 The sadden'd picture of his former self :
 He stood at ploughtail looking at the clouds,
 He watch'd the ways of birds and trees and flowers ;
 But all the little things he learn'd and loved
 Had ta'en a sadder meaning. Oftentimes,
 In spite of all he did to hide his heart,
 I saw he would have been a happy man

If any one had praised him as of old ;
But he was never sent for from the fields,
No strangers wrote to cheer him, and he
seem'd

All, all, forgotten. Still, as true as steel,
He held his promise to our girl and me,
Though oft, I know, the dreadful longing
came

To fly to drink for comfort. Then, one
night,

I heard a stirring in the dark : our girl
Crept close to me, and whisper'd in mine
ear—

'Hark ! father's crying !'

O 'tis terrible

To hear a strong man weep ! I could not
bear

To find him grieving so, but crept unto
him,

And put my arms about him, on his neck
Weeping, 'O Teddy, Teddy, do not so !
Cheer up, for you will kill me if you cry.
What do you long for? Why are you so
sad?'

And I could feel him crush his hot tears
down,

And shake through every limb. 'O lass !'
he cried,

'I cannot give a name to what I want ;
I cannot tell you why I grow so sad ;
But I have lost the pleasure and the peace
The verses brought me. I am sick and
changed,—

I think too much of other men,—I seem
Despised and useless. If I did not feel
You loved me so, and were so kind and
true,

When all the world is cruel, I should fall
And wither. All my strength is gone
away,
And I am broken !'

'Twas but little cheer
That I could give him : *that* was grief too
deep

For foolish me to understand or cure.
I made the little parlour bright o' nights,
Coax'd him to read aloud the books he
loved,

And often he was like himself again,
Singing for ease o' heart ; and now and
then,

A poem printed in a newspaper,
Or something kind from people in the
world,

Help'd me a little. So the time wore on ;—
Till suddenly, one night in winter time,
I saw him change. Home came he white
and pale,

Shivering, trembling, looking wild and
strange,

Yet speaking quietly. 'My head feels
queer—

It aches a bit !' he said ; and the next day
He could not rise from bed. Quiet he
lay,

But now and then I saw him raise his
hand

And hold his forehead. In the afternoon,
He fell to troubled sleep, and, when he
woke,

He did not seem to know me. Full of
fear,

I sent for Doctor Barth. When Doctor
came,

He found poor Teddy tossing on his bed,
Moaning and muttering and clenching
teeth,

And Doctor said, 'The ill is on the brain—
Has he been troubled lately?' and I cried,
'Ay, much, much troubled ! He has fretted
sore

For many months !'

'Twas sad, 'twas sad, to see
My strong man suffer on his dull sick-bed,
Not knowing me, but crying out of things
That haunted him. I will not weary you,
By telling how the Doctor brought him
round,

And how at last he rose from bed, the
ghost

Of his old self, and something gone away
That never would return. Then it was
plain

That he could work no more : the Light
had fled,

Which keeps a man a man despite the
world

And all its cruel change. To fright the wolf,
I took in washing at the cottage here ;

And people sent us money now and then,
And pitying letters reach'd us from the
world,

Too late ! too late !

Thank the good God above,
 Who made me strong and willing, I could
 keep
 The little house above us, though 'twas
 dear,
 And ah! I work'd more hard because I
 knew
 Poor Teddy's heart would break outright
 elsewhere.
 Yet Teddy hardly seem'd to comprehend
 All that had happen'd. Though he knew
 me well,
 And spake full sensibly of many things,
 He lack'd the power to speak of one thing
 long.
 Sometimes he was as merry as a bird,
 Singing wild songs he learn'd by heart when
 young ;
 Sometimes he wish'd to wander out a-
 field,
 But easy 'twas to lead his wits away
 To other things. And he was changeful
 ever,
 Now laughing and now crying ; and at
 times
 He wrote strange notes to poets that were
 dead,
 And named himself by all their names in
 turn,
 Still making verse, which I had sense to
 see
 Was wild, and strange, and wrong—not
 like the verse
 He made of old. One day for hours he
 sat,
 Looking upon the bit of garden ground,
 And smiling. When I spoke, he look'd
 and laugh'd.
 'Surely you know me, Teddy?' I ex-
 claim'd ;
 And up he raised his head, with shrill thin
 voice
 Saying, 'Yes, you are Queen Elizabeth,
 And I am Shakespeare ;' and again he
 smiled
 Craftily to himself ; but when I hung
 Around his neck, and wept, and ask'd
 again,
 He turn'd upon me with so pale a
 look,
 So wan, so sharp, so full of agony,
 'Twas clear the cloud was lifted for a
 moment,

'Twas clear he knew that he was Teddy
 Crowhurst,
 And that the light of life had gone away.

And oft, in sunny weather, he and I
 Had walks in quiet places,—in the lanes,
 And in the woods, and by the river side ;
 And he was happy, prying as of old
 In little mossy nests, or plucking flowers,
 Or dropping pebbles at the water-brim,
 To make the speckled minnows start and
 fly
 In little gleams of light. Ne'er had he
 been
 More cunning in the ways and looks of
 things,
 Though memory fail'd him when he tried
 for names.
 The sable streaks upon the arum-flower
 Were strange to him as ever ; a lark singing
 Made his eyes misty as it used to do ;
 The shining sun, the waving of green
 boughs,
 The rippling of the river down the dell,
 Were still true pleasure. All the seasons
 brought
 Something to charm him. Staring on the
 snow,
 Or making great snow-houses like a boy,
 He was as busy when the boughs were
 bare,
 As carrying home a bough of scented May
 Or bunch of yellow lilies from the pond.
 What had been pleasure in his younger
 days
 Came back to keep him quiet in the world.
 He gave much love to trees and birds and
 flowers,
 And, when the mighty world was all unkind,
 The little, gentle, speechless things were
 true.

True Heart, I never thought that he could
 bear
 To last so long ; but ten slow years have
 fled
 Since the first book that brought the trouble
 and pain
 Was printed,—and within the parlour there
 Teddy is sitting, busy as a bee.
 Doing? He dreams the world that knows
 him not

Rings with his praises, and for many an hour

Sits busy with the verse of later years,
Marks, copies, and arranges it with care,
To go to some great printer that he thinks
Is waiting ; and from time to time he eyes
The books they printed, numbering the
lines, *

Counting the pages. Sometimes he is
Burns,

Sometimes John Milton, sometimes other
men,

And sometimes—always looking saddest
then—

Knows he is Teddy Crowhurst. Thin he is,
And worn, and feeble,—wearing slowly
down

Like snowdrift; and at times, when Memory
Comes for a moment like a mirror flash'd
Into his eyes, he does not groan and weep,
But droops the more, and seems resign'd
and still.

True Heart, I fear the end is near at last !
He sits and hearkens vacantly and dreams,
He thrills at every knocking at the door,
Stilly he waits for light that never comes,
That never will return until the end.

And oft at evening, when my work is
done,

And the dark gathers, and he holds my
hand,

The waiting grows intenser, and becomes
The sense o' life itself. Take Teddy
hence !

Show me the man will draw my hand
away !

I am a quiet comfort to his pain ;
For though his thoughts be far away from
here,

I know he feels my hand ; and ah ! the
touch

Just keeps his heart from breaking. 'Tis
my joy

To work where I can watch him through the
day,

And quiet him, and see he wants for
nought.

He loves to sit among his books and
flowers,

And wears away with little pain, and feels
The quiet parlour is a pleasant place ;

And there—God bless him !—in a happy
time

Teddy will feel the darkness pass away,
And smile farewell upon his wife and girl,
And Light that he has lost will come again
To shine upon him as he goes to sleep.

ARTIST AND MODEL :

A LOVE POEM.

The scorn of the nations is bitter,
But the touch of a hand is warm.

Is it not pleasant to wander
In town on Saturday night,
While people go hither and thither,
And shops shed cheerful light ?
And, arm in arm, while our shadows
Chase us along the panes,
Are we not quite as cozy
As down among country lanes ?

Nobody knows us, heeds us,
Nobody hears or sees,
And the shop-lights gleam more gladly
Than the moon on hedges and trees ;
And people coming and going,
All upon ends of their own,
Though they work a spell on the spirit,
Make it more finely alone.

The sound seems harmless and pleasant
As the murmur of brook and wind ;
The shops with the fruit and the pictures
Have sweetness to suit my mind ;
And nobody knows us, heeds us,
And our loving none reproves,—
I, the poor figure-painter !
You, the lady he loves !

And what if the world should scorn you
For now and again, as you do,
Assuming a country kirtle,
And bonnet of straw thereto,
Or the robe of a vestal virgin,
Or a nun's gray gahardine,
And keeping a brother and sister
By standing and looking divine ?

And what if the world, moreover,
Should silently pass me by,
Because at the dawn of the struggle,
I labour some stories high !

Why, there 's comfort in waiting, working,
 And feeling one's heart beat right,—
 And rambling alone, love-making,
 In London on Saturday night.

For when, with a blush Titianic,
 You peep'd in that lodging of mine,
 Did I not praise the good angels
 For sending a model so fine?
 When I was fill'd with the pureness
 You brought to the lonely abode,
 Did I not learn to love you?
 And—did Love not lighten the load?

And haply, indeed, little darling,
 While I yearn'd and plotted and plann'd,
 And you watch'd me in love and in yearning
 Your heart did not quite understand
 All the wonder and aspiration
 You meant by your loveliness,
 All the faith in the frantic endeavour
 Your beautiful face could express!

For your love and your beauty have thriven
 On things of a low degree,
 And you do not comprehend clearly
 The drift of a dreamer like me;
 And perchance, when you look'd so divinely,
 You meant, and meant only, to say:
 'How sad that he dwells in a garret!
 And lives on so little a day!'

What of that? If your sweetness and
 beauty,
 And the love that is part of thee,
 Were mirror'd in wilder visions,
 And express'd much more to me,
 Did the beautiful face, my darling,
 Need subtler, loftier lore?—
 Nay, beauty is all our wisdom,—
 We painters demand no more.

Indeed, I had been no painter,
 And never could hope to rise,
 Had I lack'd the power of creating
 The meanings for your sweet eyes;
 And what you were really thinking
 Scarcely imported, in sooth,—
 Since the truth we artists fail for,
 Is the truth that *looks* the truth.

Your beautiful face was before me,
 Set in its golden hair;
 And the wonder and love and yearning
 Were shining sublimely there!
 And your eyes said—'Work for glory!
 Up, up, where the angels call!'
 And I understood, and I labour'd,
 And I love the face for it all!

I am talking, you think, so strangely!
 And you watch with wondering eyes!—
 Could I utter one half of the yearning
 Your face, even now, implies!
 But the yearning will not be utter'd,
 And never, ah! never can be,
 Till the work of the world is over,
 And we see as immortals see.

Yet bless thee for ever and ever,
 For keeping me humble and true,
 And would that my Art could utter
 The wisdom I find in you.
 Enough to labour and labour,
 And to feel one's heart beat right,
 And to wander unknown, love-making,
 In London on Saturday night!

You think: 'How dearly I love him!
 How dearly he loves me!
 How sweet to live on, and love him,
 With children at my knee!
 With the useless labour over,
 And comfort and leisure won,
 And clever people praising
 The work that he has done!'

I think: 'How dearly I love her!
 How dearly she loves me!
 Yet the beauty the heart would utter
 Endeth in agony;
 And life is a climbing, a seeking
 Of something we never can see!
 And death is a slumber, a dreaming
 Of something that may not be!'

And your face is sweetly troubled,
 Your little hand stirs on mine own,
 For you guess at a hidden meaning,
 Since I speak in so tender a tone;
 And you rain the yearning upon me
 You brought to my help before,
 And I ask no mightier wisdom,—
 We painters demand no more.

And we shall live, my darling,
 Together till we grow old,
 And people will buy my pictures,
 And you will gather the gold,
 And your loveliness will reward me,
 And sanctify all I do,
 And toiling for Love's sake, darling,
 I may toil for Fame's sake, too.

Ah, dearest, how much you teach me,
 How much of hope and of light,
 Up yonder, planning and painting,
 And here on Saturday night ;
 And I turn sad eyes no longer
 From the pageant that passes around,
 And the vision no more seems weary,
 And the head may yet be crown'd !

And I ask no more from mortals
 Than your beautiful face implies,—
 The beauty the artist beholding
 Interprets and sanctifies.
 Who says that men have fallen,
 That life is wretched and rough ?
 I say, the world is lovely,
 And that loveliness is enough.

So my doubting days are ended,
 And the labour of life seems clear ;
 And life hums deeply around me,
 Just like the murmur here,
 And quickens the sense of living,
 And shapes me for peace and storm,—
 And dims my eyes with gladness
 When it glides into colour and form !

His form and His colour, darling,
 Are all we apprehend,
 Though the meaning that underlies them
 May be utter'd in the end ;
 And I seek to go no deeper
 Than the beauty and wonder there,
 Since the world can look so wondrous,
 And your face can look so fair.

For ah ! life's stream is bitter,
 When too greedily we drink,
 And I might not be so happy
 If I knew quite all you think ;
 And when God takes much, my darling,
 He leaves us the colour and form,—
 The scorn of the nations is bitter,
 But the touch of a hand is warm.

NELL.

She gazes not at her who hears,
 But, while the gathering darkness cries,
 Stares at the vacancy through tears,
 That burn upon her glistening eyes,
 Yet do not flow. Her hair falls free
 Around a face grown deathly thin ;
 Her elbow rests upon her knee,
 And in her palms she props her chin.

SEE, Nan ! his little face looks pinch'd with
 fright,

His little hands are clench'd together tight !
 Born dead, that's comfort ! quiet too ; when
 one

Thinks of what kill'd him ! Kiss him,
 Nan, for me.

Thank God, he never look'd upon the sun
 That saw his father hang'd on gallows-
 tree.

O boy, my boy ! you're better dead and
 sleeping,

Kill'd by poor mother's fear, and shame,
 and weeping :

She never loved another living man,
 But held to father all thro' right and
 wrong—

Ah, yes ! I never turn'd against him, Nan,
 I stuck by him that stuck by me so long !

You're a kind woman, Nan ! ay, kind and
 true !

God will be good to faithful folk like you !
 You knew my Ned ?

A better, kinder lad never drew breath—
 We loved each other true, though never wed
 In church, like some who took him to his
 death :

A lad as gentle as a lamb, but lost
 His senses when he took a drop too
 much—

Drink did it all—drink made him mad when
 cross'd—

He was a poor man, and they're hard on
 such.

O Nan ! that night ! that night !
 When I was sitting in this very chair,
 Watching and waiting in the candle-light,
 And heard his foot come creaking up the
 stair,
 And turn'd, and saw him standing *yonder*,
 white

And wild, with staring eyes and rumpled hair !
 And when I caught his arm and call'd, in fright,
 He push'd me, swore, and to the door he pass'd
 To lock and bar it fast !
 Then down he drops just like a lump of lead,
 Holding his brow, shaking, and growing whiter,
 And—Nan !—just then the light seem'd growing brighter,
 And I could see the hands that held his head,
 All red ! all bloody red !
 What could I do but scream ? He groan'd to hear,
 Jump'd to his feet, and gripp'd me by the wrist ;
 ' Be still, or I shall kill thee, Nell ! ' he hiss'd.
 And I *was* still, for fear.
 ' They're after me—I've knifed a man ! ' he said.
 ' Be still !—the drink—drink did it—he is *dead* ! '
 And as he said the word, the wind went by
 With a whistle and cry—
 The room swam round—the babe unborn seem'd to scream out, and die !

Then we grew still, dead still. I couldn't weep—
 All I could do was cling to Ned and heark—
 And Ned was cold, cold, cold, as if asleep,
 But breathing hard and deep.
 The candle flicker'd out—the room grew dark—
 And—Nan !—although my heart was true and tried,—
 When all grew cold and dim,
 I shudder'd—not for fear of them outside,
 But just afraid to be alone with *him*.
 For winds were wailing—the wild rain cried,—
 Folk's footsteps sounded down the court and died—
 What could I do but clasp his knees and cling ?
 And call his name beneath my breath in pain ?
 Until he threw his head up, listening,
 And gave a groan, and hid his face again ;

' Ned ! Ned ! ' I whisper'd—and he moan'd and shook—
 But did not heed or look !
 ' Ned ! Ned ! speak, lad ! tell me it is not true ! '
 At that he raised his head and look'd so wild ;
 Then, with a stare that froze my blood, he threw
 His arms around me, crying like a child,
 And held me close—and not a word was spoken—
 While I clung tighter to his heart and press'd him—
 And did not fear him, though my heart was broken—
 But kiss'd his poor stain'd hands, and cried, and bless'd him !

Then, Nan, the dreadful daylight, coming cold
 With sound o' falling rain,—
 When I could *see* his face, and it look'd old,
 Like the pinch'd face of one that dies in pain ;
 Well, though we heard folk stirring in the sun,
 We never thought to hide away or run,
 Until we heard those voices in the street,
 That hurrying of feet.
 And Ned leap'd up, and knew that they had come.
 ' Run, Ned ! ' I cried, but he was deaf and dumb !
 ' Hide, Ned ! ' I scream'd, and held him—
 ' hide thee, man ! '
 He stared with bloodshot eyes, and hearken'd, Nan !
 And all the rest is like a dream—the sound
 Of knocking at the door—
 A rush of men—a struggle on the ground—
 A mist—a tramp—a roar ;
 For when I got my senses back again,
 The room was empty—and my head went round !
 The neighbours talk'd and stirr'd about the lane,
 And Seven Dials made a moaning sound ;
 And as I listen'd, lass, it seem'd to me
 Just like the murmur of the great dark Sea,
 And Ned a-lying somewhere, stiff and drown'd !

God help him? God *will* help him! Ay,
 no fear!
 It was the drink, not Ned—he meant no
 wrong;
 So kind! so good!—and I am useless here,
 Now he is lost that loved me true and
 long.
 Why, just before the last of it, we parted,
 And Ned was calm, though I was broken-
 hearted;
 And ah, my heart *was* broke! and ah, I
 cried
 And kiss'd him,—till they took me from his
 side;
 And though he died *that way*, (God bless
 him!) Ned
 Went through it bravely, calm as any
 there:
 They've wrought their fill of spite upon his
 head,
 And—there's the hat and clothes he used
 to wear!
 . . . That night before he died,
 I didn't cry—my heart was hard and dried;
 But when the clocks went 'one,' I took my
 shawl
 To cover up my face, and stole away,
 And walk'd along the silent streets, where all
 Look'd cold and still and gray,—
 Only the lamps o' London here and there
 Scatter'd a dismal gleaming;
 And on I went, and stood in Leicester
 Square,
 Ay, like a woman dreaming:
 But just as 'three' was sounded close at
 hand,
 I started and turn'd east, before I knew,—
 Then down Saint Martin's Lane, along the
 Strand,
 And through the toll-gate, on to Water-
 loo.
 How I remember all I saw, although
 'Twas only like a dream!—
 The long still lines o' lights, the chilly
 gleam
 Of moonshine on the deep black stream
 below;
 While far, far, far away, along the sky
 Streaks soft as silver ran,
 And the pale Moon look'd paler up on
 high,
 And little sounds in far-off streets began!
 Well, while I stood, and waited, and look'd
 down,
 And thought how sweet 'twould be to drop
 and drown,
 Some men and lads went by,
 And turning round, I gazed, and watch'd
 'em go,
 Then felt that they were going to see him die,
 And drew my shawl more tight, and fol-
 low'd slow.
 How clear I feel it still!
 The streets grew light, but rain began to
 fall;
 I stopp'd and had some coffee at a stall,
 Because I felt so chill;
 A cock crew somewhere, and it seem'd a
 call
 To wake the folk who kill!
 The man who sold the coffee stared at
 me!
 I must have been a sorry sight to see!
 More people pass'd—a country cart with
 hay
 Stopp'd close beside the stall,—and two or
 three
 Talk'd about *it!* I moan'd, and crept
 away!
 Ay, nearer to the dreadful place,
 All in the falling rain,
 I went, and kept my shawl upon my face,
 And felt no grief or pain—
 Only the wet that soak'd me through and
 through
 Seem'd cold and sweet and pleasant to
 the touch—
 It made the streets more drear and silent,
 too,
 And kept away the light I fear'd so much.
 Slow, slow the wet streets fill'd, and all
 seem'd going,
 Laughing and chatting, the same way,
 And grayer, sadder, lighter, it was grow-
 ing,
 Though still the rain fell fast and dark-
 en'd day!
 Nan!—every pulse was burning—I could
 feel
 My heart was made o' steel—
 As crossing Ludgate Hill, I saw, all
 blurr'd,
 Saint Paul's great clock and heard it
 slowly chime,

And hadn't power to count the strokes I heard,

But strain'd my eyes and *saw* it wasn't time.

Ah! then I felt I dared not creep more near,

But went into a lane off Ludgate Hill,
And sitting on a doorstep, I could hear

The people gathering still!

And still the rain was falling, falling,

And deadening the hum I heard from *there*;

And wet and stiff, I heard the people calling,

And watch'd the rain-drops glistening down my hair,

My elbows on my knees, my fingers dead,—
My shawl thrown off, now none could see,—
my head

Dripping and wild and bare.

I heard the crying of a crowd of men,

And next, a hollow sound I knew full well,

For something gripp'd me round the heart!
—and then

There came the solemn tolling of a bell!

O God! O God! how could I sit close by,
And neither scream nor cry?

As if I had been stone, all hard and cold,

I listen'd, listen'd, listen'd, still and dumb,

While the folk murmur'd, and the death-bell toll'd,

And the day brighten'd, and his time had come. . . .

. . . Till—Nan!—all else was silent, but the knell

Of the slow bell!

And I could only wait, and wait, and wait,

And what I waited for I couldn't tell,—

At last there came a groaning deep and great—

Saint Paul's struck 'eight'—

I scream'd, and seem'd to turn to fire,
and fell!

God bless him, live or dead!

Oh, he was kind and true—

They've wrought their fill of spite upon his head—

Why didn't they be kind, and take *me* too?

And there's the dear old things he used to wear,

And here's a lock o' hair!

And Ned! my Ned!

Is fast asleep, and cannot hear me call;—

God bless you, Nan, for all you've done and said,

But don't mind *me*! My heart is broke,
that's all!

ATTORNEY SNEAK.

Sharp like a tyrant, timid like a slave,
A little man, with yellow, bloodless cheek:
A snappish mingling of the fool and knave,
Resulting in the hybrid compound—Sneak.

PUT execution in on Mrs. Hart—

If people will be careless, let them smart:

Oh, hang her children! just the common cry!

Am I to feed her family? Not I.

I'm tender-hearted, but I dare be just,—

I never go beyond the law, I trust;

I've work'd my way, plotted and starved
and plann'd,

Commenced without a penny in my hand,

And never howl'd for help, or dealt in sham—

No! I'm a man of principle, I am.

What's that you say? Oh, *father* has been here?

Of course, you sent him packing? Dear, oh, dear!

When one has work'd his weary way, like me,

To comfort and respectability,

Can pay his bills, and save a pound or two,

And say his prayers on Sunday in a pew,

Can look the laws of England in the face,

'Tis hard, 'tis hard, 'tis shame, and 'tis disgrace,

That one's own father—old and worn and gray—

Should be the only hindrance in his way.

Swore, did he? Very pretty! Threaten'd? Oh!

Demand'd money? You, of course, said 'No'?

'Tis hard—my life will never be secure—

He'll be my ruin some day, I am sure.

I don't deny my origin was low—
 All the more credit to myself, you know :
 Mother (I never saw her) was a tramp,
 Father half tramp, half pedlar, and whole
 scamp,
 Who travell'd over England with a pack,
 And carried me about upon his back,
 Trudging from door to door, to feasts and
 fairs,
 Cheating the silly women with his wares,
 Stealing the farmers' ducks and hens for
 food,
 Pilfering odds and ends where'er he could,
 And resting in a city now and then,
 Till it became too hot,—and off again.
 Beat me? No, he knew better. I confess
 He used me with a sort of tenderness ;
 But would have warp'd my nature into sin,
 Had I been weak, for lack of discipline.
 Why, even now, I shudder to the soul,
 To think how oft I ate the food he stole,
 And how I wore upon my back the things
 He won by cheats and lawless bargainings.
 Oh, he had feelings, that I freely say ;
 But, without principle, what good are they?
 He swindled and he stole on every hand,
 And I was far too young to reprimand ;
 And, for the rest, why, he was circumspect,
 And might have been committed for neg-
 lect.

Ah ! how I managed, under stars so ill,
 To thrive at all, to me is mystery still.
 In spite of father, though, I got along,
 And early learn'd to judge the right from
 wrong ;
 At roadsides, when we stopp'd to rest and
 feed,
 He gave me lessons how to write and read,
 I got a snack of schooling here and there,
 And learn'd to sum by instinct, as it were.
 Then, latterly, when I was seventeen,
 All sorts of evil I had heard and seen ;
 Knew father's evil ways, bemoan'd my fate,
 Long'd to be wealthy, virtuous, and great ;
 Swore, with the fond ambition of a lad,
 To make good use of what poor gifts I had.

At last, tired, sick, of wandering up and
 down,
 Hither I turn'd my thoughts,—to London
 town ;

And finally, with little doubt or fear,
 Made up my mind to try my fortune here.
 Well, father stared at first, and shook his
 head ;
 But when he found I held to what I said,
 He clasp'd me tight, and hugg'd me to his
 heart,
 And begg'd and pray'd tha I would not
 depart ;
 Said I was all for whom he had to care,
 His only joy in trudging here and there ;
 Vow'd, if I ever left him, he would die,—
 Then, last of all, of course, began to cry.
 You know how men of his position feel ?
 Selfish, at best, even when it is real !
 I tried to smooth him over, and, next day,
 I pack'd what things I had, and ran away.

I need not tell you all my weary fight,
 To get along in life, and do aright—
 How often people, when I sought a place,
 Still push'd my blessed father in my face ;
 Until, at last, when I was almost stark,
 Old Lawyer Hawk made me his under-
 clerk ;
 How from that moment, by avoiding wrong,
 Possessing principle, I got along ;
 Read for the law, plotted, and dream'd,
 and plann'd,
 Until—I reach'd the height on which I
 stand.

'Twas hard, 'twas hard ! Just as my
 business grows,
 In father pops his miserable nose,
 Steps in, not sober, in a ragged dress,
 And worn tenfold with want and wicked-
 ness ;
 Calls me hard names because I wish'd to
 rise ;
 Here, in the office, like a baby cries ;
 Smothers my pride with shame and with
 disgrace,
 Till, red as fire, I coax'd him from the place.
 What could I do under so great a blow ?
 I gave him money, tried to make him go ;
 But ah ! he meant to rest, I plain could see,
 His ragged legs 'neath my mahogany !
 No principle ! When I began complaining,
 How he would be my ruin by remaining,
 He turn'd upon me, white and wild, and
 swore,
 And would have hit me, had I utter'd more !

'Tommy,' he dared to say, 'you've done amiss ;

I never thought to see you come to this.
I would have stopp'd you early on the journey,

If I had ever thought you'd grow attorney,
Sucking the blood of people here in London ;
But you have done it, and it can't be undone.

And, Tommy, I will do my best to see
You don't at all disgrace yourself and me.'

I rack'd my brains, I moan'd and tore my hair,

Saw nothing left but ruin and despair ;
Father at hand, why, all would deem me low :

'Sneak's father? humph!'—the business would go.

The labour of long years would come to nought !

At last I hit upon a happy thought :
Why should not father, if he pleased to be,
Be decent and respectable like me ;
He would be glad and grateful, if a grain
Of principle were settled in his brain.

I made the offer,—proud he seem'd and glad,—

There rose a hope he'd change to good from bad,

Though, 'Tommy, 'tis a way of getting bread

I never thought to come upon,' he said ;
And so I placed him in the office here,
A clerk at five and thirty pounds a year.

I put it to you, could a man do more ?
I felt no malice, did not close my door,
Gave him the chance to show if he was wise :
He had the world before him, and could rise.

Well, for a month or more, he play'd no tricks,

Writ-drawing, copying, from nine to six,
Not smart, of course, or clever, like the rest,

But trying, it appear'd, to do his best ;
But by and by he changed—old fire broke out—

He snapp'd when seniors order'd him about—

Came late to office, tried to loaf and shirk—
Would sit for precious hours before his work,

And scarcely lift a pen, but sleepily stare
Out through the window at the empty air,
And watch the sunshine lying in the lane,
Or the bluebottles buzzing on the pane,
And look as sad and worn and grieved and strange

As if he ne'er had had a chance to change ;
Came one day staggering in a drunken fit ;
Flatly refused one day to serve a writ.

I talk'd, appeal'd, talk'd of my honest name,

He stared, turn'd pale, swore loud, and out it came :

He hated living with that monkey crew,
Had tried his best and found it would not do ;

He could not bear, forsooth, to watch the tears

Of people with the Law about their ears,
Would rather steal his meals from place to place,

Than bring the sorrow to a poor man's face—

In fact, you see, he hated all who pay,
Or seek their moneys in the honest way ;
Moreover, he prefer'd a roadside crust,
To cleanly living with the good and just :
Old, wild, and used to roaming up and down,

He could not bear to stagnate in a town ;
To stick in a dark office in a street,
Was downright misery to a man with feet ;
Serving the law was more than he could bear,

Give him his pack, his freedom, and fresh air.

Mark that ! how base, ungrateful, gross, and bad !

His want of principle had made him mad.
I gave him money, sent him off by train,
And trusted ne'er to see his face again.

But he came back. Of course. Look'd wan and ill,

More ragged and disreputable still.
Despairing, groaning, wretchedest of men,
I granted him another trial then.

Still the old story—the same vacant stare
Out through the window at the empty air,

More watching of the sunshine in the lane,
And the bluebottles buzzing on the pane,
Then more of tipsiness and drunken dizziness,

And rage at things done in the way of business.

I saw the very office servants sneer,
And I determined to be more severe.

At last, one winter morn, I went to him,
And found him sitting, melancholy, grim,
Sprawling like any schoolboy on his seat,
And scratching drawings on a foolscap sheet :

Here, an old hag, with half-a-dozen chits,
Lash'd with a cat-o'-nine-tails, labell'd
'WRITS ;'

There, a young rascal, ragged as a daw,
Drinking a cup of poison, labell'd 'LAW ;'
Elsewhere, the Devil, looking o'er a pile
Of old indictments with a crafty smile,
And sticking Lawyers on an office file !
And in a corner, wretchedly devised,
A shape in black, that kick'd and agonised,
Strung by a pauper to a gallows great,
And underneath it written, 'TOMMIE'S
FATE !'

I touch'd his arm, conducted him aside,
Produced a bunch of documents, and
cried :

'Now, father, no more nonsense ! You
must be

No more a plague and a disgrace to me—
If you won't work like others, you must
quit ;

See, here are two subpoenas, there a writ,
Serve these on Such-a-one and So-and-so.
Be sharp,—and mind your conduct, or you
go.'

He never said a word, but with a glare
All round him, drew his thin hand through
his hair,

Turn'd white, and took the paper silently,
Put on his hat, and peep'd again at me.
Then quietly, not like a man in ire,
Threw all the precious papers on the fire !
And turning quickly, crying with a shout,
'You, and your documents, be *damn'd !*'
went out.

He came again ! Ay, after wandering o'er
The country as of old, he came once more.
I gave him money, off he went ; and then,
After a little year, he came again ;

Ay, came, and came, still ragged, bad, and
poor,

And he will be my ruin, I am sure.

He tells the same old tale from year to year,

How to his heart I ever will be dear ;

Or oft into a fit of passion flies,

Calls me 'ungrateful and unkind,—then
cries,

Raves of his tenderness and suffering,

And mother's too—and all that sort of
thing !

He haunts me ever like a goblin grim,

And—to be candid—I'm afraid of him ;

For, ah ! all now is hopeless, to my cost,—
Through want of principle the man is lost.

—That's Badger, is it? He must go to
Vere,

The Bank of England clerk. The writ is
here.

Say, for his children's sake, we may relent,
If he'll renew at thirty-five per cent.

BARBARA GRAY.

A mourning woman, robed in black,
Stands in the twilight, looking back ;
Her hand is on her heart, her head
Bends musingly above the Dead,
Her face is plain, and pinch'd, and thin,
But splendour strikes it from within.

I.

'BARBARA GRAY !

Pause, and remember what the world will
say,'

I cried, and turning on the threshold fled,
When he was breathing on his dying bed ;

But when, with heart grown bold,

I cross'd the threshold cold,

Here lay John Hamerton, and he was dead.

II.

And all the house of death was chill and
dim,

The dull old housekeeper was looking grim,

The hall-clock ticking slow, the dismal rain

Splashing by fits against the window-pane,

The garden shivering in the twilight dark,

Beyond, the bare trees of the empty park,

And faint gray light upon the great cold
bed,

And I alone ; and he I turn'd from,—dead

III.

Ay, 'dwarf' they called this man who sleep-
ing lies ;
No lady shone upon him with her eyes,
No tender maiden heard his true-love vow,
And pressed her kisses on the great hold
brow.
What cared John Hamerton? With light,
light laugh,
He halted through the streets' upon his
staff ;
Halt, lame, not beauteous, yet with winning
grace
And sweetness in his pale and quiet face ;
Fire, hell's or heaven's, in his eyes of
blue ;
Warm words of love upon his tongue
thereto ;
Could win a woman's Soul with what he
said,
And I am here ; and here he lieth dead.

IV.

I would not blush if the bad world saw
now
How by his bed I stoop and kiss his brow !
Ay, kiss it, kiss it, o'er and o'er again,
With all the love that fills my heart and
brain.

V.

For where was man had stoop'd to me
before,
Though I was maiden still, and girl no
more ?
Where was the spirit that had deign'd to
prize
The poor plain features and the envious
eyes ?
What lips had whisper'd warmly in mine
ears ?
When had I known the passion and the
tears ?
Till he I look on sleeping came unto me,
Found me among the shadows, stoop'd to
woo me,
Seized on the heart that flutter'd withering
here,
Stung it and wrung it with new joy and
fear,
Yea, brought the rapturous light, and
brought the day,
Waken'd the dead heart, withering away,

Put thorns and roses on the unhonour'd
head,
That felt but roses till the roses fled !
Who, who, but he crept unto sunless
ground,
Content to prize the faded face he found ?
John Hamerton, I pardon all—sleep sound,
my love, sleep sound !

VI.

What fool that crawls shall prate of shame
and sin ?
Did he not think me fair enough to win ?
Yea, stoop and smile upon my face as none,
Living or dead, save he alone, had done ?
Bring the bright blush unto my cheek, when
ne'er
The full of life and love had mantled there ?
And I am all alone ; and here lies he,—
The only man that ever smiled on me.

VII.

Here, in his lonely dwelling-house he lies,
The light all faded from his winsome eyes :
Alone, alone, alone, he slumbers here,
With wife nor little child to shed a tear !
Little, indeed, to him did nature give ;
Nor was he good and pure as some that
live,
But pinch'd in body, warp'd in limb,
He hated the bad world that loved not him !

VIII.

Barbara Gray !
Pause, and remember how he turn'd away ;
Think of your wrongs, and of your sorrows.
Nay !
Woman, think rather of the shame and
wrong
Of pining lonely in the dark so long ;
Think of the comfort in the grief he brought.
The revelation in the love he taught.
Then, Barbara Gray !
Blush not, nor heed what the cold world
will say ;
But kiss him, kiss him, o'er and o'er again,
In passion and in pain,
With all the love that fills your heart and
brain !
Yea, kiss him, bless him, pray beside his
bed,
For you have lived, and here your love lies
dead.

THE BLIND LINNET.

τί γὰρ εἶδει μ' ὄραν,
ὅτῳ γ' ὄρωντι μὴδὲν ἦν ἰδεῖν γλυκύ ;
SOPH. ŒD. TYR.

I.

THE sempstress's linnet sings
At the window opposite me ;—
It feels the sun on its wings,
Though it cannot see.
Can a bird have thoughts? May he.

II.

The sempstress is sitting,
High o'er the humming street,
The little blind linnet is flitting
Between the sun and her seat.
All day long
She stitches wearily there,
And I know she is not young,
And I know she is not fair ;
For I watch her head bent down
Throughout the dreary day,
And the thin meek hair o' brown
Is threaded with silver gray ;
And now and then, with a start
At the fluttering of her heart,
She lifts her eyes to the bird,
And I see in the dreary place
The gleam of a thin white face.
And my heart is stirr'd.

III.

Loud and long
The linnet pipes his song !
For he cannot see
The smoky street all round,
But loud in the sun sings he,
Though he hears the murmurous sound ;
For his poor, blind eyeballs blink,
While the yellow sunlights fall,
And he thinks (if a bird can think)
He hears a waterfall,
Or the broad and beautiful river
Washing fields of corn,
Flowing for ever
Through the woods where he was born ;
And his voice grows stronger,
While he thinks that he is there,
And louder and longer
Falls his song on the dusky air,

And oft, in the gloaming still,
Perhaps (for who can tell?)
The musk and the muskatel,
That grow on the window sill,
Cheat him with their smell.

IV.

But the sempstress can see
How dark things he ;
How black through the town
The stream is flowing ;
And tears fall down
Upon her sewing.
So at times she tries,
When her trouble is stirr'd
To close her eyes,
And he blind like the bird.
And then, for a minute,
As sweet things seem,
As to the linnet
Piping in his dream !
For she feels on her brow
The sunlight glowing,
And hears nought now
But a river flowing—
A broad and beautiful river,
Washing fields of corn,
Flowing for ever
Through the woods where she was
born—
And a wild bird winging
Over her head, and singing !
And she can smell
The musk and the muskatel
That beside her grow,
And, unaware,
She murmurs an old air
That she used to know !

'TIGER BAY:

A STORMY NIGHT'S DREAM.

I.

THE TIGRESS.

A DREAM I had in the dead of night :
Darkness—the Jungle—a black Man
sleeping—
Head on his arm, with the moon-dew
creeping
Over his face in a silvern light :

The Moon was driving, the Wind was crying ;

Two great lights gleam'd, round, horrid,
and red,

Two great eyes, steadfast beside the bed
Where the man was lying.

Hark ! hark !

What wild things cry in the dark ?

Only the Wind as it raves,

Only the Beasts in their caves,

Where the Jungle waves.

The man slept on, and his face was bright,
Tender and strange, for the man was
dreaming—

Coldly the light on his limbs was gleaming,
On his jet-black limbs and their folds of
white ;—

Leprous-spotted, and gaunt, and hated,
With teeth protruding and hideous head,
Her two eyes burning so still, so red,
The Tigress waited.

Hark ! hark !

The wild things cry in the dark ;

The Wind whistles and raves,

The Beasts groan in their caves,
And the Jungle waves.

From cloud to cloud the cold Moon crept,
The silver light kept coming and going—
The Jungle under was bleakly blowing,
The Tigress watch'd, and the black Man
slept.

The Wind was wailing, the Moon was
gleaming :

He stir'd and shiver'd, then raised his
head :—

Like a thunderbolt the Tigress sped,
And the Man fell screaming—

Hark ! hark !

The wild things cry in the dark ;

The wild Wind whistles and raves,

The Beasts groan in their caves,
And the Jungle waves.

II.

' RATCLIFFE MEG.

Then methought I saw another sight :
Darkness—a Garret—a rushlight dying—
On the broken-down bed a Sailor lying,
Sleeping fast, in the feeble light ;—

The Wind is wailing, the Rain is weeping *
She croucheth there in the chamber dim,
She croucheth there with her eyes on him
As he lieth sleeping—

Hark ! hark !

Who cries outside in the dark ?

Only the Wind on its way,

Only the wild gusts astray,
In Tiger Bay.

In Tiger Bay.

Still as a child the Sailor lies :—

She waits—she watches—is she human ?

Is she a Tigress ? is she a Woman ?

Look at the gleam of her deep-set eyes !

Bloated and stain'd in every feature,

With iron jaws, throat knotted and bare,

Eyes deep sunken, jet black hair,
Crouches the creature.

Hark ! hark !

Who cries outside in the dark ?

Only the Wind on its way,

Only the wild gusts astray,
In Tiger Bay.

In Tiger Bay.

Hold her ! scream ! or the man is dead ;
A knife in her tight-clench'd hand is
gleaming ;

She will *kill* the man as he lieth dream-
ing !

Her eyes are fixed, her throat swells red.
The Wind is wailing, the Rain is weeping ;

She is crawling closer—O Angels that
love him !

She holds her breath and bends above
him,

While he stirreth sleeping.

Hark ! hark !

Who cries outside in the dark ?

Only the Wind on its way,

Only the wild gusts astray
In Tiger Bay.

In Tiger Bay.

A silken purse doth the sleeper clutch,
And the gold peeps through with a fatal
glimmer !

She creepeth near—the light grows
dimmer—

Her thick throat swells, and she thirsts to
touch.

She looks—she pants with a feverish
hunger—

She dashes the black hair out of her eyes—

She glares at his face . . . he smiles and sighs—

And the face looks younger.

Hark ! hark !

Who cries outside in the dark ?

Only the Wind on its way,

Only the wild gusts astray

In Tiger Bay.

She gazeth on,—he doth not stir—

Her fierce eyes close, her brute lip quivers ;

She longs to strike, but she shrinks and shivers :

The light on his face appalleth her.

The Wind is wailing, the Rain is weeping :

Something holds her—her wild eyes roll ;

His Soul shines out, and she fears his Soul,

Tho' he lieth sleeping.

Hark ! hark !

Who cries outside in the dark ?

Only the Wind on its way,

Only the wild gusts astray

In Tiger Bay.

III.

INTERCESSION.

I saw no more, but I woke,—and prayed :
'God ! that made the Beast and the Woman !'

God of the tigress ! God of the human !
Look to these things whom Thou hast made !

Fierce and bloody and famine-stricken,

Knitted with iron vein and thew—

Strong and bloody, behold the two !—

We see them and sicken.

Mark ! mark !

These outcasts fierce of the dark ;

Where murmur the Wind and the Rain,

Where the Jungle darkens the plain,

And in street and lane.'

God answer'd clear, ' My will be done !

Woman-tigress and tigress-woman—

I made them both, the beast and the human,

But I struck a spark in the brain of the one.

And the spark is a fire, and the fire is a spirit ;

Tho' ye may slay it, it cannot die—

Nay, it shall grow as the days go by,

For my Angels are near it—

Mark ! mark !

Doth it not burn in the dark ?

Spite of the curse and the stain,

Where the Jungle darkens the plain,

And in street and lane.'

God said, moreover : 'The spark shall grow—

'Tis blest, it gathers, its flame shall lighten,

Bless it and nurse it—let it brighten !

'Tis scatter'd abroad, 'tis a Seed I sow.

And the Seed is a Soul, and the Soul is the Human ;

And it lighteth the face with a sign and a flame.

Not unto beasts have I given the same,
But to man and to woman.

Mark ! mark !

The light shall scatter the dark :

Where murmur the Wind and the Rain,

Where the Jungle darkens the plain,

And in street and lane.'

. . . So faint, so dim, so sad to seeing,

Behold it burning ! Only a spark !

So faint as yet, and so dim to mark,

In the tigress-eyes of the human being.

Fan it, feed it, in love and duty,

Track it, watch it in every place,—

Till it burns the bestial frame and face
To its own dim beauty.

Mark ! mark !

A spark that grows in the dark ;

A spark that burns in the brain ;

Spite of the Wind and the Rain,

Spite of the Curse and the Stain ;

Over the Sea and the Plain,

And in street and lane.

THE CITY ASLEEP.

STILL as the Sea serene and deep,

When all the winds are laid,

The City sleeps—so still, its sleep

Maketh the soul afraid.

Over the living waters, see !

The Seraphs shining go,—

The Moon is gliding hushfully

Through stars like flakes of snow.

In pearl-white silver here and there
The fallen moon-rays stream :
Hark ! a dull stir is in the air,
Like the stir of one in dream.

Through all the thrilling waters creep
Deep throbs of strange unrest,
Like washings of the windless Deep
When it is peacefullest.

A little while—God's breath will go,
And hush the flood no more ;
The dawn will break—the wind will blow,
The Ocean rise and roar.

Each day with sounds of strife and death
The waters rise and call ;
Each midnight, conquer'd by God's breath,
To this dead calm they fall.

Out of His heart the fountains flow,
The brook, the running river,
He marks them strangely come and go,
For ever and for ever.

Till darker, deeper, one by one,
After a weary quest,
They, from the light of moon and sun,
Flow back, into His breast.

Love, hold my hand ! be of good cheer !
For His heart be the cost,
If, out of all the waters here,
One little drop were *lost*.

Heaven's eyes above the waters dumb
Innumerably yearn ;
Out of His heart each drop hath come,
And thither *must* return.

UP IN AN ATTIC.

' Do you *dream* yet, on your old rickety sofa,
in the dear old ghastly bankrupt garret at No.
66?'—*Gray to Buchanan* (see *The Life of David Gray*).

HALF of a gold-ring bright,
Broken in days of old,
One yellow curl, whose light
Gladden'd my gaze of old ;
A sprig of thyme thereto,
Plucked on the mountains blue,
When in the gloaming-dew
We roamed erratic ;

Last, an old Book of Song,—
These have I treasured long,
Up in an Attic.

Held in one little hand,
They gleam in vain to me :
Of Love, Fame, Fatherland,
All that remain to me !
Love, with thy wounded wing,
Up the skies lessening,
Sighing, too sad to sing !
Fame, dead to pity !
Land,—that denied me bread !
Count me as lost and dead,
Tomb'd, in the City.

Daily the busy roar,
Murmur and motion here ;
Surging against its shore,
Sighs a great Ocean here !
But night by night it flows
Slowly to strange repose,
Calm and more calm it grows
Under the moonshine :
Then, only then, I peer
On each old souvenir
Shut from the sunshine.

Half of a ring of gold,
Tarnish'd and yellow now,
Broken in days of old,
Where is thy fellow now ?
Upon the heart of *her* ?
Feeling the sweet blood stir,
Still (though the mind demur)
Kept as a token ?
Ah ! doth her heart forget ?
Or, with the pain and fret,
Is *that*, too, broken ?

Thin threads of yellow hair,
Clipt from the brow of her,
Lying so faded there,—
Why whisper *now* of her ?
Strange lips are press'd unto
The brow o'er which ye grew,
Strange fingers flutter through
The loose long tresses.
Doth she remember still,
Trembling, and turning chill
From his caresses ?

Sprig from the mountains blue
 Long left behind me now,
 Of moonlight, shade, and dew,
 Wherefore remind me now?
 Cruel and chill and gray,
 Looming afar away,
 Dark in the light of day,
 Shall the Heights daunt me?
 My footsteps on the hill
 Are overgrown,—yet still
 Hill-echoes haunt me!

Book of Byronic Song,
 Put with the dead away,
 Wherefore wouldst *thou* prolong
 Dreams that have fled away?
 Thou art an eyeless skull,
 Dead, fleshless, cold, and null,
 Complexionless, dark, dull,
 And superseded;
 Yet, in thy time of pride,
 How loudly hast thou lied
 To all who heeded!

Now, Fame, thou hollow Voice,
 Shriek from the heights above!
 Let all who will rejoice
 In those wild lights above!
 When all are false save you,
 Yet were so beauteous too,
 O Fame, canst *thou* be true,
 And shall I follow?
 Nay! for the song of Man
 Dies in his throat, since Pan
 Hath slain Apollo!

O Fame, thy hill looks tame,
 No vast wings flee from thence,—
 Were I to climb, O Fame,
 What could I see from thence?
 Only, afar away,
 The mountains looming gray,
 Crimson'd at close of day,
 Clouds swimming by me;
 And in my hand a ring
 And ringlet glimmering,—
 And no one nigh me!

Better the busy roar,
 Best the mad motion here!
 Surging against its shore,
 Groans a great Ocean here.

O Love,—thou wouldst not wait!
 O Land,—thou art desolate!
 O Fame,—to others plate
 Of flights ecstatic!
 Only, at evenfall,
 Touching these tokens small,
 I think about you all,
 Up in an Attic!

TO THE MOON.

THE wind is shrill on the hills, and the
 plover
 Wheels up and down with a windy
 scream;
 The birch has loosen'd her bright locks
 over
 The nut-brown pools of the mountain
 stream;
 Yet here I linger in London City,
 Thinking of meadows where I was born—
 And over the roofs, like a face of pity,
 Up comes the Moon, with her dripping
 horn.

O Moon, pale Spirit, with dim eyes drink-
 ing
 The sheen of the Sun as he sweepeth
 by,
 I am looking long in those eyes, and think-
 ing
 Of one who hath loved thee longer than
 I;
 I am asking my heart if ye Spirits cherish
 The souls that ye witch with a harvest
 call?—
 If the dream must die when the dreamer
 perish?—
 If it be idle to dream at all?

The waves of the world roll hither and
 thither,
 The tumult deepens, the days go by,
 The dead men vanish—we know not whither,
 The live men anguish—we know not
 why;
 The cry of the stricken is smother'd never,
 The Shadow passes from street to street;
 And—o'er us fadeth, for ever and ever,
 The still white gleam of thy constant
 feet.

The hard men struggle, the students ponder,
The world rolls round on its westward
way ;

The gleam of the beautiful night up yonder
Is dim on the dreamer's cheek all day ;
The old earth's voice is a sound of weeping,
Round her the waters wash wild and
vast,

There is no calm, there is little sleeping,—
Yet nightly, brightly, thou glimmerest
past !

Another summer, new dreams departed,
And yet we are lingering, thou and I ;
I on the earth, with my hope proud-hearted,
Thou, in the void of a violet sky !
Thou art there ! I am here ! and the reaping
and mowing

Of the harvest year is over and done,
And the hoary snow-drift will soon be
blowing
Under the wheels of the whirling Sun.

While tower and turret lie silver'd under,
When eyes are closed and lips are dumb,
In the nightly pause of the human wonder,
From dusky portals I see thee come ;
And whoso wakes and beholds thee yonder,
Is witch'd like me till his days shall
cease,—

For in his eyes, wheresoever he wander,
Flashes the vision of God's white Peace !

SPRING SONG IN THE CITY.

WHO remains in London,
In the streets with me,
Now that Spring is blowing
Warm winds from the sea ;
Now that trees grow green and tall,
Now the Sun shines mellow,
And with moist primroses all
English lanes are yellow ?

Little barefoot maiden,
Selling violets blue,
Hast thou ever pictured
Where the sweetlings *grew* ?—
Oh, the warm wild woodland ways,
Deep in dewy grasses,
Where the wind-blown shadow strays,
Scented as it passes !

Pedlar breathing deeply,
Toiling into town,
With the dusty highway
Thou art dusky brown,—
Hast thou seen by daisied leas,
And by rivers flowing,
Lilac ringlets which the breeze
Loosens lightly blowing ?

Out of yonder waggon
Pleasant hay-scents float,
He who drives it carries
A daisy in his coat :
Oh, the English meadows, fair
Far beyond all praises !
Freckled orchids everywhere
Mid the snow of daisies !

Now in busy silence
Broods the nightingale,
Choosing his love's dwelling
In a dimpled dale ;
Round the leafy bower they raise
Rose-trees wild are springing ;
Underneath, thro' the green haze,
Bounds the brooklet singing.

And his love is silent
As a bird can be,
For the red buds only
Fill the red rose-tree,—
Just as buds and blossoms blow
He'll begin his tune,
When all is green and roses glow
Underneath the Moon !

Nowhere in the valleys
Will the wind be still,
Everything is waving,
Wagging at his will :
Blows the milkmaid's kirtle clean,
With her hand prest on it !
Lightly o'er the hedge so green
Blows the ploughboy's bonnet !

Oh, to be a-roaming
In an English dell !
Every nook is wealthy,
All the world looks well,
Tinted soft the Heavens glow,
Over Earth and Ocean,
Brooks flow, breezes blow,
All is light and motion !

IN LONDON, MARCH 1866.

TO-DAY the streets are dull and dreary,
 Heavily, slowly the Rain is falling,
 I hear around me, and am weary,
 The people murmuring and calling ;
 The gloomy room is full of faces,
 Firelight shadows are on the floor,
 And the deep Wind cometh from country
 places,

And the Rain hath a voice I would hear
 no more.

Ah ! weary days of windy weather !
 And will the Rain cease never, never !
 A summer past we sat together,
 In that lost life that lives for ever !

Ah ! sad and slow the Rain is falling,—
 And singing on seems sad without him.

Ah ! wearily the Wind is calling !

Would that mine arms were round about
 him !

For the world rolls on with air and ocean
 Wetly and windily round and round,
 And sleeping he feeleth the sad still motion,
 And dreameth of *me*, though his sleep be
 sound !

Ah ! weary days of windy weather !
 And will the Rain cease never, never !
 A summer past we sat together,
 In that lost life that lives for ever !

I sing, because my heart is aching,
 With hollow sounds around me ringing :
 Ah ! nevermore shall he awaking
 Yearn to the Singer and the Singing !
 Yet sleep, my father, calm and breathless,
 And if thou dreamest, dream on in joy !
 / While over thy grave walks Love the death-
 less,

Stir in the darkness, and bless thy boy !
 Ah ! weary days of windy weather !
 And will the Rain cease never, never !
 A summer past we sat together,
 In that lost life that lives for ever !

A LARK'S FLIGHT.

IN the quiet City park,
 Between the dawn and the dark,
 Loud and clear,
 That all may hear,
 Sings the Lark.

Beyond the low black line
 Of trees the dawn peeps red,—
 Clouds blow woolly and fine
 In the ether overhead,
 Out of the air is shaken
 A fresh and glistening dew,
 And the City begins to awaken
 And tremble thro' and thro' ;
 See ! (while thro' street and lane
 The people pour again,
 And lane and alley and street
 Grow hoarse to a sound of feet,)
 Here and there

A human Shape comes, dark
 Against the cool white air,
 Flitting across the park—
 While over the dew-drench'd green,
 Singing his 'Hark ! Oh, hark !'
 Hovering, hovering, dimly seen,
 Rises the Lark.

'Mystery ! Oh, mystery !'
 Clear he lichts to lightening day.
 'Mystery ! Oh, mystery !
 Up into the air with me,
 Come away, come away !'

Who is she that, wan and white,
 Shivering in the chilly light,
 Shadeth weary eyes to see
 Him who makes the melody ?
 She is nameless, she is dull,
 She has ne'er been beautiful,
 She is stain'd in brain and blood,
 Gross with mire, and foul with mud,—
 Thing of sorrow, what knows *she*
 Of the mighty mystery ?

The Lark sings sad and low,—
 'The City is dull and mean—
 There is woe ! there is woe !
 Never a soul is clean ;
 The City is dark, the wrong is deep ;
 Too late to moan, too late to weep !
 Tired, tired ! sleep, sleep !'

Who is he, the stooping one,
 Smiling coldly in the sun,
 Arms behind him lightly thrown,
 Pacing up and down alone ?
 'Tis the great Philosopher,
 Smoothly wrapt in coat of fur,
 Sootly pondering, man-wit wise,
 At his morning exercise.

He has weigh'd the winds and floods,
 He is rich in gather'd goods,
 He is crafty, and can prove
 God is Brahma, Christ, nor Jove ;
 He is mighty, and his soul
 Flits about from pole to pole,
 Chasing signs of God about,
 In a pleasant kind of doubt ;—
 What, to help the mystery,
 Sings the Lark to such as he ?

The Lark cries :

' Praise to Nature's plan !
 Year on year she plies
 Her toil of sun and skies,
 Till the beast flowers up in Man,
 Lord of effect and cause,
 Proud as a King can be ;
 But a Voice in the cloud cries, " Pause !"
 And he pauses, even he,
 On the verge of the Mystery.'

Oh, loud and clear, that all may hear,
 Rising higher, with ' Hark ! Oh, hark !'
 Higher, higher, higher, higher,
 Quivering as the dull red fire
 Of dawn grows brighter, cries the Lark :
 And they who listen there while he
 Singeth loud of Mystery,
 Interpret him in under-tone
 With a meaning of their own,
 Measuring his melody
 By their own soul's quality.

Tall and stately, fair and sweet,
 Walketh maiden Marguerite,
 Musing there on maid and man,
 In her mood patrician ;
 To all she sees her eyes impart
 The colour of a maiden heart ;
 Heart's chastity is on her face,
 She scents the air with nameless grace,
 And where she goes with heart astir,
 Colour and motion follow her.

What should the Singer sing
 Unto so sweet a thing,
 But, ' Oh, my love loves me !
 And the love I love best is guarding the nest,
 While I cheer her merrily, —
 Come up high ! come up high ! to a cloud
 in the sky !
 And sing of your love with me !'

Elbows on the grassy green,
 Scowling face his palms between,
 Yonder gaunt Thief meditates
 Treason deep against his mates ;
 For his great hands itch to hold
 Both the pardon and the gold.
 Still he listens unaware,
 Scowling round with sullen stare,
 Gnawing at his under-lip,
 Pond'ring friends and fellowship,
 Thinking of a friendly thing
 Done to him in suffering,
 And of happy days and free
 Spent in that rough companie :
 Till he seeks the bait no more, —
 And the Lark is conqueror.

For the Lark says plain,
 ' Who sells his pal is mean :
 Better hang than gain
 Blood-money to save one's skin —
 A whip for the rogue who'd tell,'
 He hears the Singer say, —
 ' Better the rope and the cell —
 Better the devils of Hell !
 Come away ! come away !'

O Lark ! O Lark !
 Up, up, for it is light —
 The Souls stream out of the dark,
 And the City's spires gleam bright ;
 The living world is awake again,
 Each wanders on his way,
 The wonderful waters break again
 In the white and perfect Day.
 Nay ! nay ! descend not yet,
 But higher, higher, higher !
 Up thro' the air, and wet
 Thy wings in the solar fire !
 There, hovering in ecstasy,
 Sing, ' Mystery ! Oh, mystery !'

O Lark ! O Lark ! hadst thou the might
 Beyond the cloud to wing thy way,
 To sing and soar in ceaseless flight,
 It might be well for men this day.
 Beyond that cloud there is a zone,
 And in that zone there is a land,
 And in that land, upon a throne,
 A mighty Spirit sits alone,
 With musing cheek upon His hand.

And all is still and all is sweet
 Around the silence of His seat,—
 Beneath, the waves of wonder flow,—
 And melted on His shining feet
 The years flash down as falling snow.

O Lark! O Lark!

Up! for thy wings are strong;
 While the Day is breaking,
 And the City is waking,
 Sing a song of wrong—
 Sing of the weak man's tears,
 Of the strong man's agony;
 The passion, the hopes, the fears,
 The heaped-up pain of the years,
 The human mystery.

O Lark! we might rejoice,
 Could'st reach that distant land,
 For we cannot hear His voice,
 And we often miss His hand!
 And the lips of each are ice
 To the kiss of sister and brother;
 And we see that one man's vice
 Is the virtue of another.
 Yea, each that hears thee sing
 Translates thy song to speech,
 And, lo! the rendering
 Is so different with each!
 The gentle are oppress'd,
 The foul man fareth best;
 Wherever we seek, our gain
 Is full of a poisonous pain.
 In one soft note and long
 Gather our sense of wrong;
 Rise up, O Lark! from the sod,
 Up, up, with soundless wings,—
 Rise up to God! rise up, rise up, to God!
 Tell Him these things!

DE BERNY.

YOU knew him slightly. We, who knew
 him well,
 Saw something in his soul you could not
 see:

A strength wherein his very vices thrive,
 A power that darken'd much the outer man,
 Strange, yet angelically innocent.
 His views were none of ours; his morals—
 well,
 Not English morals at the best; and yet
 We loved him and we miss him;—the old
 haunts

Seem dull without that foolish full-grown
 child;

The world goes on without him:—London
 throngs

With sport and festival; and something less
 Than poor De Berny haunts us every-
 where—

The buying and the selling, and the strife
 Of little natures.

What a man was that!—

Just picture him as you perceived him, Noel,
 Standing beyond his circle. Spare and tall,
 Black-bearded and black-eyed; a sallow face,
 With lines of idle humour round the lips;
 A nose and eyebrow proudly curved; an eye
 Clear as a child's. But thirty summers old!
 Yet wearied out, save only when he warm'd
 His graces in the sunshine. What an air
 Was his, when, cigarette in mouth, and hands
 Thrust in the pockets of his pantaloons,
 He took his daily walk down Regent Street,
 Stared at the pretty girls, saluted friends,
 And, pleased as any lady, stopp'd to study
 The fashions in the windows of the shops!
 Did he not walk as if he walk'd on thrones,
 With smiles of vacant patronage for all?
 And who could guess he had not break-
 fasted,
 Had little chance of dining, since his purse
 Held just the wherewithal to buy a loaf—
 Change from the shilling spent in purchasing
 The sweet post-prandial cigar!

He lived—

Ah! Heaven knew *how*—for 'twas a mystery!
 While the sun shone, he saunter'd in the
 sun;

But late at night sat scribbling, by the light
 Of a wax-candle. Wax? De Berny's way;
 For, mark, this wanderer let his body suffer,
 Hunger'd and pinch'd, rather than bate a jot
 Of certain very useless luxuries:
 Smoked nought but real Havannah, 'tis
 aver'd,

And sat at night within his dingy lodging,
 Wrapt, king-like, in a costly dressing-gown
 His mother gave him; slippers on his feet;
 His cat, Mignonne, the silken-hair'd
 Chinese,

Seated upon his shoulder, purring low;
 And something royal in his look, despite
 His threadbare pantaloons!

A clever man !
 A nature sparkling o'er with *jeux d'esprit!*
 Well read in certain light philosophies
 Down from Voltaire ; and, in his easy way,
 A sceptic—one whose heart belied his brain.
 Oft, leaning back and puffing his cigar,
 Pushing his wan white fingers through his
 hair—
 His cat Mignonne, the velvet-paw'd
 Chinese,
 Rubbing her soft white cheek against his
 beard,
 And purring her approval—he would sit,
 Smiling his sad, good-humour'd, weary
 smile,
 And lightly launch his random, reckless
 shafts
 At English thrift, the literary cant,
 The flat, unearnest living of the world,
 And (last and lightest) at the tender sex,
 Their little virtue and their mighty vows.

This was the man whose face went pale
 with pain,
 When that shrill shriek from Poland fill'd
 his ear ;
 This was the man who pinch'd himself to
 send
 A mite to Garibaldi and the Cause ;
 Who cried, or nearly cried, o'er Lamartine,
 And loved the passionate passages of Sand ;
 Who would have kiss'd the ground beneath
 the feet
 Of any shape called 'Woman,' plain or fair ;
 Gave largess royal to children in the streets ;
 Treated an unclean beggar seeking alms
 To a clean shirt, and sent him off amazed ;
 And when he heard sweet voice or instru-
 ment,
 Breath'd passionate breath, like one that
 drinks with pain
 An atmosphere too heavenly rare and sweet.
 Pleasure? Ah me! what pleasure garner'd
he,
 Who fasted oftener than ate ; who pawn'd
 His coat to serve a neighbour, and was cold ;
 Whose only little joy was promenading
 On sunny summer days in Regent Street?
 His talk? Why, how he talk'd, as I have
 said ;
 Incubus could not prove his neighbours
 worse,
 Or himself blacker, or the cold world colder ;

His jests so oft too broad for decent ears,
 His impiousness so insolently strong,
 His languid grace so callous unto all
 Save the sad sunshine that it flutter'd in.
 Yet, Noel, I could swear that Spirits—those
 Who see beneath the eyes, and hear the
 breathing
 The Soul makes as it stirs within the breast—
 Bent not unlovingly, not angrily,
 Above that weary, foolish, full-grown Child !

Weary—of what? Weary, I think, for want
 Of something whose existence he denied ;
 Not sick of life, since he had never felt
 The full of living—wearied out, because
 The world look'd falsehood, and his turn
 was truth.

Well, late one morning in the summer time,
 They found him lying in his easy-chair,
 Wrapt royally in the costly dressing-gown
 His mother gave him, slippers on his feet,
 And something royal in his look,—cold,
 dead !

A smell of laudanum sicken'd all the air
 Around him ; on the table at his side
 A copy of De Musset's *Elle et Lui* ;
 And close at hand a crumpled five-pound
 note,
 On which was written in his round clear
 hand
 'Pour Garibaldi. Vive la Liberté !'

THE WAKE OF TIM O'HARA.

(SEVEN DIALS.)

To the Wake of O'Hara
 Came company ;
 All St. Patrick's Alley
 Was there to see,
 With the friends and kinsmen
 Of the family.

On the long deal table lay Tim in white,
 And at his pillow the burning light.
 Pale as himself, with the tears on her cheek,
 The mother received us, too full to speak ;
 But she heap'd the fire, and on the board
 Set the black bottle with never a word,
 While the company gather'd, one and all,
 Men and women, big and small—
 Not one in the Alley but felt a call
 To the Wake of Tim O'Hara,

At the face of O'Hara,
All white with sleep,
Not one of the women
But took a peep,
And the wives new-wedded
Began to weep.

The mothers gather'd round about,
And praised the linen and lying-out,—
For white as snow was his winding-sheet,
And all was peaceful, and clean, and sweet ;
And the old wives, praising the bless'd dead,
Were thronging around the old press-bed,
Where O'Hara's widow, tatter'd and torn,
Held to her bosom the babe new-born,
And stared all round her, with eyes forlorn,
At the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

For the heart of O'Hara
Was good as gold,
And the life of O'Hara
Was bright and bold,
And his smile was precious
To young and old !

Gay as a guinea, wet or dry,
With a smiling mouth, and a twinkling eye !
Had ever an answer for chaff and fun ;
Would fight like a lion, with any one !
Not a neighbour of any trade
But knew some joke that the boy had made ;
Not a neighbour, dull or bright,
But minded *something*—frolic or fight,
And whisper'd it round the fire that night,
At the Wake of Tim O'Hara !

' To God be glory
In death and life,
He's taken O'Hara
From trouble and strife !'
Said one-eyed Biddy,
The apple-wife.

' God bless old Ireland !' said Mistress Hart,
Mother to Mike of the donkey-cart ;
' God bless old Ireland till all be done,
She never made wake for a better son !'
And all join'd chorus, and each one said
Something kind of the boy that was dead ;
And the bottle went round from lip to lip,
And the weeping widow, for fellowship,
Took the glass of old Biddy and had a sip,
At the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

Then we drank to O'Hara,
With drams to the brim,

While the face of O'Hara
Look'd on so grim
In the corpse-light shining
Yellow and dim,

The cup of liquor went round again,
And the talk grew louder at every drain ;
Louder the tongues of the women grew !—
The lips of the boys were loosening too !
The widow her weary eyelids closed,
And, soothed by the drop o' drink, she
dozed ;
The mother brighten'd and laugh'd to hear
Of O'Hara's fight with the grenadier,
And the hearts of all took better cheer,
At the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

Tho' the face of O'Hara
Lookt on so wan,
In the chimney-corner
The row began—
Lame Tony was in it,
The oyster-man ;

For a dirty low thief from the North came
near,
And whistled ' Boyne Water ' in his ear,
And Tony, with never a word of grace,
Flung out his fist in the blackguard's
face ;
And the girls and women scream'd out for
fight,
And the men that were drunkest began to
fight,—
Over the tables and chairs they threw,—
The corpse-light tumbled,—thē trouble
grew,—
The new-born joined in the hullabaloo,—
At the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

' Be still ! be silent !
Ye do a sin !
Shame be his portion
Who dares begin !'
'Twas Father O'Connor
Just enter'd in !—

All look'd down, and the row was done—
And shamed and sorry was every one ;
But the Priest just smiled quite easy and
free—
' Would ye wake the poor boy from his
sleep ?' said he ;
And he said a prayer, with a shining face,
Till a kind of a brightness filled the place ;

The women lit up the dim corpse-light,
 The men were quieter at the sight,
 And the peace of the Lord fell on all that
 night
 At the Wake of Tim O'Hara !

KITTY KEMBLE.

' All the world's a stage.'

DRAW softly back the curtains of the bed—
 Aye, here lies Kitty Kemble cold and dead :
 Poor Kitty Kemble, if I steal a kiss,
 Who deems the deed amiss ?

Cold bloodless cheek whereon there lingers
 faint

The crimson dye of a life's rouge and
 paint ;

Cold lips that fall, since thy false rows of
 teeth

No longer prop the toothless gums beneath ;
 Cold clammy brow that lies there bald and
 bare

No longer screen'd and shadow'd by false
 hair ;

Poor Kitty Kemble ! is it truly *thou*
 On whom I look so very sadly now ?

Lightest of ladies, is thy mortal race
 Run out indeed, thy luminous laughing face
 Turn'd to this mindless mask of marble
 dead ?

And even thy notes of tinkling laughter fled,
 Which, when all other charms to please
 were past,

Stay'd with thee till the last ?

GOD bless thee, Kitty Kemble !—and GOD
 love thee !

Warm be the kindred earth that lies above
 thee—

Lightest of ladies, never sad or sage,
 A glad coquette at sixty years of age,
 And even with thy last expiring breath
 Flirting thy fan at thy lean Lover, Death !

Tho' nature made you volatile and witty,
 Your parents were most vulgar people,
 Kitty ;

Hard work was daily yours, and trouble
 maybe

To mind the wretched house and nurse the
 baby,

While to the third-class Theatre hard by
 Your father and your mother both did hie,
 Mother as dresser, while with surly mien
 Toil'd father as a shifter of the scene ;
 And thus it happen'd that you early grew
 Familiar with the British drama too,
 And thro' the dusty stage-door you would
 steal

With father's midday beer or evening meal,
 Until that blissful day when to your glee
 The keen-eyed ballet-master noticed thee,
 And quickly, being a bright and clever girl,
 You learnt from him to dance and twist and
 twirl,

Leaping ere long before the garish lights,
 A smiling spangled creature in pink tights.
 Aye, Kitty, and the common scandal says
 The ballet-master in those early days,
 Finding you quick and rapidly advancing,
 Taught you love's dalliance as well as
 dancing !

But you were very clever ; and ere long
 Were brightest, smartest of the ballet
 throng ;

No lighter trimmer leg was to be seen
 When you were only rising seventeen,
 And from the stalls to your sweet guileless
 eyes

Ogles and nods and smiles began to rise.
 Then later, like a wise girl and a pretty,
 You chose to bless a close man from the
 City,

Quiet, respectable, and most demure
 With a stiff salary and prospects sure ;
 And him, my dear, you used for your am-
 bition

Still bent of course to better your position.
 For tho' so light and merry, you were ever
 Ambitious, Kitty, quick and bright and
 clever ;

And now you got your educated lover
 To hear you read the British drama over,
 To criticise your clever imitations
 Of the tall leading lady's declamations,
 And to correct your tone, and guide your
 tongue,

Whenever you pronounced your English
 wrong ;

And tho' the fellow was in soul a bore,
 And had no intellect to help you more,
 You got in this Bohemian sort of college
 Some gleams of grace and scraps of solid
 knowledge ;

And while your silly sisters took repose
You grew grammatical, as grammar goes.

O Kitty, what a lavish little elf
Thou wast, yet economic of thyself !
So free, so merry, and innocent of guile ;
And yet at heart so *busy*, all the while
You danced and dallied with those sparkling
eyes,

In weighty speculations how to rise !
Yes, Kitty, and you rose ; ere long you
made

The prettiest, wittiest sort of chambermaid
(That saucy female elf of the stage-inn,
Chuck'd by each handsome guest beneath
the chin ;

A nymph oft carrying a warming-pan,
And sweetheart of the comic waiting-man)
Or haply, on extravaganza nights,
As a slim fairy prince in trunks and tights,
You pertly spake a dozen lines or so,
While just behind you, glaring in a row,
Your sillier sisters of the ballet stood,
With spleen and envy raging in their blood !
Thus, Kitty Kemble, on and up you went,
Merry, yet ill content ;
And soon you cast, inflated still with pride,
Your City man aside,
Cut him stone dead to his intense annoy,
And, like a maiden coy,
Dropt, blushing crimson, in the arms scarce
vital

Of an old man of title !
A sad dyspeptic dog, the worn and yellow
Wreck of a handsome fellow,
And tho' the lord of boundless rolls and
lands,
Just a mere puppet in your pretty hands.

O Kitty Kemble, how you coaxed and
teased him,
Nursed him and pain'd him, petted him
and pleased him,
Drove him nigh crazy, made his slow blood
start
With the glad heating of your burning
heart,
Until he vowed, you managed him so
neatly,
To marry you completely ;
And with this view transmitted you, poor
fool,
To a French boarding-school ;

And there you taught, I fear, your power
being such,
More than you learnt, tho' what you learnt
was much !

O you were still and patient as a mouse,
Much as your spirit hated the strict house,
The teachers grim, the insipid simpering
misses,
The walks—so different from the coulisses !

There learning patiently did you abide,
Till one fine morning your protector died,
And once again, alas ! as in times past.
On the hard world your gentle lot was cast.
But, Kitty, what a change in you was made
By those few seasons wintering in the
shade ;

In like a common moth you crept full sly,
But *out* you came a perfect butterfly !
A pretty little sparkling wench,
Prattling so pertly in French,
Or dashing off, with fingers white,
Gay little scraps of music bright ;
Merry and wicked, and not wise,
With babies dancing in her eyes,
Most apt at quoting saw and joke
From Shakespeare and less famous folk,
Making the ignorant listener stare
With charming *mots* from Molière !

But, Kitty Kemble, 'tis not given to me
To write in full your fair biography.
About this very time from English sight
Your pretty little figure vanished quite ;
And dainty rivals came and conquered here,
And the false world forgot you quite, I fear.
I think your next appearance in our view
Was in a blaze of splendour bright and new,
When, after many years of preparation,
Provincial trial, trouble, and vexation,
Out you emerged on the astonish'd City,
The town's delight, the beaux', the critics',
Kitty !

The brightest wonder human eye could see
In good old Comedy :
A smile, a voice, a laugh, a look, a form,
To take the world by storm !
A dainty dimpling intellectual treasure
To give old stagers pleasure !
A rippling radiant cheek—a roguish eye—
That made the youngsters sigh !
And thus beneath a tinsel'd pasteboard Star
At once you mounted your triumphant car,

O'er burning hearts your chariot wheels were
driven,
Bouquets came rolling down like rain from
heaven,
And on we dragged you, Kitty, while you
stood
Roguish and great, not innocent and good,
The Queen Elect of all Light Womanhood !

Yes, Kitty Kemble, let the preacher cry
His word of 'Vanity, O Vanity !'
But those, I think, were happy, happy days.
Indeed, yours was a life that throve with
praise,
And brighten'd ; passionate and eager ;
made
To love the lamp-light and to hate the
shade ;
To play with happiness and drink the beam
Till it suffused your substance gleam by
gleam,

Making of elements past your control
The smiling semblance of a living Soul.
In sooth, you were a summer creature, one
Who never really throve save in the sun ;
And take away its perfect self-content,
Your very beauty grew indifferent.
Further, you did not crave for love or fame,
Or that still colder shadow—a good name ;
You were not even avaricious (tho'
'Twas sweet, of course, to see the guineas
grow).

Nay, Kitty, all your care and your delight
Was to gleam past upon the public sight,
To gleam, to smile, to sparkle, and depart
Ere sympathy could reach your little heart ;
To let the flaming footlights underneath
Light up your rouge, whiten your spotless
teeth,

And to those eyes, so luminous and bright,
Dart beams of glorious artificial light ;
To feel your bright and lissom body free
In brightly-hued theatric drapery ;
And on your skin, as white as morning milk,
The clinging satin and the slippery silk.
In private life 'twas your delight to be
The beauty of Bohemian revelry ;
To the smart little literary man
Whispering wicked jests behind your fan,
And not at all too nice in modesty
As to reject a dinner *vis-à-vis*
At Kew or Richmond, freely sipping port
With hirsute critics of the heavier sort,

And oft enough on such a holiday
Opening at last your own small purse to
pay !
Beneath your beauty, rouged, and ring'd,
and pearled,
You were at heart the woman of the world,
Not quite forgetting yet (tho' well content
Quite to forget) your very low descent ;
And having gained your little life's en-
deavour,
You could, I know, have deemed it bliss
for ever.

For ever, Kitty Kemble? Ah, my child !
(Surely thou art a child at last ?)
When days and nights are glad and wild,
Thy whirl the quicklier past !
To Sorrow's faintest funeral symphony
Time lingers darken'd steps dejectedly
With sad eyes heavenward ; but how fleet
he flies
When Revel sings and Mirth doth melo-
dize !
Thy merry laughter and thy gay delight
Quicken'd the Greybeard's footsteps day and
night,
And Kitty, suddenly, to thy surprise,
The cruel crowsfeet gather'd 'neath thine
eyes.

But paint is bright, and powder pearly
white,
And many merry years, in that fierce light
Which beats on thrones and faces like to
thine,
Thy ways were witching and thy lot divine.
Thy life was surely glad. The need was
fled
Long since of choosing lovers for thy bread
Or thine advancement, and thou now wert
free

To pick at will thy male society.
All that is dark. We laymen cannot tell
What amatory happiness befell ;
We only know for certain Cupid's dart
Ne'er struck so deadly deep into thy heart,
As to befool our Kitty into passion
Of the mad vulgar fashion.
We only know thou, Kitty, ever wert
Lightest of ladies, delicate and pert,
Clever and quick, and horribly well read.
And as the happy seasons o'er thee fled
Thy bust swelled out, thy body fresh and fair

Grew plumper, and thou didst assume thine
 air,
 Round, roguish, royal, dazzling, plump, and
 good,
 Of most delicious demi-matronhood.
 I think we loved thee even better then
 Than ever, Kitty; all the older men,
 I know, adored thee! and thou wert
 supreme,
 Yea, grand above all modern guess or
 dream,
 In wanton Widows, those we love to see
 In unctuous Shakespearian comedy.
 Great wast thou also, Kitty, great and true,
 As the bold Beatrice in 'Much Ado';
 And all the mighty 'Town went raving mad
 To see thy 'Lady Teazle.'

Wild and glad

Rolled the years onward, and thy little
 heart

(Tho' certainly thy stoniest, toughest part)
 Was strong enough at least to *act* with.

Well!

At forty summers still thy fortune fell
 On pleasant places; for a little yet
 The fickle British public loved its pet.
 True, here and there, thy features, still so
 pretty,

Were sharpening into shrewish lines, my
 Kitty;

And nose and chin, though still most soft
 and sweet,
 Seem'd slowly journeying on the way to
 meet!

A certain shrillness in the voice's tone,
 Which from the very first had been thine
 own,

But rather pleased the ear than otherwise
 When thou hadst fleeter feet and younger
 eyes,

Grew harsher and more harsh upon the ear.
 Never, indeed, in any earlier year
 Hadst thou performed so perfectly as now,
 And yet the cruel British Critic's brow
 Grew cloudy. Vain were trick of tone or
 smile

To hide the artful, artificial style,
 The superficial tones, the airs capricious,
 That in thy younger days had been delicious.
 O Kitty, all thy being's constant pain
 To win the heart once more was wholly vain;
 Most vain, most pitcous! Thy familiar airs

Were met by only vacant shrugs and stares,
 Thy tricks, thy jokes, thy jests, thy wanton
 ways,

Awakened only pity and amaze;
 And presently, when thou didst rashly try
 A fair young part, as in the days gone by,
 Down on thee came the cruel Critic's blud-
 geon,

Out spoke at last the oracular Curmudgeon,
 Hinting out openly, in accents cold,
 That thou wert *passée*, past thy prime, and
 old,

The ghost of loveliness and lightness, fit
 To play old women,—better still to quit
 The Stage for ever. O poor thing! poor
 thing!

The cruel knife cut deep enough to bring
 The sad blood from your very heart at last;
 You winced, you smirked, you struggled,
 and at last

You seem'd to triumph; and the bitter truth
 That thou hadst spent thy previous years
 of youth

Was taken home indeed to thy fair breast,
 And there, like to a very viper's nest,
 It bred and flourish'd. Kitty, tho' thy face
 Was merry still in many a public place,
 Thy shrill laugh loud, thy manner brazen
 bold,

Black was thy soul and piteously cold.
 Anon into the country thou didst fare,
 And spend a brighter, happier season there;
 Bearing about with thee from year to year
 The shadow of thine earlier triumphs here.
That passed, like all the rest. Ah me! ah
 me!

Even the provinces deserted thee,
 As we had done; so our poor Kitty came
 To be the lonely ghost of a great name—
 A worn and wanton woman, not yet sage
 Nor wearied out, tho' sixty years of age,
 Wrinkled and rouged, and with false teeth
 of pearl,

And the shrill laughter of a giddy girl;
 Haunting, with painted cheek and powder'd
 brow,

The private boxes, as spectator now;
 Both day and night, indeed, invited out
 To private picnic and to public rout,
 Because thy shrill laugh and thy ready joke
 Ever enlivened up the festal folk;
 Nor did such people woo thy service less
 Because of tales of thy past wickedness

Oh, thou wert very clever, keen, and bright,
Most gay, most scandal-loving, and most
light!

Still greatly given to French literature,
And foreign fenilletons not over pure;
Still highly rouging up thy cheek so dead
Into a ghostly gleam of rosy red:
Still ever ready talking with a man,
To tap his naughty knuckles with thy fan
Coquettishly, and meanwhile with thy dim
Yet lustrous eyes to smile and ogle him!
Yet ever with a lurking secret sense
Of thine own beauty's utter impotence,
With hungry observation all the while
To catch the covert sneer or lurking smile—
A helpless fear, a pang, a sharp distress,
Curdling thy choicest mirth to bitterness.

Sad years, my child, sad years of lonely
gloom!

Nor let the hasty Moralist assume
Neglect and age and agony could be
God's ruthless instruments to chasten thee.
Nay, Kitty Kemble, tho' thy spirit grew
Still bitterer as the seasons flash'd and flew.
Thy bright face ne'er one moment turned
away

From the glad gandy world of every day.
I know religion never moved thy thought,
Comfort in God was neither found nor
sought.

Still thou wert happiest, happiest and best
By the old gaslight, rouged and gaily drest.
At each new play thy well-known face was
seen,

Merry and quick, yet hiding secret spleen;
At each new brilliant *débutante's* success
Thy soul did wince for very bitterness;—
And all the taste of thy departed power
Was gall and wormwood on thy soul each
hour;

And never, Kitty, till thy latest breath,
Didst thou remember God, the Soul, and
Death.

Yet very quietly, one wintry day,
Death's pale and unseen footsteps past thy
way,

And as Death swiftly sail'd upon the air,
He lightly breathed one breath upon thee
there

As a reminder;—after that thy face
Changed very strangely; shrivell'd in its
place;

One helpless eyelid flittered, and thy faint
Dark cheek contracted underneath thy
paint:

And after that same day thy speech was
ne'er

Quite constant to thy thought, or wholly
clear;

And ev'n thy very thought at times would
seem

Suddenly to dissolve away in dream!

Yet, Kitty Kemble, to the last we found
thee

Constant to the old haunts of life around
thee,

Still in the public gaslight thou wert seen,
Tho' now upon a staff compelled to lean,
Thine eyes still black and quick, thy tones
and words

Still gay, thy laugh shrill as a mocking
bird's!

Ah! but I think thy heavenly Sire was near
His daughter's dwelling-place at last, my
dear!

That quiet day I looked upon thee last,
I had called at midday as thy porch I
passed,

Found thee 'from home,' and past the quiet
door

Away was turning, when, from the first floor,
Thy quick voice called me; and upstairs I
went,

To find my lady lying indolent,
Pillow'd in state upon her stately bed,
A pretty ribbon'd night-cap on her head,
While on her hollow cheeks' false hectic
bloom

Strange shade fell sadly from the darken'd
room.

And there upon thy pillow, partly read,
Feydeau's last fever-piece; around thee
spread

Old playbills, pink and yellow, white and
green,

Whereon in mighty capitals was seen
Thine own triumphant name. Alas! alas!
Shall I forget till life and memory pass
Thy look of blended pleasure, pride, and
pain,

Thy eager laughter, garrulous and vain,
Thy tremulous, feverish voice and fretful
glee,

As thou didst prattle, pointing out to me,

With a lean, palsied finger, dead and cold,
Thy mighty triumphs in the days of old?
And suddenly (my child, shall I forget?—
The voice, the tone, the look, all linger
yet!)

The feverish emotion grew too much;
And with a passionate, spasmodic clutch,
Thou didst against my shoulder wildly press
Thy cheek, once warm with life and loveliness,

And moaning madly over thy lost years
Hysterically break to bitterest tears!
What comfort could I give? ere, once more
gay,

Thou with light hand didst sweep the tears
away,
And break, with fretful wish and eager will,
To laughter sadder still;
Prattling, in thy most artificial tone,
Words to make Angels moan!

And here's the end of all. And on thy bed
Thou liest, Kitty Kemble, lone and dead;
And on thy clammy cheek there lingers
faint

The deep dark stain of a life's rouge and
paint;

And, Kitty, all thy sad days and thy glad
Have left thee lying for thy last part clad,
Cold, silent, on the earthly Stage; and
while

Thou liest there with dark and dreadful
smile,

The feverish footlights of the World flash
bright

Into thy face with a last ghastly light;
And while thy friends all sighing rise to go,
The great black Curtain droppeth, slow,
slow, slow.

God help us! We spectators turn away;
Part sad, we think, part merry, was the
Play.

God help the lonely player now she stands
Behind the darken'd scenes with wondering
face,

And gropes her way at last, with clay-cold
hands,

Out of the dingy place,
Turning towards Home, poor worn and
weary one,

Now the last scene is done.

THE SWALLOWS.

I.

O CHURCHYARD in the city's gloom,
What charm to please hast thou,
That, seated on a broken tomb,
I muse so oft, as now?
The dreary autumn wind goes murmuring
by,
And in the distant streets the ragged urchins
cry.

Thou holdest in thy sunless land
Nought I have seen or known,
No lips I ever kissed, no hand
That ever clasped mine own;
And all is still and dreary to the eye,—
The broken tombs, dark walls, roofed by a
sunless sky.

Now to the murmur that mine ears
Catch from the distant lanes,
Dimming mine eyes with dreamy tears,
Slow, low, my heart refrains;
And the live grass creeps up from thy dead
bones,
And crawls, with slimy stains, over thy gray
gravestones.

The cries keep on, the minutes pass,
Mine eyes are on the ground,
The silent many-fingered grass
Winds round, and round, and round:
I seem to see it live, and stir, and wind,
And gaze, until a weight is heavy on my
mind.

II.

O Churchyard in the shady gloom,
What charm to please hast thou,
That, seated on a broken tomb,
I muse so oft, as now?
Haply because I learn, with sad content,
How small a thing can make the whole
world different!

Among the gravestones worn and old,
A sad sweet hour I pass,
Where thickest from thy sunless mould
Upsprings the sickly grass;

For, though the earth holds no sweet-smelling flower,
The Swallows build their nests up in thy square gray tower.

While, burthened by the life we bear,
The dull and creeping woe,
The mystery, the pain, the care,
I watch thy grasses grow,
Sighing, I look to the dull autumn skies,
And, lo! my heart is cheered, and tears are in mine eyes.

For here, where stillness, death, and dream,
Brood above creeping things,
Over mine eyes with quick bright gleam
Shine little flashing wings,
And a strange comfort takes thy shady air,
And the deep life I breathe seems sweetened unaware!

*TOM DUNSTAN; OR, THE
POLITICIAN.*

'How long, O Lord, how long?'

I.

Now poor Tom Dunstan's cold,
Our shop is duller;
Scarce a tale is told,
And our talk has lost its old
Red-republican colour!
Though he was sickly and thin,
'Twas a sight to see his face,—
While, sick of the country's sin,
With bang of the fist, and chin
Thrust out, he argued the case!
He prophesied men should be free!
And the money-bags be bled!
'She's coming, she's coming!' said he;
'Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!'

II.

All day we sat in the heat,
Like spiders spinning,
Stitching full fine and fleet,
While old Moses on his seat
Sat greasily grinning;

And here Tom said his say,
And prophesied Tyranny's death;
And the tallow burned all day,
And we stitch'd and stitch'd away
In the thick smoke of our breath.
Weary, weary were we,
Our hearts as heavy as lead;
But 'Patience! she's coming!' said he;
'Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!'

III.

And at night, when we took here
The rest allowed to us,
The Paper came, with the beer,
And Tom read, sharp and clear,
The news out loud to us;
And then, in his witty way,
He threw the jests about:
The cutting things he'd say
Of the wealthy and the gay!
How he turn'd 'em inside out!
And it made our breath more free
To hearken to what he said—
'She's coming! she's coming!' said he;
'Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!'

IV.

But grim Jack Hart, with a sneer,
Would mutter, 'Master!
If Freedom means to appear,
I think she might step *here*
A little faster!'—
Then, 'twas fine to see Tom flame,
And argue, and prove, and preach,
Till Jack was silent for shame,—
Or a fit of coughing came
O' sudden, to spoil Tom's speech.
Ah! Tom bad the eyes to see
When Tyranny should be sped:
'She's coming! she's coming!' said he
'Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!'

V.

But Tom was little and weak,
The hard hours shook him;
Hollower grew his cheek,
And when he began to speak
The coughing took him.
Ere long the cheery sound
Of his chat among us ceased,

And we made a purse, all round,
That he might not starve, at least.
His pain was sorry to see,
Yet there, on his poor sick-bed,
'She's coming, in spite of me!
Courage, and wait!' cried he;
'Freedom's ahead!'

VI.

A little before he died,
To see his passion!
'Bring me a Paper!' he cried,
And then to study it tried,
In his old sharp fashion;
And with eyeballs glittering,
His look on me he bent,
And said that savage thing
Of the Lords o' the Parliament.
Then, dying, smiling on me,
'What matter if *one* be dead?
She's coming at last!' said he;
'Courage, boy! wait and see;
Freedom's ahead!'

VII.

Ay, now Tom Dunstan's cold,
The shop feels duller;
Scarce a tale is told,
And our talk has lost the old
Red-republican colour.
But we see a figure gray,
And we hear a voice of death,
And the tallow burns all day,
And we stitch and stitch away
In the thick smoke of our breath;
Ay, while in the dark sit we,
Tom seems to call from the dead—
'She's coming! she's coming!' says he;
'Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!'

How long, O Lord! how long
Must thy Handmaid linger—
She who shall right the wrong,
Make the poor sufferer strong?
Sweet morrow, bring her!
Hasten her over the sea,
O Lord! ere Hope he fled!
Bring her to men and to me! . . .
O Slave, pray still on thy knee,
'FREEDOM's ahead!'

O'MURTOGH.

(NEWGATE, 18—)

'It's a sight to see a bold man die!'

TO-NIGHT we drink but a sorrowful cup . . .
Hush! silence! and fill your glasses up.
Christ be with us! Hold out and say:
'Here's to the Boy that died this day!'

Wasn't he bold as the boldest here?
Red coat or black did he ever fear?
With the bite and the drop, too, ever free?
He died like a man. . . . I was there to see!

The gallows was black, our cheeks were
white
All underneath in the morning light;
The bell ceased tolling swift as thought,
And out the murdered Boy was brought.

There he stood in the daylight dim,
With a Priest on either side of him;
Each Priest look'd white as he held his book,
But the man between had a brighter look!

Over the faces below his feet
His gray eye gleam'd so keen and fleet:
He saw us looking; he smiled his last . . .
He couldn't wave, he was pinioned fast.

This was more than one could bear,
For the lass who loved him was with us
there;
She stood in the rain with her dripping shawl
Over her head, for to see it all.

But when she met the Boy's last look,
Her lips went white, she turned and shook;
She didn't scream, she didn't groan,
But down she dropt as dead as stone.

He saw the stir in the crowd beneath,
And I saw him tremble and set his teeth;
But the hangman came with a knavish grace
And drew the nightcap over his face.

Then I saw the Priests, who still stood near,
Pray faster and faster to hide their fear;
They closed their eyes, I closed mine too,
And the deed was over before I knew.

The crowd that stood all round of me
Gave one dark plunge like a troubled sea ;
And I knew by that the deed was done,
And I opened my eyes and saw the sun.

The gallows was black, the sun was white,
There he hung, half hid from sight ;
The sport was over, the talk grew loud,
And they sold their wares to the mighty
crowd.

We walked away with our hearts full sore,
And we met a hawker before a door,
With a string of papers an arm's-length long,
A dying speech and a gallows song.

It bade all people of poor estate
B. ware of O'Murtogh's evil fate ;
It told how in old Ireland's name
He had done red murder and come to
shame.

Never a word was sung or said
Of the murder'd mother, a ditch her bed,
Who died with her newborn babe that
night,
While the blessed cabin was burning bright.

Nought was said of the years of pain,
The starving stomach, the madden'd brain,
The years of sorrow and want and toil,
And the murdering rent for the bit of soil.

Nought was said of the murder done
On man and woman and little one,
Of the bitter sorrow and daily smart
Till he put cold lead in the traitor's heart.

But many a word had the speech beside :
How he repented before he died ;
How, brought to sense by the sad event,
He prayed for the Queen and the Parlia-
ment !

What did we do, and mighty quick,
But tickle that hawker's brains with a stick ;
And to pieces small we tore his flam,
And left him quiet as any lamb !

Pass round your glasses ! now lift them up !
Powers above, 'tis a bitter cup !
Christ be with us ! Hold out and say :
' Here's to the Boy that died this day !'

Here's his health !—for bold he died ;
Here's his health !—and it's drunk in pride:
The finest sight beneath the sky
Is to see how bravely a MAN can die.

THE BOOKWORM.

WITH spectacles upon his nose,
He shuffles up and down ;
Of antique fashion are his clothes,
His napless hat is brown.
A mighty watch, of silver wrought,
Keeps time in sun or rain
To the dull ticking of the thought
Within his dusty brain.

To see him at the hookstall stand
And bargain for the prize,
With the odd sixpence in his hand
And greed in his gray eyes !
Then, conquering, grasp the book half
blind,
And take the homeward track,
For fear the man should change his mind,
And want the bargain back !

The waves of life about him heat,
He scarcely lifts his gaze,
He hears within the crowded street
The wash of ancient days.
If ever his short-sighted eyes
Look forward, he can see
Vistas of dusty Libraries
Prolonged eternally.

But think not as he walks along
His brain is dead and cold ;
His soul is thinking in the tongue
Which Plato spake of old ;
And while some grinning cabman sees
His quaint shape with a jeer,
He smiles,—for Aristophanes
Is joking in his ear.

Around him stretch Athenian walks,
And strange shapes under trees ;
He pauses in a dream and talks
Great speech, with Socrates.
Then, as the fancy fails—still mesh'd
In thoughts that go and come—
Feels in his pouch, and is refresh'd
At touch of some old tome.

The mighty world of humankind
Is as a shadow dim,
He walks through life like one half blind,
And all looks dark to him ;
But put his nose to leaves antique,
And hold before his sight
Some press'd and withered flowers of Greek,
And all is life and light.

A blessing on his hair so gray,
And coat of dingy brown !
May bargains bless him every day,
As he goes up and down ;
Long may the bookstall-keeper's face,
In dull times, smile again,
To see him round with shuffling pace
The corner of the lane !

A good old Ragpicker is he,
Who, following morn and eve
The quick feet of Humanity,
Searches the dust they leave.
He pokes the dust, he sifts with care,
He searches close and deep ;
Proud to discover, here and there,
A treasure in the heap !

THE LAST OF THE HANGMEN.

A GROTESQUE.

What place is snugger and more pretty
Than a gay green Inn outside the City,
To sit in an arbour in a garden,
With a pot of ale and a long churchwarden !

Amid the noise and acclamation,
He sits unknown, in meditation :
'Mid church-bells ringing, jingling glasses,
Snugly enough his Sunday passes.

BEYOND the suburbs of the City, where
Cheap stucco'd villas on the brick-field
stare,
Where half in town, half country, you
espy
The hay-cart standing at the hostelry,—
Strike from the highway down a puddly
lane,
Skirt round a market-garden, and you
gain
A pastoral footpath, winding on for miles
By fair green fields and over country stiles ;

And soon, as you proceed, the busy sound
Of the dark City at your back is drowned,
The speedwell with its blue eye looks at
you,
The yellow primrose glimmers through the
dew ;
Out of the sprouting hedgerow at your side,
Instead of the town sparrow starveling-eyed,
The blackbird whistles and the finches sing ;
Instead of smoke, you breathe the pleasant
Spring ;
And shading eyes dim from street dust you
mark,
With soft pulsations soaring up, the LARK,
Till o'er your head, a speck against the
gleam,
He sings, and the great City fades in dream !

Five miles the path meanders ; then again
You reach the road, but like a leafy lane
It wanders now ; and lo ! you stand before
A quaint old country Inn, with open door,
Fresh-watered troughs, and the sweet smell
of hay.

And if, perchance, it be the seventh day—
Or any feast-day, calendar'd or not—
Merry indeed will be this smiling spot ;
For on the neighbouring common will be
seen
Groups from the City, romping on the
green ;
The vans with gay pink curtains empty
stand,
The horses graze unharness'd close at hand ;
Bareheaded wenches play at games in rings,
Or, strolling, swing their bonnets by the
strings ;
'Prentices, galloping with gasp and groan,
On donkeys ride, till out of breath, or
thrown ;
False gipsies, with pale cheeks by juice
stain'd brown,
And hulking loungers, gather from the
town.
The fiddle squeaks, they dance, they sing,
they play,
Waifs from the City casting care away,
And with the country smells and sights are
blent
Loud town-bred oaths and urban merri-
ment.

Ay; and behind the Inn are gardens
green,
And arbour snug, where families are seen
Tea-drinking in the shadow; some, glad
souls,
On the smooth-shaven carpet play at bowls;
And half-a-dozen, rowing round and round,
Upon the shallow skating-pond are found,
And ever and anon will one of these
Upset, and stand there, wading to the
knees,
Righting his crank canoe! Down neigh-
bouring walks
Go 'prentice lovers in delightful talks;
While from the arbour-seats smile plea-
santly
The older members of the company;
And plump round-matrons sweat in Paisley
shawls,
And on the grass the crowing baby sprawls.

Now hither, upon such a festal day,
I from my sky-high lodging made my way,
And followed straggling feet with summer
smile;
'Jog on,' I sung, 'and merrily hent the
stile,'
Until I reached the place of revelry;
And there, hard by the groups who sat at
tea,
But in a quiet arbour, cool and deep,
Around whose boughs white honeysuckles
creep,
A Face I saw familiar to my gaze,
In scenes far different and on darker days:—
An aged man, with white and reverent hair,
Brow patriarchal yet deep-lined with care,
His melancholy eye, in a half dream,
Watching the groups with philosophic
gleam;
Decent his dress, of broadcloth black and
clean,
Clean-starch'd his front, and dignified his
mien.
His right forefinger busy in the bowl
Of a long pipe of clay, whence there did roll
A halo of gray vapour round his face,
He sat, like the wise Genius of the place;
And at his left hand on the table stood
A pewter-pot, filled up with porter good,
Which ever and anon, with dreamy gaze
And arm-sweep proud, he to his lips did
raise.

'Twas Sunday; and in melancholy swells
Came the low music of the soft church-bells,
Scarce audible, blown o'er the meadows
green,
Out of the cloud of London dimly seen—
Whence, thro' the summer mist, at in-
tervals,
We caught the far-off shadow of St. Paul's.

Silent he sat, unnoted in the crowd,
With all his greatness round him like a
cloud,
Unknown, unwelcomed, unsuspected quite,
Smoking his pipe like any common wight;
Cheerful, yet distant, patronising here
The common gladness from his prouder
sphere.
Cold was his eye, and ominous now and
then
The look he cast upon those merry men
Around him; and, from time to time, sad-
eyed,
He rolled his reverent head from side to
side
With dismal shake; and, his sad heart to
cheer,
Hid his great features in the pot of beer.

When, with an easy bow and lifted hat,
I enter'd the green arbour where he sat,
And most politely him by name did greet,
He went as white as any winding-sheet!
Yea, trembled like a man whose lost eyes
note
A pack of wolves upleaping at his throat!
But when, in a respectful tone and kind,
I tried to lull his fears and soothe his
mind,
And vowed the fact of his identity
Was as a secret wholly safe with me—
Explaining also, seeing him demur,
That I too was a public character—
The GREAT UNKNOWN (as I shall call him
here)
Grew calm, replenish'd soon his pot of beer
At my expense, and in a little while
His tongue began to wag, his face to smile;
And in the simple self-revealing mode
Of all great natures heavy with the load
Of pride and power, he edged himself more
near,
And poured his griefs and wrongs into mine
ear.

'Well might I be afraid, and sir to you !
 They 'd tear me into pieces if they knew,—
 For quiet as they look, and bright, and
 smart,
 Each chap there has a tiger in his heart !
 At play they are, but wild beasts all the
 same—
 Not to be teased although they look so
 tame ;
 And many of them, plain as eye can trace,
 Have got my 'scutcheon figured on the face.
 It's all a matter of mere destiny
 Whether they go all right or come to me :
 Mankind is bad, sir, naturally bad !'

And as he shook his head with omen sad,
 I answered him, in his own cynic strain :

'Yes, 'tis enough to make a man complain.
 This world of ours so vicious is and low,
 It always treats its Benefactors so.
 If people had their rights, and rights were
 clear,
 You would not sit unknown, unhonour'd,
 here ;
 But all would bow to you, and hold you
 great,
 The first and mightiest member of the
 State.
 Who is the inmost wheel of the machine ?
 Who keeps the Constitution sharp and
 clear ?
 Who finishes what statesmen only plan,
 And keeps the whole game going ? *You 're
 the Man !*
 At one end of the State the eye may view
 Her Majesty, and at the other—*you* ;
 And of the two, both precious, I aver,
 They seem more ready to dispense with
her !

The Great Man watched me with a solemn
 look,
 Then from his lips the pipe he slowly took,
 And answered gruffly, in a whisper hot :

'I don't know if you 're making game or
 not !
 But, dash my buttons, though you put it
 strong,
 It's my opinion you're more right than
 wrong !

There's not another man this side the sea
 Can settle off the State's account like me.
 The work from which all other people
 shrink
 Comes natural to me as meat and drink,—
 All neat, all clever, all perform'd so pat,
 It's quite an honour to be hung like that !
 People don't howl and bellow when they
 meet
 The Sheriff or the Gaoler in the street ;
 They never seem to long in their mad fits
 To tear the Home Secretary into bits ;
 When Judges in white hats to Epsom Down
 Drive gay as Tom and Jerry, folk don't
 frown ;
 They cheer the Queen and Royal Family,
 But only let them catch a sight of *me*,
 And like a pack of hounds they howl and
 storm !
 And that's their gratitude ; 'cause I per-
 form,
 In genteel style and in a first-rate way,
 The work they're making for me night and
 day !
 Why, if a mortal had his rights, d' ye see,
 I should be honour'd as I ought to be—
 They'd pay me well for doing what I do,
 And touch their hats whene'er I came in
 view.
 Well, after all, they do as they are told ;
 They're less to blame than Government, I
 hold.
 Government *sees* my value, and it knows
 I keep the whole game going as it goes,
 And yet it holds me down and makes me
 cheap,
 And calls me in at odd times like a sweep
 To clean a dirty chimney. Let it smoke,
 And every mortal in the State must choke !
 And yet, though always ready at the
 call,
 I get no gratitude, no thanks at all.
 Instead of rank, I get a wretched fee,
 Instead of thanks, a sneer or scowl may-be,
 Instead of honour such as others win,
 Why, I must hide away to save my skin.
 When I am sent for to perform my duty,
 Instead of coming in due state and beauty,
 With outriders and dashing grays to draw
 (Like any other mighty man of law),
 Disguised, unknown, and with a guilty
 cheek,
 The gaol I enter like an area sneak !

And when all things have been perform'd
with art

(With my young man to do the menial
part)

Again out of the dark, when none can see,
I creep unseen to my obscurity !'

His vinous cheek with virtuous wrath was
flushed,

And to his nose the purple current rushed,
While with a hand that shook a little now,
He mopp'd the perspiration from his brow,
Sighing ; and on his features I descried
A sparkling tear of sorrow and of pride.

Meantime, around him all was mirth and
May,

The sport was merry and all hearts were
gay,

The green houghs sparkled back the merriment,

The garden honeysuckle scatter'd scent,
The warm girls giggled and the lovers
squeezed,

The matrons drinking tea look'd on full
pleased.

And far away the church-bells sad and slow
Ceased on the scented air. But still the
woe

Grew on the Great Man's face—the smiling
sky,

The light, the pleasure, on his fish-like eye
Fell colourless ;—at last he spoke again,
Growing more philosophic in his pain :

'Two sorts of people fill this mortal
sphere,

Those who are hung, and those who just
get clear ;

And I'm the schoolmaster (though you may
laugh),

Teaching good manners to the second half.
Without my help to keep the scamps in awe,
You'd have no virtue and you'd know no
law ;

And now they only hang for blood alone,
Ten times more hard to rule the mob have
grown.

I've heard of late some foolish folk have
plann'd

To put an end to hanging in the land ;
But, Lord ! how little do the donkeys know
This world of ours, when they talk non-
sense so !

It's downright blasphemy ! You might as
well

Try to get rid at once of Heaven and Hell !
Mankind is bad, sir, naturally bad,
Both rich and poor, man, woman, sad, or
glad !

While some to keep scot-free have got the
wit

(Not that they're really better—devil a
bit !),

Others have got my mark so plain and fair
In both their eyes, I stop, and gape, and
stare.

Look at that fellow stretch'd upon the
green,

Strong as a bull, though only seventeen ;
Bless you, I know the party every limb,
I've hung a few *fac-similes* of him !

And cast your eye on that pale wench who
sips

Gin in the corner ; note her hanging lips,
The neat-shaped boots, and the neglected
lace :

There's baby-murder written on her face !—
Tho' accidents may happen now and then,

I know my mark on women and on men,
And oft I sigh, beholding it so plain,
To think what heaps of labour still remain !'

He sigh'd, and yet methought he smacked
his lips,

As one who in anticipation sips
A feast to come. Then I, with a sly thought,
Drew forth a picture I had lately bought
In Regent Street, and begged the man of
fame

To give his criticism on the same.
First from their case his spectacles he took,
Great silver-rimm'd, and with deep search-
ing look

The picture's lines in silence pondered he.

'This is as bad a face as ever I see !

This is no common area-sneak or thief,
No stealer of a pocket-handkerchief,
No ! deep's the word, and knowing, and
precise,

Afraid of nothing, but as cool as ice.
Look at his ears, how very low they lie,
Lobes far below the level of his eye,
And there's a mouth, like any rat-trap's
tight,

And at the edges bloodless, close, and white.

Who *is* the party? Caught, on any charge?
There's mischief near, if he remains at
large!

Gasping with indignation, angry-eyed,
'Silence! 'tis very blasphemy,' I cried;
'Misguided man, whose insight is a sham,
These noble features you would brand and
damn,

This saintly face, so subtle, calm, and high,
Are those of one who would not wrong a
fly—

A friend of man, whom all man's sorrows
stir,

'Tis MR. MILL, the great PHILOSOPHER!

Then for a moment he to whom I spake
Seemed staggered, but, with the same
ominous shake

O' the head, he, rallying, wore a smile half
kind,

Pitying my simplicity of mind.

'Sir,' said he, 'from my word I will not
stir—

I've seen that look on many a murderer;
But don't mistake—it stands to common
sense

That education makes the difference!

I've heard the party's name, and know that
he

Is a good pleader for my trade and me;
And well he may be! for a clever man
Sees pretty well what others seldom can,—
That those mark'd qualities which make
him great

In *one* way, might by just a turn of fate
Have raised him in *another*! Ah, it's sad—
Mankind is bad, sir, naturally bad!

It takes a genius in our busy time
To plan and carry out a bit of crime
That shakes the land and raises up one's
hair;

Most murder now is but a poor affair—
No art, no cunning, just a few blind blows
Struck by a bullet-headed rough who knows
No better. Clever men now see full plain
That crime don't answer. Thanks to *me*,
again!

Ah, when I think what would become of
men

Without my bit of schooling now and
then,—

To teach the foolish they must mind their
play,

And keep the clever under every day,—
I shiver! As it is, they're kept by me
To decent sorts of daily villany—
Law, money-lending, factoring on the land,
Share-broking, banking with no cash in
hand,

And many a sort of weapon they may use
Which never brings their neck into the
noose;

For if they're talented they can invent
Plenty of crime that gets no punishment,
Do lawful murder with no sort of fear
As coolly as I drink this pot of beer!

The Great Man paused and drank; his
face was grim,

Half buried in the pot; and o'er its rim
His eye, like the law's bull's-eye, flashing
bright

To deepen darkness round it, threw its light
On the gay scene before him, and it seemed
Rendered all wretched near it as it gleamed.

A shadow fell upon the merry place,
Each figure grew distorted, and each face
Spoke of crime hidden and of evil thought.
Darkling I gazed, sick-hearted and dis-
traught,

In silence. Black and decent at my side,
With reverend hair, sat melancholy-eyed
The Patriarch. To my head I held my
hand,

And ponder'd, and the look of the fair land
Seemed deathlike. On the darkness of my
brain

The voice, a little thicker, broke again:

'Ah, things don't thrive as they throve
once,' he said,

'And I'm alone now my old woman's
dead.

I find the Sundays dull. First, I attend
The morning service, then this way I wend
To take my pipe and drop of beer; and
then,

Home to a lonely meal in town again.

'Tis a dull world!—and grudges me my
hire—

I ought to get a pension and retire.

What living man has served his country so?
But who's to take my place I scarcely
know!

Well, Heaven will punish their neglect
anon :—
They 'll know my merit, when I'm dead
and gone !'

He stood upon his legs, and these, I
think,
Were rather shaky, part with age, part
drink,
And with a piteous smile, full of the sense
Of human vanity and impotence,
Grimly he stood, half senile and half sly,
A sight to make the very angels cry ;
Then lifted up a hat with weepers on—
(Worn for some human creature dead and
gone)
Placing it on his head (unconsciously
A little on one side) held out to me
His right hand, and, though grim beyond
belief,
Wore unaware an air of rakish grief—
Even so we parted, and with hand-wave
proud
He faded like a ghost into the crowd.

Home to the mighty City wandering,
Breathing the freshness of the fields of
Spring,
Hearing the Lark, and seeing bright winds
run
Between the bending rye-grass and the sun,
I mused and mused ; till with a solemn
gleam
My soul closed, and I saw as in a dream,
Apocalyptic, cutting heaven across,
Two mighty shapes—a Gallows and a Cross.
And these twain, with a sea of lives that
clomb
Up to their base and struck and fell in foam,
Moved, trembled, changed ; and lo ! the
first became
A jet-black Shape that bowed its head in
shame
Before the second, which in turn did change
Into a luminous Figure, sweet and strange,
Stretching out mighty arms to bless the
thing
Which hushed its breath beneath Him
wondering.
And lo ! these visions vanished with no
word
In brightness ; and like one that wakes I
heard

The church bells chime and the cathedrals
toll,
Filling the mighty City like its Soul.

Then, like a spectre strange and woe-
begone,
Uprose again, with mourning weepers on,
His hat a little on one side, his breath
Heavy and hot, the gray-hair'd Man of
Death,
Tottering, grog-pimpled, with a trembling
pace
Under the Gateway of the Silent Place,
At whose sad opening the great Puppet
stands
The rope of which he tugs with palsied
hands.

Christ help me ! whither do my wild
thoughts run ?
And Christ help *thee*, thou lonely agèd one !
Christ help us all, till all 's that dark grows
clear—
Are those indeed the Sabbath bells I hear ?

LONDON, 1864.

I.

WHY should the heart seem stiller,
As the song grows stronger and surer ?
Why should the brain grow chiller,
And the utterance clearer and purer ?
To lose what the people are gaining
Seems often bitter as gall,
Though to sink in the proud attaining
Were the bitterest of all.
I would to God I were lying
Yonder 'mong mountains blue,
Chasing the morn with flying
Feet in the morning dew !
Longing, and aching, and burning
To conquer, to sing, and to teach,
A passionate face upturning
To visions beyond my reach,—
But with never a feeling or yearning
I could utter in tuneful speech !

II.

Yea ! that were a joy more stable
Than all that my soul hath found,—
Than to see and to know, and be able
To utter the seeing in sound ;

For Art, the Angel of losses,
 Comes, with her still, gray eyes,
 Coldly my forehead crosses,
 Whispers to make me wise ;
 And, too late, comes the revelation,
 After the feast and the play,
 That she works God's dispensation
 By cruelly taking away :
 By burning the heart and steeling,
 Scorching the spirit deep,
 And changing the flower of feeling,
 To a poor dried flower that may keep !
 What wonder if much seems hollow,
 The passion, the wonder dies ;
 And I hate the angel I follow,
 And shrink from her passionless eyes,—
 Who, instead of the rapture of being
 I held as the poet's dower—
 Instead of the glory of seeing,
 The impulse, the splendour, the power—
 Instead of merrily blowing
 A trumpet proclaiming the day,
 Gives, for her sole bestowing,
 A pipe whereon to play !
 While the spirit of boyhood hath faded,
 And never again can be,
 And the singing seemeth degraded,
 Since the glory hath gone from me,—
 Though the glory around me and under,
 And the earth and the air and the sea,
 And the manifold music and wonder,
 Are grand as they used to be !

III.

Is there a consolation
 For the joy that comes never again ?
 Is there a reservation ?
 Is there a refuge from pain ?
 Is there a gleam of gladness
 To still the grief and the stinging ?
 Only the sweet, strange sadness,
 That is the source of the singing.

IV.

For the sound of the city is weary,
 As the people pass to and fro,
 And the friendless faces are dreary,
 As they come, and thrill through us,
 and go ;
 And the ties that bind us the nearest
 Of our error and weakness are born ;
 And our dear ones ever love dearest
 Those parts of ourselves that we scorn ;

And the weariness will not be spoken,
 And the bitterness dare not be said,
 The silence of souls is unbroken,
 And we hide ourselves from our Dead !
 And what, then, secures us from madness ?
 Dear ones, or fortune, or fame ?
 Only the sweet singing sadness
 Cometh between us and shame.

v.

And there dawneth a time to the Poet,
 When the bitterness passes away,
 With none but his God to know it,
 He kneels in the dark to pray ;
 And the prayer is turn'd into singing,
 And the singing findeth a tongue,
 And Art, with her cold hands clinging,
 Comforts the soul she has stung.
 Then the Poet, holding her to him,
 Findeth his loss is his gain :
 The sweet singing sadness thrills through
 him,
 Though nought of the glory remain ;
 And the awful sound of the city,
 And the terrible faces around,
 Take a truer, tenderer pity,
 And pass into sweetness and sound ;
 The mystery deepens to thunder,
 Strange vanishings gleam from the
 cloud,
 And the Poet, with pale lips asunder,
 Stricken, and smitten, and bow'd,
 Starteth at times from his wonder,
 And sendeth his Soul up aloud !

THE MODERN WARRIOR.

O WARRIOR for the Right,
 Though thy shirt of mail be white
 As the snows upon the breast of The Adored,
 Though the weapon thou mayest claim
 Hath been temper'd in the flame
 Of the fire upon the Altar of the Lord,
 Ere the coming of the night,
 Thy mail shall be less bright,
 And the taint of sin may settle on the
 Sword !
 For the foemen thou must meet
 Are the phantoms in the street,
 And thine armour shall be foul'd in many a
 place,

And the shameful mire and mud,
With a grosser stain than blood,
Shall he scatter'd 'mid the fray upon thy
face ;

And the helpless thou dost aid
Shall shrink from thee dismayed,
Till thou comest to the knowledge of things
base.

Ah, mortal, with a brow
Like the gleam of sunrise, thou
May'st wander from the pathway in thy
turn,

In the noontide of thy strength
Be stricken down at length,
And cry to God for aid, and live, and learn ;
And when, with many a stain,
Thou arisest up again,
The lightning of thy look will be less stern.

Thou shalt see with humbler eye
The adulteress go by,
Nor shudder at the touch of her attire ;
Thou shalt only look with grief
On the liar and the thief,
Thou shalt meet the very murderer in the
mire—

And to which wouldst thou accord,
O thou Warrior of the Lord !
The vengeance of the Sword and of the
Fire ?

Nay ! batter'd in the fray,
Thou shalt quake in act to slay,
And remember *thy* transgression and be
meek ;

And the thief shall grasp thy hand,
And the liar blushing stand,
And the harlot if she list shall kiss thy
cheek ;
And the murderer, unafraid,
Shall meet thee in the shade,
And pray thee for the doom thou wilt not
wreak.

Yet thou shalt help the frail
From the phantoms that assail,
Yea, the strong man in his anger thou shalt
dare ;

Thy voice shall be a song
Against wickedness and wrong,
But the wicked and the wronger thou shalt
spare,

And while thou lead'st the van,
The ungrateful hand of man
Shall smite thee down and slay thee un-
aware.

With an agonised cry
Thou shalt shiver down and die,
With stain'd shirt of mail and broken
brand ;

And the voice of men shall call,
' He is fallen like us all,
Though the weapon of the Lord was in his
hand ; '

And thine epitaph shall be,
' He was wretched ev'n as we ; '
And thy tomb may be unhonoured in the
land.

But the basest of the base
Shall bless thy pale dead face
And the thief shall steal a bloody lock of
hair ;

And over thee asleep,
The adulteress shall weep
Such tears as she can never shed elsewhere,
Shall bless the broken brand
In thy chill and nerveless hand,
Shall kiss thy stain'd vesture with a prayer.

Then, while in that chill place
Stand the basest of the base,
Gather'd round thee in the silence of the
dark,

A white Face shall look down
On the silence of the town,
And see thee lying dead with those to mark,
And a voice shall fill the air,
' Bear my Warrior lying there
To his sleep upon my Breast ! ' and they
shall heark.

Lo, then those fallen things
Shall perceive a rush of wings
Growing nearer down the azure gulfs un-
trod,

And around them in the night
There shall grow a wondrous light,
While they hide affrighted faces on the sod,
But ere again 'tis dark,
They shall raise their eyes, and mark
White arms that waft the Warrior up to
God !

PAN: EPILOGUE.

'Pan, Pan is dead!'—E. B. BROWNING.

THE broken goblets of the Gods
Lie scatter'd in the Waters deep,
Where the tall sea-flag blows and nods
Over the shipwreck'd seamen's sleep ;
The gods like phantoms come and go
Amid the wave-wash'd ocean-hall,
Above their heads the bleak winds blow ;
They sigh, they shiver to and fro—
'Pan, Pan !' those phantoms call.

O Pan, great Pan, thou art not dead,
Nor dost thou haunt that weedy place,
Tho' blowing winds hear not thy tread,
And silver runlets miss thy face ;
Where ripe nuts fall thou hast no state,
Where eagles soar, thou now art dumb,
By lonely meres thou dost not wait ;—
But *here* 'mid living waves of fate
We feel thee go and come !

O piteous one !—In wintry days
Over the City falls the snow,
And, where it whitens stony ways,
I see a Shade flit to and fro ;
Over the dull street hangs a cloud—
It parts, an ancient Face flits by,
'Tis thine ! 'tis thou ! Thy gray head
howed,
Dimly thou flutterest o'er the crowd,
With a thin human cry.

Ghost-like, O Pan, thou glimmerest still,
A spectral Face with sad dumb stare ;
On rainy nights thy breath blows chill
In the street-walker's dripping hair ;
Thy ragged woe from street to street
Goes mist-like, constant day and night ;
But often, where the black waves heat,
Thou hast a smile most strangely sweet
For honest hearts and light !

Where'er thy shadowy vestments fly
There comes across the waves of strife,
Across the souls of all close by,
The gleam of some forgotten life :
There is a sense of waters clear,
An odour faint of flowery nooks ;
Strange-plumaged birds seem fitting near

The cold brain blossoms, lives that hear
Ripple like running brooks.

And as thou passest, human eyes
Look in each other and are wet—
Simple or gentle, weak or wise,
Alike are full of tender fret ;
And mean and noble, brave and base
Raise common glances to the sky ;—
And lo ! the phantom of thy Face,
While sad and low thro' all the place
Thrills thy thin human cry !

Christ help thee, Pan ! canst *thou* not go
Now all the other gods are fled ?
Why dost thou flutter to and fro
When all the sages deem thee dead ?
Or, if thou still must live and dream,
Why leave the fields of harvest fair—
Why quit the peace of wood and stream—
And haunt the streets with eyes that gleam
Through white and holy hair ?

L'ENVOI TO LONDON POEMS.

I DO not sing for Maidens. They are roses
Blowing along the pathway I pursue :
No sweeter things the wondrous world dis-
closes,
And they are tender as the morning dew.
Blessed be maids and children : day and
night
Their holy scent is with me as I write.

I do not sing for School-boys or School-
men.
To give them ease I have no languid
theme
When, weary with the wear of book and
pen,
They seek their trim poetic Academe ;
Nor can I sing them amorous ditties, bred
Of too much Ovid on an empty head.

I do not sing aloud in measured tone
Of those fair paths the easy-soul'd pursue ;
Nor do I sing for Lazarus alone,
I sing for Dives and the Devil too.
Ah ! would the feeble song I sing might
swell
As high as Heaven, and as deep as Hell !

- I sing of the stain'd outcast at Love's feet,—
Love with his wild eyes on the evening
light ;
I sing of sad lives trampled down like wheat
Under the heel of Lust, in Love's despite ;
I glean behind those wretched shapes ye see
In the cold harvest-fields of Infamy.
- I sing of death-beds (let no man rejoice
Till that last piteous touch of all is
given !) ;
I sing of Death and Life with equal voice,
Heaven watching Hell, and Hell illumed
by Heaven.
- I have gone deep, far down the infernal
stair—
And scen the spirits congregating there.
- I sing of Hope, that all the lost may hear ;
I sing of Light, that all may feel its ray ;
I sings of Soul, that no one man may fear ;
I sing of God, that some perchance may
pray.
- Angels in Hosts have praised Him loud and
long,
But Lucifer's shall be the harvest song.
- Oh, hush a space the sounds of voices light
Mix'd to the music of a lover's lute.
Stranger than dream, so luminously bright,
The eyes are dazzled and the mouth is
mute,
Sits Lucifer ; singing to sweeten care,
He twines *immortelles* in his hoary hair !

Miscellaneous Poems.

(1866-70.)

THE DEATH OF ROLAND.

De Karleman et de Rolant,
Et d'Olivier, et des vassaus,
Qui moururent à Rainscevaux !

I.

DEAD was Gerard the fair, the girl-mouth'd,
the gay,
Who jested with the foe he slung his sword
to slay ;
Dead was the giant Gny, big-hearted, small
of brain ;
Dead was the hunchback Sanche, his red
hunch slit in twain ;
Dead was the old hawk Luz, and sleeping
by his side
His twin-sons, Charles the fleet, and Pierre
the serpent-eyed ;
Dead was Antoine, the same who swore to
speak no word
Till five score heathen heads fell by his
single sword ;
Dead was the wise Gerin, who gript both
spear and pen ;
Sansun was dead, Gereir was dead !—dead
were the mighty men !

II.

Then Roland felt his sense return, and
stirr'd, and cried,
Felt down if Adalmar lay safe against his
side,
And smiled most quietlie, for joy the Sword
was there ;
With heavy-mailed hand brush'd back his
bloody hair,
And lying prone upon his back, beheld on
high
The stars like leopard-spots strewn in the
sapphire sky.
He turn'd his head, and lo ! the large hills
looming dim,
In the wan west the Moon with red and
wasting rim ;
Then sighing sore, swung round his head
as in a swoon,
And met the hunchback's eyne, glazed
beneath the Moon.
Chill was the air, and frosty vapours to and
fro,
Like sheeted shapes, in dim moonshine,
were stealing slow ;
And Roland thought, because his wound
had made him weak,

The cold shapes breathed alive their breath
upon his cheek.
Crawling unto his knees, shivering in the
cold,
He loosed his helm, and dimly gleaming
down it roll'd ;
And darkly his dim eyes distinguish'd things
around,—
The mute and moveless shapes asleep upon
the ground,
A helm glittering dim, a sword-hilt twink-
ling red,
A white steed quivering beside a warrior
dead,
And in one moonlit place, a ring on a white
hand,
When Roland thought, 'Gerard! the
brightest of the band !'
And no one stirr'd ; behind, the hills
loom'd large and dim ;
And in the west the waning Moon with red
and wasting rim.

III.

Then Roland cried aloud, ' If living man
there be
Among these heaps of slain, let that man
answer me !'
And no soul spake. The wind crept chilly
over all,
And no man felt it creep, or heard the
leader call.
'Ho, Oliyier! Gerin! speak, an' ye be not
slain !'
The voices of the hills echoed the cry
again,—
Only a heathen churl rose cursing on his
side,
And spat at him who spake, and curl'd his
limbs, and died.
Then Roland's mighty heart was heavy
with its woes,—
When fitfully, across the fields, faint ra-
diance rose,
First a faint spark, and then a gleam, and
then a glare,
Then smoke and crimson streaks that
mingled in the air,
And as the thick flame clear'd, and the
black smoke swam higher,
There loom'd beyond a Shape like one girt
round with fire !

And Roland cried aloud, because his joy
was great,
And brandish'd Adalmar, and fell beneath
the weight,
But lying prone strain'd eyes, and, gazing
through the night,
Still saw the glittering Shape circled with
spectral light.
He seem'd in a dark dream, he could not
think at all,
Until his heart rose up, and he had strength
to crawl :
Then, like a bruised worm weary he slipt
and slow,
Straining his fever'd eyes lest the sweet
ghost should go,
And oft he paused to breathe, feeling his
pulses fail,
'Mong heathens foul to smell and warriors
clad in mail,
But coming near the gleam beheld the godly
man,
Turpin the Archbishop, unhelm'd and gaunt
and wan,—
Gripping with skinny hand the ivory Cross
sat he,
Clad head to heel in frost-white mail and
propt against a tree.

IV.

And when on hands and knees the stricken
Chief came near,
The Bishop raised the Cross, and knew his
comrade dear ;
And Roland's heart swell'd up, and tears
were on his cheek,
He touch'd the blessèd Cross, and smiled
and did not speak ;
While, 'Glory be to God!' the Bishop
faintly said,
'Thou livest, kinsman dear, though all the
rest be dead !
For while I linger'd here and listen'd for a
sound,
And in the dim red Moon beheld the dead
around,
Thinking I heard a cry, I sought to cry again,
But all my force had fled, and I was spent
with pain ;
When, peering round, I saw this heathen
at my heel,
And search'd his leathern scrip and gat me
flint and steel,

Then crawl'd, though swooning-sick, and
 found his charger gray,
 And searching in the bags found wither'd
 grass and hay,
 And made a fire, a sign for thee, whoe'er
 thou wert,
 But fainted when it blazed, for I am sorely
 hurt ;
 And waken'd to behold thee near, wounded
 and weak,
 The red fire flaming on thy face, thy breath
 upon my cheek.'

v.

Then those brave Chiefs wrung hands,
 and as the crimson flare
 Died out, and all was dark, the Bishop said
 a prayer ;
 And shadows loom'd out black against the
 frosty shine,
 While Turpin search'd his pouch and mur-
 mur'd, ' Here is wine !'
 And Roland on his elbows raised himself
 and quaff'd,
 Yea, till his head reel'd round, a great and
 goodly draught,
 And quickly he felt strong, his heart was
 wild and light,
 He placed his dear Sword softly down, and
 rose his height,
 Loosening his mail, drew forth the shirt
 that lay beneath,
 And took the blood-stain'd silk and tore it
 with his teeth,
 Dressing the Bishop's wounds with chilly
 hand and slow,
 Then, while the Bishop pray'd, bound up
 his own wide wound alsoe.

vi.

Then Roland search'd around, dipping
 his hands in blood,
 Till in a henchman's pack he found a torch
 of wood,
 And taking flint and steel, blew with his
 mouth, and lo !
 The torch blazed bright, and all grew
 crimson in the glow.
 Then into Turpin's hands he set that beacon
 bright
 Who glittering like fire, sat looming in its
 light,

And crept across the mead, into the dark
 again,
 And felt the faces of the dead, seeking the
 mighty men.

vii.

Blest be thy name, White Mary, for thy
 breath and might,
 Like vapour cold, did fill the nostrils of thy
 knight !
 Yea, all his force came back, his red wound
 ceased to bleed,
 And he had hands of strength to do a blessèd
 deed !
 For one by one he found each well-helovèd
 head,
 Sought out the mighty Chiefs, among the
 drifts of dead,
 Softly unloos'd their helms, let the long
 tresses flow,
 Trail'd them to Turpin's feet and set them
 in a row ;
 And underneath the tree the pine-torch
 blazing bright
 Lit shapes in silvern mail and faces snowy
 white :
 Sansun, who grasp'd his sword with grip
 that ne'er unloos'd ;
 Gerin, with chin on breast, as if he breathed
 and mused ;
 Great Guy, with twisted limbs, and bosom
 gash'd and bare,
 And blood-clots on his arms the frost had
 frozen there ;
 Old Luz, his skinny hands filled with a foe-
 man's beard ;
 Charles with his feet lopp'd off, Pierre with
 his green eye spear'd ;
 Sanche, the fierce woman's foe, and round
 his neck, behold !
 A lock of lady's hair set in a ring of gold ;
 Antoine, with crafty smile, as if new fights
 he plann'd ;
 Gerard, still smiling on the ring that deckt
 his hand ;
 And, brightest of the host, our Roland's
 comrade dear,
 The iron woman-shape, the long-lock'd
 Olivier,
 Who gript the bladeless hilt of Durandal
 his pride,
 And held it to his kissing lips, as when he
 droop'd and died.

VIII.

And Turpin raised the torch, counted them,
 one by one :
 ' Ah, woe is me, sweet knights, for now your
 work is done !'
 Then, reaching with the Cross, he touch'd
 their brows and cried :
 ' White Mary take your souls, and place
 them at her side,
 White Mary take your souls, and guard
 them tenderlie,—
 For ye were goodly men as any men that
 he !'
 And Roland stooping touch'd the brow of
 Olivier,
 Smoothing the silken hair behind the small
 white ear,
 And cried, ' Ah, woe is me, that we should
 ever part !'
 And kiss'd him on the clay-cold lips, and
 swoon'd, for ache of heart.

IX.

Then Turpin dropt the torch, that flamed
 upon the ground,
 But drinking blood and dew, died out with
 drizzlie sound ;
 He groped for Roland's heart, and felt it
 faintly heat,
 And, feeling on the earth, he found the
 wine-flask sweet,
 And fainting with the toil, slaked not his
 own great drouth,
 But, shivering, held the flask to Roland's
 gentle mouth :
 E'en then, his Soul shot up, and in its shirt
 of steel
 The Corse sank back, with crash like ice
 that cracks beneath the heel !

X.

The frosty wind awaken'd Roland from his
 swoond,
 And, spitting salt foam from his tongue, he
 look'd around,
 And saw the Bishop dear lying at length
 close by,—
 Touch'd him, and found him cold, and
 utter'd a great cry :
 ' Now, dead and cold, alas ! lieth the noblest
 wight

For preaching sermons sweet and wielding
 sword in fight ;
 His voice was as a trump that on a moun-
 tain blows,
 He scatter'd oils of grace and wasted
 heathen-foes,—
 White Mary take his soul, to join our com-
 rades dear,
 And let him wear his Bishop's crown in
 heaven above, as here !'

XI.

Now it grew chiller far, the grass was moist
 with dew,
 The landskip glimmer'd pale, the frosty
 breezes blew,
 The many stars above melted like snow-
 flakes white,
 Behind the great blue hills the East was
 laced with light,
 The dismal vale loom'd clear against a
 crimson glow,
 Clouds spread above like wool, pale steam
 arose below,
 And on the faces dead the frosty Morning
 came,
 On mighty men of mark and squires un-
 known to fame,
 And golden mail gleam'd bright, and broken
 steel gleam'd gray,
 And cold dew filled the wounds of those
 who sleeping lay ;
 And Roland, rising, drank the dawn with
 lips apart,
 But scents were in the air that sicken'd his
 proud heart !
 Yea, all was deathly still ; and now, though
 it was day,
 The Moon grew small and pale, but did
 not pass away,
 The white mist wreath'd and curl'd over the
 glittering dead ;
 A cock crew, far among the hills, and
 echoes answer'd.

XII.

Then peering to the East, through the thick
 vaporous steam,
 He spied a naked wood, hard by a running
 stream ;

Thirsting full sore, he rose, and thither did
 he hie,
 Faintly, and panting hard, because his end
 was nigh ;
 But first he stooping loosed from Turpin's
 fingers cold
 The Cross inlaid with gems and wrought
 about with gold,
 And bare the holy Cross aloft in one weak
 hand,
 And with the other trail'd great Adalmar his
 brand.
 Thus wearily he came into the woody place,
 And stooping to the stream therein did dip
 his face,
 And in the pleasant cold let swim his great
 black curls,
 Then swung his head up, damp with the
 dim dewy pearls ;
 And while the black blood spouted in a
 burning jet,
 He loosed the bandage of his wound and
 made it wet,
 Wringing the silken folds, making them
 free from gore,
 Then placed them cool upon the wound,
 and tighten'd them once more.

XIII.

Eastward rose cloudy mist, drifting like
 smoke in air,
 Ghastly and round the Sun loom'd with a
 lurid glare,
 High overhead the Moon shrivell'd with
 sickle chill,
 The frosty wind dropp'd down, and all was
 deathlier still,
 When Roland, drawing deep the breath of
 vapours cold
 Beheld three marble steps, as of a Ruin
 old,
 And at the great tree-bolls lay many a
 carven stone,
 Thereto a Dial quaint, where slimy grass
 had grown ;
 And frosted were the boughs that gather'd
 all around,
 And cold the runlet crept, with soft and
 soothing sound,
 And sweetly Roland smiled, thinking,
 'Since death is nigh,
 In sooth, I know no gentler place where
 gentle man could die !'

XIV.

Whereon he heard a cry, a crash of
 breaking boughs,
 And from the thicket wild leapt one with
 painted brows ;
 Half-naked, glistening grim, with oily limbs,
 he came,
 His long-nail'd fingers curl'd, his bloodshot
 eyes aflame,
 Shrieking in his own tongue, as on the
 Chief he flew,
 'Yield thee thy sword of fame, and thine
 own flesh thereto !'
 Then Roland gazed and frown'd, though
 nigh unto his death,
 Sat still, and drew up all his strength in one
 great breath,
 Pray'd swiftly to the Saints he served in
 former days,
 With right hand clutch'd the Sword he was
 too weak to raise,
 And in the left swung up the Cross !—and,
 shrieking hoarse,
 Between the eyebrows smote the foe with
 all his force,
 Yea, smote him to the brain, crashing
 through skin and bone,
 And prone the heathen fell, as heavy as a
 stone,—
 While gold and gems of price, unloosen'd
 by the blow,
 Ev'n as he fell rain'd round the ringlets of
 the foe ;
 But Roland kiss'd the Cross, and, laughing,
 backward fell,
 And on the hollow air the laugh rang heavy,
 like a knell.

XV.

And Roland thought : 'I surely die ; but,
 ere I end,
 Let me be sure that *thou* art ended too, O
 friend !
 For should a heathen hand grasp thee when
 I am clay,
 My ghost would grieve full sore until the
 Judgment Day !'
 Then to the marble steps, under the tall
 bare trees,
 Trailing the mighty Sword, he crawl'd on
 hands and knees,
 And on the slimy stone he struck the blade
 with might—

The bright hilt sounding shook, the blade
flash'd sparks of light ;
Wildly again he struck, and his sick head
went round,
Again there sparkled fire, again rang hollow
sound ;
Ten times he struck, and threw strange
echoes down the glade,
Yet still unbroken, sparkling fire, glitter'd
the peerless blade !

XVI.

Then Roland wept, and set his face
against the stone—
'Ah, woe ! I shall not rest, though cold be
flesh and bone !'
And sickness seized his soul to die so cheer-
less death ;
When on his naked neck he felt a touch,
like breath,—
And did not stir, but thought, 'O God,
that madest me,
And shall my sword of fame brandish'd by
beathens be ?
And shall I die accursed, beneath a
heathen's heel ?
Too spent to slay the slave whose hated
breath I feel !'
Then, clenching teeth, he turn'd to look
upon the foe,
His bright eyes growing dim with coming
death ; and lo !
His life shot up in fire, his heart arose
again,
For no unhallow'd face loom'd on his dying
ken,
No heathen-breath he felt, — though he
beheld, indeed,
The white arch'd head and round brown
eyes of Veillintif, his Steed !

XVII.

And pressing his moist cheek on his who
gazed beneath,
Curling the upper lip to show the large
white teeth,
The white horse, quivering, look'd with
luminous liquid eye,
Then waved his streaming mane, and
utter'd up a cry ;
And Roland's bitterness was spent—he
laugh'd, he smiled,

He clasp'd his darling's neck, wept like a
little child ;
He kiss'd the foam-fleck'd lips, and clasp'd
his friend and cried :
'Ah, nevermore, and nevermore, shall we
to battle ride !
Ah, nevermore, and nevermore, shall we
sweet comrades be,
And Veillintif, had I the heart to die for-
getting thee ?
To leave thy brave bright heart to break, in
slavery to the foe ?
I had not rested in the grave, if it had
ended so !
Ah, never shall we conquering ride, with
banners bright unfur'd,
A shining light 'mong lesser lights, a
wonder to the world !'

XVIII.

And Veillintif neigh'd low, breathing on
him who died,
Wild rock'd his strong sad heart beneath
his silken side,
Tears roll'd from his brown eyes upon his
master's cheek,
While Roland, gathering strength, though
wholly worn and weak,
Held up the glittering point of Adalmar the
brand,
And at his comrade's heart drove with his
dying hand ;
And the black blood sprang forth, while
heavily as lead,
With shivering, silken side, the mighty
Steed fell dead.
Then Roland, for his eyes with frosty film
were dim,
Groped for his friend, crept close, and
smiled, embracing him ;
And, pillow'd on his neck, kissing the pure
white hair,
Clasp'd Adalmar the brand, and tried to
say a prayer :
And that he conquering died wishing all
men to know,
Set firm his lips, and turn'd his face towards
the foe,
Then closed his eyes, and slept, and never
woke again.
Roland is dead, the gentle knight ! dead is
the crown of men !

THE GIFT OF EOS.

Not in a mist of loveless eyes dies he,
 Who loveth truly nobler light than theirs ;
 To him, nor weariness nor agony,
 Purbblind appeals, nor prayers ;
To him, the priceless boon
To watch from heights divine till all be done ;
Calm in each dreamy rising of the Moon,
Glad in each glorious coming of the Sun.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

1.

Lo ! here at the portal, awaiting new light,
 We linger with pinions dripping dew-light,
 Our faces shadow'd, our heads inclining,
 The bright star-frost on our tresses shining ;
 Our eyes turn'd earthward in vigil holy,
 Sinking our voices and singing slowly.

2.

The dark Earth sleepeth to our intoning,
 The Ocean only is gleaming and moaning ;
 Our eyelids droop in a still devotion,
 Yet we see the skies in the glass of Ocean,—
 The void, star-lighted, is mirror'd faintly,
 Slow slides the shade of Selene saintly.

3.

Eos ! Eos ! thou canst not hear us,
 Yet we feel thee breathing in slumber near
 us :
 Dark is thy cloud-roof'd temple solemn,
 Shadows deepen round arch and column ;
 But a quiet light streams round thee, lying
 In the feeble arms of thy love undying.

4.

Eos ! Eos ! thy cheek faint-gleaming
 Sendeth a joy through the old man's dream-
 ing ;
 His white hair poureth in frosty showers
 Round a wreath fresh-woven of lily flowers,
 And the flowers are fading and earthward
 snowing,
 Save those thou breathest against unknow-
 ing !

TITHONOS.

What low, strange music throbs about my
 brain ?
 I hear a motion as of robes—a moaning.

EOS.

'Tis the three sisters and their shadowy
 train,
 Beating the right foot solemnly, and in-
 toning.
 Ah ! weary one, and have thy dreams been
 ill,
 That thou upheavest thus a face so pale ?

TITHONOS.

Methought that I was dead, and cold, and
 still,
 Deep in the navel of a charm'd dale !
 Ah, love, thy gift doth heavy burthen bring,
 Now I grow old, grow old,
 And these weird songs the sisters nightly
 sing
 Haunt me with memories strange and
 manifold ;
 For every eve, when Phoibos fades away
 Yonder across Parnassos' snow-tipt height,
 These halls feel empty, and the courts grow
 gray,
 The sisters lose the radiance of the day,
 And thy bright hair fades to a silvern
 light ;
 And nothing seems that is not sad though
 sweet !
 But Heaven, this East, yea, and the earth
 below
 Are silenced to the ditties these repeat,
 Sinking their voices sad and singing
 slow :
 Yea, Ocean moans with many waters ! sleep
 Is troublous even upon eyes that weep !
 The monsters of the earth are in their lairs
 Moonlit and cold ; the owl sits still and
 stares
 Through woody nooks with round white
 eye ; the wind
 Breatheth and gropeth blind ;
 The burthen and the mystery and the dream,
 The sense of things that are and yet may
 be,
 The strife between what is and what doth
 seem,
 Is weary then on all, and most on me !

EOS.

It is enough to know thou canst not die,
 Like those of whom thou 'plainest, drowsy
 one !

TITHONOS.

The seasons come and go, the moments fly
Like snow-flakes falling, melting in the
sun.

Nothing abideth—all must change - the
earth

Puts on fresh raiment every dawn of day—
What seems most precious turns to little
worth—

Our love, whose face was an auroral birth,
Steps in the shade an instant,—and is
clay.

Is it enough to know I cannot die?
Further than deathless life, can I implore?
Ah, but to know, as the slow years sweep
by,

That life is worthy to be lived, is more.
Wherefore the burthen and the dream
below?

Wherefore the happiness, the hope, the
woe?

Wherefore the slimy sense of evil things
That draws the adder round the young
man's eyes?

Wherefore the yearnings and imaginings,
The songs of bards, the broodings of the
wise?

Have the gods written only on their scroll:
'Man striveth merely for a little space,—
Then there is slumber, and the death-bells
toll,

The children cry, the widow hides her
face,

The foolish dream is o'er,
And all is done for ever evermore?'

Oh, wherefore life at all, if life be such,—
A joy, a weariness, a growing gray!
If life be more, how may man live too
much?

EOS.

Nothing, be sure, can wholly pass away.

HOURS.

Crow's-nest on a yew-tree, swing slow in
sad weather,

A lock o' wet hair pastes thy brown sides
together!—

Blood-red were her lips till she paled and
grew thin,

As the pink under-eyelid of snakes was her
skin.

Crow's-nest on a yew-tree that grows on a
tomb,

The little black fledglings croak low in the
gloom;

O maiden below, canst thou hear how they
cry?

Dost thou stir in thy sleep as the adder
goes by?

A worm crawl'd away with the little gold
ring

He placed on thy finger that summer
morning;

Then thy hand became bone, then was
turn'd into clay,

While thy heart wither'd slowly; but cheerly,
to-day

Thy fingers are leaves on the tree, in whose
shade

He sits with as tender a maid!

TITHONOS.

Of death, corruption, change, and mystery,
They chant their chime to which the old
world sleeps!

Why not for ever stand they bright and free,
Flinging a glad song over dales and deeps,
As morn by morn they do, when from my
breast

With rosy footsteps thou dost bright'ning
go,
Blue-wing'ed, to Parnassos?

EOS.

Be at rest!

The sense of things is dark on these also!
And e'en immortal gods grow pale at times
To hear their world-old rhymes.

Yea, Zeus the Sire himself beholds and
hears,

Stares vacantly into the blue profound,
What time a rainbow drawn from all earth's
tears

Fades on Olumpos with a weeping sound!

TITHONOS.

What then remains, my soul, if this be so?

EOS.

Around my neck I wind thy beard of
gray,

And kiss thy quivering eyelids till they glow,
And thy face lightens on me, and I say,

'Look in mine eyes and know!'

HOURS.

O clod of green mould, that wast lately a
man,
Time was thou wert footsore and weary
and wan,
When thy brain was as fire, when thine eyes
were as lead,
When thy hair was as white as the bones of
the dead !
Dust in the urn, on a shelf, in a shrine,
Hast thou ears, hast thou eyes, canst thou
feel, or divine?
Bones in the ground, can ye guess what ye
be ?
Brain, in the midst of the bones, canst thou
see ?
Corse, in a clod-gown clammy with dew,
Skull, with a hole where the arrow went
through,
Do ye dream, are ye troubled, remember ye
there
The life and the light that ye were ?

TITHONOS.

Thine eyes are lit with passion strong anew
To melt a mortal's heart to fiery dew !
The burthen and the wonder and the dream,
Yea, all I am or was, and all I seem,
Are dwarf'd within these liquid orbs of thine
To the blue shadow of a love divine !
Yea, sweetest, love is surest, truest, best !
And dearest, knowing it must last for long !

EOS.

Now, close thine eyes, lean heavy on my
breast,
And let my lips rain over thee in song !—
Thou wert a mortal who with fearless eyes
Dared seek the love of an immortal thing ;
Plead low thou didst, and strive and
agonise,
Yet time ebb'd on, and little peace did
bring ;
And the immortal joy seem'd far away,
Lessening and lessening to a speck of
gold
Against the gates of sunrise,—till that day
I came upon thee where thou sleeping lay,
Breathed smoothness on thy wrinkled
forehead old,
And woke thee to these wondrous halls,
from whence

Thou seest the glimmering tract of earth
below,
And trancēd thee to nuptials so intense
Thy flesh and blood seem'd melting off
like snow,
Leaving thy soul in its eternal hues
Clear, strong, and pale, as yonder crystal
sphere
That swings above my threshold, sprinkling
dews
Immortal over all who enter here !—
And still thy corporal semblance ages on,
Thy hair dries up, thy bones grow chill
and bare.
A little while, my love, and all is gone,
Drunk by the lips of a diviner air !

TITHONOS.

Ah woe ! ah woe !—and I am lost for aye !

EOS.

Nothing, be sure, can wholly pass away !
And nothing suffers loss if love remains !
The motion of mine air consumes thy clay,
My breath dries up the moisture of thy
veins ;
Yet have I given thee immortal being,
Thereto immortal love, immortal power,
Consuming thy base substance till thy see-
ing
Grows clearer, brighter, purer, hour by
hour ;—
Immortal honour, too, is thine, for thou
Hast sought the highest meed the gods
can give—
Immortal Love hath stoop'd to kiss thy
brow !
Immortal Love hath smiled, and bade
thee live !
Wherefore the gods have given thee mighty
meed,
And snatch'd thee from the death-pyres
of thy race,
To wear away these weary mortal weeds
In a serener and a purer place,—
Not amid warriors on a battle plain,
Not by the breath of pestilence or woe,
But here, at the far edge of earth and
main,
Whence light and love and resurrection
flow—
And I upon thy breast, to soothe the pain !

Immortal life assured, what mattereth
 That it be not the old fond life of breath !
 Immortal life assured, the soul is free—
 It is enough to be !
 For lo ! the love, the dream, to which is
 given
 Divine assurance by a mortal peace,
 Mix with the wonders of supremest heaven,
 Become a part of that which cannot
 cease,
 And being eternal must be beauteous too,
 And being beauteous, surely must be
 glad !
 O love, my love, thy wildest dreams were
 true,
 Though thou were footsore in thy quest,
 and sad !
 Not in a mist of hungry eyes dies he
 Who loveth purely nobler light than
 theirs ;
 For him nor weariness nor agony,
 Purbblind appeals, nor prayers ;
 But circled by the peace serene and holy
 Of that divinest thought he loved so long,
 Pensive, not melancholy,
 He mingles with those airs that made
 him strong,—
 A little loath to quit
 The old familiar dwelling-house of clay,
 Yet calm, as the warm wind dissolveth it,
 And leaf by leaf it droppeth quite away.
 To him the priceless boon
 To watch from heights serene till all be
 done ;
 Calm in each dreamy rising of the Moon,
 Glad in each glorious coming of the Sun !

HOURS.

The stars are fading away in wonder,
 Small sounds are stirring around and
 under,
 Far away, from beneath the ocean,
 We hear a murmur of wheels in motion,
 And the wind that brings it along rejoices,—
 Our hearts beat quicker, we lift our voices !

EOS.

It is Apollo ! Hitherward he urges
 His four steeds, steaming odorous fumes
 of day ;
 Along his chariot-wheels the white sea
 surges,
 As up he drives his fiery-footed way.

TITHONOS.

Ye brighten, O ye columns round about !
 Ye melt in purple shades, arches and
 towers !
 Cloud-roof, thou partest, and white hands
 slip out,
 Scattering pearls and flowers !
 Brighter and brighter, blazing red and gold,
 Purple and amethyst, that float and
 fly !—
 While, creeping in, a dawn-wind fresh and
 cold
 Pours silver o'er the couch whereon I lie !
 Afar the coming of Apollo grows !
 His breath lifts up my hair ! my pulses
 beat !
 My beard is moist with dew's divinely
 sweet,
 My lap is fill'd with sparkling leaves of
 rose,
 Wherein my fingers, wither'd and sere,
 Grope palsiedly in joy !—Afar I hear
 The low, quick breathing that the earth is
 making—
 Eastward she turns her dewy side, awaking.
 But thou ! but thou !
 Insufferably brightening !
 Thy feet yet bathed in moist still shade, thy
 brow
 Glistening and lightening,
 Thy luminous eyes enlarging, ring in ring
 Of liquid azure, and thy golden hair
 Unfolding downward, curl on curl, to cling
 Around thy naked feet rose-tipt and
 bare !
 Thy hands stretch'd out to catch the flowers
 down-flowing,
 Thy blushing look on mine, thy light
 green vest
 In balmy airs of morning backward blowing
 From one divine white breast !
 The last star melts above thee in the blue,
 The cold moon shrinks her horn, as thou
 dost go
 Parnassos-ward, flower-laden, dripping dew,
 Heralding him who cometh from below !

HOURS.

I.

Our hearts beat quicker, we lift our voices,
 The east grows golden, the earth rejoices,

White clouds part with a radiant motion,
Moist sails glimmer beneath on Ocean,
And downward tripping, the sweet Immortal
Blushingly pauses without the portal!

2.

Eos! Eos! the sound from under
Deepens in music and might and wonder:
Thou standest now on Parnassos' moun-
tain,
Thy feet drip pearls from the sacred foun-
tain,
And the Sisters nine, to thy bright skirt
clinging,
Greet thee with smiling and mystic singing!

3.

Eos! Eos! all earth beholds thee,
The light of the sunrise there infolds thee,
A cry comes up from the earth below thee,
Mountains and forests and waters know
thee,
Fresh airs thy robe are backward blowing,
Under thy footprints flowers are growing!

4.

Eos! Eos! the sound is louder!
Behinds reams radiance fiercer and
pronder!
A moment thou blushest, and glad we view
thee,
Then Apollo the Fire-God speeds unto thee,
Speeding by with a smile he hails thee,—
And the golden cloud of his breathing veils
thee!

CLARI IN THE WELL.

O MY fountain of a maiden,
Sweet to hear and bright to see,
Now before mine eyes love-laden
Dancing, thrilling, flashing free,—
Still thy sparkling bliss a moment, sit thee
down, and look at me.

Gaze into my face, my dearest!
Through thy gleaming, golden hair;
Meet mine eyes—ah! thine are clearest
When my image floateth there;
Now, they still themselves, like waters when
the windless skies are fair.

In those depths of limpid azure
See my baby likeness beam!
Deep blue with reflected pleasure
From some heavenly dome of dream,
Crystal currents of thy spirit swim around
it, glance, and gleam!

Hold my hand, and heark'ning to me
For a space, be calm and cold.
While that liquid look flows through me
And I love thee twenty-fold,
I am smiling at a story thy dead mother
often told.

When thou wast a little blossom
Blown about thy village home,
Thou didst on that mother's bosom
Put a question troublesome:
'Mother, please, where did you find me?
whence do little children come?'

And the dame with bright beguiling
Kiss'd her answer first, my dear!
But, still prest, she answer'd smiling—
'In the orchard Well so clear,
Thou wert seen one sunny morning, sleep-
ing, and we brought thee here.'

With a look as grave as this is
Thou didst ponder thoughts profound;
On the next day with fond kisses
Clinging mother's neck around—
'Mother! mother! I've been looking in the
Well where I was found!

'Bright and clear it is! but—mother!
(Here thine eyes look'd wonderingly)
'In the well there is *another*—
Just the very same as me!—
And it is awake and moving— and its pretty
eyes can see!

'When I stretch my arms unto it,
Out its little arms stretch too!
Apple-blossoms red I threw it,
And it broke away from view—
Then again it look'd up laughing through
the waters deep and blue!'

Then thy gentle mother kiss'd thee,
Clari, as I kiss thee now,
With a wondering fondness bless'd thee,
Smooth'd the bright hair from thy
brow—
Saying, 'Tis a little Sister, happy-eyed and
sweet as thou!

'Underneath the deep pure water
Dwell its parents in green bowers—
Yes, it is their little daughter,
Just the same as thou art ours ;
And it loves to lie there, looking at the
pleasant orchard flowers.

'Every day, while thou art growing,
Thou wilt find thy Sister fair—
Even when the skies are snowing
And the water freezes there,
Break the blue ice,—through the water with
a cold cheek she will stare !

'As thou changest, growing taller,
She will change, through all the years—
Well thou may'st thy Sister call her,
She will share thy hopes and fears,
She will wear the face *thou* wearest, sweet
in smiles and sad in tears.

'Ah, my darling ! may'st thou ever
See her look as kind and bright,
Find her woeful-featured never
In the pleasant orchard light—
May you both be glad and happy, when
your golden locks are white !'

Golden locks !—what, *these* grow hoary ?
Wrinkles mar a face like this ?
Break the charm of the old story
With the magic of a kiss—
Here thou art, my deep-eyed darling, as
thou wast,—a thing of bliss.

Does she love thee ? does she miss thee ?
Thy sweet Sister in the well ?
Does she mourn because I kiss thee—
Fearing what she cannot tell ?—
For you both are link'd together by a truth
and by a spell.

Darling, be my love and duty
Judged by *her* ! and prove me so ;
When upon her mystic beauty
Thou perceivest shame or woe ;
When she changes into sadness, may God
judge, and strike me low !

Thou and thy sweet Sister move in
A diviner element,
Clear as light, more sweet to love in
Than my world so turbulent ;
Holy waters bathe and bless you, peaceful,
bright, and innocent.

And within those eyes of azure
See ! my baby image beam,
Deep blue with reflected pleasure
From some heavenly dome of dream,
Crystal currents of thy spirit swim around
it, glance, and gleam.

O my fountain of a maiden,
Be thy days for ever blest,
Dancing in mine eyes love-laden,
Lying smiling on my breast,—
Brighter than a fount, in motion, deeper
than a well, at rest.

SERENADES.

SLEEP on thine eyes, peace in thy breast,
White-limb'd lady, be at rest !
Near the room wherein you lie,
Broods the owl with luminous eye.

Midnight comes ; all fair things sleep,
While all dark things vigil keep ;
Round thy bed thy scented bower
Foldeth like a lily-flower.

All so still around thee lies,
Peace in thy breast, sleep on thine eyes !
All without is dark as death,
But thy lover wakeneth.

Underneath thy bower I pace,
Star-dew sparkling on my face ;
All around me, swift of flight,
Move the creatures of the night.

Hark, the great owl cries again
With an echo in the brain ;
And the dark earth in her sleep
Stirs and trembles, breathing deep.

Sleep on thine eyes, peace in thy breast !
Fold thy hands and take thy rest ;
All the night, till morning break,
Spirits walk and lovers wake !

II.

Sleep sweet, beloved one, sleep sweet !
Without here night is growing,
The dead leaf falls, the dark boughs meet,
And a chill wind is blowing,

Strange shapes are stirring in the night,
To the deep breezes wailing,
And slow, with wistful gleams of light,
The storm-tost moon is sailing.

Sleep sweet, beloved one, sleep sweet !
Fold thy white hands, my blossom !
Thy warm limbs in thy lily sheet,
Thy hands upon thy bosom.
Though evil thoughts may walk the dark,
Not one shall near thy chamber ;
But shapes divine shall pause to mark,
Singing to lutes of amber.

Sleep sweet, beloved one, sleep sweet !
Though, on thy bosom creeping,
Strange hands are laid, to feel the beat
Of thy soft heart in sleeping.
The brother angels, Sleep and Death,
Stoop by thy couch and eye thee ;
And Sleep stoops down to drink thy breath,
While Death goes softly by thee !

IN THE GARDEN.

HE.

SEEST thou two waifs of cloud on the dim
blue
Wandering in the melancholy light ?
Methinks they seem like spirits bright and
true,
Blending their gentle breaths, and horn
anew,
In the still rapture of this heavenly
night !
See ! how the flowering stars their path be-
strew,
Till the moon turns, and smiles, and looks
them through,
And breathes upon them, when with
bosoms white
They blend on one another, and unite.
Now they are gone, they vanish from our
view,
Lost in that radiance exquisitely
bright ! . . .
O love ! my love ! methinks that thou and I
Resemble those thin waifs in Heaven
astray ;
We meet, we blend, grow bright !

SHE.

And we must die !

HE.

Nay, sweet, for Love can never pass
away !

SHE.

Are *they* not gone ? and, dear, shall we not
go ?
O Love is Life, but after Life comes
Death !

HE.

No flower, no drop of rain, no flake of
snow,
No beauteous thing that blossometh below,
May perish, though it vanish ev'n as
breath !
The bright moon drinks those wanderers of
the west,
They melt in her warm breathing, and are
blest,
We see them not, but in that light divine
Uppgather'd, they are happy, and they shine :
Not lost, but vanish'd, grown ev'n unawares
A part of a diviner light than theirs !

NIGHTINGALES SING.

Through our throats the raptures rise,
In the scented air they swim ;
From the skies,
With their own love-lustre dim,
Gaze innumerable eyes !—
Sweet, O sweet,
Thrills the music from each throat,
Thick and fleet,
Note on note,
Till in ecstasy we float !

SHE.

How vast looks Heaven ! how solitary and
deep !
Dost thou believe that Spirits walk the
air,
Treading those azure fields, and downward
peep
With great sad eyes when Earth is fast
asleep ?

HE.

One spirit, at least, immortal LOVE, is
there !

A SHOOTING STAR.

Swift from my bliss, in the silence above,
I slip to thy kiss, O my star ! O my love !

SPIRITS IN THE LEAVES.

Who are these twain in the garden-bowers?
They glide with a rapture rich as ours.
Touch them, feel them, and drink their sighs,
Brush their lips and their cheeks and eyes !

How their hearts beat ! how they glow !
Brightly, lightly, they come and go ;
Upward gazing they look in bliss,
Save when softly they pause, to kiss.

Kiss them also, and share the light
That fills their breathing this golden night.
Touch them ! clasp them ! round them
twine,
Their lips are burning with breath divine.

HE.

Love, tread this way with rosy feet ;
And resting on the shadowy seat
'Neath the laburnum's golden rain,
Watch how with murmurous refrain
The fountain leaps, its basin dark
Flashing with many a starry spark.
With such a bliss, with such a light,
With such an iteration bright,
Our souls upbubbling from the clay,
Leap, sparkle, blend in silver spray,
Gleam in the Moon, and, falling still,
Sink duskily with tremulous thrill,
Together blent with kiss and press,
In dark surcease of happiness.
Yet there they pause not, but, cast free
After deep pause of ecstasy,
Heavenward they leap, together clinging,
And like the fountain flash, upspringing !

THE FOUNTAIN LEAPING.

Higher, still higher !
With a trembling and gleaming
Still upward streaming,
In the sparkling fire
Of a dim desire ;
Still higher, higher,
With a bright pulsation
Of aspiration,—
Higher !
Higher, still higher !
To the lights above me ;

They gleam, they love me,
They beckon me nigher,
And my waves aspire,
Still higher, higher ;—
But I fall down failing,
Still wildly wailing—
Higher !

NIGHTINGALES SING.

Deeper now our raptures grow ;
Softlier let our voices croon !
Yet more slow,
Let our happy music flow,
Sweet and slow, hush'd and low,
Now the dark cloud veils the Moon.
Sweet, O sweet !
Watch her as our wild hearts beat ! . . .
See ! she quits the clasping cloud,
Forth she sails on shining feet,
Smiling, with her bright head bow'd !
Pour the living rapture loud !
Thick and fleet,
Sweet, O sweet,
Now the notes of rapture crowd !

SHE (*to herself*).

And *this* is Love !—Until this hour
I never lived ; but like a flower
Close prest 'i' the bud, with sleeping senses
I drank the dark dim influences
Of sunlight, moonlight, shade, and dew.
At last I open, thrilling thro'
With Love's strange scent, which seemeth
part
Of the warm life within my heart,
Part of the air I breathe . . . O bliss !
Was ever night so sweet as this ?
It is enough to breathe, to be,
As if one were a flower, a tree,
A leaf o' the bough, just stirring light
With the warm breathing of the night !

SPIRITS IN THE LEAVES.

Whisper ! what are they doing now ?
He is kissing her white, white brow,
Turning it softly to the light,
Like a beautiful tablet marble white.

The Moon is shining upon it—lo !
Whiter it is than driven snow.
He kisseth again and speaketh gay ;
Whisper, whisper ! what doth he say ?

HE.

For ever and ever ! for ever and ever !
As the fount that upleaps, as the breezes
that blow,

Love thou me !

For ever and ever, for ever and ever,
While the nightingales sing and the rose
garlands glow,

Love I thee !

For ever and ever, with all things to prove
us,

In this world, in that world that bendeth
above us,

Asleeping, awaking, in earth, as in Heaven,
By this kiss, this other, by thousands un-
given,

By the hands which now touch thee, the
arms that enfold thee,

By the soul in my eyes that now swoons to
behold thee,

By starlight, by moonlight, by scented rose-
blossoms,

By all things partaking the joy of our
bosoms,

By the rapture within us, the rapture around
us,

By God who has made us and Love who
hath crown'd us,

One sense and one soul we are blent, ne'er
to sever.

For ever and ever ! for ever and ever !
More kisses to seal it * * * * For ever and
ever !

THE WOOD ECHOES.

For ever and ever !

THE ASRAI.

(PROLOGUE TO THE CHANGELING.)

'Tis midnight, and the light upon my desk
Burns dim and blue, and flickers as I read
The gold-clasp'd tome, whose stained yellow
leaves

Feel spongy to the touch yet rough with
dust,

When Clari, from her chamber overhead,
Her bright hair flowing brighter from the
brush,

Steals in, and peeps, and sits upon my
knee,

And winds her gentle arms around my
neck,

Then sidelong peeping, on the page antique
Rains her warm looks, and kisses as I read.

' Before man grew of the four elements,
The Asrai grew of three—fire, water, air—
Not earth,—they were not earthly. That
was ere

The opening of the golden eye of day :
The world was silvern,—moonlight mystical
Flooded her silent continents and seas,—
And in green places the pale Asrai walked
To deep and melancholy melody,
Musing, and cast no shades.

' These could not die

As men die ; Death came later ; pale yet
fair,

Pensive yet happy, in the lonely light
The Asrai wander'd, choosing for their
homes

All gentle places—valleys mossy deep,
Star-haunted waters, yellow strips of sand
Kissing the sad edge of the shimmering
sea,

And porphyry caverns in the gaunt hill-
sides,

Frosted with gems and dripping diamond
dews

In mossy basins where the water black
Bubbled with wondrous breath. The world
was pale,

And these were things of pallor ; flowers
and scents,

All shining things, came later ; later still,
Ambition, with thin hand upon his heart,
Crept out of night and hung the heights of
heaven

With lights miraculous ; later still, man
dug

Out of the caves the thick and golden glue
That knits together the stone ribs of earth ;
Nor flowers, nor scents, the pallid Asrai
knew,

Nor burning aspiration heavenward,
Nor blind dejection downward under earth
After the things that glitter. Their desires
Shone stationary—gentle love they felt
For one another—in their sunless world
Silent they walked and mused, knowing no
guile,

With lives that flow'd within as quietly

As rain-drops dripping with bright measured
beat
From mossy cavern-caves.'

O Love ! My Love !
How thy heart beats ! how the fond kisses
rain !

We cannot love like those—ours is a pain,
A tumult, a delirium, a dream.
O little one of four sweet elements,
Fire on thy face, and moisture in thine
eyes,
Thy white breast heaving with the balmy
air,
And in thy heart and on thy kissing mouth
The warmth, the joy, the impulse, and
delight
Of the enamour'd gentle-hearted earth
Bright with the flowery fulness of the sun !

THE CHANGELING.

A LEGEND OF THE MOONLIGHT.

I.

THE ASRAI.

'O LET him smile as Mortals may,
And be like Mortals fair,
And let him tread the wondrous way
Of golden earth and air ;
And let the sun's celestial ray
Shine on his sense from day to day,
Far from these waters wan,
Strew flowers and fruits upon his way,
And make him blest,—like Man !'

Who prays ? Who cries ? Who is kneeling
by night
Down in the Mere in the pale moonlight,
Where pensive Spirits come and go
In gleaming raiments as white as snow,
Walking with silent and solemn tread
That darkling bottom of silvern sands ?
Like an azure heaven, far overhead,
The surface smooth of the Mere expands,
Strewn thick with glimmers of stary dew
Reflected down from the ether blue
Those Spirits behold not.

Strangely fair,
With flashing fingers and flowing hair,

Her face upturned in the rippling rays,
Down in the Mere the Spirit prays ;
And on her bosom there waking lies
Her Asrai babe with glittering eyes,—
Silent, as white as a marble stone,
It lies, but utters a feeble moan.

For ere of the earth, and the air, and the
dew,
And the fire, that fuseth all these to one,
Bright Man was fashion'd, and lived and
grew,

And walked erect in the shining sun,
When the sun itself was eyeless and dark,
And the earth was wrapped in a stary
night,

And the only lights that the eyes might
mark

Were the cold still spheres of a moon
snow-white ;

Ev'n then, of the dew and the crystal air,
And the moonray mild, were the Asrai
made ;

And they walked and mused in the midnight
air,

But they had no souls and they cast no
shade.

They knew no hunger and mad desire,
No bitter passion of mortal birth,
For they were not fashion'd, like Man, from
fire,

They were not leavened, like Man, with
earth—

Cold they were as the pale moonbeam,
Cold and pure as a vestal's dream.

Serene they dwelt in a silvern world,
Where throbbing waters stole dusky-
white,

Washing the feet of dark capes star-pearl'd,
And arch'd by rainbows of rippling light.

And when to the pæan of living things,
To the cry of the new-born worlds
around,

Out rolled the Sun, like a shape with
wings,

Mighty with odour, and flame, and
sound ;

As the dim dew shaken from Earth's dark
hair,

While she woke and gladdened supremely
fair,

In the glorious gleam of the natal ray,
The pallid Asrai faded away !
And when with the sunlight's fiery breath
Bright Man was moulded, and stood
supreme,

Royal, the monarch of life and death,
Shadow'd with slumber and dower'd with
dream,

Their trace was lost ; on the human shore
Those sad pale Spirits were seen no more !

. . . Yet far away in the darkened places,
Deep in the mountains and under the
meres,

A few fair Spirits with sunless faces
Lingered on with the rolling years,
And listened, listened, luminous-eyed,
While the generations arose and died,
And watch'd, watch'd, with sad surprise,
The gleaming glory of earth and skies,
Beyond their darkness. But ever, by night,
When the moon arose with her gentle light,
The Asrai, hidden from human seeing,
Drank the moonlight that was their being,—
Stirring about with a stealthy tread
On the mountain side, on the water's bed,
Or singing low and clasping hands,
Shadowless moving on shining sands.

But Earth with the snows of time was gray,
When one of this race so meek and mild,
An Asrai mother, knelt down to pray,
To heaven uplifting her little child ;
For the Asrai with passionless chilly kiss
Still mingled darkly as mortals do,
And on their bosoms bare babes like this,
With hair soft golden and eyes of blue,
Like the eyes of stars !

And she cried that night—
'Blessed indeed is the beauteous light,
And blessed are those sun-phantoms fair,
For the light turns golden on their hair,
And their faces are flowers and their breath
is a fire,
And they move about with a sweet desire
In the amber day ; and each night they lie
Quietly smiling beneath the sky,
Till the rubies of morning again are shaken
Upon their eyelids, and they awaken !'
And she prayed moreover—'Could this
thing be !
Could the child I nurse upon my knee,

My own pale little one, blend with clay,
And grow a thing of divineness day,
Like those fair mortals !'

Then out of the air
There came in answer unto her prayer
A gentle voice ; and it whispered, '*Rise !
Steal from the water, and under the skies
Find a dead Mother, and on her bed
A new-born Babe that is also dead ;
Blend thy Babe with the mortal clay,
And the thing shall be as thou hast prayed—
Thy Child shall walk in the golden day,
Shall find a Soul, and cast a Shade !*'

II.

THE CHANGELING'S BIRTH.

She rises up from the depths of the Mere
And floats away on the surface clear,
Like a swan she sails to the shadowy
sands,

And soon on the moonlit earth she stands.
Moonbeam-like in the moonbeams bright,

A space she lingers upon the shore,
Then steals along through the dusky light
Up the hill and across the moor.

She sees a light that flashes afar
Through the dark like a crimson star,
Now it glimmers, and now is gone,
For shadows come and go thereon.
It comes from the shepherd's dwelling lone,
Rudely fashioned of turf and stone ;
And the sheep dog harks, and the sheep o'
the fold

Huddle together in wintry cold ;
But within the hut the light burns low,
And mortals whispering come and go ;
For there on the wretched truckle bed
The wife of the shepherd lieth dead,
And her babe new born by her side doth lie
Closing its eyes with a last faint cry.

. . . The Spirit trembles, as on her hair
Flasheth the firelight's crimson glare ;
Trembles and fades ; but she draweth near,
Eager to see, eager to hear.
Close to the window-pane she flees,
And looketh in !

In the room she sees,
None stir : 'tis empty ; but on the bed
The child and mother are lying dead.

The light burns low ; the clock ticks slow ;
Spectral shadows come and go ;
From the room without a murmur creeps
Of whispered words, and one that weeps.

O Moon ! still Moon !
Sweet and white as a lily in June,
In the garden of heaven bend thy brows
And waft thy breathing into the house !
For the pallid creature of thy breath
The cottage window openeth,
And stealeth in. Like a moonray bright,
Holding her own babe in her hands,
And bending above that bed, snow white
She stands !

*Find a dead Mother, and on her bed
A new-born Babe that is also dead.
Blend thy Babe with the mortal clay
And the thing shall pass as thou hast
prayed :
Thy child shall walk in the golden day,
Shall find a Soul, and shall cast a Shade.*

O Moon ! still Moon !
The wonderful spell is woven soon !
Breathe again on her hair and eyes,
As she creepeth out, and under the skies
Listens ! O hark ! from within is blown
A child's low murmur, an infant's moan !
Shadows darken across the pane,
For the peasants gather wondering-eyed—
The child of the shepherd lives again,
Smiling awake by the corpse's side.

III.

HIS MORTAL LIFE.

Weary to tell and weary to hear
Were the mortal life for many a year
Of that changeling child ; but he grew on
earth,
Knowing nought of his mystic birth,
And ever waxed more strong and fair,
With the glory of daylight on eyes and
hair.

And the poor pale Mother Spirit smiled
From far away on her happy child,
Thinking, 'He thrives, and the golden
hours
Fill his lap with their fruit and flowers,

And he feels the sun, and he drinks its
light,
Growing on to a mortal's height.'
And ever nightly unseen she came
And kiss'd him asleep, to her heart's
desire,
Though his breath met hers with the fever'd
flame
Of a fatal fire.

She watched him still with a hunger keen,
Stronger than mortal mothers know ;
She hover'd o'er him, unheard, unseen,
Wherever his feet might come and go,
In the sunless hours ; and all the day
She marked his motion from far away,
And heard his voice, through the shine and
the shower,
Like the voice of a bird !

But there came an hour
When the Shepherd who called him son lay
dead,
And when he was buried the Changeling
said—
'I will take my staff, and will leave this
place,
And seek new fortunes—God give me grace
That I prosper well !' And away he went,
Humming an old tune, well-content,
Hopeful and fearless, merry and gay,
Over the hills and far away ;
And all alone !

IV.

HIS SORROW AND SIN.

Yet not alone,
For step by step, and stone by stone,
Where'er he rested—fleet as wind,
His Spirit Mother came behind ;
Creeping to darkness all the day,
But ever in the cold moonray
Finding his footprints, kissing them,
And often where his raiment hem
Had brushed the warm dew from the grass,
Strewing pale flowers. Thus did she pass
Till brazen city gates by night
She saw him enter. Still and white,
She followed.

Weary to tell and hear
Were the Changeling's doings for many a
year,

But the Spirit saw as the time fled on
That his cheek grew paler, his bright eye
shone

Less happy and bright; for he dwelt, be-
hold!

Where men and women were heaping gold
And counting gems; and a yellow gleam
Shadowed the sight and darkened the
dream

Of his gentle face; and by lamplight now
He read and pondered with pallid brow
O'er parchment scrolls, and tomes which told
Of mystic manners of finding gold.

Then, even then, across him came
So strange a change, so fierce a flame,
That he, forgetting fever-fraught
All things but that one thing he sought,
Was wrapt all round with light of dread!
And ever tossing on his bed

He named a woman's name, and cried
That God would bring her to his side,
His and none other's; and all day
He fevered in the hot sunray
Behind her footprints. Ne'ertheless
His thirst was turned to bitterness,
His love to pain; and soon by night
The Spirit saw him standing white,
Transfigured in a dumb despair,
And his wild shriek rose on the air,
While from a far off bridal room
Came wafted through the summer gloom
The sound of harps and lutes!

Then came

Long days and nights of sin and shame.
For in his agony the Man
Kept hideous orgies, and his wan
Wild features gleamed in ghastly mirth,
While naked women-snakes of earth
Twined round him fawning; and he drew
Dark curtains, shutting out the blue,
And the sweet sun; and all the nights,
In feverish flash of ghastly lights,
He slew pure sleep with sounds of sin.
Then the pale Mother peeping in
Beheld his mad distorted face,
And knew it not!

Time sped apace,

And lo! he changed, and forth again
He fared, amid a mighty train,
A Warrior now; and to the sound
Of martial strains his head swam round,

His heart kept time; while overhead
Strange suns of sorrow glimmered red.

. . . Weary to tell and weary to hear
The Changeling's doings for many a year!
Weary to tell how the Spirit dim
Moaning in misery followed him,
For whene'er she gazed on his features now,
On the hearded chin and the branded brow,
She shuddered, and often, when she crept
Into the tent where the warrior slept,
She saw on his hand a blood-red stain.

And she kissed the stain again and again
With her cold pure lips,—but it would not
go!

V.

THE BATTLE-FIELD.

One night she walked with a foot of snow
Thro' a battle-field; and the Moon on high
Swam thro' the film of a starry sky,
And the breath of the Moon, like hoar-frost
shed,

Gleamed on the dreadful drifts of dead.
Then she saw *him* standing amid it all
Living and bloody, ghastly and tall,
With a hand on his moaning horse's mane!
And his face was awful with hate and pain,
And his eyes were mad—for beneath him
lay,

Quivering there in the pale moonray,
A quivering foe—while with red right hand
He held in the air a bloody brand
To cleave him down!

Before his look

One moment the Spirit Mother shook;
He could not hear her, he could not see,
But she shriek'd aloud in her agony!
He glared all round him like one in dread
Of a voice from heaven or a ghost from the
dead,

And he sheathed his sword with a shudder
soon,

Alone in the light of the lonely Moon . . .
O Moon! immortal Moon!

VI.

THE ABBOT PAUL.

Fourscore years have come and gone,
Since the Asrai Mother knelt down and
prayed,

Since the boon was gained, and her little
one

Found a soul and cast a shade ;
And now by the side of the same still Mere,
A mighty Monastery stands,
And morn and even its bell rings clear,
Tinkling over the silver sands ;
And the Asrai as they come and go
Hear the sounds in the waters below,
And ever to them the sweet sounds seem
Like distant music heard in a dream,
And they pause and smile, and they mur-
mur ' Hark,'
With uplifted fingers !

Old, old, old,
With hoary hair and beard snow-white,
With vacant vision and senses cold,
Crawling out to feel the light—
Like a man of marble, gaunt and tall,
Heavy with years, is the Abbot Paul.
Fourscore years have slowly shed
Their snows on the mighty Abbot's head—
But not so white are his thoughts within,
That tell of a long dark life of sin.
Ever he totters and grows to the ground,
And ever by night he hears a sound
Of voices that whisper his name and weep ;
And he starteth up in his nightly sleep
With a touch like a hand upon his hair,
And he looketh around in a sick despair,
But he seeth nought. And he prayeth low :
' Pity me, God ; and let me go
Out of the sunlight,—shaking away
This form fire-fashioned out of clay !'
And often his dark beads counteth he :
' Maria Madonna, come for me !
For I am sick of the sinful light.'

Now ever he readeth low each night
In a parchment scroll, with pictures quaint
Of many a shining-headed Saint
Smiling, each 'mid his aureole,
O'er the dark characters of the scroll ;
And ever when he totters abroad
He bears this parchment scroll of God:
Against his heart ; or in the sun
He spells its letters one by one
With dim dark eyes, as he creepeth slow.

. . 'Tis a summer even. The sun sinks
low,
And the light of its solemn setting lles
Golden and crimson on the skies,

Purple over the brow of the hill,
And violet dim on the waters still
Of the glassy Mere. In the zenith blue,
Already, dim as drops of dew,
Twinkle the stars !

In his great arm-chair,
Carried out to the open air,
On the edge of a promontory sweet,
With the waters rippling at his feet,
Sits the Abbot Paul ; and his fingers cold
Still grip that parchment holy and old.
Behind his chair there standeth grim
With cold black eyeball fix'd on him,
A serving-monk.

The air is chill,
The light is low, but he readeth still,
Mumbling the sacred words aloud ;
And ever his weary neck is bowed
At the names of Mary and every Saint ;
While ever fainter and more faint
His voice doth grow, as he murmureth :
' Holy of Holies, drink my breath !
For I am sick of the sinful light !'

. . . The sun hath sunken out of sight
In the cloudy west afar away—
Chilly it groweth, chilly and gray—
But who is this with steps so still
Coming yonder across the hill ?
Over the peaks with a silvern tread
Flashing, then rising overhead
In the open heaven of a golden June ?

O Moon ! white Summer Moon !

Down the mountain and into the Mere
The pale ray falleth, so silvern clear,
And it creepeth silently over all,
Till it shineth full on the Abbot Paul,
Where he sits and prays. O see ! O see !
Sadder, stiller, groweth he,
But his eyes still burn with a dying gleam ;
While faint, far off, as in a dream,
He hears a murmur, he sees a light.

Silently, coldly, marble white,
Pale and pure as the moonray dim,
Smiling, outstretching her arms to him,
His Spirit Mother upriseth now !

A light not human is on his brow,
A light no human is in his eyes—
Fold by fold, like a dark disguise,

The mortal dress is dropping away ;
 Silently, slowly, sinks the clay ;
 His eyes see clear by some mystic spell,
 And he knoweth the gentle presence well.

'O Mother ! Mother !'

She answereth low :

'Come from the gleam of the golden glow,
 From the wicked flush of the fever'd strife,
 Back to the mystical moonlight life !
 Thy heart is heavy, thy sense is drear,
 Weary with wandering many a year—
 Come from the sorrows of the Sun !
 My own pale darling, my little one !'

'O Mother ! Mother !'

Her arms so dim
 Are round his neck, and she kisseth him !
 She smoothes his hair with a gentle hand,
 And she sings a song of the moonlight land.
 He listens and listens, but still in a dream
 Looking afar off his dark eyes gleam,
 Beyond her, through her, at some strange
 thing

There on the hilltops, beckoning ! . . .

Dead in his chair lies the Abbot Paul,
 But a Shape stands by him, stately and tall,
 And another Shape upon her knee
 Is looking up in her agony.

'O Mother ! Mother !' the tall Shape cries,
 Gazing on her with gentle eyes—

'O Mother, Mother, I cannot stay—
 A voice is summoning me away—
 Up the shining track of the sun,
 Past the sphere of the spectral moon,
 Further, higher, my path must run—

I have found a Soul, and thou hast thy
 boon ;
 And the Soul is a scourge, and the scourge
 a fire,

And it shoots me onward to strive and
 soar,
 For this is the end of thy heart's desire—
 I rest not, stay not, for evermore.
 O kiss me, Mother, before I go !'

They kiss each other, those shapes of snow,
 They cling in the moonlight, they kiss each
 other—
 'Child, my child !' and 'Mother ! Mother !'

Silently, swiftly, through the air
 Riseth one like a meteor fair,
 Riseth one with a last wild cry,
 While the other sinks in a silent swoon,
 And whiter, brighter, over the sky,
 Burneth the light of that night of June !

O Moon ! sad Summer Moon !

TO CLARI.

WITH THE PRECEDING POEM.

THOUGH on the dullest dust we tread,
 Our days are closed about with dread ;
 Before our footsteps and behind
 Burns the white Light that keeps us blind.

If Life were all, if Love were clay,
 If the great Dream could pass away,
 If thou or I could cease to be,
 That Light would fade, and we should see :

Yea, see and know, and swiftly pass,
 Like shapes from a magician's glass ;—
 But girt by godhead we remain,
 Though human systems wax and wane.

Enough ! we fear not, thou and I,
 Knowing we were not born to die,
 Because, at every step we tread,
 Our days are closed about with dread.

North Coast, and other Poems.

(1867-68.)

MEG BLANE.

I.

STORM.

'LORD, hearken to me !
 Save all poor souls at sea !
 Thy breath is on their cheeks,—
 Their cheeks are wan wi' fear ;
 Nae man speaks,
 For wha could hear ?
 The wild white water screams,
 The wind cries loud ;
 The fireflaught gleams
 On tattered sail and shroud !
 Under the red mast-light
 The hissing surges slip ;
 Thick reeks the storm o' night
 Round him that steers the ship,—
 And his een are blind,
 And he kens not where they run.
 LORD, be kind !
 Whistle back Thy wind,
 For the sake of CHRIST Thy Son !'

. . . And as she prayed she knelt not on
 her knee,
 But, standing on the threshold, looked to
 Sea,

Where all was blackness and a watery
 roar,
 Save when the dead light, flickering far
 away,

Flash'd on the line of foam upon the
 shore,
 And showed the ribs of reef and surging
 bay !

There was no sign of life across the dark,
 No piteous light from fishing-boat or
 bark,

Albeit for such she hush'd her heart to
 pray.

With tattered plaid wrapt tight around her
 form,

She stood a space, spat on by wind and
 rain,

Then, sighing deep, and turning from the
 Storm,
 She crept into her lonely hut again.

'Twas but a wooden hut under the height,
 Shielded in the black shadow of the crag :
 One blow of such a wind as blew that
 night

Could rend so rude a dwelling like a rag.
 There, gathering in the crannies overhead,
 Down fell the spouting rain heavy as lead,—
 So that the old roof and the rafters thin
 Dript desolately, looking on the surf,
 While blacker rain-drops down the walls of
 turf

Splash'd momentarily on the mud-floor
 within.

There, swinging from the beam, an earthen
 lamp
 Waved to the wind and glimmered in the
 damp,

And shining in the chamber's wretched-
 ness,

Illumed the household things of the poor
 place,

And flicker'd faintly on the woman's face
 Sooted with rain, and on her dripping
 dress.

A miserable den wherein to dwell,
 And yet she loved it well.

'O Mither, are ye there ?'

A deep voice filled the dark ; she thrill'd to
 hear ;

With hard hand she pushed back her wild
 wet hair,

And kissed him. 'Whisht, my bairn, for
 Mither's near.'

Then on the shuttle bed a figure thin
 Sat rubbing sleepy eyes :

A bearded man, with heavy hanging chin,
 And on his face a light not over-wise.

'Water !' he said ; and deep his thirst was
 quelled

Out of the broken pitcher she upheld,

And yawning sleepily, he gazed around,
And stretched his limbs again, and soon
slept sound.

Stooping, she smooth'd his pillow 'neath
his head,

Still looking down with eyes liquid and
mild,

And while she gazed, softly he slumber'd,
That bearded man, her child.

And a child's dreams were his ; for as he
lay,

He uttered happy cries as if at play,

And his strong hand was lifted up on
high

As if to catch the bird or butterfly ;

And often to his bearded lips there came
That lonely woman's name ;

And though the wrath of Ocean roared
so near,

That one sweet word

Was all the woman heard,

And all she cared to hear.

Not old in years, though youth had passed
away,

And the thin hair was tinged with silver
gray,

Close to the noontide of the day of life,
She stood, calm featured like a wedded
wife ;

And yet no wedded wife was she, but one
Whose foot had left the pathways of the
just,

Yet meekly, since her penance had been
done,

Her soft eyes sought men's faces, not the
dust.

Her tearful days were over : she had found
Firm footing, work to do upon the ground ;
The Elements had welded her at length
To their own truth and strength.

This woman was no slight and tear-strung
thing,

Whose easy sighs fall soft on suffering,
But one in whom no stranger's eyes would
seek

For pity mild and meek.

Man's height was hers—man's strength and
will thereto,

Her shoulders broad, her step man-like
and long ;

'Mong fishermen she dwelt, a rude, rough
crew,

And more than one had found her hand
was strong.

And yet her face was gentle, though the sun
Had made it dark and dun ;

Her silver-threaded hair

Was combed behind her ears with cleanly
care ;

And she had eyes liquid and sorrow-fraught,
And round her mouth were delicate lines,
that told

She was a woman sweet with her own
thought,

Though built upon a large, heroic mould.

Who did not know Meg Blane ?

What hearth but heard the deeds that Meg
had done ?

What fisher of the main

But knew her, and her little-witted son ?

For in the wildest waves of that wild coast
Her b'ack boat hover'd and her net was tost,

And lonely in the watery solitude

The son and mother fished for daily food.

When on calm nights the herring hosts
went by,

Her frail boat followed the red smacks
from shore

And steering in the stern the man would lie
While Meg was hoisting sail or plying
oar ;

Till, a black speck against the morning sky,
The boat came homeward, with its silver
store.

And Meg was cunning in the ways of
things,

Watching what every changing lineament
Of wind and sky and cloud and water
meant,

Knowing how Nature threatens ere she
springs.

She knew the clouds as shepherds know
their sheep,

To eyes unskilled alike, yet different
each ;

She knew the wondrous voices of the Deep ;
The tones of sea-birds were to her a
speech.

Much faith was hers in GOD, who was her
guide ;

Courage was hers such as GOD gives to
few,

For she could face His terrors fearless-eyed,
Yet keep the still sane woman's nature true.

Lives had she snatched out of the waste
by night,

When wintry winds were blowing ;
To sick-beds sad her presence carried
light,

When (like a thin sail lessening out of
sight)

Some rude, rough life to the unknown Gulf
was going ;

For men who scorned a feeble woman's
wail

Would heark to one so strong and brave as
she,

Whose face had braved the lightning and
the gale,

And ne'er grown pale,

Before the shrill threat of the murderous
Sea.

Yet often, as she lay a-sleeping there,

This woman started up and blush'd in
shame,

Stretching out arm embracing the thin air,
Naming an unknown name ;

There was a hearkening hunger in her
face

If sudden footsteps sounded on her ear ;
And when strange seamen came unto the
place

She read their faces in a wretched fear ;
And finding not the object of her quest,
Her hand she held hard on her heaving
breast,

And wore a white look, and drew feeble
breath,

Like one that hungereth.

It was a night of summer, yet the wind

Had wafted from God's wastes the rain-
clouds dank,

Blown out Heaven's thousand eyes and left
it blind,

Though now and then the Moon gleamed
moist behind

The rack, till, smitten by the drift, she
sank.

But the Deep roared ;

Sucked to the black clouds, spumed the
foam-fleck'd main,

While lightning rent the storm-rack like
a sword,

And earthward rolled the gray smoke of the
Rain.

'Tis late, and yet the woman doth not rest,
But sitteth with chin drooping on her
breast :

Weary she is, yet will not take repose ;
Tired are her eyes, and yet they cannot
close ;

She rocketh to and fro upon her chair,
And stareth at the air !

Far, far away her thoughts were travelling :
They could not rest—they wandered far
and fleet,

As the storm-petrels o'er the waters wing,
And cannot find a place to rest their
feet ;

And in her ear a thin voice murmur'd,
'If he be *dead*—be *dead* !'

Then, even then, the woman's face went
white

And awful, and her eyes were fixed in
fear,

For suddenly all the wild screams of night
Were hushed : the Wind lay down ; and
she could hear

Strange voices gather round her in the
gloom,

Sounds of invisible feet across the room,
And after that the rustle of a shroud,

And then a creaking door,
And last the coronach, full shrill and
loud,

Of women clapping hands and weeping sore.

Now Meg knew well that ill was close at
hand,

On water or on land,

Because the Glamour touched her lids like
breath,

And scorch'd her heart : but in a waking
swoon,

Quiet she stayed,—not stirring,—cold as
death,

And felt those voices croon ;

Then suddenly she heard a human shout,
The hurried falling of a foot without,

Then a hoarse voice—a knocking at the
door—

'*Meg, Meg! A Ship ashore!*'

Now mark the woman ! She hath risen
her height,
Her dripping plaid is wrapt around her
tight,

Tight clenched in her palm her fingers are
Her eye is steadfast as a fixed star.

One look upon her child—he sleepeth on—
One step unto the door, and she is gone :

Barefooted out into the dark she fares,
And comes where, rubbing eyelids thick
with sleep,

The half-clad fishers mingle oaths and
prayers,

And look upon the Deep.

. . . Black was the oozy lift,

Black was the sea and land ;

Hither and thither, thick with foam and
drift,

Did the deep Waters shift,

Swinging with iron clash on stone and
sand.

Faintlier the heavy Rain was falling,

Faintlier, faintlier the Wind was calling,

With hollower echoes up the drifting
dark !

While the swift rockets shooting through
the night

Flash'd past the foam-flecked reef with
phantom light,

And showed the piteous outline of the
bark,

Rising and falling like a living thing,

Shuddering, shivering,

While, howling beastlike, the white breakers
there

Spat blindness in the dank eyes of despair.

Then one cried, 'She has sunk !'—and on
the shore

Men shook, and on the heights the
women cried ;

But, lo ! the outline of the bark once more !
While flashing faint the blue light rose
and died.

Ah, GOD, put out Thy hand ! all for the
sake

Of little ones, and weary hearts that wake
Be gentle ! chain the fierce waves with a
chain !

Let the gaunt seaman's little boys and girls
Sit on his knee and play with his black
curls

Yet once again !

And breathe the frail lad safely through the
foam

Back to the hungry mother in her home !
And spare the bad man with the frenzied
eye ;

Kiss him, for CHRIST's sake, bid Thy
Death go by—

He hath no heart to die !

Now faintlier blew the wind, the thin rain
ceased,

The thick cloud cleared like smoke from
off the strand,

For, lo ! a bright blue glimmer in the
East,—

GOD putting out His hand !

And overhead the rack grew thinner too,

And through the smoky gorge

The Wind drave past the stars, and faint
they flew

Like sparks blown from a forge !

And now the thousand foam-flames o' the
Sea

Hither and thither flashing visibly ;

And gray lights hither and thither came
and fled,

Like dim shapes searching for the drowned
dead ;

And where these shapes most thickly glim-
mer'd by,

Out on the cruel reef the black hulk
lay,

And cast, against the kindling eastern sky,
Its shape gigantic on the shrouding
spray.

Silent upon the shore, the fishers fed

Their eyes on horror, waiting for the
close,

When in the midst of them a shrill voice
rose :

'The boat ! the boat !' it said.

Like creatures started from a trance, they
turned

To her who spake ; tall in the midst stood
she,

With arms uplifted, and with eyes that
yearned

Out on the murmuring Sea.

Some, shrugging shoulders, homeward
turned their eyes,

And others answered back in brutal
speech ;

But some, strong-hearted, uttering shouts
and cries,
Followed the fearless woman up the
beach.

A rush to seaward—black confusion—
then

A struggle with the surf upon the strand—
'Mid shrieks of women, cries of desperate
men,

The long oars smite, the black boat
springs from land !

Around the thick spray flies ;

The waves roll on and seem to overwhelm.

With blowing hair and onward-gazing
eyes

The woman stands erect, and grips the
belm. . . .

Now fearless heart, Meg Blane, or all must
die !

Let not the skill'd hand thwart the steadfast
eye

The crested wave comes near,—crag-like it
towers

Above you, scattering round its chilly
showers :

One flutter of the hand, and all is done !

Now steel thy heart, thou woman-hearted
one !

Softly the good helm guides ;

Round to the liquid ridge the boat leaps
light,—

Hidden an instant,—on the foaming height,
Dripping and quivering like a bird, it
rides.

Athwart the ragged rift the Moon looms
pale,

Driven before the gale,

And making silvern shadows with her
breath,

Where on the sighing Sea it shimmereth ;

And, lo ! the light illumines the reef ; 'tis
shed

Full on the wreck, as the dark boat draws
nigh.

A crash !—the wreck upon the reef is fled ;
A scream !—and all is still beneath the
sky,

Save the wild waters as they whirl and
cry.

II.

DEAD CALM.

DAWN ; and the Deep was still. From the
bright strand,

Meg, shading eyes against the morning sun,
Gazed seaward. After trouble, there was
peace.

Smooth, many-coloured as a ring-dove's
neck

Stretch'd the still Sea, and on its eastern
rim

The dewy light, with liquid yellow beams,
Gleamed like a sapphire. Overhead, soft
airs

To feathery cirrus flecked the lightening
blue,

Beneath, the Deep's own breathing made a
breeze ;

And up the weedy beach the blue waves
crept,

Falling in one thin line of cream-white foam.

Seaward the woman gazed, with keen eye
fixed

On a dark shape that floated on the calm,
Drifting as seaweed ; still and black it lay,—

The outline of a lifeless human shape :

And yet it was no drown'd mariner,

For she who looked was smiling, and her
face

Looked merry ; still more merry when a
boat,

With pale and timorous fishermen, drew
nigh ;

And as the fearful boatmen paused and
gazed,

A boat's length distant, leaning on their
oars,

The shape took life—dash'd up a dripping
head,

Screaming—flung up its limbs with flash of
foam,

And, with a shrill and spirit-thrilling cry,
Dived headlong, as a monster of the main

Plunges deep down when startled on its
couch

Of glassy waters. 'Twas the woman's child,
The witless water-haunter—Angus Blane.

For Angus Blane, not fearful as the wise
Are fearful, loved the Ocean like a thing

Born amid algæ of the slimy ooze.
 A child, he sported on its sands, and
 crept
 Splashing with little feet amid the foam ;
 And when his limbs were stronger, and he
 reached
 A young man's stature, the great Gulf had
 grown
 Fair and familiar as his mother's face.
 Far out he swam, on windless summer
 days,
 Floating like fabled mermen far from land,
 Plunging away from startled fishermen
 With eldritch cry and wild phantasmic glare,
 And in the untrodden halls below the sea
 Awaking wondrous echoes that had slept
 Since first the briny Spirit stirred and
 breathed.
 On nights of summer in the gleaming bay
 He glistened like a sea-snake in the moon,
 Splashing with trail of glistening phosphor-
 fire,
 And laughing shrill till echo answer'd him,
 And the pale helmsman on the passing
 boat,
 Thinking some Demon of the waters cried,
 Shivered and prayed. His playmates were
 the waves,
 The sea his playground. On his ears were
 sounds
 Sweeter than human voices. On his sense,
 Though sadden'd with his silent life, there
 stole
 A motion and a murmur that at times
 Brake through his lips, informing witless
 words
 With strange sea-music. In his infancy,
 Children had mocked him : he had shunned
 their sports,
 And haunted lonely places, nurturing
 The bright, fierce, animal splendour of a
 soul
 That ne'er was clouded by the mental mists
 That darken oft the dreams of wiser men.
 Only in winter seasons he was sad ;
 For then the loving Spirit of the Deep
 Repulsed him, and its smile was mild no
 more ;
 And on the strand he wandered ; from dark
 caves
 Gazed at the Tempest ; and from day to
 day
 Moaned to his mother for the happy time

When swifts are sailing on the wind o' the
 South,
 And summer smiles afar off through the
 rain,
 Bringing her golden circlet to the Sea.

And as the deepening of strange melody,
 Caught from the unknown shores beyond
 the seas,

Was the outspreading of his life to her
 Who bare him ; yea, at times, the woman's
 womb

Seemed laden with the load of him unborn,
 So close his being clave unto her flesh,
 So link'd was his strange spirit with her
 own.

The faint forebodings of her heart, when
 first

She saw the mind-mists in his infant eyes,
 And knew him witless, turned as years wore
 on

Into more spiritual, less selfish love
 Than common mothers feel ; and he had
 power

To make her nature deeper, more alive
 Unto the supernatural feet that walk
 Our dark and troubled waters. Thence
 was born

Much of her strength upon the Sea, her
 trust

In the Sea's MASTER ! thence, moreover,
 grew

Her faith in visions, warnings, fantasies,
 Such as came ever thronging on her heart
 When most her eyes looked inward—to the
 place

Fraught with her secret sorrow.

As she gazed,
 Smiling, the bearded face of Angus rose
 Nearer to shore, and panting in the sun,
 Smiled at the fishers. Then the woman
 turned,

And took, with man-like step and slow, a
 path

That, creeping through the shadows of the
 cliffs,

Wound to the clachan. In the clear, bright
 dawn

Lay Thornock glittering, while, thin and
 blue,

Curl'd peat-smoke from the line of fisher-huts
 That patred the high shingle from the land.

The tide was low : amid the tangled weeds
 The many-coloured rocks and sparkling
 pools,
 Went stooping men and women, seeking
 spoil,
 Treasure or drift-wood floating from the
 wreck ;
 Beyond, some stood in fish-boats, peering
 down,
 Seeking the drown'd dead ; and, near at
 hand,
 So near, a tall man might have waded
 thither
 With a dry beard, the weedy reef loom'd
 red,
 And there the white-fowl ever and anon
 Rose like a flash of foam, whirl'd in the
 air,
 And, screaming, settled. But not thither-
 ward
 Now look'd Meg Blane. Along the huts
 she went—
 Among the rainy pools where played and
 cried
 Brown and barefooted bairns—among the
 nets
 Stretch'd steaming in the sun—until she
 reached
 The cottage she was seeking. At the door,
 Smoking his pipe, a grizzly Fisher sat,
 Looking to sea. With him she spake
 awhile,
 Then, with a troubled look, entered the
 hut,
 And sought the inner chamber.

Faint and pale

Light glimmer'd through a loop-hole in the
 wall,
 A deep white streak across the sand-strewn
 floor,
 All else in shadow ; and the room was still,
 Save for a heavy breathing, as of one
 In quiet sleep. Within the wall's recess,
 On the rude bed of straw the sleeper lay,
 His head upon his arm, the sickly light
 Touching his upturn'd face ; while Meg
 drew near,
 And gazed upon him with a stranger's eyes,
 Quiet and pitying. Though his sleep was
 sound,
 His dreams were troubled. Throwing up
 his arms,

He seemed to beckon, muttering ; then his
 teeth
 Clench'd tight, a dark frown wrinkled on
 his brow,
 And still he lay like one awaiting doom ;
 But suddenly, in agony supreme,
 He breathed like one who struggles, sinks,
 and drowns ;
 Strangling, with wavering arms and quiver-
 ing limbs,
 And screaming in his throat, he fought for
 life ;
 Till, half-awakening with the agony,
 His glazed eyes he opened, glaring round,
 While Meg drew shivering back into the
 shade ;
 Again, with deeper breath, as if relieved,
 He dropp'd his bearded face upon his arm,
 And dream'd again.

Then Meg stole stilly forth,
 And in the outer chamber found a lamp,
 And lit the same in silence, and returned
 On tiptoe to the sleeper. As she went,
 White as a murdered woman's grew her
 face,
 Her teeth were clench'd together ; and her
 eyes
 With ring on ring of widening wonder
 glared
 In fever'd fascination upon him
 Who slumbered. Closer still she crept,
 Holding the lamp aloft, until his breath
 Was hot upon her cheek,—so gaunt, so
 white,
 It seemed her time was come. Yet in her
 look
 Was famine. As one famish'd looks on food
 After long agony, and thinks it dream,
 She gazed and gazed, nor stirred, nor
 breathed, nor lived,
 Save in her spirit's hunger flashing forth
 Out of her face ; till suddenly the man,
 Half-opening his eyes, reached out his arms
 And gript her, crying, 'Silence ! pray to
 GOD !
 She's sinking !' then, with shrill and awful
 groan,
 Awakened.

And the woman would have fled,
 Had he not gript her. In her face he
 gazed,

Thrusting one hand into his silvered hair,
 Seeking to gather close his scattered
 thoughts,
 And his eye brightened, and he murmured
 low,
 'Where am I? Dead or living? Ah, I
 live!
 The ship? the ship?' Meg answered not,
 but shrank
 Into the shadow; till she saw the mists
 Pass from his bearded face and leave it
 clear,
 And heard his voice grow calmer, measured
 now
 By tranquil heart-beats. Then he asked
 again,
 'The ship? How many live of those
 aboard?'
 And when she answered he alone was
 saved,
 He groaned; but with a sailor's fearless
 look,
 'Thank GOD for that!' he said; 'and yet
 He might
 Have spared a better man. Where am I,
 friend?'
 'On the north coast,' said Meg, 'upon the
 shore
 At Thornock.'

Could the seaman, while she spake,
 Have marked the lurid light on that pale
 face,
 All else,—the Storm, the terrible fight for
 life,—
 Had been forgotten; but his wearied eye
 Saw dimly. Grasping still her quivering
 wrist,
 He question'd on; and, summoning strength
 of heart,
 In her rude speech she told him of the
 storm:
 How from the reef the rending Ship had
 rolled
 As aid drew nigh; how, hovering near its
 tomb,
 The fishers from the whirling waters dragged
 Two drown'd seamen, and himself, a corpse
 In seeming; how by calm and tender
 care,
 They wound his thin and bloody thread of
 life
 Out of the slowly-loosening hands of Death.

III.

A TROUBLED DEEP.

THEN, with strange trouble in her eyes,
 Meg Blane
 Stole swiftly back unto her hut again,
 Like one that flyeth from some fearful
 thing;
 Then sat and made a darkness, covering
 Her face with apron old, thinking apart;
 And yet she scarce could think, for ache of
 heart,
 But saw dead women and dead men go by,
 And felt the wind, and heard the waters cry,
 And on the waters, as they washed to shore,
 Saw one Face float alone and glimmer hear
 Through the green darkness of the breaking
 brine.

And Meg was troubled deep, nor could
 divine
 The wherefore of her trouble, since 'twas
 clear
 The face long wearied for at last was near,
 Since all her waiting on was at an end.
 Ay, Meg was dull, and could not compre-
 hend
 How GOD put out His breath that day, and
 blew
 Her lover to her feet before she knew,
 Yet misted the dull future from her sight;
 Wherefore she stared stark down on her
 delight
 As on a dead face washing in from sea.
 But when she understood full certainly
 The thing had come according to her
 prayer,
 Her strength came back upon her unaware,
 And she thank'd GOD, albeit the pleasure
 seemed
 Less absolute a bliss than she had dreamed
 When it was a sweet trouble far away;
 For she was conscious how her hair was
 gray,
 Her features worn, her flesh's freshness
 gone,
 Through toiling in the sun and waiting on;
 And quietly she murmur'd, weeping not,
 'Perchance—for men forget—he hath for-
 got!'

And two long days she was too dazed
 and weak
 To step across the sands to him, and speak;

But on the third day, pale with her intent,
 She took the great hand of her son, and
 went,
 Not heeding while the little-witted one,
 Mouth'd at the sea and muttered in the sun,
 And firmly stepping on along the shore,
 She saw, afar off at the cottage door,
 The figure of her shipwrecked mariner ;
 When, deeply troubled by a nameless fear,
 She lingered, and she lingered, pale and
 wan.

Then, coming near, she noted how the
 man
 Sat sickly, holding out his arm to please
 A fisher child he held between his knees,
 Whose eyes looked on the mighty arm and
 bare,
 Where ships, strange faces, anchors, pic-
 tured were,
 Prick'd blue into the skin with many a stain ;
 And, sharply marking the man's face, Meg
 Blane
 Was cheered and holpen, and she trembled
 less,
 Thinking, 'His heart is full of kindliness.'
 And, feeling that the thing if to be done
 Must be done straight, she hastened with
 her son,
 And, though she saw the man's shape grow-
 ing dim,
 Came up with sickly smile and spake to
 him,
 Pausing not, though she scarce could hear
 or see—
 'Has Angus Macintyre forgotten me ?'
 And added quickly, 'I am Maggie Blane !'

Whereat the man was smit by sudden pain
 And wonder—yea, the words he heard her
 speak
 Were like a jet of fire upon his cheek ;
 And, rising up erect, 'Meg Blane !' he cried,
 And, white and chilly, thrust the bairn
 aside,
 And peered upon the woman all amazed,
 While, pressing hard upon her heart, she
 gazed
 Blankly at the dim mist she knew was he.

For a short space both stood confusedly,
 In silence ; but the man was first to gain
 Calmness to think and power to speak
 again ;

And, though his lips were bloodless and
 prest tight,
 Into his eyes he forced a feeble light,
 Taking her shivering hand, naming her
 name
 In forced kind tones, yet with a secret
 shame ;—
 Nor sought to greet her more with touch or
 kiss.
 But she, who had waited on so long for this,
 Feeling her hand between his fingers rest,
 Could bear no more, but fell upon his
 breast,
 Sobbing and moaning like a little bairn.

Then, with her wild arms round him, he
 looked stern,
 With an unwelcome burden ill at ease,
 While her full heart flowed out in words
 like these—
 'At last ! at last ! O Angus, let me greet !
 GOD's good ! I ever hoped that we would
 meet !

Lang, lang hae I been waiting by the Sea,
 Waiting and waiting, praying on my knee ;
 And GOD said I should look again on you,
 And, though I scarce believed, GOD's word
 comes true,
 And He hath put an end to my distress !'—
 E'en as she spoke, her son plucked at her
 dress,
 Made fierce grimaces at the man, and tried
 To draw her from the breast whereon she
 cried ;
 But looking up, she pointed to her child,
 And look'd into her lover's eyes, and smiled.
 'GOD help him, Angus ! 'Tis *the Bairn !*
 she said ;—

Nor noted how the man grew shamed and
 red,
 With child and mother ill at ease and wroth,
 And wishing he were many a mile from both.

For now Meg's heart was wandering far
 away,
 And to her soul it seemed but yesterday
 That, standing inland in a heathery dell,
 At dead of night, she bade this man fare-
 well,
 And heard him swear full fondly in her ear
 Sooner or late to come with gold and gear,

¹ *To greet* ; Anglicè, to weep.

And marry her in church by holy rite ;
 And at the memory a quiet light,
 Rose-like and maiden, came upon her face,
 And softened her tall shape to nameless
 grace,
 As warm winds blowing on a hirk-tree
 green
 Make it one rippling sheet of radiant sheen.

But soon from that remembrance driven
 again
 By the man's silence and his pallid pain,
 She shivered for a moment as with cold,
 And left his bosom, looking grieved and
 old,
 Yet smiling, forcing a strange smile, and
 seeking
 For tokens in his face more sweet than
 speaking.
 But he was dumb, and with a pallid
 frown,
 Twitching his fingers quick, was looking
 down.
 'What ails thee, Angus ?' cried the woman,
 reading
 His face with one sharp look of interceding ;
 Then, looking downward too, she paused
 apart,
 With blood like water slipping through her
 heart,
 Because she thought, 'Alas, if it should be
 That Angus cares no more for mine and
 me,
 Since I am old and worn with sharp dis-
 tress,
 And men like pretty looks and daintiness ;
 And since we parted twenty years have
 past,
 And that, indeed, is long for a man's love
 to last !'

But, agonised with looking at her woe,
 And bent to end her hope with one sharp
 blow,
 The troubled man, uplifting hands, spake
 thus,
 In rapid accents, sharp and tremulous :
 'Too late, Meg Blane ! seven years ago I
 wed
 Another woman, deeming you were dead,—
 And I have bairns !' And there he paused,
 for fear.

As when, with ghostly voices in her ear,
 While in her soul, as in a little well
 The silver moonlight of the Glamour fell,
 She had been wont to bark of nights alone,
 So stood she now, not stirring, still as stone,
 While in her soul, with desolate refrain,
 The words, 'Too late !' rang o'er and o'er
 again ;

Into his face she gazed with ghastly stare ;
 Then raising her wild arms into the air,
 Pinching her face together in sharp fear,
 She quivered to the ground without a
 tear,
 And put her face into her hands, and thrust
 Her hair between her teeth, and spat it
 forth like dust.

And though, with pity in his guilty heart,
 The man spake on and sought to heal her
 smart,
 She heard not, but was dumb and deaf in
 woe ;
 But when, in pain to see her grieving so,
 Her son put down his hand, and named her
 name,
 And whispered, 'Mither ! mither ! let us
 hame !'
 She seized the hand, and smoothed her
 features wan,
 And rose erect, not looking at the man,
 But, gazing down, moved slowly from the
 spot.

Over this agony I linger not.
 Nor shall I picture how on that sad shore
 They met and spoke and parted yet once
 more,
 So calmly that the woman understood
 Her hope indeed had gone away for good.
 But ere the man departed from the place
 It seemed to Meg, contemplating his face,
 Her love for him had ne'er been so intense
 As it had seemed when he was far from
 thence ;
 And many a thing in him seemed little-
 hearted
 And mean and loveless ; so that ere they
 parted
 She seemed unto her sorrow reconciled.
 And when he went away, she almost smiled,
 But bitterly, then turned to toil again,
 And felt most hard to all the world of men.

IV.

'And the Spirit of God moved upon the waters.'

LORD, with how small a thing
Thou canst prop up the heart against the
grave!

A little glimmering
Is all we crave!
The lustre of a love
That hath no being,

The pale point of a little star above
Flashing and fleeing,
Contents our seeing.

The house that never will be built; the gold
That never will be told;
The task we leave undone when we are
cold;

The dear face that returns not, but is lying,
Lick'd by the leopard, in an Indian cave;
The coming rest that cometh not, till, sigh-
ing,

We turn our tremulous gaze upon the
grave.

And, Lord, how should we dare
Thither in peace to fall,

But for a feeble glimmering even *there*—
Fallest, some sigh, of all?

We are as children in Thy hands indeed,
And Thou hast easy comfort for our need,—
The shining of a lamp, the tinkling of a
bell,

Content us well.

And even when Thou bringest to our eyes
A thing long-sought, to show its worth-
lessness,

Anon we see another thing arise,
And we are comforted in our distress;
And, waiting on, we watch it glittering,
Till in its turn it seems a sorry thing;

And even as we weep
Another rises, and we smile again!
Till, wearied out with watching on in vain,
We fall to sleep.

And oft one little light that *looks* divine
Is all some strong Soul seeks on mortal
ground;

There are no more to shine
When that one thing is found.

If it be worthless, then what shall suffice?
The lean hand grips a speck that was a
spark,

The heart is turned to ice,
And all the world is dark.

Hard are Thy ways when that one thing is
sought,

Found, touch'd, and proven nought.
Far off it is a mighty magic, strong
To lead a life along.

But, lo! it shooteth thitherward, and now
Droppeth, a rayless stone, upon the
sod.—

The world is lost: perchance not even
Thou
Survivest it, Lord God!

In poverty, in pain,
For weary years and long,
One faith, one fear, had comforted Meg
Blane,

Yea, made her brave and strong;
A faith so faint it seemed not faith at all,
Rather a trouble and a dreamy fear,—
A hearkening for a voice, for a footfall,
She never hoped in sober heart to hear:

This had been all her cheer!
Yet with this balm

Her Soul might have slept calm
For many another year.

In terror and in desolation, she
Had been sustained,
And never felt abandoned utterly
While that remained.

Lord, in how small and poor a space can
hide

The motives of our patience and our pride,—
The clue unto the fortunate man's distress,
The secret of the hero's fearlessness!

What had sustained this Woman on the
sea

When strong men turned to flee?
Not courage, not despair,
Not pride, not household care,
Not faith in Thee!

Nought but a hungry instinct blind and
dim—

A fond pathetic pain:
A dreamy wish to gaze again on him
She never wholly hoped to see again!

Not all at once,—not in an hour, a day
Did the strong Woman feel her force
depart,

Or know how utterly had passed away
The strength of her sad heart,

It was not Love she missed, for Love was
 dead,
 And surely had been dead long ere she
 knew ;
 She did not miss the man's face when it fled,
 As passionate women do.
 She saw him walk into the world again,
 And had no pain ;
 She shook him by the hand, and watched
 him go,
 And thought it better so.
 She turned to her hard task-work as of old,
 Tending her bearded child with love ten-
 fold,
 Hoisted the sails and plied the oar,
 Went wandering out from shore,
 And for a little space
 Wore an unruffled face,
 Though wind and water helped her heart
 no more.
 But, mark : she knelt less often on her
 knees,
 For, labour as she might,
 By day or night,
 She could not toil enough to give her ease.
 And presently her tongue, with sharper
 chimes,
 Chided at times ;
 And she who had endured such sharp dis-
 tress
 Grew peevish, pain'd at her own peevish-
 ness ;
 And though she did not weep,
 Her features grew disfigur'd, dark, and
 dead,
 And in the night, when bitterest mourners
 sleep,
 She feverishly tossed upon her bed.
 Slowly the trouble grew, and soon she found
 Less pleasure in the fierce yet friendly
 Sea ;
 The wind and water had a wearier sound,
 The moon and stars were sick as corpse-
 lights be ;
 Then more and more strange voices filled
 her ear,
 And ghostly feet came near,
 And strange fire blew her eyelids down, and
 then.
 Dead women and dead men
 Dripping with phosphor, rose, and ere she
 wist

Went by in a cold mist ;
 Nor left her strengthen'd in her heart and
 bold,
 As they had done of old ;
 But ever after they had stolen away
 She had no heart to pray :
 Bitter and dull and cold,
 Her Soul crawl'd back into the common
 day.

Out of the East by night
 Drew the dark drifting cloud ;
 The air was hushed with snow-flakes
 wavering white,
 But the seas below were loud ;
 And out upon the reef the rapid light
 Rose from a shipwrecked bark
 Into the dark !
 Pale stood the fishers, while the wind wail'd
 by,
 Till suddenly they started with one cry,
 And forth into the foam the black boat
 flew,
 And fearless to their places leapt the crew.
 Then one called out, '*Meg Blane !*'
 But Meg stood by, and trembled and was
 dumb,
 Till, smit unto the heart by sudden pain,
 Into her hair she thrust her fingers numb,
 And fell upon the sands,
 Nor answer'd while the wondering fishers
 called,
 But tore the slippery seaweed with her
 hands,
 And screamed, and was appalled.

For, lo ! the Woman's spiritual strength
 Snapt like a thread at length,
 And tears, ev'n such as suffering women
 cry,
 Fell from her eyes anon ;
 And she knew well, although she knew not
why,
 The charm she had against the deep was
 gone !
 And after that dark hour,
 She was the shadow of a strong
 Soul dead,
 All terrible things of power
 Turned into things of dread,
 And all the peace of all the world had
 fled.

Then only in still weather did she dare
 To seek her bread on Ocean, as of old,
 And oft in tempest time her shelf was bare,
 Her hearth all black and cold ;
 Then very bitterly, with heart gone wild,
 She clung about her child,
 And hated all the earth beneath the skies,
 Because she saw the hunger in his eyes.
 For on his mother's strength the witless
 wight

Had leant for guide and light,
 And food had ever come into his hand,
 And he had known no thought of suffer-
 ing ;

Yea, all his life and breath on sea and land
 Had been an easy thing.

And now there was a change in his sole
 friend

He could not comprehend,
 Yet slowly to the shade of her distress
 His nature shaped itself in gentleness !
 And when he found her weeping, he too
 wept,

And, if she laughed, laughed out in com-
 pany ;

Nay, often to the fisher-huts he crept,
 And begged her bread, and brought it
 tenderly,

Holding it to her mouth, and till she ate
 Touching no piece, although he hungered
 sore.

And these things were a solace to her fate,
 But wrung her heart the more.

Thus to the bitter dolour of her days
 In witless mimicry he shaped his ways !
 They fared but seldom now upon the Sea,
 But wandered 'mid the marshes hand in
 hand,

Hunting for faggots on the inland lea,
 Or picking dulse for food upon the
 strand.

Something had made the world more sad
 and strange,

But easily he changèd with the change.
 For in the very trick of woe he clad
 His features, and was sad since she was sad,
 Yea, leant his chin upon his hands like her,

Looking at vacancy ; and when the Deep
 Was troublous, and she started up from
 sleep,

He too awoke, with fearful heart astir ;
 And still, the more her bitter tears she shed

Upon his neck, marking that mimic-woe,
 The more in blind deep love he fashionèd
 His grief to hers, and was contented so.

But as a tree inclineth weak and bare
 Under an unseen weight of wintry air,
 Beneath her load the weary Woman bent,
 And, stooping double, waver'd as she went ;
 And the days snow'd their snows upon her
 head

As they went by,
 And ere a year had fled
 She felt that she must die.

Then like a thing whom very witlessness
 Maketh indifferent, she lingered on,
 Not caring to abide with her distress,
 Not caring to be gone ;

But gazing with a dull and darkening eye,
 And seeing Dreams pass by.
 Not speculating whither she would go,
 But feeling there was nought she cared to
 know,

And melting even as snow.
 Save when the man's hand slipped into her
 own,

And flutter'd fondly there,
 And she would feel her life again, and
 groan,

'O GOD! when I am gone, how will he
 fare?'

And for a little time, for Angus' sake,
 Her hopeless heart would ache,
 And all life's stir and anguish once again
 Would swoon across her brain.

'O bairn, when I am dead,
 How shall ye keep frae harm?
 What hand will gie ye bread?
 What fire will keep ye warm?

How shall ye dwell on earth awa' frae
 me?'

'O Mither, dinna dee !'

'O bairn, by nigh or day
 I hear nae sounds ava',
 But voices of winds that blaw,
 And the voices of ghaists that say
 "Come awa ! come awa !"

The LORD that made the Wind, and made
 the Sea,

Is sore on my son and me,
 And I melt in His breath like snaw,'—
 'O Mither, dinna dee !'

'O bairn, it is but closing up the een,
 And lying down never to rise again.
 Many a strong man's sleeping hae I
 seen,—
 There is nae pain !
 I'm weary, weary, and I scarce ken why ;
 My summer has gone by,
 And sweet were sleep, but for the sake o'
 thee.'—
 'O Mither, dinna dee !'

When summer scents and sounds were on
 the Sea,
 And all night long the silvern surge
 plash'd cool,

Outside the hut she sat upon a stool,
 And with thin fingers fashion'd carefully,
 While Angus leant his head against her
 knee,

A long white dress of wool.

'O Mither,' cried the man, 'what make ye
 there?'

'A blanket for our bed !'

'O Mither, it is like the shroud folk wear
 When they are drown'd and dead !'
 And Meg said nought, but kissed him on
 the lips,

And looked with dull eye seaward, where
 the moon

Blacken'd the white sails of the passing
 ships,

Into the Land where she was going soon.

And in the reaping-time she lay abed,
 And by her side the dress unfinish'd,
 And with dull eyes that knew not even her
 child

She gazed at vacancy and sometimes smiled;
 And ever her fingers work'd, for in her
 thought

Stitching and stitching, still the dress she
 wrought ;

And then a beldame old, with blear-eyed
 face,

For CHRIST and Charity came to the place,
 And stilly sewed the woollen shroud herself,
 And set the salt and candle on a shelf.
 And like a dumb thing crouching moveless
 there,

Gripping the fingers wan,
 Marking the face with wild and wondering
 stare,

And whining beast-like, watch'd the wit-
 less man.

Then like a light upon a headland set,
 In winds that come from far-off waters
 blowing,

The faint light glimmered—fainter—
 fainter yet !

But suddenly it brighten'd, at its going ;
 And Meg sat up, and, lo ! her features wore
 The stately sweetness they had known of
 yore ;

And delicate lines were round her mouth,
 mild rest

Was in her eyes, though they were waxing
 dim ;

And when the man crept close unto her
 breast,

She brighten'd kissing him.

And it was clear

She had heard tidings it was sweet to hear,
 And had no longer any care or fear.

'I gang, my bairn, and thou wilt come to
 me !'

'O Mither, dinna dee !'

But as he spake she dropt upon the bed,
 And darken'd, while the breath came thick
 and fleet :

'O Jessie, see they mind my Bairn !' she
 said,

And quivered,—and was sleeping at God's
 Feet.

When on her breast the plate of salt was
 laid,

And the corse-candle burned with sick
 blue light,

The man crouch'd, fascinated and afraid,
 Beside her, moaning through the night ;
 And answered not the women who stole
 near,

And would not see nor hear ;

And when a day and night had come and
 gone,

Ate at the crusts they brought him, gazing
 on ;

And when they took her out upon a bier,
 He followed quietly without a tear ;
 And when on the hard wood fell dust and
 stone,

He murmur'd a thin answer to the sound,
 And in the end he sat, with a dull moan,
 Upon the new-made mound.

Last, as a dog that mourns a master dead,
 The man did haunt that grave in dull
 dumb pain ;

Creeping away to beg a little bread,
 Then stealing back again ;
 And only knaves and churls refused to give
 The gift of bread or meal that he might
 live—
 Till, pale and piteous-eyed,
 He moan'd beneath a load too hard to bear.
 'Mither !' he cried,—
 And crawled into the Dark, to seek her
there.

THE BATTLE OF DRUMLIE- MOOR.

(COVENANT PERIOD.)

BAR the door ! put out the light, for it
 gleams across the night,
 And guides the bloody motion of their
 feet ;
 Hush the bairn upon thy breast, lest it
 guide them in their quest,
 And with water quench the blazing of the
 peat.
 Now, Wife, sit still and hark !—hold my
 hand amid the dark ;
 O Jeanie, we are scattered—e'en as sleet !
 It was down on Drumliemoor, where it
 slopes upon the shore,
 And looks upon the breaking of the bay,
 In the kirkyard of the dead, where the
 heather is thrice red
 With the blood of those asleep beneath
 the clay ;
 And the Howiesons were there, and the
 people of Glen Ayr,
 And we gathered in the gloom o' night—
 to pray.
 How ! Sit at home in fear, when God's
 Voice was in mine ear,
 When the priests of Baal were slaughtering
 His sheep ?
 Nay ! there I took my stand, with my reap-
 hook in my hand,
 For bloody was the sheaf that I might
 reap ;
 And the Lord was in His skies, with a
 thousand dreadful eyes,
 And His breathing made a trouble on the
 Deep.

Each mortal of the band brought his
 weapon in his hand,
 Though the chopper or the spit was all
 he bare ;
 And not a man but knew the work he had
 to do,
 If the Fiend should fall upon us unaware.
 And our looks were ghastly white, but it
 was not with affright,—
 The Lord our God was present to our
 prayer.

Oh, solemn, sad, and slow, rose the stern
 voice of Monroe,
 And he curst the curse of Babylon the
 Whore ;
 We could not see his face, but a gleam was
 in its place,
 Like the phosphor of the foam upon the
 shore ;
 And the eyes of all were dim, as they fixed
 themselves on him,
 And the Sea filled up the pauses with its
 roar.

But when, with accents calm, Kilmahoe
 gave out the psalm,
 The sweetness of God's Voice upon his
 tongue,
 With one voice we praised the Lord of the
 Fire and of the Sword,
 And louder than the winter wind it rung ;
 And across the stars on high went the
 smoke of tempest by,
 And a vapour roll'd around us as we sung.

'Twas terrible to hear our cry rise deep and
 clear,
 Though we could not see the criers of the
 cry,
 But we sang and gript our brands, and
 touched each other's hands,
 While a thin sleet smote our faces from
 the sky ;
 And, sudden, strange, and low, hissed the
 voice of Kilmahoe,
 'Grip your weapons ! Wait in silence !
 They are nigh !'

And heark'ning, with clench'd teeth, we
 could hear, across the heath,
 The tramping of the horses as they flew,
 And no man breathed a breath, but all were
 still as death,

And close together shivering we drew ;
 And deeper round us fell all the eyeless
 gloom of Hell,
 And—the Fiend was in among us ere we
 knew !

Then our battle-shriek arose, mid the
 cursing of our foes—
 No face of friend or foeman could we
 mark ;
 But I struck and kept my stand (trusting
 God to guide my hand),
 And struck, and struck, and heard the
 hell-hounds bark ;
 And I fell beneath a horse, but I reached
 with all my force,
 And ript him with my reap-hook through
 the dark.

As we struggled, knowing not whose hand
 was at our throat,
 Whose blood was spouting warm into our
 eyes,

We felt the thick snow-drift swoop upon us
 from the lift,
 And murmur in the pauses of our cries ;
 But, lo ! before we wist, rose the curtain of
 the mist,
 And the pale Moon shed a glimmer from
 the skies.

O God ! it was a sight that made the hair
 turn white,
 That wither'd up the heart's blood into
 woe,

To see the faces loom in the dimly lighted
 gloom,
 And the butcher'd lying bloodily below ;
 While melting, with no sound, fell so peace-
 fully around
 The whiteness and the wonder of the
 Snow !

Ay, and thicker, thicker, poured the pale
 Silence of the Lord,
 From the hollow of His hand we saw it
 shed,

And it gather'd round us there, till we
 groan'd and gasp'd for air,
 And beneath was ankle-deep and stain'd
 red ;

And soon, whatever wight was smitten down
 in fight
 Was *buried* in the drift ere he was dead !

Then we beheld at length the troopers in
 their strength,

For faster, faster, faster up they streamed,
 And their pistols flashing bright showed
 their faces ashen white,

And their blue steel caught the driving
 Moon, and gleamed.

But a dying voice cried, 'Fly !' And be-
 hold, e'en at the cry,

A panic fell upon us, and we screamed !

Oh, shrill and awful rose, 'mid the splashing
 blood and blows,

Our scream unto the Lord that let us die ;
 And the Fiend amid us roared his defiance
 at the Lord,

And his servants slew the strong man
 'mid his cry ;

And the Lord kept still in Heaven, and the
 only answer given

Was the white Snow falling, falling, from
 the sky.

Then we fled ! the darkness grew ! 'mid the
 driving cold we flew,

Each alone, yea, each for those whom he
 held dear ;

And I heard upon the wind the thud of
 hoofs behind,

And the scream of those who perish'd in
 their fear,

But I knew by heart each path through the
 darkness of the strath,

And I hid myself all day,—and I am
 here.

Ah ! gathered in one fold be the holy men
 and hold,

And beside them the accursed and the
 proud ;

The Howiesons are there, and the Wylies
 of Glen Ayr,

Kirkpatrick, and Macdonald, and Mac-
 leod.

And while the widow groans, lo ! God's
 Hand around their bones

His thin ice windeth whitely, as a shroud

On mountain and in vale our women will
 look pale,

And palest where the ocean surges boom :
 Buried 'neath snow-drift white, with no holy
 prayer or rite,

Lie the loved ones they look for in the
gloom ;
And deeper, deeper still, spreads the Snow
on vale and hill,
And deeper and yet deeper is their
Tomb !

THE NORTHERN WOOING.

SKIES are dusky, winds are keen,
Round Lallan Farm this Hallowe'en.

All is dark across the night,
But see ! one glimmer of pink light !

What are those that in the air
Flit against the window-glare ?

Falling flakes of snow they seem,
Or night-moths gather'd by the gleam.

Round and round they wind and wind,—
Tiny shades against the blind.

Child, *wish* now ! while thou canst see !
'Tis the faëry companie !

Once a year, on Hallowe'en,
Are the faëry people seen.

Thus round happy farms they fly,
While the peat-fire blazes high.

Lad and lass, to-night beware !
There is magic in the air !

' Ah, bairns, my bairns, forbear on Hallow
Night
To mock the faëry people and their might,
For though ye deem these things are all
untrue,
Yourselves may be the first to see and rue !
Hark ! now the winds a moment cease to
roar,
A sound like some one breathing at the
door !
And hark again ! faint pattings on the pane
Of little finger-taps, like fluttering rain !
Ay ! 'tis the faëry people hovering nigh :
Draw back the blind to peep, and they will
fly !

But serve them solemnly, with charm and
spell,
And the old customs that they love so well,
And they will show you all you wish to
see,—
Your true love's face, his country and
degree,—
All, all a lass with pleasure asks and learns,
Down to the number of her unborn bairns !

' Ay, please the fays ! 'tis easy if ye will ;
But woe be yours if they should wish you
ill :
Your jo will take to drink, or drown at
sea,
Or find another sweeter companie ;
Your cheeks will droop, your looks will lose
their light ;
Ye'll marry an old man, and freeze at night !
In vain, in vain ye try to change your fate,
When *they* have fix'd your lot and future
mate :
In vain ye seek to frown and turn aside,—
They make your heart consent in spite of
pride.
'Twas so with me, when I was young and
gay,
Though I was loth to hearken and obey.
They led me to their choice by spells and
charms ;
They closed my een, and drew me to his
arms !
Or grandfather had ne'er prevailed on me
To droop my pride, and smile as low as he !

' For, though I say it, hairns, my face
was fair,
And I was Farmer Binnie's child and heir ;
A widowed father's pet, I ruled the place,
Right proud, be sure, of fortune and of
face.
My hair was golden then, like Maggie's
here,
And I had een as sly, yet crystal clear,
And I could look as bright when pleased
and fain,
Or toss my curls with just as sweet disdain !
What wonder, then, if half the country-side
Looked love into my face, and blush'd and
cried,
Bleating behind me, like a flock of sheep
Around a shepherd-lass, who, half asleep,

Counts them in play, leads them with pretty
speech,
Rates all alike, and scarce kens each from
each ?

One found me coy, another found me gleg,
Another skittish as the gray mare Meg ;
Just as the humour took me, I was wild
Or gentle,—one day cross, the next day
mild ;

But cared no more for handsome Jamie
West,

When he came o'er the heather in his
best,

Jingling his silver spurs at our fire-end,
In breeks so tight 'twas near his death to
bend,

Than for the grim old Laird of Glumlie
Glen,

Who rode on solemn sheltie now and then
Over the moors,—and, making mouths at
me,

With father cracked of crops o'er barley-
bree,—

While Jock the groom, who knew I loved
such fun,

Ginger'd the sheltie for a homeward run !

'Yet oft I tried to picture in my brain
What kind of laddie in the end would gain,
And vainly sought 'mong those around to
find

The substance of the shadow in my mind.
But, bairns, in vain I pictured ; and anew
Will you and children's children picture
too :—

The bonnie shadow flies, and in its place
The chilly substance steals to our embrace.
I swore he should be stately, dark, and
tall,—

His hair was fiery-red and he was small !
I swore he should be rich in gold and
lands,—

His fortune was the strength of his two
hands !

I swore he should be meek and ruled by
me,—

The De'il himself is easier led than he !'

Round the happy farm they flee,—
Faëry folk in companie.

Near the peat-blaze range in ring ;
Fiddler, twang the fiddle-string.

In the great tub duck the head
After apples rosy red !

Slyly let each pair by turn
Watch the magic chestnuts hum !

Love who never loved before,—
Kiss me quick behind the door !

Lad and lass, to-night beware !
There is magic in the air !

'O bairns, we gathered round the blazing
peat,
And lad and lass sat close and whispered
sweet,

While ancient women spake of wonders
seen

On many a long-forgotten Hallowe'en,
And old men nodded snowy polls the while,
Passing the snuff-box round with sceptic
smile.

Tall in the midst my father had his place,
Health and a golden harvest in his face ;
And, hand in his, full rosy and full sly,
Surrounded by my silly sheep sat I.

Loud rang the laughter ! fearless grew the
fun !

Happy and warm at heart was every one !
The old, old shepherd, worn with rain and
wind,

Blink'd in the ingle-nook with eyes half
blind,

While at his feet his tired old dog slept
deep,

And, starting, dream'd of gathering the
sheep.

'James West was there, the Laird, and
many more,

Wooers both old and young, and rich and
poor ;

And, though I say it, bairns, that night I
smiled

My sweetest, and their wits were fairly
wild.

Braw with new ribbons in my bair lint-light,
Clean as a guinea, newly minted, bright,
I sat and hearkened to their silly speech,
Happy, and with a careless smile for each ;
And yet, though some were fine and fair to
see,

Not one had power to steal my heart from
me.

'Oh, Hallowe'en in those old times, I
vow,
Was thrice as merry, thrice as sweet, as
now!

The benches drawn aside, the supper o'er,
Fresh sand was strewn upon this very floor;
The fiddle played—the fiddler gave a
squeal—

Up stood the folk, and father led the reel!
The lads loup'd up and kick'd the beam for
fun!

The crimson lassies screamed to see it
done!

Meantime the old men, with contented
look,

Smoked clean new cutties in the chimney
nook,

And thought of days when they were young
and gay,

And pleased the lassies, too, with feats of
play.

Yet one was there, my bairns, amid the
throng,

Who, though his years were young, his
limbs full strong,

Danced not that night; but pale and
gloomy, stayed

Among the gaffers, in the chimney shade,—
Hugh Scott his name, an orphan lad,
whose hand

Guided the ploughshare on my father's
land,

But one my father prized and trusted best
For cunning and for skill o'er all the rest.

Full well I knew the rogue esteemed me
sweet,

But I was gentry, and his masters' meat!
And oft I smiled on him full fond and
free,

As e'er I smiled on those who courted me,
Pleased that my smiles sank sweet to his
heart's core,

But certain *he* would never hope for more.

'There in the chimney shadow, pale and
sad,

Clad in his clothes of Sabbath, sat the lad:
In vain, to catch his look, the lassies leered,

In vain the old folk saw his sulks, and
sneered,

But aye his dim and melancholy e'e
Turned flashing in the shade and followed
me.

Whene'er I danced with some fine wooer
there,

I saw his fist clench and his eyeballs
glare,—

Red as a rick on fire I watched him grow
Whene'er my partner whispered light and
low,

And had a kiss been stolen in his sight,
I swear he would have ta'en revenge in fight.

Half pleased, half careless, to increase his ill,
I marked him kindly, as a lassie will,

And sent him many a smile of tender light
To cheer him in his nook, that Hallow night.

'Louder the fiddler, gay with many a
glass,

Shouted to stir the hearts of lad and lass!
Faster and faster on his strings he skirled!

Faster and faster round the dancers whirled!
Close by, the young folks duck'd for apples
red,

Splashing, with puffing cheek and dripping
head,

Into the washing-bine, or, in a ring,
With gaping mouths, they played at cherry-
string.

But in the parlour, from the turmoil free,
Father sat now with antique companie—

Cronies who mixed their tumblers strong
and deep

Twelve times, and toddled, sober, off to
sleep.

'But, bairns, 'twas near the hour when
ghaists are said

To rise white-sheeted from their kirkyard
bed,

When the owl calls, and blinks his e'eball
white

In ruins, where the fairies flit by night.
And now my heart heat fast and thick for
fear,

Because the time of spells and charms was
near,

And I was bent that very night to fly
Out o'er the meadow to the kiln,—and try
The twining charm, the spell of fairy fate,

And hear the name of him that I should
mate.'

Lad and lass, to-night beware!
There is magic in the air!

Winds are crying shrill, and, hark
Ghosts are groaning in the dark.

Who will dare this Hallow Night
Leave the happy ingle-light ?

Who will dare to stand alone,
While the fairy thread is thrown ?

Who this night is free from fear ?
Let her ask, —and she shall hear !

‘Dark, dark was all, as shivering and
alone

I set my foot upon the threshold-stone,
And, trembling close, with twitching fingers
caught

The great horn-lantern from the stables
brought,

And leant against the door to keep it wide,
And peer’d into the solemn gloom, and
sighed.

Black was the lift, and faintly fell the
rain,

The wind was screeching like a sprite in
pain ;

And, while I paused, pinching my e’en to
mark,

The wind swung-to the door, and left me
in the dark !

‘O bairns ! what would my foolish heart
have g’en

To let the fairies be, that Hallowe’en !
But I had sworn, and all the lassies knew,
And I was shamed, and fain must see it
through.

Oh ! where were all my boasts, my laughter
light,

Now I was there alone amid the night ?
While faintly ben the farm the fiddle cried,
And far away the sound of dancing died.

‘Thud, thud against my breast my wild
heart leapt,

As out across the misty yard I crept,
Holding the lantern up ;—its flickering
ray

Made darkness doubly deep along the way.
Then in my ears I seem’d to hear strange
screams,

And fearful faces flashed with lightning-
gleams,

And, as I wandered, fingers sharp and wee
Pinched me and pulled my garter o’er the
knee.

Out of the yard, across the field, the dew
Still drizzling damply in my face, I flew,
Till, breathless, panting hard against the
wind,

Fearful to look before me or behind,
I reached the kiln,—and, standing dizzy
there,

Heard softer voices round me in the air,
A sound like little feet along the gloom,
And hummings faint as of a fairy loom.
Then setting down the lanthorn on the
ground

I entered in, nor paused to look around.
But faint and fast began to say the charm
All northern lassies know, and reached my
arm,

Casting the twine, and catching one end
tight—

Flinging the other loose into the night.
O bairns ! O bairns ! scarce had I uttered
thrice

The secret spell, with lips as cold as ice,
When through my blood a sick’ning shudder
spread,

For ghaistly fingers tighten’d at the thread !
Then in a hollow voice, to know my doom,
“Who holds ? who holds ?” I cried into
the gloom ;—

And ere the echo of my voice had died,
“Hugh Scott ! Hugh Scott !” a hollow
voice replied :

And, screaming out, and covering up my
face,

Kicking the lanthorn o’er, I fled the place,
Stumbling and tripping, flew across the
field,

Till, white as any lamb, I reached the bield,
And crept up to my room, and hid my
head,

Moaning, among the blankets of the bed !

Lightly soon shall rise the sun !
Fays, begone ! your work is done.

Fiddler, put your tools away,
Take a nap among the hay.

Lads and lassies, flush’d and red,
Yawn no more, but off to bed.

Maiden, thou hast heard and seen
Wonders strange at Hallowe’en.

Thou hast wish'd to hear and see—
And thy fate is fixed for thee.

Sad or merry, ill or well,
Fairy looms have spun the spell.

In among the blankets creep—
Dream about him in your sleep.

Wake and smile with heart resigned !
Kiss and cuddle, and be kind !

'Oh, bitter was my heart, my wits
amazed ;

Wildly I pondered like a lassie crazed :
Hugh Scott my mate ! Hugh Scott, of all
around !

A pauper lad, a tiller of the ground !
When wealthy men came liting o'er the lea,
In shining braws, and sought to marry me !
"Nay, nay !" I cried, and frowning raised
my face,

"No force shall make me choose a lot so
base :

The spirits of the air but wish this night
To try my heart, and fill my soul with
fright ;

Yet they shall know full soon they rate me
ill,—

I fear them not, nor shall I work their will !"
But as I spoke, I shook, and unaware
Keek'd o'er my shoulder at the glass, and
there,

In the faint lamplight burning by the bed,
His face, a moment mirror'd, flash'd and
fled !

'O bairns !—what further tale have I to
tell ?

How could I fight against a fate so fell ?
Strive as I might, awaking or asleep,
I found my eyes in fascination deep
Follow Hugh Scott, and, till my heart went
wild,

He haunted me from spot to spot, and
smiled.

Then, unaware, to notice I began
That he was trim and stout, and like a man,
That there were tender tones upon his
tongue,

And that his voice was sweet whene'er he
sung.

Nay, more, full soon his manners seemed to
me

More fine than those of loftier degree,

And as for gold, though he was humble,
still

He had a fortune in his farming skill.
Ay, bairns ! before another Hallow Night
The fairies to their wish had worked me
quite ;

And, since his heart had ever favoured
Hugh,

Full easily they won my father too—
And when at last Hugh craved me to be
his,

I—fell upon his heart and blush'd for bliss !

'Ah ! heed not, hairns, though grand-
father should swear

That, when I tried the spell, *himself*' was
there,

And, when I saw the phantom in the room,
Again, was near me, keeking through the
gloom ;

And that his craft and cunning were the
charms

Which cheated me and drew me to his
arms.

Nay ! nay ! right solemnly, with song and
spell,

And the old customs that they love so well,
Serve the good fays this night—be bold !
be brave !

And though they may not give you *all* ye
crave,

Be sure that you will find, as I have found,
Their choice right wise, and all their coun-
sels sound,

And bless for many a year the love and
light

They spin for happy hearts, on Hallow
Night.'

AN ENGLISH ECLOGUE.

'He crept close to Creation's brim, and heard a
roar like water.'

TIMOTHY.

WELL, here's the cuckoo come again, after
the barley sowing,

Down on the duck-pond in the lane the
white-weed is a-blowing,

The gorse has got its coat of gold, and
smells as sweet as clover,

The lady-smocks are blowing bold, the
primroses nigh over,

On field and fold all things look fair, and
lambkins white are leaping,
The speckled snakes crawl here and there,
—but Holy Tommie's sleeping.

JACOB.

Ah, him that used to work with Crewe!
Crewe told me how he blundered.
He used to preach. I heard him too.
LORD! how he groaned and thundered!
The women shrieked like sucking-swine,
the men roared out like cattle,
But seem'd to think it mighty fine!

TIMOTHY.

All trash and stuff and tattle!
He lost his head through meddling so with
things that don't concern us;
When questioning too close we go, 'tis little
GOD will learn us;
To squeeze the crops 'tis hard enough from
His dry ground about us,
But sowing t'other world is stuff, — it gets its
crops without us!

JACOB.

That's where it lies! We get no *good* by
asking questions, neighbour:
'Tis Parsons cook our Sunday food, while
we are hard at labour:
This world needs help upon its way, for
men feed one another,
And why do we give Parsons pay?—if not
to manage t'other?

TIMOTHY.

You're right! No man as grunts and grides
at this here world has thriven;
Mutton won't drop in our insides though
we do gape at heaven!
Why, Tommie's cheek was ruddy red, as
rosy as an apple,
Till Methodism filled his head, and he was
seen at chapel,
Found out that he'd received a call, grew
dismal, dull, and surly,
Read tracts at work, big tracts and small,
went praying late and early,
And by and by began, poor fool, to argue
with the doubting,
And though he'd scarcely been to school,
began his public spouting.
I wasn't blind—and soon I found how he
let matters go here,—

While he was tilling heavenly ground things
suffered down below here:
Through want of feed, the hens did die, the
horses next grew useless,
For lack o' milking by and by the very cows
grew juiceless;
And when I sought him out, and swore in
rage and consternation,
Why, Tommie sigh'd, and snivell'd sore,
and talk'd about *salvation*!
'Salvation's mighty well,' says I, right mad
with my disaster,
'I want to save my property; so find
another master!'
He didn't grumble or resist, though he
seemed broken-hearted,
But slipped a tract into my fist the morning
he departed;
Ay, got a place next day with Crewe, who
knew the lad was clever,
But dawdled as he used to do, and preached
as much as ever.

JACOB.

But Crewe soon sent him packing too—he's
just the sort of fellow;
Why, ev'n when Parson calls, old Crewe
grunts, grumbles, and looks yellow!

TIMOTHY.

He got another master, though, but soon
began to tire him;
His wages sank and sank, and so no farmer
here would hire him;
And soon, between that world and this,
poor Tommie grew more mournful,
His worldly ways went all amiss—the coun-
try folk looked scornful—
And last the blessed Methodists grew tired,
and would not hear him,
And wouldn't heed his talk inspired, and
shrank from sitting near him.

JACOB.

With Methodists 'tis just the way. Give me
the High Church, neighbour.

TIMOTHY.

'Why don't you be a man?' said they,
'keep clean and do your labour?'
And what d'ye think that Tommie cried?—
'I don't play shilly-shally;
If I'm to serve my LORD and Guide, 'twill
be continually:

You think that you can cheat and scoff from
 Sunday on to Sunday,
 And put the LORD ALMIGHTY off by howling
 out on one day ;
 But if you seek salvation, know, your
 feelings must be stronger.
 And holy Tommie would not go to chapel
 any longer.
 Learned sense? Not he! Reformed? Pooh,
 pooh! but moped and fretted blindly,
 Because the precious praying crew had used
 him so unkindly.
 His back grew bare, his life grew sore, his
 brain grew dreadful airy,
 He thought of 't'other world the more 'cause
 this seemed so contrary ;
 Went wandering on the river-side, and in
 the woods lay lurking,
 Gaped at the sky in summer-tide when other
 men were working,
 And once (I saw him) watch'd the skies,
 where a wild lark was winging,
 With tears a-shining in his eyes,—because
 the lark was singing !
 Last harvest-time to me he came, and begged
 for work so sadly,
 Show'd for his former ways such shame,
 and look'd so sick and badly,
 I had not heart to give him pain, but put
 him out a-reaping,
 But, LORD! the same tale o'er again—he
 worked like one half-sleeping.
 'Be off!' says I, 'you lazy lout,' and all the
 rest stood sneering.
 'Master,' says he, 'you're right, I doubt,—
 the LORD seems hard o' hearing !
 I thought I could fulfil full clear the call
 that I had gotten,
 But here's another harvest here, and all my
 life seems rotten.
 The Methodists are dull as stone, the High
 Church folk are lazy,
 And even when I pray alone, the ways of
 Heaven seem hazy.
 Religion don't appear to me to keep a lad
 from sad things,
 And though the world is fine to see, 'tis full
 of cruel bad things.
 Why, I can't walk in woodland ways, and
 see the flowers a-growing,
 And on the light green meadows gaze, or
 watch the river flowing,
 But even here, where things look fine, out
 creeps the speckled adder,

Or snakes crawl in the golden shine, and all
 creation's sadder.
 The better I have seemed to grow, the worse
 all things have gone with me,
 It beats me out and out, and so—I wish the
 LORD was done with me !
 And after these same words were said,
 Tommie grew paler, stiller,
 And by and by he took to bed, and quickly
 he grew iller :
 And when the early new-year rain was
 yellowing pool and river,
 He closed his eyes, and slipt his chain, and
 fell to sleep for ever.

JACOB.

'Tis clear enough, he'd lost his wit—the
 chapel set it turning.

TIMOTHY.

Now, this is how I look at it, although I've
 got no learning :
 In this here world, to do like him is nothing
 but self-slaughter,—
 He crept close to Creation's brim, and
 heard a roar like water,
 His head went round, his limbs grew stiff,
 his blood lost life and motion,—
 Like one who stands upon a cliff and sees
 the roaring Ocean. . . .
 But there's the Parson at his gate, with
 Doctor Barth, his crony ;
 Some of these days the old chap's weight
 will kill that precious pony !
 Ah, *he's* the man whose words don't fail to
 keep one sage and steady !
 Wife, here be Parson ! Draw some ale, and
 set the table ready.

A SCOTTISH ECLOGUE.

'The Lord on *him* forgot to put *His mark*.'

SANDIE.

O LORD above, swift is Thy wrath and deep!
 And yet by grace Thou sanctionest Thy
 sheep ;
 And blest are they who till the day o' doom
 Like haddocks bear the marking of Thy
 thoomb ;
 And curst, in spite of works and prayers,
 are they
 On whom Thy mark has ne'er been printed
 sae.

For while the non-elected lie beneath,
 And fast in flaming fire, and gnash their
 teeth,
 Above their heads, where streams of honey
 spring,
 Thine Elders stand in shining sarks, and
 sing,
 Blessing Thy Name for present gifts and
 past . . .
 O wife, John Galloway is gone, at last !

JEANIE.

Dead? Weel, we all are bound to GOD's
 abode,
 And John has started first upon the road.
 A Christian man and kind was John, in-
 deed,
 And free of siller unto folk in need :
 Ay, many a hearth will want now John is
 cold !
 But GOD will give him back his gifts
 tenfold.

SANDIE.

O Jeanie Gourlay ! keep thy clapper still ;
 It talks o' things you understand but ill :
 I doubt, I sorely doubt, John Galloway
 Is 'neath the oxter * o' the De'il this day !
 True, in the way of sinful flesh, his mind
 Was charitable, and his heart was kind ;
 But Light he lacked as long as he drew
 breath,
 And lost the Eldership before his death ;
 And he had many a ghostly whispering
 To tell he was a miserable thing,
 Doom'd by the Wisdom of the Just to be
 Condemn'd with those who graceless live
 and dee.
 Ay, grace, I fear, John Galloway was
 denied,
 Though loud and oft for grace he groaned
 and cried.
 'Sandie,' he used to say, ' I fear, I fear
 I have no right among the holy here ;
 I fear, I fear that I am in the dark—
 The LORD on me forgot to put His mark !
 I canna steel my beart to folk who sin,
 I canna put my thoughts to discipline ;
 Oft when I pray, I hear Him whisper plain,
 " Jock Galloway, pray awa', but 'tis in
 vain ;"—

* Armpit.

Nae sweet assurance arms me 'gainst the
 De'il,
 Nae happy faith, like that my fellows feel ;
 I long for GOD, I beg Him on my knee,
 But fear He hath to wrath prevision'd me !'

JEANIE.

Poor man ! his strife was sore ; but, Sandie,
 mind,
 Nae man can *tell* what folks are pre-
 destined ;
 Ev'n Sandie Gourlay may be one the De'il
 Hath liberty to catch within his creel !

SANDIE.

Oh, blasphemy ! 'Thou fool, forbear and
 cease !
 'The *sign* o' grace is perfect faith and peace,
 Such as the LORD, in spite o' many a cross,
 Vouchsafes to men like me and neighbour
 Ross.
 But Galloway ever was a braxie sheep,
 A whining thing who dug his doubts too
 deep.
 Why, mind ye, when old Robin Caird
 himsel'—
 A heretic, a rogue, a man o' Bel,
 Averring written Scripture was a lee,
 And doubting GOD, stretch'd out his limbs
 to dee,
 John by the sinner knelt and offered prayers:
 'LORD GOD,' he said, 'pity his old white
 hairs !
 Be kind unto him ! Take him unto Thee !'
 And bought the coffin, paid the burial
 fee.
 'Sandie,' he said, when Caird was in his
 grave,
 'I doubt I am less holly than the lave : †
 My blood is water, I am weak o' brain,—
 O LORD, it broke my heart to see his
 pain !
 I thought—I dared to think—if I were
 GOD,
 Poor Caird should never gang so dark a
 road ;
 I thought—ay, dared to think, the LORD
 forgi'e !—
 The LORD was crueller than I could be ;
 Forgetting GOD is just, and knoweth best
 What folk should burn in fire, what folk be
 blest.'

† The rest.

Such was his nature, neither strong nor deep,—

Unlike the stern strong shepherds of His sheep.

We made an Elder of John Galloway!

Large seemed his heart, he ne'er was known to stray;

But he had little strength or wrath severe—

He soften'd at the sinful pauper's tear;

He push'd his purse and pleaded like a fool

For every lassie on the cuttie-stool.

JEANIE.

Where had the parish hairns sae kind a friend?

SANDIE.

Bairns? did he teach them *grace*, and make them *mend*?

At Sunday School what lad or lass had care

For fear of flaming Hell, if John was there,—

Questioning blushing brats upon his knees,
And slyly slipping in their hands—haw-bees? *

Once while he talked to me o' life and death,

I smelt the smell o' whisky in his breath.

'Drinking again, John Galloway?' I said;

As gray as this pipe-reek, he hung his head.

'O Sandie, Sandie!' he replied, 'I ken

I am indeed the weakest man of men.

Strange doubts torment me daily, and, alas!

I try to drown them in the poison'd glass.

By fits I fear, and in my soul I say,

LORD, is Thy mark on poor John Galloway?

And sorely troubled, stealing slyly out,

I try in drink to drown the imp o' Doubt.'

Woman, is this the man ye would defend?

Nay, wheesht awhile, and hearken to his end.

When he fell sick in Martinmas, his fears

Grew deeper far; I found him oft in tears;

Though from the Prophets of God's wrath I read,

He hearken'd, but was little comforted,

* Halfpence.

And even 'Revelations' had no power
To soothe the pangs of his departing hour.

A week before he left this vale of woe,
He at his window sat, and watched the Snow

Falling and falling down without a sound,
Poured slowly from GOD's hand upon the ground:

'See, Sandie, how it snaws!' I heard him say;

'How many folk are cold, cold, cold this day!

How many want the fire that's warming me!

How many starve!—and yet—why should it be?'

And when I took the Book, explained, and read,

He only gave a groan and shook his head.

'Clearer and clearer I perceive my sin,

How I to grace may never enter in;

That Book is for the strong, but I am weak,'

And trembled, and a tear was on his cheek.

JEANIE.

Poor man! poor man! small peace on earth he found.

SANDIE.

The day he died, he called the Elders round,

Shook hands, and said, 'Friends, though I gang from here,

Down under earth, all will at last be clear.

Too long have I been dwelling in the dark,

The LORD on me forgot to put His mark,
GOD help me!' And, till he was cold as clay,

His foolish lips had little more to say;

Yet after we had laid him down in dust,

Weak to the last we found him, and unjust;

For when his will was read, unto our shame,

No holy man was mentioned in the same!

But he had left what little gold he had

To Caird's sick widow and her lass and lad!

THE SCAITH O' BARTLE.

Fathoms deep the ship doth lie,
 Wreath'd with ocean weed and shell,
 Still and deep the shadows lie,
 Dusky as a forest dell :
 Tangled in the twisted sail,
 With the breathing of the Sea,
 Stirs the Man who told this tale,
 Staring upward dreamilie.

I LAID him here, and scarcely wept ; but
 look !

His grave is green and wild and like a
 wave,
 And strewn with ocean-shells instead of
 flowers.

You saw him long ago, on board the
Erne,
 Cod-fishing in Newfoundland, and (you
 mind?)

We drank a gill, all three, the very day
 Before the *Erne* went down off Fitful Head,
 And all the crew were drown'd but brother
 Dan.

Strange, that a man who faced so many a
 storm,
 And stood on splitting planks and never
 quail'd,

And swam to save his life a dozen times,
 Should ever die ashore ! Why, from the
 first,

We twins were meant for sailors :—God
 Himself

Planted a breeze in both our brains to blow
 Our bodies up and down His calms and
 storms.

Never had wilder, stormier year been
 known

Here in the clachan, than the very year
 When Dan and I were born ;—waters and
 winds

Roar'd through the wintry season, and the
 sounds

And sights weigh'd on our Highland
 mother's heart,

Giving her whims and moods in which the
 clay

Beneath her heart was fashion'd ; and in
 March

The Scaith came down the valley, scream-
 ing past

Her ears the very hour that we were born.

When other boys were mumping at the
 school,

I went as cabin-lad on board a whaler,
 And Dan took up his canvas-bag, tied up
 His serk and comb and hrush, with two or
 three

Big home-haked hannocks and a lump of
 cheese,

Kiss'd mother, (that's her grave beside his
 own,)

And walk'd to Aberdeen, where soon he
 found

A berth on board a brig—the *Jessie Gray*,
 Bound south for Cadiz. After that for
 years

We drifted up and down ;—and when we met
 Down in the Forth, and journey'd home
 together,

We both were twenty, Dan was poor as
 ever,

But I had saved. How changed he look'd !
 how fine !

Brown cheek and bit o' whisker, hands like
 steel,

A build as sturdy as a mountain fir's,—
 Ay, every inch a sailor ! Then, the tales
 We had for one another !—tales of storms
 And sights on land, pranks play'd and
 places seen !—

But, ' Bob, I'm tired of being on the seas,
 The life's a hard one at the best,' says Dan ;
 And I was like a fool and thought the
 same.

So home we came, found father dead and
 gone,

And mother sorely push'd ; and round her
 neck

We threw our arms, and kiss'd her, and
 she cried,

And we cried too, and I took out my pay
 And pour'd it in her lap ; but Dan look'd
 griev'd,

And, glancing from the pay to mother,
 cried,

' I'll never, never go to sea again !'

'Tis thirty years ago, and yet right well
 I mind it all. How pleasant for a time
 Was life on land : the tousing with the
 girls,

The merry-making in the public-house,
 The cosy bed on winter nights. We
 work'd—

I at the fishing, Dan at making nets—
 And kept old mother for a year and more.
 But ere the year was out, the life grew dull :
 We never heard the wind blow, but we
 thought

Of sailing on the sea,—we got a knack
 Of lying on the beach and listening
 To the great waters. Still, for mother's
 sake,

Ashore we had to tarry. By and by,
 The restlessness grew worse, and show'd
 itself

In other ways,—taking a drop too much,
 Fighting and cutty-stooling—and the folk
 Began to shake their heads. Amid it all,
 One night when Dan was reading out
 God's Book,

(That bit about the Storm, where Peter tries
 To walk on water, and begins to sink,)
 Old mother sigh'd and seem'd to go to
 sleep,
 And when we tried to wake her, she was
 dead.

With sore, sore hearts we laid poor
 mother down ;
 And walk'd that day up yonder cliffs, and
 lay

A hearkening to the Sea that wash'd be-
 neath :

Far, far away we saw a sail gleam wet
 Out of a rainy spot below the line
 Where sky and water meet ; the Deep was
 calm,

And overhead went clouds whose shadows
 floated

Slowly beneath, and here and there were
 places

Purple and green and blue, and close to
 land

The red-sail'd fish-boats in a violet patch.
 I look'd at brother Dan, Dan look'd at
 me,—

And that same morning, off we went
 again !

No rest for us on land from that day
 forth.

We grew to love the waters ; they became
 Part of our flesh and blood ; the Sea, the
 Sea,

The busy whistling round the foam-girt
 world,

Was all our pleasure. Now and then we
 met,—

Once in a year or two, and never came
 To Scotland but we took a journey here
 To look on mother's grave, and spend a day
 With old companions. But we never
 thought

Of resting long, and never hoped to die
 Ashore, like mother : we had fix'd it, Jack,
 That we must drown some day. At last,
 by luck,

We ran together. Dan had got a place
 As captain of a brig, and, press'd by him,
 They made me mate. Ten years we sail'd
 together,

From Liverpool to New South Wales and
 back ;

And we were lads no more, but staid, strong
 men,

Forty and upward,—yet with kibble arms,
 Brown cheeks, and cheerful hearts. Then
 the ill wind

That blows no good to anyone began,
 And brought us back to Scotland, to this
 place

Where we were born and bred.

Now, mark you, Jack,
 Even a sailor is but flesh and blood,
 Though out upon the water he can laugh
 At women and their ways ; a run on shore,
 A splash among the dawties and the drink,
 Soon tires, soon tires—then hey ! away
 again

To the wild life that's worthy of a man !
 At forty, though, a sailor should be wise,
 And 'ware temptation : whole a sailor, free,
 But only half a sailor, though afloat,
 When wedded. Don't you guess? Though
 Dan was old,
 His head was turn'd, while in the clachan
 here,

And by a woman,—Effie Paterson,
 The daughter of a farmer on the bills,
 And only twenty. Bonnie, say you? Ay :
 As sweet a pout as ever grew on land ;
 But soft and tender, with a quiet face
 That needed the warm hearth to light it up,
 And went snow-pallid at a puff of wind
 Or whiff of danger. When I saw the trap,
 I tried my best to wheedle Dan away,
 Back to the brig ; but, red as ricks on fire,
 He glinted with those angry eyes of his,

And linger'd. Then, 'twas nearly time to sail ;
I talk'd of going, and it all came out :
He meant to *marry*, Jack !—and not content
With marrying, he meant to stop ashore !

Why, if a lightning flash had split our craft,
I should have wonder'd less. But, ' Bob,' says he,
' I love this lassie as I never thought
'Twas in my heart to love ; and I have saved ;
And I am tired of drifting here and there
On yonder waters : I have earn'd my rest,
And mean to stop ashore until I die.'
'Twas little use to argue things with Dan
When he had settled aught within his mind ;
So all I said was vain. What could I do
But put a sunny face upon it all,
And bid him hasten on the day, that I
Might see his wedding, and be off again ?

Yet soon I guess'd, before the wedding day,
That Effie did not care a cheep for Dan,
But scunner'd at his brave rough ways and tales
Of danger on the deep. His was a voice
Meant for the winds, with little power to whisper
The soft sleek things that make the women blush,
And tingle, and look sweet. Moreover,
Dan
Was forty, and the lassie but a child.
I saw it all, but dared not speak my thought !
For Dan had money, Effie's folks were poor,
And Dan was blind, and Effie gave consent,
And talk was no avail. The wedding guests
Went up to Effie's home one pleasant day,
The minister dropp'd in, the kirk-bells rang,
And all was over. 'Twas a summer morn,
The blue above was fleck'd with feathery down,
The Sea was smooth, and peaceful, and the kirk
Stood mossy here upon the little hill,
And seem'd to smile a blessing over all.

And Effie? Ah! keep me from women,
Jack !
Give them a bit o' sunshine—and they smile,
Give them a bit o' darkness—and they weep ;
But smiles and tears with them are easy things,
And cheat ye like the winds. On such a day,
With everybody happy roundabout,
Effie look'd happy too ; and if her face
Flush'd and was fearful, that was only joy ;
For when a woman blusbes, who can tell
Whether the cause be gladness, pride, or shame ?
And Dan (God bless him !) look'd as young as you,
Trembled and redden'd lass-like, and I swear,
Had he not been a sailor, would have cried.
So I was cheer'd, next day, when off I went
To take his post as captain of the brig,
And I forgot my fears, and thought them wrong,
And went across the seas with easy heart,
Thinking I left a happy man behind.

But often, out at sea, I thought of Dan,
Wonder'd if he was happy. When the nights
Were quiet, still, and peaceful, I would lie
And listen to the washing of the waves,
And think : ' I wonder if this very light
Is dropping far away on poor old Dan ?
And if his face looks *happy* in it, while
He sleeps by Effie's side?' On windy nights
I used to think of Dan with trouble and fear ;
And often, when the waves were mountains high,
And we were lying-to before the wind,
The screaming surges seem'd to take the shape
Of this old clachan, and I seem'd to hear
Dan calling me ; and I would drink the salt,
And pace the deck with all my blood on fire,
Thinking—' If Dan were driving on out here,
Dashing and weather-beaten, never still,
He would be happier !'

Ay ! though the Storm
Roll'd on between us, voices came from Dan
To tell me he was lonely on the land.
Often, when I was sailing in the ship,
He crept about these caves and watch'd
the Moon

Silv'ring the windless places of the sea,
And thought of me ! or on the beach he
lay,
And wearied to the breaking of the waves !
Or out from land he row'd his boat, and
gazed

Wistfully eastward ! or on windy nights
He speel'd yon cliffs above the shore, and
set

His teeth together in the rain and wind,
Straining eyes seaward, seeking lights at
sea,

And pacing up and down upon the brink
As if he trode the decks ! Why, things
like those

Saved him from sinking, salted all his blood,
And soothed his heartache. Wind and
wave are far

More merciful than a young woman's heart !

Why, had she been a bickering hizzie,
fill'd

With fire and temper, stubborn as a whin,
And cushlingmushling o'er a cheerless fire,
Dan might have brought her round : *that*
was the work

He understood full well ; and, right or
wrong,

He would have been the Skipper to the end.
But though a man who has been train'd at
sea,

Holding a hard strong grip on desperate
men,

Can sink his voice and play a gentle part
In sunny seasons, he has little power
To fight with *women's* weapons. Dan, he
sure,

Loved Effie with a love the deeper far
And tenderer because he had been bred
On the rough brine ; but when, from day
to day,

He met a weary and a waning face,
That tried to smile, indeed, but could not
smile,

And saw the tears where never tears should
be,

Yet never met an angry look or word,

What could he do ? He loved the lass too
well

To scold ; tried soothing words, but they
were spent

Upon a heart where the cold crancreuch
grew ;

And, when the sorrow grew too sharp to
bear,

Stole sicken'd from the dwelling. Plain he
saw

The lass was dreary, though she kept so
still,

And loved him not, though nothing harsh
was said,

But fretted, and grew thin, and haunted him
With a pale face of gentleness and grief.

O Jack, Jack, Jack ! of all the things
accurst,

Worse than a tempest and the rocks ahead,
Is misty weather, not a breath of wind,

And the low moaning of some unseen shore !
Homeless and sad and troubled by her face,

If Dan had let his heart and brain keep still,
Let the sick mildew settle on his soul,

He would have shrunk into a wretched thing
The rains might beat on, and the winds
might lash,

And ne'er have had the heart to stand erect,
And set his teeth, and face them, and sub-
due.

What could he do, but try to ease his heart
By haunting yonder beach, and glorying

In stormy seasons, thinking of the life
He used to lead, with ocean-sound for ever

Making a second life within his blood,
Thinking of me, and feeling that his soul

Was soothed a bit by his old friend the
Sea ?

And Effie, as the dawn look'd down each
day,

Turn'd from the happy shining of the sun,
In wanrest and in tears ; and poor old Dan
Dree'd bitterly the dreary life on land.

No stanchgrass ever heal'd a wound so
deep !

'Twas comfort dwelling in so wild a place,
So near to open water ; but for that,

I do not think he could have borne to dwell
Pining ashore. His trouble grew and grew :

No corsy-belly warm'd at Effie's fire,
No doctor's watch tick'd by the jizzen-bed,

No sound of tiny footfalls fill'd the house
With happy cheer ; the dull and lifeless
mood

Grew on the wife ; her sense of shame
seem'd gone ;

She paid no heed to dress, or to the house,
But faded, like a pale-faced, listless flower,
Grown in a weedy garden. Then, indeed,
To see all household goods neglected so,
The crowsfeet gathering round Effie's eyes,
The ingleside so cheerless and so cold,
Dan clench'd his fists, and storm'd with
thunder-voice ;

But Effie only trembled, and was still,
Or threw her apron o'er her face and wept ;
And Dan, who never in his life could bear
To see a woman weep, pleaded and
begg'd,—

Without avail. Then many and many a
night

He roam'd the silent cliffs till peep of day,
Or join'd the fishers, out upon the sea ;
And many and many a night he thought he
heard

My voice a-calling him. One night of storm,
When the sky murmur'd, and the foam-
fleck'd sea

Flash'd in the fireflaught round the shadowy
cliffs,

He fix'd to run away ;—but could not go,
Until he gazed on Effie's face once more ;
And when he stole into her room unheard,
He saw her sleeping with a happy smile,
So still, so sweet, so bonnie in her dream,
So like the shining lass she used to be,
That his heart sank, he swaver'd forth again,
And lay upon the waterside and wept,
And tho' the wind was whistling in his eyes,
Tho' the still fireflaught flash'd upon the
foam,

He felt too weak, too timid, and too sad,
To quit her in the little cottage here,
And dree again the dangers of the deep.

The house is yonder—ay, the slated
house,

With little patch of garden. Mark the pool
Of water at the door. Beyond you see
The line of boats, drawn high and dry, and
yonder

The dull, green water, with the purple stain
Out eastward, and the sunlight slanting
through

Upon a sail. Mark how the clachan lies
Down in the gully, with the barren hills,
Where never ran-tree waves its silver hair,
On either side. Look backward, now !
The glen,

Hollow'd between the hills, goes inland, far
As eye can see—with yellow pools of rain,
And cattle looking shadowy in the mists
Upon the slopes. How still and dull looks
all !

'Tis plain you gather, with a sailor's eye,
The danger. When the rains have lasted
long,

The yellow Waters (rightly christen'd here
The Scaith o' Bartle) gather up the glen,
Suck in the strength of flying mist and cloud,
And, bursting from the hollows where they
meet,

Rush seaward, with a roaring like the sea,
O'erwhelming all. Thrice has the mischief
come

In one-and-twenty years.

When I came home,
A month ago, and walk'd across the hills
From Carly town, I paused on yonder cliffs,
And saw the clachan lying at my feet,—
The setting sun shining upon the house
Where Dan was dwelling. Nought was
alter'd there !

The very smacks and fish-boats just the
same

As when I quitted. While I stood and
gazed,

I saw a stooping figure with a staff,
Standing hard by me on the cliffs, and gazing
Silently seaward. As I look'd, he turn'd,
And though the face was haggard, worn,
and old,

And every hair upon the head was gray,
And the fresh life about the limbs was lost,
I knew old Dan, and, shouting blithely, ran
To hug him to my heart ; and he turn'd
white,

Shaking like straw in wind, to find 'twas *me*.
Then, when the shock was over, and we
talk'd,

He brighten'd,—as an icicle turns bright
When shone on. But my heart was shock'd
and sore !

He was the ghost of what he once had been ;
His voice was broken, and his welcome
seem'd

Like one's who, sinking on his pillow,
smiles

To see a face he loves before he dies ;
And when his air grew cheerier, and at last
His love for me came lighter on his look,
His cheeriness seem'd sadder far than all.
Swavering down the path, he took my arm,
Leant heavily on his staff, as if he dream'd,
Talk'd of old times, and friends alive and
dead,

Until we halted at his cottage door ;
And, while he lifted up the latch, he cast
His eyes to windward, read the weather
signs,
After old habit, ere he enter'd in.

Effie was there,—changed too ; she wel-
comed me,
Moved but and hen the house with a light
step,
And smiled a bit :—all women have a smile,
A happiness, a kind of second self,
Kept for fresh faces. Yet I saw full soon
The hield was homeless ; little love was
there ;

Ah, that was common talk aroundabout !
The first flush faded soon from Effie's face,
Leaving it dull and wan ; she moved about
Like a sick lassie risen from a dream ;
And oft, when we were seated in the lowe,
She started, and her colour went and came ;
And though her features wore a kind of fear,
There was a light of youth there : she would
keek

At Dan, whose eyes were fix'd upon the fire,
Hang o'er her knitting, breathing deep, and
then

Hearken and hearken, till the soft bright
blush

Died by degrees, her face became composed
To pallor, and the light had gone away,
Leaving her sick and soopit once again.

At last, when we were smoking in the
hield

One dull day in November, Dan arose
And took his stick, and, beckoning me,
went out :

I follow'd ; and he never spake a word,
But gript me by the arm, and walk'd along,
Until we left the clachan far behind,
And took a pathway winding up the hills.
For many weeks, at intervals, the rain

Had fallen ; and the hills were dreeping
damp,

And down their sides ran many streams
new-born,

Making an eerie murmur. Far away
Ben Callachan was glimmering through a
mist,

And all round Bartle rose a vaporous steam
Silent and white, with cattle here and there
Dismally looming. Still and dull was all—
So still, so chill ; only the faint sharp stir
That is a sound, but seems a click within
The ear itself ;—save when from far away
A cow would low, and echoes faint and
far

Died inland, or when, blowing on the wind,
A cry came from the sea, whose waves we
saw

Beyond us, breaking in a shadowy cloud,
With gleams of glittering foam. But Dan
walk'd on,

Scarce heeding ought ; and yet his sailor's
eye

Took in the signs, and glinted up and down
With the old cunning ; but his heart was full,
His voice was broken like a weeping wean's,
And as we went along he told me all.

All that you guess ! but somewhat more
—a thought

Of later growth, a nettle in his heart—
That Effie was not true, as wives should be ;
And that her fairest thoughts were fallen
things

That clung around a fresh young lover's
knees.

I stared at Dan, and hearken'd in amaze I
His grip was tight upon my arm, his face
White as the snow on Callachan, his voice
Shrill as a sea-gull's shriek ; and all at once
He waved his arms, turn'd his wild face
away,

And cried aloud with a full heart—' O God !
Why did I ever cease to sail the Sea ?'

I tried to argue with him—he was dumb I
And yet I saw, had I been daft enough
To echo him, he would have hated me.
He only half believed the things he said,
And would have turn'd in wrath on any man
Who could believe them true, and say the
same.

He loved the braxie still, as few can love.

Save the Good Shepherd, who has love for
all !
Could not have tholed to hear another's
thoughts
Condemn her ! blamed him-self for all his
grief !
And gladly would have died beneath her
feet,
To win one word, one kiss, one shining look,
To show his love had not been quite in vain !

But on we fared, so fill'd with our own
thoughts,
We scarcely saw how far away we wander'd,
How mirk all grew, how close the gather-
ing clouds
Drew to the hill-tops, while the cattle raised
Their heads into the dismal air and cried.
Then, suddenly, there came a lightning
gleam
That for a moment lighted up the hills,
The far off cliffs, and the far flash of foam,
And faded,—to a sound as if the earth
And heavens were torn asunder. Soon the
storm
Deepen'd—the thunder and the lightning
came
Ofter than dark or silence ; and I felt
Far less myself on those dull endless
heights,
Than seeing, hearing, from my ship at sea.
But Dan said little ; only, as the drops
Of rain began to fall, he led the way
Into a mountain shieling, roof'd with turfs,
Where we in shelter crouch'd, and still
talk'd on
Of his dull ingleside, his darken'd days,
The terror and the pain he had to dree.
And 'All I care for now is ended, Bob I
I want to die, but not to leave the lass
Untended and unhappy. After all,
I cannot blame her for her crancreuch
face,—
She is so young—mid-eild is past with me—
Be sure that she would love me if she
could !'
And then he glower'd out on the dark, and
groan'd,
'Would I were in my grave!—would I
were doom'd
Among the waves!—would I were far out
yonder,
Praying and sinking in a boat at sea !'

And I was silent ; but the elements
Made answer. With a clash like iron fell
The headlong torrent of the soot-black
clouds,
Drowning the thunders with its dreesome
cry,
Birning above, around, and smiting earth
With strength of stone. Never for many a
year
Had such a fall been known : it seem'd the
Lord
Unlocking all His waters to destroy
The bad world o'er again. No rainbow
there
To promise sunshine and a speedy end !
For 'twas the Black Rain, which had once
or twice
Gone southward, making frightened Elders
groan,
And which old wives in Bartle often call
The 'Deil's rain,' thinking Satan flies him-
self,
Dropping the dreadful blackness from
above.
Silent we waited, watching, and the air
Was full of a great roar—the sods beneath
Seem'd shaking—and the rain-wash forced
a way
Through the thick turf above our heads,
and fell
Upon us, splashing, as with watery ink,
Our hands and faces. But I saw Dan's
eye
Had kindled. He was younger. For the
sounds
Quicken'd his sense of life, brought up his
strength,
And minded him of former fearsome days
Upon the Ocean ; and his other self—
The sickly self that lived the life on land—
Forsook him. Then there was a lull, a
pause—
Not broken by the further fall of rain,
Nor by the thunder-claps, but by a sign
More terrible than all—a roar, a groan,
A motion as of waters, and a sound
Like the dread surging of an angry Sea.

And Dan threw up his arms, screaming
aloud,
'THE SCAITH ! THE SCAITH !'—and
groan'd, and rush'd away,—
I following close behind him in the mirk.

And on he tore, until he gain'd a craig,
 Above the glen, yonder between the hills ;
 And cattle huddled round him, lowing loud,
 And the Scaith thicken'd, and the murmur
 grew,
 While we gazed down. The mists hung
 round the heights,
 The rain still fell, but faintly,—and below,
 Roaring on seaward, snatching in its course
 Boulders and trees and cattle, rush'd the
 Scaith,
 A blacken'd yellow wash of waters, foaming
 Where'er it touched the feet of stone or
 steep,
 And dizzily whirling round the great tree-
 roots
 To twist them from their beds. White,
 scared, and stunn'd,
 Dan groan'd, and sank upon his knees, and
 sobbed.
 Done was the thunder ; but the waters made
 Another thunder, and the fireflaught came
 Fainter and fainter. Then we heard from
 far
 A sound more awful—shrieks of living men,
 Children and women ; while the thinning
 clouds
 Parted to westward, brightening at the rims,
 And rays of misty sunset slanted down
 On Bartle, and the Scaith had seized its
 prey.

'Effie !' cried Dan ; and sped along the
 hills,
 And would have rush'd right downward to
 his death
 Had I not gript him. But we found a way
 O'er the hillside, and gain'd the northern
 height
 Above the clachan. Jack, until I die,
 That hour will haunt me ! For the village
 lay
 Naip-deep beneath the moaning rain-dyed
 flood,
 And biolds sank shatter'd, and the sunset
 cold
 Glean'd upon Bartle and the sea beyond ;
 And on the slopes on either side there
 gather'd
 Women and men : some screeching as they
 saw
 The Scaith drink up their houses and their
 goods,

Some crying for the friends they could not
 see,
 Some sitting still, and looking on their
 bairns,
 As if they had gone wild. Then Dan glared
 round,
 Seeking for Effie,—but he saw her not ;
 And the damp sunset gleaming on his face,
 Grimed with the rain-drops, show'd it
 ghastly pale,
 But he was cool as he had often been
 On gruesome nights at sea. 'She is not
 here !'
 He whispered ; 'yet she cannot but be
 saved.
 Perchance she gathers with the folk that
 stand
 Waving their arms yonder across the flood :
 Oh ! would my eyes were young that I
 might see.'
 That way I gazed ; but all that I could see
 Were mists beyond the clachan ; down
 below,
 The wildly washing waters ; here and there,
 Women and children screaming on the
 roofs,
 While punts and skiffs were gliding here
 and there,
 Piloting slowly through the rocks and walls,
 To succour those unsaved ; at intervals
 A leafless tree-top peering through the
 water,
 While frighted birds lit on its twigs, or
 wheel'd
 Around it crying. Then, 'A boat ! a
 boat !'
 Dan cried ; but he was crying to the air :
 The folk around him heard and made a
 stir,—
 But some scarce raised their wild and watery
 eyes,
 And some stopp'd moaning, look'd at him
 who cried,
 And then again sat rocking to and fro,
 Gazing straight downward, and with eerie
 groans
 Bewailing their own sorrow.

Then the place
 Blacken'd in gloaming—mists rose from the
 flood—
 The sky turn'd black, with neither stars nor
 moon,

And down below, flashing from place to place,
 The lights, like corpse-lights warning folk of death,
 Flitted and faded, showing where the boats
 Still moved about upon their weary work
 And those who grieved were stiller all around ;
 The solemn moaning of the Scaith was hush'd,
 Your ears could hear the sobbing of the Sea ;
 And only now and then a hollow splash
 Spake plain of walls that yielded and slipt down
 Into the waters. Then a light came near,
 And to the water's edge a fishing-boat
 Brought a dead fisher, and a little child
 Who cried for 'mither' ; and as he who row'd
 Handed the bairn to hungry outstretch'd arms,
 And landed with the corpse, old Dan leapt in,
 Snatching the lanthorn from the fisher's hand,
 Push'd off ere I could follow, and had flown
 Into the darkness . . .

Jack,—I never again
 Saw poor old Dan, alive ! Yet it was well
 His woes were ended ; for that very day,
 Ere the Scaith came, Effie had crept from home,—
 Ay, with a man ;—and ere I knew the truth
 Why, she was out upon the ocean waves,
 And fleeing with the loon to Canada.
 Ill winds pursue her ! God will find her out !
 He sent His water down to free old Dan,
 And He is after her across the Deep !

Next dawning, when the Scaith was part subdued,
 And sinking slowly through the seams of earth,
 Pouring in bright brown burns to join the sea,
 Fouling with mud the line of breaking foam,
 'Twas a most piteous sight to see the folk,

With spade and mattock, digging at the graves
 Of their own dwellings ; taking what was saved
 With bitter thankless faces. Fallen walls,
 And trees uprooted from the waste hill-sides,
 And boulders swept from far along the glen,
 And household lumber gather'd everywhere,
 Mingled in ruin ; and the frailer bields
 Were swept away for ever. As for me,
 I had my work in hand. I took a spade
 And waded through the thick and muddy pools,
 ("Twas still waist-deep,) right onward to the place
 Where Dan had dwelt. For something drew me there,
 Foremost of all. The bield was standing still,
 Though doors and windows had been beaten in ;
 And as I splash'd along the passage, bits
 Of household lumber tripped me ; but I went
 Right on to Effie's room, and there the flood
 Was lying black and cold ;—and there lay Dan.

Washing upon the water, with his face
 Drawn downward, his hands clench'd, his long gray hair
 Rippling around him—stiff, and cold, and dead
 And when I turn'd his face up to the light,
 I did not scunner much—it look'd so strong,
 So seaman-like, and fine. I saw it all !
 How he had drifted thither in the dark,
 And found the water low around the bield,
 But slowly rising ; how he fought his way,
 Search'd but and ben, and last, in Effie's room,
 Stood ghastly in the lanthorn light, and saw
 The place was empty ; how, while there he stood,
 Staring in horror, with an eldritch cry
 The wild SCAITH struck the crashing window panes,
 Dash'd down the lanthorn, gript him in the dark,

Roar'd in his ears, and while it struck him
down,

Out of his nostrils suck'd the breath of life.
Jack, Jack, we know there comes to men
who drown

A sudden flashing picture of the past,—
And ah ! how pitiful, how pitiful,
In that last minute did the picture come :
A vision of the sounding Sea afar,
A ghaistly ship upon it,—Effie's face,
Coming and going like to floating foam,—
The picture of the kirk upon the hill,
And sunshine smiling on the wedding
guests,—

The shadowy cliffs where he had paced in
pain,
The waves, the sun, the moon, the thought
of *me*,
All thicken'd on him as he scream'd her
name,
And struggled with the cruel Scaith, and
died !

Ay ! GOD Almighty's water, e'en ashore,
More merciful than women, found him out ;
And here he lies, but should have lain else-
where.

Had Scots law, and the blethering women's
tongues,
Not hinder'd me,—I would have ta'en a
boat,

And sewn his body in a sheet, with stones
Fasten'd beneath his soles to sink him
down,
And row'd out yonder, westward, where the
sun

Dips red beneath the straight blue water
line,

Then said a prayer, and softly sent him
down

Where he could sleep in peace, and hear
for ever

The washing of the waters through the
depths :

With flag-flowers o'er his head, great weeds
all round,

And white salt foam-bells hanging in his
ears,

His would have been a sailor's sleep indeed !
But as it is, he slumbers here on land,
In shade of Bartle Kirk, 'mong country
loons

And fishermen that shrink at open Sea.

THE GLAMOUR.

The hills close round her—everywhere
Strange voices deepen in the air ;
The pain, the hope, the agony,
Flash to a sense of mystery ;
The shapes of earth and air and skies
Catch glamour in her weary eyes ;
Worn with the pain, worn with the pain,
She would lie down, and sleep again !

O LORD my GOD, draw not Thy hand away—
The sleep-stoure fills my eyes—I feel my
grave—

And I would reach a painless end, like those
Thy glamour ne'er hath troubled. I have
been

O'er long a shadow on the paths of men,
O'er long a screeching bird in happy bields,
O'er long a haunted wanderer day and
night.

Lord, let me die ! Lord, let me die ! Lord
GOD,

Pity and spare me ! Draw Thy hand away !
Thy breath is on me in the mirk, and ah !
I sicken sore, while yonder through the pane
Corpse-candles, blowing blue against the
wind,

Flit slowly to the kirkyard, down Glen-Earn.

What had I done, that Thou shouldst
pick me out,

To breathe Thy glamour on ? I was a lass
Happy and heartsome, till that dreesome
day

I walk'd from kirk by moonlight down the
glen,

And saw Maccaskill of Craig-Dhonil pass,
Sewn to the middle in his winding-sheet,
And waving hairy arms until I swoon'd ;—
And ere a year was run Maccaskill died ;
And then I kenn'd I had the bitter gift
My father and my father's father had.

Yet I was young, and felt a kind o' pride,
To see so far into Thy mysteries,—
To ken when man or wife was doom'd to
die ;

To see the young life in a lassie's wame,
Although her snood was whole ; and to prophesy
Tempests and human losses. Manya man
Then turn'd away ; but Kenneth married
me—

Kenneth Macdonald, sheep-herd on the hills,

A holy man and kind ; and for a time
The glamour came no more, and I was gay,
Feeling the young bairn underneath my breast

Breathe softly with the rocking of my heart.
But in the winter gloaming, when the drift
Was thick around the door, and winds were blowing,

And I was lying on the jizzen-bed,
And Jean the howdie wash'd my paps with salt,

I saw a strange thing lying on her knee—
A span-long body in a blood-stain'd sowe—
And scream'd and cried, 'Jean, Jean, the bairn will die !'

And so it was. For while old mother slipt
Out to the kitchen lowe, where Kenneth sat,
To drop a cinder through the wee white sark,

The bairn came dead into the chilly mirk ;
And in the snowy dawning I beheld
The span-long body of my sweet first-born,
Wrapt in its sowe, upon the howdie's knee.

But *Angus* lived—my white-faced sickly bairn,

The last I bore ; for, ere I rose from bed,
I heard, one gloaming dark, from but the house,

A sound of sawing, hewing with an adze,
Mix'd with a sound of weeping, clapping hands ;

And all the bield was empty,—and I knew
A shell was being made for some one near ;
And ah ! before the moon was full again
Just as the season of the lambing came,
My bonnie man was sheeted in the house,
And stiff, and cold ; and I was left alone,
Shadow'd and sad, with hot tears dropping down

On *Angus*, pulling feebly at my breast.

I never bedded with another man,
Never bare wean again ; but I could earn
Both food and drink, and all my pride and joy

Was *Angus*. Lord, he was the honniest bairn

The sweetest, gentlest, ever wrought in flesh,

To gladden mother's eyes. The very day

That he was born, I call'd the minister,
Who gave him baptism, that the glamour ne'er,

Might come on him or his ; and ah ! he grew,
Pale like a lily—for this solemn world
O'er gentle ; and the glamour brought no fear

To mirk our dwelling. Nay, for many a year,

The eerie light seem'd gone away from me,
For never ghaist or burial cross'd my path,
Corpse-light or wraith. Then *Angus* on the hills

Grew sheep-herd, like his father, though he lack'd

His father's fearless heart ; and, as he grew,
Turn'd weaker, whiter—bonnie still, but thin

And bloodless ; and he lack'd the heart to face

Darkness and danger : ringing of a bell
At midnight, sudden footsteps in the dark,
A hand placed on his shoulder suddenly,
Would strike him down into a swooning fit,
Dreesome to see ; and when his eighteenth year

Was o'er, he sometimes sicken'd at my face,
And shiver'd though he knew me. All at once

The glamour came across my Soul again.
One night, while we were seated in the bield,
I heard a wailing come from but the house,
And horror gript me. 'Mother !' *Angus* cried,

Glow'ring full fear'd into my burning eyes,
'What ails thee ?' 'Wheesht !' I whisper'd ; 'hear ye nought ?'

'Nought !' *Angus* said. And then I heard a sound

Of groans, and clapping hands ; and suddenly

I saw my *Angus* shrink until he grew
As small as any babe new-born, and turn,
Swift as the fireflaught, to himself again ?—
And while I scream'd, and fell upon his neck,

Weeping, and kissing him, and moaning low,

He sicken'd at my face, and swoon'd away.

For, though I hid the trouble from my bairn,

Long had he known his mother was a seer,

Whose eyes were troubled by mysterious things ;

And every shade he saw upon my face
Distranght him, lest I saw before his path
Mishap or death. My white-faced, fearful bairn !

My drooping Angus, with his soft, wide eyes,

And fluttering mouth ! Alone upon the hills,

He trembled—fear'd the lightning and the storm—

Tholed not to lie within the dark alone—
And would have wither'd in his bairndom's time,

Had I not cheer'd him with a smiling face.

Lord, Thou wert sore upon me ! I was lone,

And Angus was my pleasure. I was haunted,

And Angus was my help. Yet, once again,
Thy glamour struck me, and I knew, I knew,

Angus must die. Hard, hard, both day and night,

I tried to cheat myself and hope, and smiled
On Angus, till his heart grew still once more.
But it was all in vain. Thrice Angus shrunk,

Three several gloamings, seated in his chair.
And I kept down my fear, and did not scream ;

And oft I heard the wailing in the house,
And sounding of the kirk-bells down Glen-Earn

At midnight. Then I sicken'd and grew thin,

And hunger'd o'er my bairn, and pray'd, and pray'd,—

And what to me was light of sun or star
If Angus went away ?

. . . It was a night

Quiet and cold. The moon and stars were out,

The moon-dew glittering on the hills.
Alone,

I sat, awaiting Angus. It grew late,
And Angus came not ; and the low winds blew,

And the clock tick'd, and ah ! my heart was dark.

Then, last, I took my cloak, and wander'd forth,

To see if he was coming down the Glen,
And took the cold wet pathway in the moon
Until I reach'd the foot of Cawmock Craig,
And saw the straight rock rise into the lift,
Its side all dark, but on its top the Moon
Shining full bright and chilly. As I stood,
I heard a shout, and saw, far, far above,
A figure dark between me and the lift,
Threading the narrow paths around the
Craig

Whence many a man hath fallen and been slain ;

And even then—Lord, Lord !—Thy glamour dropt

Upon me, and I saw before my face
The wraith of Angus wrapt in bloody sowe
Gliding before me in the ghaistly light.

Shrill as an owl, I screech'd !—and up above
My Angus heard, and sicken'd, and swam round,

And, swooning on the sharp edge of the
Craig,

Dash'd downward to his death !—

. . . O bonnie, bonnie

Look'd Angus, lying in his sowe asleep,
Quiet like moonlight on his face, his hair
Kaim'd back and shining round his cold
white ears.

And yonder in the cold kirkyard he lies ;
And, Lord, I want to slumber at his side,
And cheer him in the darkness of the
grave,—

For he was ever fearful, weak, and pale—
A young man with a white bairn's timorous
soul.

And, Lord, I think that Thou at last art
kind,

For oft the white wraith, glimmering at my
side,

Hath waved its arms, and moan'd, and
look'd like *me* :

And I have watched it ever, not afraid,
But sad and smiling, and what dress I
wore

The wraith hath worn ; and when I turn'd
my gown

And let the grey hairs hang all down my
neck,

The wraith too, turn'd its gown, and loos'd
its hair ;

And yonder, yonder, yonder through the
pane
The blue corpse-candles, blowing in the
wind,
Flit slowly to the kirkyard, down Glen-
Earn.

SIGURD OF SAXONY.

(MEDIÆVAL.)

THE sedgy shores of this enchanted lake
Are dark with shadows of the swans which
make

Their nests along its marge ;
And on the hither side, where silver waves
Curl with low music into hollow caves,
Waiting for that bright barge
Which beareth sleepers to the silent land,
I, Sigurd, in my ghostly sorrow, stand.

I stand alone beneath heaven's silent arch,
Shaded both night and day by clouds that
march

And countermarch above ;
A sombre suit of perfect mail I wear,
A gloomy plume, that troubles the thin air
To murmurs if I move ;
My sword is red and broken ; and my
shield
Bears a gold anchor on a sable field.

This is a place where mortals find not
speech ;
Save the small murmurous waves that crawl
the beach,

All is as still as death :
I hear my heart against my ribs of stone,
Like to a wild bird in the net, make moan ;
My slow and frozen breath
Curls like a vapour o'er the silent spot ;
My shadow seeks my feet, and moveth not.

Nought can redeem her. Wherefore I seek
grace
To join her in her distant dwelling-place
Of pastoral repose ;
And I would make this heart that aches and
grieves
As white and perfect as a lily's leaves
And fragrant as a rose,

That with a stainless spirit I may take
The solemn barge across the enchanted
lake.

For, having worn her stainless badge in
fight,
Thrice conquering in her name, by day and
night

I rode with vizor down,
Meeting and slaying honourable foes,
Wounded in flesh, giving and taking blows
To compass her renown.

Thus, warring a sweet war without reprieve,
I, Sigurd, wore her badge upon my sleeve.

Arméd from head to heel, with spear in
hand,

I cried her praises through the wondering
land,

And few her praise refused ;
Then flushing with my victory complete,
I hastened back and knelt me at her feet,
Battered, and maimed, and bruised ;
And then I wooed her in a secret place,
With light upon me from her shining face.

She bathed my bloody brow, with red
wounds striped,

And with a kerchief white as snow she
wiped

The foam from off my mouth ;
She set my unhelmed head upon her knee,
And wound white arms about me tenderly,
And slaked the thirsty drouth
That ebbed in sluggish fire through blood
and brain,
From a full cup of cool white porcelain.

Wherefore my soul again was strong. I
caught

The voiceless music of her form and
thought.

I knelt upon my knee,
Saying, 'I love thee more than life or
fame ;

I love thee only less than my good name,
Which is a part of thee ;
And I adore thy beauty undefiled !'
Whereat she looked into mine eyes and
smiled.

I wooed her night and day with virtuous
deeds,
And that humility which intercedes

With ladies for true men.
I took her lily of a hand in mine,
Drinking her breath, as soft as eglantine,
And wooing well ; and then
She toyed with my great beard, and gave
consent :
So down the flowery path of love we went.

Twined closely, down the soft descent of
love
We wandered on, with golden stars above,
And many flowers below,
Until we came to this dark lake or sea,
Which openeth upon eternity,
And could no farther go ;
For beyond life and death, and these dark
skies,
The place of sleep, the Silent Valley, lies.

Here on the beach we stood, and hand in
hand
Waited to wander to that silent land,
And all the shore was dark ;
Saying, ' We yearn to see the Happy Vale,
And hand in hand together we will sail
In the enchanted barque.'
' Too late to turn : one passage we must
take
Across the gleaming silence of the lake.

She said, ' The waters make such threaten-
ing moan,
Neither can pass across their waste alone ;
We cannot, cannot part ;
We will together cross these waves of death.'
But the dark waves grew darker, and the
breath
Came colder from the heart ;
And by each face a quiet cloud was worn,
Small as the shadow of a lamb new born.

Then in the distant waves we could behold
A radiance like the blowing autumn gold
Of woodland forests deep ;
And my sweet lady trembled, growing
white
As foam of ocean on a summer night,
When the wild surges leap ;
And falling very cold upon my breast,
She faltered, ' I am weary,—let me rest.'

I laid her down upon a flowery bed,
And put soft mosses underneath her head,

And kissed her, and she slept ;
And the air brightened round her, as the
far
Blue ether burns like silver round a star.
And round her slumber crept
A trouble of the air, and silver clear
The ghostly light upon the lake grew near.

Yea, nearer, nearer grew the light, and
soon,
Shaped like the sickle of the early moon,
The barge drew shoreward slow—
A vapour and a radiance all around,
A gleaming of fair faces, and a sound
Of flutes and lute-strings low.
And round my lady crept a shadowy crowd,
Fading and brightening like a moonlit
cloud.

They clustered with a ghostly light around
My lady dear, and raised her from the
ground,
And bare her to the barque :
Whereon I would have followed, but a
hand
Held me like iron to the hated land.
Then all again was dark ;
And from the breathing darkness came a
hum
Of voices sweet, ' Thy time has not yet
come.'

And then I shrieked in utter agony ;
While fading far away upon the sea,
I saw the light again ;
And with a cry into the waves I sprung,
And sought to follow, but the waters clung
About me like a chain ;
And thrice I fought amid their rage and
roar,
And thrice they hurled me bleeding on the
shore.

Long have I waited here, alone, alone,
Hearing the melancholy waves make moan
Upon the pebbly beach :
With eyes upon the pitiless stars above
Here have I waited in my homeless love,
Pale, patient, deaf to speech,
With the salt rheum upon me, pale and
bent,
And breathless as a marble monument,

This lonely watching would invite despair
Did I not oft catch glimpses of my fair

Lady, so sadly lost,

Making, with radiance round her like a star,
A luminous pathway on the hill afar,

Then fading like a ghost ;

What time I shout aloud, and at the shout
Pause, shuddering at the echoes round
about.

Twice has the barge returned : once for a
bent

Old servitor, who, down the soft descent

That leads to this dim land,

Had wandered from the towns that lie
behind,

And, groping in the cold, had fall'n stone-
blind

Upon the shifting sand ;

Once for a little gold-haired child astray,
Who, wandering hither, fell to sleep at
play.

Twice has the mystic barge returned, and
twice

Have I been frozen to the earth in ice,

Helpless to move or speak ;

Thrice have I fought with the relentless
roar

Of water, and been flung upon the shore

Battered, and maimed, and weak ;

But now I wait with quiet heart and brain,
Grown patient with unutterable pain.

And I *will* wait. To slay myself were sin,
And I, self-slaughter'd, could not hope to
win

My solitary boon ;

But if the barge should come again, and
leave

Me still in lonely watch without reprieve,

Under the silver moon

I will lie down upon my back and rest,
With mailéd hands crossed praying on my
breast ;

And fall to slumber on a bed of weeds,
A knight well worn in honourable deeds,

Yet lost to life, and old ;

And haply I may dream before I wake
That I am floating o'er the pathless lake

In that bright barge of gold ;

And, waking, I may see with sweet surprise
Light shining on me from my lady's eyes.

A POEM TO DAVID.*

I.

I WOULD not be lying yonder,
Where thou, beloved, art lying,
Though the nations should crown me living,
And murmur my praises dying.

Better this fierce pulsation,
Better this aching brain,
Than dream, and hear faintly above me
The cry of the wind and the rain ;

Than lie in the kirkyard lonely,
With fingers and toes upcurled,
And be conscious of never a motion
Save the slow rolling round of the world.

I would not be lying yonder,
Though the seeds I had sown were
springing !

I would not be sleeping yonder,
And be done with striving and singing !

For the eyes are blinded with mildew,
The lips are clammy with clay,
And worms in the ears are crawling,—
But the brain is the brain for aye !

The brain is warm and glowing,
Whatever the body be ;
It stirs like a thing that breatheth,
And dreams of the Past and To be !

Ay ! down in the deep damp darkness
The brains of the dead are hovelled !
They gleam on each other with radiance,
Transcending the eye that is shrivelled !

Each like a faint lamp lighteth
The skull wherein it dwelleth !
Each like a lamp turneth brighter
Whenever the kirk-bell knelleth !

I would not be lying yonder
Afar from the music of things,
Not were my green grave watered
By the tears of queens and kings.

* David Gray, Author of *The Luggie*, and
other Poems.

If the brain like a thing that breatheth
Is full of the Past and To be,
The silence is far more awful
Than the shriek and the agony ;

And the hope that sweetened living
Is gone with the light of the sun,
And the struggle seems wholly over,
And nothing at all seems done ;

And the dreams are heavy with losses,
And sins, and errors, and wrongs,
And you cannot hear in the darkness
If the people are singing your songs !

There's only the slow still rolling
Of the dark world round and round,
Making the dream more wondrous,
Though it render the sleep more sound.

'T is cold, cold, cold and weary,
Cold in a weary place :
The sense of the sin is present
Like the gleam of a demon's face !

What matter the tingling fingers
That touch the song above you ?
What matter the young man's weeping,
And longing to know you and love you ?

Nought has been said and uttered,
Nought has been seen or known,—
Detraction, the adder above you,
Is sunned on the cold grave-stone.

II.

Yet 't is dark here, dark,
And the voices call from below !
'T is so dark, dark, dark,
That it seems not hard to go !

'T is dark, dark, dark,
And we close our eyes and are weary !
'T is dark, dark, dark,
And the waiting seems bitter and dreary !

And yonder the sun is shining,
And the green, long grass hath grown,
And the cool kirk-shade looks pleasant,
And you lie so alone, so alone !

The world is heartless and hollow,
And singing is sad without you,
And I think I could bear the dreaming
Were mine arms around about you ;

Were thy lips to mine, beloved,
And thine arms around me too,
I think I could lie in silence,
And dream as we used to do !

The flesh and the bones might wither,
The blood be dried like dew,
The heart might crumble to ashes,
Till dust was dust anew ;

And the world with its slow still motion
Might roll on its heavenward way,—
And our brains upon one another
Would gleam till the Judgment Day !

HAKON.

HAKON of Thule, ere he died,
Summoned a Priest to his bed-side.

'Ho, Priest !' with blackening brow quoth
he,
'What comfort canst thou cast to me ?'

The young Priest, with a timorous mouth,
Told of the new gods of the South,—

Of Mary Mother and her Child,
And holy Saints with features mild ;

Of those who hate and those who love,
Of Hell beneath and Heaven above.

Then Hakon laughed full loud and shrill—
'Serve thy puny gods who will !'

Then, roaring to his henchman red,
'Slit me the throat o' the Priest,' he said ;

'His red heart's blood shall flow before,
As steaming sacrifice to Thor !

'Bring me my mighty drinking-cup :
With fiery wine now fill it up !'

Then, though so faint his life's blood ran,
'Let me die standing, like a man !'

He swore, and staggered to his legs,
And drained the goblet to the dregs.

'Skaal be to the gods !' he said—
His great heart burst, and he was dead !

Sonnets

WRITTEN BY LOCH CORUISK,* ISLE OF SKYE.

(1870.)

Late in the gloaming of the year,
I haunt the melancholy Mere ;
A Phantom I, where phantoms brood,
In that soul-searching solitude.
Hiding my forehead in the dim
Hem of His robe, I question Him !

CORUISKEN SONNETS.

I.

LORD, IS IT THOU ?

LORD, is it Thou? GOD, do I touch in-
deed

Thy raiment hem, that rolls like vapour
dark ?

O homeless Spirit, that fleest us in our
need,

Pause I answer ! while I kneel, remain
and mark. . .

Father! . . . Ere back they hear me,
cold and stark,

Across Thy darken'd threshold,—ere I
plead

For love no longer, pity me, and hark !
Surviving the long tale of craft and creed,
The dumb Hills gather round me, gaunt
and gray,—

The Waters utter their monotonous
moan,—

The immemorial Heavens, with no groan,
Bend dim eyes down, as on their natal day :
Cold are all these as snow, and still as
stone ;

But *I* have found a voice—to plead, to
pray.

II.

WE ARE FATHERLESS.

I FOUND Thee not by the starved widow's
bed,

Nor in the sick-rooms where my dear
ones died ;

* For a detailed description of Loch Coruisk,
see the writer's Prose Works, Volume v.

In Cities vast I hearken'd for Thy tread,
And heard a thousand call Thee, wretched-
eyed,

Worn out, and bitter. But the Heavens
denied

Their melancholy Maker. From the
Dead !

Assurance came, nor answer. Then I
fled

Into these wastes, and raised my hands,
and cried :

'The seasons pass—the sky is as a pall—
Thin wasted hands on withering hearts
we press—

There is no God—in vain we plead and
call,

In vain with weary eyes we search and
guess—

Like children in an empty house sit all,
Cast-away children, lorn and fatherless.'

III.

WE ARE CHILDREN.

CHILDREN indeed are we—children that
wait

Within a wondrous Dwelling, while on
high

Stretch the sad vapours and the voiceless
sky ;

The House is fair, yet all is desolate
Because our Father comes not ; clouds of
fate

Sadden above us—shivering we espy

The passing rain, the cloud before the gate,
And cry to one another, 'He is nigh !'

At early morning, with a shining Face,
He left us innocent and lily-crown'd ;

And now 'tis late—night cometh on apace—
 We hold each other's hands and look
 around,
 Frighted at our own shades! Heaven send
 us grace!
 When He returns, all will be sleeping
 sound.

IV.

WHEN WE ARE ALL ASLEEP.

WHEN He returns, and finds the World so
 drear—
 All sleeping,—young and old, unfair and
 fair,
 Will He stoop down and whisper in each
 ear,
 'Awaken!' or for pity's sake forbear,—
 Saying, 'How shall I meet their frozen
 stare
 Of wonder, and their eyes so full of fear?
 How shall I comfort them in their de-
 spair,
 If they cry out, "Too late! let us sleep
 here"?'
 Perchance He will not wake us up, but
 when
 He sees us look so happy in our rest,
 Will murmur, 'Poor dead women and
 dead men!
 Dire was their doom, and weary was their
 quest.
 Wherefore awake them unto life again?
 Let them sleep on untroubled—it is best.'

V.

BUT THE HILLS WILL BEAR WITNESS.

BUT ye,—ye Hills that gather round this
 day,
 Ye Mountains, and ye Vapours, and ye
 Waves,
 Ye will attest the wrongs of men of clay,
 When, in a World all hush'd, sits on our
 graves
 The melancholy Maker. From your
 caves
 Strange echoes of our old lost life shall
 come;
 With still eyes fixed on your vast archi-
 traves,
 Nature shall speak, though mortal lips be
 dumb,

Then God will cry: 'Sadly the Waters
 fall,
 Sadly the Mountains keep their snowy
 state,
 The Clouds pass on, the Winds and Echoes
 call,
 The World is sweet, yet wearily I wait.
 Though all is fair, and I am Lord of all,
 Without my Children I am desolate.'

VI.

DESOLATE!

DESOLATE! How the Peaks of ashen gray,
 The smoky Mists that drift from hill to
 hill,
 The Waters dark, anticipate this day
 That sullen desolation. Oh, how still
 The shadows come and vanish, with no
 will!
 How still the Waters watch the heaven's
 array!
 How still the melancholy vapours stray,
 Mirror'd below, and drifting on, fulfil
 Thy mandate as they mingle!—Not a
 sound,
 Save that deep murmur of a torrent near,
 Deepening silence. Hush! the dark pro-
 found
 Groans, as some gray crag loosens and
 falls sheer
 To the abyss. Wildly I look around,
 O Spirit of the Human, are Thou *here*?

VII.

LORD, ART THOU HERE?

LORD, art Thou here? far from the citted
 zones,
 Brooding in melancholy solitude;
 Hushing Thy breath to awful undertones,
 Darkening Thy face, if mortal foot in-
 trude.
 Father, how shall I meet Thee in this
 mood?
 How shall I ask Thee why Thou dwell'st
 with stones,
 While far away the world, like Lazarus,
 groans,
 Sick for Thy healing. Father, if Thou
 be'st good,

And wise, and gentle, oh come down, come
down !

Come like an Angel with a human face,
Pass through the gates into the hungry
Town,

Comfort the weary, send the afflicted
grace,

Shine brighter on the Graves where we lay
down

Our dear ones, cheer them in the narrow
place !

VIII.

GOD IS BEAUTIFUL.

OH, Thou art beautiful ! and Thou dost
bestow

Thy beauty on this stillness—still as
sheep

The Hills lie under Thee ; the Waters
deep

Murmur for joy of Thee ; the voids below
Mirror Thy strange fair Vapours as they
flow ;

And now, afar upon the barren height,
Thou sendest down a radiant look of light

So that the still Peaks glisten, and a glow
Rose-colour'd tints the little snowy cloud

That poises on the highest peak of all.

Oh, Thou art beautiful !—the Hills are
bowed

Beneath Thee ; on Thy name the soft
Winds call—

The monstrous Ocean trumpets it aloud,
The Rains and Snows intone it as they
fall.

IX.

THE MOTION OF THE MISTS.

HERE by the sunless Lake there is no air,
Yet with how ceaseless motion, like a
shower

Flowing and fading, do the high Mists
lower

Amid the gorges of the Mountains bare.
Some weary breathing never ceases there,—

The barren peaks can feel it hour by
hour ;

The purple depths are darken'd by its
power ;

A soundless breath, a trouble all things
share

That feel it come and go. See ! onward
swim

The ghostly Mists, from silent land to
land,

From gulf to gulf ; now the whole air
grows dim—

Like living men, darkling a space, they
stand.

But lo ! a Sunbeam, like the Cherubim,
Scatters them onward with a flaming
brand.

X.

CORUISK.

I THINK this is the very stillest place

On all God's earth, and yet no rest is
here.

The Vapours mirror'd in the black loch's
face

Drift on like frantic shapes and dis-
appear ;

A never-ceasing murmur in mine ear

Tells me of Waters wild that flow and
flow.

There is no rest at all afar or near,

Only a sense of things that moan and go.

And lo ! the still small life these limbs
contain

I feel flows on like those, restless and
proud ;

Before that breathing nought within my
brain

Pauses, but all drifts on like mist and
cloud ;

Only the bald Peaks and the Stones remain,
Frozen before Thee, desolate and bowed.

XI.

BUT WHITHER ?

AND whither, O ye Vapours ! do ye
wend ?

Stirred by that weary breathing, whither
away ?

And whither, O ye Dreams ! that night
and day

Drift o'er the troublous life, tremble, and
blend

To broken lineaments of that far Friend,

Whose strange breath's come and go ye
must obey ?

O sleepless Soul! in the world's waste
 astray,
 Whither? and will thy wanderings ever
 end?
 All things that be are full of a quick pain;
 Onward we fleet, swift as the running
 rill,—
 The vapours drift, the mists within the
 brain
 Float on obscuringly and have no will.
 Only the bare Peaks and the Stones remain;
 These only,—and a God sublimely still.

XII.

GOD IS PITILESS.

OH, Thou art pitiless! They call Thee
 Light,
 Law, Justice, Love; but Thou art
 pitiless.
 What thing of earth is precious in Thy
 sight,
 But weary waiting on and soul's distress?
 When dost Thou come with glorious
 hands to bless
 The good man that dies cold for lack of
 Thee?
 When bring'st Thou garlands for our
 happiness?
 Whom dost Thou send but Death to set us
 free?
 Blood runs like wine—foul spirits sit and
 rule—
 The weak are crushed in every street and
 lane—
 He who is generous becomes the fool
 Of all the world, and gives his life in
 vain.
 Wert Thou as good as Thou art beautiful,
 Thou couldst not bear to look upon such
 pain.

XIII.

YEA, PITILESS.

YEA, Thou art pitiless—Thou dost permit
 The Priest to use Thee as a hangman's
 cord—
 Thou proppest up the Layman's shallow
 wit,
 Driving the Beggar from the laden board—
 Thou art the easy text of those who hoard
 Their gifts in secret chests for Death to see,

'Mighty and strong and glorious is the
 Lord!'
 The Prophet cries, gone mad for lack of
 Thee!
 While good men dying deem Thy grace a
 dream,
 While sick men wail for Thee and mad
 blaspheme,
 A thousand forms of Thee the foolish
 preach—
 Fair stretch Thy temples over all the lands,
 In each of these some barbarous Image
 stands,
 And men grow atheists in the shrine of
 each.

XIV.

COULD GOD BE JUDGED.

CAN I be calm, beholding everywhere
 Disease and Anguish busy, early and
 late?
 Can I be silent, nor compassionate
 The evils that both Soul and Body bear?
 Oh, what have sickly Children done, to
 share
 Thy cup of sorrows? yet their dull, sad
 pain
 Makes the earth awful;—on the tomb's
 dark stair
 Moan Idiots, with no glimmer in the
 brain.
 No shrill Priest with his hangman's cord
 can beat
 Thy mercy into these—ah nay, ah nay!
 The Angels Thou hast sent to haunt the
 street
 Are Hunger and Distortion and Decay.
 Lord! that mad'st Man, and send'st him
 foes so fleet,
 Who shall judge *Thee* upon Thy judg-
 ment-day?

XV.

THE HILLS ON THEIR THRONES.

GHOSTLY and livid, robed with shadow,
 see!
 Each mighty Mountain silent on its
 throne,
 From foot to scalp one stretch of livid
 stone,
 Without one gleam of grass or greenery,

Silent they take the immutable decree—
 Darkness or sunlight come,—they do not
 stir ;
 Each bare brow lifted desolately free,
 Keepeth the silence of a death-chamber.
 Silent they watch each other until-doom ;
 They see each other's phantoms come
 and go,
 Yet stir not. Now the stormy hour brings
 gloom,
 Now all things grow confused and black
 below,
 Specific through the cloudy Drift they loom,
 And each accepts his individual woe.

XVI.

KING BLAABHEIN.

MONARCH of these is Blaabhein. On his
 height
 The lightning and the snow sleep side by
 side,
 Like snake and lamb ; he waiteth in a white
 And wintry consecration. All his pride
 Is husht this dimly-gleaming autumn day—
 He broodeth o'er the things he hath be-
 held—
 Beneath his feet the Rains crawl still and
 gray,
 Like phantoms of the mighty men of eld.
 A quiet awe the dreadful heights doth fill,
 The high clouds pause and brood above
 their King ;
 The torrent murmurs gently as a rill ;
 Softly and low the winds are murmuring ;
 A small black speck above the snow, bow
 still
 Hovers the Eagle, with no stir of wing !

XVII.

BLAABHEIN IN THE MISTS.

WATCH but a moment—all is changed ! A
 moan
 Breaketh the beauty of that noonday
 dream ;
 The hoary Titan darkens on his throne,
 And with an indistinct and senile scream
 Gazes at the wild Rains as past they
 stream,
 Through vaporous air wild-blowing on his
 brow ;

All black, from scalp to base there is no
 gleam,
 Even his silent snows are faded now.
 Watch yet !—and yet !—Behold, and all is
 done—
 'Twas but the shallow shapes that come
 and go,
 Troubling the mimic picture in the eye.
 Still and untroubled sits the kingly one.
 Yonder the Eagle floats—there sleeps the
 Snow
 Against the pale green of the cloudless
 sky.

XVIII.

THE FIERY BIRTH OF THE HILLS.

O HOARY Hills, though ye look aged, ye
 Are but the children of a latter time—
 Methinks I see ye in that bourn sublime
 When from the hissing cauldron of the Sea
 Ye were upheaven, while so terribly
 The Clouds boiled, and the Lightning
 scorched ye bare.
 Wild, new-born, blind, Titans in agony,
 Ye glared at heaven through folds of fiery
 hair ! . . .
 Then, in an instant, while ye trembled thus
 A Hand from heaven, white and luminous,
 Pass'd o'er your brows, and husht your
 fiery breath.
 Lo ! one by one the still Stars gather'd
 round,
 The great Deep glass'd itself, and with no
 sound
 A cold Snow fell, and all was still as
 death.

XIX.

THE CHANGELESS HILLS.

ALL power, all virtue, is repression—ye
 Are stationary, and God keeps ye great ;
 Around your heads the fretful winds play
 free ;
 Ye change not—ye are calm and desolate.
 What seems to us a trouble and a fate
 Is but the loose dust streaming from your
 feet
 And drifting onward—early ye sit and
 late,
 While unseen Winds waft past the things
 that fleet.

So sit for ever, still and passionless
 As He that made you!—thought and soul's
 distress
 Ye know not, though ye contemplate the
 strife;
 Better to share the Spirit's bitterest aches—
 Better to be the weakest Wave that breaks
 On a wild Ocean of tempestuous Life.

XX.

O MOUNTAIN PEAK OF A GOD.

FATHER, if Thou imperturbable art,
 Passive as these, lords of a lonely
 land—
 If, having laboured, Thou must sit apart—
 If having once open'd the Void, and
 planned
 This tragedy, Thou must impassive stand
 Spectator of the scenic flow of things,
 Then I—a drop of dew, a grain of
 sand—
 Pity Thy lot, poor palsied King of Kings.
 Better to fail and fail, to shriek and shriek,
 Better to break, like any Wave, and
 go,—
 Impotent godhead, let Thy slave be weak!—
 Yea, do not freeze my Soul, but let it
 flow—
 Oh, wherefore call to Thee, a mountain
 Peak
 Impassive, beautiful, serene with snow?

XXI.

GOD THE IMAGE.

IMPASSIVE, beautiful, and desolate,
 Is this the Lord my God, whom I en-
 treat?
 Powerless to stay the ravages of fate—
 Jove with his right hand palsied, Jove
 effete,
 Fetter'd by frost upon a stony seat—
 O dreadful apparition! Can this be?
 Yonder He looms, where never a heart
 doth beat,
 In the cold ether of theology.
 Come down! come down! O Souls that
 wander there!
 Cold are the snows, chill is the dreadful
 air—

Come down! come down into the Valleys
 deep;
 Leave the wild Image to the stars, that
 rise
 Around about it with affrighted eyes;
 Come to green under-glooms, and sink,
 and sleep.

XXII.

THE FOOTPRINTS.

COME to green under-glooms,—and in your
 hair
 Weave nightshade, foxglove red, and
 rank wolfsbane,
 And slumber and forget Him; if in vain
 Ye try to slumber off your sorrow there,
 Arise once more and openly repair
 To busy haunts where men and women
 sigh,
 And if all things but echo back your care,
 Cry out aloud, 'There is no God!' and
 die.
 But if upon a day when all is dark,
 Thou, stooping in the public ways, shalt
 mark
 Strange luminous footprints as of feet
 that shine—
 Follow them! follow them! O soul be-
 reaven!
 God had a Son—He hath pass'd that way
 to heaven:
 Follow, and look upon the Face divine!

XXIII.

WE ARE DEATHLESS.

YET hear me, Mountains! echo me, O
 Sea!
 Murmur an answer, Winds, from out
 your caves;
 Cry loudly, 'Torrents, Mountains, Winds,
 and Waves—
 Hark to my crying all, and echo me—
 All things that live are deathless—I and
 ye.
 The Father could not slay us if He would;
 The Elements in all their multitude
 Will rise against their Master terribly,
 If but one hair upon a human head
 Should perish! . . . Darkness grows on
 crag and steep,

A hollow thunder fills the torrent's bed ;
 The wild Mists moan and threaten as
 they creep ;
 And hush ! now, when all other cries are
 fled,
 The warning murmur of the white-hair'd
 Deep.

XXIV.

A VOICE IN THE WHIRLWIND.

I HEARD a Whirlwind on the mountain
 peak
 Pause for a space its furious flight and
 cry—
 'There is no Death !' loudly it seemed to
 shriek ;
 ' Nothing that is, beneath the sun, shall
 die.'
 The frail sick Vapours echoed, drifting
 by—
 'There is no Death, but change early and
 late ;
 Powerless were God's right Hand, full
 arm'd with fate,
 To slay the meanest thing beneath the
 sky.'
 Yea, even as tremulous foam-bells on the
 sea,
 Coming and going, are all things of
 breath ;
 But evermore, deathless, and bright, and
 free,
 We re-emerge, in spite of Change or
 Death.
 Hearken, O Mountains ! Waters, echo
 me !
 O wild Wind, echo what the Man-Wind
 saith !

XXV.

CRY OF THE LITTLE BROOK.

CHRIST help me ! whither would my dark
 thoughts run,
 I look around me, trembling fearfully ;
 The dreadful silence of the Silent One
 Freezes my lips, and all is sad to see.
 Hark ! hark ! what small voice murmurs
 ' God made me !'
 It is the Brooklet, singing all alone,
 Sparkling with pleasure, that is all its own,
 And running, self-contented, sweet, and
 free.

O Brooklet, born where never grass is green,
 Finding the stony hill and flowing fleet,
 Thou comest as a Messenger serene,
 With shining wings and silver-sandall'd
 feet ;
 Faint falls thy music on a Soul unclean,
 And, in a moment, all the World looks
 sweet !

XXVI.

THE HAPPY HEARTS OF EARTH.

WHENCE thou hast come, thou knowest
 not, little Brook,
 Nor whither thou art bound. Yet wild
 and gay,
 Pleased in thyself, and pleasing all that
 look,
 Thou wendest, all the seasons, on thy
 way ;
 The lonely glen grows glad some with thy
 play,
 Thou glidest lamb-like through the ghostly
 shade ;
 To think of solemn things thou wast not
 made,
 But to sing on, for pleasure, night and
 day.
 Such happy hearts are wandering, crystal
 clear,
 In the great world where men and women
 dwell ;
 Earth's mighty shows they neither love nor
 fear,
 They are content to be, while I rebel,
 Out of their own delight dispensing cheer,
 And ever softly whispering, ' All is well !'

XXVII.

FATHER, FORGIVE THY CHILD.

OH SING, clear Brook, sing on, while in a
 dream
 I feel the sweetness of the years go by !
 The crags and peaks are softened now, and
 seem
 Gently to sleep against the gentle sky ;
 Old scenes and faces glimmer up and die,
 With outlines of sweet thought obscured
 too long ;
 Like boys that shout at play far voices
 cry ;
 Oh sing ! for I am weeping at the song.

I know not what I am, but only know
 I have had glimpses tongue may never
 speak ;
 No more I balance human joy and woe,
 But think of my transgressions, and am
 meek.
 Father! forgive the child who fretted
 so,—
 His proud heart yields,—the tears are on
 his cheek !

XXVIII.

GOD'S LONELINESS.

WHEN, in my strong affection, I have
 sought
 To play at Providence with men of clay,
 How hath my good come constantly to
 nought,
 How hath my light and love been cast
 away,—
 How hath my light been light to lead
 astray,
 How hath my love become of sorry worth,
 How feeble hath been all my soul's
 essay
 To aid one single man on all God's earth !
 Father in Heaven, when I think these
 things,
 Helpless Thou seemest to redeem our
 plight—
 Thy lamp shines on shut eyes—each Spirit
 springs
 To its own stature still in Thy despite—
 While haggard Nature round Thy footstool
 clings,
 Pale, powerless, sitt'st Thou, in a Lonely
 Light.

XXIX.

THE CUP OF TEARS.

MY God ! my God ! with passionate appeal,
 Pardon I crave for these mad moods of
 mine,—
 Can I remember, with no heart to feel,
 The gift of Thy dear Son, the Man
 Divine—
 My God ! what agonies of love were
 Thine,
 Sitting alone, forgotten, on Thy height,
 Pale, powerless, awful in that Lonely Light,
 While 'neath Thy feet the cloudy hyaline

Rain'd blood upon the darkness,—where
 Thine Own
 Held the black Cup of all earth's tears,
 and cried !
 Ev'n then, tho' Thou wert conscious of his
 groan,
 Pale in that Lonely Light Thou did'st
 abide,
 Nor dared, even then, tho' shaken on Thy
 throne,
 To reach Thy hand and dash the Cup
 aside.

XXX.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

ON the dark waters of man's thought still
 gleams
 Softly and silveryly, from night to night,
 That starlight Legend, though its substance
 seems
 Consuming in the melancholy light
 It sheddeth. Father, do I see aright?
 Is it a truth or most divine of dreams?
 That He, Thy Child, walk'd once in rai-
 ment white
 With mortal men, and mused by Syrian
 streams?
 O Life that puts our noblest life to shame,
 Was it a Star, or light to lead astray?
 Thought's waves grow husht beneath that
 silvern flame,
 Our hopes pursue it and our doubts obey ;
 And whether truth or phantom, it became
 The sweetest sphere that lights the
 World's black way.

XXXI.

EARTH'S ELDEST BORN.

BUT He, the only One of mortal birth
 Who raised the Veil and saw the Face
 behind,
 While yet He wander'd footsore on the
 earth,
 Beheld His Father's Eyes,—that they
 were kind.
 Here in the dark I grope, confused, pur-
 blind ;
 I have not seen the glory and the peace ;
 But on the darken'd mirror of the mind
 Strange glimmers fall, and shake me till
 they cease—

Then, wondering, dazzled, on Thy name I
 call,
 And, like a child, reach empty hands and
 moan,
 And broken accents from my wild lips fall,
 And I implore Thee in this human
 tone ;—
 If such as I can follow Him at all
 Into Thy presence, 'tis by love alone.

XXXII.

WHAT SPIRIT COMETH?

WHO cometh wandering hither in my need?
 What gentle Ghost from Heaven cometh
 now?—
 Oh, I am broken to the rod indeed—
 Father, my earthly father, is it thou?
 The stooping shape with piteous human
 brow,
 The dear quaint gesture, and the feeble
 pace,
 The weary-eyed, world-worn, beloved face,
 Ev'n as they wildly faded, meet me now.
 A gentle voice flows softly, saying plain :
 'From death comes light, from pain
 beatitude ;
 Chide not at loss, for out of loss comes
 gain ;
 Chide not at grief, for 'tis the Soul's best
 food—
 Out of my death-chamber, out of wrong
 and pain,
 Cometh a life and odour. God is good.'

XXXIII.

STAY, O SPIRIT!

FATHER, my earthly father, stay, oh stay!
 I know thou wert a man as others be ;
 Sore were thy feet upon the World's cold
 clay,

And thou didst stumble oft, and on thy
 knee
 Knelt little ; but thy gentle heart gleamed
 free
 In cloud and shadow, giving its best cheer ;
 Thou had'st an open hand, and laugh'd
 for glee
 When happy men or creatures dumb played
 near.
 But in thy latter years God's scourge was
 sore
 Upon thee—weary were thy wrongs and
 dire,—
 Yet blessings on thee—until all was o'er,
 Cheery thou wert beside a cheerless fire—
 Till one red dawn the mark was on the
 door,
 And thou wert dead to all the world's
 desire.

XXXIV.

QUIET WATERS.

O RAINBOW, Rainbow, on the livid height,
 Softening its ashen outlines into dream,
 Dewy yet brilliant, delicately bright
 As pink wild-roses' leaves, why dost thou
 gleam
 So beckoningly? Whom dost thou invite
 Still higher upward on the bitter quest?
 What dost thou promise to the weary sight
 In that strange region whence thou is-
 suest?
 Speakest thou of pensive runlets by whose
 side
 Our dear ones wander sweet and gentle-
 eyed,
 In the soft dawn of some diviner Day?
 Art thou a promise? Come those hues and
 dyes
 From heavenly Meads, near which thou
 dost arise,
 Iris'd from Quiet Waters, far away!

The Book of Orm.

(1870.)

'This also we humbly beg,—that Human things may not prejudice such as are Divine, neither that from the unlocking of the Gates of Sense, and the kindling of a greater Natural Light, anything of incredulity or intellectual night may arise in our minds towards DIVINE MYSTERIES.'—STUDENT'S PRAYER, BACON.

'To vindicate the ways of God to man.'—MILTON.

'God's Mystery will I vindicate, the Mystery of the Veil and of the Shadow; yea, also Death and Sorrow, God's divine Angels on all earths; and I will vindicate the Soul, that the Soul may vindicate the Flesh; and all these things shall vindicate Evil, proving God's mercy to His creatures, great and small.'—A RUNE FOUND IN THE STARLIGHT.

INSCRIPTION.

To F. W. C.

FLOWERS pluckt upon a grave by moonlight, pale
And suffering, from the spiritual light
They grew in: these, with all the love and
blessing
That prayers can gain of God, I send to thee!

PROEM.

(TO BOOK OF ORM AND
POLITICAL MYSTICS.)

WHEN in these songs I name the Name of
God,
I mean not Him who ruled with brazen
rod
The rulers of the Jew; nor Him who calm
Sat reigning on Olympus; nay, nor Brahm,
Osiris, Allah, Odin, Balder, Thor,
(Though these I honour, with a hundred
more);
Menu I mean not, nor the Man Divine,
The pallid Rainbow lighting Palestine;
Nor any lesser of the gods which Man
Hath conjured out of Night since Time
began.
I mean the primal Mystery and Light,
The most Unfathomable, Infinite,
The Higher Law, Impersonal, Supreme,
The Life in Life, the Dream within the
Dream,

The Fountain which in silent melody
Feeds the dumb waters of Eternity,
The Source whence every god hath flown
and flows,
And whither each departs to find repose.

THE BOOK OF THE VISIONS SEEN BY ORM THE CELT.

THERE is a mortal, and his name is
Orm,
Born in the evening of the world, and
looking
Back from the sunset to the gates of
morning.

And he is aged early, in a time
When all are aged early,—he was born
In twilight times, and in his soul is twilight.

O brother, hold me by the hand, and
hearken,
For these things I shall phrase are thine and
mine,
And all men's,—all are seeking for a sign.

Thou wert born yesterday, but thou art
old,
Weary to-day, to-morrow thou wilt sleep—
Take these for kisses on thy closing
eyelids.

I.

FIRST SONG OF THE VEIL.

How God in the beginning drew
 Over his face the Veil of blue,
 Wherefore no soul of mortal race
 Hath ever look'd upon the Face ;
 Children of earth whose spirits fail
 Hark to the First Song of the Veil.

I.

THE VEIL WOVEN.

In the beginning,
 Ere Man grew,
 The Veil was woven
 Bright and blue ;
 Soft mists and vapours
 Gather'd and mingled
 Over the black world
 Stretched below,
 While winds of heaven
 Blew from all places,
 Shining luminous,
 A starry snow.
 Blindly, dumbly,
 Darken'd under
 Ocean and river,
 Mountain and dale,
 While over his features,
 Wondrous, terrible,
 The beautiful Master
 Drew the Veil :
 Then starry, luminous,
 Rolled the Veil of azure
 O'er the first dwellings
 Of mortal race ;
 —And since the beginning
 No mortal vision,
 Pure or sinning,
 Hath seen the Face
 Yet mark me closely !
 Strongly I swear,
 Seen or seen not,
 The Face is *there* !
 When the Veil is clearest
 And sunniest,
 Closest and nearest
 The Face is prest ;
 But when, grown weary
 With long downlooking,
 The Face withdrawing
 For a time is gone,

The great Veil darkens,
 And ye see full clearly
 Glittering numberless
 The gems thereon.
 For the lamp of his features
 Divinely burning,
 Shines, and suffuses
 The Veil with light,
 And the Face, drawn backward
 With that deep sighing
 Ye hear in the gloaming,
 Leaveth the Night.

Thus it befell to men
 Graveward they journeyed,
 From waking to sleeping,
 In doubt and in fear,
 Evermore hoping,
 Evermore seeking,
 Nevermore guessing
 The Master so near :
 Making strange idols,
 Rearing fair Temples,
 Crying, denying,
 Questioning, dreaming,
 Nevermore certain
 Of God and His grace,—
 Evermore craving,
 To look on a token,
 To gaze on a Face.

Now an Evangel,
 Whom God loved deep,
 Said, ' See ! the mortals,
 How they weep !
 They grope in darkness,
 They blunder onward
 From race to race,
 Were it not better,
 Once and for ever,
 To unveil the Face ?'
 God smiled.

He said—' Not yet ?
 Much is to remember,
 Much to forget ;
 Be thou of comfort !
 How should the token
 Silence their wail ?'

And, with eyes tear-clouded,
 He gazed through the luminous,
 Star-inwrought, beautiful,
 Folds of the Veil.

II.

EARTH THE MOTHER.

BEAUTIFUL, beautiful, she lay below,

The mighty Mother of humanity,

Turning her sightless eyeballs to the glow

Of light she could not see,

Feeling the happy warmth, and breathing
slow

As if her thoughts were shining tran-
quilly.

Beautiful, beautiful the Mother lay,

Crown'd with silver spray,

The greenness gathering hushfully around

The peace of her great heart, while on
her breast

The wayward Waters, with a weeping sound,

Were sobbing into rest.

For all day long her face shone merrily,

And at its smile the waves leapt mad and
free :

But at the darkening of the Veil, she drew

The wild things to herself, and hush'd
their cries.

Then, stiller, dumber, search'd the deepen-
ing Blue

With passionate blind eyes ;

And went the old life over in her thought,

Dreamily praying as her memory wrought

The dimly guessed at, never utter'd tale,

While, over her dreaming,

Deepen'd the luminous,

Star-inwrought, beautiful,

Folds of the wondrous Veil.

For more than any of her children of clay

The beautiful Mother knows—

She is so old !

Ye would go wild to hearken, if this day

Her dumb lips should uncloze,

And the tale be told :

Such unfathomable things,

Such mystic vanishings,

She knoweth about God—she is so old.

For oft, in the beginning, long ago,

Without a Veil looked down the Face ye
know,

And Earth, an infant happy-eyed and
bright,

Look'd smiling up, and gladden'd in its
sight.

But later, when the Man Flower from her
womb

Burst into brightening bloom,

In her glad eyes a golden dust was blown

Out of the Void, and she was blind as
stone.

And since that day

She hath not seen, nor spoken,—lest her
say

Should be a sorrow and fear to mortal
race,

And doth not know the Lord hath hid
away,

But turneth up blind orbs—to feel the
Face.

III.

CHILDREN OF EARTH.

So dumbly, blindly,

So cheerly, sweetly,

The beautiful Mother

Of mortals smiled ;

Her children marvell'd

And looked upon her—

Her patient features

Were bright and mild ;

And on her eyeballs

Night and day,

A sweet light glimmer'd

From far away.

Her children gather'd

With sobs and cries,

To see the sweetness

Of sightless eyes ;

But though she held them

So dear, so dear,

She could not answer,

She could not hear.

She felt them flutter

Around her knee,

She felt their weeping,

Yet knew not wherefore—

She could not see.

' O Mother ! Mother

Of mortal race !

Is there a Father ?

Is there a Face ?'

She felt their sorrow

Against her cheek,—

She could not hearken,

She could not speak ;

With thin lips fluttering,

With blind eyes tearful,
And features pale,
She clasp'd her children,
And looked in silence
Upon the Veil.

Her hair grew silvern,
The swift days fled,
Her lap was heavy
With children dead ;
To her heart she held them,
But could not warm them—
The life within them
Was gone like dew.
Whiter, stiller,
The Mother grew.

The World grew hoary,
The World was weary,
The children cried at
The empty air :
' Father of mortals !'
The children murmured,
' Father ! Father !
Art Thou there ?'
Then the Master answer'd
From the thunder-cloud :
' I am God the Maker !
I am God the Master !
I am God the Father !'
He cried aloud.
Further, the Master
Made sign on sign—
Footprints of his spirits,
Voices divine ;
His breath was a water,
His cry was a wind.

But the people heard not,
The people saw not,—
Earth and her children
Were deaf and blind.

IV.

THE WISE MEN.

' CALL the great philosophers !
Call them all hither,—
The good, the wise !'
Their robes were snowy,
Their hearts were holy,
They had cold still eyes.
To the mountain-summits

Wearily they wander'd,
Reaching the desolate
Regions of snow,
Looming there lonely,
They searched the Veil wonderful
With tubes fire-fashion'd
In caverns below . . .
God withdrew backward,
And darker, dimmer,
Deepen'd the day :
O'er the philosophers
Looming there lonely
Night gather'd gray.
Then the wise men gazing
Saw the lights above them
Thicken and thicken,
And all went pale—
Ah ! the lamps numberless,
The mystical jewels of God,
The luminous, wonderful,
Beautiful lights of the Veil !

Alas for the Wise Men !
The snows of the mountain
Drifted about them,
And the wind cried round them,
As the lights of wonder
Multiplied !
The breath of the mountain
Froze them into stillness,—
They sighed and died.
Still in the desolate
Heights overhead,
Stand their shapes frozen,
Frozen and dead.
But a weary few,
Weary and dull and cold,
Crept faintly down again,
Looking very old ;
And when the people
Gather'd around them,
The heart went sickly
At their dull blank stare—
' O Wise Men answer !
Is there a Father ?
Is there a beautiful
Face up there ?'
The Wise Men answer'd and said :
' Bury us deep when dead—
We have travelled a weary road,
We have seen no more than ye.
'Twere better not to be—
There is no God !'

And the people, hearkening,
Saw the Veil above them,
And the darkness deepen'd,
And the Lights gleamed pale.
Ah! the lamps numberless,
The mystical jewels of God,
The luminous, wonderful,
Beautiful Lights of the Veil!

II.

THE MAN AND THE SHADOW.

On the high path where few men fare,
Orm meeteth one with hoary hair,
And speaketh, solemn and afraid,
Of that which haunteth him—a Shade.
Slowly, with weary feet and weak,
They wander to a mountain peak;
And to the man with hoary hair
A Bridge of Spirits riseth fair,
Whereon his Soul with gentle moan
Passeth unto the Land Unknown.

I.

THE SHADOW.

O AGED Man who, clad in pilgrim's garb,
With staff of thorn and wallet lying near,
Sittest among the weeds of the wayside,
Gazing with hollow eyeballs, in a dream,
On that which sleeps—a Shadow—at thy feet!

Hearst thou?

By the fluttering of thy lips,
I know thou hearest; yet, with downcast eyes,

Thou broodest moveless, letting yonder sun
Make thee a Dial, worn and venerable,
To show the passing hour. All things
around

Share stillness with thee; for behold they
keep

The gloaming of the year. To russet
brown

The heather fadeth; on the treeless hills,
O'er rusted with the slow-decaying bracken,
The sheep crawl slow with damp and red-
stain'd wool;

Keen cutting winds from the Cold Clime
begin

To frost the edges of the cloud—the Sun
Upriseth slow and silvern—many Rainbows

People the desolate air with flowers that
fade

Through pallor unto tears;—and though
these flash

Ever around thee, here thou sittest alone,—
Best Dial of them all, old, moveless, dumb,
Ineffably serene with aged eyes,
Still as a stone,—yet with some secret spell
Pertaining to the human, some faint touch
Of mystery in that worn face, to show
Thy wither'd flesh is scented with a Soul.

Nay, then, with how serene and sad a light
Thy face, strange gleams of spiritual pain
Fading there, turneth up to mine! Yea,
smile!

Tender as sunlight on the autumn hills,
Cometh that kindly lustre! Aye, thy hand—
Something mysterious streameth from thy
palm—

Spirit greets spirit—scent is mixed with
scent—

Sweet is the touch of hands. Behold me,—
Orm,
Thy brother!

Brother, we are surely bound
On the same journey,—and our eyes alike
Turn up and onward: wherefore, now thou
risest,

Lean on mine arm, and let us for a space
Pursue the path together. Ah, 'tis much,
In this so weary pilgrimage, to meet
A royal face like thine; to touch the hand
Of such a soul-fellow; to feel the want,
The upward-crying hunger, the desire,
The common hope and pathos, justified
By knowledge and gray hairs. Come on!
come on!

Up yonder! Slowly, leaning on my strength,
And I will surely pick my steps with
thine,—

While at our backs the secret Shadows
creep,
And imitate our motions with no sound.

Dost thou remember more than I? *My
Soul*
Remembereth no beginning.

One still day,
I saw the Hills around me, and beheld
The Hills had shadows,—for beyond their
rim

The fiery Sun was setting ;—then I saw
My Ghost upon the ground, and as I ran
Eastward, the melancholy semblance ran
Before my footsteps ; and I felt afraid.

Could I have shaken off this grievous thing,
Much had been spared me. Since that day
I ran,

And saw it run before me in the sun,
It hath been with me in the day and night,
The sunlight and the starlight—at the board
Hath joined me, darkening the festal cup—
Hath risen black against the whitening wall
On lonely midnights, when by the wind's
shriek

Startled from terrible visions seen in dream,
Rising upon my couch, and with quick
breath

Lighting the lamp, I hearkened—it hath
track'd

My footsteps into pastoral churchyards,
And suddenly, when I was very calm,
Look'd darkly up out of the gentle graves,
So that I clench'd my teeth, or should have
scream'd ;

And still behind me—see !—it creeps and
creeps,

Dim in the dimness of this autumn day.

Higher ! yet higher ! Though the path
is steep,

And all around the withering bracken rusts,
Up yonder on the crag, a mossy spring,
Frosted with silver, glistens, and around
Grasses as green as hedgerows in the May
Cushion the lichen'd stones.

Here let us pause :

Here, where the grass gleams emerald, and
the spring

Upbubbling faintly seemeth as a sound,
A drowsy hum, heard in the mind itself—
Here, in this stillness, let us pause and
mark

The many-colour'd Picture. Far beneath
Sleepeth the glassy Ocean like a sheet
Of liquid mother-o'-pearl, and on its rim
A Ship sleeps, and the shadow of the ship ;
Aster the reef juts darkly, edged with foam,
Through the smooth brine : oh, hark, how
loudly sings

A wild, weird ditty to a watery tune,
The fisher among his nets upon the shore ;

And yonder, far away, his shouting bairns
Are running, dwarf'd by distance small as
mice,

Along the yellow sands. Behind us, see
The immeasurable Mountains, rising silent
Against the fields of dreamy blue, wherein
The rayless crescent of the mid-day Moon
Lies like a reaper's sickle ; and before us
The immeasurable Mountains, rising silent
From bourne to bourne, from knolls of
thyme and heather,

To leafless slopes of granite, from the
slopes

Of granite to the dim and dusky heights,
Where, with a silver glimmer, silently
Pausing, the white cloud sheds miraculous
Snow

On the heights untravell'd, whither we are
bound.

O perishable Brother, what a World !
How wondrous and how fair ! Look ! look !
and think !

What magic mixed the tints of yonder west,
Wherein, upon a cushion soft as moss,
A heaven pink-tinted like a maiden's flesh,
The dim Star of the Ocean lieth cool
In palpitating silver, while beneath
Her image, putting luminous feelers forth,
Bathes liquid, like a living thing o' the Sea.
What magic? What Magician? O my
Brother,

What strange Magician, mixing up those
tints,

Pouring the water down, and sending forth
The crystal air like breath, snowing the
heavens

With luminous jewels of the day and night,
Look'd down, and saw thee lie a lifeless
clod,

And lifted thee, and moulded thee to shape,
Colour'd thee with the sunlight till thy
blood

Ran ruby, poured the chemic tints o' the
air

Through eyes that kindled into azure, stole
The flesh-tints of the lily and the rose
To make thee wondrous fair unto thyself,
Knitted thy limbs with ruby hands, and
blew

Into thy hollow heart until it stirr'd,—
Then to the inner chamber of his Heaven
Withdrawing, left in midst of such a world

The living apparition of a Man,—
 A mystery amid the mysteries,—
 A lonely Semblance, with a wild appeal
 To which no form that lives, however dear,
 Hath given a tearless answer,—a Shape, a
 Soul,
 Projecting ever as it ageth on
 A SHADE which is a silence and a sleep.

Yet not companionless, within this waste
 Of splendour, dwellest thou—here by thy
 side

I linger, girdled for the road like thee,
 With pilgrim's staff and scrip; and through
 the vales,

Below, a Storm of people like to thee
 Drifts with thee westward darkly, cloud on
 cloud,

Uttering a common moan, and to our eyes
 Casting one common shadow; yet each
 Soul

Therein now seeketh, with a want like thine,
 The inevitable bourne. Nor those alone,
 Thy perishable brethren, share thy want,
 And wander haunted through the world;
 but Beasts,

With that dumb hunger in their eyes, pro-
 ject

Their darkness—by the yeanning Lambkin's
 side

Its shade plays, and the basking Lizard
 bath

Its image on the flat stone in the sun,—
 And these, the greater and the less, like
 thee

Shall perish in their season: in the mere
 The slender Water-Lily sees her shape,
 And sheddeth softly on the summer air
 Her last chill breathing; and the forest
 Tree

That, standing glorious for a hundred years,
 Lengthens its shadow daily from the sun,
 Fulfilleth its own prophecy at last,
 And falleth, falleth. Art thou comforted?
 Nay, then,—behold the Shadows of the
 Hills,

Attesting these are perishable too,
 And cry no more thou art companionless.

How, like a melancholy bell, thy voice
 Echoes the word! 'Companionless!' Thine
 eyes
 Suffer with light and tears, and wearily

Thou searchest all the picture beautiful
 For vanished faces. Still, 'companionless!'
 O Brother, let me hold thy hand again—
 Spirit greets spirit—scent is mixed with
 scent—

Sweet is the touch of hands. Look on me!
 Orm!

Thy Brother!

And no nearer? O 'tis sad
 That here, like dumb Beasts, yearning with
 blank eyes,

Wringing each other's hands, pale, passion-
 ate,

Full of immortal likeness, wild with thirst
 To mingle, yet we here must stand asunder,
 Two human Shapes, two Mansions built
 apart,

Two pale Men,—and two Ghosts upon the
 ground!

Tread back my footsteps with me in thy
 mind:

I have wander'd long and far, and O I
 have seen

Strange visions; for my Soul resembles not
 The miserable souls of common men—

Mere Lamps to guide the Body to the
 board

And lustful bed—say, rather, 'tis a Wind
 Prison'd in flesh, and shrieking to be free
 To blow on the high places of the Lord!
 Hither and hither hath its pent-up struggle
 Compelled my footsteps—o'er the snowy
 Steeps,

Through the green Valleys—into huts of
 hinds

And palaces of princes. It hath raved
 Loud as the wind among the pines for rest,
 Answered by all the winds of all the world
 Gather'd like howling wolves beneath the
 Moon;

And it hath lain still as the air that broods
 On meres Coruisken on dead days of frost,
 In supreme moments of unearthly bliss,
 Feeling the pathos and exceeding peace
 Of thoughts as delicate and far removed
 As starlight. But in stormy times and calm,
 In pain or pleasure, came the Shadow too,
 Meeting the Soul in its superbest hour,
 And making it afraid.

These twain have dwelt
 Together, haunting one another's bliss,—

The Wind, that would be on the extremest
 peaks,
 And the strange Shadow of the prison-
 house,
 Wherein 'tis pent so very cunningly.
 Nay, how they mock each other! 'Shade
 accursed,'
 The Wind moans, 'yet a little while, and
 thou
 shalt perish with the poor and mean abode
 That casts thee—follow and admonish
that,—
 To *me* thine admonition promiseth
 The crumbling of the ruin chain'd wherein
 I cry for perfect freedom.' Then methinks
 The wild Shade waves its arms grotesque
 and says,
 In dumb show, 'Peace, thou unsubstantial
 Wind!
 Bred of the peevish humour of the flesh,
 Born in the body and the cells o' the brain;
 With these things shalt thou perish,—foul
 as gas
 Thou senseless shalt dissolve upon the air,
 And none shall know that thou hast ever
 been.'
 Thus have they mock'd each other morn
 and mirk
 In speech not human. When I lay at
 night,
 Drunk with the ichor of the form I clasp'd,
 How hath the sad Soul, mocking the brute
 bliss,
 The radiant glistening play o' the sense,
 withdrawn
 Unto the innermost chamber of the brain,
 And moan'd in shame; while in the taper
 light,
 The Shades, with clasping arms and waving
 hair,
 Seem'd saying, 'Gather roses while thou
 mayst,
 O royal purple Body doom'd to die!
 And hush, O Wind, for *thou* shalt perish
 too!'

I saw a Hind at sunrise—dumb he stood,
 And saw the Dawn press with her rosy feet
 The dewy sweetness from the fields of hay,
 Felt the World brighten—leaves and flowers
 and grass
 Grow luminous—yet beside the pool he
 stood,

Wherein, in the gray vapour of the marsh,
 His mottled oxen stood with large blank
 eyes
 And steaming nostrils: and his eyes like
 theirs
 Were empty, and he humm'd a surly song
 Out of a hollow heart akin to beast's:
 Yea, sun nor star had little joy for him,
 Nor tree nor flower,—to him the world was
 all
 Mere matter for a ploughshare. On the
 hill
 Above him, with loose jerkin backward
 blown
 By winds of morning, and his white brow
 bare
 Like marble, stood a Singer—one of those
 Who write in heart's-blood what is blotted
 out
 With ox-gall; and his Soul was in his eyes
 To see the coming of the beautiful Day,
 His lips hung heavy with beauty, and he
 looked
 Down on the surly clod among the kine,
 And sent his Soul unto him through his
 eyes,
 Transfiguring him with beauty and with
 praise
 Into the common pathos. Of such stuffs
 Is mankind shapen, both, like thee and
 me,
 Wear westward, to the melancholy Realm
 Where all the gather'd Shades of all the
 world
 Lie as a cloud around the feet of God.

This darkens all my seeking. O my friend!
 If the whole world had royal eyes like
 thine,
 I were much holpen; but to look upon
 Eyes like the ox-herd's, blank as very
 beast's,
 Shoots sorrow to the very roots of life.
 Aye! there were hope indeed if each Man
 seemed
 A Spirit's habitation,—but the world
 Is curst with these blank faces, still as
 stone,
 And darkening inward. Have these dumb
 things Souls?
 If they be tenantless, dare thou and I
 Christen by so sublime a name the Wind
 Bred in the wasting body?

Yesternorn,
 In yonder city that afar away
 Staineth the peaceful blue with its foul
 breath,
 I passed into a dimly-lighted hall,
 And heard a lanthorn-jaw'd Philosopher,
 Clawing his straw-like bunch of yellow hair,
 With skeletonian periods and a voice
 Shrill as the grating of two bones. 'O
 Soul,'
 Quoth he, 'O beauteousness we name the
 Soul,
 Thou art the Flower of all the life o' the
 World,
 And not in every clod of flesh shoots forth
 The perfect apparition of thy tints
 Immortal! Flower and scented bloom of
 things
 Thou growest on no dunghill in the sun!'
 A flower, a flower immortal? How I
 laugh'd!
 Clip me the lily from its secret roots,
 And farewell all the wonder of the flower!

That self-same day, in that same city of
 souls,
 I saw the King, a man of flesh and blood,
 In gorgeous raiment. O the little eyes
 Glimmering underneath the golden crown,
 While sitting on a throne in open court,
 Fountains of perfume sprinkling him with
 spray,
 He heard the gray men of his kingdom
 speak
 Of mighty public matters solemnly,
 And nodding grave approval, all the while
 Crack'd filberts like a Monkey; yet at
 times
 His shadow, and the shadow of his throne,
 Falling against a grand sarcophagus
 That filled one corner of the fountain'd
 court,
 Awoke a nameless trouble, and the more
 The sun shone, deeper on the tomb close
 by
 The double shadow linger'd. Then me-
 thought
 I was transported to a marvellous land,
 A mighty forest of primæval growth
 Brooding in its own darkness—underwood
 Breast-deep, and swarming thick with mon-
 strous shapes;
 And from a bough above me, by his tail

A Man-beast swung and glimmer'd down
 at me
 With little eyes and shining ivory teeth.
 Laugh with me! Brute-beast and the small-
 eyed King
 Seem'd brethren—face, eyes, mouth, and
 lips the same—
 Only the brute-beast was the happier,
 Since never nameless trouble filled his eyes,
 Because his ghost upon the glimmering
 grass
 Beneath him quivered, while he poised
 above
 With philosophic swing by claws and tail.
 'O Soul the Flower of all the life o' the
 World,
 O perfect Flower and scented bloom of
 things!'
 O birth betoken'd in that windy hour,
 When, sloughing off the brute, we stand
 and groan,
 First frighten'd by the Shadow that has
 chased
 Our changes up through all the grooves of
 Time!

Lift up thine eyes, old man, and look on
 me:
 Like thee, a dark point in the scheme of
 things,
 Where the dumb Spirit that pervadeth all—
 Grass, trees, beasts, man—and lives and
 grows in all—
 Pauses upon itself, and awe-struck feels
 The shadow of the next and imminent
 Transfiguration. So, a living *Man!*
 That entity within whose brooding brain
 Knowledge begins and ends—that point in
 time
 When Time becomes the Shadow of a
 Dial,—
 That dreadful living and corporeal Hour,
 Who, wafted by an unseen Hand apart
 From the wild rush of temporal things that
 pass,
 Pauses and listens,—listening sees his face
 Glazed in still waters of Eternity,—
 Gazes in awe at his own loveliness,
 And fears it,—glanceth with affrighted eyes
 Backward and forward, and beholds all
 dark,
 Alike the place whence he unconscious
 came,

And that to which he conscious drifteth
on,—
Yet seeth before him, wheresoe'er he turn,
The Shadow of himself, presaging doom.

II.

THE RAINBOW.

THE OLD MAN SPEAKS.

MINE eyes are dim. Where am I? Is this
Snow
Falling in the cold air? All darkeneth,—
As if between me and the light there stood
Some shape that lived. My God, is this the
end?

ORM.

Not yet! not yet! Look up! Thou livest
yet!
'Tis but a little faintness, and will pass.

OLD MAN.

Pass? All things pass. The light, the
morning dew,
The power that plotted and the foot that
clomb;
And delicate bloom of life upon the flesh
Fading like peach-bloom 'neath a finger-
press.
O God, to blossom like a flower in a day,
Then wear a winter in slow withering. . . .
Why not with sun-flash, Lord, or bolt of
fire? . . .
Where am I?

ORM.

On the lonely heights of Earth;
Beneath thee lies the Ocean, and above
thee
The Hills stand silent in the setting Sun.

OLD MAN.

What forms are these that come and change
and go?

ORM.

Desolate Shadows of the gathering Rain.

OLD MAN.

What sound is that I hear?

ORM.

The homeless Wind
Shivering behind the Shadows as they glide,
And moaning.

OLD MAN.

Ah!

ORM.

Some phantom of the brain
Appalleth thee! Cling to me! Courage!

OLD MAN.

Hark!

Dost thou not hear?

ORM.

What?

OLD MAN.

Voices of the shapes
That yonder, with their silver robes wind-
blown,
All faint and shadowless against the light,
Beckon me. Hush! They sing a lullaby!
They are the spirits that so long ago
Sung round my cradle,—and they sing the
same,—
Though I am grown the ghosts of that fair
time.
No! faces! These are faces I remember!
A fair face that, sweet in its golden hair—
And lower, see! a little pale-faced child's,
Sad as a star. 'Father!' A voice cried
'Father!'
Lift me up! Look! How they are
gathering!
All sing! All beckon!

ORM.

. . . 'Tis the end indeed.

Within his breast the life-blood of the
heart
Swells like a breaking wave, as, clinging
round me,
He yearneth, fascinated yet afraid,
With wild dim eyes that look on vacancy!

OLD MAN.

What gleameth yonder in the brightening
air?

ORM.

The Spirit of the Rainbow hovering faint
Amid the wind-blown shadows of the Rain.

OLD MAN.

Shadows! I see them—all the Shadows—
see!
Uprising from the wild green sea of graves

That beats forlorn about the shores of earth.

Shadows—behold them!—how they gather and gather,

More and yet more, darker and darker yet ;
Drifting with a low moan of mystery

Upward, still upward, till they almost touch
The bright dim edge of the Bow, but there they pause,

Struggling in vain against a breath from heaven,

And blacken. Hark! their sound is like a Sea !

Above them, with how dim a light divine,
Burneth the Bow,—and lo ! it is a Bridge,
Dim, many-colour'd, strangely brightening,
Whereon, all faint and fair and shadowless,
Spirits like those, with faces I remember,
With a low sound like the soft rain in spring,

With a faint echo of the cradle song,
Coming and going, beckon me ! I come !
Who holds me ? Touch me not. O help !
I am called !

Ah !

[Dies.

ORM.

Gone ! Dead ! Something very cold
past by

And touched my cheek like breath ; even
then, O God,

My comrade heard Thy summons, and
behold !

Here lieth, void and cold and tenantless,
His feeble habitation. Poor gray hairs,
Thin with long blowing in the windy cold,
At last ye sadden ruin ! poor sweet lips,
Ye are dewless, ye are silent ! poor worn
heart,

No more shalt thou, like to a worn-out
watch,

Tick feebly out the time !

O Shadow sad,
Monitor, haunter, waiter till the end,
Brother of that which darkeneth at my feet,
Hast thou too fled, and dost thou follow
still

The Spirit's quest divine ? Nay, thou dark
Ghost !

Thy work is done for ever—thou art
doom'd—

A breath from heaven holds thee to the
ground ;

And here unto the ruin thou art chained,
Moveless, and dark, no more the ghost of
life,

But dead, the Shadow of a thing of stone.

Thus far, no further, Shadow!—but, O
brother,

O Spirit, where art *thou* ? From what far
height

Up yonder, pausing for a moment's space,
Lookest thou back thy blessing ? Art thou
free ?

Dost thou still hunger upward seeking rest,
Because some new horizon, strange as ours,
Shuts out the prospect of the place of
peace ?

Art thou a wave that, having broken once,
Gatherest up a glorious crest once more,
And glimmerest onward,—but to break
again ;

Or dost thou smooth thyself to perfect
peace

In tranquil sight of some Eternal Shore ?

From the still region whither thou hast
fled,

No answer cometh ; but with dewy wings
Brightening before it dieth, how divine
Burneth the Rainbow, at its earthliest edge
Now fading like a flower ! Is it indeed
A Bridge whereon fair Spirits come and go ?
O Brother, didst thou glide to peace that
way ?

Silent—all silent—dimmer, dimmer yet,
Hue by hue dying, creeping back to
heaven—

O let me too pass by it up to God !

Too late—it fadeth, faint and far away !

The Shadows gather round me—from the
ground

My dark familiar looketh silently.

O Shadows, be at peace, for ye shall rest,
Yea, surely ye shall cease ; for now, as ever,
Out of your cloudy being springs serene
The Bow of Mystery that spans the globe !

The beautiful Bow of thoughts ineffable,
Last consequence of this fair cloud of flesh !
The dim miraculous Iris of sweet Dream !
Rainbow of promise ! Colour, Light, and
Soul !

That comes, dies, comes again, and ever
draws
Its strangest source from tears—that lives,
that dies—
That is, is not—now here, now faded
wholly—
Ever assuring, ever blessing us,
Ever eluding, ever heckoning ;
Born of our essence, yet more strange than
we,
As human, yet more beautiful tenfold,—
Rising in earth out of our cloudy being,
Touching forlornest places with its tints,
Strewing the Sea with opal, scattering
roses
Across the hollow pathways of the Wind,
Fringing the clouds with flowers of crimson
fire,
And melting, melting (whither our wild
eyes
Follow imploring, whither our weak feet
Totter for ever), melting far away,
Yonder ! upon the dimmest peak of Heaven !

III.

SONGS OF CORRUPTION.

Songs of Corruption, woven thus,
With tender thoughts and tremulous,
Sitting with a solemn face
In an island burying-place,
While weary waves broke sad and slow
O'er weedy wastes of sand below,
And stretch'd on every side of me
The rainy grief of the gray Sea.

I.

PHANTASY.

IF thou art an Angel,
Who hath seen thee,
O Phantasy, brooding
Over my pale wife's sleeping?
In the darkness
I am listening
For the rustle of thy robe ;
Would I might feel thee breathing,
Would I might hear thee speaking,
Would I might only touch thee
By the hand !

She is very cold,
My wife is very cold,

Her eyes are withered,
Her breath is dried like dew ;—
The sound of my weeping
Disturbeth her not ;
Thy shadow, O Phantasy,
Lieth like moonlight
Upon her features,
And the lines of her mouth
Are very sweet.

In the night
I heard my pale wife moaning,
Yet did not know
What made her afraid.
My pale wife said,
' I am very cold,'
And shrank away from thee,
Though I saw thee not ;
And she kissed me and went to sleep,
And gave a little start upon my arm
When on her living lips
Thy freezing finger was laid.

What art thou—
Art thou God's Angel?
Or art thou only
The chilly night-wind,
Stealing downward
From the regions where the sun
Dwelleth alone with his shadow
On a waste of snow ?
Art thou the water or earth ?
Or art thou the fatal air ?
Or art thou only
An apparition
Made by the mist
Of mine own eyes weeping ?

She is very cold,
My wife is very cold !
I will kiss her,
And the silver-haired mother will kiss
her,
And the little children will kiss her ;
And then we will wrap her warm,
And hide her in a hollow space ;
And the house will be empty
Of thee, O Phantasy,
Cast on the unhappy household
By the strange white clay.

Much I marvel, O Phantasy,
That one so gentle,

So sweet, when living,
Should cast a Shadow as vast as thine ;
For, lo ! thou loomest
Upward and heavenward,
Hiding the sunlight
Blackening the snow,
And the pointing of thy finger
Fadeth far away
On the sunset-tinged edges,
Where Man's company ends,
And God's loneliness begins.

II.

THE DREAM OF THE WORLD
WITHOUT DEATH.

Now, sitting by her side, worn out with weeping,
Behold, I fell to sleep, and had a vision,
Wherein I heard a wondrous Voice in-
toning :

Crying aloud, 'The Master on His throne
Openeth now the seventh seal of wonder,
And beckoneth back the angel men name
Death.

And at His feet the mighty Angel kneeleth,
Breathing not ; and the Lord doth look
upon him,
Saying, 'Thy wanderings on earth are
ended.'

And lo ! the mighty Shadow sitteth idle
Even at the silver gates of heaven,
Drowsily looking in on quiet waters,
And puts his silence among men no longer.

The world was very quiet. Men in traffic
Cast looks over their shoulders ; pallid
seamen
Shivered to walk upon the decks alone ;

And women barred their doors with bars of
iron,
In the silence of the night ; and at the sun-
rise
Trembled behind the husbandmen afield.

I could not see a kirkyard near or far ;
I thirsted for a green grave, and my vision
Was weary for the white gleam of a tomb-
stone.

But hearkening dumbly, ever and anon
I heard a cry out of a human dwelling,
And felt the cold wind of a lost one's going.

One struck a brother fiercely, and he fell,
And faded in a darkness ; and that other
Tore his hair, and was afraid, and could
not perish.

One struck his aged mother on the mouth,
And she vanished with a gray grief from his
hearthstone.

One melted from her bairn, and on the
ground

With sweet unconscious eyes the bairn lay
smiling.

And many made a weeping among moun-
tains,
And hid themselves in caverns, and were
drunken.

I heard a voice from out the beauteous
earth,
Whose side rolled up from winter into
summer,
Crying, 'I am grievous for my children.'

I heard a voice from out the hoary ocean,
Crying, 'Burial in the breast of me were
better,
Yea, hural in the salt flags and green
crystals.'

I heard a voice from out the hollow ether,
Saying, 'The thing ye cursed hath been
abolished—
Corruption, and decay, and dissolution !'

And the world shrieked, and the summer-
time was bitter,
And men and women feared the air behind
them ;
And for lack of its green graves the world
was hateful.

Now at the bottom of a snowy mountain
I came upon a woman thin with sorrow,
Whose voice was like the crying of a sea-
gull.

Saying, 'O Angel of the Lord, come hither,
And bring me him I seek for on thy bosom,
That I may close his eyelids and embrace
him.

, I curse thee that I cannot look upon him !
I curse thee that I know not he is sleeping !
Yet know that he has vanished upon God !

' I laid my little girl upon a wood-bier,
And very sweet she seemed, and near unto
me ;
And slipping flowers into her shroud was
comfort.

' I put my silver mother in the darkness,
And kissed her, and was solaced by her
kisses,
And set a stone, to mark the place, above
her.

' And green, green were their quiet sleeping-
places,
So green that it was pleasaut to remember
That I and my tall man would sleep beside
them.

' The closing of dead eyelids is not dreadful,
For comfort comes upon us when we close
them,
And tears fall, and our sorrow grows
familiar ;

' And we can sit above them where they
slumber,
And spin a dreamy pain into a sweetness,
And know indeed that we are very near
them.

' But to reach out empty arms is surely
dreadful,
And to feel the hollow empty world is
awful,
And bitter grow the silence and the dis-
tance.

' There is no space for grieving or for
weeping ;
No touch, no cold, no agony to strive with,
And nothing but a horror and a blankness !'

Now behold I saw a woman in a mud-hut
Raking the white spent embers with her
fingers,
And fouling her bright hair with the white
ashes.

Her mouth was very bitter with the ashes ;
Her eyes with dust were blinded ; and her
sorrow
Sohbed in the throat of her like gurgling
water.

And all around the voiceless hills were
hoary,
But red light scorched their edges ; and
above her
There was a soundless trouble of the
vapours.

' Whither, and O whither,' said the woman,
' O Spirit of the Lord, hast Thou conveyed
them,
My little ones, my little son and daughter ?

' For, lo ! we wandered forth at early
morning,
And winds were blowing round us, and
their mouths
Blew rose-buds to the rose-buds, and their
eyes

' Looked violets at the violets, and their
hair
Made sunshine in the sunshine, and their
passing
Left a pleasure in the dewy leaves behind
them ;

' And suddenly my little son looked up-
ward,
And his eyes were dried like dew-drops ;
and his going
Was like a blow of fire upon my face.

' And my little son was gone. My little
daughter
Looked round me for him, clinging to my
vesture ;
But the Lord had drawn him from me, and
I knew it

' By the sign He gives the stricken, that the
lost one
Lingers nowhere on the earth, on hill or
valley,
Neither underneath the grasses nor the
tree-roots.

- ' And my shriek was like the splitting of an ice-reef,
And I sank among my hair, and all my palm
Was moist and warm where the little hand
had filled it.
- ' Then I fled and sought him wildly, hither
and thither—
Though I knew that he was stricken from
me wholly
By the token that the Spirit gives the
stricken.
- ' I sought him in the sunlight and the star-
light,
I sought him in great forests, and in waters
Where I saw mine own pale image looking
at me.
- ' And I forgot my little bright-haired
daughter,
Though her voice was like a wild-bird's far
behind me,
Till the voice ceased, and the universe was
silent.
- ' And stilly, in the starlight, came I back-
ward
To the forest where I missed him ; and no
voices
Brake the stillness as I stooped down in the
starlight,
- ' And saw two little shoes filled up with dew,
And no mark of little footsteps any farther,
And knew my little daughter had gone
also.'
- But beasts died ; yea, the cattle in the
yoke,
The milk-cow in the meadow, and the
sheep,
And the dog upon the doorstep : and men
envied.
- And birds died ; yea, the eagle at the sun-
gate,
The swan upon the waters, and the farm-
fowl,
And the swallows on the housetops : and
men envied.
- And reptiles ; yea, the toad upon the road-
side,
The slimy, speckled snake among the grass,
The lizard on the ruin : and men envied.
- The dog in lonely places cried not over
The body of his master ; but it missed
him,
And whined into the air, and died, and
rotted.
- The traveller's horse lay swollen in the
pathway,
And the blue fly fed upon it ; but no
traveller
Was there ; nay, not his footprint on the
ground.
- The cat mew'd in the midnight, and the
blind
Gave a rustle, and the lamp burnt blue and
faint,
And the father's bed was empty in the
morning.
- The mother fell to sleep beside the cradle,
Rocking it, while she slumbered, with her
foot,
And wakened,—and the cradle there was
empty.
- I saw a two-years' child, and he was
playing ;
And he found a dead white bird upon the
doorway,
And laughed, and ran to show it to his
mother.
- The mother moaned, and clutched him, and
was bitter,
And flung the dead white bird across the
threshold ;
And another white bird flitted round and
round it,
- And uttered a sharp cry, and twittered and
twittered,
And lit beside its dead mate, and grew
busy,
Strewing it over with green leaves and
yellow.
- So far, so far to seek for were the limits

Of affliction ; and men's terror grew a
homeless
Terror, yea, and a fatal sense of blankness.

There was no little token of distraction,
There was no visible præsence of bereave-
ment,
Such as the mourner easeth out his heart
on.

There was no comfort in the slow farewell,
Nor gentle shutting of beloved eyes,
Nor beautiful broodings over sleeping
features.

There were no kisses on familiar faces,
No weaving of white grave-clothes, no last
pondering
Over the still wax cheeks and folded fingers.

There was no putting tokens under pillows,
There was no dreadful beauty slowly fading,
Fading like moonlight softly into darkness.

There were no churchyard paths to walk on,
thinking
How near the well-beloved ones are lying.
There were no sweet green graves to sit and
muse on,

Till grief should grow a summer meditation,
The shadow of the passing of an angel,
And sleeping should seem easy, and not
cruel.

Nothing but wondrous parting and a blank-
ness.

But I awoke, and, lo ! the burthen was
uplifted,
And I prayed within the chamber where she
slumbered,
And my tears flowed fast and free, but were
not bitter.

I eased my heart three days by watching
near her,
And made her pillow sweet with scent and
flowers,
And could bear at last to put her in the
darkness.

And I heard the kirk-bells ringing very
slowly,

And the priests were in their vestments, and
the earth
Dripped awful on the hard wood, yet I
bore it.

And I cried, 'O unseen Sender of Corrup-
tion,
I bless Thee for the wonder of Thy mercy,
Which softeneth the mystery and the
parting.

' I bless Thee for the change and for the
comfort,
The bloomless face, shut eyes, and waxen
fingers,—
For Sleeping, and for Silence, and Corrup-
tion.'

III.

SOUL AND FLESH.

MY Soul, thou art wed
To a perishable thing,
But death from thy strange mate
Shall sever thee full soon,
If thou wilt reap wings
Take all the Flesh can give :

The touch of the smelling dead,
The kiss of the maiden's mouth,
The sorrow, the hope, the fear,
That floweth along the veins :
Take all, nor be afraid ;
Cling close to thy mortal Mate !

So shalt thou duly wring
Out of thy long embrace
The hunger and thirst whereof
The Master maketh thee wings,—
The beautiful, wondrous yearning,
The mighty thirst to endure.

Be not afraid, my Soul,
To leave thy Mate at last,
Thou ye shall learn in time
To love each other well ;
But put her gently down
In the earth beneath thy feet.

And dry thine eyes and hasten
To the imperishable springs ;
And it shall be well for thee
In the beautiful Master's sight,
If it be found in the end
'Thou hast used her tenderly.

IV.

THE SOUL AND THE
DWELLING.

A House miraculous of breath
The royal Soul inhabiteth.
Alone therein for evermore,
It seeks in vain to pass the door ;
But through the windows of the eyne
Signalleth to its kin divine. . . .
This is a song Orm sang of old
To Oona with the locks of gold.

COME to me ! clasp me !
Spirit to spirit !
Bosom to bosom !
Tenderly, clingingly,
Mingle to one ! . . .

Now, from my kisses
Withdrawing, and blushing,
Why dost thou gaze on me ?
Why dost thou weep ?
Why dost thou cling to me,
Imploring, adoring ?
What are those meanings
That flash from thine eyes ?

Pitiful ! pitiful !
Now I conceive thee !—
Yea, it were easier
Striking two swords,
To weld them together,
Than spirit with spirit
To mingle, though rapture
Be perfect as this.
Shut in a tremulous
Prison, each spirit
Hungers and yearns—
Never, ah never,
Belovéd, belovéd,
Have these eyes look'd on
The face of thy Soul.

Ours are two dwellings,
Wondrously beautiful,
Made in the darkness
Of soft-tinted flesh :
In the one dwelling,
Prison'd I dwell,
And lo ! from the other
Thou beckonest me !
I am a Soul !

Thou art a Soul !
These are our dwellings !
O to be free !

Beauteous, belovéd,
Is thy dear dwelling ;
All o'er it blowing
The roses of dawn—
Bright is the portal,
The dwelling is scented
Within and without ;
Strange are the windows,
So clouded with azure,
The faces are hidden
That look from within.

Now I approach thee,
Sweetness and odour
Tremble upon me—
Wild is the rapture !
Thick is the perfume !
Sweet bursts of music
Thrill from within !
Closer, yet closer !
Bosom to bosom !
Tenderly, clingingly,
Mingle to one. . . .
Ah ! but what faces
Are those that look forth ! . . .

Faces ? What faces ? As I speak they die
And all my gaze is empty as of old.
O love ! the world was fair, and everywhere
Rose wondrous human dwellings like mine
own,
And many of these were foul and dark with
dust,
Haunted by things obscene, not beautiful,
But most were very royal, meet to serve
Angels for habitation. All alone
Brooded my Soul by a mysterious fire
Dim-burning, never-dying, from the first
Lit in the place by God ; the winds and
rains
Struck on the abode and spared it ; day and
night
Above it came and went ; and in the night
My Soul gazed from the threshold silently,
And saw the congregated lamps that swung
Above it in the dark and dreamy blue ;
And in the day my Soul gazed on the earth,
And sought the dwellings there for signs,
and lo !

None answer'd ; for the Souls inhabitant
 Drew coldly back and darken'd ; and I said,
 ' In all the habitations I behold,
 Some old, some young, some fair, and
 some not fair,
 There dwells no Soul I know.' But as I
 spake,
 I saw beside me in a dreamy light
 Thy habitation, so serene and fair,
 So stately in a rosy dawn of day,
 That all my Soul look'd forth and cried,
 ' Behold,
 The sweetest dwelling in the whole wide
 world !'
 And thought not of the inmate, but gazed
 on,
 Lingeringly, hushfully ; for as I gazed
 Something came glistening up into thine
 eyes,
 And beckon'd, and a murmur from the
 portal,
 A murmur and a perfume, floated hither,
 Thrill'd through my dwelling, making every
 chamber

Tremble with mystical,
 Dazzling desire !

. . . Come to me ! close to me !
 Bosom to bosom !
 Tenderly, clingingly,
 Mingle to one !
 Wildly within me
 Some eager inmate
 Rushes and trembles,
 Peers from the eyes
 And calls in the ears,
 Yearns to thee, cries to thee !
 Claiming old kinship
 In lives far removed ! . . .
 Vainly, ah vainly !
 Pent in its prison
 Must each miraculous
 Spirit remain,—
 Yet inarticulate,
 Striving to language
 Music and memory,
 Rapture and dream !

Rapture and dream ! Belov'd one, in vain
 My spirit seeks for utterance. Alas,
 Not yet shall there be speech. Not yet,
 not yet,
 One dweller in a mortal tenement

Can know what secret faces hide away
 Within the neighbouring dwelling. Ah
 beloved,
 The mystery, the mystery ! We cry
 For God's face, who have never looked
 upon
 The poorest Soul's face in the wonderful
 Soul-haunted world. A spirit once there
 dwelt
 Beside me, close as thou—two wedded
 souls,
 We mingled—flesh was mixed with flesh—
 we knew
 All joys, all unreserves of mingled life—
 Yea, not a sunbeam filled the house of one
 But touched the other's threshold. Hear
 me swear
 I never knew that Soul ! All touch, all
 sound,
 All light was insufficient. The Soul, pent
 In its strange chambers, cried to mine in
 vain—
 We saw each other not : but oftentimes
 When I was glad, the windows of my
 neighbour
 Were dark and drawn, as for a funeral ;
 And sometimes, when, most weary of the
 world,
 My Soul was looking forth at dead of night,
 I saw the neighbouring dwelling brightly
 lit,
 The happy windows flooded full of light,
 As if a feast were being held within.
 Yet were there passing flashes, random
 gleams,
 Low sounds, from the inhabitant divine
 I knew not ; and I shrunk from some of
 these
 In a mysterious pain. At last, Belov'd,
 The frail fair mansion where that spirit
 dwelt
 Totter'd and trembled, through the won-
 drous flesh
 A dim sick glimmer from the fire within
 Grew fainter, fainter. ' I am going away,'
 The Spirit seemed to cry ; and as it cried,
 Stood still and dim and very beautiful
 Up in the windows of the eyes—there
 linger'd,
 First seen, last seen, a moment, silently
 So different, more beautiful tenfold
 Than all that I had dreamed—I sobbed
 aloud

'Stay! stay!' but at the one despairing
word

The spirit faded, from the hearth within
The dim fire died with one last quivering
gleam—

The house became a ruin; and I moaned
'God help me! 'twas herself that look'd at
me!

First seen! I never knew her face be-
fore! . . .

Too late! too late! too late!

. . . Yea, from my forehead

Kiss the dark fantasy!

Tenderly, clingingly,

Mingle to one!

Is not this language?

Music and memory,

Rapture and dream?—

O in the dewy-bright

Day-dawn of love,

Is it not wondrous,

Blush-red with roses,

The beautiful, mystical

House of the Soul!

Lo in my innermost

Chambers is floating

Soft perfume and music

That tremble from *thee*. . . .

Ah, but what faces

Are these, that look forth?

. . . Sit, still, Belovéd, while I search thy
looks

For memories. O thou art beautiful!

Crownéd with silken gold,—soft amber
tints

Coming and going on thy peach-hued
flesh,—

Thy breath a perfume,—thy blue eyes twain
stars—

Thy lips like dewy rosebuds to the eye,

Though living, to the touch. O royal
abode,

Flooded with music, light, and precious
scent,

Curtainéd soft with subtle mystery!

Nay, stir not, but gaze on, still and
serene,

Possessing me with thy superb still sweep

Of eyes ineffable—sit still, my queen,

And let me, clinging on thee, court the
ways

Wherein I know thee. Nay, even now,
Belovéd,

When all the world like some vast tidal
wave

Withdraws and leaves us on a golden
shore

Alone together—when thou most art
mine—

When the winds blow for us, and the soft
stars

Are shining for us, where we dream apart,—

Now our two dwellings in a dizzy hour

Have mingled their foundations—clinging
thus

And hungering round me in mine ecstasy,—

Belovéd, do I know thee? Hath my
Soul

Spoken to thine the imperial speech of
Souls,

Perfect in meaning and in melody?

Tell me, Belovéd, while thou sittest so,

Mine own, my queen, my palace of de-
lights,

What lights are these that pass and come
again

Within thee? Is the Spirit looking forth,

Or is it but the glittering gleams of
time

Playing on vacant windows? Can I swear
Thou thinkest of me now at all? Behold

Now all thy beauty is suffused with bright-
ness—

Thou blushest and thou smilest. Tell me
true,

Thou then wast far within, and with that
cry

I woke thee out of dream. O speak to
me!—

Soul's speech, Belovéd! Do not smile that
way—

A flood of brightness issues from thy
door,

But mine is scarcely bright. Lovest thou
me,

Belovéd, my belovéd? Soul belovéd,

Do I possess thee? Sight and scent and
touch

Are insufficient. Open! let me in

To the strange chambers I have never
seen!

Heart of the rose, unopen! or I die!

V.

SONGS OF SEEKING.

Songs of Seeking, day by day
 Sung while wearying on the way,—
 Feeble cries of one who knows
 Nor whence he comes, nor whither goes.
 Yet of his own free will doth wear
 The bloody Cross of those who fare
 Upward and on in sad accord,—
 The footsore Seekers of the Lord.

I

O THOU whose ears incline unto my singing,
 Woman or man, thou surely bearest thy
 burden,
 And I who sing, and all men, bear their
 burdens.

Even as a meteor-stone from suns afar,
 I fell unto the ways of life and breathed,
 Wherefore to much on earth I feel a
 stranger.

I found myself in a green noriand valley,
 A place of gleaming waters and gray
 heavens,
 And weirdly woven colours in the air.

A basin round whose margin rose the
 mountains
 Green-hased, snow-crown'd, and windy
 saeters midway,
 And the thin line of a spire against the
 mountains.

Around were homes of peasants rude and
 holy,
 Who look'd upon the mountains and the
 forests,
 On the waters, on the vapours, without
 wonder ;

Who, happy in their labours six days
 weekly,
 Were happy on their knees upon the
 seventh.
 But I wonder'd, being strange, and was not
 happy.

For I cried : ' O Thou Unseen, how shall
 I praise Thee—
 How shall I name Thee glorious whom I
 know not—
 If Thou art as these say, I scarce conceive
 Thee.

' Unfold to me the image of Thy features,
 Come down upon my heart, that I may
 know Thee ;—
 And I made a song of seeking, on a moun-
 tain.

II.

QUEST.

As in the snowy stillness,
 Where the stars shine greenly
 In a mirror of ice,
 The Reindeer abideth alone,
 And speedeth swiftly
 From her following shadow
 In the moon,—
 I speed for ever
 From the mystic shape
 That my life projects,
 And my Soul perceives ;
 And I loom for ever
 Through desolate regions
 Of wondrous thought,
 And I fear the thing
 That follows me,
 And cannot escape it
 Night or day.

Doth Thy wing'd lightning
 Strike, O Master !
 The timid Reindeer
 Flying her shade ?
 Will Thy wrath pursue me,
 Because I cannot
 Escape the shadow
 Of the thing I am ?

I have pried and pondered,
 I have agonised,
 I have sought to find Thee,
 Yet still must roam,
 Affrighted, fleeing Thee,
 Chased by the shadow
 Of the thing I am,
 Through desolate regions
 Of wondrous thought !

III.

THE HAPPY EARTH.

SWEET, sweet it was to sit in leafy Forests,
 In a green darkness, and to hear the stirring
 Of strange breaths hither and thither in the
 branches ;

And sweet it was to sail on crystal Waters,
Between the dome above and the dome
under,
The Hills above me and the Hills beneath
me ;

And sweet it was to watch the wondrous
Lightning
Spring flashing at the earth, and slowly
perish
Under the falling of the summer Rain.

I loved all grand and gentle and strange
things,—
The wind-flower at the tree-root, and the
white cloud,
The strength of Mountains, and the power
of Waters.

And unto me all seasons utter'd pleasure :
Spring, standing startled, listening to the
skylark,
The wild flowers from her lap unheeded
falling ;

And Summer, in her gorgeous loose ap-
parel ,
And Autumn, with her dreamy drooping
lashes ;
And Winter, with his white hair blown
about him.

Yea, everywhere there stirred a deathless
beauty,
A gleaming and a flashing into change,
An under-stream of sober consecration.

Yet nought endured, but all the glory
faded,
And power and joy and sorrow were inter-
woven ;
There was no single presence of the Spirit.

IV.

O UNSEEN ONE !

BECAUSE Thou art beautiful,
Because Thou art mysterious,
Because Thou art strong,
Or because Thou art pitiless,
Shall my Soul worship Thee,
O Thou Unseen One ?

As men bow to monarchs,
As slaves to their owners,
Shall I bow to Thee ?
As one that is fearful,
As one that is slavish,
Shall I pray to Thee ?

Wert Thou a demigod,
Wert Thou an angel,
Lip-worship might serve ;
To Thee, most beautiful,
Wondrous, mysterious,
How shall it avail ?

Thou art not a demigod,
Thou art not a monarch,—
Why should I bow to Thee ?
I am not fearful,
I am not slavish,—
Why should I pray to Thee ?

O Spirit of Mountains !
Strong Master of Waters !
Strange Shaper of Clouds !
When these things worship Thee
I too will worship Thee,
O Maker of Men !

V.

WORLD'S MYSTERY.

THE World was wondrous round me—
God's green World—
A World of gleaming waters and green
places,
And weirdly woven colours in the air.

Yet evermore a trouble did pursue me—
A hunger for the wherefore of my being,
A wonder from what regions I had fallen.

I gladdened in the glad things of the
World,
Yet crying always, 'Wherefore, and oh,
wherefore ?
What am I ? Wherefore doth the World
seem bappy ?'

I saddened in the sad things of the World,
Yet crying, 'Wherefore are men bruised
and beaten ?
Whence do I grieve and gladden to no
end ?'

VI.

THE CITIES.

I TOOK my staff and wandered o'er the mountains,
And came among the heaps of gold and silver,
The gorgeous desolation of the Cities.

My trouble grew tenfold when I beheld
The agony and burden of my fellows,
The pains of sick men and the groans of hungry.

I saw the good man tear his hair and weep ;
I saw the bad man tread on human necks
Prospering and blaspheming : and I wondered.

The silken-natured woman was a bond-slave ;
The gross man foul'd her likeness in high places ;
The innocent were heart-wrung : and I wondered.

The gifts of earth are given to the base ;
The monster of the Cities spurned the martyr ;
The martyr died, denying : and I wondered.

VII.

THE PRIESTS.

THREE Priests in divers vestments passed
and whispered :
'Worship the one God, stranger, or thou diest ;
Yea, worship, or thy tortures shall be endless.'

I cried, 'Which God, O wise ones, must I worship ?'
And neither answer'd, but one showed a Picture,
A fair Man dying on a Cross of wood.

And this one said, 'The others err, O stranger !
Repent, and love thy brother,—'tis enough !
The Doom of Dooms is only for the wicked.'

I turned and cried unto him, 'Who is wicked ?'

He vanish'd, and within a house beside me
I heard a hard man bless his little children.

My heart was full of comfort for the wicked,
Mine eyes were cleared with love, and everywhere
The wicked wore a piteousness like star-light.

I felt my spirit foul with misconceivings,
I thought of old transgressions and was humble ;

I cried, 'O God, whose doom is on the wicked !

'Thou art not He for whom my being hungers !

The Spirit of the grand things and the gentle,

The strength of mountains and the power of waters !'

And lo ! that very night I had a Vision.

VIII.

THE LAMB OF GOD.

I.

I SAW in a vision of the night
The Lamb of God, and it was white ;
White as snow it wander'd through
Silent fields of harebell-blue,
Still it wandering fed, and sweet
Flower'd the stars around its feet.

2.

I heard in vision a strange voice
Cry aloud, 'Rejoice ! rejoice !
Dead men rise and come away,
Now it is the Judgment Day !'
And I heard the host intone
Round the footstool of the Throne.

3.

Then the vision pained my sight,
All I saw became so bright—
All the Souls of men were there,
All the Angels of the air ;
God was smiling on His seat,
And the Lamb was at His feet.

4.

Then I heard a voice—' 'Tis done !
 Blest be those whom God hath won !'
 And the loud hosannah grew,
 And the golden trumpets blew,
 And around the place of rest
 Rose the bright mist of the Blest.

5.

Then suddenly I saw again,
 Bleating like a thing in pain,
 The Lamb of God ;—and all in fear
 Gazed and cried as it came near,
 For on its robe of holy white
 Crimson blood-stains glimmer'd bright.

6.

O the vision of the night ;
 The Lamb of God ! the blood-stains bright !
 In quiet waters of the skies
 It bathed itself with piteous eyes—
 Vainly on its raiment fell
 Cleansing dews ineffable !

7.

All the while it cried for pain,
 It could not wash away the stain—
 All the gentle blissful sky
 Felt the trouble of its cry—
 All the streams of silver sheen
 Sought in vain to make it clean.

8.

Where'er it went along the skies
 The Happy turned away their eyes ;
 Where'er it past from shore to shore
 All wept for those whose blood it bore—
 Its piteous cry filled all the air,
 Till the Dream was more than I could bear.

9.

And in the darkness of my bed
 Weeping I awakened—
 In the silence of the night,
 Dying softly from my sight,
 Melted that pale Dream of pain
 Like a snow-flake from thy brain.

IX.

DOOM.

MASTER, if there be Doom,
 All men are bereaven !
 If, in the universe,

One Spirit receive the curse,
 Alas for Heaven !
 If there be Doom for one,
 Thou, Master, art undone.

Were I a Soul in heaven,
 Afar from pain,
 Yea, on Thy breast of snow,
 At the scream of one below
 I should scream again.
 Art Thou less piteous than
 The conception of a Man ?

X.

GOD'S DREAM.

I HEAR a voice, 'How should God pardon
 sin ?
 How should He save the sinner with the
 sinless ?
 That would be ill : the Lord my God is
 just.'

Further I hear, 'How should God pardon
 lust ?
 How should He comfort the adulteress ?
 That would be foul : the Lord my God is
 pure.'

Further I hear, 'How should God pardon
 blood ?
 How should the murderer have a place in
 heaven
 Beside the innocent life he took away ?'

And God is on His throne ; and in a dream
 Sees mortals making figures out of clay,
 Shapen like men, and calling them God's
 angels.

And sees the shapes look up into His eyes,
 Exclaiming, 'Thou didst ill to save this
 man ;
 Damn Thou this woman, and curse this
 cut-throat, Lord !'

God dreams this, and His dreaming is the
 world ;
 And thou and I are dreams within His
 dream ;
 And nothing dieth God hath dreamt or
 thought,

XI.

FLOWER OF THE WORLD.

WHEREVER men sinned and wept,
I wandered in my quest ;
At last in a Garden of God
I saw the Flower of the World.

This Flower had human eyes,
Its breath was the breath of the mouth ;
Sunlight and starlight came,
And the Flower drank bliss from both.

Whatever was base and unclean,
Whatever was sad and strange,
Was piled around its roots ;
It drew its strength from the same.

Whatever was formless and base
Pass'd into fineness and form ;
Whatever was lifeless and mean
Grew into beautiful bloom.

Then I thought, 'O Flower of the World,
Miraculous Blossom of things,
Light as a faint wreath of snow
Thou tremblest to fall in the wind.

'O beautiful Flower of the World,
Fall not nor wither away ;
He is coming—He cannot be far—
The Lord of the Flow'rs and the Stars.

And I cried, 'O Spirit divine !
That walkest the Garden unseen,
Come hither, and bless, ere it dies,
The beautiful Flower of the World.'

XII.

O SPIRIT !

WEARY with seeking, weary with long
waiting,

I fell upon my knees, and wept, exclaiming,
'O Spirit of the grand things and the gentle!

'Thou hidest from our seeking—Thou art
crafty—

Thou wilt not let our hearts admit Thee
wholly—

Believing hath a core of unbelieving—

'A coward dare not look upon Thy features,
But museth in a cloud of misconceiving ;
The bravest man's conception is a coward's.

'Wherefore, O wherefore, art Thou veil'd
and hidden?

The world were well, and wickedness were
over,

If Thou upon Thy throne were one thing
certain.'

And lo ! that very night I had a Vision,

VI.

THE LIFTING OF THE VEIL.

Thou who the Face Divine wouldst see,
Think,—couldst thou bear the sight, and be?
O waves of life and thought and dream,
Darkening in one mysterious Stream,
Flow on, flow loudly ; nor become
A glassy Mirror sad and dumb,
Whereon for evermore might shine
The dread peace of the Face Divine !—
Children of earth whose spirits fail,
Beware the Lifting of the Veil !

I.

ORM'S VISION.

MY Soul had a vision,
And in my Soul's vision
The Veil was lifted,
And the Face was there !

There was no portent
Of fire or thunder,
The wind was sleeping,
Above and under
All things lookt fair.
And the change came softly
Unaware :
On a golden morrow
The Veil was lifted,
And yea ! the ineffable Face was there.

My Soul saw the vision
From a silent spot—
Nay, of its likeness
Ask me not—
How should my Soul fathom
The formless features ?
Gaze at the Master
How should it dare ?
Only I flutter'd
To my knees and mutter'd
A moan, a prayer—

Silent, ineffable,
Gazing downward,
The Face was there !

This let me whisper :
It stirred not, changed not,
Though the world stood still, amazed ;
But the Eyes within it,
Like the eyes of a painted picture,
Met and followed
The eyes of each that gazed.

II.

THE FACE AND THE WORLD.

THEN my Soul heard a voice
Crying—' Wander forth
O'er hill and valley,
O'er the earth—
Behold the mortals
How they fare—
Now the great Father
Grants their prayer ;
Now every spirit
Of mortal race,
Since the Veil is lifted,
Beholds the Face !

I awoke my body,
And up the mountains,
With the sweet sun shining
I wander'd free—
And the hills were pleasant,
Knee-deep in heather,
And the yellow eagle
Wheel'd over me—
And the streams were flowing,
And the lambs were leaping
Merrily !

But on the hill-tops
The shepherds gather'd,
Up-gazing dreamily
Into the silent air,
And close beside them
The eagle butcher'd
The crying lambkin,
But they did not see, nor care.
I saw the white flocks of the shepherds,
Like snow wind-lifted and driven,
Blow by, blow by !
And the terrible wolves behind them,
As wild as the winds, pursuing
With a rush and a tramp and a cry !

I passed the places
Of ice and snow,
And I saw a Hunter
Lying frozen,—
His eyes were seal'd—
He did not know ;
Drinking his heart's-blood,
Not looking upward,
Sat the soot-black raven
And the corby crow.

Then I knew they linger'd,
Though the Veil was lifted,
Death and Decay,
And my Spirit was heavy
As I turned away ;
But my Spirit was brighter
As I saw below me
The glassy Ocean
Glimmering,
With a white sail dipping
Against the azure
Like a sea-bird's wing—
And all look'd pleasant,
On sea and land,
The white cloud brooding,
And the white sail dipping,
And the village sitting
On the yellow sand.

And beside the waters
My Soul saw the fishers
Staring upward,
With dumb desire,
Though a mile to seaward,
With the gulls pursuing,
Shot past the herring
With a trail like fire ;
Though the mighty Sea-snake
With her young was stranded
In the fatal shallows
Of the shingly bay—
Though their bellies hunger'd—
What cared they ?

Hard by I noted
Little children,
Toddling and playing
In a field o' hay—
The Face was looking,
But they were gazing
At one another,
And what cared they ?

But one I noted,
A little Maiden,
Look'd up o' sudden
And ceased her play,
And she dropt her garland
And stood upgazing,
With hair like sunlight,
And face like clay.

All was most quiet
In the air,
Save the children's voices
And the cry of dumb beasts,—
'Twas a weary Sabbath
Everywhere—
Each soul an eyeball,
Each face a stare ;—
And I left the place,
And I wander'd free,
And the Eyes of the Face
Still followed me !

At the good Priest's cottage
The gray-hair'd grandsire
Lay stiff in the garden—
For his Soul had fled—
And I cried in passing,
'Oh ye within there,
Come forth in sorrow
And bury your dead.'
With his flock around him
Praying bareheaded,
The pale Priest, kneeling
All gaunt and gray,
Answer'd, 'Look upward !
Leave the dead to heaven !
God is yonder !
Behold, and pray !'

I was sick at heart
To hear and see,
And to feel the Face
Still following me,
And all seemed darkening,
And my heart sank down,—
As I saw afar off
A mighty Town—
When with no warning,
Slowly and softly
The beautiful Face withdrew,
And the whole world darken'd,
And the silence deepen'd,
And the Veil fell downward
With a silver glimmer of dew.

And I was calmer
As, slowly and sweetly,
Gather'd above me
Mysterious Light on Light,—
And weary with watching
I lay and slumber'd
In the mellow stillness
Of the bless'd night.

. . . When my Soul awaken'd
In the lonely place,
The Veil was lifted,
And, behold ! the Face—
And sick, heart-weary,
Onward I ran,
Through fields of harvest
Where the wheat hung wither'd,
Unreapt by man ;
And a ragged Idiot
Went gibbering gaily
Among the wheat,
In moist palms rubbing
The ears together ;
And he laugh'd, and beckon'd
That I should eat.

At the city gateway
The Sentinels gather'd,
Fearful and drunken
With eyes like glass—
Look up they dared not,
Lest, to their terror,
Some luminous Angel
Of awe should pass ;
And my Soul passed swiftly
With a prayer,
And entered the City :—
Still and awful
Were street and square.
'Twas a piteous Sabbath
Everywhere—
Each soul an eyeball,
Each face a stare.

In pale groups gather'd
The Citizens,
The rich and poor men,
The lords, the lepers
From their loathsome dens,
There was no traffic,
The heart of the City
Stood silently ;
How could they barter,

How could they traffic,
 With the terrible Eyes to see.
 Nay! each man brooded
 On the Face alone :
 Each Soul was an eyeball,
 Each Shape was a stone ;
 And I saw the faces,
 And some were glad,
 And some were pensive,
 And some were mad ;
 But in all places,
 Hall, street, and lane,—
 'Twas a frozen pleasure,
 A frozen pain.

I passed the bearers
 Of a sable bier,
 They had dropped their burthen
 To gaze in fear ;
 From under the trappings
 Of the death-cloth grand,
 With a ring on the finger,
 Glimmer'd the corpse's
 Decaying hand.
 I passed the bridal,
 Clad bright and gay,
 Frozen to marble
 Upon its way.

Freely I wandered
 Everywhere—
 No mortal heeded
 The passing footstep,
 Palace and hovel
 Were free as the mountain air.
 Aye! softly I entered
 The carven court of stone,
 And the fountains were splashing,
 And the pale King sitting
 Upon his jewell'd throne—
 And before him gather'd
 The Frail and Sickly,
 The Poor and Old ;
 And he open'd great coffers,
 And gave thence freely
 Fine gear and gold,—
 Saying, ' 'Tis written,
 Who giveth freely
 Shall in sooth be bless'd
 Twenty-fold !'
 But he look'd not upward,
 And seem'd unconscious

Of the strange Eyes watching
 O'er sea and land ;
 Yet his eyelids quiver'd,
 And his eyes look'd sidelong,
 And he hid in his bosom
 A blood-stained hand ;
 But the beggar people
 Let the gold and raiment
 Lie all unheeded ;
 While with no speech,
 Upward they lifted
 Their wild pale features,
 For the Face was mirror'd
 In the eyes of each.

With the Face pursuing
 I wandered onward,
 Heart-sick, heart-sore,
 And entered the fretted
 Cathedral door ;
 And I found the people
 Huddled together,
 Hiding their faces
 In shame and sin,
 For through the painted
 Cathedral windows
 The Eyes of Wonder
 Were looking in !
 And on the Altar,
 The wild Priest, startled,
 Was gazing round him
 With sickly stare,
 And his limbs were palsied,
 And he moan'd for mercy,
 More wonder-stricken
 Than any there.

Then I fell at the Altar,
 And wept, and murmur'd,
 ' My Soul, how fares it,
 This day, with *thee* ?
 Art thou contented
 To live and see,
 Or were it better
 Not to be ?'
 And my pale Soul whisper'd :
 ' Like a band that holdest
 And keepeth from growing
 A goodly tree,—
 A terror hath me—
 I feel not, stir not—
 'Twere surely better
 Not to be !'

Then a rush of visions
 Went wildly by !
 My Soul beheld the marble World,
 And the luminous Face on high.
 And methought, affrighted,
 That the mortal race
 Built cover'd cities
 To hide the Face ;
 And gather'd their treasures
 Of silver and gold,
 And sat amid them
 In caverns cold ;
 And ever nightly,
 When the Face of Wonder
 Withdrew from man,
 Many started,
 And hideous revel
 Of the dark began.
 And men no longer
 Knew the common sorrow,
 The common yearning,
 The common love,
 But each man's features
 Were turn'd to marble,
 Changelessly watching
 The Face above—
 A nameless trouble
 Was in the air—
 The heart of the World
 Had no pulsation—
 'Twas a piteous Sabbath
 Everywhere !

III.

ORM'S AWAKENING.

I AWOKE. And rising,
 My Soul look'd forth—
 'Twas the dewy darkness,
 And the Veil was glittering
 Over the earth ;
 But afar off eastward
 The Dawn was glimmering,
 All silver pale,
 And slowly fading
 With a mystic tremor,
 The Lights gleam'd beautiful
 In the wondrous Veil
 Yea, Dawn came cheerily,
 And the hill-tops brighten'd,
 And the shepherds shouted,
 And a trumped blew,
 And the misty Ocean

Caught silver tremors,
 With the brown-sail'd fish-boats
 Glimmering through—
 And the City murmur'd
 As I ran unto it,
 And my heart was merry,
 And my fears were few ;
 And singing gaily
 The lark rose upward,
 Its brown wings gleaming
 With the morning dew !

VII.

THE DEVIL'S MYSTICS.

A scroll antique, with weeds behung,
 Writ in a mystic pagan tongue,
 Wash'd to Orm's feet by the wan Main
 After long nights of wind and rain :
 Translating this at dead of night,
 The Celt beholds with dazzled sight
 Strange gods stalk past, and in their train,
 Supreme, the King of Sin and Pain.

I.

THE INSCRIPTION WITHOUT.

THE Moral Law : all Evil is Defect ;
 The limb deform'd for common use of life
 Defect,—but haply in the line of growth.

II.

THE TREE OF LIFE.

THE Master said :
 ' I have planted the Seed of a Tree,
 It shall be strangely fed
 With white dew and with red,
 And the Gardeners shall be three—
 Regret, Hope, Memory !'

The Master smiled :
 For the Seed that He had set
 Broke presently through the mould,
 With a glimmer of green and gold,
 And the Angels' eyes were wet—
 Hope, Memory, Regret.

The Master cried :
 ' It liveth—breatheth—see !
 Its soft lips open wide—
 It looks from side to side—

How strange they gleam on me,
The little dim eyes of the Tree !'

The Master said :

'After a million years,
The Seed I set and fed
To itself hath gathered
All the world's smiles and tears—
How mighty it appears !'

The Master said :

'At last, at last, I see
A Blossom, a Blossom o' red
From the heart of the Tree is shed.
Fairer it seems to be
Than the Tree, or the leaves o' the Tree.'

The Master cried :

'O Angels, that guard the Tree,
A Blossom, a Blossom divine
Grows on this greenwood of mine :
What may this Blossom be?
Name this Blossom to me !'

The Master smiled ;

For the Angels answered thus :
'Our tears have nourish'd the same,
We have given it a name
That seemeth fit to us—
We have called it *Spiritus*.'

The Master said :

'This Flower no Seed shall bear
But hither on a day
My beautiful Child shall stray,
And shall snatch it unaware,
And wreath it in his hair.'

The Master smiled :

'The Tree shall never bear—
Seedless shall perish the Tree,
But the Flower my Child's shall be ;
He will pluck the Flower and wear,
Till it withers in his hair !'

III.

THE SEEDS.

WHEN all that puzzles sense was planned,
When the first seeds of being fell,
In reverence bent, I stood at hand,
And heard a part of the spell :
'Grow, Seed ! blossom, Brain !
Deepen into power and pain !'

Shoots of the seed, I saw them grow,
Green blades of vegetable sheen,
They darken'd as with wind, and so
The Earth's black ball grew green—
'Grow, Seed ! blossom, Brain !
Deepen, deepen, into pain !'

Then starry-bright out of the ground
The firstling flowers sprang dewy-wet ;
I pluckt one, and it felt no wound—
There was no pain as yet.
'Grow, Seed ! blossom, Brain !
Deepen, deepen, into pain !'

Next in His Hand He lifted thus
Bright bubbling water from the spring—
And in that crystal tremulous
Quickened a living thing.
'Grow, Seed ! blossom, Brain !
Deepen, deepen, into pain !'

And suddenly ! ere I was 'ware,
(So fast the dreadful spell was tried),
O'er Earth's green bosom everywhere
Crawl'd living things, and cried.
'Grow, Seed ! blossom, Brain !
Deepen, deepen, into pain !'

On every grass-blade glittering bright
A shining Insect leapt and played,
By every sea, on every height,
A Monster cast its shade—
'Grow, Seed ! blossom, Brain !
Deepen, deepen, into pain !'

The most was lingering in the least,
The least became the most anon ;
From plant to fish, from fish to beast,
The Essence deepen'd on.
'Grow, Seed ! blossom, Brain !
Deepen, deepen, into pain !'

And deeper still in subtle worth
The Essence grew, from gain to gain,
And subtler grew, with each new birth,
The creature's power of pain.
'Grow, Seed ! blossom, Brain !
Deepen, deepen, into pain !'

Paler I saw the Master grow,
Faint and more faint His breathing fell,
And strangely, lower and more low,
He mutter'd o'er the spell :

'Grow, Seed! blossom, Brain!
Deepen, deepen, into pain!'

Now the deep murmur of the Earth
Was mingled with a painful cry,
The yeanning young leapt up in mirth,
But the old lay down to die.
'Grow, Seed! blossom, Brain!
Deepen, deepen, into pain!'

When standing in the perfect light
I saw the first-born Mortal rise—
The flower of things he stood his height
With melancholy eyes.
'Grow, Seed! blossom, Brain!
Deepen, deepen, into pain!'

From all the rest he drew apart,
And stood erect on the green sod,
Holding his hand upon his heart,
And looking up at God!
'Grow, Seed! blossom, Brain!
Deepen, deepen, into pain!'

He stood so terrible, so dread,
With right hand lifted pale and proud,
God feared the thing He fashion'd,
And fled into a cloud.
'Grow, Seed! blossom, Brain!
Deepen, deepen, into pain!'

And since that day He hid away
Man hath not seen the Face that fled,
And the wild question of that day
Hath not been answer'd.
'Grow, Seed! blossom, Brain!
Deepen, deepen, into pain!'

And since that day, with cloudy face,
Of His own handiwork afraid,
God from His heavenly hiding-place
Peers on the thing He made.
'Grow, Seed! blossom, Brain!
Deepen, deepen, into pain!'

O Crown of things, O good and wise,
O mortal Soul that would'st be free,
I weep to look into thine eyes—
Thou art so like to me!
'Grow, Seed! blossom, Brain!
Deepen, deepen, into pain!'

IV.

FIRE AND WATER; OR, A VOICE
OF THE FLESH.

'TWO white arms, a moss pillow,
A curtain o' green;
Come love me, love me,
Come clasp me unseen!'

As red as a rose is,
I saw her arise,
Fresh waked from reposes,
With wild dreamy eyes.

I sprang to her, clasp'd her
I trembled, I prest,
I drank her warm kisses,
I kiss'd her white breast.

With a ripple of laughter,
A dazzle of spray,
She melted, she melted,
And glimmer'd away!

Down my breast runs the water,
In my heart burns the fire,
My face is like crimson
With shame and desire!

V.

SANITAS.

DREAMILY, on her milk-white Ass,
Rideth the maiden Sanitas—
With zone of gold her waist is bound,
Her brows are with immortelles crown'd;
Dews are falling, song-birds sing,
It is a Christian evening—
Lower, lower, sinks the sun,
The white stars glimmer, one by one!

Who sitteth musing at his door?
Silas, the Leper, gaunt and hoar;
Though he is curst in every limb,
Full whitely Time hath snowed on him—
Dews are falling, song-birds sing,
It is a Christian evening—
The Leper, drinking in the air,
Sits like a beast, with idiot stare.

How pale! how wondrous! doth she pass,
The heavenly maiden Sanitas;
She looketh, and she shuddereth,
She passeth on with bated breath—

Dews are falling, song-birds sing,
It is a Christian evening—
His mind is like a stagnant pool,
She passeth o'er it, beautiful !

Brighter, whiter, in the skies,
Open innumerable eyes ;
The Leper looketh up and sees,
His aching heart is soothed by these—
Dews are falling, song-birds sing,
It is a Christian evening—
He looketh up with heart astir,
And every Star hath eyes like her !

Onward on her milk-white Ass
Rideth the maiden Sanitas.
The boughs are green, the grain is pearl'd,
But 'tis a miserable world—
Dews are falling, song-birds sing,
It is a Christian evening—
All o'er the blue above her, she
Beholds bright spots of Leprosy.

VI.

THE PHILOSOPHERS.

We are the Drinkers of Hemlock !
Lo ! we sit apart,
Each right hand is uplifted,
Each left hand holds a heart ;
At our feet rolls by the tumult,
O'er our heads the still stars gleam—
We are the Drinkers of Hemlock !
We drink and dream !

We are the Drinkers of Hemlock !
We are worn and old,
Each hath the sad forehead,
Each the cup of gold.
In our eyes the awe-struck Nations
Look, and name us wise, and go—
We are the Drinkers of Hemlock !
We drink and know !

We are the Drinkers of Hemlock !
Silent, kingly, pure ;
Who is wise if we be foolish ?
Who, if we die, shall endure ?
The Bacchanals with dripping vine-leaves,
Blushing meet our eyes, and haste—
We are the Drinkers of Hemlock !
Bitter to taste !

We are the Drinkers of Hemlock !
Spirits pure as snow ;
White star-frost is on our foreheads—
We are weary, we would go.
Hark ! the world fades with its voices,
Fades the tumult and the cry—
We are the Drinkers of Hemlock !
We drink and die !

VII.

THE DEVIL'S PRAYER.

FATHER which art in Heaven,—not here
below ;
Be Thy name hallow'd, in that place of
worth ;
And till Thy Kingdom cometh, and we
know,
Be Thy will done more tenderly on
Earth ;
Since we must live—give us this day our
bread ;
Forgive our stumblings—since Thou
mad'st us blind ;
If we offend Thee, Sire, at least forgive
As tenderly as we forgive our kind ;—
Spare us temptation,—human or divine ;
Deliver us from evil, now and then ;
The Kingdom, Power, and Glory all are
Thine
For ever and for evermore. Amen.

VIII.

HOMUNCULUS ; OR, THE SONG OF
DEICIDES.

1.

Now all the mystic Lamps that shed
Light on the living world are fled ;
Now the swart digger rises gold,
Under a starless heaven and cold ;
Now every God, save one, is dead,
Now that last God is almost sped ;
Cold falls the dew, chill rise the tides,
To this still Song of Deicides.

2.

Homunculus ! Homunculus !
Not ever shalt thou conquer us !
Zeus, Astaroth, Brahm, and Menú,
With all the gods, white, black, and blue,

Are fallen, and while I murmur thus,
Strong, and more strong, Homunculus
Upon a Teuton Jackass rides,
Singing the Song of Deicides.

3.

It seems but yesterday the dim
And solitary germ of him
Glimmer'd most strangely on my sense,
While, with my microscope intense,
I search'd a Beast's brain-cavern dark :—
A germ—a gleam—a cell—a spark—
Grown to Homunculus, who rides
To my sad Song of Deicides.

4.

Oh had I then so far foreseen,
This day of doom had never been,
For with a drop of fire from Hell
I would have killed the feeble Cell.
Too late! too late! for slow and strange
He has passed the darker sphere of change,
Lo! he emerges—shouts—derides,
Singing the Song of Deicides!

5.

Black is his raiment, top to toe,
His flesh is white and warm below,
All through his silent veins flow flee
Hunger, and Thirst, and Venery ;
But in his eye a still small flame,
Like the first Cell from which he came,
Burns round and luminous,—as he rides
To my still Song of Deicides!

6.

With Obic Circle he began,
Swift through the Phallic rites he ran,
He watch'd until his head went round
The Memphian Sphinx's stare profound ;
All these by turn he overcast,
And suck'd the Orphic Egg at last ;
Now laughing low he westward strides,
Singing the Song of Deicides!

7.

He drives the Gods o' the north to death—
The Sanctus Spiritus is breath—
He plucks down Thammuz from his joy,
And kneads him to a huswife's toy ;
He stares to shame the Afric spheres ;
He strikes—he overturns—he sneers—
Oven the fallen Titans strides,
And squeaks the Song of Deicides!

8.

Homunculus! Homunculus
Wretched, degenerate, impious!
He will not stay, he will not speak—
Another blow! another shriek!
Lo! where he hacketh suddenly
At the red Cross of Calvary!
All darkens—faintly moan the tides—
Sing low the Song of Deicides!

9.

Gigantic, in a dark mist, see!
Loometh the Cross of Calvary ;
With rayless eyes the Skeleton
Quivers through all its bones thereon.
Deep grows the mist, faint falls the wind,
The bloodshot sun setteth behind . . .
A crash! a fall—The Cross be strides,
Singing the Song of Deicides!

10.

Now he hath conquered godhead thus,
Whither will turn Homunculus?
I am the only God let be—
All but my fiends believe in me ;
(Though all the Angels deem me prince,
My kith and kin I can't convince.)
Christ help me now! Hither he rides,
Singing my song of Deicides!

11.

Silent I wait—(how stand the odds?)
I am the Serpent of the Gods,—
Wait!—draw the fork'd tongue in slow,
Hoard up my venom for the blow.
Crouch in my cave—of all the host
I know he feareth me the most—
Then strike and crush that thing accurst
I should have stifled at the first! . . .
All Earth awaits! Hither he rides!
Cold fall the dews, chill rise the tides,
To this still Song of Deicides!

IX.

ROSES.

'SAD, and sweet, and wise,
Here a child reposes,
Dust is on his eyes,
Quietly he lies,—
Satan, strew Roses!

Weeping low, creeping slow,
Came the Weary-wing'ed !
Roses red over the dead
Quietly he fling'ed.

'I am old,' he thought,
'And the world's day closes ;
Pale and fever-fraught,
Sadly have I brought
These blood-red Roses.'

By his side the mother came
Shudderingly creeping ;
The Devil's and the woman's heart
Bitterly were weeping.

'Swift he came and swift he flew,
Hopeless he reposes ;
Waiting on is weary too,—
Wherefore on his grave we strew
Bitter, withering Roses.'

The Devil gripped the woman's heart,
With gall he staunch'd its bleeding ;
Far away, beyond the day,
The Lord heard interceding.

'Lord God, One in Three !
Sure Thy anger closes ;
Yesterday I died, and see
The Weary-wing'ed over me
Bitterly streweth Roses.'

The voice cried out, 'Rejoice ! rejoice !
There shall be sleep for evil !'
And all the sweetness of God's voice
Passed strangely through the Devil.

κ.

HERMAPHRODITUS.

THIS is a section of a Singer's Brain—
How delicately run the granular lines !
By what strange chemic could I touch this
thing,
That it again might quicken and dissolve,
Changing and blooming, into glittering
gleams
Of fancy ; or what chemic could so quicken
The soft soil backward that it might put
forth
Green vegetable shoots,—as long ago ?
Upon what headland did it blow of old

And ripen hitherward ! Surely 'twas a place
Flowery and starry !

Cast it back to the grave !
Look down no more, but raise thine eyes
and see
Who standeth glorious in the brightening
Dawn !

Behold him, on the apex of the cone,
The perfect blossom of miraculous life,
Hermaphroditus. With how subtle shade
Male into female beauty mingl'eth—thews
Of iron coated o'er with skin of silk ;—
There, on the crown he stands, the perfect
one,
Witching the world with sterile loveliness,—
Beyond him, darkness and the unknown
change,
The next uncurtain'd and still higher scene
That is to follow. Are those pinions,—
peeping
Under the delicate-flesh'd white shoulder-
blades ?

XI.

AFTER.

I SEE, as plain as eyes can see,
From this dark point of mystery,
Death sitting at his narrow Gate,—
While all around, disconsolate,
The wretched weep, the weary wait.
God pity us who weep and wait !

But, better still, if sadder, I
From this dark corner can descry
What is well-veil'd from human view :
Beyond the Gate I can pursue
The flight of those who have passed thro' .
God pity us who have passed thro' !

In at the portal, one by one,
They creep, they crawl, with shivering
moan—
Nobles and Beggars, Priests and Kings ;
Out at the further gate each springs
A Spirit,—with a pair of wings !
God pity us now we have wings !

All round the starry systems stir,
Each silent as a death-chamber ;
There is no sound of melody,
Only deep space and mystery ;

And each hath wings to wander free.
God pity us who wander free !

Some cannot use their wings at all ;
 Some try a feeble flight and fall ;
 A few, like larks in earthly skies,
 With measured beat of wings uprise,
 And make their way to Paradise.
God help us on to Paradise !

If ever in their flight through space
 They chance to reach that resting-place,
 I do not think these creatures dim
 Will find the Lord of Cherubim
 Exactly what they picture Him.
May God be what we picture Him !

Out of the fiery Sun is thrown
 To other worlds the meteor-stone ;
 Back to the Sun, in season right,
 The meteor-stone doth take its flight.
 Lost in that melancholy light.
We fade in melancholy light.

I see, as plain as eyes can see,
 From this dark point of mystery,
 Those fledgling Spirits everywhere ;
 They sing, they lessen, up the air ;
 The go to God—Christ help them there !
We go to God—Christ help us there !

XII.

HIS PRAYER.

IN the time of transfiguration,
 Melt me, Master, like snow ;
 Melt me, dissolve me, inhale me
 Into Thy wool-white cloud ;
 With a warm wind blow me upward
 Over the hills and the seas,
 And upon a summer morning
 Poise me over the valley
 Of Thy mellow, mellow realm ;
 'Then, for a wondrous moment,
 Watch me from infinite space
 With Thy round red Eyeball of sunlight,
 And melt and dissolve me downward
 In the beautiful silver Rain
 That drippeth musically,
 With a gleam like Starlight and Moonlight,
 On the footstool of Thy Throne.

VIII.

THE VISION OF THE MAN
 ACCURST.

How in the end the Judgment dread
 Shall by the Lord thy God be said,—
 While brightly in a City of Rest
 Shall flash the fountains of the Blest,
 And gladdening around the Throne
 All mortal men shall smile,—save one. . . .
 Children of Earth, hear, last and first,
 The Vision of the Man Accurst.

JUDGMENT was over ; all the world re-
 deem'd
 Save one Man,—who had sinned all sins,
 whose soul
 Was blackness and foul odour. Last of all,
 When all was lamb-white, through the
 summer Sea
 Of ministering Spirits he was drifted
 On to the white sands ; there he lay and
 writhed,
 Worm-like, black, venomous, with eyes
 accurst
 Looking defiance, dazzled by the light
 That gleam'd upon his clench'd and blood-
 stain'd hands ;
 While, with a voice low as a funeral bell,
 The Seraph, sickening, read the sable
 scroll,
 And as he read the Spirits ministrant
 Darken'd and murmur'd, ' Cast him forth,
 O Lord !'
 And, from the Shrine where unbeheld He
 broods,
 The Lord said, ' 'Tis the basest mortal
 born—
 Cast him beyond the Gate !'

The wild thing laugh'd
 Defiant, as from wave to wave of light
 He drifted, till he swept beyond the Gate,
 Past the pale Seraph with the silvern eyes ;
 And there the wild Wind, that for ever
 beats
 About the edge of brightness, caught him
 up,
 And, like a straw, whirl'd round and lifted
 him,
 And on a dark shore in the Underworld
 Cast him, alone and shivering ; for the
 Clime

Was sunless, and the ice was like a sheet
Of glistening tin, and the faint glimmering
peaks

Were twisted to fantastic forms of frost,
And everywhere the frozen moonlight
steam'd

Foggy and blue, save where the abysses
loom'd

Sepulchral shadow. But the Man arose,
With teeth gnash'd beast-like, waved wild
feeble hands

At the white Gate (that glimmer'd far away,
Like to the round ball of the Sun beheld
Through interstices in a wood of pine),
Cast a shrill curse at the pale Judge within
Then groaning, beast-like crouch'd.

Like golden waves

That break on a green island of the south,
Amid the flash of many plumaged wings,
Passed the fair days in Heaven. By the
side

Of quiet waters perfect Spirits walked,
Low singing, in the star-dew, full of joy
In their own thoughts and pictures of those
thoughts

Flash'd into eyes that loved them ; while
beside them,

After exceeding storm, the Waters of Life
With soft sea-sound subsided. Then God
said,

' 'Tis finished—all is well !' But as He
spake

A voice, from out the lonely Deep beneath,
Mock'd !

Then to the Seraph at the Gate,
Who looketh on the Deep with steadfast
eyes

For ever, God cried, 'What is he that
mocks ?'

The Seraph answered, ' 'Tis the Man
accurst !'

And, with a voice of most exceeding peace,
God ask'd, 'What doth the Man ?'

The Seraph said :

' Upon a desolate peak, with hoar-frost
hung,

Amid the steaming vapours of the Moon,
He sitteth on a throne, and hideously
Playeth at judgment ; at his feet, with eyes
Slimy and luminous, squats a monstrous
Toad ;

Above his head pale phantoms of the Stars
Fulfil cold ministrations of the Void,
And in their dim and melancholy lustre
His shadow, and the shadow of the Toad
Beneath him, linger. Sceptred, thron'd,
and crown'd,

The foul judgeth the foul, and sitting grim,
Laughs !'

With a voice of most exceeding peace
The Lord said, 'Look no more !'

The Waters of Life

Broke with a gentle sea-sound gladdening—
God turn'd and blest them ; as He blest the
same,

A voice from out the lonely Void beneath,
Shriek'd !

Then to the Seraph at the Gate,
Who looketh on the Deep with steadfast
eyes

For ever, God cried, 'What is he that
shrieks ?'

The Seraph answered, ' 'Tis the Man
accurst !'

And, with a voice of most exceeding peace,
God ask'd, 'What doth the Man ?'

The Seraph said :

' Around him the wild phantasms of the
fog

Moan in the rheumy hoar-frost and cold
steam.

Long time, crown'd, sceptred, on his
throne he sits

Playing at judgment ; then with shrill voice
cries—

" 'Tis finished, thou art judged !" and,
fiercely laughing,

He thrusteth down an iron heel to crush
The foul Toad, that with dim and luminous
eyes

So stareth at his Soul. Thrice doth he lift
His foot up fiercely—lo ! he shrinks and
cowers—

Then, with a wild glare at the far-off Gate,
Rushes away, and, rushing through the dark,
Shrieks !'

With a voice of most exceeding peace
The Lord said, 'Look no more !'

The Waters of Life,
The living, spiritual Waters, broke,
Fountain-like, up against the Master's
Breast,
Giving and taking blessing. Overhead
Gather'd the shining legions of the Stars,
Led by the ethereal Moon, with dewy eyes
Of lustre : these have been baptised in fire,
Their raiment is of molten diamond,
And 'tis their office, as they circling move
In their blue orbits, evermore to turn
Their faces heavenward, drinking peace
and strength
From that great Flame which, in the core
of Heaven,
Like to the white heart of a violet burns,
Diffusing rays and odour. Blessing all,
God sought their beauteous orbits, and
behold !
The Eyes innumerable glistening
Were turned away from Heaven, and with
sick stare,
Like the blue gleam of salt dissolved in fire,
They searched the Void, as human faces
look
On horror.

To the Seraph at the Gate,
Who looketh on the Deep with steadfast
eyes,
God cried, 'What is this thing whereon
they gaze ?'
The Seraph answered, 'On the Man
accurst.'
And, with a voice of most exceeding peace,
God ask'd, 'What doth the Man ?'

The Seraph said :
'O Master ! send Thou forth a tongue of
fire
To wither up this worm ! Serene and cold,
Flooded with moon-dew, lies the World,
and there
The Man roams ; and the image of the
Man
In the wan waters of the frosty sphere
Falleth gigantic. Up and down he drifts,
Worm-like, black, venomous, with eyes
accursed,
Waving his bloody hands in fierce appeal,
So that the gracious faces of Thy Stars
Are troubled, and the stainless tides of
light

Shadow pollution. With wild, ape-like
eyes,
The wild thing whining peers through
horrent hair,
And rusheth up and down, seeking to find
A face to look upon, a hand to touch,
A heart that heats ; but all the World is
void
And beauteous. All alone in the Cold
Clime,
Alone within the lonely universe,
Crawleth the Man accurst !'

Then said the Lord,
'Doth he repent ?' And the fair Seraph
said,
'Nay he blasphemeth ! Send Thou forth
Thy fire !'
But with a voice of most exceeding peace,
Out of the Shrine where unbeheld He
broods,
God said, 'What I have made, a living
Soul,
Cannot be unmade, but endures for ever.'
Then added, 'Call the Man !'

The Seraph heard,
And in a low voice named the lost one's
name ;
The wild Wind that for ever beats the Gate
Caught up the word, and fled through the
cold Void.
'Twas murmur'd on, as a lorn echo fading,
From peak to peak. Swift as a wolf the
Man
Was rushing o'er a waste, with shadow
streaming
Backward against a frosty gleaming wind,
When like a fearful whisper in his ear
'Twas wafted ; then his blanch'd lips shook
like leaves
In that chill wind, his hair was lifted up,
He paused, his shadow paused, like stone
and shadow,
And shivering, glaring round him, the Man
moaned,
'Who calls ?' and in a moment he was
'ware
Of the white light streaming from the far
Gate,
And looming, blotted black against the
light,
The Seraph with uplifted forefinger,
Naming his name !

And ere the Man could fly,
The wild Wind in its circuit swept upon
him,

And, like a straw, whirled him and lifted
him,

And cast him at the Gate,—a bloody
thing—

Mad, moaning, horrible, obscene, unclean ;
A body swollen and stained like the wool
Of sheep that in the rainy season crawl
About the hills, and sleep on foul damp beds
Of bracken rusting red. There, breathing
hard,

Glaring with fiery eyes, panted the Man,
With scorch'd lips drooping, thirsting as he
heard

The flowing of the Fountains far within.

Then said the Lord, 'Is the Man there?'
and 'Yea,'

Answered the Seraph pale. Then said the
Lord,

'What doth the Man?' The Seraph,
frowning, said :

'O Master, in the belly of him is fire,
He thirsteth, fiercely thrusting out his
hands,

And threateneth, seeking water!' Then
the Lord

Said, 'Give him water—let him drink !'

The Seraph,
Stooping above him, with forefinger bright
Touched the gold kerbstone of the Gate,
and lo !

Water gush'd forth and gleamed ; and
lying prone

The Man crawl'd thither, dipt his fever'd
face,

Drank long and deeply ; then, his thirst
appeas'd,

Thrust in his bloody hands unto the wrist,
And let the gleaming Fountain play upon
them,

And looking up out of his dripping hair,
Grinned mockery at the giver.

Then the Lord
Said low, 'How doth the Man?' The
Seraph said :

'It is a snake ! He mocketh all Thy gifts,
And, in a snake's voice half-articulate,
Blasphemeth !' Then the Lord : 'Doth
the Man crave

To enter in ?' 'Not so,' the Seraph said,
'He saith——' 'What saith he?' 'That
his Soul is filled

With hate of Thee and of Thy ways ; he
loathes

Pure pathways where the fruitage of the
Stars

Hangeth resplendent, and he spitteth hate
On all Thy Children. Send Thou forth
Thy fire !'

In no wise is he better than the beasts,
The gentle beasts, that come like morning
dew

And vanish. Let him die !' Then said the
Lord :

'What I have made endures ; but 'tis not
meet

This thing should cross my perfect work for
ever.

Let him begone !' Then cried the Seraph
pale :

'O Master ! at the frozen Clime he glares
In awe, shrieking at Thee !' 'What doth
he crave ?

'Neither Thy Heaven nor by Thy holy
ways.

He murmureth out he is content to dwell
In the Cold Clime for ever, so Thou sendest
A face to look upon, a heart that beats,
A hand to touch—albeit like himself,
Black, venomous, unblest, exiled, and
base :

Give him this thing, he will be very still,
Nor trouble Thee again.'

The Lord mused.

Still,
Scarce audible trembled the Waters of
Life—

Over all Heaven the Snow of the same
Thought

Which rose within the Spirit of the Lord
Fell hushedly ; the innumerable Eyes
Swam in a lustrous dream.

Then said the Lord :
'In all the waste of worlds there dwelleth
not

Another like himself—behold he is
The basest Mortal born. Yet 'tis not meet
His cruel cry, for ever piteous,
Should trouble my eternal Sabbath-day.
Is there a Spirit here, a human thing,

Will pass this day from the Gate Beautiful
To share the exile of this Man accurst,—
That he may cease the shrill pain of his cry,
And I have peace?'

Hushedly, hushedly,
Snow'd down the Thought Divine—the
living Waters
Murmured and darkened. But like mourn-
ful mist
That hovers o'er an autumn pool, two
Shapes,
Beautiful, human, glided to the Gate
And waited.

'What art thou?' in a stern voice
The Seraph said, with dreadful forefinger
Pointing to one. A gentle voice replied,
'I will go forth with him whom ye call curst!
He grew within my womb—my milk was
white

Upon his lips. I will go forth with him!'
'And *thou*?' the Seraph said. The second
Shape

Answered, 'I also will go forth with him;
I have kist his lips, I have lain upon his
breast,

I bare him children, and I closed his eyes;
I will go forth with him!'

Then said the Lord,
'What Shapes are these who speak?' The
Seraph answered:

'The woman who bore him and the wife he
wed—

The one he slew in anger—the other he
stript,

With ravenous claws, of raiment and of
food.'

Then said the Lord, 'Doth the Man hear?'
'He hears.'

Answer'd the Seraph; 'like a wolf he lies,
Venomous, bloody, dark, a thing accurst,
And hearkeneth, with no sign!' Then said
the Lord:

'Show them the Man,' and the pale Seraph
cried,
'Behold!'

Hushedly, hushedly, hushedly,
In heaven fell the Snow of Thought Divine,
Gleaming upon the Waters of Life beneath,
And melting,—as with slow and lingering
pace,

The Shapes stole forth into the windy cold,
And saw the thing that lay and throbb'd
and lived,

And stooped above him. Then one reach'd
a hand

And touch'd him, and the fierce thing
shrank and spat,

Hiding his face.

'Have they beheld the Man?'
The Lord said; and the Seraph answer'd
'Yea;'

And the Lord said again, 'What doth the
Man?'

'He lieth like a log in the wild blast,
And as he lieth, lo! one sitting takes
His head into her lap, and moans his name,
And smoothes his matted hair from off his
brow,

And croons in a low voice a cradle song;
And lo! the other kneeleth at his side,
Half-shrinking in the old habit of her fear,
Yet hungering with her eyes, and passion-
ately

Kissing his bloody hands.'

Then said the Lord,
'Will they go forth with him?' A voice
replied,

'He grew within my womb—my milk was
white

Upon his lips. I will go forth with him!'
And a voice cried, 'I will go forth with
him;

I have kist his lips, I have lain upon his
breast,

I bare him children, and I closed his eyes;
I will go forth with him!'

Still hushedly
Snowed down the Thought Divine, the
Waters of Life

Flow'd softly, sadly; for an alien sound,
A piteous human cry, a sob forlorn
Thrill'd to the heart of Heaven.

The Man wept.

And in a voice of most exceeding peace
The Lord said (while against the Breast
Divine

The Waters of Life leapt, gleaming, glad-
dening):

'The Man is saved; let the Man enter in!'

Political Mystics.

(1871.)

Shades of the living Time,
Phantoms men deem real,
Rise to a runic rhyme,
Cloak'd from head to heel !
One by one ye pass
As in a magician's glass,
One by one displace
The hood which veils the face ;
And ever we recognise,
With terrible deep-drawn breath,
Christ's inscrutable eyes,
And the bloodless cheeks of Death !

TITAN AND AVATAR.

A CHORAL MYSTIC.

I.

ODE OF NATIONS.

'Twas the height of the world's night, there
was neither warmth nor light,
And the heart of Earth was heavy as a
stone ;

Yet the nations sick with loss saw the surge
of heaven toss

Round the meteor of the Cross ; and with
a moan

All the people desolate gazed thereon and
question'd fate,

And the wind went by and bit them to the
bone.

Hope was fled and Faith was dead, and the
black pell overhead

Hung like Death's, for doom was heavy
everywhere,—

When there rose a sudden gleam, then a
thunder, then a scream,

Then a lightning, stream on stream aslant
the air !

And a dreadful ray was shed around the
Cross, and it grew red,

And the pallid people leapt to see the
glare.

Fire on the heights of France ! Fire on the
heights of France !

Fire flaming up to heaven, streak on
streak !

How on France Kings look't askance ! how
the nations join'd in dance !

To see the glory glance from peak to
peak !

How the chain'd lands curst their chance,
as they bent their eyes on France !

Earth answer'd, and her tongues began
to speak.

Now hark !—who lit the spark in the
miserable dark ?

O Washington, men miss thee and
forget.

Where did the light arise, in answer to
man's cries ?

In the West ; in those far skies it rose
and set.

Who brought it in his breast from the
liberated West ?

Speak his name, and kneel and bless
him : Lafayette.

O Sire, that madest Fire ! How with
passionate desire

Leapt the nations while it gather'd and
up-streamed ;

Then they fed it, to earth's groans, with
Man's flesh and blood and bones,

And with Altars and with Thrones ; and
still it screamed.

Then they cast a King thereon—but a
flash, and he was gone.

Then they brought a Queen to feed it :—
how it gleam'd !

Then it came to pass, Earth's frame seem'd
 dissolving in the flame,
 Then it seem'd the Soul was shaken on
 its seat,
 And the pale Kings with thin cries look'd
 in one another's eyes,
 Saying, 'Hither now it flies, and O how
 fleet!
 Sound loud the battle-cry, we must trample
 France or die,
 Strike the Altar, cast it down beneath
 our feet.'

Forth they fared. The red fire flared on
 the heights of France, and glared
 On the faces of the free who kept it fed;
 Came the Kings with blinded eyes, but with
 baffled prayers and cries
 They beheld it grow and rise, still bloody-
 red;
 When lo! the Fire's great heart, like a
 red rose cloven apart
 Open'd swiftly, to deep thunder overhead.

And lo, amid the glow, while the pale
 Kings watched woe,
 Rose a single SHAPE, and stood upon the
 pyre.
 Its eyes were deeply bright, and its face, in
 their sad sight,
 Was pallid in a white-heat of desire,
 And the cheek was ashen hued; and with
 folded arms it stood
 And smiled bareheaded, fawn'd on by
 the Fire!

Forehead bare, the Shape stood there, in
 the centre of the glare,
 And cried, 'Away ye Kings, or ye shall
 die.'
 And it drave them back with flame, o'er the
 paths by which they came,
 And they wrung their hands in shame as
 they did fly.
 As they fled it came behind fleet-footed
 than the wind,
 And it scatter'd them, and smote them
 hip and thigh.

All amazed, they stood and gazed, while
 their crying kingdoms blazed,
 With their fascinated eyes upon the
 Thing;—

When lo, as clouds dilate, it grew greater
 and more great,
 And beneath it waited Fate with triple
 sting;
 All colossus-like and grand, it bestrode the
 sea and land,
 And behold the crown'd likeness of a
 KING!

Then the light upon the height, that had
 burned in all men's sight
 Was absorb'd into the creature where he
 smiled.
 O his face was wild and wan—but the burn-
 ing current ran
 In the red veins of the Man who was its
 child:—
 To the sob of the world's heart did the
 meteor-light depart,
 Earth darken, and the Altar fall defiled.

The aloud the Phantom vow'd, 'Look
 upon me, O ye proud!
 Kiss my footprints! I am reaper, ye are
 wheat!
 Ye shall tremble at my name, ye shall ea-
 my bread in shame,
 I will make ye gather tame beneath my
 Seat.'

And the gold that had been bright on the
 hair of Kings at night,
 Ere dawn was shining dust about his
 feet.

At this hour behold him tower, in the dark-
 ness of his power,
 Look upon him, search his features, O
 ye free!

Is there hope for living things in this fiery
 King of Kings,
 Doth the song that Freedom sings fit
 such as he?

Is it night or is it day, while ye bleed he-
 neath his sway?
 It is night, deep night on earth and air
 and sea.

Still the height of the world's night. There
 is neither warmth nor light,
 And the heart of Earth is heavy as a
 stone;
 And within the night's dark core where the
 sad Cross gleam'd before
 Sits the Shape that Kings adore, upon a
 Throne;

And the nations desolate crawl beneath and
curse their fate,
And the wind goes by and bites them to
the bone.

O Sire that mad'st the Fire, and the Shape
that dread and dire

Came from thence, the first and last born
of the same,

To Thee we praying throng, for Thou alone
art strong,

To right our daily wrong and bitter
shame :

From the aching breast of earth, lift the red
Fire and its birth !

Consume them—let them vanish in one
flame !

II.

THE AVATAR'S DREAM.

(Buonaparte loquitur, at Erfurt.)

THE cup is overflowing. Pour, pour yet,
My Famulus—pour with free arm-sweep
still,

And when the wine is running o'er the brim,
Sparkling with golden bubbles in the sun,
I will stoop down and drink the full great
draught

Of glory, and as did those heroes old
Drinking ambrosia in the happy isles,
Dilate at once to perfect demigod.

Meantime, I feast my eyes as the wine runs
And the cup fills. Fill up, my Famulus !
Pour out the precious juice of all the earth,
Pour with great arm-sweep, that the world
may see.

O Famulus—O Spirit—O good Soul,
Come close to me and listen—curl thyself
Up in my breast—let us drink ecstasy
Together ; for the charm thou taughtest
me

I working like slow poison in the veins
Of the great Nations : each, a wild-beast
tamed,

Looks mildly in mine eyes and from my
hand

Eats gently ; and this day I speak the
charm

To Russia, and, behold ! the crafty eyes
Blink sleepily, while on the fatal lips
Hovers the smile of appetite half-fed,

Half-hungry : he being won, all else is won,
And at our feet, our veritable slave,
Lies Europe. Whisper now, Soul of my
Soul,

Since we have won this Europe with the
sword,

How we shall portion it to men anew.

First, in the centre of the West, I set
My signet like a star, and on a rock
Base the imperial Throne : seated whereon,
The royal crown of France upon my head,
At hand the iron crown of Lombardy,
And in my sceptre blended as a sign
The hereditary gems of Italy,
Spain, Holland, I shall see beneath my feet
My Puppets sit with strings that reach my
hand :

Murat upon the throne of Italy,
Jerome upon new-born Westphalia,
Louis the lord of Holland, and perchance
A kinsman in the Prussian dotard's place ;
And, lower yet, still puppets to my hand,
Saxony, Würtemberg, Bavaria,
The petty principalities and powers,
All smiling up in our hot thunderous air ;—
And all the thrones, the kingdoms, and the
powers

That break to life beneath them, murmur-
ing

'Hail, King of Europe—Emperor of the
West.'

Thus far. Still farther ? Driven to the East,
First by fond cunning, afterwards by blows,
The Russian's eyes bloodshot with greed
will watch,

While still our flood-tide inexhaustible
Of Empire washes to the Danube, rolls
Into the Baltic, and with one huge wave
Covers the plains of Poland. Then at last
The mighty Empires of the East and West
Shall clash together in the final blow,
And that which loses shall be driven on
To lead the heathen on in Asia,
And that which hurls the other to such
doom

Shall be the chosen Regent of the World.
Shall this be so, O Spirit ? Pour, O pour—
Yea, let me feast mine eyes upon the wine,
Albeit I drink not. See !—Napoleon,
Waif from the island in the southern sea,

Sun to whom all the Kings o' the earth are
stars,

Sword before which all earthly swords are
straws,

Child of the Revolution, Crown and Head,
Heart, Soul, Arm, King, of all Humanity !

O Famulus—in God's name keep my soul
From swooning to vain-glory. I believe
God (not the other) sends thee, that thy
month

May fill me with a message for the race,
And purge the peevish and distemper'd
world

Of her hereditary plague of Kings.

For Man, I say, all in due season grow
Back to the likeness hat he wore at first,
One mighty nation pling the green earth,
One equal people with one King and head,
One Kingdom with one Temple, and
therein

No priest, no idol, no ark sacrifice,
But spheric music and the dreamy light
Of heaven's mild azure and the changeless
stars.

The curse of earth hath been the folly of
peace

Under vain rulers, so dividing earth,
That twenty thousand kings of Lilliput
Strutted and fretted heaven and teased the
time,

Kept nature's skin for ever on the sting
Like vermin, and perplex'd Humanity
With petty pangs and peevish tyranny,
While the soul sickened of obscure disease,
And the innumerable limbs of state
Moved paralysed, most inert, or dead.
Came Revolution like avenging fire ;
And in the red flash miserable men
Beheld themselves and wondered—saw their
Kings

Still strutting Lilliputian in the glare,—
And laugh'd till heaven rung,—gave one
fierce look

To heaven, and rose. Outraged Columbia
Breath'd o'er the sea, and scorch'd the in-
solent cheek

Of Albion. Albion paled before the flame,
The darken'd embers faded in the West,
And all was still again ; when one mad
morn

Men wakening, saw the heights of France
afire !

Earth shook to her foundation, and the
light

Illumed the hemispheres from west to east,
And men that walk beneath and under us,
Holding their heads to other stars, beheld
The glory flaming from the underworld.

The little Kings of Europe, lily-pale,
Scream'd shrill to one another. Germany

In her deep currents of philosophy
Mirror'd the fiery horror. Russia groaned,
Sheeted in snows that took the hue of blood

Under the fierce reflection. Italy,
Spain and the Tyrol, wild Helvetia,

Caught havoc ; and even on the white
English crags

A few strong spirits, in a race that binds
Its body in chains and calls them Liberty,
And calls each fresh link Progress, stood
erect

With faces pale that hunger'd to the light.
Then, like a hero in his anguish, burnt

Poor gentle Louis, whom the stars destined
To be a barber and who was a King,

And as he flamed and went like very
straw,

Earth shriek'd and fever'd France grew
raving mad.

Pass o'er the wild space of delirium,
When France upon her stony bed of pain
Raved, screamed, blasphemed, was me-
dicined with blood,

Forgot all issues and the course of time ;
And come to that supremer, stiller hour
When, facing these fierce wasps of Kings
who flocked

To sting the weary sufferer to death,
I rose and stood behind her, drove them
back,

So ! with a sword-sweep. Those were
merry days,

My Spirit ! These were spring days, winds
of war

Sharp-blowing, but the swallow on the way
Already bringing summer from the south !

Then one by one I held these little Kings
Between my fingers and inspected them
Like curious insects, while with buzz and
hiss

Their tiny stings were shooting in and out ;
And how I laugh'd

To think such wretched vermin had so long
Tortured unhappy Man, and to despair

Driven him and his through infinite ways
of woe!

When, with one sweep of his great arm,
one blow

Of his sharp palm, he might annihilate
Such creatures by the legion and in sooth
Exterminate the breed! O Spirit of Man!

A foolish Titan! foolish now as then,
Guided about the earth like a blind man

By any hand that leads,

And then and now unconscious of a frame
Whose strength, into one mighty effort
gathered,

Might shake the firmament of heaven itself!
. . . Well, we have done this service. We
have freed

Earth from its pest of Kings, so that they
crawl

Powerless and stingless; we have medicined
Desperate disease with direful remedies;
And lo, the mighty Spirit of mankind
Hath stagger'd from the sick-bed to his
feet,

And feebly totters, picking darken'd steps,
And while I lead him on scarce sees the
sun,

But questions feebly 'Whither?' Whither?
Indeed

I am dumb, and all Earth's voices are as
dumb—

God is not dumber on His throne. In vain
I would peer forward, but the path is black.
Ay,—whither?

O what peevish fools are mortals,
Tormented by a raven on each shoulder,
'Whither?' and 'wherefore?' Shall I
stand and gape

At heaven, straining eyes into the tomb,
Like some purblind philosopher or bard
Asking stale questions of the Infinite
Dumb with God's secret? questioning the
winds,

The waves, the stars, all things that live
and move,

All signs, all augurs? Never yet hath one
Accorded answer. 'Whither?' Death re-
plies

With dusky smile. 'Wherefore?' The
echoes laugh

Their 'wherefore? wherefore?' Of the
time unborn,

And of the inevitable Law, no voice

Bears witness. The pale Man upon the
Cross

Moan'd,—and beheld no further down the
Void

Than those who gather'd round to see Him
die.

Ay,—but the Soul, being weather-wise, can
guess

The morrow by the sunset, can it not?
And there are signs about the path whereon
I guide the foolish Titan, that imply
Darkness and hidden dangers. All these
last

I smile at; but, O Soul within my Soul,
'Tis he, the foolish Titan's self, I fear:
For, though I have a spell upon him now,
And say it, and he follows, any morn
(Awakening from his torpor as he woke
One bloody morn in Paris and went wild),
He may put out his frightful strength
again,

And with one mighty shock of agony
Bring down the roof of Empire on my
head.

He loves me now, and to my song of war
Murmurs deep undertone, and as he goes
Fondles the hand that leads; but day by
day

Must I devise new songs and promises,
More bloody incantation, lest he rouse
And rend me. Oftentimes it seems *he*
leads,

I follow,—he the Tyrant, I the Slave,—
And it, perchance, were better had I paused
At Amiens, nor with terrible words and
ways

Led him thus far, still whispering in his
ear

That he at last shall look on 'Liberty.'

Liberty? Have I lull'd him with a Lie?
Or shall the Titan Spirit of man be led
To look again upon the face of her,
His first last love, a spirit woman-shaped,
Whom in the sweet beginning he beheld,
Adored, loved, lost, pursued, whom still in
tears

He yearns for; in whose name alone all
Kings

Have led and guided him a space and
throve,

Denying whom all Kings have died in turn,

Whose memory is perfume, light and dream,

Whose hope is incense, music, bliss, and tears,

To him whose great heart with immortal beat

Measures the dark march of Humanity.

I do believe this Shape he saw and loved

Was but a Phantasm, unsubstantial, strange,

A vision never to be held and had,

A spectral woman ne'er to be enjoyed ;

But such a thought whisper'd into his ear

Were rank as blasphemy cried up at God.

The name is yet a madness, a supreme

Ecstasy and delirium ! All things

That cry it, move the tears into the eyes

Of the sad Titan. Echoed from the heights

Of France, it made him mad, and in his rage

He tore at Earth's foundations. Evermore

He turns his suffering orbs upon the dark,

Uplifts his gentle hands to the chill stars,

Pauses upon the path, and in the ear

Of him who leadeth cries with broken voice,

'How long, how long, how long?'

And unto him,

This Titan, I, supreme of all the earth,

Am but a pigmy (let me whisper it !)

And I have won upon him with strange lies,

And he has suffered all indignities,

Bonds, chains, a band to blindfold both his eyes,

Patient and meek, since I have sworn at last

To lead him to the trysting-place where waits

His constant love and most immortal Bride.

Still in mine ears he murmureth her name,

And follows. I have led him on through fire,

Blood, darkness, tears, and still he hath been tame,

Though oftentimes shrinking from things horrible,

And on and on he follows even now,

Blindfold, with slower and less willing feet—

I fear with slower and less willing feet—

And still I lead, through lurid light from heaven,

Whither I know not. 'Whither !' Oftentimes

My great heart fails, lest on some morn we reach

That portal o'er which flaming Arch is writ,

'All hope abandon ye who enter here !'

And he, perceiving he hath been befool'd,

Will cast me from him with his last fierce breath

Down through the gate into some pit of doom.

Meantime he follows smiling. O Famulus !

Could I but dream that she, the Shape he seeks,

Whom men name Liberty, and gods name Peace,

Were human, could inhale this dense dark air,

Could live and dwell on earth, and rear the race,

'Twere well,—for by Almighty God I swear

I would find out a means to join their hands

And bless them, and abide their grateful doom.

But she he seeks I know to be a dream,

A vision of the rosy morning mist,

A creature foreign to the earth and sea,

Ne'er to be look'd upon by mortal soul

Out of the mortal vision. Wherefore still

I fear this Titan. I can never appease

His hungry yearning wholly. He will bear

No future chains, no closer blindfolding,

And if a fatal whisper reach his ear,

I and all mine are wholly wreck'd and lost.

Yet is this Titan old so weak of wit,

So senile-minded though so huge of frame,

So deaf to warning voices when they cry,

That, should no angel light from heaven speak

The mad truth in his ear, he will proceed

Patiently as a lamb. He counteth not

The weary years ; his eyes are shut indeed

With a half-smile, to see the mystic Face

Pictured upon his brain ; only at times

He lifeth lids and gazeth wildly round,

Clutching at the cold hand of him that guides,—

But with a whisper he is calm'd again,

Relapsing back into his gentle dream.

O he is patient, and he will await
 Century after century in peace,
 So that he hears sweet songs of her he
 seeks,
 So that his guides do speak to him of her,
 So that he thinks to clasp her in the end.

The end? Sweet sprite, the end is what I
 fear—

If I might live for ever, Famulus!—
 Why am I not immortal and a god?
 I have caused tears enough, as bitter tears
 As ever by the rod divine were struck
 Out of this rock of earth. O for a spell
 Wherewith to cheat old Death, whose feet
 I hear

Afar off, for I hate the bony touch
 Of hands that change the purple for the
 shroud!

Yet I could go in peace (since all must go)
 So that my seed were risen and in its eyes
 I saw assurance of imperial thoughts,
 Strength, and a will to grasp the thunder-
 bolt

I leave unhurl'd beside the Olympian
 throne.

Ah God, to die, and into the dark gloom
 Drag that throne with me, to the hollow
 laugh

Of the awakening Titan! All my peers
 Are ciphers, all my brethren are mere
 Kings

Of the old fashion, only strengthen'd now
 By my strong sunshine; reft of that, they
 die,

Like sunflowers in the darkness. Death,
 old Death,

Touch me this day, or any dark day soon,
 And I and mine are like the miser's hoard,
 A glorious and a glittering pile of gold
 Changed to a fluttering heap of wither'd
 leaves.

This must not be. No, I must have a
 child.

I must be firm and from my bed divorce
 The barren woman. Furthermore, to link
 My throne with all the lesser thrones of
 earth,

I must wed the seed of Kings. Which seed,
 which child?

Which round ripe armful of new destiny?
 Which regal mould for my imperial issue?

Thine, fruitful house of Hapsburg? Russia,
 thine?

The greater, not the lesser. I must wed
 Seed of the Czar, and so with nuptial rites
 Unite the empires of the East and West.

Fill, fill, my Famulus, the golden cup
 I thirst for; all the peril as I gaze
 Hath faded. I no more with fluttering lips
 Cry 'Whither?' but with hands outstretch'd
 I watch

Rubily glistening glory. It shall thrive!
 King of the West, sowing the seed of
 Kings

First of the Empire of the Golden Age,
 The sleeping Titan, and the quiet Sea;
 Light of the Lotus and all mortal eyes,
 Whose orbit nations like to heliotropes
 Shall follow with lesser circle and sweet
 sound!

III.

THE ELEMENTAL QUEST.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

FORM of her the Titan full of patience
 Sees amid the darkness of the nations;
 Voice of her whose sound in the beginning
 Came upon him desolate and sinning;
 Face and fairest form of her whose gleam-
 ing
 Soothes his gentle spirit into dreaming;
 Spirit! whom the Titan sees above him!

SEMI-CHORUS II.

Gentle eyes that shine and seem to love
 him!
 Tender touch, the thrill of her sweet fingers,
 Thrill that reach'd his soul and burns and
 lingers;
 Breath of her, and scent of her, and bliss
 of her;
 Dream of her, and smile of her, and kiss of
 her!
 Come again, and speak, and bend above
 him,
 Spirit that came once and seemed to love
 him.

THE TITAN.

How long, how long?

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Courage, great heart and strong,
 Break not, but beat low chime

To the dark flow of Time ;
Follow the path foot-worn,
Sad night and dewy morn,
Under the weary sun
Follow, O mighty one ;
Under dim moon and star !

THE TITAN.

Whither? How far, how far?

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Spirit of the fathomless abysses,
Spirit that he looked upon and misses,
Free and fair and perfect, more than
human,
Bringing love and peace-gifts like a woman ;
Come unto him, lessen to his pleading.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

Mark his patience, hear his gentle inter-
ceding ;
O'er mountain upon mountain left behind
thee,
He hath cheerly climb'd in vain to find
thee :
Wild waters he hath cross'd, wild sea and
river,
All countries he hath traversed, faithful ever,
Ever hoping, ever waiting, never seeing.

CHORUS.

Spirit seen in some long darken'd being,
Spirit that he saw at the world's portal,
Saw, and knew, and loved, and felt im-
mortal,
Spirit that he wearies for and misses,
Answer from the fathomless abysses !

THE TITAN.

How long, how long?

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Courage, O Titan strong !
Courage, from place to place
Still follow the voice and the face !

THE TITAN.

Whither?

A VOICE AFAR.

O hither !

THE TITAN.

Whither?

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Voice of her he follows in dumb pleasure,
Camest thou from the earth or from the
azure ;
Camest thou from the pastures on the
mountains,
From the ocean, from the rivers, from the
fountains,
From the vapours blowing o'er him while
he hearkens,
From the ocean hoar that beats his feet and
darkens,
From the star that on the sea-fringe melts
and glistens?

SEMI-CHORUS II.

O homeless voice, he maddens as he
listens,
O voice divine, his wild lips part asunder ;
He speaketh, and his words are a low
thunder.

THE TITAN.

Whither, O whither?

VOICE AFAR.

Hither !

THE TITAN.

Whither? Wherefore, while I wait in
patience,
Mock her voice, O voices of the nations ;
Wherefore by night and day,
Where'er my slow feet stray,
Trouble all hours with wild reverberations?

Mountain winds, ye name her name unto
me !
Flowing rivers glance and thrill it through
me !
Earth, water, air, and sky,
Name her as I go by !
With her dim ghost the floating clouds
pursue me.

All of these have seen her face and love
her,
Earth beneath and heaven that bends above
her ;
The rain-wreck and the storm
Mimic the one fair form,
The whirlwind knows her name and cries it
over.

Flowers are sown by her bright foot, where
ever

They are flashing past by mere and river ;
Birds in the forest stir,
Singing mad praise of her ;

All green paths know her, though she flies
for ever.

CHORUS.

Joy of wind and wave and cloud and
blossom,
Pause at last, and fall upon his bosom !

THE TITAN.

None behold her twice, but having conn'd
her

While she flashes past with feet that
wander,

Remember the blest gleam,
And grow by it, and dream,
And fondle the sweet memory, and ponder.

All have known her, and yet none possess
her ;

None behold her, yet all things caress her ;
The warmth of her white feet,
Where it doth fall so sweet,
Abides for ever there, and all things bless
her.

Faster than the prophesying swallow,
Fast by wood and sea and hill and hollow,
Sought by all things that be,
But most of all by me,
She fieth none know whither, and I follow.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

O wherefore, radiant one,
Under the moon and sun,
Glimmer away ?

VOICE AFAR.

Here on the heights I stay ;
Come hither.

THE TITAN.

Whither ?

VOICE AFAR.

O hither !

CHORUS.

Form of her the Titan full of patience
Sees amid the darkness of the nations ;

Voice of her whose song in the beginning
Came upon him desolate and sinning ;
Face and fairest form of her whose gleam-
ing

Soothes his gentle spirit into dreaming ;
Touch of her, the thrill of her quick fingers,
Thrill that reach'd his soul and burns and
lingers ;

Soul beyond his soul, yet ever near it,
His heart's home, and haven of his spirit ;
Joy of wind and wave and cloud and
blossom,

Pause at last, and fall upon his bosom !

IV.

THE ELEMENTAL DOOM.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

STRANGE hands are passing across our
eyes,

Before our souls strange visions rise
And dim shapes flash and flee.

The mists of dream are backward roll'd—
As from a mountain, we behold
What is, and yet shall be.

A VOICE.

Speak, while the depths of dream unfold,
What is it that ye see ?

SEMI-CHORUS I.

'Tis vision. Lo, before us stands,
Casting his shade on many lands,
The mighty Titan, by the sea
Of tempest-tost humanity ;
And to the earth, and sea, and sky,
He uttereth a thunder-cry
Out of his breaking heart,
And the fierce elements reply,
And earth is cloven apart.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

Like sparks blown from a forge, the spheres
Drift o'er us ;—all our eyes and ears
Are full of fire and sound.
With blood about him blown like rain,
We see how on a darken'd plain
Stands the Avatar, crown'd.
Silent he waits, and white as death,
Looks in the Titan's eyes.
They stand—the black sky holds its breath—
The deep Sea stills its cries,
The mad storm hushes driving past,

The sick stars pause and gaze—the blast,
The wind-rent rain, the vapours dark,
Like dead things crouch, and wait, and
hark ;
And lo ! those twain alone and dumb
Loom desolate and strange.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Is the time come? .

SEMI-CHORUS II.

The time is come.

CHORUS.

Titan, to thy revenge !

SEMI-CHORUS I.

O look and listen !
His great eyes glisten,
Like an oak the storm rendeth
He swayeth and bendeth,
With lips torn asunder
He shakes, but no thunder
Comes thence.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

While still nigh him,
With smiles that defy him,
The crown'd one is standing,—
His pale look commanding
A tigress, that crouching
Beneath him and touching
His feet with low cries,
Waits, fiercely betraying
Blood's thirst yet obeying
His eyes !

CHORUS.

Is he doom'd?

A VOICE.

He is doom'd.

CHORUS.

Oh, by whom?

VOICE.

By the child yet unborn in the womb,
By the dead laid to sleep in the tomb,
He is doom'd, he is doom'd.

CHORUS.

Speak his doom !

THE TITAN.

Napoleon ! Napoleon !

THE AVATAR.

Who cries ?

THE TITAN.

I, child of the earth and the skies,
I, Titan, the mystical birth,
Whose voice since the morning of earth
Hath doom'd such as thou in the end,
Speak thy doom !

THE AVATAR.

Speak ! I smile and attend.

THE TITAN.

Because thou hast with lies and incanta-
tions,
With broken vows and false asseverations,
For thine own ends accurst,
Betrayed me from the first,
I speak, and doom thee, in the name of
nations.

Because I have wander'd like a great stream
flowing
From its own channel and through strange
gulfs going,
So that for years and years
I must retrace in tears
The black and barren pathway of thy
showing.

Because one further step after thy leading
Had hurl'd me down to doom past inter-
ceding,
So that I never again,
In passion or in pain,
Might look upon the face I follow pleading.

Because thou hast led me blind, knee-deep
through slaughter,
Through fields of blood that wash'd our
way like water,
Because in that divine
Name I adore, and mine,
Thou hast bruised Earth, and to desolation
brought her.

Because thou hast been a liar and blas-
phemer,
Deeming me triply dotard and a dreamer.

Because thy hand at length
Would strike me in my strength,
Me, deathless ! me, diviner and supremer !

Because all voices of the earth and azure,
All things that breathe, all things curst for
thy pleasure,
All poor dead men who died
To feed thy bitter pride,
All living, all dead, cry—mete to him our
measure !

Because thou hast slain Kings, and as a
token
Stolen their crowns and worn them, having
spoken
My curse against the same ;
Because all things proclaim
That thou didst swear a troth, and that 'tis
broken.

By her whom thou didst swear under God's
heaven
To find ; by her who being found was
driven
O'er earth, air, sky, and sea,
Through desolate ways, by thee,
With voice appealing and with raiment
riven !

Because thou hast turned upon and violated
Her soul to whom thou first wert conse-
crated,
Because, thro' thy soul's lie
And life's delusion, I
Must wait more ages, who have wept and
waited

Since the beginning. By the soul of
Patience,
Sick of thy face and its abominations,
I speak on thine and thee
The doom of Destiny,
Hear it, and die, hear in the name of
nations !

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Is he doom'd ?

SEMI-CHORUS II.

He is doom'd. 'Tis the end.

THE TITAN.

Napoleon !

THE AVATAR.
Speak ! I attend.

THE TITAN.

Utter the doom thou dost crave.

THE AVATAR.

'Tis spoken. A shroud and a grave.

THE TITAN.

O voices of earth, air, and sky,
Hear ye his doom, and reply.

HUMAN VOICES.

Death is sleep. Let him wake and not die.

THE TITAN.

Because by thee all comfort hath been
taken,
So that the Earth rocks still forlorn and
shaken,
Staring at the sad skies
With sleepless aching eyes,
Thou shalt *not* die, but wait and watch and
waken.

This is thy doom. Lone as a star thy being
Shall see the waves break and the drift-cloud
fleeing,
Hear the wind cry and grow,
Watch the great waters flow,
And seeing all, shine hid from all men's
seeing.

Here on this Isle amid a sea of sorrow
I cast thee down. Black night and weary
morrow,
Lie there alone, forgot,
So doom'd and pitied not ;
Let all things watch thy face, and thy face
borrow

The look of these mad elements that ever
Strike, scream, and mingle, sever and dis-
sever ;
Gather from air and sea
The thirst of all things free,
The up-looking want, the hunger ceasing
never.

All shall forget thee. Thou shalt hear the
nations
Flocking with music light and acclamations

To kiss his royal feet
Who sitteth in thy Seat,
Surrounded by the slaves of lofty stations.

A rock in the lone Sea shall be thy pillow.
In the wide waste of gray wave and green
 billow,
The days shall rise and set
In silence, and forget
To sun thee,—a black shape beneath a
 willow

Watching the weary waters with heart
bleeding ;
Or dreaming cheek upon thy hand ; or
 reading
The book upon thy knee ;
And ever as the sea
Moans, raising eyes to the still heavens,
 and pleading :

Till like a wave worn out with silent break-
ing
Or like a wind blown weary ; thou, for-
saking
Thy tenement of clay,
Shalt wear and waste away,
And grow a portion of the ever-waking

Tumult of cloud and sea. Feature by
 feature
Losing the likeness of the living creature,
 Returning back thy form
To its elements of storm,
Thou shalt dissolve in the great wreck of
 Nature.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Is it done ?

SEMI-CHORUS II.

It is done.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Look again.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

I see on the rock in the main
The Shape sitting dark by the sea,
And his shade, and the shade of the tree,
Where he sitteth, are pencil'd jet-black
On the luminous sky at his back ;
But lo ! while I gaze, from the sky
Like phantoms they vanish and die :—
All is dark.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Look again.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

Hark, O bark !

SEMI-CHORUS I.

A shrill cry is piercing the dark—
Like the multitudinous moan
Of the waves as they clash, comes a groan
From afar—

THE TITAN.

What is this, O ye free ?

SEMI-CHORUS II.

He has gone like a wave of the sea—
Day dieth, the light falleth red,—
O Titan, behold he is dead ! . .

CHORUS.

Strange hands are passed across our eyes,
Before our souls strange visions rise,
 And dim shapes flash and flee ;
The mists of dream are backward rolled—
As from a mountain we behold
 That Island in the sea.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Now how thy face upon thy breast,
O Titan, and bemoan thy quest !
O look not thither with thine eyes,
But lift them to the constant skies !

THE TITAN.

What do ye see that thus to me
Ye turn and smile so bitterly ?

SEMI-CHORUS I.

'Tis vision. On that island bare
Sits one with face divinely fair,
 And pensive smiling lips ;
And on her lap the proud head lies.
Pale with the seal on its proud eyes
 Of Death's divine eclipse ;
All round is darkness of the sea,
And sorrow of the cloud.

SEMI-CHORUS II.

Yet she
Is making with her heavenly face
Sweetness like sunlight ; and the place

Grows luminous ; and the world afar
Looks thither as to some new star,
All wondering ; and with lips of death
Men name one name beneath their breath,
Not cursing as of yore, for now
All the inexorable brow
Is mouldering marble.

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Hark, O hark !

A silver voice divides the dark !

A VOICE.

Hither, O hither !

ANOTHER VOICE.

Whither ?

FIRST VOICE.

O sweet is sleep if sleep be deep,
And sweetest far to eyes that weep ;
He who upon my breast doth creep
Shall close his weary eyes and sleep.

Yet he who seeks me shall not find,
And he who chains me shall not bind ;
For fleet-footed than the wind
I still elude all human kind.

But when, soul-weary of the chase,
Falleth some man of mortal race,
I pause—I find him in his place,
I pause—I bless his dying face !

Whatsoever man he be,
I take his head upon my knee,
I give him words and kisses three,
Kissing I whisper, 'Thou art free !

O free is sleep if sleep be deep !—
I soothe them sleeping, and I heap
Greenness above them, and they weep
No longer, but are free, and sleep.

O royal face and royal head !
O lips that thunder'd ! O eyes red
With nights of watch ! O great soul dead !
Thy blood is water, thy heart lead !

They doom'd thee in my name, but see !
I doom thee not, but set thee free ;
Balm for all hearts is shed by me,
And for all spirits, liberty.

He finds me least who loves me best,
His Soul in an eternal quest
Wails still, while one by one are prest
Tyrants that hate me, to my breast.

The sad days fly—the slow years creep,
And he alone doth never sleep.
Would he might slumber and not weep.
O free is sleep, if sleep be deep.

THE TITAN.

Irene !

THE FOOL OF DESTINY.

A CHORIC DRAMA.

Scene.—THE CHÂTEAU OF WILHELMS-
HÖHE, IN CASSEL.

*German Citizens walking in the Gardens
without.*

FIRST CITIZEN.

How fine it is to lounge in talk
Together, down this long green walk
While russet trees to left and right
Snaring the rosy shafts of light
Shade them to silver, till they glow
There on the roof of the château
Gleaming bright ruby !

SECOND CITIZEN.

Not too near—

The place is private.

FIRST CITIZEN.

Didst thou hear

The news ? Another glorious blow
For Fatherland !

SECOND CITIZEN.

To-night at five

I saw the courier arrive,
Bringing the news to him who waits
Yonder.—O he may thank the fates
He sits so snug, the man of sin !—
How cunningly, before the end,
The Snake contrived to save his skin !

FIRST CITIZEN.

Thou art too hard upon him, friend.
He saw that all his cards were played,

And so, to save more bloodshed, strayed
Into the cage.

SECOND CITIZEN.

A cage, indeed !
Where from a gold plate he may feed
Of all earth's dainties, while afar
France, 'neath the tramping feet of War,
Bleeds like a winepress. There he lolls,
Butcher of bodies and of souls,
Smiling, and sees the storm blow by !

FIRST CITIZEN.

What could he do ?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Could he not die ?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Die? Sentiment ! If I were he
I'd bless the stars which set me free
From that foul-hearted Whore's embrace,
France, with her fickle painted face,
Better in Germany to dine,
Smoke one's cigar, and sip one's wine ;
And in good time, like most, no doubt,
Who have worn their wicked members out,
Repent, and be absolved, and then
Die in one's bed, like smaller men !

SECOND CITIZEN.

Thou cynic !

FIRST CITIZEN'S WIFE.

Dost thou think that he
Is happy ?

FIRST CITIZEN.

Why not? . . . Possibly,
My dear, 'tis something after all
To know the worst that can befall ;
To know, whatever joy or sorrow
Fate is preparing for the morrow,
It cannot make more dark the lot
One bears to-night. Happy ! Why not ?
Happy as most of our poor kind.

WIFE.

He hath so much upon his mind !

FIRST CITIZEN.

A woman's thought ;—but hark to me,
And take this for philosophy—

Beyond a given amount of pain,
The spirit suffers not a grain.
What stuff we humble folk are taught
Of monarchs and their weight of thought !
Why, thou and I, and Jack and Jill,
Feel just as much of good and ill,
Of life and strife, of thought and care,
As he who sitteth musing there !

SECOND CITIZEN.

I saw him walking, yesterday.
He is much aged of late, they say—
He stoops much, and his features are
Gray as the ash of the cigar
He smokes for ever.

FIRST CITIZEN (*to wife*).

Come, my dear,
Let's home ! 'Tis growing chilly here ;
So !—take my arm. Yes, I contend
It matters little in the end
If one be Beggar, Priest, or King—
The whip's for all—the pang, the sting !
Dost thou remember—canst forget ?
When all our goods were seized for deb',
In Friedberg ? Claim was heap'd on claim—
Blow came on blow—shame follow'd shame,
And last to crown our dire distress,
Thy brother Hans' hard-heartedness.
Think you I felt a whit less sad,
Less thunderstruck, less fierce, less mad,
Than yonder melancholy Man,
When, through the dark cloud of Sedan,
He, as a star that shoots by night,
Swept from his sphere of lonely light,
And at the feet of Wilhelm lay
Glow-worm-like, in the garish day
Of conquest ? Well, well ! wait and see—
I rose again, and so may he.
The world is but a Play, tho' ye
Dear creatures take it seriously !
I cannot pity from my heart
The player of the Monarch's part,
For at the worst he never knows
The famish'd Body's bitter throes.
I pity more with all my soul
The filler of the Soldier's rôle,
Who feels the ball, and with a groan
Sinks in the bloody ranks unknown,
And while the far-off cannon cries,
Kisses his sweetheart's hair, and dies.

[*Exeunt.*

NAPOLEON. A PHYSICIAN.

PHYSICIAN.

The sickness is no sickness of the flesh,
No ailment such as common mortals feel,
But spiritual : 'tis thy fiery thought
Drying the wholesome humour of the veins,
Consuming the brain's substance, and from
thence,

As flame spreads, through each muscle,
vein, and nerve,

Reaching the vital members. If your High-
ness

Could stoop from the tense strain of great
affairs

To books and music, or such idle things

As wing the weary hours for lesser men !

Turu not thine eyes to France ; receive no
news :

Shut out the blinding gleam of battle : rest
From all fierce ache of thought ; and for a
time

Let the wild world go by.

NAPOLEON.

Enough, old friend :

Thine is most wholesome counsel. I will
seek

To make this feverish mass of nerve and
tew,

Th's thing of fretful heart-beats,
Fulfil its functions more mechanically.

Farewell.

PHYSICIAN.

Farewell, Sire. Brighter waking thoughts,
And sweeter dreams, attend thee ! [*Exit.*]

NAPOLEON.

All things change

Their summer livery for the autumn tinge
Of wind-blown withering leaves. That
man is faithful,—

I have been fed from his cold palm for
years,

And I believe, so strongly use and wont
Fetter such natures, he would die to serve
me ;

Yet do I see in his familiar eyes
The fatal pain of pity. I have lain

At Death's door divers times, and he hath
slowly,

With subtle cunning and most confident
skill,

Woo'd back my breath, but never even
then,

Though God's Hand held me down, did he
regard me

With so intense a gaze as now, when
smitten

By the mail'd hand of Man. I am not
dead !

Not dying ! only sick,—as all are sick
Who feel the mortal prison-house too weak
For the free play of Soul ! I eat and
drink—

I laugh—I weep, perchance—I feel—
I think—

I still preserve all functions of a man—

Yet doth the free wind of the fickle world

Blow on me with as chilly a respect

As on a nameless grave. Is there so sad

A sunset on my face, that all beholding

Think only of the morrow ?—other minds,
Other hearts, other hands ? Almighty
God,

If I dare pray Thee by that name of God,
Strengthen me ! blow upon me with Thy
breath !

Let our last memorable flash of fire

Burst from the blackening brand !—

Yes, sick—sick—sick :

Sick of the world ; sick of the fitful fools
That I have played with ; sick, forsooth, of
breath,

Of thought, of hope, of Time. I staked
my Soul

Against a Crown, and won. I wore the
Crown,

And 'twas of burning fire. I staked my
Crown

Against a Continent, and lost. I am here ;
Fallen, unking'd, the shadow of a power,
Yet not heart-broken—no, not heart-
broken—

But surely with more equable a pulse

Than when I sat on yonder lonely Seat

Fishing for wretched souls, and for my
sport,

Although the bait was dainty to the taste,

Hooking the basest only. I am nearer

To the world's heart than then ; 'tis bitter
bread,

Most bitter, yea, most bitter ; yet I eat
More freely, and sleep safer. I could die
now :

And yet I dare not die.

Maker of men !
 Thou Wind before whose strange breath
 we are clouds
 Driving and changing !—Thou who dost
 abide
 While all the laurels on the brows of Kings
 Wither as wreaths of snow !—Thou Voice
 that dwellest
 In the high sleeping chambers of the great,
 When council and the feverish pomp are
 hush'd,
 And the dim lamp burns low, and at its
 side
 The sleeping potion in a cup of gold :—
 Hear me, O God, in this my travail hour !
 From first to last, Thou knowest—yea,
 Thou knowest—
 I have been a man of peace : a silent man,
 Thought-loving, most ambitious to appease
 Self-chiding fears of mental littleness,
 A planner of delights for foolish men—
 In all, a man of peace. I struck one blow,
 And saw my hands were bloody ; from that
 hour
 I knew myself too delicately wrought
 For crimson pageants ; yea, the sight of
 pain
 Sick'n'd me like a woman. Day and night
 I felt that stain on my immortal soul,
 And gloved it from the world, and diligently
 Wrought the red sword of empire to a
 scythe
 For the swart hands of husbandmen to reap
 Abundant harvest.—Nay, but hear me
 swear,
 I never dreamed such human harvests blest
 As spring from that red rain which pours
 this day
 On the fair fields I sowed. Never, O God,
 Was I a butcher or a thing of blood ;
 Always a man of peace :—in mine ambition
 Peace-seeking, peace-engendering ;—till that
 day
 I saw the half-unloosen'd hounds of War
 Yelp on the chain and gnash their bloody
 teeth,
 Ready to rend mine unoffending Child,
 In whose weak hand the mimic toy of
 empire
 Trembled to fall. Then feverishly I
 wrought
 A weapon in the dark to smite those
 hounds

From mine imperial seat ; and as I wrought
 One of the fiends that came of old to Cain
 Found me, and since I thirsted gave to me
 A philtre, and in idiocy I drank :
 When suddenly I heard as in a dream
 Trumpets around me silver-tongued, and
 saw
 The many-colour'd banners gleam in the
 sun
 Above the crying legions, and I rode
 Royal before them, drunk with light and
 power,
 My boy beside me blooming like a rose
 To see the glorious show. Yet God, my
 God,
 Even then I swear the hideous lust of life
 Was far from me and mine ; nay, I rode
 forth,
 As to a gay review at break of day,
 A student dazzled with the golden glare,
 Half conscious of the cries of those he ruled,
 Half brooding o'er the book that he had
 left
 Open within his chamber. ' Blood may
 flow,'
 I thought, ' a little blood—a few poor
 drops,—
 A few poor drops of blood : but they shall
 prove
 Pearls of great price to buy my people
 peace ;
 The hounds of War shall turn from our
 fair fields,
 And on my son a robe like this I wear
 Shall fall, and make him royal for all time !
 O fool, fool, fool ! What was I but a
 child,
 Pleased beyond understanding with a toy,
 Till in mine ears the scream of murder'd
 France
 Rang like a knell. I had slain my best
 beloved !
 The curse of blood was on mine hands
 again !
 My gentle boy, with wild affrighted gaze,
 Turn'd from his sire, and moaned ; the
 hounds of War
 Scream'd round me, glaring with their
 pitiless eyes
 Innumerable as the eyes of heaven ;
 I felt the sob of the world's woe ; I saw
 The fiery rain fill all the innocent air ;
 And, feeble as a maid who hides her face

In terror at a sword-flash, conscience-struck,
Sick, stupefied, appalled, and all alone,
I totter'd, grasped the empty air,—and
fell !

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Vast Sea of Life that, 'neath the arc
Of yonder glistening sky,
Rollet thy waters deep and dark,
While windy years blow by :
On thy pale shore this night we stand,
And hear thy wash upon the sand.

Calm is thy sheet and wanly bright,
Low is thy voice and deep ;
There is no child on earth this night
Wrapt in a gentler sleep ;
Crouch'd like a hound thou liest now,
With eye upcast and dreadful brow.

O Sea, thy breast is deep and blest
After a dreadful day ;
And yet thou listenest in thy rest
For some sign far away ;
Watching with fascinated eyes
The uplifted Finger in the skies !

A hundred years thy still tides go
And touch the self-same mark—
Thus far, no farther, may they flow
And fall in light and dark ;
The mystic water-line is drawn -
By moonlit night and glimmering dawn.

Sure as a heart-beat year by year,
Though winds and thunders call,
Be it storm or calm, the tides appear,
Touch the long line and fall,
Liquid and luminously dim ;
And men build dwellings on their brim.

O well may this man wring his hands,
And utter a wild prayer.
He built above thy lonely sands
A Feast-house passing fair ;
It rose above thy sands, O Sea,
In a fair nook of greenery.

For he had watched thee many days,
And mark'd thy weedy line,
And far above the same did raise
His Temple undivine.
Throng'd with fair shapes of sin and guilt
It rose most magically built.

Not to the one eternal Light,
Lamp of both quick and dead,
Did he uprear it in thy sight,
But with a smile he said :
' To the unvarying laws of Fate,
This Temple fair I dedicate.

' To that sure law by which the Sea
Is driven to come and go
Within one mystic boundary,
And can no further flow ;
So that who knoweth destiny
May safely build, nor fear the Sea !'

O fool ! O miserable clod !
O creature made to die !
Who thought to mark the might of God
And mete it with his eye ;
Who measured God's mysterious ways
By laws of common nights and days.

O worm, that sought to pass God by,
Nor feared that God's revenge :
The law within the law, whereby
All things work on to change ;
Who guessed not how the still law's course
Accumulates superfluous force ;—

How for long intervals and vast
Strange secrets hide from day,
Till Nature's womb upheaves to cast
The gather'd load away ;
How deep the very laws of life
Deposit elements of strife.

O many a year in sun and shower
The quiet waters creep !—
But suddenly on some dark hour
Strange trouble shakes the deep :
Silent and monstrous thro' the gloom
Rises the Tidal Wave for doom.

Then woe for all who, like this Man,
Have built so near the Sea,
For what avails the human plan
When the new force flows free ?
Over their bonds the waters stream,
And Empires crash and despots scream.

O, is it earthquake far below
Where the still forces sleep ?
Doth the volcano shriek and glow,
Unseen beneath the deep ?
We know not ; suddenly as death
Comes the great Wave with fatal breath,

God works His ends for ever thus,
 And lets the great plan roll
 He wrought all things miraculous,
 The Sea, the Earth, the Soul ;
 And nature from dark springs doth draw
 Her fatal miracles of law.

O well may this Man wring his hands.
 And utter a wild prayer ;
 He built above the shifting sands
 A Feast-house passing fair.
 Long years it stood, a thing of shame :
 At last the mighty moment came.

Crashing like grass into its grave,
 Fell down the fair abode ;
 The despot struggled in the wave,
 And swimming screamed to God.
 And lo, the waters with deep roar
 Cast the black weed upon the shore.

Then with no warning, as they rose,
 Shrunk back to their old bounds :
 Tho' still with deep volcanic throes
 And sad mysterious sounds
 They quake. The Man upon their brim
 Sees wreck of Empire washed to him.

Vast Sea of life, that 'neath the arc
 Of yonder glistening sky,
 Spreadest thy waters strange and dark
 While windy years blow by,
 Creep closer, kiss his feet, O Sea,
 Poor baffled worm of Destiny !

Fain would he read with those dull eyes
 What never man hath known,
 The secret that within thee lies
 Seen by God's sight alone ;
 Thou watchest Heaven all hours ; but he,
 Praying to Heaven, watches thee.

So will he watch with weary breath,
 Musing beside the deep,
 Till on thy shore he sinks in death,
 And thy still tides upcreep,
 Raise him with cold forgiving kiss,
 And wash his dust to the Abyss.

NAPOLEON. A BISHOP.

NAPOLEON.

Speak out thy tidings quickly,
 How fares it with the Empress and my son ?

BISHOP.

Well, Sire. They bid thee look thy fate in
 the face,
 And be of cheer.

NAPOLEON.

Where didst thou part with them ?

BISHOP.

In England, Sire, where they have found a
 home
 Among the frozen-blooded islanders,
 Who yesterday called blessings on thy
 brow,
 And now rejoice in thy calamity.
 Thus much thy mighty lady bade me say,
 If I should find thee private in thy woe :—
 With thy great name the streets are gar-
 rulous :
 Mart, theatre, and church, palace and
 prison,
 Down to the very commons by the road
 Where Egypt's bastard children pitch their
 tents,
 Murmur 'Napoleon' ; but, alas ! the sound
 Is an echo that with no refrain,
 No loving echo in a living voice,
 Dies a cold death among the mountain
 snow.

NAPOLEON.

Old man, I never looked for friendship
 there,
 I never loved that England in my heart ;
 Tho' 'twas by such a sampler I believed
 To weave our France's fortunes thriftily
 With the gold tissues of prosperity.

BISHOP.

Ah, Sire, if I dare speak—

NAPOLEON.

Speak on.

BISHOP.

Too much
 Thine eyes to that cold isle of heretics
 Turn'd from thy throne for use and pre-
 cedent ;
 Too little did they look, and that too late,
 On that strong rock whereon the Lord thy
 God
 Hath built His Holy Church.

NAPOLEON.

Something of this
I have heard in happier seasons.

BISHOP.

Hear it now
In the dark day of thine adversity.
O Sire, by him who holds the blessed Keys,
Christ's Vicar on the earth for blinded men,
I do conjure thee, hearken—with my mouth,
Though I am weak and low, the Holy
Church
Cries to her erring son !

NAPOLEON.

Well, well, he hears.

BISHOP.

Thou smilest, Sire. With such a smile, so
grim,
So bitter, didst thou mock our blessed
cause
In thy prosperity.

NAPOLEON.

False, Bishop, false !
I made a bloody circle with my sword
Round the old Father's head, and so
secured him
Safe on his tottering Seat against the world,
When all the world cried that his time was
come.
What then ? He totter'd on. I could not
prop
His Seat up with my sword, that Seat being
built,
Not on a rock, but sand.

BISHOP.

The world is sick
And old indeed, when lips like thine blas-
pheme.
Whisper such words out on the common
air,
And, as a child,
Blow thy last hopes away.

NAPOLEON.

Hopes, hopes ! What hopes ?
What knowest thou of hopes ?

BISHOP.

Thy throne was rear'd
(Nay hear me, Sire, in patience to the end)

Not on the vulgar unsubstantial air
Which men call Freedom, not on half con-
sent

Of unbelievers — tho', alas ! thou hast
stoop'd

To smile on unbelievers—not on lives
That saw in thee one of the good and
wise,

Not wholly on the watchword of thy name ;
But first on this—the swords thy gold could
buy,

And most and last, upon the help of those
Who to remotest corners of our land
Watch o'er the souls of men, sit at their
hearths,

Lend their solemnity to birth and death,
Guide as they list the motions of the mind,
And as they list with darkness or with light
Appease the spiritual hunger. Where
Had France been, and thou, boasted Sun
of France,

For nineteen harvests, save for those who
crept

Thine agents into every cottage-door,
Slowly diffusing thro' each vein of France
The sleepy wine of empire ? Like to slaves
These served thee, used thy glory for a
charm,

Hung up thine image in a peasant's room,
Beside our blessed Saints, and cunningly,
As shepherds drive their sheep unto the fold,
Gather'd thy crying people where thy hand
Might choose them out for very butchery.
Nay, more ; as fearful men may stamp out
fire,

They in the spirits of thy people killed
The sparks of peril left from those dark
days,

When France being drunk with blood and
mad with pain

Sprang on the burning pyre, and with her
raiment

Burning and streaming crimson in the wind,
Curst and denied her God. They made
men see,

Yea, in the very name of Liberty,
A net of Satan's set to snare the soul
From Christ and Christ's salvation : in their
palms

They welded the soft clay of popular
thought

To this wish'd semblance yet more cun-
ningly ;

Till not a peasant heir of his own fields,
 And not a citizen that own'd a house,
 And not a man or woman who had saved,
 But when some wild voice shriek'd out
 'Liberty!'

Trembled as if the robber's foot were set
 Already on his threshold, and in fear
 Clutch'd at his little store. These things
 did they,

Christ's servants serving thee; they were
 as veins

Bearing the blood through France from
 thee its heart

Throbbing full glorious in the capital.

And thou, O Sire, in thine own secret mind
 Knowest what meed thou hast accorded
 them,

Who, thy sworn liegemen in thy triumph-
 hour,

Are still thy props in thy calamity.

NAPOLEON.

Well; have you done?

BISHOP.

Not yet.

NAPOLEON.

What more?

BISHOP.

Look round

This day on Europe, look upon the World,
 Which like a dark tree o'er the river of Time
 Hangeth with fruit of races, goodly some,
 Some rotten to the core. Out of the heart
 Of what had seem'd the sunset of the west,
 Rises the Teuton, silent, subtle, and sure,
 Gathering his venom slowly like a snake
 Wrapping the sleepy lands in fold by fold;
 Then springing up to stab his prey with fangs
 Numerous as spears of wheat in harvest time.

O, he is wise, the Teuton, he is deep
 As Satan's self in perilous human lore,
 Such as the purblind deem philosophy!
 But, be he cunning as the Tempter was,
 Christ yet shall bruise his head; for in him-
 self

He hears, as serpents use,
 A brood of lesser snakes, cunning things too
 But lesser, and of these many prepare
 Such peril as in his most glorious hour
 May strike him feebler than the wretched
 worms

That crawl this day on the dead lambs of
 France.

Meantime, he to his purpose moves most
 slow,

And overcomes. Note how, upon her rock
 The sea-beast Albion, swollen with idle
 years

Of hasking in the prosperous sunshine, rolls
 Her fearful eyes, and murmurs. See how
 wildly

The merciless Russian paceth like a bear
 His lonely steppes of snow, and with deep
 moan

Calling his hideous young, casts famished
 eyes

On that worn Paralytic in the East,
 Whom thou of old didst save. Call thou
 to these

For succour; shall they stir? Will the sea-
 beast

Budge from her rock? Will the bear leave
 his wilds?

Then mark how feebly in the wintry cold
 Old Austria ruffles up her plumage, Sire,
 Covering the half-heal'd wound upon her
 neck;

See how on Spain her home-bred vermin
 feed,

As did the worms on Herod; Italy
 Is as a dove-cote by a battle-field,
 Abandoned to the kites of infamy;
 Belgium, Denmark, and Helvetia,
 Like plovers watching while the wind-hover
 Strikes down one of their miserable kind,
 Wheeling upon the wind cry to each other;
 And far away the Eagle of the West,
 Poised in the lull of her own hurricane,
 Sits watching thee with eyes as blank of love
 As those grey seas that break beneath her
 feet.

NAPOLEON.

This is cold comfort, yet I am patient.
 Well?

To the issue! Dost thou keep behind the
 salve

Whose touch shall heal my wounds? or dost
 thou only,

As any raven on occasion can,
 Croak out the stale truth, that the day is
 lost,

And that the world's slaves kneel the con-
 queror?

BISHOP.

Look not on these, thy crown'd peers, for
aid,
But inward. Read thy heart.

NAPOLEON.

It is a book
I have studied somewhat deeply.

BISHOP.

In thine heart,
Tho' the cold lips might sneer, the dark
brow frown,
Wert thou not ever one believing God?

NAPOLEON.

I have belicved, and do believe, in God.

BISHOP.

For that, give thanks to God. He shall
uplift thee.

NAPOLEON.

How?

BISHOP.

By the secret hands of His great Church.
Even now in darkness and on tilths remote
They labour in thy service ; one by one
They gather up the fallen reins of power
And keep them for thy grasp ; so be thou
sure,
When thou hast woven round about thy soul
The robe of holiness, and from the hands
Of Holy Church demandest thy lost throne,
It shall be hers to give thee.

NAPOLEON.

In good truth,

I scarce conceive thee. What, degenerate
Rome,
With scarce the power in this strong wind
of war
To hold her ragged gauds about her limbs ;
Rome, reft of the deep thunder in her voice,
'The dark curse in her eye ; Rome, old,
dumb, blind,—
Shall Rome give Kingdoms?—Why, she
hath already
Transferred her own to Heaven.

BISHOP.

Canst thou follow
The coming and the going of the wind,
Fathom the green abysses of the sea?

For such as these, is Rome :—the voice of
God

Sounding in darkness and a silent place ;
The morning dew scarce seen upon the
flowers,

Yet drawn to heaven and grown the thunder-
bolt

That shakes the earth at noon. When
man's wild soul

Clutches no more at the white feet of Christ ;
When death is not, nor spiritual disease ;
When atheists can on the black mountain
tops

Walk solitary in the light of stars,
And cry, ' God is not ' ; when no mothers
kneel

Moaning on graves of children ; when no
flashes

Trouble the melancholy dark of dream ;
When prayer is hush'd, when the Wise Book
is shut—

Then Rome shall fall indeed : meantime she
is based

Invulnerable on the soul of man,
Its darkest needs and fears ; she doth dis-
pense

What soon or late is better prized than
gold,—

Comfort and intercession ; for all sin
She hath the swiftest shrift, wherefore her
clients

Are those that have sinned deeply, and of
such

Is half the dreadful world ; all these she
holds

By that cold eyeball which hath read their
souls,

So that they look upon her secretly
And tremble,—while in her dark book of
Fate

E'en now she dooms the Teuton.

Enter a MESSENGER.

NAPOLEON.

Well, what news?

MESSENGER.

'Tis brief and sad. The mighty Prussian
chiefs,

Gathering their fiery van in silence, close
Toward the imperial City—in whose walls
Treason and Rage and Fear contend toge-
ther

Like hunger-stricken wolves ; and at their
cry,
Echoed from Paris to the Vosges, France,
Calling her famish'd children round her
knees,
Looks at the trembling nations. All is still,
Like to that silence which precedes the
storm,
And shakes the forest leaves without a
breath ;
But surely as the vaporous storm is woven,
The German closes round the heart of
France
His hurricane of lives.

NAPOLEON.

(*To Bishop*) The Teuton thrives
Under the doom we spake of.
(*To Messenger*) Well, speak on !

MESSENGER.

Meantime, like kine that see the gathering
clouds
And shelter 'neath the shade of rocks and
trees,
Thy timorous people fly before the sound
Of the approaching footsteps, seeking woods
For shelter, snaring conies for their food,
And sleeping like the beasts ; some fare in
caves,
Fearing the wholesome air, hushing the cries
Of infants lest the murderous foe should
hear ;
Some scatter west and south, their frightened
eyes
Cast backward, with their wretched house-
hold goods ;
And where these dwelt, most blest beneath
thy rule,
The German legions thrive, let loose like
swine
Amid the fields of harvest, in their track
Leaving the smoking ruin, and the church
Most desecrated to a sleeping-sty ;—
So that the plenteous lands that rolled in
gold
Round thy voluptuous City, lie full bare
To shame, to rapine, to calamity.

NAPOLEON.

O for one hour of empire, that with life
I might consume this sorrow ! 'Tis a spell
By which we are subdued !

MESSENGER.

Strasbourg still stands,
Stubborn as granite, but the citadel
Is falling. Within, Famine and Horror
nest,
And rear their young on ruin. [*Exit.*

Enter a MESSENGER.

NAPOLEON.

How, peal on peal !
Like the agonising clash of bells when flame
Hath seized on some fair city. News, more
news ?
Dost thou too catch the common trick o'
the time,
And ring a melancholy peal ?

MESSENGER.

My liege,
Strasbourg still stands.

NAPOLEON.

And then ?

MESSENGER.

Pent up in Metz,
Encircled by a river of strong lives,
Bazine is faithful to the cause and thee,
And from his prison doth proclaim himself,
And all the host of Frenchmen at his back,
Thy liegemen to the death.

NAPOLEON.

Why, that last peal
Sounds somewhat blither. Well ?

MESSENGER.

From his lone isle
The old Italian Red-shirt in his age
Hath crawl'd, tho' sickly and infirm, to
France,
And slowly there his leonine features breed
Hope in the timid people, who—

NAPOLEON.

Enough ! [*Exit Messenger.*
That tune is flat and tame.

Enter a MESSENGER.

What man art thou
Speak !

MESSENGER.

Better I had died at Weissenburg,
Where on the bloody field I lay for dead,

Than live to bring this woe. Ungenerous
 France,
 Forgetful of thy gracious years of reign,
 Pitiless as a sated harlot is
 When ruin overtaketh him whose hand
 Hath loaded her with gems, shameless and
 mad,
 France, like Delilah, now betrays her lord.
 The streets are drunken—from thy palace-
 gate
 They pluck the imperial eagles, trampling
 them
 Into the bloody mire; thy flags and pennons,
 Torn from their vantage in the wind, are
 wrapt
 In mockery round the beggar's ragged
 limbs;
 And thine imperial images in stone,
 Dash'd from their lofty places, strew the
 ground
 In shameful ruin. All the ragged shout,
 While Trochu from the presidential seat
 Proclaims the empire dead, and calleth up
 A new Republic, in whose chairs of office
 Thine enemies, scribblers and demagogues,
 Simon, Gambetta, Favre, and linked with
 these
 The miserable Rochefort, trembling grasp
 The reins of power, unconscious of the scorn,
 That doth already doom them. To their
 feet
 Come humming back, vain-drunken, all the
 wasps
 Whom in thine hour of glory thou didst
 brush
 With careless arm-sweep from thy festal cup;
 Shoulder'd by mobs the pigmy Blanc de-
 claims,
 The hare-brain'd Hugo shrieks a maniac
 song
 In concert, and the scribblers, brandishing
 Their pens like valiant lilliputians
 Against the Teuton giant, frantically
 Scream chorus. Coming with mock-humble
 eyes
 To the Republic, this sham shape of straw,
 This stuff'd thing of a harlot's carnival,
 The dilettante sons of Orleans, kneeling,
 Proffer forsooth their swords, which being
 disdain'd
 They sheathe chapfallen and with bows
 withdraw
 Back to their pictures and perfumery.

NAPOLEON.

Why, thine is news indeed! Nor do I
 weep
 For mine own wrong, but for the woes of
 France,
 Whose knell thou soundest. With a tongue
 of fire
 Our enemy shall like the ant-eater
 Devour these insect rulers suddenly.
 (*Aside*) Now, may the foul fiend blacken
 all the air
 Above these Frenchmen, with revolt and
 fear
 Darken alike the wits of friends and foes,
 With swift confusion and with anarchy
 Disturb their fretful counsels, till at last,
 Many-tongued, wild-hair'd, mad, and hor-
 rible
 With fiery eyes and naked crimson limbs,
 Upriseth the old Spectre of the Red,
 And as of yore lifts up the shameful knife
 To stab unhappy France; then, in her
 need,
 Fearful and terror-stricken, France shall
 call
 On him who gave her nineteen plenteous
 years—
 And he may rise again. [*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Who in the name of France curses French
 souls this day?
 How! shall the tempter curse? Silence;
 and turn away;
 Turn we our faces hence white with a wild
 desire,
 Westward we lift our gaze till the straining
 balls flash fire,
 Westward we look to France, sadly we watch
 and mark:—
 Far thro' the pitch-black air, like breaking
 foam in the dark,
 Cometh and goeth a light across the
 stricken land,
 And we hear a distant voice like the wash
 of waves on the sand.

VOICES.

Set the cannon on the heights, and under
 Let the black moat gape, the black graves
 grow!
 Now let thunder
 Answer back the thunder of the foe!

France has torn her cerements asunder,
France doth live, to strike the oppressor
low.

CHORUS.

O hark! O hark! a voice arises wild and
strong,
Loud as a bell that rings alarm it lifts the
song.
See! see! the dark is lit, fire upon fire
upsprings,
Loudly from town to town the fiery tiding
rings,
Now the red smithies blaze and the blue
steel is sped,
They twist bright steel for guns, they cast
the fatal lead;
Cannon is drawn to the gate,—and lo, the
bravest stand
Bare to the shoulder there, smoke-begrim'd,
fuse in hand;
Now to the winds of heaven the Flag of
Stars they raise,
While those sing martial songs who are too
frail for frays.
France is uprisen again! France the sworn
slayer of Kings!
With bleeding breast and bitter heart at
the Teuton's throat she springs.

VOICES.

Now like thunder
Be our voice together while we cry!
Kings shall never hold our spirits under,
Kings shall cast their crowns aside and
fly:
Latin, Slav, or Teuton, they shall wonder;
The soul of man hath doom'd them—let
them die.
We have slain Kings of old, they were our
own to slay,
But now we doom all Kings until the
Judgment day,
Raise ye the Flag of Stars! Tremble, O
Kings, and behold!
Raise ye the Flag of man, while the knell
of anarchs is tolled.
This is a festal day for all the seed of Eve;
France shall redeem the world, and heal all
hearts that grieve;
France with her sword this day shall free
all human things,
With blood drain'd from her heart our
France shall write the doom of Kings.

CHORUS.

Silence and hearken yet! O but it is a
cry
Heard under heaven of old, tho' the terrible
day blew by.
The red fire flames to heaven, and in the
crimson glow
Black shapes with prayers and cries, are
gliding to and fro.

VOICES.

Fill each loophole with a man! and finding
Each a foe, aim slowly at the brain,
While the blinding
Lightnings flash, and the great guns
refrain.
To the roofs! and while beneath the foe
are winding,
Dash ye stones and missiles down like
rain.
Watch for the gray-beard King: to drink
his blood were great.
Watch for the Cub thereto—aim at his
brain full straight.
Watch most for that foul Knave who crawls
behind the crown,
Who smiles befooling all with crafty eyes
cast down;
Sweeter than wine indeed his wretched
blood would flow,
Curst juggler with our souls, he who hath
wrought this woe.
France hath uprisen again! Let the fierce
shaft be sped
Till all the foul satanic things that flatter
Kings be dead!

CHORUS.

Echo the dreadful prayer, let the fierce
shaft be sped,
Till all the foul satanic things that flatter
Kings be dead!

VOICES.

Send the light balloon aloft with singing,
Let our hopes rise with it to the sky,
Let our voices like one fount upspringing
Tell the mighty realm that hope is
nigh!
See, in answer, from the distance winging
Back unto our feet the swift doves fly!

CHORUS.

We see the City now, dark square and street and mart,
 The muffled drum doth sound réveille in its heart,
 The chain'd halloon doth swing, while men stand murmuring by,
 Then with elastic bound uleaps into the sky.
 We see the brightening dawn, the dimly dappled land,
 The shapes with arms outstretch'd that on the housetops stand,
 The eyes that turn to meet with one quick flash of fear
 The birds that sad and slow wing nearer and more near.
 O courage ! all is well—yea, let your hearts be higher,
 North, south, east, west, the souls of Frenchmen are as fire,
 The reaper leaves the wheat, the workman leaves his loom,
 Tho' the black priest may frown, who heeds his look of gloom ?
 Flash the wild tidings forth ! ring them from town to town,
 Till like a storm of scythes ye rise, and the foe like wheat go down.

VOICES.

See ! how northward the wild heavens lighten,
 Red as blood the fierce aurora waves,
 Let it bathe us strong in blood and brighten
 Sweet with resurrection on our graves,
 Lighten, lighten,
 Scroll of God !—unfold above and brighten,
 Light the doom of monarchs and their slaves.
 This is a day indeed—be sure that God can see,
 Raise the fierce cry again, ' Liberty ! Liberty !'
 Courage ! No man dies twice, and he shall live in death,
 Who for the Flag of Stars strikes with his latest breath.
 Nay, not a foe shall live to tell if France be slain :
 If the wild cause be lost, only the grave shall gain.

Teuton and Frank in fierce embrace shall strew the fatal sod,
 And they shall live indeed who died to save their souls for God.

CHORUS.

O Spirits, turn and look no more and hark not to their cry ;
 A Hand is flashed before our eyes, a Shape goes sadly by.
 And as it goes, it looks on us with eyes that swim in tears,
 And bitter as the death-cry sounds the echo in our ears.
 O look no more and seek no more to read the days unborn,
 'Tis storm this night on the world's sea, and 'twill be storm at morn.
 The Lord hath sent His breath abroad, and all the waves are stirr'd ;
 Amid the tempest Liberty flies like a white sea-bird,
 And, while the heavens are torn apart and the fierce waters gleam,
 Doth up and down the furrow'd waves dart with a sea-bird's scream.
 O bow the head, and close the eyes, and pray a quiet prayer,
 But let the bitter curse of Man go by upon the air.

NAPOLEON. AN OFFICER.

NAPOLEON.

Is there no hope for France ?

OFFICER.

None. Yet I know not !
 A nation, thus miraculously strengthen'd,
 And acting in the fiercest wrath of love,
 Hath risen ere this above calamity,
 Yea out of anguish conjured victory.
 If strength and numbers, if the mighty hands
 Of the Briareus, shall decide the day,
 Then surely as the sun sets France must fall ;
 If love or prayer can make a miracle
 And bring an angel down to strike for her,
 Then France may rise again.

NAPOLEON.

Have we not proved
Her children cowards? Yea, by God!
Like dogs
That rend the air with wrath upon the
chain,
And being loosen'd slink before the thief,
They fail'd me—those who led and those
who follow'd;
Scarce knowing friend from foe, while inch
by inch
The Germans ate their ranks as a slow fire
Devoureth wind-blown wheat. I cannot
trust
In France or Frenchmen.

OFFICER.

Sire—

NAPOLEON.

Why dost thou hang
Thy head, old friend, and look upon the
ground?
Nay, if all Frenchmen had but hearts like
thine,
Then France were blest in sooth, and I, its
master,
Were safe against the swords of all the
world.

OFFICER.

Sire, 'twas not that I meant—my life is
yours
To give or take, to blame or praise; I
blush'd
Not for myself, but France.

NAPOLEON.

Then hadst thou cause
For crimson cheeks indeed.

OFFICER.

Sire, as I live,
Thou wrongest her! The breast whereon
we grew
Suckled no cowards. For one dizzy hour
France totter'd, and look'd back; but now
indeed
She hath arisen to the very height
Of her great peril.

NAPOLEON.

'Tis too late. She is lost;
She did betray her master, and shall die.

OFFICER.

Not France betrayed thee, Sire; but rather
those
Whom thy most noble nature, royally
based
Above suspicion and perfidious fear,
Welcom'd unto thy council; not poor
France,
Whose bleeding wounds speak for her loud
as tongues,
Bit at the hand that raised her up so high;
Not France, but bastard Frenchmen, doubly
damn'd
Alike by her who bare them, and by thee
Who fed them. These betrayed thee to
thy doom,
And falling clutch'd at thine imperial crown,
Dragging it with them to the bloody dust;
But these that held her arms like bands of
lead
Being torn from off her, France, unchain'd
and free,
Uplifts her pale front to the stars, and
stands
Serene in doom and danger, and sublime
In resurrection.

NAPOLEON.

How the popular taint
Corrupts the wholesome matter of thy mind!
This would be treason, friend, if we were
strong—
Now 'tis less perilous: the commonest
wind
Can blow its scorn upon the fallen.

OFFICER.

Sire,
Behold me on my knees, tears in mine eyes,
And sorrow in my heart. My life is thine,
My life, my heart, my soul are pledged to
thine;
And triply now doth thy calamity
Hold me thy slave and servant. If I pray,
'Tis that thou mayst arise, and thou shalt
rise;
And if I praise our common mother, France,
Who for the moment hath forgot her lord,
'Tis that my soul rejoices for thy sake,
That when thou comest to thine own again
Thy realm shall be a realm regenerate,
Baptised a fair thing worthy of thy love
In its own blood of direful victory.

NAPOLEON.

Sayest thou?—Rise!—Friend, thou art little skilled

In reading that abstruse astrology
Whereby our cunning politicians cast
The fate of Kings. France robed in victory
Is France for ever lost to our great house.
France fallen, is France that with my secret hand

I may uplift again. But tell thy tale
Most freely: let thy soul beat its free wings
Before me as it lists. Come! as thou sayest,

France is no coward;—she hath at last arisen;

Nay, more—she is sublime. Proceed.

OFFICER.

My liege,

God, ere He made me thy most loving servant,

Made and baptised me, Frenchman; and my heart,

A soldier's heart, yearns out this day in pride

To her who bare me, and, both great and low,

My brethren. Courage is a virtue, Sire,
Even in a wretched cause. In Strasbourg still

Old Uhrich with his weight of seventy years

Starves unsubdued, while the dull enemy
Look on in wonder at such strength in woe;

Bazaine still keeps the glittering hosts at bay,

And holds them with a watchful hand and eye;

The captain of the citadel at Laon,
Soon as the foeman gather'd on his walls,
Illumed the hidden mine, and Frank and Teuton,

With that they strove for, strew'd the path in death;

From Paris to the Vosges, loud and wild
The tocsin rings to arms, and on the fields
The fat ripe ear empties itself unrepaid,
While every man whose hand can grasp a sword

Flocks to the petty standard of his town;
The many looms of the great factory
Stand silent, but the fiery moulds of clay

Are fashioning cannon, and the blinding wheels

Are sharpening steel. In every market-place

Peasant and prince are drilling side by side;

Roused from their wine-fed torpor, changed from swine

To men, the very country burghers arm,
Nay, what is more to them than blood,
bleed gold,

Bounteously, freely. I have heard that priests,

Doffing the holy cassock secretly,
Shouting uplift the sword, and crying Christ

To aid them strike for France. Only the basest,

Only the scum, shrink now; for even women,
Catching the noble fever of the time,

Buckle the war-belts round their lovers' waists,

And clapping hands, with mingled cries and sobs,

Urge young and old against the enemy.

NAPOLEON.

Of so much thunder may the lightning spring!

I know how France can thunder, and I have felt

How women's tongues can urge. But what of Paris?

What of the City of Light? How doth it bear

The terror and the agony?

OFFICER.

Most bravely,
As doth become the glorious heart of France:

Strong, fearless, throbbing with a martial might,

Dispensing from its core the vital heat
Which filleth all the members of the land;

Though even now the sharp steel pricks the skin,

To stab it in its strength.

NAPOLEON.

Who holds the reins
Within the gates?

OFFICER.

Trochn.

NAPOLEON.

Still? Why, how long
Have the poor fools been constant? Favre
also?
Gambetta? Rochefort? All these gentle-
men
Still flourish? And Thiers? Hath the
arch-schemer
A seat among the gods, a place of rank
With the ephemera?

OFFICER.

Not so, my liege.

NAPOLEON.

Well, being seated on Olympus' top,
What thunderbolts are France's puny Joves
Casting abroad? Or do they sit and quake
For awe of their own voices, which in
France,
As in the shifting glaciers of the Alps,
May bring the avalanche upon their heads?

OFFICER.

The men, to do them justice, use their
power
Calmly and soldierly, and for a time
Forget the bitter humours of the senate
In the great common cause. Paris is
strong,
And full of noble souls.

NAPOLEON.

Paris must fall.

OFFICER.

Not soon, my liege—for she is belted round
And arm'd impregnable on every side.
Hunger and thirst may slay her, not the
sword;
And ere the foeman's foot is heard within,
Paris will spring upon her funeral pyre
And follow Hope to heaven. Last week I
walk'd
Reading men's faces in the silent streets,
And, as I am a soldier, saw in none
Fear or capitulation: very harlots
Cried in their shame the name of Liberty,
And, hustled from the gates, shriek'd out a
curse

Upon the coming Teuton: all was still
And dreadful; but the citizens in silence
Drilled in the squares; on the great boule-
vard groups

Whisper'd together, with their faces pale
At white heat; in the silent theatre,
Dim lit by lamps, were women, wives and
mothers,

Silently working for their wounded sons
And husbands; in the churches too they
sat

And wrought, while ever and anon a foot
Rung on the pavement, and with sad red
eyes

They turn'd to see some arm'd citizen
Kneel at his orisons or vespers. Nightly,
Ere the moon rose, the City slept like
death:

Yet as a lion sleeps, with half-shut eyes,
Hearing each murmur on the weary wind,
Crouching and ready for the spring. Each
dawn

I saw the country carts come rumbling in,
And the scared country-folk, with large
wild eyes

And open mouths, who flock'd for shelter,
bringing

Horrible tidings of the enemy
Who had devoured their fields and happy
homes.

Then suddenly like a low earthquake came
The rumour that the foe was at the gates;
And climbing a cathedral roof that night,
I saw the pitch-black distance sown with fire
Gleam phosphorescent like the midnight
sea,

And heard at intervals mysterious sounds,
Like far-off thunder, or the Atlantic waves
Clashing on some great headland in a
storm,

Come smother'd from afar. But, lingering
yet,

I haunted the great City in disguise,
While silently the fatal rings were wound
Around about it by the Teuton hosts:
Still, as I am a soldier, saw no face
That look'd capitulation: rather saw
The knitted eyebrow and the clenched
teeth,

The stealthy hand that fingered with the
sword.

The eye that glanced as swift as Hunger's
doth

Towards the battlements. Then (for at last
 A voice was raised against my life) I sought
 Trochu, my schoolfellow and friend in
 arms,
 And, though his brow darkened a moment's
 space,
 He knew me faithful and reached out his
 hand
 To save me. By his secret help I found
 A place in a balloon, that in the dusk
 Ere daylight rose upon a moaning wind
 And drifted southward with the drifting
 clouds ;
 And as the white and frosty daylight grew,
 And opening crimson as a rose's leaves
 The clouds to eastward parted, I beheld
 The imperial City, gables, roofs, and spires,
 White and fantastic as a city of dream,
 Gleam orient, while the muffled drums
 within
 Sounded réveille ; then a red flash and
 wreath
 Of vapour broke across the outer line,
 Where the back fortifications frowning rose
 Ring above ring around the imperial gates,
 And flash on flash succeeded with a sound
 Most faint and lagging wearily behind.
 Still all without the City seemed as hushed
 As sleep or death. But as the reddening
 day
 Scattered the mists, the tiny villages
 Loomed dim ; and there were distant
 glimmerings,
 And far-off muffled sounds : yet scarce a
 sign
 Showed the innumerable enemy,—
 Who snugly housed and canopied with
 stone
 Lay hidden in their strength ; only the
 watch-fire
 Gleam'd here and there, only from place to
 place
 Masses of shadow seem'd to move, and
 light
 Was glimmered dimly back from hidden
 steel ;
 And, woefullest sight of all, miles to the
 west,
 Along the dark line of the foe's advance,
 On the straight rim where earth and heaven
 meet,
 The forests blazed, and to the driving
 clouds

Cast blood-red phantoms growing dim in
 day.
 Meantime, like one whirl'd in a dizzy
 dream,
 Onward we drove below the driving cloud,
 And from the region of the burning fire
 And smouldering hamlet rose still higher,
 and saw
 The white stars like to tapers burning out
 Above the region of the nether storm,
 And the illimitable ether growing
 Silent and dark in the deep wintry dawn.

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Most weighty news, my liege, from Italy.

NAPOLEON.

Yes ?

MESSENGER.

Rome is taken. The imperial walls
 Yawn where the cannon smote ; in the red
 street
 Romans embracing shout for Liberty ;
 From Florence to Messina bonfires blaze,
 And rockets rise and wild shouts shake the
 air ;
 And with the thunder in his aged ears,
 Surrounded by his cold-eyed Cardinals,
 Clutching his spiritual crown more close,
 Trembling with dotage, sits the grey-haired
 Pope
 Anathematising in the Vatican. [*Exit.*

OFFICER.

Woe to the head on whom his curse shall
 fall,
 For in the day of judgment it shall be
 Better with Sodom and Gomorrah. Wait !
 This is the twilight ; red will rise the dawn.

NAPOLEON.

Peace, friend ; yet if it ease thy heart,
 speak on.
 I would to God, I did believe in God
 As thou dost. Twilight surely—'tis indeed
 A twilight—and therein from their fair
 spheres
 Kings shoot like stars. How many nights
 of late
 The heavens have troubled been with fiery
 signs,

With characters like monstrous hieroglyphs,
And the aurora, brighter than the day
And red as blood, has burst from west to
east.

OFFICER.

I do believe the melancholy air
Is full of pain and portent.

NAPOLEON.

Would to God
I had more faith in God, for in this work
I fail to trace His hand ; but rather feel
The nether-shock of earthquake everywhere
Shaking old thrones and new, those rear'd
on rock

As well as those on sand. All darkens yet,
And in that darkness, while with cheeks of
snow

The affrighted people gaze at one another,
The Teuton still, mouthing of Deity,
Works steadfastly to some mysterious end.
My heart was never Rome's so much as now,
Now, when she shares my cup of agony.
Agony ! Is this agony ? then indeed
All life is agony.

OFFICER.

Your Imperial Highness
Is suffering ! Take comfort, Sire.

NAPOLEON.

It is nought—
Only a passing spasm at the heart—
'Tis my disease, comrade ; 'tis my disease !
So leave me : it is late ; and I would rest.

OFFICER.

God in his gracious goodness give thee
health !

NAPOLEON.

Pray that He may ; for I am deeply sick—
Too sick for surgery—too sick for drugs—
Too sick for man to heal. 'Tis a complaint
Incident to our house ; and of the same
Mine imperial uncle died. [*Exit Officer.*

France in the dust,
With the dark Spectre of the Red above
her !

Rome fallen ! Aye me, well may the face
of heaven

Durn like a fiery scroll. Had I but eyes
To read whose name is written next for
doom !

The Teuton's ? Oh the Serpent, that has
bided

His time so long, and now has stabbed so
deep !

Would I might bruise his head before I die !
[*Exit.*

Night. NAPOLEON *sleeping.* CHORUS of
SPIRITS.

A VOICE.

What shapes are ye whose shades darken
his rest this night ?

CHORUS.

Cold from the grave we come, out of the
dark to the light.

A VOICE.

Voices ye have that moan, and eyes ye have
that weep,

Ah ! woe for him who feels such shadows
round his sleep !

CHORUS.

Tho' thou wert buried and dead,
Still would we seek thee and find thee,
Ever there follows the tread
Of feet from the tomb behind thee ;
Sleep, shall thy soul have sleep ?
Nay, but be broken and shaken.
Gather around him and weep,
Trouble him till he awakes.

A VOICE.

Who, in imperial raiment, darkly frowning
stand,
Laurel-leaves in their hair, sceptred, yet
sword in hand ?

ANOTHER VOICE.

Who in their shadow looms, woman-eyed,
woe-begone,
And bares his breast to show the piteous
wounds thereon ?

CHORUS.

Peace, they are Kings, they are crowned ;
Kings, tho' their realms have departed,
Realms of the grave they have found,
And they walk in the same heavy-hearted.
Sleep ? did their souls have sleep ?
Nay, for like his was their being.

Gather around him and weep,
Awake him to hearing and seeing.

SPIRIT OF CÆSAR.

Greater than thou I fell. Die ; for thy day
is o'er.

Thou reap the world with swords? *thou*
wear the robe I wore?

Up like the bird of Jove, I rose from height
to height,

Poised on the heavenly air, eyes to the
blood-red light ;

Swift came the flash of wrath, one long-
avenging glare—

Down like a stone I fell, down thro' the
dizzy air ;

Dark burnt the heaven above, red ran the
light of day,

In the great square of Rome, bloody I fell,
and lay.

CHORUS.

Kings of the realms of fear,
Each the sad ghost of the other,

One by one step near,

Look in the eyes of a brother.

Hush ! draw nearer and speak—

And ere he waketh each morrow

Blow on his bloodless cheek

With the chilly wind of your sorrow.

SPIRIT OF BUCNAPARTE.

Greater than thou I fell. Die, Icarus, and
give place.

Thou take from my cold grave the glory and
the grace !

Out of the fire I came, onward thro' fire I
strode ;

Under my path earth burnt, o'er it the pale
stars glow'd ;

Sun of the earth, I leapt up thro' the won-
dering sky,

Naming my name with God's, Kings knelt
as I went by.

Aye ; but my day declined ;—to one glad
cry of the free

My blood-red sunset died on the eternal Sea.

A VOICE.

What spirit art thou, with cold, still smile
and face like snow ?

SPIRIT.

Orsini ; and avenged. 'Too soon I struck
the blow,

A VOICE.

And thou, with bleeding breast and eyes
that roll in pain ?

SPIRIT.

I am that Maximilian, miserably slain.

A VOICE.

And ye, O shadowy things, featureless
wild, and stark ?

VOICES.

We are the nameless ones whom he hath
slain in the dark.

A VOICE.

Ye whom this man hath doom'd, Spirits,
are ye all there ?

CHORUS.

Not yet ; they come, they come—they
darken all the air.

A VOICE.

O latest come, and what are ye ? Why do
ye moan and call ?

CHORUS.

O hush ! O hush ! they come to speak the
bitterest curse of all.

SPIRITS.

With Sin and Death our mothers' milk
was sour,

The womb wherein we grew from hour
to hour

Gather'd pollution dark from the polluted
frame—

Beside our cradles naked Infamy

Caroused, and Lust sat smiling hide-
ously—

We grew like evil weeds apace, and knew
not shame.

With incantations and with spells most
rank,

The fount of Knowledge where we might
have drank,

And learnt to love the taste, was hidden
from our eyes ;

And if we learn'd to spell out written
speech,

Thy slaves were by, and we had books to
teach

Falsehood and Filth and Sin, Blasphemies,
Scoffs, and Lies.

We drank of poison, ev'n as flowers drink dew ;

We ate and drank of poison till we grew
Noxious, polluted, black, like that whereon
we fed ;

We never felt the light and the free
wind—

Sunless we grew, and deaf, and dumb,
and blind—

How should we dream of God, souls that
were slain and dead ?

Love with her sister Reverence passed
our way

As angels pass, unseen, but did not stay—

We had no happy homes wherein to bid
them dwell ;

We turn'd from God's blue heaven with
eyes of beast,

We heard alike the atheist and the priest,
And both these lied alike to smooth our
hearts for Hell.

Of some, both Soul and Body died ; of
most,

The Body fatten'd on, while the poor
ghost,

Prison'd from the sweet day, was withering
in woe ;

Some robed in purple quaff'd their fatal
cup,

Some out of rubied goblets drank it
up—

We did not know God was ; but now, O
God, we know.

Lambs of thy flock, but oh ! not white
and fair ;

Beasts of the field, tamed to thy hand, we
were ;

Not men and women—nay, not heirs to
light and truth :

Some fattening ate and fed ; some lay at
ease ;

Some fell and linger'd of a long disease ;

But all look'd on the ground—beasts of the
field forsooth.

Ah woe, ah woe, for those thy sceptre
swayed,

Woe most for those whose bodies, fair
arrayed,

Insolent, sat at ease, smiled at thy feet of
pride ;

Woe for the harlots with their painted
bliss !

Woe for the red wine-oozing lips they kiss !
Woe for the Bodies that lived, woe for the
Souls that died !

SEMI-CHORUS I.

Tho' thou wert buried and dead,
Still would they seek thee and find thee.
Ever there follows the tread
Of feet from the grave behind thee.

SPIRIT OF HORTENSE.

Woe ! woe ! woe !

SEMI-CHORUS II.

Ye who saw sad light fall,
Tbro' the chink of the dungeon gleaming,
And watch'd your shade on the wall
Till it took a sad friend's seeming ;
Ye who in speechless pain
Fled from the doom and the danger,
And dragging a patriot's chain
Died in the land of the stranger ;
Men who stagger'd and died,
Even as beasts in the traces,
Women he set aside
For the trade of polluting embraces,
Say, shall his soul have sleep,
Or shall it be troubled and shaken ?

CHORUS.

Gather around him and weep,
Trouble him till he awaken.

NAPOLEON (*awakening*).

Who's there ? Who speaks ?—All silent.
O how slowly

Moveth the dark and melancholy night !
I cannot rest—I am too sick at heart—
I have had ill dreams. The inevitable Eyes
Are watching, and the weary void of sleep
Hath voices strangely sad.

[*He rises, and paces the chamber.*

O those dark years

Of Empire ! He who tames the tiger, and
lies

Pillow'd upon its neck in a lone cave,
Is safer. Who could sleep on such a bed ?
Mine eyes were ever dry of the pure dew
God scatters on the lids of happy men ;
Watching with fascinated gaze the orbs,
Ring within ring of blank and bestial light,
Where the wild fury slept : seeking all arts
To soothe the savage instinct in its throes
Of passionate unrest. One co'd hand held

Sweet morsels for the furious thing to lap,
And with the other, beld behind my back,
I clutch'd the secret steel : oft, lest its teeth
Should fasten on its master, cunningly
Turning its wrath against the shapes that
moved

Outside its splendid lair † until at last,
Let forth to the mad light of War, it sprang
Shrieking and sought to rend me. O thou
beast !

Art thou so wild this day? and dost thou
thirst

To fix on thine imperial ruler's throat?
Why, have I bidden thee 'down,' and thou
hast crouch'd

Tamely as any hound ! Thou shalt crouch
yet.

And bleed with shamefuller stripes !

Let me be calm,

Not bitter. 'Tis too late for bitterness.
Yet I could gnaw my heart to think how
France

Hath fail'd me ! nay, not France, but rather
those

Whom to high offices and noble seats
In France's name I raised. I bought their
souls—

What soul can power not buy?—and,
having lost

The blessed measure of all human truth,
Being soulless, these betrayed me ; yea,
became

A brood of lesser tigers hungering
With their large eyes on mine. I did not
build

My throne on sand ; no, no,—on Lies and
Liars,

Weaker than sand a thousandfold !

In this

I did not work for evil. Tho' my means
Were dark and vile perchance, the end I
sought

Was France's weal, and underneath my care
She grew as tame as any fatted calf.

I never did believe in that stale cry
Raised by the newsman and the demagogue,
Though for mine ends I could cry 'Liberty !'
As loud as any man. The draff of men
Are as mere sheep and kine, with heads
held down

Grazing, or resting blankly ruminant.

These must be tended, must be shepherded.

But Frenchmen are as wild things scarcely
tamed,

Brute-like yet fierce, mad too with some
few hours

Of rushing freely with an angry roar.

These must be awed and driven. By a
scourge

Dripping with sanguine drops of their own
blood,

I awed them : then I drove them : then in
time

I tamed them. Fool ! deeming them
wholly mine,

I sought to snatch a little brief repose ;

But with a groan they found me, and I
woke ;

And since they seem'd to suffer pain I said
'Loosen the yoke a little,' and 'twas done,
And they could raise their heads and gaze
at me

And the wild hunger deepen'd in their eyes,
While fascinated on my throne I sat
Forcing a melancholy smile of peace.

O had I held the scourge in my right hand,
Tighten'd the yoke instead of loosening,
It had not been so ill with me as now !

But Pity found me with her sister Fear,
And lured me. He who sitteth on a throne
Should have no counsellors who come in
tears ;

But rather that still voice within his brain,
Imperturbable as his own cold eyes
And viewless as his coldly-flowing blood ;

Rather a heart as strong as the great heart
Driving the hot life through a lion's thews ;
Rather a will that moves to its desire
As steadfast as the silent-footed cloud.

What peevish humour did my mother mix
With that immortal ichor of our race
Which unpolluted fill'd mine uncle's veins ?

He lash'd the world's Kings to his triumph-
car

And sat like marble while the fiery wheels
Dript blood beneath him : tho' the live
earth shriek'd

Below him, he was calm, and like a god
Cold to the eloquence of human tears,
Cold to the quick, cold as the light of stars,
Cold as the hand of Death on the damp
brow,

Cold as Death brooding on a battle-field
In the white after-dawn,—from west to east
Royal he moved as the red wintry sun,

He never flatter'd Folly at his feet ;
 He never sought to syrup Infamy ;
 He, when the martyrs curst him, drew
 around him

The purple of his glory and passed on
 Indifferently like Olympian Jove.
 There was no weak place in the steel he
 wore,

Where women's tongues might reach his
 mighty heart

As they have reach'd at mine. O had I kept
 A heart of steel, a heart of adamant ;
 Had I been deaf to clamour and the peal
 Of pœvish fools ; had I for one strong hour
 Conjured mine uncle's soul to mix with
 mine,

Sedan had never slain me ! I am lost
 By the damn'd implements mine own hands
 wrought—

Things that were made as slavish tools of
 peace,

Never as glittering weapons meet for war.
 He never stoop'd to use such peaceful tools ;
 But, for all uses,
 Made the sword serve him—yea, for sceptre
 and scythe ;

Nay more, for Scripture and for counsellor !

Yet he too fell. Early or late, all fall.
 No fruit can hang for ever on the tree.
 Daily the tyrant and the martyr meet
 Naked at Death's door, with the fatal mark
 Both brows being branded. Doth the world
 then slay

Only its anarchs ? Doth the lightning flash
 Smite Cæsar and spare Brutus ? Nay, by
 heaven !

Rather the world keeps for its paracles
 Torture more subtle and more piteous doom
 Than it dispenses to its torturers.

Tiberius, with his foot on the world's neck,
 Smileth his cruel smile and groweth grey,
 Half dead already with the weight of years
 Drinking the death he is too frail to feel,
 While in his noon of life the Man Divine
 Hath died in anguish at Jerusalem.

[*He opens a Life of Jesus and reads.*
A long pause.]

Here too the Teuton works ; crafty and slow,
 Anatomising, gauging, questioning,
 'Till that fair Presence which redeem'd the
 world

Dwindles into a phantom and a name.
 Shall he slay Kings, and spare the King of
 Kings ?

In her fierce madness France denied her
 God,

But still the Teuton doth destroy his God
 Coldly as he outwits an enemy.

Yet doth he keep the Name upon his lips,
 And coldly dedicating the dull deed
 To the abstraction he hath christen'd 'God,'

To the creation of his cogent brain,
 Conjures against the blessed Nazarene,
 That pallid apparition masculine,
 That shining orb hemm'd in with clouds of
 flesh ;

Till, darken'd with the woe of his own
 words,

The fool can turn to Wilhelm's wooden
 face

And Bismarck's crafty eyes, and see therein
 Human regeneration, or at least
 The Teuton's triumph mightier than
 Christ's.

Lie there, Iconoclast ! Thou art thrice a
 fool,

Who, having nought to set within its place
 But civic doctrine and a naked sword,
 Would tear from out its niche the piteous
 bust

Of Him whose face was Sorrow's morning
 star.

[*Takes up a second Book, and reads.*]

Mark, now, how speciously Theology,
 Leaving the broken fragments of the Life
 Where the dull Teuton's hand hath scatter'd
 them,

Takes up the cause in her high fields of air.
 'Darkness hath lain upon the earth like
 blood,

And in the darkness human things had
 shriek'd

And felt for God's soft hand, and agonised.
 But overhead the awful Spirit heard,

Yet stir'd not on His throne. Then lastly,
 One

Dropt like a meteor stone from suns afar,
 And stirred and stretch'd out hands, and
 lived, and knew

That He indeed had dropt from suns afar,
 That He had fallen from the Father's breast
 Where He had slumber'd for eternities.
 Hither in likeness of a Man He came—

He, Jesus, wander'd forth from heaven and
said,

"Lo, I, the deathless one, will live and
die !

Evil must suffer—Good ordains to suffer—
Our point of contact shall be suffering,
There will we meet, and ye will hear my
voice ;

And my low tones shall echo on thro' time,
And one salvation proved in fatal tears
Be the salvation of Humanity."

Ah, old Theology, thou strikest home !
'Evil *must* suffer—Good *ordains* to suffer'—
Sayst thou? Did He then quaff His cup
of tears

Freely, who might have dash'd it down, and
ruled?

The world was ready with an earthly crown,
And yet He wore it not. Ah, He was wise.
Had He but sat upon a human throne,
With all the kingdom's beggars at His feet,
And all its coffers open at His side,
He had died more shameful death, yea, He
had fallen

Even as the Cæsars. Rule the world with
Love?

Tame savage human nature with a kiss?
Turn royal cheeks for the brute mob to
smite?

He knew men better, and He drew aside,
Ordain'd to do and suffer, not to reign.

My good physician bade me search in
books

For solace. Can I find it? Verily,
From every page of all man's hand hath
writ

A dark face frowns, a voice moans 'Vanity !'
There is one Book—one only—that for ever
Passeth the understanding and appeaseth
The miserable hunger of the heart—
Behold it—written with the light of stars
By God in the beginning.

[*Looks forth. A starry night.*

I believe

God is, but more I know not, save but
this—

He passeth not as men and systems pass,
For while all change the Law by which they
change

Survives and is for ever, being God.

Our sin, our loss, our misery, our death,
Are but the shadows of a dream : the hum
Within our ears, the motes within our eyes ;
Death is to us a semblance and an end,
But is as nothing to that Central Law
Whereby we cannot die.

Yonder blue dome,

Gleaming with meanings mystically wrought,
Hath been from the beginning, and shall be
Until the end. How many awe-struck eyes
Have look'd and spelt one word—the name
of God,

And call'd it as they listed, Law, Fate,
Change,

And marvell'd for its meaning till they died,
And others came and stood upon their
graves

And read in their turn, and marvelling gave
place.

The Kings of Israel watch'd it with wild
orbs,

Madden'd, and cried the Name, and drew
the sword.

Above the tented plain of Troy it bent
After the sun of day had set in blood.

The superstitious Roman look'd by night
And trembled. All these faded phantom-
like,

And lo ! where it remaineth, watch'd with
eyes

As sad as any of those this autumn night,—
The Higher Law writ with the light of
Stars

By God in the beginning. . . .

Let me sleep !

Or I shall gaze and gaze till I grow wild
And never sleep again. Too much of God
Maketh the heart sick. Come then forth,
thou charm,

Thou silent spell wrung from the blood-red
flower,

With power to draw the curtains of the soul
And shut the inevitable Eyes away.

Dead mother, at thy knees I said a prayer—
Lead me not into temptation, and, O God,
Deliver me from evil. Is it too late
To murmur it this night? This night, O
God,

Whate'er Thou art and wheresoe'er Thou
art,

This night at least, when I am sick and
fallen,
Deliver me from evil !

CHORUS.

Under the Master's feet the generations
Like ants innumerable come and go :
He leans upon a Dial, and in patience
Watches the hours crawl slow.

In His bright hair the eternal stars are
burning,
Around His face Heaven's glories burn
sublime :
He heeds them not, but follows with eyes
yearning
The Shadow men call Time.

Some problem holds Him, and He follows
dreaming
The lessening and lengthening of the
shade.—
Under His feet, ants from the dark earth
streaming,
Gather the men He made.

He heeds them not nor turns to them His
features—
They rise, they crawl, they strive, they
run, they die ;
How should He care to look upon such
creatures,
Who lets great worlds roll by ?

He shall be nowise heard who calls unto
Him,
He shall be nowise seen who seeks His
face ;
The problem holds Him—no mere man
may woo Him,
He pauseth in His place.

So hath it been since all things were created,
No change on the immortal Face may
fall,
Having made all, God paused, and fasci-
nated,
Watch'd Time, the shade of all.

Call to the Maker in thine hour of trial,
Call with a voice of thunder like the sea :
He watches living shadows on a Dial,
And hath no ears for thee,

He watches on—He feels the still hours
fleeing,
He heeds thee not, but lets the days
drift by ;
And yet we say to thee, O weary being,
Blaspheme not, lest thou die.

Rather, if woe be deep and thy soul wander,
Ant among ants that swarm upon a sod,
Watching thy shadow on the grass-blade,
ponder
The mystery with God.

So may some comfort reach thy soul way-
faring,
While the days run and the swift glories
shine,
And something God-like shall that soul
grow, sharing
The attitude divine.

Silent, supreme, sad, wondering, quiescent,
Seeking to fathom with the spirit-sight
The problem of the Shadow of the Present
Born of eternal Light.

THE TEUTON MONOLOGUE.

(1870.)

To stand this night alone with Destiny,
Alone in all the world beneath the stars,
And hold the string that makes the puppets
dance,

Is something ; but to feel the steadfast will
Deepen, the judgment clear itself, the gaze
Grow keener, all the purpose that was dim
Brighten distinct in the serene still light
Of conquest—that is more ; more than all
power,
More than lip-homage, more than crowns
and thrones,
More than the world ; for it is life indeed.
O how the dreams and hopes and plans
cohere !

How the great phalanx broadens ! Like a
wave

It washes Europe, and before its sweep
The lying idols, based on quicksand, shift,
Totter, and fall : strewn with the wreck'd
and dead,

It shrieks and gathers up a flashing crest
In act to drown the lingering life of France.

Tide of the Teuton, is it wonderful
The grand old King sees in thy victory
The strength and wrath of God ?

Here then I pause,
And (let me whisper it to mine own heart)
I tremble. I have played with fire ; behold,
It hath devour'd God's enemy and mine ;
And tamely at my bidding croucheth now
With luminous eyes half closed. This fire
is Truth,

And by it I shall rise or fall. This fire
Is very God's—I know it ; and thus far
God to my keepin_g hath committed it.
What next ? and next ? There at my feet
lies France,

Bound, stricken, screaming,—yonder, good
as dead.

Plucked of his fangs, the imperial Adder
crawls,

Tame as a mouse. I have struck down
these twain,

The Liar, and the creature of the Liar ;
I have slain these twain with an avenging
flame ;

And while I stand victorious comes a Voice
Out of the black abysses of the earth
Whereat I pause and tremble. 'Tis so
easy

To cast down Idols ! The tide so pitilessly
Washes each name from the waste sands of
time !

'Twas yesternorn the Man of Mysteries
fell—

Whose turn comes next ? . . .

From Italy to the blue Baltic rolls

A voice, a wind, a murmur in the air,

A tone full of the sense of wind and waters

And the faint whispers from ethereal fields,

A cry of anguish and of mystery

Echoed by the Volcano in whose depths

The monarchs one by one have disappeared.

And men who hear it answer back one
word,

'Liberty !'—Cities echo through their
streets ;

The word is wafted on from vale to vale :
Heart-drowsy Albion answers with a cheer,
Feeble yet clear ; the great wild West
refrains ;

Italy thunders, and Helvetia

Blows the wild horn high up among her
hills ;

France, wounded, dying, stretch'd beneath
my feet,

Gnaws at her bonds and shrieks in mad
accord

(For she indeed first gave the thing a name),
And even the wily Russian, with his yoke
Prest on innumerable groaning necks,
Sleek like the serpent, smooths his frosty
cheek

To listen, fiercely smiling hisses back
The strange word 'Liberty !' between his
teeth,

And shivers with a bitterer sense of cold
'Than ever seized him in that lonely realm
O'er which he paceth hungry and alone.

What is this thing that men call 'Liberty' ?
Not force, not tumult, not the wind and
rain

And tempest, not the spirit of mere Storm,
Not Earthquake, not the Lightning, not
swift Fire,

Not one of these ; but mightier far than
these,—

The everlasting principle of things,
Out of whose silence issue all, the rock
Whereon the mountain and the crater stand,
The adamantine pillars of the Earth,
Deep-based beneath the ever-varying air
And under the wild changes of the Sea,
The Inevitable, the Unchangeable,
The secret law, the impulse, and the
thought,

Whereby men live and grow.

Then I, this night

As ever, dare with a man's eyes and soul
Hold by this thing whereof the foolish rave,
And cry, 'In God's name, peace, ye winds
and waves,

Ye froths and bubbles on the sea, ye voices
Haunting the fitful region of the air !

God is above ye all, and next to God
The Son and Holy Spirit, and beneath
These twain the great anointed Kings of
Earth,

And underneath the Kings the Wise of
Wit,

And underneath the Wise the merely
Strong,

And least of all, clay in the hands of all,
The base, the miserable, and the weak.'

What, then, is this that ye name 'Liberty' ?
There is evermore a higher. Not like waves

Beating about in a waste sea are men,
But great, small, fair, foul, strong, weak,
miserable ;—

And Liberty is law creating law
Wherein each corporal member of the world
Filleth his function in the place ordain'd.
Child at the knee, look in thy mother's
face !

Boy-student, reverence the philosopher !
Clown, till the earth, and let the market
thrive !

Citizen, doff to beauty and to grace,
To antique fame and holy ancestry !
Nobles, blood purified from running long,
Circle of sanctity, surround the King !
King, stand on the bare height and raise
thine eyes,

For there sits God above thee, reverencing
The perfect Mirror of the soul of things,
Wherein He gazes calmly evermore,
And knows Himself divine !

Thus stands for ever

The eternal Order like a goodly Tree,
The root of which is deep within the soil.
And lo ! the wind and rain are beating
on it,

And lightning rends its branches ; yet anon
It hangs in gorgeous blossom still-renewed,
And shoots its topmost twig up through the
cloud

To touch the changeless stars. Herr
Democrat

Comes with his blunt rough axe, and at
its root

Strikes shrieking ; the earth's parrots echo
him ;

Blow follows blow ; the air reverberates ;
But the Tree stands. Come winds and
waves and lightnings,

Come axe-wielders, come ye iconoclasts,
And spend your strength in vain. What !
ye would stretch

This goodly trunk, this very Iggdrasil,
Down to the dusty level of your lives,
Would strew the soil with the fair blooms
thereof,

Would tear away the succulent leaves and
make

A festal chaplet for Silenus' hair,
A drunken garland for the Feast of Fools.
See, yonder blow the branches where the
Great

Tremble like ripen'd fruit ; yonder the Holy
Gleam in the silvern foliage, sweet and fair ;
There just beneath the cloud, most dim
in height,

The flowers of monarchy open their buds
And turn their starry faces upward still.
Strike at the root, my little democrat,
Down with them ! Down with the whole
goodly Tree !

Down even with that fair shoot beyond the
cloud,

Down with the unseen bloom of perfect
height,

Down with the blossom on the topmost
twig,

Down with the light of God !

I compare further

This Order to a Man, body and brain,
Heart, lungs, eyes, feet to stand on, hands
to strike.

The King is to the realm what conscience is
To manhood : the true statesman is the
brain ;

And under these subsist, greater and less,
The members of the body politic.

Behold now, this alone is majesty :

The incarnate Conscience of the people,
fixed

Beyond the body, higher than the brain,
Yet perfect fruit of both,—the higher sense
That flashes back through all the popular
frame

The intuitions and the lights divine
Whereby the world is guided under God.

Nor are all Kings ancestral, though these
same

Are highest. Yonder in the stormy West
The plain man Lincoln rose to majesty,
Incarnated the conscience and the will
Of the strong generation, moved to his end,
Struck, triumph'd in the name of Con-
science, fell,

And like a sun that sets in bloody light,
In dying darken'd half earth's continents,
. . . What, art thou there, old Phantom
of the Red ?

Urge on thy dreadful legions, for in truth
There is no face in France this day with
light

So troublous to the eyes of victory.
O brave one, wert *thou* France's will and
soul,

Why we might tremble. Let there rise a
land,
As strong in conscience and as stern in soul
As we have been to follow a living truth,
And it might slay us even as we have slain
Imperial France and the Republic. Now
Supreme we stand, our symbol being the
Sword,
Our King the hand that wields; in that
one hand
I strike, all strike, yea every Teuton strikes.
Reason and conscience knitted in accord
Are deathless, and must overcome the
world.
The higher law will shape them. I believe
There is evermore a higher!

THE REPLY.

BLUE arc of heaven whose lattices
Are throng'd with starry eyes;
Vast dome that over land and seas
Dost luminously rise,
With mystic characters enwrought
More strange than all poetic thought!

Hear, Heaven, if thou canst hear! and see,
O stars, if see ye can!
Mark, while your speechless mystery
Flows to a Voice in man:
He stands erect this solemn hour
In reverent insolence of power.

Order divine, whose awful show
Dazzles all guess or dream;
Sequence unseen, whose mystic flow
Fulfils the immortal scheme;
Thou Law whereby all stand or stir,—
Here breathes your last interpreter!

Because one foolish King hath slain
Another foolish King;
Because a half-born nation's brain
With dizzy joy doth ring;
Because at the false Shepherd's cry
The silly sheep still throng to die;

Because purblind Philosophy
Out of her cobweb'd cave
Croaks in a voice of senile glee
While empty patriots rave;
Because humanity is still,
The gull of any daring will;

Because the Tinsel Order stands
A little longer yet;
Because in each crown'd puppet's hands
A laurel-sprig is set,
While the old lame device controls
The draff of miserable souls;
Because man's blood again bathes bright
The purple and the throne,
And gray fools gladden at the sight,
And maiden choirs intone;
Because once more the puppet Kings
Dance, while Death's lean hand pulls the
strings;
Because these things have been and are,
And oft again may be,
Doth this man swear by sun and star,
And oh our God by Thee,
Framing to cheat his own shrewd eyes
His fair cosmogony of lies,

O Lord our God whose praise we sing,
Behold he deemeth Thee
A little nobler than the King,
And greater in degree,
Set just above the monarch's mind,
Greater in sphere but like in kind!

O calm Intelligence divine,
Transcending life and death,
He deems these bursting bubbles Thine,
Blown earthward by Thy breath,—
He marks Thee sitting well content,
Like some old King at tournament.

The lists are set; upon the sod
The gleaming columns range;
The sign is given by Thee, O God,
From Thy Pavilion strange:
The trumpets blow, the champions meet,
One screams—Thou smilest on Thy seat.

Behold, O God, the Order blest
Of Thy great chivalry!
See tinsel crown and glittering crest,
Cold heart and empty eye!
The living shout, the dying groan,
All reddens underneath Thy throne!

Accept Thy chosen! great and good,
Vouchsafe them all they seek!
Deepen their purple in man's blood!
Trumpet them with man's shriek!
Paint their escutcheons fresh, O Sire;
With heart's blood bright and crimson fire!

And further, from the fire they light
 Protect them with Thy hand,
 Beyond the bright hill of the fight
 Let them in safety stand ;
 For 'twere not well a random blow
 Should strike Thy next-of-kin below.

O God ! O Father ! Lord of All !
 Spare us, for we blaspheme,
 See,—for upon our knees we fall,
 And hush our mocking scream—
 Let us pray low ; let us pray low ;
 Thy will be done ; Thy Kingdom grow !

Blue arc of heaven whose lattices
 Are throng'd with starry eyes,
 Still dome that over earth and seas
 Doth luminously rise ;
 Fair Order mystically wrought,
 More strange than all poetic thought.

He fears ye all, this son of man,
 To his own soul he lies,
 Lo ! trembling at his own dark plan
 He contemplates the prize :
 He has won all, and lo ! he stands
 Clutching the glory in his hands !

To one, to all, on life's dark way,
 Sooner or late is brought
 The silent solemnising ray
 Illuminating thought ;
 It shines, they stand on some lone spot,
 Its light is strange, they know it not.

Sleeps, like a mirror in the dark,
 The Conscience of the Soul,
 Unknown, where never eye may mark,
 While days and seasons roll ;
 But late or soon the walls of clay
 Are loosening to admit the day.

Light comes—a touch—a streak—a beam—
 Child of the unknown sky—
 And lo ! the Mirror with a gleam
 Flashes its first reply :
 Light brighteneth : and all things fair
 Flow to the glass and tremble there.

O Lord our God, Thou art the Light,
 We shine by Thee alone ;
 Tho' Thou hast made us mirrors bright,
 The gleam is not our own ;
 Until Thy ray shines sweet and plain
 All shall be dark as this man's brain.
 Thro' human thought as thro' a cave
 Creep gently, Light, this hour ;

Tho' now 'tis darker than the grave,
 There lies the shining power ;
 Come ! let the Soul flash back to Thee
 The million lights of Deity !

THE CITY OF MAN.

COMFORT, O free and true !
 Soon shall there rise for you
 A City fairer far than all ye plan ;
 Built on a rock of strength,
 It shall arise at length,
 Stately and fair and vast, the City meet for
 Man !

Towering to yonder skies
 Shall the fair City rise,
 Dim in the dawning of a day more pure :
 House, mart, and street, and square,
 Yea, and a Fane for prayer—
 Fair, and yet built by hands, strong, for it
 shall endure.

In the fair City then
 Shall walk white-rob'd men,
 Wash'd in the river of peace that watereth it ;
 Woman with man shall meet
 Freely in mart and street—
 At the great council-board woman with man
 shall sit.

Hunger and Thirst and Sin
 Shall never pass therein ;
 Fed with pure dews of love, children shall
 grow.
 Fearless and fair and free,
 Honour'd by all that see,
 Virgins in golden zones shall walk as white
 as snow.

There, on the fields around,
 All men shall till the ground,
 Corn shall wave yellow, and bright rivers
 stream ;
 Daily, at set of sun,
 All, when their work is done,
 Shall watch the heavens yearn down and the
 strange starlight gleam.

In the fair City of men
 All shall be silent then,
 While, on a reverent lute, gentle and low,
 Some holy Bard shall play
 Music divine, and say
 Whence those that hear have come, whither
 in time they go.

No man of blood shall dare
Wear the white mantle there ;
No man of lust shall walk in street or
mart ;—

Yet shall the Magdalen
Walk with the citizen ;
Yet shall the sinner stand gracious and pure
of heart.

Now, while days come and go,
Doth the fair City grow,
Surely its stones are laid in sun and moon.

Wise men and pure prepare
Ever this City fair.
Comfort, O ye that weep ; it shall arise full
soon.

When, stately, fair, and vast,
It doth uprising at last,
Who shall be King thereof, say, O ye
wise ?—

When the last blood is spilt,
When the fair City is built,
Unto the throne thereof the Monarch shall
arise.

Flower of blessedness,
Wrought out of heart's distress,
Light of all dreams of saintly men who died,

He shall arise some morn
One Soul of many born,
Lord of the realms of peace, Heir of the
Crucified !

O but he lingereth,
Drawing mysterious breath
In the dark depths where he was cast as seed.
Strange was the seed to sow,
Dark is the growth and slow ;
Still hath he lain for long—now he grows
quick indeed.

Quicken, O Soul of Man !
Perfect the mystic plan—
Come from the flesh where thou art darkly
wrought ;
Wise men and pure prepare
Ever thy City fair—
Come when the City is built, sit on the
Throne of Thought.

Earth and all things that be,
Wait, watch, and yearn for thee,
To thee all loving things stretch hands
bereaven ;—
Perfect and sweet and bright,
Lord of the City of Light,
Last of the flowers of Earth, first of the
fruits of Heaven !

Songs of the Terrible Year.

(1870.)

*** These 'Songs,' inasmuch as they formed a portion of the 'Drama of Kings,' preceded by a long period the publication of Victor Hugo's series under the same admirable title. The 'Drama of Kings' was written under a false conception, which no one discarded sooner than the author ; but portions of it are preserved in the present collection, because, although written during the same feverish and evanescent excitement, they are the distinct lyrical products of the author's mind, and perfectly complete in themselves.—R. B.

ODE TO THE SPIRIT OF AUGUSTE COMTÉ.

(1871.)

SPIRIT of the great brow !
Fire hath thy City now :
She shakes the sad world with her troubled
scream !

O spirit who loved best
This City of the West,
Hark ! loud she shattered cries — great
Queen of thy great Dream.

But, as she passes by
To the earth's scornful cry,
What are those Shapes who walk behind so
wan ?—

Martyrs and prophets born
Out of her night and morn :
Have we forgot them yet ?—these, the great
friends of Man.

We name them as they go,
Dark, solemn-faced, and slow—

Voltaire, with saddened mouth, but eyes
still bright,
Turgot, Malesherbes, Rousseau,
Lafayette, Mirabeau—
These pass and many more, heirs of large
realms of Light.

Greatest and last pass *thou!*
Strong heart and mighty brow,
Thine eyes surcharged with love of all
things fair;
Facing with those grand eyes
The light in the sweet skies,
While thy shade earthward falls, darkening
my soul to prayer.

Sure as the great sun rolls,
The crown of mighty souls
Is martyrdom, and lo! thou hast thy
crown.
On her pale brow there weighed
Another such proud shade—
O, but we know you both, risen or stricken
down.

Sinful, mad, fever-fraught,
At war with her own thought,
Great-soul'd, sublime, the heir of constant
pain,
France hath the dreadful part
To keep alive Man's heart,
To shake the sleepy blood into the slug-
gard's brain;

Ever in act to spring,
Ever in suffering,
To point a lesson and to bear the load,
Least happy and least free
Of all the lands that be,
Dying that all may live, first of the slaves
of God.

To try each crude desire
By her own soul's fierce fire,
To wait and watch with restless brain and
heart,
To quench the fierce thirst never,
To feel supremely ever,
To rush where cowards crawl—this is her
awful part.

Ever to cross and rack,
Along the same red track,
Genius is led, and speaks its soul out plain;

Blessed are those that give—
They die that man may live,
Their crown is martyrdom, their privilege is
pain.

Spirit of the great brow!
I see thee, know thee now—
Last of the flock who die for man each day,
Ah, but *I* should despair
Did I not see up there
A Shepherd heavenly-eyed on the heights
far away.

No cheat was thy vast scheme
Tho' in thy gentle dream
Thou saw'st no Shepherd watching the wild
throng—
Thou, walking the sad road
Of all who seek for God,
Blinded became at last, looking at Light so
long.

Yet God is multiform,
Human of heart and warm,
Content to take what shape the Soul loves
best;
Before our footsteps still,
He changeth as we will—
Only, - with blood alone we gain Him, and
are blest.

O, latest son of her,
Freedom's pale harbinger,
I see the Shepherd whom thou could'st not
find;
But on thy great fair brow,
As thou didst pass but now,
Bright burnt the patient Cross of those who
bless mankind.

And on her brow, who flies
Bleeding beneath the skies,
The mark was set that will not let her rest—
Sinner in all men's sight,
Mocker of very Light,
Yet is she chosen thus, martyr'd—and shall
be blest.

Go by, O mighty dead!
My soul is comforted;
The Shepherd on the summit needs no
prayers;
Best worshipper is he
Who suffers and is free—
That Soul alone blasphemous which trembles
and despairs.

A DIRGE FOR KINGS.

STRANGE are the bitter things
 God wreaks on cruel Kings ;
 Sad is the cup drunk up
 By Kings accurst.
 In secret ways and strong
 God doth avenge man's wrong.
 The least, God saith, is Death,
 And Life the worst.

Sit under the sweet skies ;
 Think how Kings set and rise,
 Think, wouldst thou know the woe
 In each proud breast ?
 Sit on the hearth and see
 Children look up to thee—
 Think, wouldst thou own a throne,
 Or lowly rest ?

Ah, to grow old, grow old,
 Upon a throne of gold—
 Ah, on a throne, so lone,
 To wear a crown ;
 To watch the clouds, the air,
 Lest storm be breeding there—
 Pale, lest some blast may cast
 Thy glory down.

He who with miser's ken
 Hides his red gold from men,
 And wakes and grieves, lest thieves
 Be creeping nigh ;
 He who hath murder done,
 And fears each rising sun,
 Lest it say plain ' O Cain,
 Rise up and die !'

These, and all underlings,
 Are blesseder than Kings,
 For ah ! by weight of fate
 Kings' hearts are riven ;
 With blood and gold they too
 Reckon their sad days thro'—
 They fear the plan of man,
 The wrath of heaven.

In the great lonely bed,
 Hung round with gold and red,
 While the dim light each night
 Burns in the room,
 They lie alone and see
 The rustling tapestry,

Lest Murder's eyes may rise
 Out of the gloom.

Dost thou trust any man ?
 Thou dost what no King can.
 Friend hast thou near and dear ?
 A King hath none.
 Hast thou true love to kiss ?
 A King hath no such bliss,
 On no true breast may rest
 Under the sun.

Ah, to sit cold, sit cold,
 Upon a throne of gold,
 Forcing the while a smile
 To hide thy care ;
 To taste no cup, to eat
 No food, however sweet,
 But with a drear dumb fear,
 Lest Death be there !

Ah, to rule men, and know
 How many wish thee low—
 That 'neath the sun, scarce one
 Would keep thee high :
 To watch in agony
 The strife of all things free,
 To dread the mirth of Earth
 When thou shalt die !

Hast thou a hard straw bed ?
 Hast thou thy crust of bread ?
 And hast thou quaffed thy draught
 Of water clear ?
 And canst thou dance and sing ?—
 O blesseder than a King !
 O happy one whom none
 Doth hate or fear !

Wherefore, though from the strong
 Thou sufferest deep wrong,
 Tho' Kings, with ire and fire,
 Have wrought thee woe :
 Pray for them ! for I swear
 Deeply they need thy prayer—
 Most in their hour of power,
 Least when cast low.

And when thou castest down
 King, sceptre, throne, and crown,
 Pause that same day, and pray
 For the accurst ;
 Since in strange ways and strong,
 God doth avenge man's wrong—
 The least, God saith, is Death,
 And Life the worst.

THE PERFECT STATE.

WHERE is the perfect State
 Early most blest and late,
 Perfect and bright?
 'Tis where no Palace stands
 Trembling on shifting sands
 Morning and night.
 'Tis where the soil is free,
 Where, far as eye may see,
 Scattered o'er hill and lea,
 Homesteads abound ;
 Where clean and broad and sweet
 (Market, square, lane, and street,
 Belted by leagues of wheat),
 Cities are found.

Where is the perfect State
 Early most blest and late,
 Gentle and good?
 'Tis where no lives are seen
 Huddling in lanes unseen,
 Crying for food ;
 'Tis where the home is pure,
 'Tis where the bread is sure,
 'Tis where the wants are fewer,
 And each want fed ;
 Where plenty and peace abide,
 Where health dwells heavenly-eyed,
 Where in nooks beautified,
 Slumber the Dead.

Where is the perfect State
 Unvexed by Wrath and Hate,
 Quiet and just ?
 Where to no form of creed
 Fetter'd are thought and deed,
 Reason and trust.

'Tis where the great free mart
 Broadens, while from its heart
 Forth the great ships depart,
 Blown by the wind ;
 'Tis where the wise men's eyes,
 Fixed on the earth and skies,
 Seeking for signs, devise
 Good for mankind.

Where is the perfect State,
 Holy and consecrate,
 Blessedly wrought ?
 'Tis where all waft abroad
 Wisdom and faith in God,
 Beautiful thought.

'Tis where the Poet's sense
 Deepens in reverence,
 While to his truths intense
 Multitudes turn.
 Where the bright sons of art,
 Walking in street or mart,
 Feel mankind's reverent heart
 Tremble and yearn.

Say, is the perfect State,
 Strong and self-adequate,
 Where where it stands,
 Perfect in praise of God,
 Casting no thoughts abroad
 Over the lands ?
 Nay : for by each man's side
 Hangeth a weapon tried ;
 Nay : for wise leaders guide
 Under the Lord.
 Nor, when a people cries,
 Smiling with half-shut eyes,
 Waiteth this State,—but flies,
 Lifting the Sword.

Where is the perfect State ?
 Not where men sit and wait,
 Selfishly strong ;
 While some lost sister State
 Crieth most desolate,
 Ruin'd by wrong ;
 Not where men calmly sleep,
 Tho' all the world should weep ;
 Not where they merely heap
 Gold in the sun :
 Not where in charity
 Men with mere dust are free,
 When o'er the weary sea
 Murder is done.

Which is the perfect State ?
 Not the self-adequate
 Coward and cold ;
 Not the brute thing of health,
 Swollen with gather'd wealth,
 Sleepy and old.
 Nay, but the mighty land
 Ever with helping band,
 Ever with flaming brand,
 Rising in power :
 This is the fair and great,
 This the evangel State,
 Letting no wrong'd land wait
 In the dark hour.

This is the perfect State,
Early in arms and late ;
Blessed at home ;—
Ready at Freedom's cry
Forward to fare and die,
Over the foam.
Loving States great and small,
Loving home best of all,
Yet at the holy call
Springing abroad :
This is the royal State,
Perfect and adequate,
Equal to any fate,
Chosen of God !

THE TWO VOICES.

(January 1871.)

I.

FIRST VOICE.

FLY to me, England ! Hie to me,
Now in mine hour of woe ;
Haste o'er the sea, ere I die, to me ;
Swiftly, my Sister ! stand nigh to me.
Help me to strike one blow !
Over the land and the water,
Swifter than winds can go,
Up the red furrow of slaughter,
Down on the lair of the foe !
Now, when my children scream madly and
cling to me ;
Now, when I droop o'er the dying they
bring to me ;
Come to me, England ! O speak to me,
spring to me !
Hurl the assassin low !

II.

SECOND VOICE.

Woe to thee ? I would go to thee
Faster than wind can flee ;
Doth not my fond heart flow to thee ?
Would I might rise and show to thee
All that my love would be !
But behold, they bind me and blind me ;
Cowards, yet born of me ;
They fasten my hands behind me,
I am chain'd to a rock in the sea.

Alas, what availeth my grief while I sigh for
thee ?
Traitors have trapt me—I struggle—I cry
for thee—
Come to thee, Sister ? Yea, were it to die
for thee !—
O that my hands were free !

III.

FIRST VOICE.

Pray for me, Sister ! say for me
Prayers until help is nigh ;
Send thy loud voice each way for me,
Trouble the night and the day for me,
Waken the world and the sky :
Say that my heart is broken,
Say that my children die ;
With blood and tears for thy token,
Plead till the nations reply.
Plead to the sea, and the earth, and the air
for me !
Move the hard heart of the world till it care
for me—
Come to me, England !—at least say a
prayer for me,
Waken the winds with a cry !

IV.

SECOND VOICE.

Doom on me, Hell's own gloom on me,
Blood and a lasting blame !
Already the dark days loom on me,
Cold as the shade of the tomb on me ;
I am call'd by the coward's name.
Shall I bark to a murder'd nation ?
Shall I sit unarm'd and tame ?
Then woe to this generation,
Tho' out of my womb they came.
Betrayed by my children, I wail and I call
for thee ;
Not tears, but my heart's blood, O Sister,
should fall for thee.
My children are slaves, or would strike one
and all for thee :
Shame on them, shame ! shame ! shame !

V.

FIRST VOICE.

Pain for thee ! all things wane for thee
In truth, if this be so,

Fatal will be the stain for thee,
 Dying, I mourn and 'plain for thee,
 Since thou art left so low :
 For Death can come once only,
 Tho' bitterly comes the blow ;
 But Shame abideth, and lonely
 Feels a sick heart come and go.
 Homeless and citiless, yet I can weep for
 thee ;
 Fast comes the morrow with anguish most
 deep for thee ;
 Dying, I mourn for the sorrow they heap
 for thee :
 Thine is the bitterest woe.

VI.

SECOND VOICE.

Mourn me not, Sister ! scorn me not !
 Pray yet for mine and me ;
 Tho' the old proud fame adorn me not,
 The sore grief hath outworn me not :
 Wait ; I will come to thee.
 I will rend my chains asunder,
 I will tear my red sword free,
 I will come with mine ancient thunder,
 I will strike the foe to his knee.
 Yea ! tho' the knife of the butcher is nigh
 to thee ;
 Yea ! while thou screamest and echoes
 reply to thee ;
 Comfort, O France ; for in God's name, I
 fly to thee—
 Sword in hand, over the sea !

ODE BEFORE PARIS.

(December 1870.)

CITY of loveliness and light and splendour,
 City of Sorrows, hearken to our cry ;
 O Mother tender,
 O Mother marvellously fair,
 And fairest now in thy despair,
 Look up ! O be of comfort ! Do not
 die !
 Let the black hour blow by.
 Cold is the night, and colder thou art lying.
 Gnawing a stone sits Famine at thy feet
 Shivering and sighing ;

Blacker than Famine, on thy breast,
 Like a sick child that will not rest,
 Moans Pestilence ; and hard by, with
 fingers fleet,
 Frost weaves his winding-sheet.

Snow, snow ! the world is white as one cold
 lily . .
 Snow : it is frozen round thee as hard
 as lead ;
 The wind blows chilly ;
 Thou liest white in the dim night,
 And in thine eyes there is no light,
 And the Snow falleth, freezing on thy
 head,
 And covering up thy dead.

Ah, woe ! thy hands, no longer flower-
 bearing,
 Press stony on thy heart ; and that
 heart bleeds ;
 Thine eyes despairing
 Watch while the fierce Fire clings and
 crawls
 Through falling roofs and crumbling
 walls.
 Ah, woe ! to see thee thus, the wild
 soul pleads,
 The wild tongue intercedes.

O, we will cry to God, and pray and plead
 for thee ;
 We, with a voice that troubles heaven
 and air,
 Will intercede for thee :
 We will cry for thee in thy pain,
 Louder than storm and wind and
 rain ;
 What shape among the nations may
 compare
 With thee, most lost, most fair ?

Yea, thou hast sinned and fallen, O City
 splendid,
 Yea, thou hast passed through days of
 shamefullest woe—
 And lo ! they are ended—
 Famine for famine, flame for flame,
 Sorrow for sorrow, shame for shame,
 Verily thou hast found them all ;—and
 lo !
 Night and the falling snow.

Let Famine eat thy heart, let Fire and
Sorrow
Hold thee, but turn thy patient eyes
and see

The dim sweet morrow.
Better be thus than what thou wast,
Better be stricken and overcast,
Martyr'd once more, as when to all
things free
Thy lips cried 'Liberty!'

Let the Snow fall! thou shalt be sweeter
and whiter;

Let the Fire burn! under the morning
sky

Thou shalt look brighter.
Comfort thy sad soul through the
night;

Turn to the east and pray for light;
Look up! O be of comfort! Do not
die!

Let the black hour blow by!

A DIALOGUE IN THE SNOW.

(Before Paris, December 1870.)

DESERTER.

O, I AM spent! My heart fails, and my
limbs
Are palsied. Would to God I were dead!

SISTERS OF MERCY.

Stand! What art thou, who like a guilty
thing
Creepst along the shadow, stooping low?

DESERTER.

A man. Now stand aside, and let me pass.

SISTERS.

Not yet. Whence fleest thou? Whither
dost thou go?

DESERTER.

From Famine and Fire. From Horror.
From Frost and Death.

SISTERS.

O coward! traitor to unhappy France!
Stand forward in the moon, that it may light
The blush of shame upon thy guilty cheek!

Lo, we are women, yet we shiver cold
To look upon so infamous a thing.

DESERTER.

Nay, look your fill, I care not—stand and
see.

SISTERS.

O horror! horror! who hath done this deed?

DESERTER.

What say ye? am I fair to look upon?

SISTERS.

The dead are fairer. O unhappy one!

DESERTER.

Why do ye shudder? Am I then so foul?

SISTERS.

There is no living flesh upon thy bones.

DESERTER.

Famine hath fed upon my limbs too long.

SISTERS.

And thou art rent as by the teeth of hounds.

DESERTER.

Fire tore me, and what blood I have I bleed.

SISTERS.

Thine eyes stare like the blank eyes of a
corpse.

DESERTER.

They have look'd so close on horror and so
long,

I cannot shut them from it till I die.

SISTERS.

Thou crawl'st like a man whose sick limbs
fail.

DESERTER.

Ha! Frost is there, and numbs me like a
snake.

SISTERS.

God help thee, miserable one; and yet,
Better if thou hadst perish'd in thy place
Than live inglorious, tainted with thy
shame.

DESERTER.

Shame? I am long past shame. I know
her not.

SISTERS.

Is there no sense of honour in thy soul?

DESERTER.

Honour? Why sec, she hath me fast
enough:

These are her other names, Fire, Famine,
and Frost,—

Soon I shall hear her last and sweetest,—
Death.

SISTERS.

Hast thou no care for France, thy martyr'd
land?

DESERTER.

What hath she given me? Curses and blows.

SISTERS.

O miserable one, remember God!

DESERTER.

God? Who hath look'd on God? Where
doth He dwell?

O fools, with what vain words and empty
names

Ye sicken me. Honour, France, God! All
these—

Hear me—I curse. Why, look you, there's
the sky,

Here the white earth, there, with its bleed-
ing heart,

The butcher'd City; here half dead stand I.

A murder'd man, grown grey before my
time,

Forty years old—a husband, and a father—
An outcast flying out of Hell. Who talks

To me of 'honour'? The first tears I wept
When standing at my wretched mother's
knee,

Because her face was white, and she wore
black.

That day the bells rang out for victory.

Then, look you, after that my mother sat

Weeping and weary in an empty house,

And they who look'd upon her shrunken
cheeks

Fed her with 'honour.' 'Twas too gentle
fare,—

She died. Nay, hearken! Left to seek for
bread,

I like a wild thing haunted human doors
Searching the ash for food. I ate and lived.

I grew. Then, wretched as I was, I felt

Strange stir of manhood in my flesh and
bones,

Dim yearnings, fierce desires, and one pale
face

Could still them as the white moon charms
the sea.

Oh, but I was a low and unclean thing,
And yet she loved me, and I stretch'd these
hands

To God, and blest Him for His charity.

Mark that:—I blest Him, I. Even as I
stood,

Bright in new manhood, the drums beat,—
a hand

Fell on my shoulder, and, 'in France's
name,'

A voice cried, 'Follow.' To my heart they
held

Cold steel:—I followed; following saw her
face

Fade to a bitter cry—hur'd on with blows,
Curs'd, jeer'd at, scorn'd, went forth as in
a dream,

And, driven into the bloody flash of war,
Struck like a blinded beast I knew not whom

Blows for I knew not what. The fierce
years came

Like ulcers on my heart, and heal'd, and
went.

Then I crept back, a broken sickly man,
To seek her, and I found her—dead! She
had died,

Poor worm, of hunger. She had ask'd for
bread,

And 'France' had given her stones. She
had pray'd to 'God';

He had given her a grave. The day she
died,

The bells rang for another victory.

SISTERS.

O do not weep! Yet we are weeping too.

DESERTER.

Now mark, I was too poor a worm to grieve
Too long and deeply. The years passed.

My heart

Heal'd, and as wounds heal, harden'd.
Once again

I join'd the wolves that up and down the
earth

Rush tearing at men's lives and women's
hea:ts.

That passed, and I was free. One morn I
saw

Another woman, and I hunger'd to her,
And we were wedded. Hard days follow'd
that ;

And children—she was fruitful—all your
worms

Are fruitful, mark—that is God's blessing
too !

Well, but we throve, and farm'd a bit of land
Out yonder by the City. I learn'd to love
The mother of my little ones. Time sped ;

And then I heard a cry across the fields,
The old cry, ' Honour, ' the old cry, ' For
France ! '

And like a wolf caught in his lair I shrunk
And shudder'd. It grew louder, that curst
cry !

Day follow'd day, no bells rung victory,
But there were funeral faces everywhere ;
And then I heard the far feet of the foe
Trampling the field of France and coming
nearer

To that poor field I sow'd. I would have
fled,

But that they thrust a weapon in mine hands
And bade me stand and strike ' for France.'
I laugh'd !

But the wolves had me, and we screaming
drew

Into the City. Shall I gorge your souls
With horror ? Shall I croak into your ears
What I have suffer'd there, what I have
seen ?

I was a worm, ever a worm, and starved
While the plump coward cramm'd. Look
at me, women,

Fire, Famine, and Frost have got me ; yet
I crawl,

And shall crawl on ; for hark you, yester-
night,

Standing within the City, sick at heart,
I gazed up eastward, thinking of my home
And of the woman and children desolate,
And lo ! out of the darkness where I knew
Our hamlet lay there shot up flames and
cast

A bloody light along the arc of heaven ;
And all my heart was sicken'd unaware
With hunger such as any wild thing feels
To crawl again in secret to the place
Whence the fierce hunter drove it, and to
see

If its young live ; and thither indeed I fare ;
And yonder flame still flareth, and I crawl,
And I shall crawl unto it though I die ;
And I shall only smile if they be dead,
If I may merely see them once again,—
For come what may, my cup of life is full,
And I am broken from all use and will.

SISTERS.

Pass on, unhappy one ; God help thee
now !

DESERTER.

If ye have any pity, give me bread.

SISTERS.

Lean on us ! Oh thou lost one, come this
way.

THE PRAYER IN THE NIGHT.

STARS in heaven with gentle faces,
Can ye see and keep your places ?
Flowers that on the old earth blossom,
Can ye hang on such a bosom ?
Canst thou wander on for ever
Through a world so sad, O River ?
O ye fair things 'neath the sun,
Can ye bear what Man hath done ?

This is Earth. Heaven glimmers yonder.
Pause a little space and ponder !

Day by day the fair world turneth
Dewy eyes to heaven and yearneth,
Day by day the mighty Mother
Sees her children smite each other ;
She moans, she pleads, they do not hear
her—
She prays—the skies seem gathering near
her—

Yearning down diviner, bluer,
Baring every star unto her,—
Each strange light with swinging censer
Sweeter seeming and intenser,—
Yet she ceaseth not her cry,
Seeing how her children die.

On her bosom they are lying,
Clinging to her, dead and dying—
Dead eyes frozen in imploring
Yonder heaven they died adoring,

Dying eyes that upward glimmer
 Ever growing darker, dimmer ;
 And her eyes, too, thither turning,
 Asking, praying, weeping, yearning,
 Search the blue abysses, whither
 He who made her, brought her hither,
 Gave her children, bade them grow,
 Vanished from her long ago.

Ah, what children ! Father, see them !
 Never word of *hers* may free them—
 Never word of love may win them.
 For there burneth fierce within them
 Fire of thine ; soul-sick and sinning,
 As they were in the beginning,
 Here they wander. Father, see !
 Generations born of *Thee* !

Blest was Earth when on her bosom
 First she saw the double blossom,
 Double sweetness, man and woman,
 One in twain, divine and human,
 Leaping, laughing, crying, clinging,
 To the sound of her sweet singing—
 Flesh like lily and rose together,
 Eyes as blue as April weather,
 Golden hair with golden shadows,
 In the face the light of meadows,
 In the eyes the dim soul peeping
 Like the sky in water sleeping.
 ' Guard them well ! ' the Father said,
 Set them in her arms,—and fled.

Countless worlds around Him yearning,
 Vanish'd He from her discerning ;—
 Then she drooped her fair face, seeing
 On her breast each gentle being :
 And unto her heart she prest them,
 Raised her look to heaven and blest them ;
 And the fountains leapt around her,
 Leaves and flowers shot up and crown'd
 her,
 Flowers bloom'd and streams ran gleaming.
 Till with bliss she sank to dreaming ;—
 And the darkness for a cover
 Gently drew its veil above her,
 And the new-born smiled reposing,
 And a million eyes unclosing
 Yearn'd through all the veil to see
 That new fruit of mystery.

Father ! come from the abysses ;
 Come, Thou light the Mother misses ;

Come ; while hungry generations
 Pass away, she sits in patience.
 Of the children Thou didst leave her,
 Millions have been born to grieve her.
 See ! they gather, living, dying,
 Coming, going, multiplying ;
 And the Mother, for the Father,
 Though like waves they rise and gather,
 Though they blossom thick as grasses,
 Misses every one that passes,
 Flashes on them peace and light
 Of a love grown infinite.

Father ! see them : hath each creature
 Something in him of Thy nature ?
 Born of Thee and of no other,
 Born to Thee by a sweet Mother,
 Man strikes man, and brother brother.
 Hearts of men from Thy heart fashioned
 Bieed and anguish bloody-passion'd ;
 Beast-like roar the generations ;
 Tiger-nations spring on nations ;
 Though the stars yearn downward nightly,
 Though the days come ever brightly,
 Though to gentle holy couches
 Death in angel's guise approaches,
 Though they name Thee, though they woo
 Thee,
 Though they dream of, yearn unto Thee,
 Ill they guess the guise Thou bearest,
 Ill they picture Thee, Thou Fairest ;—
 Come again, O Father wise,
 Awe them with those loving eyes !

Stars in heaven with tender faces,
 Can ye see and keep your places ?
 Flowers that on the Earth will blossom,
 Can ye deck so sad a bosom ?
 Canst thou singing flow for ever
 Through a world so dark, O River ?
 Father, canst Thou calmly scan
 All that Man hath made of Man ?

THE SPIRIT OF FRANCE.

WHO passeth there
 Naked and bare,
 A bloody sword upraising ?
 Who with thin moan
 Glides past alone,
 At the black heaven gazing ?

Limbs thin and stark,
 Eyes sunken and dark,
 The lightning round her leaping?
 What shape floats past
 Upon the blast,
 Crouching in pain and creeping?
 Behold! her eyes to heaven are cast,
 And they are red with weeping.

Say a prayer thrice
 With lips of ice :
 'Tis she—yea, and no other ;
 Look not at me
 So piteously,
 O France—O martyr mother !
 O whither now,
 With branded brow
 And bleeding heart, art flying ?
 Whither away ?
 O stand ! O stay !
 Tho' winds, waves, clouds are crying—
 Dawn cometh swift—'twill soon be day—
 The Storm of God is dying.

She will not speak,
 But, spent and weak,
 Droops her proud head and goeth ;
 See ! she crawls past,
 Upon the blast,
 Whither no mortal knoweth—
 O'er fields of fight,
 Where glimmer white
 Death's steed and its gaunt rider—
 Thro' storm and snow
 Behold her go,
 With never a friend beside her—
 O Shepherd of all winds that blow,
 To Quiet Waters guide her !

There, for a space,
 Let her sad face
 Fall in a tranquil mirror—
 There spirit-sore
 May she count o'er
 Her sin, her shame, her error,—
 And read with eyes
 Made sweet and wise
 What her strong God hath taught her,
 With face grown fair
 And bosom bare
 And hands made clean from slaughter—
 O Shepherd, seek and find her there,
 Beside some Quiet Water !

THE APOTHEOSIS OF THE
 SWORD.

(Versailles, 1871.)

PRIEST.

HARK to the Song of the Sword !
 In the beginning, a Word
 Came from the lips of the Lord ;
 And He said, 'The Earth shall be,
 And around the Earth and Sea,
 And over these twain the Skies ;
 And out of the Earth shall rise
 Man, the last and the first ;
 And Man shall hunger and thirst,
 And shall eat of the fruits in the sun,
 And drink of the streamlets that run,
 And shall find the wild yellow grains,
 And, opening earth, in its veins
 Sow the seeds of the same ; for of bread
 I have written that he shall be fed.'
 Thus at the first said the Lord.

CHOIR.

Hark to the Song of the Sword !

PRIEST.

Then Man sowed the grain, and to bread
 Kneaded the grain, and was fed,
 He and his household indeed
 To the last generation and seed :
 'Then the children of men, young and old,
 Sat by the waters of gold,
 And ate of the bread and the fruit,
 And drank of the stream, but made suit
 For blessing no more than the brute.
 And God said, ' 'Twere better to die
 Than eat and drink merely, and lie
 Beast-like and foul on the sod,
 Lustful, forgetful of God !'
 And he whispered, 'Dig deeper again,
 Under the region of grain,
 And bring forth the thing ye find there
 Shapeless and dark ; and prepare
 Fire,—and into the same
 Cast what ye find—let it flame—
 And when it is burning blood-bright,
 Pluck it forth, and with hammers of might
 Beat it out, beat it out, till ye mark
 The thing that was shapeless and dark
 Grown beautiful, azure, and keen,
 Purged in the fire and made clean,

Beautiful, holy, and bright,
Gleaming aloft in the light ;—
Then lift it, and wield ! ' said the Lord.

CHOIR.

Hark to the Song of the Sword !

PRIEST.

Then Man with a brighter desire
Saw the beautiful thing from the fire,
And the slothful arose, and the mean
Trembled to see it so keen,
And God, as they gather'd and cried,
Thunder'd a World far and wide :
' This Sword is the Sword of the Strong !
It shall strike at the life's blood of wrong ;
It shall kill the unclean, it shall wreak
My doom on the shameful and weak ;
And the strong with this sign in their hands
Shall gather their hosts in the lands,
And strike at the mean and the base,
And strengthen from race on to race ;
And the weak shall be wither'd at length,
For the glory of Man is his strength,
And the weak man must die,' saith the
Lord.

CHOIR.

Hark to the Song of the Sword !

PRIEST.

Sire, whom all men of thy race
Name as their hope and their grace ;
King of the Rhine-water'd land.
Heart of the state and its hand,
Thou of the purple and crown,
Take, while thy servants bow down,
The Sword in thy grasp.

KAISER.

It is done.

PRIEST.

Uplift ! let it gleam in the sun—
Uplift in the name of the Lord !

CHOIR.

Hail to the King and the Sword !

KAISER.

Lo ! how it gleams in the light,
Beautiful, bloody, and bright—
Such in the dark days of yore
The monarchs of Israel bore ;
Such by the angels of heaven
To Charles the Mighty was given—

Yea, I uplift the Sword,
Thus in the name of the Lord !

THE CHIEFS.

Form ye a circle of fire
Around him, our King and our Sire—
While in the centre he stands,
Kneel with your swords in your hands,
Then with one voice deep and free
Echo like waves of the sea—
' In the name of the Lord !'

CHANCELLOR.

Sire, while thou liftest the Sword,
Thus in the name of the Lord,
I too, thy slave, kneel and blend
My voice with the hosts that attend—
Yea, and while kneeling I hold
A scroll writ in letters of gold,
With the names of the monarchs who bow
Thy liegemen throned lower than thou ;
Moreover, in letters of red,
Their names who ere long must be led
To thy feet, while thou liftest the Sword,
Thus in the name of the Lord.

VOICES WITHOUT.

Where is he ?—he fades from our sight !
Where the Sword ?—all is blacker than night.
Is it finish'd, that loudly ye cry ?
Doth he sheathe the great Sword while we
die ?

O bury us deep, most deep ;
Write o'er us, wherever we sleep,
' In the name of the Lord !'

KAISER.

While I uplift the Sword,
Thus in the name of the Lord,
Why, with mine eyes full of tears,
Am I sick of the song in mine ears ?
God of the Israelite, hear ;
God of the Teuton, be near ;
Strengthen my pulse lest I fail,
Shut out these slain while they wail—
For they come with the voice of the grave
On the glory they give me and gave.

CHORUS.

In the name of the Lord ? Of what Lord ?
Where is He, this God of the Sword ?
Unfold Him ; where hath He his throne ?
Is he Lord of the Teuton alone ?

Doth He walk on the earth? Doth He tread
On the limbs of the dying and dead?
Unfold Him! We sicken, and long
To look on this God of the strong!

PRIEST.

Hush! In the name of the Lord,
Kneel ye, and bless ye the Sword!
Bless it with soul and with brain,
Bless it for saved and for slain,
For the sake of the dead in the tomb,
For the sake of the child in the womb,
For the sake of these Kings on the knee,
For the sake of a world it shall free!
Bless it, the Sword! bless the Sword!
Yea, in the name of the Lord!

CHIEFS.

Deepen the circle of Fire
Around him, our King and our Sire!
While in our centre he towers,
Kneeling, ye spirits, ye powers,
Bless it and bless it again,
Bless it for saved and for slain,
Bless ye the beautiful Sword,
Aloud in the name of the Lord!

KAISER.

In the name of the Lord!

ALL.

In the name of the Lord!

*THE CHAUNT BY THE
RHINE.*

(1871.)

Te verò appello sanctissimum FLUMEN,
tibi que futura prædico: torrenti sanguine plenus
ad ripas usque erumpes, undæque divinæ non
solum pollutentur sanguine, sed totæ rumpentur,
et viris multo major erit numerus sepulchrorum.
Quid fles, O Asclepi?—THE ASCLEPIAN DIA-
LOGUE.

FIRST VOICE.

(From Germany.)

Flash the sword!—and even as thunder
Utter ye one living voice,—
While the watching nations wonder,
Hills of Fatherland, rejoice:
Echo!—echo back our prayers and accla-
mation:!

SECOND VOICE.

(From France.)

France, O Mother! lie and hearken,
Make no bitterer sign of woe,
Here within thee all things darken,
All things brighten with thy foe:
Hush thy weeping; still thy bitter lamen-
tations.

FIRST VOICE.

Flash the sword!—A voice is flowing
From the Baltic bound in white,
Though 'tis blowing chill and snowing,
Blue-eyed Teutons see the light.
And the far white hills of Norway hear the
crying.

SECOND VOICE.

Thou too hearkenest, Mother dearest,
Thou too hearkenest through thy tears,
And thou tremblest as thou hearest,
For 'tis thunder in thine ears;
And thou gazest on the dead and on the
dying.

FIRST VOICE.

Lübeck answers and rejoices,
Though her dead are brought to her;
Potsdam thunders; there are voices
In the fields of Hanover;
And the spirits of the lonely Hartz awaken.

SECOND VOICE.

And in France's vales and mountains
Hands are wrung and tears are shed;
Women sit by village fountains,
And the water bubbles red.
O comfort, O be of comfort—ye forsaken!

FIRST VOICE.

O'er Bavarian woods and rivers,
Where the Brunswick heather waves,
On the glory goes and quivers
Through the Erzgebirge caves;
And the swords of Styria gleam like moonlit
water.

SECOND VOICE.

There is silence, there is weeping,
On the bloody banks of Seine,
And the unburied dead are sleeping
In the fields of trampled grain;
While the roadside Christs stare down on
fields of slaughter.

FIRST VOICE.

Flash the sword ! Where need is sorest,
Sitting in the lonely night,
While the wind in the Black Forest
Moans, the woodman sees the light ;
And the hunters wind the horn and hail
each other.

SECOND VOICE.

Strasbourg sits among her ashes
With a last despairing cry ;
East and west red ruin flashes
With a red light on the sky.
Not a word ! Sit yet and hearken, O my
Mother !

FIRST VOICE.

Flash the sword ! The glades of Baden
Echo ; Jena laughs anon ;
Dresden old and Stuttgart gladden,
There is mirth in Ratisbon :—
And underneath the Linden there is leaping.

SECOND VOICE.

In thine arms the horror carries,
And the sword-flash gleams on thee,
Hide thy funeral face, O Paris,
Do not hearken ; do not see ;
Electra, clasp thine urn, and hush thy
weeping.

FIRST VOICE.

Hamburg kindles, and her women
Sadly smile remembering all ;
There are bitter smiles in Bremen,
Where Vandamme's fierce feet did fall ;
But the Katzbach, O the Katzbach laugheth
loudly !

SECOND VOICE.

Comfort, Mother ! hear not, heed not ;
Let the dead bury the dead !
Fold thy powerless hands and plead not,
They remember sorrows fled,
And their dead go by them, silently and
proudly.

FIRST VOICE.

O that Fritz's soul could hear it
In the walks of Sans Souci !
O to waken Lützow's spirit,
Blücher's too, the grim and free ;
And the Jäger, the wild Jäger, would they
listen'd !

SECOND VOICE.

Comfort, Mother ! O cease weeping !
Let the past bury the past :
Faces of the slain and sleeping
Gleam along upon the blast.
Yea, 'twas 'Leipscic' that they murmur'd as
they glisten'd.

FIRST VOICE.

All the land of the great River
Slowly brightens near and far ;
Lost for once, and saved for ever,
Körner's spirit like a star
Shooteth past, and all remember the
beginning.

SECOND VOICE.

They are rising, they are winging,
Spirits of her singers dead :
'Tis an old song they are singing,
Fold thy hands and bow thy head,
But they sing for *thee* too, gentle to thy
sinning.

FIRST VOICE.

And the River to the ocean
Rolls ; and all its castles dim
Gleam ; and with a shadowy motion,
Like a mist upon its brim,
Rise the Dead,—and look this way with
shining faces.

SECOND VOICE.

Thine, too, rise !—and darkly cluster,
Moaning sad around thee now,
In their eyes there is no lustre,
They are cold as thy cold brow—
Let them vanish ; let them sleep in their
dark places.

FIRST VOICE.

Flash the sword ! In the fair valleys
Where the scented Neckar flows,
Fair-hair'd Teutons lift the chalice,
And the winter vineyard grows,
And the almond forests tremble into blos-
som.

SECOND VOICE.

On thy vineyards the cold daylight
Gleams, and they are deadly chill ;
Women wander in the grey light,
And the lean trees whistle shrill ;
Hold thine urn, O martyr Mother, to thy
bosom.

FIRST VOICE.

Flash the sword ! Sweet notes of pleasure
 O'er the Rhenish upland swell,
 And the overhanging azure
 Sees itself in the Moselle.
 All the land of the great River gleams and
 hearkens !

SECOND VOICE.

Dost thou hear them ? dost thou see them ?
 There 'tis gladness, here 'tis pain ;
 One great Spirit comes to free them,
 But he holds thee with a chain.
 All the land of the great City weeps and
 darkens !

FIRST VOICE.

River of the mighty people,
 Broaden to the sea and flow,
 Mirror tilth and farm and steeple,
 Darken with boats that come and go.
 Smile gently, like a babe that smiles and
 prattles.

SECOND VOICE.

Yea ! and though thou flow for ever,
 Bright and bloodless as to-day,
 Scarcely wilt thou wash, O River,
 Thy dark load of dead away,
 O bloody River ! O field of many battles !

FIRST VOICE.

On with great immortal waters
 Brightening to a day divine,
 Through the fields of many slaughters
 Freely roll, O German Rhine.
 Let the Tenton drink thy wine and wax the
 stronger.

SECOND VOICE.

On and on, O mighty River,
 Flow through lands of corn and vine—
 Turn away, O France, for ever,
 Look no more upon the Rhine ;
 On the River of many sorrows look no
 longer.

FIRST VOICE.

Lo ! the white Alps for a token
 With the wild aurora gleam,
 And the Spectre of the Brocken
 Stands aloft with locks that stream,—
 All the land of the great River can behold it !

SECOND VOICE.

Hide thine eyes and look not thither !
 For, in answer to their cries,
 Fierce the Phantasm gazeth hither
 With an Avenging Angel's eyes ;
 It is fading, and the mists of storm enfold it !

Saint Abe and his Seven Wives.

A TALE OF SALT LAKE CITY.

DEDICATION : TO OLD DAN CHAUCER.

Maypole dance and Whitsun ale,
 Sports of peasants in the dale,
 Harvest mirth and junketting,
 Fireside play and kiss-in-ring,
 Ancient fun and wit and ease,—
 Gone are one and all of these ;
 All the pleasant pastime planned
 In the green old Mother-land :
 Gone are these and gone the time
 Of the breezy English rhyme,
 Sung to make men glad and wise
 By great Bards with twinkling eyes :

Gone the tale and gone the song
 Sound as nut-brown ale and strong,
 Freshening the sultry sense
 Out of idle impotence,
 Sowing features dull or bright
 With deep dimples of delight !

Thro' the Mother-land I went,
 Seeking these, half indolent :
 Up and down, I saw them not ;
 Only found them, half-forgot,
 Buried in long-darken'd nooks
 With thy barrels of old books,
 Where the light and love and mirth
 Of the morning days of earth

Sleeps, like light of sunken suns
 Brooding deep in cob-webb'd tuns !
 Everywhere I found instead,
 Hanging her dejected head,
 Barbing shafts of bitter wit,
 The pale Modern Spirit sit—
 While her shadow, great as Gog's,
 Cast upon the island fogs,
 In the midst of all things dim
 Loom'd, gigantically grim.

Honest Chaucer, thee I greet
 In a verse with blithesome feet,
 And, tho' modern bards may stare,
 Crack a passing joke with Care !
 Take a merry song and true
 Fraught with inner meanings too !
 Goodman Dull may croak and scowl :—
 Leave him hooting to the owl !
 'Tight-laced Prudery may turn
 Angry back with eyes that burn,
 Reading on from page to page
 Scrofulous novels of the age !
 Fools may frown and humbugs rail,
 Not for them I tell the Tale ;
 Not for them, but souls like thee,
 Wise old English JOLLITY !

Newport, October, 1871.

APPROACHING UTAH.—THE BOSS'S TALE.

I.

PASSING THE RANCHE.

'GRRR !' shrieked the boss, with teeth
 clench'd tight,

Just as the lone ranche hove in sight,
 And with a face of ghastly hue
 He flogg'd the horses till they flew,
 As if the devil were at their back,
 Along the wild and stony track.
 From side to side the waggon swung,
 While to the quaking seat I clung.
 Dogs bark'd ; on each side of the pass
 The cattle grazing on the grass
 Raised heads and stared ; and with a cry
 Out the men rush'd as we roll'd by.
 'Grrr !' shriek'd the boss ; and o'er and o'er
 He flogg'd the foaming steeds and swore ;
 Harder and harder grew his face
 As by the ranche we swept apace,
 And faced the hill, and past the pond,
 And gallop'd up the height beyond,
 Nor tighten'd rein till field and farm
 Were hidden by the mountain's arm

A mile behind ; when, hot and spent,
 The horses paused on the ascent,
 And mopping from his brow the sweat,
 The boy glanced round with teeth still set,
 And panting, with his eyes on me,
 Smil'd with a look of savage glee.

Joe Wilson is the boss's name,
 A Western hoy well known to fame.
 He goes about the dangerous land
 His life for ever in his hand ;
 Has lost three fingers in a fray,
 Has scalp'd his Indian too they say ;
 Between the white man and the red
 Four times he hath been left for dead ;
 Can drink, and swear, and laugh, and brawl,
 And keeps his big heart thro' it all
 Tender for habes and women.

He
 Turned, smiled, and nodded savagely ;
 Then, with a dark look in his eyes
 In answer to my dumb surprise,
 Pointed with jerk of the whip's heft
 Back to the place that we had left,
 And cried aloud,

' I guess you think
 I'm mad, or vicious, or in drink.
 But theer you're wrong. I never pass
 The ranche down theer and bit of grass,
 I never pass 'em, night nor day,
 But the fit takes me just that way !
 The hosses know as well as me
 What's coming, miles afore we see
 The dern'd old corner of a place,
 And they git ready for the race !
 Lord ! if I *didn't* lash and swear,
 And ease my rage out passing theer,
 Guess I should go clean mad, that's all.
 And that's the reason why I call
 This turn of road where I am took
 Jest Old Nick's Gallop !'

Then his look
 Grew more subdued yet darker still ;
 And as the horses up the hill
 With loosen'd rein toil'd slowly, he
 Went on in half soliloquy,
 Indifferent almost if I heard,
 And grimly grinding out each word.

II.

JOE WILSON GOES A-COURTING.

' There was a time, and no mistake,
 When the same ranche down in the brake

Was pleasanter a heap to me
 Than any sight on land or sea.
 The hosses knew it like their master,
 Smelt it miles orf, and spank'd the faster !
 Ay, bent to reach thet very spot,
 Flew till they halted steaming hot
 Sbarp opposite the door, among
 The chicks and children old and young ;
 And down I'd jump, and all the go
 Was ' Fortune, boss ! ' and ' Welcome,
 Joe ! '

And Cissy with her shining face,
 Tho' she was missus of the place,
 Stood larfing, hands upon her hips ;
 And when upon her rosy lips
 I put my mouth and gave her one,
 She'd cuff me, and enjoy the fun !
 She was a widow young and tight,
 Her chap had died in a free fight,
 And here she lived, and round her had
 Two chicks, three brothers, and her dad,
 All making money fast as hay,
 And doing better every day.
 Waal ! guess tho' I was peart and swift,
 Spooning was never much my gift ;
 But Cissy was a gal so sweet,
 So fresh, so spicy, and so neat,
 It put your wits all out o' place,
 Only to star' into her face.
 Skin whiter than a new-laid egg,
 Lips full of juice, and sech a leg !
 A smell about her, morn and e'en,
 Like fresh-bleach'd linen on a green ;
 And from her hand when she took mine,
 The warmth ran up like sherry wine ;
 And if in liquor I made free
 To pull her larfing on my knee,
 Why, there she'd sit, and feel so nice,
 Her heer all scent, her breath all spice !
 See ! women hate, both young and old,
 A chap that's over shy and cold,
 And fire of all sorts kitches quick,
 And Cissy seem'd to feel full slick
 The same fond feelings, and at last
 Grew kinder every time I passed ;
 And all her face, from eyes to chin,
 Said ' Bravo, Joe ! You're safe to win ! '
 And tho' we didn't fix, d'ye see,
 In downright words that it should be,
 Ciss and her fam'ly understood
 That she and me would jine for good.
 Guess I was like a thirsty boss
 Dead beat for days, who comes across

A fresh clear beck, and on the brink
 Scoops out his shaky hand to drink ;
 Or like a gal or boy of three,
 With eyes upon a pippin-tree ;
 Or like some Injin cuss who sees
 A bottle of rum among the trees,
 And by the bit of smouldering log,
 Where squatters camp'd and took their grog
 The night afore. Waal ! ' (here he ground
 His teeth again with savage sound)
 ' Waal, stranger, fancy, jest for fun,
 The feelings of the thirsty one,
 If, jest as he scoop'd out his hand,
 The water turn'd to dust and sand !
 Or fancy how the lad would scream
 To see thet fruit-tree jest a dream !
 Or guess how thet poor Injin cuss,
 Would dance and swear, and screech and
 fuss,
 If when he'd drawn the cork and tried
 To get a gulp of rum inside,
 ' Twarn't anything in thet theer style,
 But physic stuff or stinking ile !
 Ah ! you've a notion now, I guess,
 Of how all ended in a mess,
 And how when I was putting in
 My biggest card and thought to win,
 The Old One taught her how to cheat,
 And yer I found myself, clean beat ! '

III.

SAINT AND DISCIPLE.

Joe Wñson paused, and gazed straight
 down,
 With gritting teeth and bitter frown,
 And not till I entreated him
 Did he continue,—fierce and grim,
 With knitted brow and teeth clench'd tight.
 ' Along this way one summer night,
 Jest as I meant to take the prize,
 Passed an APOSTLE—dern his eyes !—
 On his old pony, gravel-eyed,
 His legs a-dangling down each side,
 With twinkling eyes and wheedling smile,
 Grinning beneath his broad-brimm'd tile,
 With heer all scent and shaven face,
 He came a-trotting to the place.
 My luck was bad, I wasn't near,
 But busy many a mile from yer ;
 And what I tell was told to me
 By them as were at hand to see.

'Twarn't every day, I reckon, they
 Saw an Apostle pass their way !
 And Cissy, being kind o' soft,
 And empty in the upper loft,
 Was full of downright joy and pride
 To hev that saint at her fireside—
 One of the seventy they call
 The holiest holy—dern 'em all !
 O he was 'cute and no mistake,
 Deep as Salt Lake, and wide awake !
 Theer at the ranche three days he stayed,
 And well he knew his lying trade.
 'Twarn't long afore he heard full free
 About her larks and thet with me,
 And how 'twas quite the fam'ly plan
 To hev me for her second man.
 At fust thet old Apostle said
 Little, but only shook his head ;
 But you may bet he'd no intent
 To let things go as things had went.
 Three nights he stayed, and every night
 He squeezed her hand a bit more tight ;
 And every night he didn't miss
 To give a loving kiss to Ciss ;
 And tho' his fust was on her brow,
 He ended with her mouth, somehow.
 O, but he was a knowing one,
 The Apostle Hiram Higginson !
 Grey as a badger's was his heer,
 His age was over sixty year
 (Her grandfather was little older),
 So short, his head just touch'd her
 shoulder ;
 His face all grease, his voice all puff,
 His eyes two currants stuck in duff :—
 Call thet a man !—then look at *me* !
 Thretty year old and six foot three,
 Afear'd o' nothing morn nor night,
 The man don't walk I wouldn't fight !
 Women is women ! Thet's their style—
 Talk *reason* to them and they'll bile ;
 But haste 'em soft as any pigeon,
 With lies and rubbish and religion ;
 Don't talk of flesh and blood and feeling,
 But Holy Ghost and blessed healing ;
 Don't name things in too plain a way,
 Look a heap warmer than you say,
 Make 'em believe they're serving true
 The Holy Spirit and not you,
 Prove all the world but you's damnation,
 And call your kisses jest salvation ;
 Do this, and press 'em on the sly,
 You're safe to win 'em. Jest you try !

'Fust thing I heerd of all this game,
 One night when to the ranche I came,
 Jump'd down, ran in, saw Cissy theer,
 And thought her kind o' cool and queer ;
 For when I caught her with a kiss,
 'Twarn't that she took the thing amiss,
 But kept stone cool and gev a sigh,
 And wiped her mouth upon the sly
 On her white milkin'-apron. "Waal,"
 Says I, "you're out o' sorts, my gel !"
 And with a squeamish smile for me,
 Like folks hev when they're sick at sea,
 Says she, "O, Joseph, ere too late,
 I am awaken'd to my state—
 How pleasant and how sweet it is
 To be in sech a state of bliss !"
 I stared and gaped, and turned to Jim
 Her brother, and cried out to him,
 "Hullo, mate, what's the matter here ?
 What's come to Cissy ? Is she *queer* ?"
 Jim gev a grin and answered, "Yes,
 A trifle out o' sorts, I guess."
 But Cissy here spoke up and said,
 "It ain't my stomach, nor my head,
 It ain't my flesh, it ain't my skin,
 It's holy *spirits* here within !"
 "Waal," says I, meanin' to be kind,
 "I must be off, for I'm behind ;
 But next time that I pass this way
 We'll fix ourselves without delay.
 I know what your complaint is, Ciss,
 I've seen the same in many a miss,
 Keep up your spirits, thet's your plan,
 You're lonely here without a man,
 And you shall hev as good a one
 As e'er druv boss beneath the sun !"
 At that I buss'd her with a smack,
 Turn'd out, jump'd up, and took the track,
 And larfing druv along the pass.

'Theer ! Guess I was as green as grass !'

IV.

THE BOOK OF MORMON.

"'Twas jest a week after thet day
 When down I druv again this way.
 My heart was light ; and 'neath the box
 I'd got a shawl and two fine frocks
 For Cissy. On in spanking style
 The hosses went mile arter mile ;
 The sun was blazing golden bright,
 The sunflowers burning in the light,

The cattle in the golden gleer
 Wading for coolness everywheer
 Among the shinin' ponds, with flies
 As thick as pepper round their eyes
 And on their heads. See! as I went
 Whistling like mad and waal content,
 Altho' 'twas broad bright day all round,
 A cock crow'd, and I thought the sound
 Seem'd pleasant. Twice or thrice he crow'd,
 And then up to the ranche I rode,
 Since then I've often heerd folk say
 When a cock crows in open day
 It's a *bad sign*, announcin' clear
 Black luck or death to those thet hear.

'When I drew up, all things were still,
 I saw the boys far up the hill
 Tos in' the hay; but at the door
 No Cissy stood as oft afore.
 No, not a soul there, left nor right,
 Her very chicks were out o' sight.
 So down I jump'd, and "Ciss!" I cried,
 But not a sign of her outside.
 With thet into the house I ran,
 But found no sight of gel or man—
 All empty. Thinks I, "This is queer!"—
 Look'd in the dairy—no one theer;
 Then loiter'd round the kitchen track
 Into the orchard at the back:
 Under the fruit-trees' shade I pass'd, . . .
 Thro' the green bushes, . . . and at last
 Found, as the furthest path I trode,
 The gel I wanted. Ye . . . s! by —!

'The gel I wanted—ay, I found
 More than I wanted, you'll be bound!
 Theer, seated on a wooden cheer,
 With bows and ribbons in her heer,
 Her hat a-swinging on a twig
 Close by, sat Ciss in her best rig,
 And at her feet that knowing one,
 The Apostle Hiram Higginson!
 They were too keen to notice me,
 So I held back behind a tree
 And watch'd 'em. Never night nor day
 Did I see Cissy look so gay,
 Her eyes all sparkling blue and bright,
 Her face all sanctified delight.
 She hed her gown tuck'd up to show
 Embrider'd petticoat below,
 And jest a glimpse, below the white,
 Of dainty leg in stocking tight
 With crimson clocks; and on her knee
 She held an open book, which he,

Thet dern'd Apostle at her feet,
 With her low milking-stool for seat
 Was reading out all clear and pat
 Keeping the place with finger fat;
 Creeping more close to book and letter
 To feel the warmth of his text better
 His crimson face like a cock's head
 With his emotion as he read,
 And now and then his eyes he'd close
 Jest like a cock does when he crows
 Above the heads of thet strange two
 The shade was deep, the sky was blue,
 The place was full of warmth and smell,
 All round the fruit and fruit-leaves fell,
 And that Saint's voice, when all was still,
 Was like the groanin' of a mill.

'At last he stops for lack of wind,
 And smiled with sarcy double-chinn'd
 Fat face at Cissy, while she cried,
 Rocking herself from side to side,
 "O Bishop, them are words of bliss!"
 And then he gev a long fat kiss
 On her warm hand, and edged his stool
 Still closer. Could a man keep cool
 And see it? Trembling thro' and thro'
 I walked right up to thet theer two,
 And caught the dern'd old lump of duff
 Jest by the breeches and the scruff,
 And chuck'd him off, and with one kick
 Sent his stool arter him right slick—
 While Cissy scream'd with frighten'd face,
 "Spare him! O spare that man of grace!"

"Spare him!" I cried, and gev a shout,
 "What's this yer shine you air about—
 What cuss is this that I jest see
 With that big book upon your knee,
 Cuddling up close and making sham
 To read a heap of holy flam?"
 Then Cissy clasp'd her hands, and said,
 While that dern'd Saint sat fierce and red,
 Mopping his brow with a black frown,
 And squatting where I chuck'd him down,
 "Joe Wilson, stay your hand so bold,
 Come not a wolf into the fold;
 Forbear to touch that holy one—
 The Apostle Hiram Higginson."
 "Touch him!" said I; "for half a pin
 I'd flay and quarter him and skin!
 Waal may he look so white and skeer'd,
 For of his doings I have heerd;
 Five wives he hev already done,
 And him—not half the man for one!"

' And then I stoop'd and took a peep
 At what they'd studied at so deep,
 And read, for I can read a bit,
 " The Book of Mormon "—what was writ
 By the first Saint of all the lot,
 Mad Joseph, him the Yankees shot.
 " What's the contents of this yer book ?"
 Says I, and fixed her with a look.
 " O Joe," she answered, " read aright,
 It is a book of blessed light—
 Thet holy man expounds it clear ;
 Edification great is theer !"
 Then, for my blood was up, I took
 One kick at thet infernal book,
 And tho' the Apostle guv a cry,
 Into the well I made it fly,
 And turning to the Apostle cried,
 " Tho' thet theer Scriptur' is your guide,
 You'd best depart without delay,
 Afore you sink in the same way !
 And sure as fate you'll wet your skin
 If you come courting yer agin !"

' At first he stared and puff'd and blew,—
 " Git out !" I cried, and off he flew,
 And not till he was out o' reach
 Shook his fat fist and found his speech.
 I turned to Cissy. " Cicely Dunn,"
 Ses I, " is this a bit of fun
 Or earnest ?" Reckon 'twas a sight
 To see the way she stood upright,
 Rolled her blue eyes up, tried to speak,
 Made fust a giggle, then a squeak,
 And said half crying, " I despise
 Your wicked calumnies and lies,
 And what you would insinuate
 Won't move me from my blessed state.
 Now I perceive in time, thank biven,
 You are a man to anger given,
 Jealous and vi'lent. Go away !
 And when you recollect this day,
 And those bad words you've said to me,
 Blush if you kin. Tehee ! tehee !"
 And then she sobbed, and in her chcer
 Fell crying : so I felt quite queer,
 And stood like a dern'd fool, and star'd
 Watchin' the pump a-going hard ;
 And then at last, I couldn't stand
 The sight no more, but slipt my hand
 Sharp into hers, and said quite kind,
 " Say no more, Cissy—never mind ;
 I know how queer you women's ways is—
 Let the Apostle go to blazes !"

Now thet was plain and fair. With this
 I would have put my arm round Ciss.
 But Lord ! you should have seen her face,
 When I attempted to embrace ;
 Sprang to her feet and gev a cry,
 Her back up like a cat's, her eye
 All blazing, and cried fierce and clear,
 " You villain, touch me if you deer !"
 And jest then in the distance, fur
 From danger, a voice echoed her,—
 The dern'd Apostle's, from some place
 Where he had bid his ugly face,—
 Crying out faint and thick and clear,
 " Yes, villain, touch her if you deer !"

' So riled I was, to be so beat,
 I could have struck her to my feet.
 I didn't tho', tho' sore beset—
 I never struck a woman yet.

' But off I walked right up the pass,
 And found the men among the grass,
 And when I came in sight said flat,
 " What's this yer game Cissy is at ?
 She's thrown me off, and taken pity
 On an Apostle from the City.
 Five wives already, too, has he—
 Poor cussed things as e'er I see—
 Does she mean *mischief* or a *lark* ?"
 Waal, all the men at thet look'd dark,
 And scratch'd their heads and seem'd in
 doubt.

At last her brother Jim spoke out—
 " Joe, don't blame *us*—by George, it's true,
 We're chawed by this as much as you ;
 We've done our best and tried and tried,
 But Ciss is off her head with pride.
 And all her thoughts, both night and day,
 Are with the Apostles fur away.
 ' O that I were in bliss with them
 Theer in the new Jerusalem !'
 She says ; and when we laugh and sneer,
 Ses we're jest raging wolves down here.
 She's a bit dull at home d'ye see,
 Allays liked heaps of company,
 And now the foolish critter paints
 A life of larks among the Saints.
 We've done our best, don't hev a doubt,
 To keep the old Apostle out :
 We've trained the dogs to seize and bite him,
 We've got up ghosts at night to fright him,
 Doctor'd his hoss and so upset him,
 Put tickle-grass in bed to fret him,

Jalap'd his beer and snuffed his tea too,
Gunpowder in his pipe put free too ;
A dozen times we've well-nigh kill'd him,
We've skeer'd him, shaken him, and spill'd
him ;

In fact, done all we deer," said Jim,
" Against a powerful man like him ;
But all in vain we've hed our sport ;
Jest like a cat that *can't* be hurt,
With nine good lives if he hev one,
Is this same Hiram Higginson ! "

v.

JOE ENDS HIS STORY—FIRST GLIMPSE
OF UTAH.

Joe paused, for down the mountain's brow,
His hastening horses trotted now.
Into a canyon green and light,
Thro' which a beck was sparkling light,
Quickly we wonnd. Joe Wilson lit
His cutty pipe, and suck'd at it
In silence grim ; and when it drew,
Puff after puff of smoke he blew,
With blank eye fixed on vacancy.
At last he turned again to me,
And spoke with bitter indignation
The epilogue of his narration.

'Waal, stranger, guess my story's told,
The Apostle beat and I was bowl'd.
Reckon I might have won if I
Had allays been at hand to *try* ;
But I was busy out of sight,
And he was theer, morn, noon, and night,
Playing his cards, and waal it weer
For him I never caught him theer.

To cut the story short, I guess
He got the Prophet to say " yes,"
And Cissy without much ado
Gev her consent to hev him too ;
And one fine morning off they druv
To what he called the Abode of Love—
A dern'd old place, it seems to me,
Jest like a dove-box on a tree,
Where every lonesome woman-soul
Sits shivering in her own hole,
And on the outside, free to choose,
The old cock-pigeon struts and coos.
I've heard from many a one that Ciss
Has found her blunder out by this,
And she'd prefer for company
A brisk young chap, tho' poor, like me,

Than the sixth part of him she's won—
The holy Hiram Higginson.
I've got a peep at her since then,
When she's crawl'd out of theer theer
den,

But she's so pale and thin and tame
I shouldn't know her for the same.
No flesh to pinch upon her cheek,
Her legs gone thin, no voice to speak,
Dabby and crush'd, and sad and flabby,
Sucking a wretched squeaking baby ;
And all the fun and all the light
Gone from her face, and left it white.
Her cheek 'll take a feeble flush,
But hesn't blood enough to blush ;
Tries to seem modest, peart and sly,
And brighten up if I go by,
Bnt from the corner of her eyes
Peeps at me quietly, and sighs.
Reckon her luck has been a stinger !
She'd bolt if I held up my finger ;
But tho' I'm rough, and wild, and free,
Take a *Saint's* leavings—no not me !
You've heerd of Vampires—them that rise
At dead o' night with flaming eyes,
And into women's beds 'll creep
To suck their blood when they're asleep.
I guess these Saints are jest the same,
Sucking the life out is their game ;
And tho' it ain't in the broad sun
Or in the open streets it's done,
There ain't a woman they clap eyes on
Their teeth don't touch, their touch don't
pison ;
Theet's their dern'd way in this yer spot—
Grrr ! git along, hoss ! dern you, trot !'

From pool to pool the wild beck sped
Beside us, dwindled to a thread.
With mellow verdure fringed around
It sang along with summer sound :
Here gliding into a green glade ;
Here darting from a nest of shade
With sudden sparkle and quick cry,
As glad again to meet the sky ;
Here whirling off with eager will
And quickening tread to turn a mill ;
Then stealing from the busy place
With duskier depths and wearier pace
In the blue void above the beck
Sailed with us, dwindled to a speck,
The hen-hawk ; and from pools below
The blue-wing'd heron oft rose slow,

And upward pass'd with measured beat
 Of wing to seek some new retreat.
 Blue was the heaven and darkly bright,
 Suffused with throbbing golden light,
 And in the burning Indian ray
 A million insects hummed at play.
 Soon, by the margin of the stream,
 We passed a driver with his team
 Bound for the City ; then a hound
 Afar off made a dreamy sound ;
 And suddenly the sultry track
 Left the green canyon at our back,
 And sweeping round a curve, behold !
 We came into the yellow gold
 Of perfect sunlight on the plain ;
 And Joe abruptly drawing rein,
 Said quick and sharp, shading his eyes
 With sunburnt hand, ' See, theer it lies—
 Theer's *Sodom* !'

And even as he cried,
 The mighty Valley we espied,
 Burning below us in one ray
 Of liquid light that summer day ;
 And far away, ' mid peaceful gleams
 Of flocks and herds and glistening streams,
 Rose, fair as aught that fancy paints,
 The wondrous City of the Saints !

THE CITY OF THE SAINTS.

O Saints that shine around the heavenly Seat !
 What heaven is this that opens at my feet ?
 What flocks are these that thro' the go'den gleam
 Stray on by freckled fields and shining stream ?
 What glittering roofs and white kiosks are these
 Up-peeping from the shade of emerald trees ?
 Whose City is this that rises on the sight
 Fair and fantastic as a city of light
 Seen in the sunset ? What is yonder sea
 Opening beyond the City cool and free,
 Large, deep, and luminous, looming thro' the
 heat,
 And lying at the darkly shadowed feet
 Of the Sierras, which with jagged line
 Burning to amber in the light divine,
 Close in the Valley of the happy land,
 With heights as barren as a dead man's hand ?

O pilgrim, halt ! O wandering heart, give praise !
 Behold the City of these Latter Days !
 Here may'st thou leave thy load and be for-
 given,
 And in anticipation taste of Heaven !

I.

AMONG THE PASTURES—SUMMER EVENING DIALOGUE.

Bishop Pete. Bishop Foss. Stranger.

BISHOP PETE.

AH, things down here, as you observe, are
 getting more pernicious,
 And Brigham's losing all his nerve, altho'
 the fix is vicious.
 Jest as we've reard a prosperous place and
 fill'd our holy quivers,
 The Yankee comes with dern'd long face to
 give us all the shivers !
 And on his jaws a wicked grin prognosti-
 cates disaster,
 And, jest as sure as sin is sin, he means to
 be the master.
 ' Pack up your traps,' I hear him cry, ' for
 here there's no remainin','
 And winks with his malicious eye, and
 progues us out of Canaan.

BISHOP JOSS.

It ain't the Yankee that I fear, the neigh-
 bour, nor the stranger—
 No, no, it's closer home, it's *here*, that I
 perceive the danger.
 The wheels of State has gather'd rust, the
 helm wants hands to guide it,
 'Tain't from without the biler'll bust, but
 'cause of steam inside it ;
 Yet if we went falootin' less, and made less
 noise and flurry,
 It isn't Jonathan, I guess, would hurt us in
 a hurry.
 But there's sedition east and west, and
 secret revolution,
 There's the canker in the social breast, rot in
 the constitution ;
 And over half of us, at least, are plunged
 in mad vexation,
 Forgetting how our race increased, our very
 creed's foundation.
 What's our religion's strength and force, its
 substance, and its story ?

STRANGER.

Polygamy, my friend, of course ! the law of
 love and glory !

BISHOP PETE.

Stranger, I'm with you there, indced :—it's
 been the best of nusses ;
 Polygamy is to our creed what meat and
 drink to *us* is,
 Destroy that notion any day, and all the
 rest is brittle,
 And Mormondom dies clean away like one
 in want of vittle.
 It's meat and drink, it's life, it's power ! to
 heaven its breath doth win us !
 It warms our vitals every hour ! it's Holy
 Ghost within us !
 Jest lay that notion on the shelf, and all
 life's springs are frozen !
 I've half a dozen wives myself, and wish I
 had a dozen !

BISHOP JOSS.

If all the Elders of the State like *you* were
 sound and holy,
 P. Shufflebotham, guess our fate were far
 less melancholy.
 You air a man of blessed toil, far-shining
 and discerning,
 A heavenly lamp well trimm'd with oil,
 upon the altar burning.
 And yet for every one of us with equal re-
 solution,
 There's twenty samples of the Cuss, as
 mean as Brother Clewson.

STRANGER.

St. Abe ?

BISHOP JOSS.

Yes, *him*—the snivelling sneak—his very
name provokes me,—
 Altho' my temper's milky-meeek, he sours
 me and he chokes me.
 To see him going up and down with those
 meek lips asunder,
 Jest like a man about to drown, with lead
 to sink him under,
 His grey hair on his shoulders shed, one
 leg than t'other shorter,
 No end of cuteness in his head, and him—
 as weak as water !

BISHOP PETE.

And yet how well I can recall the time
 when Abe was younger—
 Why not a chap among us all went for the
 notion stronger.

When to the mother-country he was sent
 to wake the sinning,
 He shipp'd young lambs across the sea by
flocks—he was so winning ;
 O but he had a lively style, describing
 saintly blisses !
 He made the spirit pant and smile, and
 seek seraphic kisses !
 How the bright raptures of the Saint fresh
 lustre seemed to borrow,
 While black and awful he did paint the
 one-wived sinner's sorrow !
 Each woman longed to be his bride, and by
 his side to slumber—
 'The more the blesseder !' he cried, still
 adding to the number.

STRANGER.

How did the gentleman contrive to change
 his skin so quickly ?

BISHOP JOSS.

The holy Spirit couldn't thrive because the
 Flesh was sickly !
 Tho' day by day he did increase his flock,
 his soul was shallow,
 His brains were only candle-grease, and
 wasted down like tallow.
 He stoop'd a mighty heap too much, and
 let his household rule him,
 The weakness of the man was such that
 any face could fool him.
 Ay ! made his presence cheap, no doubt,
 and so contempt grew quicker,—
 Not measuring his notice out in smallish
 drams, like liquor.
 His house became a troublous house, with
 mischief overbrimmin',
 And he went creeping like a mouse among
 the cats of women.
 Ah, womenfolk are hard to rule, their tricks
 is most surprising,
 It's only a dern'd spoony fool goes *sentimentalising* !
 But give 'em now and then a bit of notice
 and a present,
 And lor, they're just like doves, that sit on
 one green branch, all pleasant !
 But Abe's love was a queer complaint, a
 sort of tertian fever,
 Each case he cured of thought the Saint a
 thorough-paced deceiver ;

And soon he found, he did indeed, with all
their whims to nourish,
That Mormonism ain't a creed where
fleshy follies flourish.

BISHOP PETE.

Ah, right you air! A creed it is demandin'
iron mettle!
A will that quells, as soon as riz, the biling
of the kettle!
With wary eye, with manner deep, a spirit
overbrimmin',
Like to a shepherd 'mong his sheep, the
Saint is 'mong his women;
And unto him they do uplift their eyes in
awe and wonder;
His notice is a blessed gift, his anger is
blue thunder.
No n'ises vex the holy place where dwell
those blessed parties;
Each missus shineth in her place, and
blithe and meek her heart is!
They sow, they spin, they darn, they bem,
their blessed babes they handle,
The Devil never comes to *them*, lit by that
holy candle!
When in their midst serenely walks their
Master and their Mentor,
They're hush'd, as when the Prophet stalks
down holy church's centre!
They touch his robe, they do not move,
those blessed wives and mothers,
And, when on one he shineth love, no envy
fills the others;
They know his perfect saintliness, and
honour his affection—
And, if they did object, I guess he'd settle
that objection!

BISHOP JOSS.

It ain't a passionate flat like Abe can
manage things in *your* way!
They teased that most eternal babe, till
things were in a poor way.
I used to watch his thorny bed, and bust
my sides with laughter.
Once give a female hoss her head you'll
never stop her after.
It's one thing getting seal'd, and he was
mighty fond of Sealing,
He'd all the human heat, d'ye see, without
the saintly feeling.

His were the wildest set of gals that ever
drove man silly,
Each full of freaks and fal-de-lals, as frisky
as a filly.
One pull'd this way, and t'other that, and
made his life a mockery,
They'd all the feelings of a cat scampaging
'mong the crockery.
I saw Abe growing pale and thin, and well
I knew what ail'd him—
The skunk went stealing out and in, and
all his spirit failed him;
And tho' the tanning-yard paid well, and
he was money-making,
His saintly home was hot as Hell, and, ah!
how he was baking!
Why, now and then at evening-time, when
his day's work was over,
Up t'is here hill be used to climb and squat
among the clover,
And with his fishy eye he'd glare across the
Rocky Mountains,
And wish he was away up there, among
the heavenly fountains!
I had an aunt, Tabitha Brooks, a virgin
under fifty,
She warn't so much for pretty looks, but
she was wise and thrifty:
She'd seen the vanities of life, was good at
'counts and brewin'—
Thinks I, 'Here's just the sort of Wife to
save poor Abe from ruin.'
So, after fooling many a week, and showing
him she loved him,
And seeing he was shy to *speck*, whatever
feelings moved him,
At last I took her by the hand, and led her
to him straightway,
One day when we could see him stand jest
close unto the gateway.
My words were to the p'int and brief: says
I, 'My brother Clewson,
There'll be an end to all your grief, if
you've got resolution.
Where shall you find a house that thrives
without a head that's ruling?
Here is the paragon of wives to teach those
others schooling!
She'll be to you not only wife, but careful
as a mother—
A little property for life is hers; you'll
share it, brother.

I've seen the question morn and eve within
 your eyes unspoken,
 You're slow and nervous I perceive, but
 now—the ice is broken.
 Here is a guardian and a guide to bless a
 man and grace him ;
 And then I to Tabitha cried, 'Go in, old
 gal—embrace him !'

STRANGER.

Why, that was acting fresh and fair ;—but
 Abe, was he as hearty?

BISHOP JOSS.

We . . ! Abe was never anywhere
 against a *female* party !
 At first he seemed about to run, and then
 we might have missed him ;
 But Tabby was a tender one, she collar'd
 him and kissed him.
 And round his neck she blushing hung,
 part holding, part caressing,
 And murmur'd, with a faltering tongue,
 'O, Abe, I'll be a blessing.'
 And home they walk'd one morning, he
 just reaching to her shoulders,
 And sneaking at her skirt, while she stared
 straight at all beholders.
 Swinging her bonnet by the strings, and
 setting her lips tighter,
 In at his door the old gal springs, her grin
 eyes growing brighter ;
 And, Lord ! there was the devil to pay,
 and lightning and blue thunder,
 For she was going to have her way, and
 hold the vixens under ;
 They would have torn old Abe to bits, they
 were so anger-bitten,
 But Tabby saved him from their fits, as a
 cat saves her kitten.

STRANGER.

It seems your patriarchal life has got its
 botherations,
 And leads to much domestic strife and
 infinite vexations !
 But when the ladies couldn't lodge in peace
 one house-roof under,
 I thought that 'twas the saintly dodge to
 give them homes asunder ?

BISHOP JOSS.

And you thought right ; it is a plan by
 many here affected—
 Never by *me*—I ain't the man—I'll have
 my will respected.
 If all the women of *my* house can't fondly
 pull together,
 And each as meek as any mouse, look out
 for stormy weather !—
 No, no, I don't approve at all of humour-
 ing my women,
 And building lots of boxes small for each
 one to grow grim in.
 I teach them jealousy's a *sin*, and solitude's
 just bearish,
 They nuss each other lying-in, each other's
 babes they cherish ;
 It is a family jubilee, and not a selfish
 pleasure,
 Whenever one presents to me another infant
 treasure !
 All eka¹, all respected, each with tokens of
 affection,
 They dwell together, soft of speech, beneath
 their lord's protection ;
 And if by any chance I mark a spark of
 shindy raising,
 I set my heel upon that spark,—before the
 house gets blazing !
 Now that's what Clewson should have done,
 but couldn't, thro' his folly,
 For even when Tabby's help was won, he
 wasn't much more jolly.
 Altho' she stopt the household fuss, and
 husht the awful riot,
 The old contrary stupid Cuss could not
 enj'y the quiet.
 His house was peaceful as a church, all
 solemn, still, and saintly ;
 And yet he'd tremble at the porch, and
 look about him faintly ;
 And tho' the place was all his own, with
 hat in hand he'd enter,
 Like one thro' public buildings shown, soft
 treading down the centre.
 Still, things were better than before, though
 somewhat trouble-laden,
 When one fine day unto his door there
 came a Yankee maiden.
 'Is Brother Clewson in?' she says ; and
 when she saw and knew him,

The stranger gal to his amaze scream'd out
and clung unto him.
Then in a voice all thick and wild, exclaim'd
that gal unlucky,
'O Sir, I'm Jason Jones's child—he's *dead*
—stabbd in Kentucky!
And father's gone, and O I've come to *you*
across the mountains.'
And then the little one was dumb, and
Abe's eyes gushed like fountains. . . .
He took that gal into his place, and kept
her as his daughter—
Ah, mischief to her wheedling face and the
bad wind that brought her!

BISHOP PETE.

I knew that Jones;—used to faloot about
Emancipation—
It made your very toe-nails shoot to hear
his declamation.
And when he'd made all bosoms swell with
wonder at his vigour,
He'd get so drunk he couldn't tell a white
man from a nigger!
Was six foot high, thin, grim, and pale,—
his troubles can't be spoken—
Tarred, feathered, ridden on a rail, left
beaten, bruised, and broken;
But nothing made his tongue keep still, or
stopt his games improper,
Till, after many an awkward spill, he came
the final cropper.

BISHOP JOSS.

. . . That gal was fourteen years of age,
and sly with all her meekness;
It put the fam'ly in a rage, for well they
knew Abe's weakness.
But Abe (a cuss, as I have said, that any
fool might sit on)
Was stubborn as an ass's head, when once
he took the fit on!
And, once he fixed the gal to take, in spite
of their vexation,
Not all the rox on earth would break his
firm determination.
He took the naggings as they came, he
bowed his head quite quiet,
Still mild he was and sad and tame, and
ate the peppery diet;
But tho' he seemed so crush'd to be, when
this or that one blew up,

He stuck to Jones's Legacy and school'd
her till she grew up.
Well! there! the thing was said and done,
and so far who could blame him?
But O he was a crafty one, and sorrow
couldn't shame him!
That gal grew up, and at eighteen was
prettier far and neater—
There were not many to be seen about these
parts to beat her;
Peart, brisk, bright-eyed, all trim and tight,
like kittens fond of playing,
A most uncommon pleasant sight at pic-nic
or at praying,
Then it became, as you'll infer, a simple
public duty,
To cherish and look after her, considering
her beauty;
And several Saints most great and blest
now offer'd their protection,
And I myself among the rest felt something
of affection.
But O the selfishness of Abe, all things it
beats and passes!
As greedy as a two-year babe a-grasping at
molasses!
When once those Shepherds of the flock
began to smile and beckon,
He screamed like any fighting cock, and
raised his comb, I reckon!
First one was floor'd, then number two, she
wouldn't look at any;
Then *my* turn came, although I knew the
maiden's faults were many.
'My brother Abe,' says I, 'I come untoe
your house at present
To offer sister Anne a bome which she will
find most pleasant.
You know I am a saintly man, and all my
ways are lawful'—
And in a minute he began abusing me most
awful.
'Begone,' he said, 'you're like the rest,—
wolves, wolves with greedy clutches!
Poor little lamb, but in my breast I'll shield
her from your to'ches!'
'Come, come,' says I, 'a gal can't stay a
child like that for ever,
You'll *hev* to seal the gal some day;' but
Abe cried fiercely, 'Never!'
Says I, 'Perhaps it's in your view *yourself*
this lamb to gather?'

And ' If it is, what's that to *you*? ' he cried ;
 ' but I'm her father !
 You get along, I know your line, it's crush-
 ing, bullying, wearing,
 You'll never seal a child of mine, so go, and
 don't stand staring ! '
 This was the man once mild in phiz as any
 farthing candle—
 A hedgehog now, his quills all riz, whom
 no one dared to handle !
 But O I little guessed his deal, nor tried to
 circumvent it,
 I never thought he'd dare to *seal* another ;
 but he meant it !
 Yes, managed Brigham on the sly, for fear
 his plans miscarried,
 And long before we'd time to cry, the two
 were sealed and married.

BISHOP PETE.

Well, you've your consolation now—he's
 punish'd clean, I'm thinking,
 He's ten times deeper in the slough, up to
 his neck and sinking.
 There's vinegar in Abe's pale face enough
 to sour a barrel,
 Goes crawling up and down the place,
 neglecting his apparel,
 Seems to have lost all heart and soul, has
 fits of absence shocking—
 His home is like a rabbit's hole when
 weasels come a-knocking.
 And now and then, to put it plain, while
 falling daily sicker,
 I think he tries to float his pain by copious
 goes of liquor.

BISHOP JOSS.

Yes, that's the end of selfishness, it leads to
 long vexation—
 No man can pity Abe, I guess, who knows
 his situation ;
 And, Stranger, if this man you meet, don't
 take *him* for a sample,
 Although he speaks you fair and sweet, he's
 set a vile example.
 Because you see him ill at ease, at home,
 and never hearty,
 Don't think these air the tokens, please, of
 a real saintly party !
 No, he's a failure, he's a sham, a scandal
 to our nation,

Not fit to lead a single lamb, unworthy of
 his station ;
 No ! if you want a Saint to see, who rules
 lambs when he's got 'em,
 Just cock your weather-eye at *me*, or Brother
 Shufflebotham.
 We don't go croaking east and west, afraid
 of women's faces,
 We bless and we air truly blest in our
 domestic places ;
 We air religious, holy men, happy our folds
 to gather,
 Each is a loyal citizen, also a husband—
 rather.
 But now with talk you're dry and hot, and
 weary with your ride here,
 Jest come and see *my* fam'ly lot,—they're
 waiting tea inside here.

II.

WITHIN THE CITY.

ST. ABE AND THE SEVEN.

Sister Tabitha, thirty odd,
 Rising up with a stare and a nod ;
 Sister Amelia, sleepy and mild,
 Freckled, Dudn-ish, suckling ~~a~~ child ;
 Sister Fanny, pert and keen,
 Sister Emily, solemn and lean,
 Sister Mary, given to tears,
 Sister Sarah, with wool in her ears ;—
 All appearing like tapers wan
 In the mellow sunlight of Sister Anne.

With a tremulous wave of his hand, the
 Introduces the household quaint,
 And sinks on a chair and looks around,
 As the dresses rustle with snakish sound,
 As curtsies are bobb'd, and eyes cast
 Some with a simper, some with a frown,
 And Sister Anne, with a fluttering breast,
 Stands trembling and peeping behind the
 rest.

Every face but one has been
 Pretty, perchance, at the age of eighteen
 Pert and pretty, and plump and bright
 But now their fairness is faded quite,
 And every feature is fashion'd here
 To a flabby smile, or a snappish sneer.
 Before the stranger they each assume
 A false fine flutter and feeble bloom,

And a little colour comes into the cheek
When the eyes meet mine, as I sit and speak ;
But there they sit and look at me,
Almost withering visibly,
And languidly tremble and try to blow—
Six pale roses all in a row !

Six? ah, yes ; but at hand sits one,
The seventh, still full of the light of the sun.
Though her colour terribly comes and goes,
Now white as a lily, now red as a rose,
So sweet she is, and so full of light,
That the rose seems soft, and the lily bright.
Her large blue eyes, with a tender care,
Steal to her husband unaware,
And whenever he feels them he flushes red,
And the trembling hand goes up to his head !
Around those dove-like eyes appears
A redness as of recent tears.
Alone she sits in her youth's fresh bloom
In a dark corner of the room,
And folds her hands, and does not stir,
And the others scarcely look at her,
But crowding together, as if by plan,
Draw further and further from Sister Anne.

I try to rattle along in chat,
Talking freely of this and that—
The crops, the weather, the mother-land,
Talk a baby could understand ;
And the faded roses, faint and meek,
Open their languid lips to speak,
But in various sharps and flats, all low,
Gave a lazy 'yes' or a sleepy 'no.'
Yet now and then Tabitha speaks,
Snapping her answer with yellow cheeks,
And fixing the Saint who is sitting by
With the fish-like glare of her glittering eye,
Whenever the looks of the weary man
Stray to the corner of Sister Anne.

Like a fountain in a shady place
Is the gleam of the sadly shiuing face—
A fresh spring whither the soul might turn,
When the road is rough, and the hot sands
burn ;

Like a fount, or a bird, or a blooming tree,
To a weary spirit is such as she !
And Brother Abe, from his easy chair,
Looks thither by stealth with an aching care,
And in spite of the dragons that guard the
brink

Would stoop to the edge of the fount, I think,
And drink ! and drink !

'Drink? Stuff and fiddlesticks,' you cry,
Matron reader with flashing eye :
'Isn't the thing completely *his*,
His wife, his mistress, whatever you please?
Look at her! Dragons and fountains!
Absurd !'

Madam, I bow to every word ;
But truth is truth, and cannot fail,
And this is quite a veracious tale.
More like a couple of lovers shy,
Who flush and flutter when folk are by,
Were man and wife, or (in another
And holier parlance) sister and brother.
As a man of the world I noticed it,
And it made me speculate a bit,
For the situation was to my mind
A phenomenon of a curious-kind—
A person in love with his *wife*, 'twas clear,
But afraid, when another soul was near,
Of showing his feelings in any way
Because—there would be the Devil to pay !

The Saint has been a handsome fellow,
Clear-eyed, fresh-skinn'd, if a trifle yellow,
And his face, though somewhat soft and plain,
Ends in a towering mass of brain.

His locks, though still an abundant crop,
Are thinning a little at the top,
But you only notice here and there
The straggling gleam of a silver hair.
A man by nature roll'd round and short,
Meant for the Merry Andrew's sport,
But sober'd down by the wear and tear
Of business troubles and household care :
Quiet, reticent, gentle, kind,
Of amorous heart and extensive mind,
A Saint devoid of saintly sham,
Is little Brother Abraham.

Brigham's right hand he used to be—
Mild though he seems, and simple, and free ;
Sound in the ways of the world, and great
In planning potent affairs of state ;
Not bright, nor bumptious, you must know,
Too retiring for popular show,
But known to conceive on a startling scale
Gigantic plans that never fail ;
To hold with a certain secret sense
The Prophet under his influence,
To be, I am led to understand,
The Brain, while the Pr. phet is the Hand,
And to see his intellectual way

Thro' moral dilemmas of every day,
By which the wisest are led astray.

Here's the Philosopher!—here he sits,
Here, with his vaguely wandering wits,
Among the dragons, as I have said,
Smiling, and holding his hand to his head.
What mighty thoughts are gathering now
Behind that marble mass of brow?

What daring schemes of polity
To set the popular conscience free,
And bless humanity, planneth he?
His talk is idle, a surface-gleam,
The ripple on the rest of the stream,
But his thoughts—ah, his *thoughts*—where
do they fly,

While the wretched roses under his eye
Flutter and peep? and in what doth his plan
Turn to the counsel of Sister Anne?
For his eyes give ever a questioning look,
And the little one in her quiet nook
Flashes an answer, and back again
The question runs to the Brother's brain,
And the lights of speculation flit
Over his face and trouble it.

Follow his eyes once more, and scan
The fair young features of Sister Anne:
Frank and innocent, and in sooth
Full of the first fair flush of youth.
Quite a child—nineteen years old;
Not gushing, and self-possessed, and bold,
Like our Yankee women at nineteen,
But low of voice, and mild of mien—
More like the fresh young fruit you see
In the mother-land across the sea—
More like that rosiest flower on earth,
A blooming maiden of English birth,
Such as we find them yet awhile
Scatter'd about the homely Isle,
Not yet entirely eaten away
By the canker-novel of the day,
Or curling up and losing their scent
In a poisonous dew from the Continent.

There she sits; in her quiet nook,
Still bright tho' sadden'd; and while I look,
My heart is filled and my eyes are dim,
And I hate the Saint when I turn to him!
Ogre! Blue Beard! Oily and sly!
His meekness a cheat, his quiet a lie!
A roaring lion he'll walk the house
Tho' now he crouches like any mouse!

Had not he pluck'd enough and to spare
Of roses like these set fading there,
But he must seek to cajole and kiss
Another yet, and a child like this?
A maid on the stalk, just panting to prove
The honest joy of a virgin love;
A girl, a baby, an innocent child,
To be caught by the first man's face that
smiled!

Scarce able the difference to fix
Of polygamy and politics!
Led to the altar like a lamb,
And sacrificed to the great god *Sham*!
Deluded, martyr'd, given to woe,
Last of seven who have perish'd so;
For who can say but the flowers I see
Were once as rosy and ripe as she?

Already the household worm has begun
To feed on the cheeks of the little one;
Already her spirit, fever-fraught,
Droops to the weight of its own thought;
Already she saddens and sinks and sighs,
Watched by the jealous dragonish eyes.
Even Amelia, sleepy and wan,
Sharpens her orbs as she looks at Anne;
While Sister Tabby, when she can spare
Her gaze from the Saint in his easy-chair,
Fixes her with a gorgon glare.

All is still and calm and polite,
The Sisters bolster themselves upright,
And try to smile, but the atmosphere
Is charged with thunder and lightning here.
Heavy it seems, and close and warm,
Like the air before a summer storm;
And at times,—as in that drowsy dream
Preluding thunder, all sounds will seem
Distinct and ominously clear,
And the far-off cocks seem crowing near;—
Ev'n so in the pauses of talk, each breast
Is strangely conscious of the rest,
And the tick of the watch of Abe the Saint
Breaks on the air, distinct though faint,
Like the ticking of his heart!

I rise
To depart, still glancing with piteous eyes
On Sister Anne; and I find her face
Turn'd questioning still to the same old
place—
The face of the Saint. I stand and bow,
Curtseys again are bobbing now,

Dresses rustling . . . I know no more
Till the Saint has led me to the door,
And I find myself in a day-dream dim,
Just after shaking hands with him,
Standing and watching him sad and slow
Into the dainty dwelling go,
With a heavy sigh, and his hand to his head.

. . . Hark, *distant thunder*!—'tis as I said :
The air was far too close ;—at length
The Storm is breaking in all its strength.

III.

PROMENADE—MAIN STREET, UTAH.

THE STRANGER.

Along the streets they're thronging, walking,
Clad gaily in their best and talking,
Women and children, quite a crowd ;
The bright sun overhead is blazing,
The people sweat, the dust they're raising
Arises like a golden cloud.
Still out of every door they scatter,
Laughing and light. Pray what's the
matter,
That such a flock of folks I see ?

A LOUNGER.

They're off to hear the Prophet patter,
This yer's a day of jubilee.

VOICES.

Come along, we're late I reckon. . .
There's our Matt, I see him beckon. . .
How d'ye do, marm? glad to meet you. . .
Silence, Hiram, or I'll beat you. . .
Emm, there's brother Jones a-looking. . .
Here's warm weather, how I'm cooking!

STRANGER.

Afar the hills arise with cone and column
Into a sky of brass serene and solemn ;
And underneath their shadow in one haze
Of limpid heat the great salt waters blaze,
While faint and filmy through the sultry
veil

The purple islands on their bosom sail
Like floating clouds of dark fantastic air.
How strangely sounds (while 'mid the
Indian glare
Moves the gay crowd of people old and
young)
The bird-like chirp of the old Saxon tongue!

The women seem half weary and half gay,
Their eyes droop in a melancholy way,—
I have not seen a merry face to-day.

A BISHOP.

That's a smart hoss you're riding, brother !
How are things looking, down with you ?

SECOND BISHOP.

Not over bright with one nor 'tother,
Taters are bad, tomatoes blue.
You've heer'd of Brother Simpson's losses?—
Buried his wife and spiled his hay.
And the three best of Hornby's hosses
Some Injin cuss has sto'n away.

VOICES.

Zoë, jest fix up my gown. . .
There's my hair a-coming down. . .
Drat the baby, he's so crusty—
It's the heat as makes him thusty. . .
Come along, I'm almost sinking. . .
There's a stranger, and he's winking.

STRANGER.

That was a fine girl with the grey-hair'd
lady,
How shining were her eyes, how true and
steady,
Not drooping down in guilty Mormon
fashion,
But shooting at the soul their power and
passion.
That's a big fellow, six foot two, not under,
But how he struts, and looks as black as
thunder,
Half glancing round at his poor sheep to
scare 'em—
Six, seven, eight, nine,—O Abraham, what
a harem !
All berry brown, but looking scared as may
be,
And each one but the oldest with a baby.

A GIRL.

Phoebe !

ANOTHER.

Yes, Grace !

FIRST GIRL.

Don't seem to notice, dear,
That Yankee from the camp again is here,
Making such eyes, and following on the sly,
And coughing now and then to show he's
nigh.

SECOND GIRL.

Who's that along with him—the little scamp
Shaking his hair and nodding with a
smile?

FIRST GIRL.

Guess he's some new one just come down
to camp.

SECOND GIRL.

Isn't he handsome?

FIRST GIRL.

No; the first's my style!

STRANGER.

If my good friends, the Saints, could get
their will,

These Yankee officers would fare but ill;
Wherever they approach the folk retire,
As if from veritable coals of fire;

With distant bow, set lips, and half-hid
frown,

The Bishops pass them in the blessed town;
The women come behind like trembling
sheep,

Some freeze to ice, some blush and steal a
peep.

And often, as a band of maidens gay
Comes up, each maid ceases to talk and
play,

Droops down her eyes, and does not look
their way;

But after passing where the youngsters pine,
All giggle as at one concerted sign,
And tripping on with half-hush'd merry
cries,

Look boldly back with laughter in their
eyes!

VOICES.

Here we are, . . . how folk are pushing! . . .
Mind the baby in the crushing. . .
Pheemy! . . . Yes, John! . . . Don't go
staring

At that Yankee—it's past bearing.
Draw your veil down while he passes,
Reckon you're as bold as brass is.

ABE CLEWSON.

*(Passing with his hand to his head, attended
by his Wives.)*

Head in a whirl, and heart in a flutter,
Guess I don't know the half that I utter.

Too much of this life is beginning to try me,
I'm like a dern'd miller the grind always
nigh me;

Praying don't soothe me nor comfort me any,
My house is too full and my blessings too
many—

The ways o' the wilderness puzzle me
greatly.

SISTER TABITHA.

Do walk like a Christian, and keep kind o'
stately!

And jest keep an eye on those persons
behind you,

You call 'em your Wives, but they tease
you and blind you;

Sister Anne's a disgrace, tho' you think her
a martyr,

And she's tuck'd up her petticoat nigh to
her garter.

STRANGER.

What group is this, begrim'd with dust and
heat,

Staring like strangers in the open street?

The women, ragged, wretched, and half
dead,

Sit on the kerbstone hot and hang the head,
And clustering at their side stand children
brown,

Weary, with wondering eyes on the fair
town.

Close by in knots beside the unhorsed team
The sunburn'd men stand talking in a
dream,

For the vast tracts of country left behind
Seem now a haunting mirage in the mind.

Gaunt miners folding hands upon their
breasts,

Big-jointed labourers looking ox-like
down,

And sickly artizans with narrow chests

Still pallid from the smoke of English
town.

Hard by to these a group of Teutons stand,
Light hair'd, blue-eyed, still full of Father-
land,

With water-loving Northmen, who grow gay
To see the mimic sea gleam far away.

Now to this group, with a sharp question-
ing face,

Cometh a holy magnate of the place

In decent black; shakes hands with some;
and then

Begins an eager converse with the men :
All brighten ; even the children hush their
cries,
And the pale women smile with sparkling
eyes.

BISHOP.

The Prophet welcomes you, and sends
His message by my mouth, my friends ;
He'll see you snug, for on this shore
There's heaps of room for millions more ! . . .
Scotchman, I take it ? . . . Ah, I know
Glasgow—was there a year or so . . .
And if *you* don't from Yorkshire hail,
I'll—ah, I thought so ; seldom fail.
Make yourselves snug and rest a spell,
There's liquor coming—meat as well.
All welcome ! We keep open door—
Ah, *we* don't push away the poor ;
Tho' he's a fool, you understand,
Who keeps poor long in this here land.
The land of honey you behold—
Honey and milk—silver and gold !

AN ARTIZAN.

Ah, that's the style—Bess, just you hear it ;
Come, come, old gal, keep up your spirit :
Silver and gold, and milk and honey,
This is the country for our money !

A GERMAN.

Es lebe die Stadt ! es lebe dran !
Das heilige Leben steht mir an !

A NORTHMAN.

Taler du norske ?

BISHOP.

(*Shaking his head, and turning with a
wink to the English.*)

No, not me !

Saxon's the language of the free !
The language of the great Evangels !
The language of the Saints and Angels !
The only speech that Joseph knew !
The speech of him and Brigham too !
Only the speech by which we've thriven
Is comprehended up in Heaven ! . . .
Poor heathens ! but we'll make 'em sry,
They'll talk like Christians by-and-by.

STRANGER. (*Strolling out of the streets.*)

From east, from west, from every worn-out
land,
Yearly they stream to swell this busy band.

Out of the fever'd famine of the slums,
From sickness, shame, and sorrow, Lazarus
comes,
Drags his sore limbs o'er half the world and
sea,

Seeking for freedom and felicity.
The sewer of ignorance and shame and
loss,

Draining old Europe of its dirt and dross,
Grows the great City by the will of God ;
While wondrously out of the desert sod,
Nourished with lives unclean and weary
hearts,

The new faith like a splendid weed upstarts.
A splendid weed ! rather a fair wild-flower,
Strange to the eye in its first birth of
power,

But bearing surely in its breast the seeds
Of higher issues and diviner deeds.
Changed from Sahara to a fruitful vale
Fairer than ever grew in fairy tale,
Transmuted into plenteous field and glade
By the slow magic of the white man's
spade,

Grows Deseret, filling its mighty nest
Between the eastern mountains and the west,
While—who goes there ? What shape
antique looks down

From this green mound upon the festive
town,

With tall majestic figure darkly set
Against the sky in dusky silhouette ?
Strange his attire : a blanket edged with red
Wrapt royally around him ; on his head
A battered hat of the strange modern sort
Which men have christened 'chimney pots'
in sport ;

Moccasins on his feet, fur-fringed and grand,
And a large green umbrella in his hand.
Pensive he stands with deep-lined dreamy
face,

Last living remnant of the mighty race
Who on these hunting-fields for many a year
Chased the wild buffalo, and elk, and deer
Heaven help him ! In his mien grief and
despair

Seem to contend, as he stands musing there ;
Until he notices that I am nigh,
And lo ! with outstretched hands and
glistening eye

Swift he descends—Does he mean mischief ?
No ;

He smiles and beckons as I turn to go.

INDIAN.

Me Medicine Crow. White man gib drink
to me.

Great chief ; much squaw ; papoose, sah,
one, two, three !

STRANGER.

With what a leer, half wheedling and half
winking,

The lost one imitates the act of drinking ;
His nose already, to his woe and shame,
Carbuncled with the white man's liquid flame !
Well, I pull out my flask, and fill a cup
Of burning rum—how quick he gulps it up ;
And in a moment in his trembling grip
Thrusts out the cup for more with thirsty lip.
But no !—already drunken past a doubt,
Degenerate nomad of the plains, get out !

[*A railway whistle sounds in the far
distance.*]

Fire-hearted Demon tamed to human hand,
Rushing with smoky breath from land to
land,

Screaming aloud to scare with rage and wrath
Primæval ignorance before his path,
Dragging behind him as he runs along
His lilliputian masters, pale and strong,
With melancholy sound for plain and hill
Man's last Familiar Spirit whistles shrill.

Poor devil of the plains, now spent and frail,
Hovering wildly on the fatal trail,
Pass on!—there lies thy way and thine abode,
Get out of Jonathan thy master's road.

Where? anywhere!—he's not particular
where,

So that you clear the road, he does not care ;
Off, quick ! clear out ! ay, drink your fill
and die ;

And, since the Earth rejects you, try the Sky!
And see if He, who sent your white-faced
brother

To hound and drive you from this world
you bother,

Can find a corner for you in another !

IV.

WITHIN THE SYNAGOGUE.
SERMONIZETH THE PROPHET.

THE PROPHET.

Sisters and brothers who love the right,
Saints whose hearts are divinely beating,

Children rejoicing in the light,

I reckon this is a pleasant meeting.

Where's the face with a look of grief?—

Jehovah's with us and leads the battle ;

We've had a harvest beyond belief,

And the signs of fever have left the cattle ;

All still blesses the holy life

Here in the land of milk and honey.

FEMININE WHISPERS.

Brother Shuttleworth's seventeenth wife, . .

Her with the heer brushed up so funny !

THE PROPHET.

Out of Egypt hither we flew,

Through the desert and rocky places ;

The people murmur'd, and all look'd blue,

The bones of the martyr'd filled our traces.

Mountain and valley we crawl'd along,

And every morning our hearts beat
quicker.

Our flesh was weak, but our souls were
strong,

And we'd managed to carry some kegs of
liquor.

At last we halted on yonder height,

Just as the sun in the west was blinking.

FEMININE WHISPERS.

Isn't Judge Hawkins's last a fright? . . .

I'm suttin that Brother Abe's been drink-
ing !

THE PROPHET.

That night, my lambs, in a wondrous dream,

I saw the gushing of many fountains ;

Soon as the morning began to beam,

Down we went from yonder mountains,

Found the water just where I thought,

Fresh and good, though a trifle gritty,

Pitch'd our tents in the plain, and wrought

'The site and plan of the Holy City.

'Pioneers of the blest,' I cried,

'Dig, and the Lord will bless each
sapdeful.

FEMININE WHISPERS.

Brigham's sealed to another Bride . . .

How worn he's gittin' ! he's aging dread-
ful.

THE PROPHET.

This is a tale so often told,

The theme of every eventful meeting ;

Yes ! you may smile and think it old ;

But yet it's a tale that will bear repeating.

That's how the City of Light began,
That's how we founded the saintly nation,
All by the spade and the arm of man,
And the aid of a special dispensation.
'Work' was the word when we begun,
'Work' is the word now we have plenty.

FEMININE WHISPERS.

Heard about Sister Euphemia's son? . . .
Sealing already, though only twenty!

THE PROPHET.

I say just now what I used to say,
Though it moves the heathens to mock
and laughter,
From work to prayer is the proper way—
Labour first, and Religion after.
Let a big man, strong in body and limb,
Come here inquiring about his Maker,
This is the question I put to him,
'Can you grow a cabbage, or reap an
acre?'
What's the soul but a flower sublime,
Grown in the earth and upspringing
surely?

FEMININE WHISPERS.

O yes! she's hed a most dreadful time!
Twins, both thriving, though she's so
poorly.

THE PROPHET.

Beauty, my friends, is the crown of life,
To the young and foolish seldom granted;
After a youth of honest strife
Comes the reward for which you've
panted.
O blessed sight beyond compare,
When life with its halo of light is
rounded,
To see a Saint with reverend hair
Sitting like Solomon love-surrounded!
One at his feet and one on his knee,
Others around him, blue-eyed and dreamy!

FEMININE WHISPERS.

All very well, but as for *me*,
My man had better!—I'd *pison* him,
Pheemy!

THE PROPHET.

There in the gate of Paradise
The Saint is sitting serene and hoary,
Tendrils of arms, and blossoms of eyes,
Festoon him round in his place of glory;

Little cherubs float thick as bees
Round about him, and murmur 'father!'
The sun shines bright and he sits at ease,
Fruit all round for his hand to gather.
Blessed is he and for ever gay,
Floating to Heaven and adding to it!

FEMININE WHISPERS.

Thought I should have gone mad that day
He brought a second; I made him rue it!

THE PROPHET.

Sisters and Brothers by love made wise,
Remember, when Satan attempts to quell
you,
If this here Earth isn't Paradise
You'll never see it, and so I tell you.
Dig and drain, and harrow and sow,
God will bless you beyond all measure;
Labour, and meet with reward below,
For what is the end of all labour?
Pleasure!
Labour's the vine, and pleasure's the grape,
The one delighting, the other bearing.

FEMININE WHISPERS.

Higginson's third is losing her shape.
Sbe hes too many—it's dreadful wearing.

THE PROPHET.

But I hear some awakening spirit cry,
'Labour is labour, and all men know it;
But what is p'asure?' and I reply,
Grace abounding and Wives to show it!
Holy is he beyond compare
Who tills his acres and takes his blessing,
Who sees around him everywhere
Sisters soothing and habes caressing.
And *his* delight is Heaven's as well,
For swells be not the ranks of the chosen?

FEMININE WHISPERS.

Martha is growing a handsome gel. . . .
Three at a birth?—that makes the dozen.

THE PROPHET.

Learning's a shadow, and books a jest,
One Book's a Light, but the rest are
human.
The kind of study that I think best
Is the use of a spade and the love of a
woman.
Here and yonder, in heaven and earth,
By big Salt Lake and by Eden river,

The finest sight is a man of worth,
 Never tired of increasing his quiver.
 He sits in the light of perfect grace
 With a dozen cradles going together !

FEMININE WHISPERS.

The babby's growing black in the face !
 Carry him out—it's the heat of the
 weather !

THE PROPHET.

A faithful vine at the door of the Lord,
 A shining flower in the garden of spirits,
 A lute whose strings are of sweet accord,
 Such is the person of saintly merits.
 Sisters and brothers, behold and strive
 Up to the level of his perfection ;
 Sow, and harrow, and dig, and thrive,
 Increase according to God's direction.
 This is the Happy Land, no doubt,
 Where each may flourish in his voca-
 tion. . . .
 Brother Bantam will now give out
 The hymn of love and of jubilation.

v.

THE FALLING OF THE THUNDERBOLT.

Deep and wise beyond expression
 Sat the Prophet holding session,
 And his Elders, round him sitting
 With a gravity befitting,
 Never rash and never fiery,
 Chew'd the cud of each inquiry,
 Weigh'd each question and discussed it,
 Sought to settle and adjust it,
 Till, with sudden indication
 Of a gush of inspiration,
 The grave Prophet from their middle
 Gave the answer to their riddle,
 And the lesser lights all holy,
 Round the Lamp revolving slowly,
 Thought, with eyes and lips asunder,
 ' *Right*, we reckon he's a wonder !'

Whether Boyes, that blessed brother,
 Should be sealed unto another,
 Having, tho' a Saint most steady,
 Very many wives already ?
 Whether it was held improper,
 If a woman drank, to drop her ?
 Whether unto Brother Fleming

Formal praise would be beseeming,
 Since from three or four potatoes
 (Not much bigger than his great toes)
 He'd extracted, to their wonder,
 Four stone six and nothing under ?
 Whether Bigg be reprimanded
 For his conduct underhanded,
 Since he'd packed his prettiest daughter
 To a heathen o'er the water ?
 How, now Thompson had departed,
 His poor widows, broken-hearted,
 Should be settled ? They were seven,
 Sweet as cherubs up in heaven ;
 Three were handsome, young, and pleasant,
 And had offers on at present—
 Must they take them ? . . . These and other
 Questions proffer'd by each brother,
 The great Prophet ever gracious,
 Free and easy, and sagacious,
 Answer'd after meditation
 With sublime deliberation ;
 And his answers were so clever
 Each one whisper'd, ' Well, I never !'
 And the lesser lights all holy,
 Round the Prophet turning slowly,
 Raised their reverend heads and hoary,
 Thinking, ' To the Prophet, glory !
 Hallelujah, veneration !
 Reckon that he licks creation !'

Suddenly as they sat gleaming,
 On them came an unbeseeming
 Murmur, tumult, and commotion,
 Like the breaking of the ocean ;
 And before a word was utter'd,
 In rush'd one with voice that fluttered,
 Arms uplifted, face the colour
 Of a bran-new Yankee dollar,
 Like a man whose wits are addled,
 Crying—' *Brother Abe's shedaddled !*'

Then those Elders fearful-hearted
 Raised a loud cry and upstarted,
 But the Prophet, never rising,
 Said, ' Be calm ! this row's surprising !'
 And as each Saint sank unsew'd
 In his arm-chair he continued :
 ' Goodman Jones, your cheeks are yellow,
 Tell thy tale, and do not bellow !
 What's the reason of your crying—
 Is our brother *dead*?—or *dying* ?'

As the Prophet spake, supremely
 Hushing all the strife unseemly,

Sudden in the room there entered
 Shapes on whom all eyes were centred—
 Six sad female figures moaning,
 Trembling, weeping, and intoning,
 'We are widows broken-hearted—
 Abraham Clewson has departed !'

While the Saints again upleaping
 Joined their voices to the weeping,
 For a moment the great Prophet
 Trembled, and look'd dark as Tophet.
 But the cloud pass'd over lightly.
 'Cease !' he cried, but sniffed slightly,
 'Cease this murmur and be quiet—
 Dead men won't awake with riot.
 'Tis indeed a loss stupendous—
 When will Heaven his equal send us ?
 Speak, then, of our brother cherish'd,
 Was it *fits* by which he perish'd ?
 Or did Death come even quicker,
 Thro' a bolting horse or kicker ?'

At the Prophet's question scowling,
 All the Wives stood moaning, howling,
 Crying wildly in a fever,
 'O the villain ! the deceiver !'
 But the oldest stepping boldly,
 Curtseying to the Session coldly,
 Cried in voice like cracking thunder,
 'Prophet, don't you make a blunder !
 Abraham Clewson isn't dying—
 Hasn't died, as you're implying ;
 No ! he's not the man, my brothers,
 To die decently like others !
 Worse ! he's from your cause revolted—
 Run away ! skedaddled ! bolted !'

Bolted ! run away ! skedaddled !
 Like to men whose wits are added,
 Echoed all those Lights so holy,
 Round the Prophet shining slowly
 And the Prophet, undissembling,
 Underneath the blow sat trembling,
 While the perspiration hovered
 On his forehead, and he covered
 With one trembling hand his features
 From the gaze of smaller creatures.
 Then at last the high and gifted
 Cough'd and craved, with hands uplifted,
 Silence. When 'twas given duly,
 'This,' said he, ' 's a crusher truly !
 Brother Clewson fall'n from glory !
 I can scarce believe your story.

O my Saints, each in his station,
 Join in prayer and meditation !'

Covering up each eyelid saintly
 With a finger-tip, prayed faintly,
 Shining in the church's centre,
 Their great Prophet, Lamp, and Mentor ;
 And the lesser Lights all holy,
 Round the Lamp revolving slowly,
 Each upon his seat there sitting,
 With a gravity befitting,
 Bowed their reverend heads and hoary,
 Saying, 'To the Prophet glory !
 Hallelujah, veneration !
 Reckon that he licks creation !'

Lastly, when the trance was ended,
 And, with face where sorrow blended
 Into pity and compassion,
 Shone the Light in common fashion ;
 Forth the Brother stept who brought them
 First the news which had distraught them,
 And, while stood the Widows weeping,
 Gave into the Prophet's keeping
 A seal'd paper, which the latter
 Read, as if 'twere solemn matter—
 Gravely pursing lips and nodding,
 While they watch'd in dark foreboding,
 Till at last, with voice that quivered,
 He these woeful words delivered :—

'Sisters, calm your hearts unruly,
 'Tis an awful business truly ;
 Weeping now will save him never,
 He's as good as lost for ever ;
 Yes, I say with grief unspoken,
 Jest a pane crack'd, smash'd, and broken
 In the windows of the Temple—
 Crack'd 's the word—so take example !
 Had he left ye one and all here,
 On our holy help to call here,
 Fled alone from *every* fetter,
 I could comprehend it better !
 Flying, not with some strange lady,
 But with her he had already,
 With his own seal'd Wife eloping—
 It's a case of craze past hoping !
 List, O Saints, each in his station,
 To the idiot's explanation !'

Then, while now and then the holy
 Broke the tale of melancholy
 With a grunt contempt expressing,
 And the Widows made distressing

Murmurs of recrimination
Here and there in the narration,
The great Prophet in affliction
Read this awful Valediction.

VI.

LAST EPISTLE OF ST. ABE TO THE
POLYGAMISTS.

O Brother, Prophet of the Light!—don't
let my state distress you,
While from the depths of darkest night I
cry, 'Farewell! God bless you!'
I don't deserve a parting tear, nor even a
malediction,
Too weak to fill a saintly sphere, I yield to
my affliction;
Down like a cataract I shoot into the depths
below you;
While you stand wondering and mute, my
last adieu I throw you;
Commending to your blessed care my well-
beloved spouses,
My debts (there's plenty and to spare to
pay them), lands, and houses,
My sheep, my cattle, farm and fold, yea,
all by which I've thriven:
These to be at the auction sold, and to my
widows given.
Bless them! to prize them at their worth
was far beyond my merit,
Just make them think me in the earth, a
poor departed spirit.
I couldn't bear to say good-bye, and see
their tears up-starting;
I thought it best to pack and fly without
the pain of parting!
O tell Amelia, if she can, by careful educa-
tion,
To make her boy grow up a man of strength
and saintly station!
Tell Fanny to beware of men, and say I'm
still her debtor—
Tho' she cut sharpish now and then, I
think it made me better!
Let Emily still her spirit fill with holy con-
solutions—
Seraphic soul, I hear her still a-reading
'Revelations!'
Bid Mary now to dry her tears—she's free
of her chief bother;
And comfort Sarah—I've my fears she's
going to be a mother;

And to Tabitha give for me a tender kiss of
healing—
Guilt wrings my soul—I seem to see that
well-known face appealing!

And now,—before my figure fades for ever
from your vision,
Before I mingle with the shades beyond
your light Elysian,
Now, while your faces all turn pale, and
you raise eyes and shiver,
Let me a round unvarnish'd tale (as Shak-
spere says) deliver;
And let there be a warning text in my most
shameful story,
When some poor sheep, perplex and vext,
goes seeking too much glory.
O Brigham, think of my poor fate, a scandal
to beholders,
And don't again put too much weight before
you've tried the shoulders!

Though I'd the intellectual gift, and knew
the rights and reasons;
Though I could trade, and save, and shift,
according to the seasons;
Though I was thought a clever man, and
was at spouting splendid,—
Just think how finely I began, and see how
all has ended!
In *principle* unto this hour I'm still a holy
being—
But oh, how poorly is my power propor-
tion'd to my seeing!
You've all the logic on your side, you're
right in each conclusion,
And yet how vainly have I tried, with eager
resolution!
My will was good, I felt the call, although
my strength was meagre,
There wasn't one among you all to serve
the Lord more eager!
I never tired in younger days of drawing
lambs unto me,
My lot was one to bless and praise, the fire
of faith thrill'd through me.
And *you*, believing I was strong, smiled on
me like a father,—
Said, 'Bless'd be this man, though young,
who the sweet lambs doth gather!'
At first it was a time full blest, and all my
earthly pleasure
Was gathering lambs unto my breast to
cherish and to treasure;

Ay, one by one, for heaven's sake, my
 female flock I found me,
 Until one day I did awake and heard them
 bleating round me,
 And there was sorrow in their eyes, and
 mute reproach and wonder,
 For they perceived to their surprise their
 Shepherd was a blunder.
 O Brigham, think of it and weep, my firm
 and saintly Master—
*The Pastor trembled at his Sheep, the Sheep
 despised the Pastor !*
 O listen to the tale of dread, thou Light
 that shines so brightly—
 Virtue's a horse that drops down dead if
 overloaded slightly !
 She's all the *will*, she wants to go, she'd
 carry every tittle ;
 But when you see her flag and blow, just
 ease her of a little !
One wife for me was near enough, *two*
 might have fixed me neatly,
Three made me shake, *four* made me puff,
five settled me completely,—
 But when the *sixth* came, though I still was
 glad and never grumbled,
 I took the staggers, kick'd, went ill, and
 in the traces tumbled !
 Ah, well may I compare my state unto a
 beast's position—
 Unfit to bear a saintly weight, I sank and
 lost condition ;
 I lack'd the moral nerve and thew, to fill so
 fine a station—
 Ah, if I'd had a head like you, and your
 determination !
 Instead of going in and out, like a superior
 party,
 I was too soft of heart, no doubt, too open,
 and too hearty.
 When I *began* with each young sheep I was
 too free and loving,
 Not being strong and wise and deep, I set
 her *feelings* moving ;
 And so, instead of noticing the gentle flock
 in common,
 I waken'd up that mighty thing—the Spirit
 of a Woman.
 Each got to think me, don't you see,—so
 foolish was the feeling,—
 Her own especial property, which all the
 rest were stealing !

And, since I could not give to each the
 whole of my attention,
 All came to grief, and parts of speech too
 delicate to mention !
 Bless them ! they loved me far too much,
 they erred in their devotion,
 I lack'd the proper saintly touch, subduing
 mere emotion :—
 The solemn air sent from the skies, so cold,
 so tranquillising,
 That on the female waters lies, and keeps
 the same from rising,
 But holds them down all smooth and bright,
 and, if some wild wind storms 'em,
 Comes like a cold frost in the night, and
 into *ice* transforms 'em !
 And there, between ourselves, I see the
 difficulty growing,
 Since most men are as meek as me, too
 passionate and glowing ;
 They cannot in *your* royal way dwell like a
 guest from Heaven
 Within this tenement of clay, which for the
 Soul is given ;
 They cannot like a blessed guest come calm
 and strong into it,
 Eating and drinking of its best, and calmly
 gazing thro' it.
 No, every mortal's not a Saint, and truly
 very few are,
 So weak they are, they cannot paint what
 holy men like you are.
 Instead of keeping well apart the Flesh and
 Spirit, brother,
 And making one with cunning art the
 nigger of the other,
 They muddle and confuse the two, they
 mix, and twist and mingle,
 So that it takes a cunning view to make out
 either single.
 The Soul gets mingled with the Flesh
 beyond all separation,
 The Body holds it in a mesh of animal
 sensation ;
 The poor bewilder'd Being, grown a thing
 in nature double,
 Half light and soul, half flesh and bone, is
 given up to trouble.
 He thinks the instinct of the clay the glow-
 ings of the Spirit,
 And when the Spirit has her say, inclines
 the Flesh to hear it.

The slave of every passing whim, the dupe
of every devil,
Inspired by every female limb to love, and
light, and revel,
Impulsive, timid, weak, or strong, as Flesh
or Spirit makes him,
The lost one wildly moans along till mis-
chief overtakes him ;
And when the Soul has fed upon the Flesh
till life's spring passes,
Finds strength and health and comfort
gone—the way of last year's grasses,
And the poor Soul is doom'd to bow, in
deep humiliation,
Within a place that isn't now a decent
habitation.

No! keep the Soul and Flesh apart in pious
resolution,
Don't let weak flutterings of the heart lead
you to *my* confusion !
But let the Flesh be as the *horse*, the Spirit
as the *rider*,
And use the snaffle first of course, and ease
her up and guide her ;
And if she's going to resist, and won't let
none go past her,
Just take the *curb* and give a twist, and
show her you're the Master.
The Flesh is but a temporal thing, and
Satan's strength is in it,
Use it, but conquer it, and bring its vice
down every minute !
Into a woman's arms don't fall, as if you
meant to *stay* there,
*Just come as if you'd made a call, and
idly found your way there ;*
Don't praise her too much to her face, but
keep her calm and quiet,—
Most female illnesses take place thro' far
too warm a diet ;
Unto her give your fleshly kiss, calm, kind,
and patronising,
Then—soar to your own sphere of bliss,
before her heart gets rising !
Don't fail to let her see full clear, how in
your saintly station
The Flesh is but your nigger here obeying
your dictation ;
And tho' the Flesh be e'er so warm, your
Soul the weakness smothers
Of loving any female form much better than
the others !

O Brigham, I can see you smile to bear
the Devil preaching ;—
Well, I can praise your perfect style, tho'
far beyond my reaching.
Forgive me, if in shame and grief I vex you
with digression,
And let me come again in brief to my own
dark confession.

The world of men divided is into *two
portions*, brother,
The first are Saints, so high in bliss that
they the Flesh can smother ;
God meant them from fair flower to flower
to flutter, smiles bestowing,
Tasting the sweet, leaving the sour, just
hovering,—and going.
The second are a different set, just *halves*
of perfect spirits,
Going about in bitter fret, of uncompleted
merits,
Till they discover, here or there, their
other half (or woman),
Then these two join, and make a Pair, and
so increase the human.
The second Souls inferior are, a lower spirit-
order,
Born 'neath a less auspicious star, and taken
by soft sawder ;—
And if they do not happen here to find th. ir
fair Affinity,
They come to grief and doubt and fear, and
end in asininity ;
And if they try the blessed game of those
superior to them,
They're very quickly brought to shame,—
their passions so undo them.
In some diviner sphere, perhaps, they'll
look and grow more holy,—
Meantime they're vessels Sorrow taps and
grim Remorse sucks slowly.

Now, Brigham, *I* was made, you see, one
of those *lower* creatures,
Polygamy was not for me, altho' I joined
its preachers.
Instead of, with a wary eye, seeking the one
who waited,
And sticking to her, wet or dry, because
the thing was fated,
I snatch'd the first whose beauty stirred my
soul with tender feeling !
And then another ! then a third ! and so
continued Sealing !

And duly, after many a smart, discovered,
sighing faintly,

I *hadn't* found my missing part, and *wasn't*
strong and saintly !

O they were far too good for me, altho' their
zeal betrayed them ;—

Unfortunately, don't you see, heaven for
some other made them :

Each would a downright blessing be, and
Peace would pitch the tent for her,

If 'she' could only find the 'he' originally
meant for her !

Well, Brother, after many years of bad
domestic diet,

One morning I woke up in tears, still weary
and quiet,

And (speaking figuratively) lo ! beside my
bed stood smiling

The Woman, young and virgin snow, but
beckoning and beguiling.

I started up, my wild eyes rolled, I knew
her, and stood sighing,

My thoughts throng'd up like bees of gold
out of the smithy flying.

And as she stood in brightness there,
familiar, tho' a stranger,

I looked at her in dumb despair, and
trembled at the danger.

But, Brother Brigham, don't you think
the Devil could so undo me,

That straight I rushed the cup to drink too
late extended to me.

No, for I hesitated long, ev'n when I found
she loved me,

And didn't seem to think it wrong when
love and passion moved me.

O Brigham, you're a Saint above, and know
not the sensation

The ecstasy, the maddening love, the
rapturous exultation,

That fills a man of lower race with wonder
past all speaking,

When first he finds in one sweet face the
Soul he has been seeking !

When two immortal beings glow in the first
fond revealing,

And their inferior natures know the luxury
of feeling !

But ah, I had already got a quiver-full of
blessing,

Had blundered, tho' I knew it not, six
times beyond redressing,

And surely it was time to stop, tho' still my
lot was lonely :

My house was like a cobbler's shop, full,
tho' with 'misfits' only.

And so I *should* have stopt, I swear, the
wretcheDEST of creatures,

Rather than put one mark of care on her
beloved features :

But that it happen'd Sister Anne (ah, now
the secret's fitted !)

Was left in this great world of man unto
my care committed.

Her father, Jason Jones, was dead, a man
whose faults were many,

'O, be a father, Abe,' he said, 'to my poor
daughter Annie !'

And so I promised, so she came an Orphan
to this city,

And set my foolish heart in flame with
mingled love and pity ;

And as she prettier grew each day, and
throve 'neath my protection,

*I saw the Saints did cast her way some
tokens of affection.*

O, Brigham, pray forgive me now ;—envy
and love combining,

I hated every saintly brow, benignantly in-
clining !

Sneered at their motives, mocked the cause,
went wild and sorrow-laden,

And saw Polygamy's vast jaws a-yawning
for the maiden.

Why *not*, you say ? Ah, yes, why not,
from your high point of vision ;

But I'm of an inferior lot, beyond the light
Elysian.

I tore my hair, whined like a whelp, I loved
her to distraction,

I saw the danger, knew the help, yet
trembled at the action.

At last I came to you, my friend, and told
my tender feeling ;

You said, 'Your grief shall have an end—
this is a case for Sealing ;

And since you have deserved so well, and
made no heinous blunder,

Why, brother Abram, *take* the gel, but
mind you keep her under.'

Well ! then I went to Sister Anne, my in-
most heart unclotting,

Told her my feelings like a man, conceal-
ing next to nothing,

Explain'd the various characters of those I
 had already,
 The various tricks and freaks and stirs
 peculiar to each lady,
 And, finally, when all was clear, and hope
 seem'd to forsake me,
 'There! it's a wretched chance, my dear—
 you leave me, or you take me.'
 Well, Sister Annie look'd at me, *her* inmost
 heart revealing
 (Women are very weak, you see, inferior,
 full of feeling),
 Then, thro' her tears outshining bright,
 'I'll never, never leave you!
 'O Abe,' she said, 'my love, my light, why
 should I pain or grieve you?
 I do not love the way of life you have so
 sadly chosen,
 I'd rather be a single wife than one in half
 a dozen;
 But now you cannot change your plan,
 tho' health and spirit perish,
 And I shall never see a man but you to love
 and cherish.
 Take me, I'm yours, and O, my dear, don't
 think I miss your merit,
 I'll try to help a little here your true and
 loving spirit.'
 'Reflect, my love,' I said, 'once more,'
 with bursting heart, half crying,
 'Two of the girls cut very sore, and most
 of them are trying!'
 And then that gentle-hearted maid kissed
 me and bent above me,
 'O Abe,' she said, 'don't be afraid,—I'll
 try to make them *love* me!'
 Ah well! I scarcely stopt to ask myself, till
 all was over,
 How precious tough would be her task who
 made those dear souls love her!
 But I was seal'd to Sister Anne, and straight-
 way, to my wonder,
 A series of events began which show'd me
 all my blunder.
 Brother, don't blame the souls who erred
 thro' their excess of feeling—
 So angrily their hearts were stirred by my
 last act of sealing;
 But in a moment they forgot the quarrels
 they'd been wrapt in,
 And leagued together in one lot, with
 Tabby for the Captain.

Their little tiffs were laid aside, and all
 combined together,
 Preparing for the gentle Bride the blackest
 sort of weather.
 It wasn't *feeling* made them flout poor
 Annie in that fashion,
 It wasn't love turn'd inside out, it wasn't
 jealous passion,
 It wasn't that they cared for *me*, or any
 other party,
 Their hearts and sentiments were free,
 their appetites were hearty.
 But when the pretty smiling face came
 blossoming and blooming,
 Like sunshine in a shady place the far'ly
 Vault illuming,
 It naturally made them grim to see its sunny
 colour,
 While like a row of tapers dim by daylight,
 they grew duller.
 She tried her best to make them kind, she
 coaxed and served them dumbly,
 She watch'd them with a willing mind,
 deferred to them most humbly;
 Tried hard to pick herself a friend, but
 found her arts rejected,
 And fail'd entirely in her end, as one might
 have expected,
 But, Brother, tho' I'm loth to add one word
 to criminate them,
 I think their conduct was too bad,—it
 almost made me hate them.
 Ah me, the many nagging ways of women
 are amazing,
 Their cleverness solicits praise, their cruelty
 is crazing!
 And Sister Annie hadn't been a single day
 their neighbour,
 Before a baby could have seen her life would
 be a labour,
 But bless her little loving heart, it kept its
 sorrow hidden,
 And if the tears began to start, suppressed
 the same unbidden.
 She tried to smile, and smiled her best, till
 I thought sorrow silly,
 And kept in her own garden nest, and lit
 it like a lily.
 O I should waste your time for days with
 talk like this at present,
 If I described her thousand ways of making
 things look pleasant!

But, bless you, 'twere as well to try, when
thunder's at its dire work,
To clear the air, and light the sky, by
pennyworths of firework.
These gentle ways to hide her woe and make
my life a blessing,
Just made the after darkness grow more
gloomy and depressing.
Taunts, mocks, and jeers, coldness and
sneers, insult and trouble daily,
A thousand stabs that brought the tears, all
these she cover'd gaily ;
But when her fond eyes fell on *me*, the
light of love to borrow,
And Sister Anne began to see *I knew* her
secret sorrow,
All of a sudden like a mask the loving
cheat forsook her,
And reckon I had all my task, for *illness*
overtook her.
She took to bed, grew sad and thin, seem'd
like a spirit flying,
Smiled thro' her tears when I went in, but
when I left fell crying ;
And as she languish'd in her bed, as weak
and wan as water,
I thought of what her father said, 'Take
care of my dear daughter !'
Then I look'd round with secret eye upon
her many Sisters,
And close at hand I saw them lie, ready
for use—like blisters ;
They seemed with secret looks of glee, to
keep their wifely station ;
They set their lips and sneer'd at me, and
watch'd the situation.
O Brother, I can scarce express the agony
of those moments,
I fear your perfect saintliness, and dread
your cutting comments !
I prayed, I wept, I moan'd, I cried, I
anguish'd night and morrow,
I watch'd and waited, sleepless-eyed, beside
that bed of sorrow.

At last I knew, in those dark days of sorrow
and disaster,
Mine wasn't soil where you could raise a
Saint up, or a Pastor ;
In spite of careful watering, and tilling
night and morning,
The weeds of vanity would spring without
a word of warning.

I was and ever must subsist, labell'd on
every feature,
A wretched poor *Monogamist*, a most in-
ferior creature—
Just half a soul, and half a mind, a blunder
and abortion,
Not finish'd half till I could find the other
missing portion !
And gazing on that missing part which I at
last had found out,
I murmur'd with a burning heart, scarce
strong to get the sound out,
' If from the greedy clutch of Fate I save
this chief of treasures,
I will no longer hesitate, but take decided
measures !
A poor monogamist like me can *not* love
half a dozen,
Better by far, then, set them free, and take
the Wife I've chosen !
Their love for me, of course, is small, a
very shadowy tittle,
They will not miss my face at all, or miss
it very little.
I can't undo what I have done, by my for-
lorn embraces,
And call the brightness of the sun again
into their faces ;
But I *can* save one spirit true, confiding and
unthanking,
From slowly curdling to a shrew or into
swinedom sinking.'
These were my bitter words of woe, my
fears were so distressing,
Not that I would reflect—O no !—on any
living blessing.

Thus, Brother, I resolved, and when she
rose, still frail and sighing,
I kept my word like better men, and bolted,
—and I'm flying.
Into oblivion I haste, and leave the world
behind me,
Afar unto the starless waste, where not a
soul shall find me.
I send my love, and Sister Anne joins cor-
dially, agreeing
I never was the sort of man for your high
state of being ;
Such as I am, she takes me, though ; and
after years of trying,
From Eden hand in hand we go, like our
first parents flying ;

And like the bright sword that did chase
 the first of sires and mothers,
 Shines dear Tabitha's flaming face, sur-
 rounded by the others :
 Shining it threatens there on high, above
 the gates of Heaven,
 And faster at the sight we fly, in naked
 shame, forth-driven.
 Nothing of all my worldly store I take,
 'twould be improper,
 I go a pilgrim, strong and poor, without a
 single copper.
 Unto my Widows I outreach my property
 completely.
 There's modest competence for each, if it
 is managed neatly.
 That, Brother, is a labour left to your
 sagacious keeping ;—
 Comfort them, comfort the bereft ! I'm
 good as dead and sleeping !
 A fallen star, a shooting light, a portent
 and an omen,
 A moment passing on the sight, thereafter
 seen by no men !
 I go, with backward-looking face, and spirit
 rent asunder.
 O may you prosper in your place, for you're
 a shining wonder !
 So strong, so sweet, so mild, so good !—by
 Heaven's dispensation,
 Made Husband to a *multitude* and Father
 to a *nation* !
 May all the saintly life ensures increase
 and make you stronger !
 Humbly and penitently yours,
 A. CLEWSON (*Saint no longer*)

*THE FARM IN THE VALLEY—
 SUNSET.*

(1871.)

STILL the saintly City stands,
 Wondrous work of busy hands ;
 Still the lonely City thrives,
 Rich in worldly goods and wives,
 And with thrust-out jaw and set
 Teeth, the Yankee threatens yet—
 Half admiring and half riled,
 Oft by bigger schemes beguiled,
 Turning off his curious stare
 To communities elsewhere,

Always with unquiet eye
 Watching Utah on the sly.

Long the City of the Plain
 Left its image on my brain :
 White kiosks and gardens bright
 Rising in a golden light ;
 Busy figures everywhere
 Bustling bee-like in the glare ;
 And from dovescotes in green places,
 Peep'd out weary women's faces,
 Flushing faint to a thin cry
 From the nursery hard by.
 And the City in my thought
 Slept fantastically wrought,
 Till the whole began to seem
 Like a curious Eastern dream,
 Like the pictures strange we scan
 In the tales Arabian :
 Tales of magic art and sleight,
 Cities rising in a night,
 And of women richly clad,
 Dark-eyed, melancholy, sad,
 Ever with a glance uncertain,
 Trembling at the purple curtain,
 Lest behind the black slave stand
 With the bowstring in his hand ;—
 Happy tales, within whose heart
 Founts of weeping eyes upstart,
 Told, to save her pretty head,
 By Scheherazad in bed !

All had faded and grown faint,
 Save the figure of the Saint
 Who that memorable night
 Left the Children of the Light,
 Flying o'er the lonely plain
 From his lofty sphere of pain
 Oft his gentle face would fit
 O'er my mind and puzzle it,
 Ever waking up meanwhile
 Something of a merry smile,
 Whose quick light illumined me
 During many a reverie,
 When I puffed my weed alone.

Faint and strange the face had grown,
 Tho' for five long years or so
 I had watched it come and go,
 When, on busy thoughts intent,
 I into New England went,
 And one evening, riding slow
 By a River that I know,

(Gentle stream ! I hide thy name,
Far too modest thou for fame !)
I beheld the landscape swim
In the autumn hazes dim,
And from out the neighbouring dales
Heard the thumping of the flails.

All was hush'd ; afar away
(As a novelist would say)
Sank the mighty orb of day,
Staring with a hazy glow
On the purple plain below,
Where (like burning embers shed
From the sunset's glowing bed,
Dying out or burning bright,
Every leaf a blaze of light)
Ran the maple swamps ablaze ;
Everywhere amid the haze,
Floating strangely in the air,
Farms and homesteads gather'd fair :
And the River rippled slow,
Thro' the marshes green and low,
Spreading oft as smooth as glass
As it fringed the meadow grass,
Making 'mong the misty fields
Pools like golden gleaming shields.

Thus I walked my steed along,
Humming a low scrap of song,
Watching with an idle eye
White clouds in the dreamy sky
Sailing with me in slow pomp.
In the bright flush of the swamp,
While his dogs bark'd in the wood,
Gun in hand the sportsman stood ;
And beside me, wading deep,
Stood the angler half asleep,
Figure black against the gleam
Of the bright pools of the stream ;
Now and then a wherry brown
With the current drifted down
Sunset-ward, and as it went,
Made an oar-splash indolent ;
While with solitary sound,
Deepening the silence round,
In a voice of mystery
Faintly cried the chickadee.

Suddenly the River's arm
Rounded, and a lonely Farm
Stood before me blazing red
To the bright blaze overhead ;
In the homesteads at its side,

Cattle lowed and voices cried,
And from out the shadows dark
Came a mastiff's measured bark.
Fair and fat stood the abode
On the path by which I rode,
And a mighty orchard, strown
Still with apple-leaves wind-blown,
Raised its branches gnarl'd and bare
Black against the sunset air,
And with greensward deep and dim,
Wander'd to the River's brim.

Close beside the orchard walk
Linger'd one in quiet talk
With a man in workman's gear.
As my horse's feet drew near,
The labourer nodded rough 'good-day,
Turned his back and loung'd away.
Then the first, a plump and fat
Yeoman in a broad straw hat,
Stood alone in thought intent,
Watching while the other went,
And amid the sunlight red
Paused, with hand held to his head.

In a moment, like a word
Long forgotten until heard,
Like a buried sentiment
Born again to some stray scent,
Like a sound to which the brain
Gives familiar refrain,
Something in the gesture brought
Things forgotten to my thought ;
Memory, as I watched the sight,
Flashed from eager light to light.
Remember'd and remember'd not,
Half familiar, half forgot,
Stood the figure, till at last,
Bending eyes on his, I passed,
Gazed again, as loth to go,
Drew the rein, stopt short, and so
Rested, looking back ; when he,
The object of my scrutiny,
Smiled and nodded, saying, ' Yes !
Stare your fill, young man ! I guess
You'll know me if we meet again !'

In a moment all my brain
Was illumined at the tone,
All was vivid that had grown
Faint and dim, and straight I knew him,
Holding out my hand unto him,
Smiled, and called him by his name.

Wondering, hearing me exclaim,
 Abraham Clewson (for 'twas he)
 Came more close and gazed at me.
 As he gazed, a merry grin
 Brighten'd down from eyes to chin :
 In a moment he, too, knew me,
 Reaching out his hand unto me,
 Crying 'Track'd, by all that's blue !
 Who'd have thought of seeing you ?'

Then, in double quicker time
 Than it takes to make the rhyme,
 Abe, with face of welcome bright,
 Made me from my steed alight ;
 Call'd a boy, and bade him lead
 The beast away to bed and feed ;
 And, with hand upon my arm,
 Led me off into the Farm,
 Where, amid a dwelling-place
 Fresh and bright as her own face,
 With a gleam of shining ware
 For a background everywhere,
 Free as any summer breeze,
 With a bunch of huswife's keys
 At her girdle, sweet and mild
 Sister Annie blush'd and smiled,—
 While two tiny laughing girls,
 Peeping at me through their curls,
 Hid their sweet shamefacedness
 In the skirts of Annie's dress.

That same night the Saint and I
 Sat and talked of times gone by,
 Smoked our pipes and drank our grog
 By the slowly smouldering log,
 While the clock's hand slowly crept
 To midnight, and the household slept.
 'Happy?' Abe said with a smile,
 'Yes, in my *inferior* style,
 Meek and humble, not like them
 In the New Jerusalem.'
 Here his hand, as if astray,
 For a moment found its way
 To his forehead, as he said,
 'Reckon they believe I'm dead !
 Ah, that life of sanctity
 Never was the life for me.
 Couldn't stand it wet nor dry,
 Hated to see women cry ;
 Couldn't bear to be the cause
 Of tiffs and squalls and endless jaws ;
 Always felt amid the stir
 Jest a whited sepulchre ;

And I did the best I could
 When I ran away for good.
 Yet, for many a night, you know
 (Annie, too, would tell you so),
 Couldn't sleep a single wink,
 Couldn't eat, and couldn't drink,
 Being kind of conscience-cleft
 For those poor creatures I had left.
 Not till I got news from there,
 And I found their fate was fair,
 Could I set to work, or find
 Any comfort in my mind.
 Well (here Abe smiled quietly),
 Guess they didn't groan for me !
 Fanny and Amelia got
 Sealed to Brigham on the spot ;
 Emmy soon consoled herself
 In the arms of Brother Delf ;
 And poor Mary one fine day
 Packed her traps and tript away
 Down to Fresco with Fred Bates,
 A young player from the States ;
 While Sarah, 'twas the wisest plan,
 Pick'd herself a single man—
 A young joiner fresh come down
 Out of Texas to the town—
 And he took her with her baby,
 And they're doing well as maybe.'

Here the Saint with quiet smile,
 Sipping at his grog the while,
 Paused as if his tale was o'er,
 Held his tongue and said no more.
 'Good,' I said, 'but have you done?
 You have spoke of all save one—
 All your Widows, so bereft,
 Are most comfortably left,
 But of one alone you said
 Nothing. Is the lady *dead* ?'

Then the good man's features broke
 Into brightness as I spoke,
 And with loud guffaw cried he,
 'What, Tabitha? Dead! Not she,
 All alone and doing splendid—
 Jest you guess, now, how she's ended!
 Give it up? This very week
 I heard she's at Oneida Creek,
 All alone and doing hearty,
 Down with Brother Noyes's party
 Tried the Shakers first, they say,
 Tired of them and went away,
 Testing with a deal of bother
 This community and 't'other,

Till she to Oneida flitted,
And with trouble got admitted.
Bless you, she's a shining lamp,
Tho' I used her like a scamp,
And she's great in exposition
Of the Free Love folk's condition,
Vowing, tho' she found it late,
'Tis the only happy state. . . .

'As for me,' added the speaker,
'I'm lower in the scale, and weaker ;
Polygamy's beyond my merits,
Shakerism wears the spirits,
And as for Free Love, why you see
(Here the Saint wink'd wickedly)
With my whim it might have hung
Once, when I was spry and young ;

But poor Annie's love alone
Keeps my mind in proper tone,
And tho' my spirit mayn't be strong,
I'm lively—as the day is long.'

As he spoke, with half a yawn,
Half a smile, I saw the dawn
Creeping faint into the gloom
Of the quickly-chilling room.
On the hearth the wood-log lay,
With one last expiring ray ;
Draining off his glass of grog,
Clewson rose and kick'd the log ;
As it tumbled into ashes,
Watched the last expiring flashes,
Gave another yawn and said,
'Well ! I guess it's time for bed !'

White Rose and Red.

A LOVE STORY.

DEDICATION.

To WALT WHITMAN and ALEXANDER GARDINER, with all friends in Washington,
I dedicate this Poem.

INVOCATION.

'KNOW'ST THOU THE LAND?'

I.

KNOW'ST thou the Land, where the lian-
flower

Burgeons the trapper's forest bower,
Where o'er his head the acacia sweet
Shaketh her scented locks in the heat,
Where the hang-bird swings to a blossom-
cloud,

And the hobolink sings merry and loud ?
Know'st thou the Land ?

O there ! O there,
Might I with thee, O friend of my heart,
repair !

II.

Know'st thou the Land where the golden
Day

Flowers into glory and glows away,

While the Night springs up, as an Indian girl
Clad in purple and hung with pearl !
And the white Moon's heaven rolls apart,
Like a bell-shaped flower with a golden
heart,—

Know'st thou the Land ?

O there ! O there,
Might I with thee, O Maid of my Soul,
repair !

III.

Know'st thou the Land where the woods
are free,

And the prairie rolls as a mighty sea,
And over its waves the sunbeams shine,
While on its misty horizon-line
Dark and dim the buffaloes stand,
And the hunter is gliding gun in hand ?
Know'st thou it well ?

O there ! O there,
Might I, with those whose Souls are free,
repair !

IV.

Know'st thou the Land where the sun-birds
 song

Filleth the forest all day long,
 Where all is music and mirth and bloom,
 Where the cedar sprinkles a soft perfume,
 Where life is gay as a glancing stream,
 And all things answer the Poet's dream?
 Know'st thou the Land?

O there! O there,
 Might I, with him who loves my lays,
 repair!

V.

Know'st thou the Land where the swampy
 brakes

Are full of the nests of the rattlesnakes,
 Where round old Grizzly the wild bees
 hum,
 While squatting he sucks at their honey-
 comb,
 Where crocodiles crouch and the wild cat
 springs,
 And the mildest ills are mosquito stings?
 Know'st thou the Land?

O there! O there,
 Might I, with adverse Critics, straight
 repair!

VI.

Know'st thou the Land where wind and
 sun

Smile on all races of men—save one:
 Where (strange and wild as a sunset proud
 Streak'd with the bars of a thunder-cloud)
 Alone and silent the Red Man lies,
 Sees the cold stars coming, and sinks, and
 dies?

Know'st thou the Land?
 O there! O there,
 Might I to wet his poor parch'd lips repair!

VII.

Lock up thy gold, and take thy flight
 To the mighty Land of the red and white;
 A ditty I love I would have thee hear,
 While daylight dies, and the Night comes
 near

With her black feet wet from the western sea,
 And the Red Man dies, with his eyes on
 thee!

Fast to that Land, ere his last footprints there
 Are beaten down by alien feet, repair!

PART I.

THE CAPTURE OF EUREKA
 HART.

I.

NATURA NATURANS.

DAWN breaking. Thro' his dew-veil smiles
 the sun,

And under him doth run
 On the green grass and in the forest brake
 Bright beast and speckled snake;
 Birds on the bough and insects in the ray
 Gladden; and it is day.

What is this lying on the thymy steep,
 Where yellow bees hum deep,
 And the rich air is warm as living breath?
 What soft shape slumbereth
 Naked and dark, and glows in a green nest,
 Low-breathing in bright rest?
 Is it the spotted panther, lying there
 Lissome and light and fair?
 Is it the snake, with glittering skin coil'd
 round

And gleaming on the ground?
 Is it some wondrous bird whose eyrie lies
 Between the earth and skies?
 'Tis none of these, but something stranger
 far—

Strange as a fallen star!
 A mortal birth, a marvel heavenly-eyed,
 With dark pink breast and side!
 And as she lies the wild deer comes most
 meek

To smell her scented cheek,
 And creeps away; the yearling ounce lies
 near,

And watches with no fear;
 The serpent rustles past, with touch as light
 As rose-leaves, rippling bright
 Into the grass beyond; while yonder, on high,
 A black speck in the sky,
 The crested eagle hovers, with sharp sight
 Facing the flood of light.

What living shape is this who sleeping lies
 Watch'd by all wondering eyes
 Of beast and speckled snake and flying bird?
 Softly she sleeps, unstirr'd
 By wind or sun; and since she first fell there
 Her raven locks of hair

Have loosen'd, shaken round her in a shower,
 Whence, like a poppy flower
 With dark leaves and a tongue to brightness
 tipt,
 She lies vermilion-lipt.
 Bare to the waist, her head upon her arm,
 Coil'd on a couch most warm
 Of balsam and of hemlock, whose soft scent
 With her warm breath is blent.
 Around her brow a circlet of pure gold,
 With antique letters scroll'd,
 Burns in the sun-ray, and with gold also
 Her wrists and ankles glow.
 Around her neck the threaded wild cat's
 teeth
 Hang white as pearl ; beneath
 Her bosoms heave, and in the space between,
 Dusky tattoo'd, is seen
 A figure small as of a pine-bark brand
 Held blazing in a hand.
 Her skirt of azure, wrought with braid and
 thread
 In quaint signs yellow and red,
 Scarce reaches to her dark and dimpled knee,
 Leaving it bare and free.
 Below, mocassins red as blood are wound,
 With gold and purple bound ;—
 So that red-footed like the stork she lies,
 With softly shrouded eyes,
 Whose brightness seems with heavy lustrous
 dew
 To pierce the dark lids thro'.
 Her eyelids closed, her popped lips apart,
 And her quick eager heart
 Stirring her warm frame, as a bird unseen
 Stirs the warm lilac-sheen,
 She slumbers,—and of all beneath the skies
 Seemeth the last to rise.

She stirs—she wakens—now, O birds, sing
 loud
 Under the golden cloud !
 She stirs—she wakens—now, O wild beast,
 spring,
 Blooms grow, breeze blow, birds sing !
 She wakens in her nest and looks around,
 And listens to the sound ;
 Her eyelids blink against the heavens' bright
 beam,
 Still dim and dark with dream,
 Her breathing quickens, and her cheek
 gleams red,

And round her shining head
 Glossy her black hair glistens. Now she
 stands,
 And with her little hands
 Shades her soft orbs and upward at the sky
 She gazeth quietly ;
 Then at one bound springs with a sudden
 song
 The forest-track along.

Thro' the transparent roof of twining leaves,
 Where the deep sunlight weaves
 Threads like a spider's-web of silvern
 white,
 Faint falls the dreamy light
 Down the gray bolls and boughs that
 intervene,
 On to the carpet green
 Printk with all wondrous flowers, on emerald
 brakes
 Where the still speckled snakes
 Crawl shaded ; and above the shaded
 ground,
 Amid the deep-sea sound
 Of the high branches, bright birds scream
 and fly
 And chattering parrots cry ;
 And everywhere beneath them in the bowers
 Float things like living flowers,
 Hovering and settling ; and here and there
 The blue gleams deep and fair
 Thro' the high parted boughs, while serpent-
 bright
 Slips thro' the golden light,
 Startling the cool deep shades that brood
 around,
 And floating to the ground,
 With multitudinous living motes at play
 Like dust in the rich ray.

Hither for shelter from the burning sun
 Hath stolen the beauteous one,
 And thro' the ferns and flowers she runs,
 and plucks
 Berries blue-black, and sucks
 The fallen orange. Where the sunbeams
 blink
 She lieth down to drink
 Out of the deep pool, and her image sweet
 Floats dim below her feet,
 Up-peering thro' the lilies yellow and
 white
 And green leaves where the bright

Great Dragon-fly doth pause. With burning
breath

She looks and gladdeneth.
She holds her hands, the shape holds out
hands too ;

She stoops more near to view,
And it too stoopeth looking wild and sly ;
Whereat, with merry cry,
She staretth up, and fluttering onward flies
With gladness in her eyes.

But who is this who all alone lies deep
In heavy-lidded sleep ?

A dark smile hovering on his bearded lips,
His hunter's gun he grips,
And snores aloud where snakes and lizards
run,

His mighty limbs i' the sun
And his fair face within the shadow. See !
His breath comes heavily
Like one's tired out with toil ; and when in
fear

The Indian maid comes near,
And bendeth over him most wondering,
The bright birds scream and sing,
The motes are madder in the ray, the snake
Glides luminous in the brake,
The sunlight flashes fiery overhead,
The wood-cat with eyes red
Crawleth close by, with her lithe crimson
tongue

Licking her clumsy young,
And, deep within the open prairie nigh,
Hawks swoop and struck birds cry !

Dark maiden, what is he thou lookest on ?
O ask not, but begone !

Go ! for his eyes are blue, his skin is white,
And giant-like his height.

To him thou wouldst appear a tiny thing,
Some small bird on the wing,
Some small deer to be kill'd ere it could fly,
Or to be *tamed*, and die !—

O look not, look not, in the hunter's face,
Thou maid of the red race,
He is a tame thing, thou art weak and wild,
Thou lovely forest-child !

How should the deer by the great deer-
hound walk,

The wood-dove seek the hawk ?—
Away ! away ! lest he should wake from rest,
Fly, sun-bird, to thy nest !

Why doth she start, and backward softly
creep ?

He stirreth in his sleep—
Why doth she steal away with wondering
eyes ?

He stretches limbs, and sighs.
Peace ! she hath fled—and he is all alone,
While, with a yawn and groan,
The man sits up, rubs eyelids, grips his gun,
Stares heavenward at the sun,
And cries aloud, stretching himself anew :
' *Broad day*,—by all that's blue !'

II.

EUREKA.

ON the shores of the Atlantic,
Where the surge rolls fierce and frantic,
Where the mad winds cry and wrestle
With each frail and bird-like vessel,—
Down in Maine, where human creatures
Are amphibious in their natures,
And the babies, sons or daughters,
Float like fishes in the waters,—
Down in Maine, by the Atlantic,
Grew the Harts, of race gigantic,
And the tallest and the strongest
Was Eureka Hart, the youngest.

Like a bear-cub as a baby,
Rough, and reard' as roughly as may be,
He had rudely grown and thriven
Till, a giant, six foot seven,
Bold and ready for all comers,
He had reach'd full thirty summers.
All his brethren, thrifty farmers,
Had espoused their rural charmers,
Settling down once and for ever
By the Muskeosquash River :
Thrifty men, devout believers,
Of the tribe of human *beavers* ;
Life to them, with years increasing,
Was an instinct never-ceasing
To build dwellings multifarious
In the fashion called gregarious,
To be honest in their station,
And increase the population
Of the beavers ! They, moreover,
Tho' their days were cast in clover,
Had the instinct of *secreting* ;
Toiling hard while time was fleeting,
To lay by in secret places,
[Like the bee and squirrel races.]

Quiet stores of yellow money,
[Which is human nuts and honey.]

Tho' no flowers of dazzling beauty
In their ploughshare line of duty
Rose and bloom'd, still, rural daisies,
Such as every village raises,
From the thin soil of their spirits
Grew and throve. Their gentle merits,
Free of any gleam of passion,
Flower'd in an instructive fashion.
Quite convinced that life was fleeting
Every week they went to meeting,
Met and prayed to God in dozens,
Uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins,
Joining there in adoration,
All the beaver population !
From this family one creature,
Taller and more fair of feature,
Érr'd and wander'd, slightly lacking
In the building, breeding, packing,
Tribal-instinct ; and would never
Settle down by wood or river,
Build a house or take a woman
In the pleasant fashion common
To his race ; evincing rather
Traces of some fiercer father,
Panther-like, to hunting given
In the eye of the blue heaven !
When beneath the mother's bosom
His great life began to blossom,
Haply round her winds were crying,
O'er her head the white clouds flying,
At her feet the wild waves flowing,
All things moving, coming, going,
And the motion and vibration
Reach'd the thing in embryoation,
On its unborn soul conferring
Endless impulse to be stirring,—
To be ever wandering, racing,
Bird-like, wave-like, chased or chasing !
Born beside the stormy ocean,
'Twas the giant's earliest notion
To go roaming on the billow,
With a damp plank for a pillow.
In his youth he went as sailor
With the skipper of a whaler ;
But in later life he better
Loved to feel no sort of fetter,
All his own free pathway mapping
In the forest,—hunting, trapping.
By great rivers, thro' vast valleys,
As thro' some enchanted palace

Ever bright and ever changing,
Many years he went a-ranging,—
Free as any wave, and only
Lonely as a cloud is lonely,
Floating in a void, surveying
Endless tracts for endless straying.

Pause a minute and regard him !
Years of hardships have not marr'd him.
Limbs made perfect, iron-solder'd,
Narrow-hipp'd and mighty-shoulder'd,
Whisker'd, bearded, strong and stately,
With a smile that lurks sedately
In still eyes of a cold azure,
Never lighting to sheer pleasure,
Stands he there, 'mid the green trees
Like the Greek god, Herakles.

Stay, nor let the bright allusion
Lead your spirit to confusion.
Tho' a wanderer, and a creature
Almost as a god in feature,
This man's nature was as surely
Soulless and instinctive purely,
As the natures of those others,
His sedater beaver-brothers ;
Nothing brilliant, bright, or frantic,
Nothing maidens style romantic,
Flash'd his slow brain morn or night
Into spiritual light !

As waves run, and as clouds wander,
With small power to feel or ponder,
Roam'd this thing in human clothing,
Intellectually—nothing !
Further in his soul receding,
Certain signs of beaver-breeding
Kept his homely wits in see-saw ;
Part was Jacob, part was Esau ;
No revolter ; a believer
In the dull creed of the beaver ;
Strictly moral ; seeing beauty
In the ploughshare line of duty ;
Loving nature as beasts love it,
Eating, drinking, tasting of it,
With no wild poetic gleaming,
Seldom shaping, never dreaming ;
Beaver with a wandering craze,
Walked Eureka in God's ways.

Now ye know him, now ye see him ;
Nought from beaver-blood can free him ;
Yet stand by and shrewdly con him,
While a wild light strikes upon him,

While a gleam of glory finds him,
Flashes in his eyes and blinds him,
Shapes his mind to its full measure,
Raising him, in one mad pleasure,
'Spite the duller brain's control,
To the stature of a SOUL !

III.

THE CAPTURE.

The wild wood rings, the wild wood gleams,
The wild wood laughs with echoes gay ;
Thro' its green heart a bright beck streams,
Sparkling like gold in the sun's beams,
But creeping, like a silvern ray,
Where hanging boughs make dim the day.
Hush'd, hot, and Eden-like all seems,
And onward thro' the place of dreams
Eureka Hart doth stray.

Strong, broad-awake, and happy-eyed,
With the loose tangled light for guide,
He wanders, and at times doth pass
Thro' open glades of gleaming grass,
With spiderwort and larkspur spread,
And great anemones blood-red ;

On every side the forest closes,
The myriad trees are interlaced,
Starr'd with the white magnolia roses,
And by the purple vines embraced.

Beneath on every pathway shine
The fallen needles of the pine ;
Around are dusky scented bowers,
Bridged with the glorious lian-flowers.
Above, far up thro' the green trees,

The palm thrusts out its fan of green,
Which softly stirs in a soft breeze,
Far up against the heavenly sheen.

And all beneath the topmost palm
Is sultry shade and air of balm,
Where, shaded from the burning rays,
Scream choirs of parroquets and jays ;
Where in the dusk of dream is heard
The shrill cry of the echo-bird ;

And on the grass, as thick as bees,
Run mocking-birds and wood-doves small
Pecking the blood-red strawberries,

And fruits that from the branches fall ;
All rising up with gleam and cry,
When the bright snake glides hissing by,
Springs from the grass, and, swift as light,
Slips after the chameleons bright

From bough to bough, and here and there
Pauses and hangs in the green air,
Festoon'd in many a glistening fold,
Like some loose chain of gems and gold.

Smoke from a mortal pipe is blent
With cedar and acacia scent :
Phlegmatically relishing,

Eureka smokes ; from every tree
The wood-doves brood, the sun-birds sing,
The forest doth salute its King,
The monarch Man,—but what cares be ?
His eyes are dull, his soul in vain
Hears the strange tongues of his domain,
No echo comes to the soft strain
From the dull cavern of his brain.

But hark ! what quick and sparkling cry
Darts like a fountain to the sky ?
How, human voices ! strangely clear,
'They burst upon the wanderer's ear.
He stops, he listens—hark again,
Wild rippling laughter rises plain !

O'er his fair face a look of wonder
Is spreading—' Injins here—by thunder !'

He cocks his gun, and stands to hear,
Sets his white teeth together tight,

Then, silent-footed as the deer,
Creeps to the sound. The branches bright
Thicken around him ; with quick flight
The doves and blue-birds gleam away,
Shooting in showers from spray to spray.

A thicket of a thousand blooms,
Green, rose, white, blue, one rainbow glow,
Closes around him ; strange perfumes,
Crush'd underfoot in the rich glooms,

Load the rich air as he doth go ;
The harmless snakes around him glow
With emerald eyes ; lithe arms of vine
Trip him and round his neck entwine,
Bursting against his stained skin
Their grapes of purple glossy-thin.
But still the rippling laughter flows
Before him as he creeps and goes,
Till suddenly, with a strange look,
He crouches down in a green nook,
Crouches and gazes from the bowers,
Curtain'd and cover'd up in flowers.

O, what strange sight before him lies ?
Why doth he gaze with sparkling eyes
And beating heart ? Deep, bright, and cool,
Before him gleams a crystal pool,

Fed by the beck : and o'er its brim
 Festoons of roses mirror'd dim
 Hang drooping low on every side ;
 And glorious moths and dragon-flies
 Hover above, and gleaming-eyed
 The stingless snake hangs blossom-wise,
 In loose folds sleeping. Not on these
 Gazes Eureka thro' the trees :
 Snake never made such smiles to grace
 His still blue eyes and sun-tann'd face,
 And never flower, howe'er so fair,
 Would fix that face to such a stare.
 And yet like gleaming water-snakes
 They wind and wanton in the pool.
 Above their waists in flickering flakes
 The molten sunlight slips and shakes ;
 Beneath, their gleaming limbs bathe cool.
 One floats above with laughter sweet,
 And splashes silver with her feet ;
 One clinging to the drooping boughs
 Leans back, and lets her silken hair
 Rain backward from her rippling brows,
 While on her shoulders dark and bare
 Blossoms fall thick and linger there
 Nestling and clinging. To the throat
 Cover'd, one dark-eyed thing doth float,
 Her face a flower, her locks all wet,
 Tendrils and leaves around it set ;
 O sight most strangely beautiful,
 Three Indian Naiads in a pool !

Eureka, be it understood,
 Though beaver-born, is flesh and blood,
 And what he saw in day's broad gold
 Was stranger far a thousand fold,
 Than that wild scene bold Tam O'Shanter
 In Scotland saw one winter night,
 (Ah with the Scottish Bard to canter,
 On Pegasus to Fame instanter,
 Singing one song so trim and tight !)
 He look'd, and look'd, like Tam ; like
 him,
 On the most fair of face and limb
 Fixing most long his wondering eye ;
 For I like greater bards should lie,
 If I averr'd that all and one
 Who sported there beneath the sun,
 Were gloriously fair of face ;
 But they were women of red race,
 Clad in the most bewitching dress,
 Their own unconscious loveliness ;
 And tho' their beauty might not be
 Perfect and flawless, they were fine,

Bright-eyed, red-lipp'd, made strong and free
 In many a cunning curve and line
 A sculptor would have deem'd divine.
 Not so the rest, who all around
 With fierce eyes squatted on the ground,
 Nodding approval :—squaws and crones
 Clapping their hands with eager groans.
 These were the witches, I might say,
 Of this new tropic Alloway.

[As for the Devil—even *he*
 Was by the Serpent represented
 Swinging asleep from a green tree,—
 Reflected, gloriously painted,
 In the bright water where the three
 Laugh'd and disported merrily.]

But chiefly poor Eureka gazed,
 Trembling, dumb-stricken, and amazed,
 On the most beautiful of all,
 Who standing on the water-side,
 A perfect shape queenly and tall
 Stood in the sun erect, and dried
 Her gleaming body head to feet
 In one broad ray of golden heat.
 Naked she stood, but her strange sheen
 Of beauty clad her like a queen,
 And beaming rings of yellow gold
 Were round her wrists and ankles roll'd,
 And on her skin Eureka scann'd
 A symbol bright as of a brand
 Held burning in a human hand.

Smiling, she spake in a strange tongue,
 And eager laughter round her rung,
 While wading out all lustrous-eyed
 She sat upon the water-side,
 And pelted merrily the rest
 With blossoms bright and flowers of jest.

Ah, little did Eureka guess,
 While wondering at her loveliness,
 The same fair form had softly crept
 And look'd upon him while he slept,
 And thought him (*him!* the man of Maine!
 Civilizee with beaver-brain !)
 Beauteous, in passion's first wild beam,
 Beyond all Indian guess or dream !

Eureka Hart, though tempted more
 Than e'er was mortal man before,
 Did not like Tam O'Shanter break
 The charm with mad applause or call ;
 Too wise for such a boor's mistake,
 He held his tongue, observing all ;

But while the hunter forward leant,
Sharing the glorious merriment,
He moved a little unaware

The better to behold the sport,
And lo ! upon the heavy air

Off went his gun with sharp report,
And while the bullet past his ear

Whizz'd quick, he stagger'd with the
shock,

And with one scream distinct and clear
Rose the red women in a flock.

The naked bathers stood and scream'd,
The brown squaws cried, their white teeth
gleam'd ;

And ere he knew, with startled face
He stagger'd to the open space ;
The sharp vines tript him, and, confounded,
He stumbled, grasping still his gun,—

And, by the chattering choir surrounded,
Half dazed, lay lengthways in the sun.

As when a clumsy grizzly bear
Breaks on a dove-cot unaware,

As when some snake, unwieldy heap,
Drops from a pine-bough, half asleep,
Plump in the midst of grazing sheep ;—
Even so into the women-swarm
Suddenly fell the giant's form !

They leapt, they scream'd, they closed, they
scatter'd,

Some fled, some stood, all call'd and
chatter'd,

And to the man in his amaze
Innumerable seem'd as jays

And parroquets in the green ways.
Had they been men, despite their throng,
In sooth he had lain still less long ;
But somehow in the stars 'twas fated,
He for a space was *fascinated* !

And ere he knew what he should do,
All round about him swarm'd the crew,
Sharp-eyed, quick-finger'd, and, despite
His struggling, clung around him tight ;
Half choked, half smother'd by embraces,

In a wild mist of arms and faces,
He stagger'd up ; in vain, in vain !
Hags, squaws, and maidens in a chain
Clung round him, and with quicker speed
Than ye this running rhyme can read,
With tendrils tough as thong of hide,
Torn from the trees on every side,
In spite of all his strength, the band
Had bound the Giant foot and hand.

IV.

THRO' THE WOOD.

Through the gleaming forest closes,
Where on white magnolia-roses
Light the dim-draped queen reposes,
Lo, they lead the captive Giant.

Shrieking shrill as jays around him,
They have led him, they have bound him,
With a wreath of vine-leaves crown'd him,
Which he weareth, half defiant.

If their ears could hear him swearing !
Of his oaths he is not sparing,
While, with hands sharp-claw'd for tearing.
Hags and beldams burn to rend him.

If the younger, prettier creatures
Heard that tallest of beseechers,
While he pleads with frantic features !
But they do *not* comprehend him.

In their Indian tongue they're crying,
From the forest multiplying,
Mocking, murmuring, leaping, flying,
While he shouts out, 'D—the women !'

All his mighty strength is nothing :
Like a ship, despite his loathing,
Mid these women scant of clothing
He is tossing, struggling, screaming.

Crown'd like Bacchus on he passes,
O'er deep runlets, through great grasses,
While [like flies around molasses]
Fair and foul are round him humming !

Half a day they westward wander,
Stopping not to rest or ponder ;
Then the forest ends ; and yonder
Wild dogs bark to hear them coming.

Cluster'd in an open clearing
Stand the wigwams they are nearing,
Bark the dogs, a strange foot fearing,
Low the cattle,—straight before them.

Out into the sunlight leaping,
There they see the wigwams sleeping,
With a blue smoke upward creeping,
And the burning azure o'er them !

All is still, save for the screaming
 Children from the wigwams streaming,
 All is still and sweet to seeming,
 Not a man's face forward thrusting.

Thinks Eureka, 'This looks stranger—
 Ne'er a man—then double danger ;
 Many a year I've been a ranger,—
 Woman's mercy put no trust in !'

As he speaks in trepidation,
 All his heart in palpitation,
 He is fill'd with admiration
 At a vision wonder-laden.

From the largest wigwam, slowly,
 While the women-band bow lowly,
 Comes an old man white and holy,
 Guided gently by a maiden !

v.

THE RED TRIBE.

Ninety long years had slowly shed
 Their snows upon the patriarch's head,
 And on a staff of ash he leant,
 Shaking and bending as he went.
 His face, sepulchral, long, and thin,
 Was shrivell'd like a dried snake's skin,
 And on the cheeks and forehead dark
 Tattoo'd was many a livid mark,
 And in the midst his eyeballs white
 Roll'd blankly, seeing not the light ;
 And when he listen'd in his place

You saw at once that he was *blind*,
 For with a visionary grace
 Dim mem'ries moved from his own mind,
 And the wild waters of his face
 Waved in a wondrous wind.

From an artistic point of sight,
 The aged man was faultless quite ;
 Albeit the raiment he did wear
 Was somewhat hybrid ; for example,
 A pair of pantaloons threadbare
 Match'd strangely with his Indian air,
 And blanket richly wrought and ample ;
 And, though perchance not over clean,
 He had a certain gentle mien
 Kindly and kingly ; and a smile
 Complacent in the kingly style,
 Yet fraught with strangely subtle rays,
 The lingering light of other days :—
 Brightness and motion such as we
 Trace in the trouble of the Sea,

When the long stormy day is sped,
 And in the last light dusky-red
 The waves are sinking, one by one.

But she who led him !—In the sun
 She gleam'd beside him, like a rose
 That by a dark sad water grows
 And trembles. In a moment's space
 Eureka recognised the face !
 'Twas hers, who stood most beautiful,
 Queen of those bathers in the pool !
 But her bright locks were braided now
 Around her clear and glistening brow,
 And on her limbs she wore a dress
 Less rich than her own loveliness.
 From the artistic point of view,
 The maiden's dress was faultless too,
 But, look'd at closely, not so rare
 As white-skinn'd maid would wish to wear ;
 'Twas coarsest serge of sullen dye,

Albeit embroider'd curiously ;
 And the few ornaments she wore
 Were trifles valueless and poor ;—
 Their merit, let us straight confess,
 And all the merit of her dress,
 Was that they form'd for eyes to see
 Nimbus enough of drapery
 And ornament, just to suggest
 The costume that became her best—
 Her own brave beauty. She just wore
 Enough for modesty—no more.
 She was not, as white beauties seem,
 Smother'd, like strawberries in cream,
 With folds of silk and linen. No !
 The Indians wrap their babies so,
 And *we* our women ; who, alas !
 Waddle about upon the grass,
 Distorted, shapeless, smother'd, choking,
 Hideous, and horribly provoking,
 Because we long, without offence,
 To tear the mummy-wrappings thence,
 And show the human form enchanting
 That 'neath the fatal folds is panting !

She was a shapely creature, tall,
 And slightly form'd, but plump withal,—
 Shapely as deer are—finely fair
 As creatures nourish'd by warm air,
 And luscious fruits that interfuse
 Something of their own glorious hues,
 And the rich odour that perfumes them,
 Into the body that consumes them.
 She had drank richness thro' and thro'
 As the great flowers drink light and dew ;

And she had caught from wandering streams
 Their restless motion ; and strange gleams
 From snakes and flowers that glow'd around
 Had stolen into her blood, and found
 Warmth, peace, and silence ; and, in brief,
 Her looks were bright beyond belief
 Of those who meet in the green ways
 The rum-wreck'd squaws of later days.

[I would be accurate, nor essay
 Again in Cooper's pleasant way
 A picture highly wrought and splendid
 Of the red race whose pride has ended.
 Nor here by contrast err : indeed,
 The red man is of Esau's seed,
 Hath Esau's swiftness, and, I guess,
 Much, too, of Esau's loveliness.
 A thousand years in the free wild
 He fought and hunted, leapt and smiled ;
 A million impulses and rays
 Shot thro' his spirit's tangled ways,
 Working within his dusky frame
 As in a storm-cloud worketh flame,
 Shaping his strength as years did roll
 Into the semblance of his soul.
 Slowly his shape and spirit caught
 The living likeness wonder-fraught,
 The golden, many-coloured moods
 Of those free plains and pathless woods ;
 Those blooms that burst, those streams that
 run

One changeless rainbow in the sun !
 Unto the hues of this rich clime
 His nature was subdued in time ;
 And he became as years increased
 A glorious animal, at least.]

Soon like a mist did disappear
 Eureka Hart's first foolish fear,
 For courteously the chief address'd him,
 In English speech distinct tho' broken,
 Bade them unloose and cease to pest him,
 And further, smiling and soft spoken,
 Inquired his country and his name,
 Whither he fared and whence he came.
 Eureka, from the wites released,
 Shook himself like a bright-eyed beast,
 And mutter'd ; then, meeting the look
 Of that bright naïad of the brook,
 Blush'd like a shamefaced boy, while she
 Stood gazing on him silently,
 With melancholy orbs whose flame
 Confused his soul with secret shame.

In a brief answer and explicit,
 He told the cause of his strange visit.
 The old chief smiled and whisper'd low
 Into the small ear of the maiden :
 Her large eyes fell, and with a glow
 Of dark, deep rose her face was laden.
 Then, like a sound of many waters,
 Innumerable screams and chatters,
 The voices of the women-band
 Broke out in passion and in power ;
 But, at the raising of his hand,
 Ceased, like the swift cease of a shower.

Full soon Eureka saw and knew
 That the Dark Dame who favours few
 Had brought him to a friendly place,
 Where, far from cities, a mild race
 Of happy Indians spent their days
 'Mid pastures and well-water'd ways.
 An ancient people strong and good,
 With something sacred in their blood ;
 Scatter'd and few, to strangers kind ;
 Wise in the ways of rain and wind ;
 Peaceful when pleased, bloody when roused,
 They dwelt there comfortably housed ;
 And in those gardens ever fair,
 Hunted and fish'd with little care.
 Just then their braves were roaming bound
 On an adjacent hunting-ground ;
 And all the population then
 Were women wild and aged men.—
 But he, that old man blind and tall,
 Was a great King, and Chief of all ;
 And she who led him was by birth
 His grandchild, dearest thing on earth
 To his dusk age ; and dear tenfold
 Because no other kin had she,—
 Since sire and mother both lay cold
 Under Death's leafless Upas-tree.

Enough ! here faltereth my first song :
 Eureka, still in secret captured,
 In that lost Eden lingers long,
 And his big bosom beats enraptured.
 Long days and nights speed o'er him there ;
 What binds him *now* ? a woman's hair !
 What doth he see ? a woman's eyes
 Above him luminously rise !
 What doth he kiss ? a woman's mouth
 Sweeter than spice-winds of the south !
 By golden streams he lies full blest,
 And Red Rose blossoms on his breast.

O love! love! love! whose spells are shed
 On hodies black, white, yellow, red—
 Flame of all matter,—flower of clay,—
 Star of pangenesis;—but stay! I
 A theme of so divine a tone
 Must have a canto of its own!

PART II.
 RED ROSE.

I.

ERYCINA RIDENS.

O LOVE! O spirit of being!
 O wonderful secret of breath,
 Sweeter than hearing or seeing,
 Sadder than sorrow or death.

Earth with its holiest flavour,
 Life with its lordliest dower,
 The fruit's strange essence and flavour,
 Bloom and scent of the flower.

[Thus might a modern poet,
 O Aphrodite, uptake
 His fanciful flute and blow it,
 And wail the echoes awake!]

O love, love, Aphrodite,
 Cytherea divine,
 I hold you fever'd and flighty,
 And seek a pleasanter shrine.

Yet hither, O spirit fervent,
 Just to help me along,
 Forget I am not thy servant,
 And blow in the sails of my song.

For lo! 'tis a situation
 Caused by thyself, 'twould seem;
 The old, old foolish sensation,
 Two lovers lost in a dream.

O the wonder and glory,
 Bright as Creation's burst I
 O the ancestral story,
 Old as Adam the first I

Flame, and fervour, and fever,
 Flashing from morning to night,
 Alliteration for ever
 Of love, and longing, and light.

How should the story vary?
 How the song be new?
 Music and meaning marry?
 'Tis love, love, love, all thro'!

As it was in the beginning,
 Is, and ever shall be!
 Loving, and love for the winning,
 Love, and the soul set free.

[An invocation like this
 Need not be over-wise;
 Who shall interpret kisses?
 What is the language of eyes?]

Again a man and a woman
 Feeling the old blest thing,
 Better than voices human
 A hird on the hough could sing.

Only a sound is wanted,
 Merry, and happy, and loud,—
 Such as the lark hath panted
 Up in the golden cloud.

Lips, and lips to kiss them;
 Eyes, and eyes to behold;
 Hands, and hands to press them;
 Arms, and arms to enfold.

The love that comes to the palace,
 That comes to the cottage door;
 The ever-abundant chalice
 Brimming for rich and poor;

The love that waits for the winning,
 The love that ever is free,
 That was in the world's beginning,
 Is, and ever shall be!

II.

LOG AND SUNBEAM.

As a pine-log prostrate lying,
 Slowly thro' its knotted skin
 Feels the warm revivifying

Spring-time thrill and tremble in;
 As a pine-log, strong and massive,
 Feels the light and lieth passive,
 While a Sunbeam, coming daily,
 Creeps upon its bosom gaily;
 Warms the bark with quick pulsations,
 Warms and waits each day in patience,
 While the green begins to brighten,
 And the sap begins to heighten,—

Till at last from its hard bosom
 Suddenly there slips a blossom
 Green as emerald !—then another !
 Then a third ! then more and more !
 Till the soft green bud-knots smother
 What was sapless wood before ;
 Till the thing is consecrated
 To the spirit of the Spring,
 Till the love for all things fated
 Burns and beautifies the thing ;—
 And the wood-doves sit and con it,
 And the squirrels from on high
 Fluttering drop their nuts upon it,
 And the bee and butterfly
 Find it pleasant to alight there,
 And taps busy morn and night there
 Many a bird with golden beak ;
 Till, since all has grown so bright there,
 It would cry (if Logs could speak),
 'Sunbeam, sunbeam, I'm your debtor !
 I was fit for firewood nearly,
 I'm considerably better,
 And I *love* you, Sunbeam, dearly !'
 . . . *Thou*, Eureka, wast the wood !
She, the Sunbeam of the Spring,
 Vivifying thy dull blood
 Past thy mind's imagining !
 Till the passion of her loving,
 Seething forth with ardours frantic,
 Brought the buds forth, set thee moving,
 Made thee almost look romantic.
 'O would some power the giftie gie us
 To see oursels as others see us !'
 Sang the wise ploughman in his power.
 And yet, Eureka, had sweet Heaven
 To thee her wondrous 'giftie' given
 To see thyself as seen that hour,
 To know thy features as *she* knew them,
 To see thy shape as *she* perceived it ;
 To see thine eyes, and thro' and thro' them,
 Into thy Soul as she conceived it ;
 Either thy blood had run mad races,
 And driven thee to some maniac action ;
 Or (what more likely in the case is)
 Thy wits had frozen to stupefaction !
 For never god in olden story,
 When the gods had honour due,
 Gather'd brighter guise and glory,
 In an adoring mortal's view.
 Let me own it, though thy nature
 Was sedate and beaver-bred,

As a god thou wert in stature,
 Fair of face and proud of tread ;
 And thine eyes were luminous glasses,
 And thy face a glorious scroll,
 And the radiant light that passes
 O'er the dumb flowers and the grasses,
 Caught thy gaze and *look'd* like Soul ;
 And the animal vibration
 Throbbing in thee at her touch,
 The wild earthly exaltation,
 Beasts and birds can feel as much,
 Radiating and illuming
 Every fibre of thy flesh,
 Made thee beautiful and blooming,
 Great and glorious, fair and fresh ;
 Fit it seem'd for love to yearn to,
 For a fairer Soul than thine,
 Morning, noon, and night to burn to,
 In a flash that felt divine.
 Her tall white chief, whom God had brought
 her
 From the far-off Big-Sea Water !
 Her warrior of the pale races,
 With wise tongues and paintless faces ;
 More than mortal, a great creature,
 Soft of tongue, and fine of feature ;
 As the wind that blew above her
 O'er the hunting-fields of azure,
 As the stately clouds that hover
 In the air that pants for pleasure,
 Full of strength and motion stately,
 Were thy face and form unto her ;
 And thy blue eyes pleased her greatly,
 And thy clear voice trembled thro' her ;
 And for minute after minute
 She did pore upon thy face,
 Read the lines and guess within it
 The great spirit of thy race ;
 And thou seemedst altogether
 A great creature, fair of skin,
 Born in scenes of softer weather,
 Nobler than her savage kin !
 As a peasant maiden homely
 Might regard some lordly wooer,
 Find each feature trebly comely
 From the pride it stoops unto her ;
 Thus, Eureka, she esteem'd thee
 Fairer for thy finer blood ;
 She revered thee, loved thee, deem'd thee
 Wholly beautiful and good !
 And her day-dream ne'er was broken,
 As some mortal day-dreams are,

By a word or sentence spoken
 In thy coarse vernacular.
 For she could not speak a dozen
 Words as used by the white nation !
 And thy speech seem'd finely chosen,
 Since she made her own translation,
 Scarce a syllable quite catching,
 Yet, upon thy bosom leaning,
 Out of ever sentence snatching
 Music with its own sweet meaning.

Powers above ! the situation's
 Psychological, I swear !
 How express the false relations
 Of this strange-assorted pair ?
 Happy, glorious, self-deluded,
 On the handsome face she brooded,
 Ne'er by word or gesture driven
 From her day-dream sweet as heaven.
 In her native language for him
 She had warrior's names most sweet :
 And she loved and did adore him,
 Falling fawn-like at his feet ;
 More, the rapturous exultation
 Struck *him* ! blinded *him*, in turn !
 Till with passionate sensation
 Body and brain began to burn ;—
 And he yielded to the bursting,
 Burning, blinding, hungering, thirsting,
 Passion felt by beasts and men !
 And his eyes caught love and rapture,
 And he held her close in capture,
 Kissing lips—that kiss'd again !

III.

NUPTIAL SONG.

Where were they wedded? In no Temple
 of ice
 Built up by human fingers ;
 The floor was strewn with flowers of fair
 device,
 The wood-birds were the singers.

Who was the Priest? The priest was the
 still Soul,
 Calm, gentle, and low-spoken ;
 He read a running brooklet like a scroll,
 And trembled at the token.

What was the service? 'Twas the serviceread
 When Adam's faith was plighted !
 The tongue was silent, but the lips rose-red
 In silence were united.

Who saw it done? The million starry eyes
 Of one ecstatic Heaven.

Who shared the joy? The flowers, the
 trees, the skies
 Thrill'd as each kiss was given.

Who was the Bride? A spirit strong and
 true,
 Beauteous to human seeing,—
 Soft elements of flesh, air, fire, and dew,
 Blent in one Rose of being.

What was her consecration? Innocence !
 Pure as the wood-doves round her,
 Nothing she knew of rites—the strength
 intense
 Of God and Nature found her.

As freely as maids give a lock away,
 She gave herself unto him.
 What was the Bridegroom? Clay, and
 common clay,
 Yet the wild joy slipt through him.

Hymen, O Hymen ! By the birds was shed
 A matrimonial cadence !
Da nuces! Squirrels strew'd the nuts, in-
 stead
 Of rosy youths and maidens !

Eureka, yea, Eureka was to blame—
 He was an erring creature :
 Uncivilised by one wild flash of flame
 He waver'd back on Nature.

He kiss'd her lips, he drank her breath in
 bliss,
 He drew her to his bosom :
 As a clod kindles at the Spring's first kiss
 His being burst to blossom !

Who rung the bells? The breeze, the
 merry breeze,
 Set all in bright vibration :
 Clear, sweet, yet low, there trembled
 through the trees
 The nuptial jubilation !

IV.

ARRETEZ !

O'er this joy I dare not linger :
 Stands a Shape with lifted finger
 Crying in a low voice, 'Singer !
 Far too much of Eve and Adam.

'Details of this dark connection
I desire not for inspection !'
And the Bard, with genuflexion,
Answers, ' I obey thee, Madam !'

Stands the Moral Shape reproving,
While I linger o'er this loving ;
Cries the voice, ' Pass on ! be moving !'
We are virtuous, here to nor'ward !'

Constable, I force cessation
To my flood of inspiration ;
Such a theme for adumbration !
I resign it, and move forward.

v.

THE FAREWELL.

Love, O love ! thou bright and burning
Weathercock for ever turning ;
Gilded vane, fix'd for our seeing
On the highest spire of being ;
Symbol, indication ; reeling
Round to every wind of feeling ;
Only pointing some sad morrow,
In one sudden gust of sorrow,
Sunset-ward, where redly, slowly,
Passion sets in melancholy.

In the wood-ways, roof'd by heaven,
Were the nuptial kisses given ;
In the dark green, moonbeam-haunted
Forest ; in the bowers enchanted
Where the fiery specks are flying,
And the whip-poor-will is crying ;
Where the heaven's open blue eye
Thro' the boughs broods dark and dewy,
And the white magnolia glimmers
Back the light in starry tremors ;
Where the acacia in the shady
Silence trembles like a lady
Scented sweet and softly breathing ;
There, amid the brightly wreathing,
Blooming branches, did they capture
Love's first consecrated rapture.

Pure she came to him, a maiden
Innocent as Eve in Eden,
Tho' in secret ; for she dreaded
Wrath of kinsmen tiger-headed,
In whose vision, fierce and awful,
Love for white men was unlawful.
Yet in this her simple reason
Knew no darker touch of treason

Than dost thou, O white and dainty
English maid of sweet-and-twenty,
When from guardian, father, brother,
[Harsh protectors, one or t'other,]
Off you trip, self-handed over
To your chosen lord and lover,
Tears of love and rapture shedding
In the hush of secret wedding.

Now from these lost days Elysian,
Modestly I drop my vision !
Rose the wave supreme and splendid,
To a tremulous crest, and ended,
Falling, falling, one sad morrow,
In a starry spray of sorrow.

Whether 'twas by days or hours,
Weeks or months, in those bright bowers,
They their gladness counted,—whether
Like the one day's summer weather
At the pole, their bliss upstarted,
Brighten'd, blacken'd, and departed,—
I relate not ; all my story
Is, that soon or late this glory
Fell and faded. After daylight
Came an eve of sad and gray light ;
There were tears—wild words were spoken,
Down the cup was dash'd, and broken.

First came danger,—eyeballs fiery
Watch'd the pair in fierce inquiry ;
Secret footsteps dodged the lovers ;
As a black hawk slowly hovers
O'er the spot amid the heather
Where the gray birds crouch together,
Hung Suspicion o'er the places
Where they sat with flaming faces.
Next came—what d'ye call the dreary
Heavy-hearted thing and weary,
In old weeds of joy bedizen'd ?
By the shallow French 'tis christen'd
Ennuï ! Ay, the snake that grovels
In a host of scrofulous novels,
Leper even of the leprous
Race of serpents vain and viprous,
Bred of slimy eggs of evil,
Sat on by the printer's devil,
Last, to gladden absinthe-lovers,
Born by broods in paper covers !

After the great wave of madness,
Ennuï came ; and tho' in gladness
Still the Indian maiden's nature
Clung round the inferior creature,

Though with burning, unconsuming,
 Deathless love *her* heart was blooming,
He grew weary, and his passion
 In a dull evaporation
 Slowly lessen'd, till caressing
 Grew distracting and distressing.
 Conscience waken'd in a fever,
 Just a day too late, as ever ;
 He remember'd, one fine day,
 His relations far away .

All the beavers ! the deceiver !
 After all, he *was* a beaver
 Born and bred, tho' the unchanging
 Dash of wild blood kept him ranging ;
 Beaver-conscience, now awaken'd,
 Since the first true bliss had slacken'd,
 Whisper'd with a sad affection,
 ' Fie ! it is a strange connection !
 Is it worthy ? Can it profit ?
 Sits the world approving of it ?'

While another whisper said,
 ' *You're* a white man ! *She* is red !'
 Ne'ertheless he seem'd to love her,
 Watch'd her face and bent above her,
 Fondly thinking, ' Now, I wonder
 If the world would blame my blunder ?
 If her skin were only whiter,
 If her manners were politer,
 I would take her with me nor'ward,
 Wed her, cling to her thenceforward,
 Clothe her further, just a tittle,
 Live respectable and settle !'
 She was silent, as he brooded
 Handsome-faced and beaver-mooded,
 Thinking, ' Now my chief is seeming
 Where the fires of fight are streaming !
 O, how great and grand his face is,
 Lit with light of the pale races !'
 And she bent her brows before him,
 Kiss'd his hands, and did adore him,
 And she waited in deep duty ;
 While her eyes of dazzling beauty,
 Like two jewels ever streaming
 Broken yet unceasing rays,
 Watch'd him as in beaver-dreaming
 He would walk in the green ways.

Still he seem'd to her a splendid
 Creature, but his trance had ended ;
 More and more, thro' ever seeing
 Red skins round him, he lost patience,
 More and more the hybrid being
 Sigh'd for civilised relations ;

For Eureka Hart, tho' wholly
 Of a common social mind,
 Narrow-natured, melancholy,
 Hated *ties* of any kind ; —
 Yet if any tie could hold him
 To a place or to a woman,
 'Twould be one the world had told him
 Was respectable and common.
 Here, then, hemm'd in by a double
 Dark dilemma, he found trouble,
 And with look a Grecian painter
 Would have given to a god,
 Feeling passion still grow fainter,
 Thought, ' I reckon things look odd !
 Wouldn't Parson Pendon frown,
 If he knew, in Drowsietown ?'

As he spoke he saw the village
 Rising up with tith and tillage,
 Saw the smithy, like an eye
 Flaming bloodshot at the sky,
 Saw the sleepy river flowing,
 Saw the swamps burn in the sun,
 Saw the people coming, going,
 All familiar, one by one.
 ' There the plump old Parson goes,
 Silver buckles on his toes.
 Broad-brimm'd beaver on his head,
 Clean-shaved chin, and cheek as red
 As ripe pippins, kept in hay,
 Polish'd on Thanksgiving day ;
 Black coat, breeches, all complete,
 On the old mare he keeps his seat,
 Jogging on with smiles so bright
 To creation left and right.
 There's the Widow Abner smiling
 At her door as he goes past,
 Guess she thinks she looks beguiling,
 But he cuts along more fast.
 There's Abe Sinker drunk as ever,
 There's the pigs all in the gutter,
 There's the miller by the river,
 Broad as long and fat as butter.
 See it all, so plain and pleasant,
 Just like life their shadows pass,
 Wonder how they are at present ?
 Guess they think *I'm* gone to grass !'
 While this scene he contemplated,
 Sighing like a homeless creature,
 Round him, brightly concentrated,
 Glow'd the primal fire of Nature !
 Rainbow-hued and rapturous-colour'd,
 With one burning brilliant look

Flaming fix'd upon the dullard,
 Nature rose in wild rebuke !
 Shower'd her blossoms round him, o'er him,
 Breathed warm breath upon his face,
 Flash'd her flowers and fruits before him,
 Follow'd him from place to place ;
 With wild jasmine and with amber
 She perfum'd his sleeping chamber,
 Hung around him happy hours
 With her arms of lustre-flowers,
 Held to his in blest repose
 Her warm breasts of living roses ;
 Bade a thousand dazzling, crying,
 Living, creatures do him honour,
 Stood herself, naked and sighing,
 With an aureole upon her ;
 Then, with finger flashing brightly
 Pointing to her prime creation,—
 Fruits and flowers and scents blent lightly
 In one dazzling adumbration,—
 Cried unto him over and over,
 ' See my child ! O love her, love her !
 I eternal am, no comer
 In a feeble flush of summer,
 Like the hectic colour flying
 Ot a maid love-sick and dying ;
 Here no change, but ever burning
 Quenchless fire, and ceaseless yearning :
 Endless exquisite vibration
 Sweet as love's first nuptial kiss,
 One soft sob of strange sensation
 Flowering into shapes of bliss ;
 And the brightest, O behold her
 With a changeless warmth like mine—
 Love her ! In thy soul enfold her !
 Blend with us, and be divine !'
 All in vain that fond entreating !
 Still Eureka's beaver-brain
 Thought—' This climate's rather heating—
 Weather's cooler up in Maine !'

Yet no wonder Nature loved him,
 Sought to take his soul by storm,
 Gloried when her meaning moved him,
 Clung in fondness round his form ;
 For, in sooth, tho' unimpassion'd,
 Gloriously the man was fashion'd :
 One around whose strength and splendour
 Women would have pray'd to twine,
 As the lian loves to blend her
 Being with the beech or pine.
 And his smile when she was present
 Was seraphic, full of spirit,

And his voice was low and pleasant,
 And her soul grew bright to hear it !
 And when tall he strode to meet her,
 And his handsome face grew sweeter,
 In her soul she thought, ' O being,
 Fair and gracious and deep-seeing,
 White man, great man, far above me,
 What am I, that thou shouldst love me ?'

She had learnt him with lips burning
 (O for such a course of learning !)
 Something of her speech,—'twas certain
 Quite enough to woo and flirt in ;
 Words not easy of translation
 They transfused into sensation,
 Soon discovering and proving,
 As a small experience teaches,
 ' Bliss ' and ' kiss,' and other loving
 Words, are common to all speeches !
 Ah, the rapture ! ah, the fleeting
 Follies of each fond, mad meeting !
 Smiling with red lips asunder,
 Clapping hands at each fond blunder,
 She instructed him right gaily
 In her Indian *patois* daily,
 Sweetly from his lips it sounded,
 Help'd with those great azure eyes,
 Till upon his heart she bounded
 Panting praise with laughs and cries.
 'Twas a speech antique and olden,
 Full of gurgling notes, it ran
 Like some river rippling golden
 Down a vale Arcadian ;
 Like the voices of doves brooding ;
 Like a fountain's gentle moan ;
 Nothing commonplace intruding
 On its regal monotone :
 Sounds and symbols interblending
 Like the heave of loving bosoms ;
 Consonants like strong boughs bending,
 Snowing vowels down like blossoms !
 Faltering in this tongue, he told her,
 Sitting in a secret place,
 While with bright head on his shoulder,
 Luminous-eyed, she watch'd his face,
 How, tho' every hour grown fonder,
 Tho' his soul was still aflame,
 Still, he sigh'd once more to wander
 To the clime from whence he came ;
 Just once more to look upon it,
 Just for one brief hour to con it,
 Just to see his kin and others
 In the Town where they did dwell.

Just to say to his white brothers
 One farewell, a last farewell.
 Then to hasten back unto her,
 And to live with her and die. . . .
 Sharp as steel his speech stabb'd thro' her,
 Cold she sat without a cry,
 On her heart her small hand pressing,
 Breathing like a bird in pain,
 Silent, tho' he smiled caressing,
 Kiss'd, but kissing not again.

Then she waken'd, like one waking
 From a trance, and with heart aching
 Clung around him, as if dreading
 Lest some hand should snatch him thence!
 Then, upon his bosom shedding
 Tears of ecstasy intense,
 By her gods conjured him wildly
 Never, never to depart!
 O how meekly, O how mildly,
 Answer'd back Eureka Hart!

But by slow degrees he coax'd her,
 Night by night, and day by day,
 With such specious spells he hoax'd her
 That her first fear fled away.
 Slow she yielded, still believing
 Not for long he'd leave her lonely;
 For he told her, still deceiving,
 'Twas a *little journey* only.
 Poor, dark bird! nought *then* knew she
 Of this world's geography!

Troubled, shaken, half-demented,
 Broken-hearted—she assented.
 Since, by wind, and wave, and vapour,
 By the shapes of earth and skies;
 By the white moon's ghostly taper,
 By the stars that like dead eyes
 Watch it burning; by the mystic
 Motion of the winds and woods;
 By all dark and cabalistic
 Shapes of tropic solitudes;
 By the waters melancholy;
 By God's hunting-fields of blue;
 By all things that she deem'd holy
 He had promised to be true!
 Just to pay a flying visit
 To connections close at hand,
 Then to haste with love undying
 Back unto that happy land.
 'Twas enough! the Maid assented,
 Thinking sadly, in her pain,

'He will never be contented
 Till he sees them once again.
 Thither, thither let him wander;
 When once more I feel his kiss,
 His proud spirit will be fonder
 Since my love hath granted this!'

'Go!' she cried, and her dark features
 Kindled like a dying creature's,
 And her heart rose, and her spirit
 Cried as if for God to hear it—
 Wildly in her arms she press'd him
 To her hosom broken-hearted—
 Call'd upon her gods, and blest him!
 And Eureka Hart departed.

VI.

THE PAPER.

Here should my second canto end—yet stay
 Listen a little ere ye turn away.

By night they parted; and she cut by night
 One large lock from his forehead, which
 with bright,

Warm lips she kiss'd; then kiss'd the lock
 of hair,

With one quick sob of passionate despair;
 And he, with hand that shook a little now,
 Still with that burning seal upon his brow,
 While in that bitter agony they embraced,
 He in her little hand a paper placed,
 Whereon, at her fond prayer, he had writ
 plain,

'*Eureka Hart, Drowsietown, State of
 Maine.*'

'For,' thought he, 'I have promised soon
 or late

Hither to come again to her, my mate;
 And I will keep my promise, sure, some day,
 Unless I die or sicken by the way.

But no man knows what pathway he may
 tread,—

To-morrow—nay, ere dawn—I may be
 dead!

And she shall know, lest foul my fortune
 proves,

The name and country of the man she loves;
 And since she wishes it, to cheer her heart,
 It shall be written down ere I depart.'

And so it was; and while his kiss thrill'd
 thro' her,

With that loved lock of hair he gave it to
 her.

Aye, so it was ; for in the woods at dawn
He from his pouch had an old letter drawn,
One leaf of which was blank, and this he
took,

And smiling at the woman's wondering look,
While quietly she murmur'd, ' 'Tis a charm!
In hunter's fashion he had prick'd his arm,
And, having pen nor ink, had ta'en a spear
Of thorn for stylus, and in crimson clear,
His own heart's blood, had writ the words
she sought.

And in that hour deep pity in him wrought,
And he believed that he his vows would
keep,

Nor e'er be treacherous to a love so deep.
'See!' said he, as the precious words he
gave,

'Keep this upon thy bosom, and be brave.
As sure as that red blood belong'd to me,
I shall, if I live on, return to thee.

If death should find me while thou here
dost wait,

Thou canst at least make question of my fate
Of any white man whose stray feet may fare
Down hither, showing him the words writ
there.'

All this he said to her with faltering voice
In broken Indian, and in words less choice ;
And quite persuaded of his good intent,
Shoulder'd his gun with a gay heart, and
went.

And in that paper, while her fast tears fell,
She wrapt the lock of hair she loved so well,
And thrust it on her heart ; and with sick
sight,

Watch'd his great figure fade into the night ;
Then raised her hands to her wild gods,
that sped

Above her in a whirlwind overhead,
And the pines rock'd in tempest, and her form
Bent broken with the breathing of the storm.

O little paper ! Blurr'd with secret tears !
O blood-red charm ! O thing of hopes and
fears !

Between two worlds a link, so faint, so slight,
The two worlds of the red man and the
white !

Lie on her heart and soothe her soul's sad
pain !

'EUREKA HART, DROWSIETOWN, STATE
OF MAINE.'

PART III.

WHITE ROSE.

I.

DROWSIETOWN.

O so drowsy ! In a daze
Sweating 'mid the golden haze,
With its smithy like an eye
Glaring bloodshot at the sky,
And its one white row of street
Carpetted so green and sweet,
And the loungers smoking still
Over gate and window-sill ;
Nothing coming, nothing going,
Locusts grating, one cock crowing,
Few things moving up or down,
All things drowsy—Drowsietown !

Thro' the fields with sleepy gleam,
Drowsy, drowsy steals the stream,
Touching with its azure arms
Upland fields and peaceful farms,
Gliding with a twilight tide
Where the dark elms shade its side ;
Twining, pausing sweet and bright
Where the lilies sail so white ;
Winding in its sedgy hair
Meadow-sweet and iris fair ;
Humming as it hies along
Monotones of sleepy song ;
Deep and dimpled, bright nut-brown,
Flowing into Drowsietown.

Far as eye can see, around,
Upland fields and farms are found,
Floating prosperous and fair
In the mellow misty air :
Apple-orchards, blossoms blowing
Up above,—and clover growing
Red and scented round the knees
Of the old moss-silvered trees.
Hark ! with drowsy deep refrain,
In the distance rolls a wain ;
As its dull sound strikes the ear,
Other kindred sounds grow clear—
Drowsy all—the soft breeze blowing,
Locusts grating, one cock crowing,
Cries like voices in a dream
Far away amid the gleam,
Then the waggons rumbling down
Thro' the lanes to Drowsietown.

Drowsy? Yea!—but idle? Nay!
 Slowly, surely, night and day,
 Humming low, well greased with oil,
 Turns the wheel of human toil.
 Here no grating gruesome cry
 Of spasmodic industry;
 No rude clamour, mad and mean,
 Of a horrible machine!
 Strong yet peaceful, surely roll'd,
 Winds the wheel that whirls the gold.
 Year by year the rich rare land
 Yields its stores to human hand—
 Year by year the stream makes fat
 Every field and meadow-flat—
 Year by year the orchards fair
 Gather glory from the air,
 Redden, ripen, freshly fed,
 Their bright balls of golden red.
 Thus, most prosperous and strong,
 Flows the stream of life along
 Six slow days! wains come and go,
 Wheat-fields ripen, squashes grow,
 Cattle browse on hill and dale,
 Milk foams sweetly in the pail,
 Six days: on the seventh day,
 Toil's low murmur dies away—
 All is husht save drowsy din
 Of the waggons rolling in,
 Drawn amid the plenteous meads
 By small fat and sleepy steeds.
 Folk with faces fresh as fruit
 Sit therein or trudge afoot,
 Brightly drest for all to see,
 In their seventh-day finery:
 Farmers in their breeches tight,
 Snowy cuffs, and buckles bright;
 Ancient dames and matrons staid
 In their silk and flower'd brocade,
 Prim and tall, with soft brows knitted,
 Silken aprons, and hands mitted;
 Haggard women, dark of face,
 Of the old lost Indian race;
 Maidens happy-eyed and fair,
 With bright ribbons in their hair,
 Trip along, with eyes cast down,
 Thro' the streets of Drowsietown.
 Drowsy in the summer day
 In the meeting-house sit they;
 'Mid the high-back'd pews they doze,
 Like bright garden-flowers in rows;
 And old Parson Pendon, big
 In his gown and silver'd wig,
 Drones above in periods fine

Sermons like old-flavour'd wine—
 Crusted well with keeping long
 In the darkness, and not strong.
 O! so drowsily he drones
 In his rich and sleepy tones,
 While the great door, swinging wide,
 Shows the bright green street outside,
 And the shadows as they pass
 On the golden sunlit grass.
 Then the mellow organ blows,
 And the sleepy music flows,
 And the folks their voices raise
 In old unctuous hymns of praise,
 Fit to reach some ancient god
 Half asleep with drowsy nod.
 Deep and lazy, clear and low,
 Doth the oily organ grow!
 Then with sudden golden cease
 Comes a silence and a peace;
 Then a murmur, all alive,
 As of bees within a hive;
 And they swarm with quiet feet
 Out into the sunny street;
 There, at hitching-post and gate
 Do the steeds and waggons wait.
 Drawn in groups, the gossips talk,
 Shaking hands before they walk:
 Maids and lovers steal away,
 Smiling hand in hand, to stray
 By the river, and to say
 Drowsy love in the old way—
 Till the sleepy sun shines down
 On the roofs of Drowsietown.
 In the great marsh, far beyond
 Street and building, lies the Pond,
 Gleaming like a silver shield
 In the midst of wood and field;
 There on sombre days you see
 Anglers old in reverie,
 Fishing feebly morn to night
 For the pickarel so bright.
 From the woods of beech and fir,
 Dull blows of the woodcutter
 Faintly sound; and haply, too,
 Comes the cat-owl's wild 'tuhoo!'
 Drown'd by distance, dull and deep,
 Like a dark sound heard in sleep;—
 And a cock may answer, down
 In the depths of Drowsietown.

Such is Drowsietown—but nay!
 Was, not *is*, my song should say—

Such *was* summer long ago
 In this town so sleepy and slow.
 Change has come : thro' wood and dale
 Runs the demon of the rail,
 And the Drowsietown of yore
 Is not drowsy any more !

O so drowsy ! In the haze
 Of those long dead summer days,
 Underneath the still blue sky
 I can see the hamlet lie—
 Like a river in a dream
 Flows the little nut-brown stream ;
 Yet not many a mile away
 Flashes foam and sprinkles spray,
 Close at hand the green marsh flows
 Into brackish pools and sloughs,
 And with storm-wave fierce and frantic
 Roars the wrath of the Atlantic.

Waken Drowsietown ?—The Sea ?
 Break its doze and reverie ?
 Nay, for if it hears at all
 Those unresisting waters call,
 They are far enough, I guess,
 Just to soothe and not distress.
 When the wild nor'wester breaks,
 And the sullen thunder shakes,
 For a space the Town in fear,
 Dripping wet with marsh and mere,
 Quakes and wonders, and is found
 With its ear against the ground
 Listening to the sullen war
 Of the flashing sea afar !
 But the moment all is done
 On its tear-drops gleams the sun,
 Each rude murmur dies ; and lo !
 In a sleepy sunny glow,
 'Mid the moist rays slanting down,
 Once more dozes Drowsietown.

As the place is, drowsy-eyed
 Are the folks that there abide ;
 Strong, phlegmatic, calm, revealing
 No wild fantasies of feeling ;
 Loving sunshine ; on the soil
 Basking in a drowsy toil.
 Mild and mellow, calm and clear,
 Flows their life from year to year—
 Each fulfils his drowsy labour,
 Each the picture of his neighbour,
 Each exactly, rich or poor,
 What his father was before—

O so drowsy ! In a gleam,
 Far too steady to be Dream,
 Flows their slow humanity
 Winding, stealing, to the Sea.

Sea ? What Sea ? The Waters vast,
 Whither all life flows at last,
 Where all individual motion
 Lost in one imperious ocean
 Fades, as yonder river doth
 In the great Sea at its mouth.
 Ah ! the mighty wondrous Deep,
 'Tis so near ;—yet half asleep,
 Deaf to all its busy hum,
 These calm people go and come ;—
 Quite forgetting it is nigh,
 Save when hurricanes go by
 With a ghostly wail o'erhead
 Shrieking shrill—' Bury your dead !'
 For a moment, wild-eyed, caught
 In a sudden gust of thought,
 Panting, praying, wild of face,
 Stand the people of the place ;
 But, directly all is done,
 They are smiling in the sun—
 Drowsy, yet busy as good bees
 Working in a sunny ease,
 To and fro, and up and down,
 Move the folks of Drowsietown.

II.

AFTER MEETING.

DEACON JONES.

Well, winter's over altogether ;
 'The loon's come back to Purley Pond ;
 It's all green grass and pleasant weather
 Up on the marsh and the woods beyond.
 It's God Almighty's meaning clear
 To give us farmers a prosperous year ;
 'Tho' many a sinner that I could mention
 Is driving his ploughshare nowadays
 Clean in the teeth of the Lord's intencion,
 And spiling the land he ought to raise.

DEACON HOLMES.

I've drained the marsh by Simpson's build-
 ing,
 Cleared out the rushes, and flag, and
 weed,
 The ground's all juicy, and looks like yield-
 ing,
 And I'm puttin' it down in pip-corn seed.

How's Father Abel? Comin' round?
Glad the rheumatics have left him now.

DEACON JONES.

Summer's his med'cine; he'll soon be sound,
And spry as a squirrel on a bough.

BIRD CHORUS.

Chickadee! chickadee!
Green leaves on every tree!
Over field, over foam,
All the birds are coming home.
Honk! honk! sailing low,
Cried the gray goose long ago.
Weet! weet! in the light
Flutes the phoebe-bird so bright.
Chewink, veery, thrush o' the wood,
Silver treble raise together;
All around their dainty food
Ripens with the ripening weather.
Hear, O hear!
In the great elm by the mere
Whip-poor-will is crying clear.

MOTHER ABNER.

And so it is! And so the news is true!
And your Eureka has returned to you;
I saw him in the church, and took a stare.
A Hart, aye every inch, the tallest there.
You'll hold the farm-land now, and keep
things clear;
You wanted jest a man—Eureka's here.

WIDOW HART.

Well, I don't know. Eureka ain't no hand
At raising crops or looking after land;
It's been a bitter trial to me, neighbour,
To see his wandering ways and hate o'
labour.
He's been abroad too much to care jest now
For white men's ways, and following the
plough.

MOTHER ABNER.

He's a fine figure and a handsome face;
There ain't his ekal this day in the place.
And if he'd take a wife and settle down,
There's many a wench would jump in
Drowsietown.
Ah! that's the only way to tie your son,
And now he's got the farm 'tis easy done;
There's Jez'bel Jones, and there's Euphe-
mia Clem,

And Sarah Snowe,—they're all good
matches, them.

And there's—why, there he goes, right
down the flat,

Looks almost furrin' in that queer straw
bat;

And who's that with him in the flower'd
chintz dress?

Why, Phoebe Anna Cattison, I guess!
That little mite! How tiny and how prim
Trips little Phoebe by the side of him!
And when she looks up in his face, tehee!
It's like a chipmunk looking up a tree!

THE RIVER SINGS.

O willow loose lightly
Your soft long bair!
I'll brush it brightly
With tender care;
And past you flowing
I'll softly uphold
Great lilies blowing
With bearts of gold.
For spring is beaming,
The wind's in the south,
And the musk-rat's swimming,
A twig in its mouth,
To built its nest
Where it loves it best,
In the great dark nook
By the bed o' my brook.
It's spring, bright spring,
And blue-birds sing!
And the fern is pearly
All day long,
And the lark rises early
To sing a song.

The grass shoots up like fingers of fire,
And the flowers awake to a dim desire,
So willow, willow, shake down, shake down
Your locks so silvern and long and slight;
For lovers are coming from Drowsietown,
And thou and I must be merry and
bright!

PHOEBE ANNA.

This is the first fine day this year:
The grass is dry and the sky is clear;
The sun's out shining; up to the farm
It looks like summer; so bright and warm;
There's apple blooms on the boughs al-
ready,
Long as your finger the corn-blades
shoot,

And father thinks, if the sun keeps steady,
 'Twill be a wonderful fall for fruit.
 How do you like being here at home again?
 Reckon you'd rather pack up and roam
 again!

EUREKA.

I'm sick o' roaming, I hate strange places;
 I've slep' too long in the woods and
 brakes;
 It's pleasure seeing white folks' faces
 After the b'ars, and the birds, and the
 snakes.
 This yer life is civilisation,
 T'other's a heathen dissipation!
 One likes to die where bis father before him
 Died, with the same sky shinin' o'er him.
 I've been a wastrel and that's the truth,
 Earning nought but a sneer and a frown;
 I've wasted the precious days o' youth,
 Instead of stopping and settling down.

PHŒBE ANNA.

But now the farm is your own to dwell in,
 You'll ne'er go back to the wilderness?

EUREKA.

Waal! that's a question! There's no
 tellin';
 I ain't my own master quite, I guess.
 Think I shall *have* to go some day,
 And fix some business far away.
 I—there's your mother beckonin' yonder,
 Looks kind o' huffish, you'd better run;
 (*Alone, sotto voce*) That girl's a sort of a
 shinin' wonder,
 The prettiest pout beneath the sun.

BIRD CHORUS.

Chickadee! chickadee!
 Green leaves on every tree;
 Winter goes, spring is here;
 Little mate, we loved last year.
 Cheewink, veery, robin red,
 Shall we take another bride?
 We have plighted, we are wed.
 Here we gather happy-eyed.
 Little bride, little mate,
 Shall I leave you desolate?
 Men change; shall we change too?
 Men change; but we are true.
 If I cease to love thee best,
 May a black boy take my nest.

EUREKA.

Soothin' it is, after so many a year,
 To hear the Sabbath bells a-ringing clear,
 The air so cool and soft, the sky so blue,
 The place so peaceful and so well-to-do. . . .
 Wonder what *she* is doing t'bis same day?
 Thinkin' o' me in her wild Injin way,
 Listenin' and waitin', dreaming every
 minute

The door will open, and this child step in it.
 Poor gal! I seem to feel her eyes so bright
 A-followin' me about, morn, noon, and
 night!

Sometimes they make me start and thrill
 right thro'—

She was a splendid figure, and that's true!
 Not jest like Christian women, fair and
 white,

A heap more startlin' and a deal more
 bright;

And as for looks, why many would prefer
 That Phœbe Ann, or some white gal like
 her!

Don't know! *I've* got no call to judge;
 but see!

The little white wench is so spry and free!
 And tho' she's but a mite, small as a mouse,
 She'd look uncommon pretty in a house.

No business, tho', of mine—I've made my
 bed,

And I must lie in it, as I have said.

Ye . . . s, I'll go back—and stay—or bring
 her here,

But there's no call to hurry yet, that's clear.
 She'll fret and be impatient for a while,
 And go on in the wild mad Injin style;
 But she can't know, for a clear heathen's
 sake,

The sort o' sacrifice I'm fix'd to make.

Some wouldn't do it; Parson there would
 say

It's downright throwing next world's chance
 away;

But I've made up my mind—it's fix'd at
 present;

And—there, let's try to think of something
 pleasant!

THE CAT-OWL.

Boohoo! boohoo!
 White man is not true;
 I have seen such wicked ways
 That I hide me all the days,

And come from my hole so deep
 While the white man lies asleep.
 A misanthrope am I,
 And, tho' the skies are blue,
 I utter my warning cry—
 Boohoo!
 Boohoo! boohoo! boohoo!

THE LOON.

(*Chuckling to himself on the pond.*)

Ha! ha! ha! back again,
 Thro' the frost and fog and rain;
 Winter's over now, that's plain.
 Ha! ha! ha! back again!
 And I laugh and scream,
 For I love so well
 The bright, bright bream,
 And the pickerel!
 And soft is my breast,
 And my bill is keen,
 And I'll build my nest
 'Mid the sedge unseen.

I've travell'd—I've fish'd in the sunny south,
 In the mighty mere, at the harbour mouth;
 I've seen fair countries, all golden and gay;
 I've seen bright pictures that beat all
 wishing;

I've found fine colours far away—
 But give me Purley Pond, for fishing;
 Of all the ponds, north, south, east, west,
 This is the pond I love the best;
 For all is quiet, and few folk peep,
 Save some of the innocent angling people;
 And I like on Sundays, half asleep,
 All alone on the pool so deep,

To rock and hear the bells from the
 steeple.

And I laugh so clear that all may hear
 The loon is back, and summer is near.
 Ha! ha! ha! so merry and plain
 I laugh with joy to be home again.

(*A shower passes over; all things sing.*)

The swift is wheeling and gleaming,
 The brook is brown in its bed,
 Rain from the cloud is streaming,
 And the Bow bends overhead.
 The charm of the winter is broken! the
 last of the spell is said!

The eel in the pond is quick'ning,
 The grayling leaps in the stream—

What if the clouds are thick'ning?
 See how the meadows gleam!
 The spell of the winter is shaken; the
 world awakes from a dream!

The fir puts out green fingers,
 The pear-tree softly blows,
 The rose in her dark hower lingers,
 But her curtains will soon uncloze,
 The lilac will shake her ringlets over the
 blush of the rose.

The swift is wheeling and gleaming,
 The woods are beginning to ring,
 Rain from the cloud is streaming;—
 There, where the Bow doth cling,
 Summer is smiling afar off, over the
 shoulder of Spring!

III.

PHOEBE ANNA.

Dimpled, dainty, one-and-twenty,
 Rosy-faced and round of limb,
 Warm'd with mother-wit in plenty,
 Prudent, modest, spry yet prim,
 Lily-handed, tiny-footed,
 With an ankle clean and neat,
 Neatly gloved and trimly booted,
 Looking nice and smelling sweet!
 Self-possess'd, subduing beauty
 To a sober sense of duty,
 Chaste as Dian, plump as Hebe,
 Such I guess was little Phoebe.
 O how different a creature
 From that other wondrous woman!
 Not a feeling, not a feature,
 Had these two fair flowers in common.
 One was tall and moulded finely,
 Large of limb, and grand of gaze,
 Rich with incense, and divinely
 Throbbing into passionate rays,—
 Lustrous-eyed and luscious-bosom'd,
 Beautiful, and richly rare,
 As a passion-flower full blossom'd,
 Born to Love and Love's despair.
 Such was Red Rose; and the other?
 Tiny, prudish, if you please,
 Meant to be a happy mother,
 With a bunch of huswife's keys.
 Prudent, not to be deluded,
 Happy-eyed and sober-mooded,
 Dainty, mild, yet self-reliant,
 She, as I'm a worthy singer,

Wound our vacillating giant
Round her little dimpled finger.

Bit by bit, a bashful wooer,
Fascinated unaware,
Did Eureka draw unto her,
Tame as any dancing bear.
Not a finger did she stir,
Yet he glow'd and gazed at her !
Not a loving look she gave,
Yet he watch'd her like a slave !
He, who had been used to having
Pleasures past all human craving,
Who had idly sat and taken
Showers of kisses on him shaken,
Who had fairly tired of passion
Ever felt in passive fashion,
Now stood blushing like a baby
In the careless eyes of Phœbe !

Fare ye well, O scenes of glory,
One bright sheet of golden sheen !
Love, the spirit of my story,
Wakens in a different scene.
Down the lanes, so tall and leafy,
Falls Eureka's loving feet,
Following Phœbe's, but in chief he
In the kitchen loves to sit,—
Loves to watch her, tripping ruddy
In the rosy firelight glow,
Loves to watch, in a brown study,
The warm figure come and go.

Half indifferent unto him,
Far too wise to coax and woo him,
Ill-disposed to waste affection,
Full of modest circumspection,
Quite the bright superior being,
Tho' so tiny to the seeing,
With a mind which penetrated,
In a sly and rosy mirth,
Thro' the face, and estimated
Grain by grain the spirit's worth,
Phœbe Anna, unenraptured,
Led the creature she had captured.

What is Love? A shooting star,
Flying, flashing, lost afar.
What is Man? A fretful boy,
Ever seeking some new toy.
What is Memory? Alas !
'Tis a strange magician's glass,
Where you pictures bright may mark
If you hold it *in the dark*.

Thrust it out into the sun,
All the picturing is done,
And the magic dies away
In the golden glow of day !

Coming back to civilisation,
Petted, fêted, shone on daily,
Was a novel dissipation,
And Eureka revell'd gaily.
Friendly faces flash'd around him,
Church-bells tinkled in his ear,
Cosy cronies sought and found him,
Drowsietown look'd bright and clear.
Parson Pendon and his lady
(Respectability embodied)
Welcom'd the stray sheep already,
Matrons smiled, and deacons nodded.
Uncle Pete had left him lately
Malden Farm and all its store,
And he found himself prized greatly
As a worthy bachelor.
All his roaming days seem'd over !
Like a beast without a load,
Grazing in the golden clover,
In the village he abode !
And he loved the tilth and tillage,
All the bustle of the village—
Loved the reaping and the sowing,
Loved the music of the mill,
Loved to see the mowers mowing,
And the golden grasses growing,
Breast-deep, near the river still.
Civilisation altogether
Seem'd exactly to his notion !
Life was like good harvest weather,
Faintly flavoured with devotion.
Ruefully he cogitated,
With the peaceful spire in sight :—
'Waal, I guess the thing was fated,
And it's hard to set it right.
Seems a dream, too ! now, I wonder
If it seems a dream to *her* !
After that first parting stunn'd her,
For a time she'd make a stir ;
P'raps, tho', when the shock was over,
Other sentiments might move her !
First she'd cry, next, she'd grow fretful,
Thirdly, riled, and then forgetful.
After all that's done and said,
Injin blood is Injin ever !
I'm a white skin. she's a red ;
Providence just made us sever.

Parson says that sort of thing
 Isn't moral marrying !
 Tho' the simple creature yonder
 Had no better education—
 Ignorance jest made her fonder,
 And I yielded to temptation.
 Here's the question : I've been sinning—
 Wrong, clean wrong, from the beginning ;
 Can I make my blunder better
 By repeating it again ?
 When mere Nature, if I let her,
 Soon can cure the creature's pain ;
 She'll forget me fast enough—
 And she's no religious feeling ;
 Injin hearts are always tough,
 And their wounds are quick of healing.
 Heigho !'—here he sighed ; then seeing
 Phœbe Ann trip by in laughter,
 Brightening up, the bother'd being
 Shook off care, and trotted after !

Had this final complication
 Not been added to the rest ;
 Had not Fate with new temptation
 Drugg'd the conscience of his breast,
 Possibly his better nature
 Might have triumph'd o'er the treason ;
 But the passions of the creature
 Rose in league with his false reason ;
 On the side of civilisation
 Rose the pretty Civilisee :
 In a flush of new sensation,
 Conscience died, and Shame did flee.
 That bright picture, many-colour'd,
 Nature had flash'd before the dullard ;
 That wild ecstasy and rapture
 She had tamed unto his capture—
 That grand form, intensely burning
 To a lightning-flash of yearning—
 That fair face transfigur'd brightly
 Into starry rapture nightly—
 Those large limbs of living lustre,
 Moving with a flower-like grace—
 Those great joys which hung in cluster,
 Like ripe fruit in a green place—
 All had faded from his vision,
 And instead, before his sight,
 Tript the pretty-faced precisian,
 Deep and dimpled, warm and white !

In her very style of looking
 There was cognisance of cooking !
 From her very dress were peeping
 Indications of housekeeping !

You might gather in a minute,
 As she lightly passed you by,
 She could (with her whole heart in it !)
 Nurse a babe or make a pie.
 Yet her manner and expression
 Shook the foolish giant's nerve,
 With their quiet self-possession
 And their infinite reserve.
 In his former time the wooing
 Had been all the *female's* doing ;
 He had waited while the other
 Did his soul with raptures smother !
 But 'twas quite another matter,
 Here in civilisation's school !
 And his heart went pitter-patter,
 And he trembled like a fool.
 Thro' the church the road lay to her ;—
 That was written on her face,
 Lawfully the man must woo her
 In the manner of her race.
 So by slow degrees he enter'd
 Courtship's Maze so mystic-centred !
 Round and round the pathways wander'd,
 Made his blunders, puzzled, ponder'd ;
 Laugh'd at, laughing, scorn'd, imploring,
 Mad, enraged, distraught, adoring ;
 This way, that way, turning, twisting ;
 Yielding oft, and oft resisting :
 Gasping while the voice of Cupid
 Madden'd him with ' Hither, stupid !'
 Seeking ever for the middle
 Of the green and golden riddle—
 Oft, just as he cried, ' I've got it !'
 Finding *culs de sac*, and not it !
 Till at last his blunders ended
 On a summer morning splendid,
 When with vision glad and hazy,
 Seeing Phœbe blushing falter,
 In the centre of the Maze, he
 Found himself before—an Altar !

IV.

NUPTIAL SONG.

Where were they wedded? In the holy
 house
 Built up by busy fingers.
 All Drowsietown was quiet as a mouse
 To hear the village singers.

Who was the Priest? 'Twas Parson Pendon,
 dress'd
 In surplice to the knuckles,

Wig powder'd, snowy cambric on his breast,
Silk stockings, pumps, and buckles.

What was the service? 'Twas the solemn,
stale,
Old-fashioned, English measure :
'Wilt thou this woman take? and thou this
male?'
'I will'—'I will'—with pleasure.

Who saw it done? The countless rustic
eyes
Of folk around them thronging.
Who shared the joy? The matrons with
soft sighs,
The girls with bright looks longing.

Who was the bride? Sweet Phœbe, dress'd
in clothes
As white as she who wore 'em,
Sweet-scented, self-possess'd,—one bright
White Rose
Of virtue and decorum.

Her consecration? Peaceful self-control,
And modest circumspection—
The sweet old service softening her soul
To formalised affection.

Surveying with calm eyes the long, straight
road
Of matrimonial being,
She wore her wedding clothes, trusting in
God,
Domestic, and far-seeing.

With steady little hand she sign'd her name,
Nor trembled at the venture.
What did the Bridegroom? Blush'd with
sheepish shame,
Endorsing the indenture.

O Hymen, Hymen! In the church so calm
Began the old sweet story,
The parson smiled, the summer fields
breathed balm,
The crops were in their glory.

Out from the portal came the wedding crew,
All smiling, palpitating ;—
And there was Jacob with the cart, bran
new,
And the white pony, waiting.

The girls waved handkerchiefs, the village
boys
Shouted, around them rushing,
And off they trotted thro' the light and
noise,
She calm, the giant blushing.

Down the green road, along by glade and
grove,
They jog, with rein-bells jingling,
The orchards pink all round, the sun above,
She cold, Eureka tingling.

And round her waist his arm becomes
entwined,
But still her ways are coolish—
'There's old Dame Dartle looking! Don't
now! Mind
The pony! Guess you're foolish!'

Who rang the bells? The ringers with a
will
Set them in soft vibration.
Hark! loud and clear, there chimes o'er
vale and hill
The nuptial jubilation.

PART IV.

THE GREAT SNOW.

I.

THE GREAT SNOW.

'Twas the year of the Great Snow.

First the East began to blow
Chill and shrill for many days,
On the wild wet woodland ways.
Then the North, with crimson cheeks,
Blew upon the pond for weeks,
'Hill'd the water thro' and thro',
Till the first thin ice-crust grew
Blue and filmy; then at last
All the pond was frosted fast,
Prison'd, smother'd, fetter'd tight,
Let it struggle as it might.
And the first Snow drifted down
On the roofs of Drowsietown.

First the vanguard of the Snow;
Falling flakes, whirling slow,
Drifting darkness, troubled dream;
Then a motion and a gleam;

Sprinkling with a carpet white
Orchards, swamps, and woodland ways,
Thus the first Snow took its flight,
And there was a hush for days.

'Mid that hush the Spectre dim,
Faint of breath and thin of limb,
HOAR-FROST, like a maiden's ghost,
Nightly o'er the marshes crost
In the moonlight : where she flew,
At the touch of her chill dress
Cobwebs of the glimmering dew
Froze to silvern loveliness.

All the night, in the dim light,
Quietly she took her flight ;
Thro' the streets she crept, and stayed
In each silent window shade,
With her finger moist as rain
Drawing flowers upon the pane ;—
On the phantom flowers so drawn
With her frozen breath breath'd she ;
And each window-pane at dawn
Turn'd to crystal tracery !

Then the Phantom Fog came forth,
Following slowly from the North ;
Wheezing, coughing, blown, and damp,
He sat sullen in the swamp,
Scowling with a blood-shot eye ;
As the canvas-backs went by ;
Till the North-wind, with a shout,
Thrust his pole and poked him out ;
And the Phantom with a scowl,
Black'ning night and dark'ning day,
Hooted after by the owl,
Lamely halted on his way.

Now in flocks that ever increase
Honk the armies of the geese,
'Gainst a sky of crimson red
Silhouetted overhead.
After them in a dark mass,
Sleet and hail hiss as they pass,
Rattling on the frozen lea
With their shrill artillery.
Then a silence : then comes on
Frost, the steel-bright Skeleton !
Silent in the night he steals,
With wolves howling at his heels,
Seeing to the locks and keys
On the ponds and on the leas.
Touching with his tingling wand
Trees and shrubs on every hand,

Till they change, transform'd to sight,
Into dwarfs and druids white,—
Icicle-bearded, frosty-shrouded
Underneath his mantle clouded ;
And on many of their shoulders,
Chill, indifferent to beholders,
Sits the barr'd owl in a heap,
Ruffled, dumb, and fast asleep.
There the legions of the trees
Gather ghost-like round his knees ;
While in cloudy cloak and hood,
Cold he creeps to the great wood :—
Lying there in a half-doze,
While on finger-tips and toes
Squirrels turn their wheels, and jays
Flutter in a wild amaze,
And the foxes, lean and foul,
Look out of their holes and growl.
There he waiteth, breathing cold
On the white and silent wold.

In a silence sat the Thing,
Looking north, and listening !
And the farmers drave their teams
Past the woods and by the streams,
Crying as they met together,
With chill noses, '*Frosty weather !*'
And along the iron ways
Tinkle, tinkle, went the sleighs.
And the wood-chopper did hie,
Leather stockings to the thigh,
Crouching on the snow that strew'd
Every corner of the wood.
Still Frost waited, very still ;
Then he whistled, loud and shrill ;
Then he pointed north, and lo !
The main Army of the Snow.

Black as Erebus afar,
Blotting sun, and moon, and star,
Drifting, in confusion driven,
Screaming, straggling, rent and riven,
Whirling, wailing, blown afar
In an awful wind of War,
Dragging drifts of death beneath,
With a melancholy groan,
While the fierce Frost set his teeth,
Rose erect, and waved them on !

All day long the legions passed
On an ever-gathering blast ;
In an ever-gathering night,
Fast they eddied on their flight.

With a tramping and a roar,
Like the waves on a wild shore ;
With a motion and a gleam,
Whirling, driven in a dream ;
On they drive in drifts of white,
Burying Drowsietown from sight,
Covering ponds, and woods and roads,
Shrouding trees and men's abodes ;
While the great Pond loaded deep,
Turning over in its sleep,
Groaned;—but when night came, forsooth,

Grew the tramp unto a thunder ;
Wind met wind with wail uncouth,
Frost and Storm fought nail and tooth,
Shrieking, and the roofs rock'd under.
Scared out of its sleep that night,
Drowsietown awoke in fright ;
Chimney-pots above it flying,

Whimpering crashing to the ground,
Snow-flakes blinding, multiplying,
Snow-drift whirling round and round ;
While, whene'er the strife seemed dying,
The great North-wind, shrilly crying,
Clash'd his shield in battle-sound !

Multitudinous and vast,
Legions after legions passed.
Still the air behind was drear
With new legions coming near ;
Still they waver'd, wander'd on,
Glimmer'd, trembled, and were gone.
While the drift grew deeper, deeper,
On the roofs and at the doors,
While the wind awoke each sleeper
With its melancholy roars.
Once the Moon looked out, and lo !
Blind against her face the Snow
Like a wild white grave-cloth lay,
Till she shuddering crept away.
Then thro' darkness like the grave,
On and on the legions drove.

When the dawn came, Drowsietown
Smother'd in the snow-drift lay.
Still the swarms were drifting down
In a dark and dreadful day.
On the blinds the whole day long
Thro' the red light shadows fitted.
At the inn in a great throng
Gossips gather'd drowsy-witted.
All around on the white lea
Farm-lamps twinkled drearily ;
Not a road was now revealed,
Drift, deep drift, at every door ;

Field was mingled up with field,
Stream and pond were smother'd o'er,
Trees and fences fled from sight
In the deep wan waste of white.

Many a night, many a day,
Pass'd the wonderful array,
Sometimes in confusion driven,
By the dreadful winds of heaven ;
Sometimes gently wavering by
With a gleam and smothered sigh,
While the lean Frost still did stand
Pointing with his skinny hand
Northward, with the shrubs and trees
Buried deep below his knees.
Still the Snow passed ; deeper down
In the snow sank Drowsietown.
Not a bird stayed, big or small,
Not a team could stir at all.
Round the cottage window-frame
Barking foxes nightly came,
Scowling in a spectral ring
At the ghostly glimmering.
Old Abe Sinker at the Inn
Heap'd his fire up with a grin,
For the great room, warm and bright,
Never emptied morn or night.
Old folks shiver'd with their bones
Full of pains and cold as stones.
Nought was doing, nought was done,
From the rise to set of sun.
Yawning in the ale-house heat,
Shivering in the snowy street,
Like dream-shadows, up and down,
With their footprints black below,
Moved the folk of Drowsietown,
In the Year of the Great Snow !

II.

THE WANDERER.

Snowing and blowing, roaring and rattle,
Frost, snow, and wind are all busy at battle !
O what a quaking, and shaking, and call-
ing,
Whitely, so whitely, the snow still is falling ;
Stone-dead the earth is, shrouded all over,
White, stiff, and hard is the snow-sheet
above her,
Deep, deep the drift is ; and tho' it is snow-
ing,
Blacker, yet blacker, the heavens are
growing.

Oh, what a night ! gather nearer the fire !
 Pile the warm pine-logs higher and higher ;
 Shut the black storm out, close tight the
 shutters,
 Hark ! how without there it moans and it
 mutters,
 Tearing with teeth, claws, and fingers
 tremendous,
 Roof, wall, and gable !—now Angels de-
 fend us !
 There was a roar !—how it crashes and
 darkens !
 No wonder that Phœbe stops, trembles,
 and hearkens.

For black as the skies are, tho' hueless and
 ghastly,
 Stretches the wold, 'mid the snow falling
 fastly,
 Here in the homestead by Phœbe madecoy,
 All is so pleasant, so ruddy, and rosy.
 All by herself in the tile-paven kitchen,
 In white huswife's gown, and in apron be-
 witching,

Flits little Phœbe, so busily making
 Corn bread and rye bread for Saturday's
 baking.

See ! in the firelight that round her is
 gleaming,

How she is glowing, and glancing, and
 beaming,

While all around her, in sheer perspiration
 Of an ecstatic and warm admiration,
 Plates, cups, and dishes, delightedly glow-
 ing,

Watch her sweet shade as 'tis coming and
 going,

Catch her bright image as lightly she
 passes,

Shine it about in plates, dishes, and glasses !
 Often in wonder all trembling and quaking,
 To feel how the homestead is swaying and
 shaking,

All in a clatter they cry out together,
 'The roof will be off in a minnte ! What
 weather !'

. . . . A face in the darkness, a foot on
 the Snow,

I it there? Dost thou hear? Doth it
 come? Doth it go?

Hush ! only the gusts as they gather and
 grow.

O Phœbe is busy !—with little flour'd
 fingers,
 Like rosebuds in snow, o'er her labour she
 lingers ;

And oft when the tumult is londest she
 listens,

Her eyes are intent, and her pretty face
 glistens

So warm in the firelight. Despite the
 storm's crying,

Sound, sound in their slumbers the farm-
 maids are lying ;

The clock with its round face perspiring
 and blinking,

Is pointing to bed-time, and sleepily winking,
 The sheep-dog lies basking, the grey cat is
 purring,

Only the tempest is crying and stirring.

The minutes creep on, and the wind still is
 busy,

And Phœbe still hearkens, perplex'd, and
 uneasy.

. . . . A face in the wold where the snow-
 drift lies low.

A footfall by night?—or the winds as they
 blow ?

O hush ! it comes nearer, a foot on the
 Snow.

Phœbe's fond heart is beginning to flutter,
 She harks for a footfall, a tap on the
 shutter ;

She lists for a voice while the storm gathers
 shriller,

The drift's at the door, and the frost groweth
 chiller.

She looks at the clock, and she starteth
 back sighing,

While the cuckoo leaps out from his hole
 in it, crying

His name ten times over ; past ten, little
 singer !

'O what keeps Eureka? and where can he
 linger?'

The snow is so deep, and the ways are so
 dire,

She thinks ; and a footfall comes nigher
 and nigher.

. . . . A face in the darkness, a face full of
 woe,

A face and a footfall—they come and they go,

Still nearer and nearer—a foot on the
Snow!

Eureka's abroad in the town,—but 'tis later
Than Drowsietown's bed-time. Still greater
and greater

The fears of poor Phœbe each moment are
growing;

And sadder and paler her features are
glowing.

She steps to the door—lifts the latch—with
wild scolding

The door is dashed open, and torn from
her holding,

While shivering she peers on the blackness,
vibrating

With a trouble of whiteness within it pulsating!

The wind piles the drift at the threshold
before her,

The snow swarms upon her, around her,
and o'er her,

But melts on the warmth of her face and
her hands.

A moment in trouble she hearkens and
stands.

All black and all still, save the storm's wild
tabor!

And she closes the door, and comes back
to her labour.

In vain—she grows paler—her heart sinks
within her,

The cuckoo bursts out in a flutter (the
sinner),

And chimes the half-hour—she sits now
awaiting,

Her heart forebodes evil, her mind still
debating;

The drift is so deep—could a false step
within it

Have led to his grave in one terrible
minute?

Could his foot have gone wand'ring away
in the wold there,

While frozen and feeble he sank in the cold
there?

'Tis his foot! . . . Nay, not yet! . . .
There he's tapping, to summon

His wife to the door! Nay, indeed, little
woman!

'Tis his foot at the door!—and he listens to
hear her!

Nay, not yet; yet a footfall there *is*, coming
nearer.

A face in the darkness, a foot on the Snow,
Nearer it comes to the warm window-glow;
O hush! thro' the wind, a foot-fall on the
Snow.

Now heark, Phœbe, heark!—But she hearkens
not; for dreaming,

Her soft eyes are fixed on the fire's rosy
gleaming;

Hands crossed on her knees she rocks to
and fro;

O heark! Phœbe, heark! 'tis a foot on the
Snow.

O heark! Phœbe, heark! and flit over the
floor,

'Tis a foot on the Snow! 'tis a tap at the
door!

Low, faint as hail tapping. . . Upstarting,
she hearkens.

It ceases. The firelight sinks low, the
room darkens.

She listens again. All is still. The wind
blowing,

The thrill of the tempest, the sound of the
snowing.

Hush again! something taps—a low murmur
is heard.

'Come in,' Phœbe cries; but the latch is
not stirred.

Her heart's failing fast; superstitious and
mute

She stands and she trembles, and stirs not
a foot.

She hears a low breathing, a moaning, a
knock,

Between the wind's cry and the tick of the
clock:

Tap! tap! . . . with an effort she shakes
off her fear,

Makes one step to the door; again pauses
to hear.

The latch stirs; in terror and desperate
haste

She opens the door, shrinking back pallid-
faced,

And sees at the porch, with a thrill of
affright,

'Mid the gleaming of snow and the dark-
ness of night,

A shape like a Woman's, a tremulous form

White with the snow-flakes and bent with
the storm !

Great eyes looking out through a black
tatter'd hood,

With a gleam of wild sorrow that thrills
through the blood,

A hand that outreaches, a voice sadly strung,
That speaks to her soul in some mystical
tongue !

The face in the darkness, the foot on the Snow,
They have come, they are here, with their
weal and their woe :

O long was the journey ! the wayfarer slow !

Now Phœbe hath courage, for plainly the
being

She looks on is mortal, though wild to the
seeing—

Tall, spectral, and strange, yet in sorrow so
human—

And the eyes, though so wild, are the eyes
of a woman.

Her face is all hid ; but her brow and her
hands,

And the quaint ancient cloak that she
wears as she stands,

Are those of the red race who still wander
scatter'd—

The gipsies of white towns, dishonour'd,
drink-shatter'd.

And strange, too, she seems by her tongue ;
yet her words are

As liquid and soft as the notes of a bird are.

All this in a moment sees Phœbe ; then lo !
She sees the shape staggering in from the
snow,

Revealing, as in to the fire-gleam she goes,
A face wil l with famine, and haggard with
woes,

For her hood falls away, and her head
glimmers bare,

And loosen'd around falls her dank drip-
ping hair,

And her eyes gleam like death—she would
fall to the earth,

But the soft little hands of kind Phœbe
reach forth,

And lead her, half swooning, half con-
scious, until

She sinks in a chair by the fire and is still ;
Still, death-like,—while Phœbe kneels down
by her chair,

And chafes her chill hands with a motherly
care.

The face is upon her, it gleams in the glow,
She hears a voice warning, still dreadful
and low,

Far back lies the footprint, a track in the
Snow.

The woman was ghost-like, yet wondrously
fair

Through the gray cloud of famine, the dews
of despair,

Her face hunger'd forth—'twas a red
woman's face,

Without the sunk eyeball, the taint of the
race ;

With strange gentle lines round the mouth
of her, cast

By moments of being too blissful to last.

Her cloak fallen wide, as she sat there
distraught,

Revealed a strange garment with figures
enwrought

In silk and old beads—it had once been
most bright—

But frayed with long wearing by day and
by night.

Mocassins she wore, and they, too, had
been gay,

And now they were ragged and rent by the
way ;

And bare to the cold was one foot, soft and
red,

And frozen felt both, and one trickled and
bled.

The face of the stranger, 'tis worn with its
woe,

It comes to thee, Phœbe, but when shall it
go ?

Far back go the footprints ; see ! black in
the Snow.

But look ! what is that ? lo ! it lies on her
breast,

A small living creature, an infant at rest !

So tiny, so shrivell'd, a mite of red clay,
Warm, mummied, and wrapt in the Indian
way.

It opens its eyes, and it shrivels red cheeks ;
It thrusts out its hand to the face, and it
speaks

With a cry to the heart of the mother ; and
 lo !
 She stirs from her swoon, and her famish'd
 cheeks glow,
 She rolls her wild eyes at the cry of distress,
 And her weak hands instinctively open her
 dress
 That the babe may be fed ; and the touch
 of the child
 When it comes to her bosom, warm, milky,
 and mild,
 Seems blissful—she smiles—O, so faintly !
 —is blest
 To feel its lips draw at the poor weary breast.
 She closes her eyes, she is soothed, and her
 form
 Within the great firelight grows happy and
 warm.
 She hears not the wind, and she seems in a
 dream,
 Till her orbs startle open amid the glad
 gleam ;
 Her looks fall on Phœbe, who trembles for
 pity ;
 She holds out her hands with a cry of
 entreaty ;
 Her thoughts flow together—she knows the
 bright place,
 She feels the sweet firelight, she sees the
 kind face—
 For Phœbe unloosens her poor dripping
 cloak,
 And its damp rises up in the kitchen like
 smoke ;
 And Phœbe, with tender and matronly
 grace,
 Is wiping the snow and the wet from her
 face.
 She looks, sinks again, speaks with quick
 birdlike cries,
 In her own thrilling speech ; but her voice
 breaks and dies,
 And her tears, through shut eyelids, ooze
 slowly and blindly
 On the white little hands that are touching
 her kindly.

A face in the darkness, a face full of woe,
 Deep, deep, are the white ways, and bleak
 the winds blow ;
 O, long was the journey, the wayfarer slow,
 O, look ! black as death, stretch the prints
 in the Snow,

III.

RETROSPECT : THE JOURNEY.

A footprint—trace it back. O God !
 The bleeding feet, the weary road.
 Fly, Fancy, as the eagle flies,
 With beating heart and burning eyes,
 Fly on the north-wind's breath of power,
 Beat mile by mile, and hour by hour,
 Southward, still southward : shouldst thou
 tire,
 Rest with the solar sphere of fire,
 Then rise again and take thy flight
 Across the continent in white,
 And track, still track, as thou dost go
 This bleeding footprint in the snow !
 Fly night by night, or day by day,
 Count the long hours, watch the wild way ;
 Then see, beneath thee sailing swift
 The white way melteth, and the drift
 Gathers no longer ; and instead
 Of snow a dreary rain is shed,
 On grassy ways, on dreary leas,
 And sullen pools that do not freeze.
 Now must thy keen eye look more near
 To trace the bloody footprint here ;
 But see ! still see ! it can be traced
 On the wet pastures of the waste ;
 On ! on, still on ! still southward sail,
 While tall trees shake in the shrill gale,
 And great streams gather, and things green
 Begin to show thro' the dim sheen.
 Here thro' a mighty wood the track
 Errs like a silk thread slowly back,
 And here birds singing go and come,
 Tho' far away the world is dumb.
 A river, and the track is lost.
 But when the stream is safely cross'd
 Again, upon the further brim,
 The drop of blood, the footprint dim !
 O wing'd thought, o'er half a world
 Thou sailest with great wings unfurl'd,
 From white to dark, from dark to bright,
 From north to south, thou takest flight,
 Passing with constant waft of wing
 From winter climes to climes of spring,
 Swiftly thou goest, and still thy gaze
 Follows the footprint thro' wild ways ;
 Swiftly thou speedest south—O God !
 A thousand leagues of weary road !

A thousand leagues ! O see, the track,
 Clear to the soul's eye, wavers back

Dim yet unbroken, linking slow
 Winter with spring, sunshine with snow,
 The dead leaf with the leaf still blowing,
 The frozen stream with the stream flowing ;
 Linking and binding silently
 Forgetfulness with memory,
 Love living with love long at rest,
 A burning with a frozen breast,
 A Sunbeam Soul all light and seeing
 With a mere Beaver of a being.

Turn back, my Spirit, turn and trace
 The woman from her starting place,
 Wheuce with fix'd features and feet free
 She plunged into the world's great Sea,—
 A fair sweet swimmer, strong of limb,
 Most confident in God, and *him*,
 And found herself by wild winds blown,
 In a great waste, alone, alone !

Long with the patience of her race,
 Had Red Rose waited for the face
 That came not, listen'd for the voice
 That made her soul leap and rejoice.
 They came not : all was still. For days,
 She like a fawn in the green ways
 Wander'd alone ; and night by night
 She watch'd heaven's eye of liquid light
 With eyes as luminous as theirs,
 'Mid tremulous sighs and panted prayers.
 He came not : all was still : her tread
 Grew heavier on the earth, her head
 Hung sadder, and her weeping eyes
 Look'd more on earth than on the skies :
 Like a dead leaf she droop'd in woe,
 Until one day, with a quick throe,
 She turn'd to crimson as she wept,
 And lo ! within her something leapt !

Flesh of her flesh, the blossom broke,
 Blood of her blood, she felt it stir,
 Within her life another woke
 With still small eyes, and look'd at her !
 And with a strange ecstatic pain,
 She breathed, and felt it breathe again.
 She seem'd to see it night and day,
 Coming along from far away
 Down a green path, and with fierce flame
 She rush'd to meet it as it came,
 But as she rush'd the shape did seem
 Suddenly to dissolve in dream,
 And daily she stood hungering sore,
 Till far off it arose once more,

But as the life within her grew
 A horror took away her breath,
 Lest when her cruel kinsmen knew
 Her secret, they should deal her death.
 For now the aged Chief, with whom
 Her happy life had broke to bloom,
 Along the dark deep path had wound
 That leads to God's great hunting-ground ;
 And a young brave of the red band
 Was proudly wooing for her hand ;—
 Not in white fashion fervently,
 Not with wild vows and on his knee ;
 Rather a proud majestic wooer
 Who felt his suit an honour to her,
 And who his formal presents sent
 In calm assumption of consent,
 And never dream'd the maid would dare
 To turn her tender eyes elsewhere ;—
 Nor dared she openly disdain
 A suit so solemn and so plain ;
 But with a smile half agonized
 She (as we whites say) temporized !

She found two friendly women, who,
 Tho' bags in form, were kind and true,
 And with their aid, when the hour came,
 She bare her child and hid her shame.
 As Eve bare Cain, upon a bed
 Of balsam and of hemlock, spread
 By those kind hands, in the deep woods,
 Amid the forest solitudes,
 With myriad creatures round her flying,
 And every creature multiplying ;
 In the warm greenwood, hid from sight,
 She held her babe to the glad light,
 And brighten'd. As she linger'd there,
 She had a dream most sadly fair :
 She seem'd upon a river-side,
 Gazing across a crystal tide,
 And o'er the tide in dying swells
 There came a burthen as of bells
 Out of a mist ; then the mist clear'd,
 And on the further bank appear'd
 A dim shape fondly beckoning—
 Her warrior tall, her heart's white King !
 She cried, and woke ; the dream was nought ;
 But ever after her wild thought
 Yearn'd with an instinct mad and dumb
 To seek him, since he did not come.
 She thought, ' My warrior beckons me !
 He would be here if he were free.
 And if I stay my kinsmen wild
 Will surely slay me and the child ;

But there, with *him* in that fair place,
 Where he is chief of his own race,
 All will be well ; for he is good,
 Of milder race and gentler blood ;
 And tho' I die upon the way
 'Twill not be worse than if I stay,
 Butcher'd and shamed in all men's sight
 When my sad secret comes to light.
 'Tis well ! this paper in my hand
 Will guide my footsteps thro' the land,
 And when I strengthen I will fly,
 And I will find my lord, or die !'
 'Twas thought, 'twas done ; at dead of night,
 She clasp'd her infant and took flight.

One guide she had—the luminous star,
 On the horizon line afar ;
 For thither oft Eureka's hand
 Had pointed, telling her his land
 Lay thitherward : gazing thereon,
 That night she busied to be gone,
 It seem'd a lamp that he had placed
 To guide her footsteps o'er the waste.
 She gather'd food, then to her back
 Attach'd the babe, and took the track,
 Waving her hands in wild ' adieu '
 To those kind women dark of hue,
 Who crouching on a dark ascent
 Moan'd low, and watch'd her as she went.
 There shone the star liquid and clear,
 His voice seem'd calling in her ear,
 The night was warm as her desire,
 And forth she fled on feet of fire.

One guide ; she had another too :
 A crumpled paper coarse to view,
 Wherein she had kept with tender care
 A little lock of precious hair,
 And on the paper this was written plain :
 ' EUREKA HART, DROWSIETOWN, STATE
 OF MAINE.'

O poor dark bird, nought still knew she
 Of this wild world's geography !
 Less than the swallow sailing home,
 Less than the petrel 'mid the foam,
 Less than the mallard winging fast,
 O'er solitary fens and vast,
 To seek his birthplace far away
 In regions of the midnight day.
 She only knew that somewhere *there*,

In some strange land afar or near,
 Under that star serene and fair,
He waited ; and her soul could hear

His summons ; even as a dove
 Her soul's wild pinions she unfurl'd,
 And sought in constancy and love
 Her only refuge in the world !

A footprint—trace it on !—

For days
 Her path was on great pasture ways :
 League after league of verdurous bloom
 Of star-like flowers and faint perfume,
 And from her coming leapt in fear
 The antelope and dappled deer ;
 And everywhere around her grew
 Ripe fruit and berries that she knew,
 While glistening in the golden gleam
 Glanced many a mere and running stream.
 A happy land of flocks and herds,
 And many-colour'd water-birds !
 Oft, sailing with her as she went,
 The eagle eddied indolent
 On soft swift wing ; and with his wild
 Dark dewy eye glauced at her child,
 Nor till she scream'd and arms upthrew,
 Turn'd, and on sullen wing withdrew.
 But sweet it was by night to rest
 And give her little babe the breast,
 And O each night with eyes most dim
 She felt one night more near to *him* :
 And all the pains of the past day,
 With all the perils of the way,
 Seem'd as a dream ; and lo ! afar
 She saw the smiling of the Star.

'Twere hut a weary task to trace
 Her footprint on from place to place,
 From day to day ; to sing and tell
 What daily accidents befell,
 What dangers threaten'd her, what eyes
 Watch'd her go by in wild surprise,
 What prospects blest her, where and when
 She look'd on life and met with men.
 Enough to say, tho' light and dark,
 Straight, as an arrow to its mark,
 The woman flew ; wise in the ways
 Of her own race, she hid from gaze
 When flitting forms against the sky
 Warn'd her that Indians might be nigh ;
 And when the wild beast dreadful-eyed
 Approach'd her, with shrill shriek she cried,
 Until the bloody coward shook
 Before the red rage of her look.
 And tho' the prospect changed all days,
 It did not change to *her* ; whose gaze

Saw these things only : the white star
On the horizon line afar,
And the quick beckoning of a hand
Out of another, sweeter land.

The long sad road—the way so dreary
The very *Fancy* falters weary !
The very soul is dazed, and shows
Only a gleam of wild tableaux :
In midst of each that shape of woe
Still straggling northward—slow, slow, slow.

. . . A river deep. She cannot find
A wading-place to suit her mind ;
But on the bank sets quietly,
Amid the sunflowers tall as she,
Her little babe : then slips her dress
And stands in mother-nakedness ;
Then in a bundle on her head
She ties her raiment yellow and red,
And swimming o'er the waters bright,
With glistening limbs of liquid light.
Sets down her burden dry, and then,
With swift stroke sailing back again,
Seeks the small babe where it doth lie,
And with her right hand holds it high,
While with the other slow she swims,
Trailing her large and liquid limbs ;
Then dripping wades to the far shore,
And clothes her loveliness once more . . .

. . . On a lone plain she now is found,
Where troglodytes dwell underground.
Wild settlers peering from their caves,
Like dead men moving in their graves,
Rise round her as she comes, and glare
With hungry eyes thro' horrent hair ;
But they are gentle, and they give
Herbs and black bread that she may live,
And in their caves the weary one
Rests till the rising of the sun ;
Then the wild shapes around her stand
Reading the paper in her hand,
And point her northward ; and she flies
Fleet-footed, while with wandering eyes
They stand and watch her shape fade dim
Across the dark horizon-rim . . .

. . . She stands on a great river's bank,
'Mid noxious weeds and sedges dank ;
And on the yellow river's track,
Jagged with teeth like snags jet black,
The ferryman in his great boat,
A speck on the broad waste, doth float,

Approaching to the water's side,
But lengthways drifting with the tide.
She leaps into the boat, and o'er
The waste to the dark further shore,
Slowly they journey ; as he rows
The paper to the man she shows,
Who reads ; and as she springs to land,
He too points northward with his hand . . .

. . . See, with a crimson glare of light,
A log-town burneth in the night !
And flying forth with all their goods
Into the sandy solitudes,
The people wild, with bloodless cheeks,
Glare at a wanderer who speaks
In a strange tongue ; but as they fly
Are dumb, and answer not her cry . . .

. . . Now thro' a land by the red sun
Scorch'd as with fire, the lonely one
Treads slowly ; and ere long she hears
The sharp cry of shrill overseers,
Driving black gangs that toiling tramp
Thro' cotton fields and sugar swamp.
Here first the hand of man is raised
To harm her—for with eyes amazed
She nears a City, and is cast
Into a slave-pen foul and vast,
Seized as an Ethiop slave. From thence
She in an agony intense
Is thrust ; but not ere eager eyes
Have mark'd her beauty as a prize.
But God is good, and one blest day
She hears upon the burning way
An aged half-caste burnt and black
Speak in her tongue and answer back.
These twain wring hands upon the road,
And in the stranger's poor abode
She sleeps that night ; but with the sun
She wakens, and is pointed on . . .

. . . Now in a waggon great she lies,
And shaded from the brazen skies,
Slowly she jogs, and all at rest
She gives her little babe the breast.
Happy she rests ; hears in her dream
The driver's song, the jingling team.
With jet black cheek and bright red lip,
The negro drives and cracks his whip,
Singing plantation hymns to God,
And grinning greetings with a nod . . .

. . . Now, toiling on a dusty way,
She begs her bread from day to day,

And some are good to her and mild,
 And most are soften'd by the child.
 Once, as she halts at a great door,
 Hungry and weary, sick and sore,
 A lovely lady white as milk
 Glides past her in her rustling silk ;
 Then pauses, questioning, and sees
 The sleeping babe upon her knees,
 And takes the paper from her hand,
 And reading it doth understand ;
 Then stoops to *kiss* the child with cold
 Kind lips, and gives the mother gold . . .

. . . Now in a mighty boat, among
 A crowd of people strange of tongue,
 She saileth slow, with wandering sight,
 On a vast river day and night ;
 All day the prospect drifteth past—
 Swamp, wood, and meadow, fading fast,—
 With lonely huts, and shapes that stand
 On the stream's bank, and wave the hand ;
 All night with eyes that look aloft,
 Or close in sleep, she sails ; but oft
 The blackness takes a deeper frown,
 And the wild eyeballs of a town
 Flash open as the boat goes by,
 And she awakens with a cry . . .

On, on, and on—O the blind quest,
 The throbbing heart, the aching breast !
 And O the faith, more steadfast far
 Than aught on earth, or any star ;
 The faith that never ceased to shine,
 The strength of constancy divine,
 The will that warm'd her as she went
 Across a mighty continent,
 Unknown, scarce help'd, from land to land,
 With that poor paper in her hand !

The vision falls. The figure fades
 Amid the lonely forest glades,
 Fringing the mightily inland seas.
 I see her still ; and still she flees
 Onward, still onward ; tho' the wind
 Blows cold, and nature looks unkind :
 The dead leaves fall and rot ; the chill
 Damp earth-breath clings to vale and hill,
 The birds are sailing south ; and hark !
 As she fares onward thro' the dark,
 The honking wild geese swiftly sail
 Amid a slowly gathering gale,
 All darkens ; and around her flow
 The cold and silence of the Snow.

There, she is lost ; in that white gleam
 She fadeth, let her fade, in dream !
 Poor bird of the bright summer, now
 She feels the kisses on her brow
 Of Frost and Fog ; and at her back
 Another Shadow keeps the track.
 'Tis winter now ; and birds have flown
 Southward, to seek a gladder zone ;
 One, only one, doth northward fare,
 And dreams to find her summer *there*.
 God help her ! look not ! let her go
 Into the realm of the Great Snow !

IV.

THE JOURNEY'S END.

Back in a swoon, with haggard face,
 Falleth the woman of wild race,
 Dumb, cold as stone, her weary eyes
 Fix'd as in very death she lies—
 While little Phoebe trembling stands,
 Wetting her lips, chafing her hands,
 Trembling, almost afraid to stir
 For wonder, as she looks at her :
 So weird, so wild a shape, she seems
 Like some sad spirit seen in dreams ;
 Beauteous of face beyond belief,
 And yet so worn with want and grief.

The clock ticks low within. Without
 The wind still wanders with shrill shout.
 The cuckoo strikes the hour—*midnight* !
 And Phoebe starteth in affright.

' O what can keep Eureka still ?'
 She thinks, and listens with a thrill
 For his foot's sound. It doth not come.
 The clock ticks low. All else is dumb.
 And still the woman lieth there,
 Down drooping in the great arm-chair,
 With hanging hands, chin on her breast,
 And 'neath her cloak the babe at rest.
 She doth not breathe, she doth not moan,
 But lieth like a thing of stone.
 ' O God,' thinks Phoebe, deadly white,
 ' If she be dead !' and faint with fright,
 Chafeth the fingers marble cold
 That seem to stiffen in her hold.
 She cannot stir, she cannot move,
 To wake the maids who sleep above ;
 Her heart is fluttering in its fear,
 ' Eureka ! O that he were here !'

[*He* hurries not ! Perchance some sense
 Of danger may detain him hence,

He would not hasten, if he knew
The curious sight he has to view.
Few mortal husbands, red or white,
Would care to wear his shoes this night.]

'What can she be?' thinks little Phœbe,
'Some Indian tramp—a beggar maybe—
And yet she's got a different mien
To such of these as I have seen.
Her face is like a babe's—she's young,
And she can speak no other tongue
Than Indian. When she spoke her words
Came like the gurgling notes of birds.
Poor thing! and out on such a night,
When all the world is wild and white
With the Great Snow. And O, to see
The little babe upon her knee!
I wonder now, if I should take it
From her cold bosom, I should wake it—
Poor little child!' And as she spake
Those words she saw the baby wake,
Sweet-smiling in the fire's red streaks,
With beaded eyes and rosy cheeks.
Then Phœbe started. 'Why,' thought she,
'The babe is near as fair as me!
With just one dark flush on its face
To show the taint of Indian race.
That's strange! Poor little outcast mite!
I guess his *father's* skin is white.'
Then, for a moment, Phœbe's mien
Wore an expression icy-keen,
As now in scrutiny amazed
The sleeping woman's hand she raised,
And dropt it quickly, murmuring—
'She is no wife! she wears no ring!
So for a space her features took
Pure matronhood's Medusa-look,—
That look, so pitiless and lawful,
Which oft makes little women awful;
And which weak women, when they fall,
Dread in their sisters worst of all!
But bless thee, Phœbe, soon the child
Softened thy face and made it mild;
To see it lie so bright and pretty,
Thy woman's eyes were moist for pity,
And soon thy tears began to flow—
'Poor soul! and out in the Great Snow!'

E'en as she spake the stranger stirr'd.

The cold lips trembled with no word.
The fingers quiver'd, the great eyes
Open'd in stupefied surprise,

A deep sigh tore her lips apart,
And with a thickly-throbbing heart
She gazed around. The ruddy light,
The cosy kitchen warm and bright,
The clock's great shining face, the human
Soft kindly eyes of the white woman,
Came like a dream—her eyes she closed
A moment with a moan, and dozed.
Then suddenly her soul was 'ware
Of the wild quest that brought her there!
She open'd eyes—a flush of red
Flash'd to her cheeks so chill and dead—
She murmur'd quick with quivering lips,
And, trembling to the finger tips,
Thrust her chill hand into her breast,
Under the ragged cloak, in quest
Of something precious hidden there!—
'Tis safe,—she draws it forth with care;
A wretched paper, torn and wet,
Thumb-mark'd with touch of many a
hand,

'Tis there—'tis safe—she has it yet,
Her heart's sole guide, the amulet,
That led her lone feet thro' the land!
But first, unto her lips of ice
She holds it eagerly, and thrice
She *kisses* it; then, with wild eyes
And unintelligible cries,
Holds it to Phœbe. 'Read!' cries she,
In her own tongue, distractedly;
And little Phœbe understands,
And takes the paper in her hands,
And on the hearth she stoopeth low,
To read it in the firelight glow.

Now courage, Phœbe! steel thy spirit!
A blow is coming—thou must bear it!

Slowly, so vilely it is writ,
Her unskill'd eyes decipher it;
So worn it is with snow and rain,
That scarce a letter now is plain,
And every red and ragged mark
Is smudged with handling, dim, and dark.

'E-U-R-E'—in letters blurr'd
She spells. '*Eureka!*' that's the word.
But why does little Phœbe start
As she reads on? '*Eureka Hart!*'—
His name, her husband's name; and now
The red blood flames on cheek and brow!
She stops—she quivers—glares wild-eyed
At the red woman at her side,

Who watches *her* with one sick gaze
Of wild entreaty and amaze :
Then she spells on—her features turn
To marble, though her bright eyes burn,
For all the bitter truth grows plain.

'EUREKA HART, DROWSIETOWN, STATE
OF MAINE.'

First lightning flash of fierce surprise !
It burns her cheek, and blinds her eyes.
Again she looks on the strange creature's
Tall, ragged form and beauteous features.
Next lightning flash, and muffled thunder—
'The baby's skin is white—no wonder !'
And she perceives, as plain as may be,
All the event—down to the baby !
Last flash, the whole dark mystery light-
ing,—

'Why, it's Eureka's own handwriting !'

Ay, little wife !—and these dim stains
Are life-blood from Eureka's veins ;
In blood the words were writ by him,
And see ! how faded and how dim !

The woman took her hand. She shook
The touch away with tiger-look,
And trembling gazed upon her. So
She stagger'd underneath the blow,
Watch'd by the stranger's luminous eyes
In mingled stupor and surprise ;
Ah ! little did the stranger guess
The situation's bitterness,
But in her own wild tongue did say,
'Where is my love ? show me the way !'

A band upon the latch. Both start,—

The door swings wide—the drift sweeps
in.

Footsteps : and lo ! Eureka Hart,
Snow-cover'd, muffled to the chin.

v.

FACE TO FACE.

Warmly muffled to the chin there,
Blind with snow-drift, stamping, waiting,
Dazzled by the light within there,
Stood the giant oscillating.
Then he closed the door, and turning
His great back against it, smiled !
Slightly tipsy, not discerning
The red woman and her child.

By the great eyes dimly blinking,
Feebly leering at his mate,
Phoebe saw he had been drinking,
While he hiccup'd, 'Guess I'm late !'
So he stood ; when, wildly ringing,
Rose a scream upon the air,
'Twas the Indian woman, springing,
Gasping, gazing, from her chair.

Round her face the black hair raining,
To her heart the baby straining,
Gasping, gazing, half believing
'Twas some phantom soul-deceiving,
Bound as by a spell she linger'd,
Pointing at him fiery-finger'd ;
And the giant mighty-jointed,
Groan'd and stagger'd as she pointed,
Thinking, while his heart beat quicker,
'Twas some phantom born of liquor ! . . .
While he rubb'd his eyes and mutter'd,
While he roll'd his eyes distress'd,
O'er the floor a thin form flutter'd,
Cried, and sank upon his breast !

Phoebe screams. Stagger'd and blinded,
Stands the creature beaver-minded,
While upon his heart reposes
Cheeks he knows full well—Red Rose's !
Half repulsing and half holding,
While her arms are round him folding,
Gaunt he stands in pain afflicted,
An impostor self-convicted !
While her great eyes, upward-looking,
Not reproaching, not rebuking,
Trusting, loving, lustre-pouring,
Happy now, and still adoring,
Burn on his ; and her dark passion
Masters her in the old fashion,
Thrills the frail thin figure, burning
With a lightning flash of yearning,
Lights the worn cheeks and the faded
Forehead with her dark locks shaded,
Thrills, transfigures, seems to lend her
All the soul of her old splendour ;—
So that all the rags upon her,
All the anguish and dishonour,
All the weary days of wandering,
All the weeping, plaining, pondering,
All the sorrow, all the striving
Ne'er a man could face surviving,
All the Past, burns iridescent
In one Rainbow of the Present.
See ! she feasts on every feature
Madly, like a famish'd creature,

Reads each line in rapture, reeling
 With the frantic bliss of feeling ;
 Kindling now her arms are round him,
 Murmuring madly, she hath found him,
 He is folded close unto her,
 And the bliss of God thrills thro' her !

Her white Chief, whom God had brought her
 From the shining Big Sea Water,
 Her great Chief of the pale races,
 With wise tongues and painless faces !
 More than mortal in her seeing,
 Glorious, grand, a god-like being !
 Nor, tho' Phœbe stands there, looking
 Most distractedly rebuking,
 Doth this child of the red nation
 Comprehend the situation !
 Not a thought hath she to move her,
 Save that all the quest is over !
 He is living, he is near her,
 Grand, greater, braver, dearer !
 No reproach in her fixed gaze is
 While her eyes to his she raises—
 Only hungering and thirsting
 Of a heart with pleasure bursting ;
 Only a supreme sensation
 Of ecstatic admiration,
 Melting in one soul-flush splendid
 Years of heart-ache past and ended.

Her white Warrior, her fair Master !
 Hers, all hers, despite disaster !
 Hers, her own, that she may cry for,
 Cling to, smile to, trust in, die for !
 Is she *blind*? Hath the glad wonder
 Struck her to the soul and stunn'd her?
 Sees she not on every feature
 The sick horror of the creature?
 Sober now, and looking ghastly,
 Trembling while his breath comes fastly,
 With the cold sweat on his forehead,
 Shrinking as from something horrid,
 Paralysed with guilt, despairing,
 Not at *her* but Phœbe glaring,
 Speechless, helpless, and aghast,
 Stands the giant, pinion'd fast.

Yes, her eyes are blindly gleaming
 Thro' the warm tears wildly streaming—
 Yes, her soul *is* blind (God guide her !);
 Hunger, thirst, and grief have tried her,
 She is feeble, not perceiving
 Cause for bitterness or grieving ;

She is foolish, never guessing
 That her visit is distressing,
 She is mad, mad, mad, presuming
 He has waited for her coming !

No, she will *not* see the horror
 Fate hath been preparing for her—
 All the little strength remaining
 She will wildly spend in straining,
 In a rapturous confusion,
 To her breast the old delusion:
 Hark ! her lips speak, words are springing
 Like the notes of a bird singing,
 Like a fountain sunward throbbing
 With a silvern song of sobbing ;
 Not a word is clear, but all
 Rise in rapture, blend, and fall !

Suddenly the rapture falters,
 Her hands loosen, her face alters,
 Drawing from him softly, quickly,
 While he staggers white and sickly,
 She, with grace beyond all beauty,
 Doth her ragged cloak unloose,
 Then, with looks of loving duty,
 Shows Eureka—the papoose !

Tiny, pink-cheek'd, blushing brightly,
 Like a mummy roll'd up tightly ;
 Puffing cheeks, and fat hands spreaning¹
 In an ecstasy unmeaning ;
 Blinking, his pink cheeks in gathers,
 With *blue* eyes just like his father's !
 In his pretty face already
 Just the image of his daddy !
 Stolid, stretching hands to pat him,
 Lies the baby, smiling at him !

Still stands little Phœbe, panting,
 This, and only this, was wanting ;
 Now, with all her courage rallied,
 She between them—panting, pallid—
 Stands ; and, keen-eyed as an eagle,
 Tho' as fluttering as a linnet,
 Folds her virtue, like a regal
 Robe, around her ; frowning in it.
 Yet so wildly doth she flutter,
 Not a sentence can she utter ;
 Stately, speechless, with eyes blazing,
 Stands the little White Rose, gazing !

¹ The Printer's Devil queries this, but he does not know the Old Poets. See (e.g.) Michael Drayton's *Moses' Birth and Miracles*—'And spreans the pretty hands.'

Suddenly, with acclamation,
 On that group of desperation
 Bursts the Storm!—With one wild rattle
 Of the elements at battle,
 With one horrid roar and yelling,
 Tearing, tugging at the dwelling,
 Strikes the Wind; the latch is lifted,

With a crash wide swings the door;
 In the blinding Snow is drifted,

With a melancholy roar!
 'Tis the elements of Nature
 Flocking round the weary creature,
 Crying to her, while they blind her,
 'Come to us! for we are kinder!
 Cross the cruel, fatal portal
 Of the miserable mortal;
 Come, our hands are cold but loving!
 Back into the midnight moving,
 In some spot of silence creeping,
 Find a quiet place for sleeping.
 We, the Winds, will dig it straightway,
 Far beyond the white man's gateway.
 I, the Snow, will place above it
 My soft cheek, and never move it;
 With my beauty, white and chilly,
 Lying o'er thee like a lily,
 Dress'd for sleep in snowy clothing
 Thou shalt slumber, hearing nothing.
 We will freeze thine ears from hearing
 His hard foot when it is nearing;
 We will close thine ears from conning
 His that look upon thee shunning.
 We will keep thee, we will guard thee,
 Till the kiss of God reward thee.
 Come, O come! Thus, unavailing,
 Sounds the elemental wailing.

Peace, O Winds, your weary voices
 Teach her nothing: she rejoices!
 Hush, O Snow, let your chill hands not
 Touch her cheek; she understands not;
 Hush! But God, who is that other,
 Standing beckoning unto her?
 Winds and Snows, 'tis your pale brother,
 And his chilly breath thrills thro' her.
 Ay, the Shadow there is looming
 Thro' the tempest and the glooming!
 O'er each path her feet have chosen—
 Mountains, valleys, rivers frozen;
 Creeping near, with eyes that glisten,
 When her cold foot flagg'd, to listen;
 As a bloodhound, ever flitting,
 Night-time, day-time, never quitting;

Sure of scent, with thin foot trailing
 In the snowdrift, never failing,
 He has follow'd, follow'd slow,
 That red footprint in the Snow!
 Now he finds her white and wan,—
 'Tis the Winter, Peboan.¹

Spare her! Who would bid him spare her?
 Let him trance her and upbear her
 In his arms, and softly place her
 Where no cruel foot can trace her.
 Let her die! See, his eyes con her,
 And his icy hand is on her;
 Thro' her form runs the quick shiver,
 Light as leaves her eyelids quiver,
 And with quick, spasmodic touches,
 The belovèd form she clutches;
 From the cruelty of man,
 Take her gently, Peboan!

Phœbe shivers. To her reaching,
 With an agony beseeching,
 Red Rose holds the babe; one moment,
 With a shrug of bitter comment,
 Phœbe shrinks; then, being human,
 Frighten'd, thinking Death is there,
 Quietly the little woman
 Takes the burden unaware.
 Not a breath too soon; for, rocking
 In the roaring of the storm,
 With the snow flakes round her flocking,
 And the wild wind round her form,
 With a cry of anguish, prone
 Falls the wanderer, cold as stone!

VI.

PAUGUK.

O poor Red Rose! rent by the storm!
 The flame still flicker'd in her form.

Moveless she lay; but in her breast
 The tumult was not quite at rest.

They raised her up, and, with soft tread,
 They bore her slowly to a bed.

And little Phœbe's heart did ache,
 Despite her wrongs, for pity's sake;

And little Phœbe's own kind hands
 (God bless them!) loos'd the wand'rer's
 bands,

¹ See the American-Indian Mythology. 'Peboan' is the personification of extreme Cold.

Took softly off the dripping dress,
 With eyes that wept for kindness,
 Wrung the wet hair, and smoothed it right,
 And clad the Red Rose all in white.
 There, all in white, on a white bed,
 The Red Rose hung her heavy head.
 Around her was a roar, a gleam,
 And she was struggling in a dream.
 Faces round her went and came,
 Her great eyes flash'd with fading flame.
 For all the time, fever'd and sore,
 She did her journey yet once more ;
 Once again her Soul's feet trod
 The pathless wild, the weary road ;
 Once again she sail'd along
 The mighty meres and rivers strong ;
 Once again, with weary tread,
 She stagger'd on, and begged her bread ;
 Once again she falter'd slow
 Into the realm of the Great Snow.
 Oh, the roaring in her brain !
 Oh, the wild winds that moan again !
 Against her, as she clasps her child,
 The hail is driven, the drift is piled.
 She sees a light that shines afar ;
 It beckons her—a hand, a Star.
 She hears a voice afar away ;
 It calls to her ; she must not stay.
 Around her clouds of tempest roll,
 And, oh ! the storm within her soul !
 But now and then, amid the snow,
 There comes a silence and a glow ;
 And white she lies, in a white room,
 And some one watches in the gloom.
 Close by the bed where she doth rest,
 Sits, with the babe upon her breast,
 A little woman, waiting there,
 Despite her wrongs, so kind, so fair !
 E'en as she wakens, wild and weak,
 Red Rose sits up, and tries to speak,
 And reaching out, with a thin moan,
 She takes a white hand in her own ;

But swoons once more, and hears again
 The tempest roaring in her brain !

Now as she dreams, with fever'd cries,
 Phoebe looks on with quiet eyes ;

And Phoebe and her maidens go
 Softly and lightly to and fro.

Downstairs by the great fire of wood,
 Alone, Eureka Hart doth brood ;

And when his little wife descends
 He scowls, and eyes his finger-ends.

She scarcely looks into his face,
 But orders him about the place ;

And at her will he flies full meek,
 With red confusion on his cheek.

Her eyes are swoll'n with tears ; to him
 Her face is pitiless and grim.

But as she reascends the stairs
 Her pale cheek flushes unawares.

In pity half, and half in scorn,
 She sees again that shape forlorn.

She cannot love her ; yet her heart
 Flutters, and takes the wand'rer's part.

Her thoughts are angry, weak and wild,
 Yet carefully she tends the child.

Often she prays, with heart astir,
 The white man's God to strengthen her.

And thus, despite her heart's distress,
 She doth a deed of blessedness.

Silent for days by that bedside
 She waiteth, watching, weary-eyed :

Not all alone ; by her unseen,
 Sitteth another, strange of mien.

He squatteth in the corner there,
 And looketh on through his thin hair.

Clad in fantastic Indian weeds,
 With calumet and skirt of beads,

Gaunt, haggard, hungry, woebegone,
 Waiteth Pauguk,¹ the Skeleton !

For wintry Peboan hath fled,
 Leaving this shadow in his stead.

¹ In the same mythology, Pauguk is, as represented in the poem, the Indian spirit of Death.

And there he waits, unseen, unheard ;
And as a serpent on a bird

Fixeth his glittering gaze, Panguk
Watcheth the bed with hungry look.

VII.

THE MELTING OF THE SNOW.

A sound of streamlets flowing, flowing ;
A cry of winds so bleakly blowing ;
A stir, a tumult ever growing ;
Deep night ; and the Great Snow was going.

Underneath her death-shroud thick,
Like a body buried quick,
Heaved the Earth, and thrusting hands
Crack'd the ice and brake her bands.
Heaven, with face of watery woe,
Watched the resurrection grow.
All the night, bent to be free,
In a sickening agony,
Struggled Earth. With silent tread
From his cold seat at her head
Rose the Frost, and northward stole
To his cavern near the pole.
When the bloodshot eyes of Morn
Opened in the east forlorn,
'Twas a dreary sight to see
Blotted waste and watery lea,
All the beautiful white plains
Blurr'd with black'ning seams and stains,
All the sides of every hill
Scarr'd with thaw and dripping chill,
All the cold sky scowling black
O'er the soaking country track ;
There a sobbing everywhere
In the miserable air,
And a thick fog brooding low
O'er the black trail of the snow ;
While the Earth, amid the gloom
Still half buried in her tomb,
Swooning lay, and could not rise,
With dark film upon her eyes.

In the farmhouse (where a light
Glimmer'd feebly day and night
From the sick-room) Red Rose heard
Earth's awakening, and stirr'd,
Gazcd around her, and descried
Phœbe sitting at her side,
Knitting, while the little child,
Sleeping on the pillow, smiled.

Little Phœbe's face was still,
Calm with quiet strength and will.
And the lamplight round her flitted
Faintly, feebly, as she knitted.
Full confession had she brought
From Eureka's soul distraught.
What he hid, in desperation,
She supplied, by penetration.
So she traced from the beginning
All the story of the sinning.
Had her spirit felt perchance
Just a little more romance ;
Had the giant in her sight
Seem'd a paragon more bright ;
Had the married love she bore
Been a very little more—
Why, perchance poor Phœbe's heart
Might have taken the man's part,
Heaping fiercely, as is common,
All its hate upon the woman.
Not so Phœbe ! cold and pale
Did she listen to the tale ;
Ne'er relenting, scarcely heeding,
Heard the man's excusing, pleading ;
Felt her blood boil, and her face
Crimson for a moment's space,
Thinking darkly, in dismay,
'What will Parson Pendon say ?'
But at last the little soul
Back to the sick chamber stole ;
Saw the wanderer lying there,
Wildly, marvellously fair ;
Saw the little baby too
Blinking with big eyes of blue ;
And she murmured, with a sigh,
'She's deceived, as well as I.
Hers is far the bitterest blow,
'Cause she seems to love him so.'
So thought Phœbe, calmly sitting
By the bedside at her knitting,
While the fog hung thick and low
O'er the black trail of the Snow.

Thus she did her duty there,
Tending with a bitter care
Her sick rival ; spite her pain,
Able, with a woman's brain,
To discern as clear as day
On whose side the sinning lay ;
Able to compassionate
Her deluded rival's fate,
All the weariness and care
Of the fatal journey there ;

Able to acknowledge (this
Far the most amazing is)
On how dull and mean a thing
Wasted was this passioning ;
On how commonplace a chance
Hung the wanderer's romance ;
Round how mere a Log did twine
The wild tendrils of this vine.

Screen'd thus from the wintry blast,
Droopt the Red Rose, fading fast ;
While the White Rose, hanging near,
Trembled in a pensive fear.
So the snow had nearly fled,
And upon her dying bed
Earth was quick'ning ; damp and chill
Streamed the fog on vale and hill.
Like a slimy crocodile
Weltering on banks o' Nile,
Everywhere, with muddy maw,
Crawl'd the miserable Thaw.
On the pond and on the stream
Loosen'd lights began to gleam,
And before the snow could fleet
Drizzly rains began to beat.

Here and there upon the plain,
'Mid the pools of thaw and rain,
Linger'd in the dismal light
Patches of unmelted white.
As these melted, very slowly,
In a quiet melancholy,
Vacant gleams o' the clouded blue
Through the dismal daylight flew,
And the wind, with a shrill clang,
Went into the west, and sang.

A sound of waters ever flowing ;
A stir, a tumult, ever growing ;
A gleam o' the blue, a west wind blowing ;
Warmth, and the last snow wreath was
going.

Not alone ! ah ! not alone !

Waking up with fever'd moan,
Red Rose started and looked round,
Listening for a voice, a sound,
And the skeleton, Pauguk,
Crouching silent in his nook,
Panted, like a famish'd thing,
In the very act to spring.

'Twas at sunset ; on the bed
Crimson shafts of light were shed,

And the face, famish'd and thin,
Flash'd to sickly flame therein,
While the eyes, with fevered glare,
Sought a face they saw not there.
Then she moan'd, and with a cry,
Beckoning little Phœbe nigh,
Whisper'd ; but the words she said
Perish'd uninterpreted.
Still, in bitterest distress,
Clinging to poor Phœbe's dress,
With wild gestures, she in vain
Tried to make her meaning plain.
Then did little Phœbe see
How the face changed suddenly !
For invisible Pauguk,
Creeping swiftly from his nook,
Stood erect, and hung the head
O'er the woman on the bed.
Still the woman, glaring round,
Listen'd for a voice, a sound,
Crying wildly o'er and o'er,
With her great eyes on the door.

Pale, affrighted, and aghast,
Phœbe understood at last—
Knew the weary wanderer cried
To behold *him* ere she died ;
So, without a word of blame,
Phœbe called him, and he came.

The sun was set, the night was growing,
Softly the wind o' the west was blowing,
The gates of heaven were overflowing ;
With the last snow Red Rose was going.

VIII.

THE LAST LOOK.

To the bedside, white and quaking,
Came Eureka, with a groan,
Conscience-stricken now, and taking
Her thin hand into his own.
At the touch she kindled, rallied,
With a look of gentle grace ;
Clung about him deathly pallid,
And, uplooking in his face,
Smiled! Ah, God ! that smile of parting
From her soul's dim depths upstarting !
'Twas a smile of awful beauty,
Full of fatal love and duty ;
Such a smile as haunts for ever
Any being but a beaver.
Ev'n Eureka's stolid spirit
Was half agonized to bear it.

Smiling thus, and softly crooning
 Words he could not understand,
 Sank she on the pillow, swooning,
 Clutching still her hero's hand.

Silent Spirits, shapes that love her,
 Is she resting? is all over?
 Nay; for while Eureka, quaking,
 Heart-sick, soul-sick to behold her,
 From the bed her worn form taking,
 Leans her head upon his shoulder;
 Once again, the spirit flying,
 With a last expiring ray,
 Waves a message, dimly dying,
 From its tenement of clay.
 Those great eyes upon him looking.
 Not reproaching, not rebuking,
 Brighten into bliss—perceiving
 Nought of shame or of deceiving:
 Only for the last time seeing
 Her great Chief, a god-like being;
 Only happy, all at rest,
 To be dying—on his breast.

See! her hand points upward, slowly,
 With an awful grace and holy,
 And her eyes are saying clearly,
 'Master, lord, beloved so dearly,
 We shall meet, with souls grown fonder,
 In God's happy prairies yonder;
 Where no Snow falls; where, for ever,
 Flows the shining Milky River,
 On whose banks, divinely glowing,
 Shapes like ours are coming, going,
 In the happy star-dew moving,
 Silent, smiling, loved, and loving!
 Fare thee well, till then, my Master!'—
 Hark, her breath comes fainter, faster,
 While, in love man cannot measure,
 Kissing her white warrior's hand,
 She sinks, with one great smile of pleasure—
 Last flash upon the blackening brand!

EPILOGUE.

IN a dark corner of the burial-place,
 Where sleep apart the creatures of red race,
 Red Rose was laid, cold, beautiful, and
 dead,
 With all the great white Snow above her
 bed.
 And soon the tiny partner of her quest,
 The little babe, was laid upon her breast;

For, though the heart of Phoebe had been
 kind,
 And sought to save the infant left behind,
 It wither'd when the mother's kiss with-
 drew—
 The Red Rose faded, and the Blossom too.
 There sleeps their dust, but 'neath another
 sky,
 More kind than this, their Spirits sleeping
 lie.
 Sleeping, or waking? *There*, with eyes
 tear-wet,
 Is her soul homeless? doth she wander yet,
 Silent by those still pathways, with bent
 head,
 Still listening, listening, for her warrior's
 tread?
 It came not, comes not—tho' the ages roll,
 Still with that life-long hunger in her soul,
 She must wait on, and thousand others too,
 If waking Immortality be true.
 But, no; God giveth his beloved sleep;
 Rose of the wilderness, may thine be deep!
 Not 'neath the white man's happy Death-
 domains,
 But in the red man's mighty hunting-plains;
 Amid the harmless shades of flocks and
 herds,
 Amid the hum of bees, the song of birds,
 With fields and woods all round, and skies
 above
 Dark as thine eyes, and deathless as thy
 love!

Here ends my tale; what further should I
 state?
 Save that poor Phoebe soon forgave her
 mate,
 As small white wives forgive; with words
 outspoken
 The peace was patch'd almost as soon as
 broken;
 For Phoebe argued, after a good cry,
 'Tis a bad job; but break my heart—
 not I!
 All the men do it—that's a fact confess'd,
 And my great stupid's only like the rest.
 But what's the good of fretting more than
 need?
 I've got the cows to mind, the hens to feed.
 I 'spose it's dreadful, but 'tis less a sin
 Than if the wench had a white woman's
 skin!

Oft at his head her mocking shafts she
aim'd,
While by the hearth he hung the head
ashamed,
Pricking his moral hide right thro' and
thro',
As virtuous little wives so well can do,
Till out he swagger'd, cursing, sorely hit,
And puzzled by the little woman's wit.
Indeed, for seasons of domestic strife,
She kept this rod in pickle all her life.

As for Eureka, why, he felt, of course,
Some conscience-prick, some tremor of
remorse,
Not deep enough to cause him many groans,
Or keep the fat from growing on his bones.

He throve, he prosper'd, was esteem'd by
all,—
At fifty, he was broad as he was tall;
Loved much his pipe and glass, and at
the inn
Spake oft—an oracle of double chin,
Did he forget her? Never! Often, while
He sat and puff'd his pipe with easy smile,
Surveying fields and orchards from the
porch,
And far away the little village church,
While all seem'd peaceful—earth, and air,
and sky,—
A twinkle came into his fish-like eye;
'Poor critter!' sigh'd he, as a cloud he blew,
'She was a splendid figure, and that's
true!'

Faces on the Wall.

(1876.)

LONE HOUSE.

LONE HOUSE amid the Main, where I
abide,
Faces there are around thy walls; and
see
With constant features, fair and faithful-
eyed,
In solemn silence these admonish me.
They are the Faces of the strong and
free;
Prophets who on the car of Tempest ride;
Martyrs who drift amid the waters wide
On some frail raft, and pray on bended
knee.
Stay with me, Faces! make me free and
strong!
On other walls let flush'd Bacchantes
leer;
In quainter rooms of snigger sons of
song
Let old fantastic tapestries appear.
Lone House! for comfort, when the nights
are long,
Let none but future-seeking eyes be here!

STORM AND CALM.

THE lone House shakes, the wild waves
leap around,
Their sharp mouths foam, their frantic
hands wave high;
I hear around me a sad soul of sound,—
A ceaseless sob,—a melancholy cry.
Above, there is the trouble of the sky.
On either side stretch waters with no
bound.
Within, my cheek upon my hand, sit I,
Oft startled by sick faces of the drown'd.
Yet are there golden dawns and glassy
days
When the vast Sea is smooth and sunk in
rest,
And in the sea the gentle heaven doth
gaze,
And, seeing its own beauty, smiles its
best;
With nights of peace, when, in a virgin
haze,
God's Moon wades thro' the shallows of
the West,

WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

THE Sea without, the silent room within,
 The Mystery above, the Void below !
 I watch the storms die and the storms begin ;
 I see the white ships ghost-like come
 and go ;
 I wave a signal they may see and know,
 As, crowding up on deck with faces thin,
 The seamen pass,—some sheltered creek to
 win,
 Or drift to whirling pools of pain and woe.
 What prospect, then, on midnights dark
 and dead,
 When the room rocks and the wild water
 calls?—
 Only to mark the beacon I have fed,
 Whose cold streak glassily on the black
 sea falls ;
 Only, while the dim lamp burns overhead,
 To watch the glimmering Faces on the
 walls.

NAPOLEON.

LOOK on that picture, and on this. . . .
 Behold
 The Face that frown'd the rights of
 realms away ;
 The imperial forehead, filleted with gold ;
 The arrogant chin, the lips of frozen clay.
 This is the later Cæsar, whose great day
 Was one long sunset in blood-ruby rolled,
 Till, on an ocean-island lone and gray,
 It sank unblest, forgotten, dead, and cold.
 Yea, this is he who swept from plain to
 plain,
 Watering the harvest-fields with crimson
 rain ;
 This is the Eagle who on garbage fed.
 Turn to the wall the pitiless eyes. Art,
 Thought,
 Law, Science, owed the monster less than
 nought ;
 And Nature breath'd again when he was
 dead.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

TURN ; and, behold the sad Soul of the West
 Passing behind a Rainbow bloodily !
 Conscience incarnate, steadfast, strong,
 and free,
 Changeless thro' change, blessing and ever
 blessed,

Sad storm-cloud with God's Iris on his
 breast,
 Across the troubled ocean travelled he,—
 Sad was his passing ! gentle be his rest !
 God's Bow sails with him on another sea !

At first no larger than a prophet's hand,
 Against the dense insufferable blue
 Cloud-like he came ; and by a fierce wind
 fanned,
 Didst gather into greatness ere we knew,
 Then, flash by flash, most desolately grand,
 Passed away sadly heavenward, dropping
 dew !

WALT WHITMAN.

FRIEND Whitman ! wert thou less serene
 and kind,
 Surely thou mightest (like our Bard sub-
 lime,
 Scorn'd by a generation deaf and blind),
 Make thine appeal to the avenger, Time ;
 For thou art none of those who upward
 climb,
 Gathering roses with a vacant mind,
 Ne'er have thy bands for jaded triflers
 twined
 Sick flowers of rhetoric and weeds of
 rhyme.
 Nay, thine hath been a Prophet's stormier
 fate.
 While Lincoln and the martyr'd legions
 wait
 In the yet widening blue of yonder sky,
 On the great strand below them thou art
 seen,—
 Blessing, with something Christ-like in thy
 mien,
 A sea of turbulent lives that break and
 die !

O FACES!

O FACES ! that look forward, eyes that
 spell
 The future time for signs, what see ye
 there ?
 On what far gleams of portent do ye dwell ?
 Whither, with lips like quivering leaves
 and hair
 Back-blowing in the whirlwind, do ye stare
 So steadfast and so still ? Oh speak and tell !

Is the soul safe? shall the sick world be well?
 Will morning glimmer soon, and all be fair?
 O Faces! ye are pale, and somewhat sad,
 And in your eyes there swim the fatal tears;
 But on your brows the dawn gleams cold and hoar.
 I, too, gaze forward, and my heart grows glad;
 I catch the comfort of the golden years;
 I see the Soul is safe for evermore!

TO TRIFLERS.

Go, triflers with God's secret. Far, oh far
 Be your thin monotone, your brows flower-crown'd,
 Your backward-looking faces; for ye mar
 The pregnant time with silly sooth of sound,
 With flowers around the feverish temples bound,
 And withering in the close air of the feast.
 Take all the summer pleasures ye have found,
 While Circe-charm'd ye turn to bird and beast.
 Meantime I sit apart, a lonely wight
 On this bare rock amid this fitful Sea,
 And in the wind and rain I try to light
 A little lamp that may a Beacon be,
 Whereby poor ship-folk, driving thro' the night,
 May gain the Ocean-course, and think of me!

THE WANDERERS.

GOD'S blessing on poor ship-folk! Peace and prayer
 Fall on their eyelids till they close in sleep!
 God send them gentle winds and summer air,
 For the great sea is treacherous and deep.
 Light me up lamps on every ocean-steep,—
 Beacon the shallows with a loving care.

Ay me! the wind cries and the wild waves leap,
 And on they drive—God knows—*they* know not—where.
 Come Poets! come, O Prophets! yea, disown
 The phantasies and phantoms ye pursue!
 Lights! lights! with fatal snares the sea is sown.
 Guide the poor ship-folk lone beneath the blue.
 Nay, do not light for Lazarus alone,
 But light for Dives and the Devil too.

THE WATCHER OF THE BEACON.

LONE is his life who, on a sea-tower blind,
 Watcheth all weathers o'er the beacon-light.
 Ah! woe to him if, mad with his own mind,
 He groweth sick for scenes more sweet and bright;
 For round him, in the dreadful winter night,
 The snow drifts, and the waves beat, and the wind
 Shrieks desolately, while with feeble sight
 He readeth some old Scripture left behind
 By those who sat before him in that place,
 And in their season perish'd, one and all . . .
 Wild raves the wind: the Faces on the wall
 Seem phantoms: features dark and dim to trace.
 He starteth up—he tottereth—he would fall,
 When, lo! the gleam of one Diviner Face!

'AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD MOVED UPON THE WATERS.'

O FACES! fade upon the wall, and leave
 This only, for the watcher to implore.
 Dim with the peace that starry twilights weave,
 It riseth, and the storm is hush'd and o'er.

Trembling I feed my feeble lamp once
 more,
 Tho' all be placid as a summer eve.
 See there it moves where weary waters
 grieve,—
 O mariners ! look yonder and adore !
 Spirit, grow brighter on my nights and
 days ;

Shine out of heaven ; my guide and comfort
 he :
 Pilot the wanderers through the ocean
 ways ;
 Keep the stars steadfast, and the waters free :
 Lighten thy lonely creature while he
 prays :
 Keep his Soul strong amid the mighty Sea !

Balder the Beautiful.

A SONG OF DIVINE DEATH.

ὦ Θάνατε Παύδν !

'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. . . . But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. . . . Behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.'—PAUL, COR. 1st Ep. chap. xv.

NOTE.

It may be well for readers of the following poem to dismiss from their minds all recollection of the *Eddas*, Ewald's *Balder*, Oehlenschläger's *Balder hin Gode*, and even Mr. Arnold's *Balder Dead*. With the hero of these familiar works my Balder has little in common ; he is neither the shadowy god of the *Edda*, nor the colossal hero of Ewald, nor the good principle of Oehlenschläger, nor the Homeric demigod of Mr. Arnold. In the presentation of both the Father and Son, I have reverted to the lines of the most primitive mythology : discovering in the one the northern Messiah as well as the northern Apollo, in the other (instead of the degraded Odin of later superstition) the Alfadur, or temporarily omnipotent godhead, who, despite his darker features, has affinity with both the Zeus of the Eleusinian mysteries and the Jehovah of the Bible. It is unnecessary, however, further to explain the spirit of a poem which each competent reader will interpret in his own way, and which, if it fulfils its purpose at all, should have many meanings for many minds.

A portion of *Balder the Beautiful* has already been printed in the pages of the *Contemporary Review*.

PROEM TO —.

A SONG OF A DREAM.

O WHAT is this cry in our burning ears,
 And what is this light on our eyes, dear
 love ?

The cry is the cry of the rolling years,
 As they break on the sun-rock, far above ;
 And the light is the light of that rock of gold
 As it burneth bright in a starry sea ;
 And the cry is clearer a hundredfold,
 And the light more bright, when I gaze
 on thee.

My weak eyes dazzle beneath that gleam,
 My sad ears deafen to hear that cry :
 I was born in a dream, and I dwell in a
 dream,
 And I go in a dream to die !

O whose is this hand on my forehead bare,
 And whose are these eyes that look in
 mine ?

The hand is the Earth's soft hand of air,
 The eyes are the Earth's—thro' tears they
 shine ;

And the touch of the hand is so soft, so light,
 As the ray of the blind orbs blesseth me ;
 But the touch is softest, the eyes most bright,
 When I sit and smile by the side of thee.
 For the mortal Mother's blind eyes beam
 With the long-lost love of a life gone by,
 On her breast I woke in a beauteous dream,
 And I go in a dream to die !

O what are the voices around my way,
 And what are these shadows that stir
 below ?

The voices of waifs in a world astray,
 The shadows of souls that come and go.
 And I hear and see, and I wonder more,
 For their features are fair and strange as
 mine,
 But most I wonder when most I pore
 On the passionate peace of this face of
 thine.
 We walk in silence by wood and stream,
 Our gaze upturned to the same blue sky :
 We move in a dream, and we love in a
 dream,
 And we go in our dream to die !

O what is this music of merry bells,
 And what is this laughter across the world ?
 'Tis the mirth of a market that buys and
 sells,
 'Tis the laughter of men that are counting
 gold.
 I walk thro' Cities of silent stone,
 And the public places alive I see ;
 The wicked flourish, the weary groan,
 And I think it real, till I turn to thee !
 And I smile to answer thine eyes' bright
 beam,
 For I know all's vision that darkens by :
 That they buy in a dream, and they sell in
 a dream,
 And they go in a dream to die.

O what are these shapes on their thrones of
 gold,
 And what are those clouds around their
 feet ?
 The shapes are kings with their hearts clay-
 cold,
 The clouds are armies that ever meet ;
 I see the flame of the crimson fire,
 I hear the murdered who moan ' Ah me !—
 My bosom aches with its bitter ire,
 And I think it real, till I turn to thee !
 And I hear thee whisper, ' These shapes
 but seem—
 They are but visions that flash and fly,
 While we move in a dream, and love in a
 dream,
 And go in our dream to die !'

O what are these Spirits that o'er us creep,
 And touch our eyelids and drink our
 breath ?

The first, with a flower in his hand, is
 Sleep ;
 The next, with a star on his brow, is
 Death.
 We fade before them when'er they come,
 (And never single those spirits be !)
 A little season my lips are dumb,
 But I waken ever,—and look for thee.
 Yea, ever each night when the pale stars
 gleam
 And the mystical Brethren pass me by,
 This cloud of a trance comes across my
 dream,
 As I seem in my dream to die !

O what is this grass beneath our feet,
 And what are these beautiful under-
 blooms ?
 The grass is the grass of the churchyard,
 Sweet,
 The flowers are flowers on the quiet
 tombs.
 I pluck them softly, and bless the dead,
 Silently o'er them I bend the knee,
 But my tenderest blessing is surely said,
 ' Tho' my tears fall fast, when I turn to
 thee.
 For our lips are tuned to the same sad
 theme,
 We think of the loveless dead, and sigh ;
 Dark is the shadow across our dream,
 For we go in that dream to die !

O what is this moaning so faint and low,
 And what is this crying from night to
 morn ?
 The moaning is that of the souls that go,
 The crying is that of the souls new-born.
 The life-sea gathers with stormy calls,
 The wind blows shrilly, the foam flies
 free.
 The great wave rises, the great wave falls,
 I swim to its height by the side of thee !
 With arms outstretching and throats that
 scream,
 With faces that flash into foam and fly,
 Our beings break in the light of a dream,
 As the great waves gather and die.

O what is this Spirit with silvern feet,
 His bright head wrapt in a saffron veil ?
 Around his raiment our wild arms beat,
 We cling unto them, but faint and fail.

'Tis the Spirit that sits on the twilight star,
 And soft to the sound of the waves sings
 he,
 He leads the chaunt from his crystal car,
 And I join in the mystical chaunt with
 thee,
 And our beings burn with the heavenly
 theme,
 For he sings of wonders beyond the sky,
 Of a god-like dream, and of gods in a dream,
 Of a dream that cannot die !

O closer creep to this breast of mine ;
 We rise, we mingle, we break, dear love !
 A space on the crest of the wave we shine,
 With light and music and mirth we move ;
 Before and behind us (fear not, sweet !)
 Blackens the trough of the surging sea—
 A little moment our mouths may meet,
 A little moment I cling to thee ;
 Onward the wonderful waters stream,
 'Tis vain to struggle, 'tis vain to cry—
 We wake in a dream, and we ache in a
 dream,
 And we break in a dream, and die !

But who is this other with hair of flame,
 The naked feet, and the robe of white ?
 A Spirit, too, with a sweeter name,
 A softer smile, a serener light.
 He wraps us both in a golden cloud,
 He thrills our frames with a fire divine,
 Our souls are mingled, our hearts beat loud,
 My breath and being are blent with thine :
 And the sun-rock flames with a flash
 supreme,
 And the starry waves have a stranger cry—
 We climb to the crest of our golden dream,
 For we dream that we cannot die !

Aye ! the cry rings loud in our burning ears,
 And the light flames bright on our eyes,
 dear love,
 And we know the cry of the rolling years
 As they break on the sun-rock far above ;
 And we know the light of the rock of gold,
 As it burneth bright in a starry sea,
 And the glory deepens a thousandfold
 As I name the immortal gods and thee !
 We shrink together beneath that gleam,
 We cling together before that cry ;
 We were made in a dream, and we fade in
 a dream,
 And if death be a dream, we die !

BALDER THE BEAUTIFUL.

The gods are brethren. Wheresoe'er
 They set their shrines of love or fear,
 In Grecian woods, by banks of Nile,
 Where cold snows sleep or roses smile,
 The gods are brethren. Zeus the Sire
 Was fashion'd of the self-same fire
 As Odin ; He whom Ind brought forth
 Hath his pale kinsmen east and north ;
 And more than one since life began
 Hath known Christ's agony for Man.
 The gods are brethren. Kin by fate,
 In gentleness as well as hate,
 'Mid heights that only Thought may climb
 They come, they go ; they are, or seem ;
 Each, rainbow'd from the rack of Time,
 Casts broken lights across God's Dream.

I.

THE BIRTH OF BALDER.

I.

BALDER'S BIRTH-SONG.

THERE blent with his growing
 The leaf and the flower,
 The wind lightly blowing
 Its balm from afar,
 The smile of the sunshine,
 The sob of the shower,
 The beam of the moonshine,
 The gleam of the star.
 'Mid shining of faces
 And waving of wings,
 With gifts from all places
 Came beautiful things ;
 The blush from the blossom,
 The bloom from the corn,
 Blent into his bosom,
 Ere Balder was born.

As a rainbow in heaven
 Was woven the rune,
 The colours were seven
 Most dim and divine :
 Thro' regions of thunder
 Serene swam the moon,
 With white rays of wonder
 Completing the sign.
 The snow-star was gleaming
 Cold, silent, and clear,
 Its bright image beaming
 Deep down in the mere ;
 The night grew profounder,
 The earth slept forlorn,

With the drift wrapt around her
Ere Balder was born.

Beside a waste water
Lay Frea alone,
In Asgard they sought her,
To earth she had crept ;
The Father was sitting
Snow-white on his throne,
The night-clouds were fitting,
The wind-harps were swept.
No eyes divine found her—
She lay as one dead—
Vast forests around her,
Black vapours o'erhead,—
She saw not,—she heard not,—
But weary and worn,
Snow-shrouded, she stirred not,
Ere Balder was born.

There, hid from the Father,
She brooded below,
In realms where pines gather
Ice-robed and ice-crown'd,
And the great trees were drooping,
Struck down by the snow,
With chilly arms stooping
To touch the white ground.
While whirlwinds were weaving
Their raiment of cloud,
She sat there conceiving,
Dark, brooding, and bow'd ;
But where the boughs thicken'd
A bird sang one morn,—
And she kindled and quicken'd,
Ere Balder was born.

Then by that great water,
Within the dark woods,
The dawn broke, and brought her
A glimmer of Spring !
The gray geese came crying
Far over the floods,
The black crane pass'd, flying
With slow waft of wing.
And when the moon's silver
Was shed on the mere,
The cry of the culver
Was heard far and near,
And the owls to each other
Made answers forlorn,—
And she smiled, the sad Mother,
Ere Balder was born.

Then the peace and the splendour
Of powers of the night,
And the strength that grows tender
Where dusk rivers run,
The beam of the moonshine,
The soft starry light,
And the first smile of sunshine,
Were woven in one.
And they mingled within her
With motions of earth
To strengthen and win her
To mystical birth ;—
By the pangs of a woman
The goddess was torn,
Ere, with heart of the human,
God Balder was born.

The wind-gods were blowing
Their trumpets of might,
The skies were still snowing,
And dark was the wold,—
With a rock for her pillow
Lay Frea that night,
Beneath a great willow
All leafless and cold—
But the earth to strange motion
Was stirring around,
And the ice of the ocean
Had split with shrill sound ;—
When coldly upspringing
Arose the red morn,
To a sound as of singing
Bright Balder was born !

His hair was as golden
As lily-hearts be,
When, softly unfolden,
From black tarns they rise,—
The lights of the azure,
The shades of the sea,
Blent into the pleasure
Of beautiful eyes ;
Like the aspen that lingers
Where waters run fleet
Was the touch of his fingers,
The thrill of his feet ;
White, white as the blossom
That blows on the thorn,
On Frea's fair bosom
Bright Balder was born.

While soften'd and sadden'd
With love shone her face,

Uplooking he gladden'd
 And clung to her breast,
 For a light as of summer
 Swept over the place,
 When the shining new-comer
 Awoke from his rest !
 And the willow and alder
 Thrill'd out unto bloom,
 And the lilac brought Balder
 Its light and perfume,
 While the merle sable-suited
 Sang merry by morn,
 And with bill of gold fluted
 That Balder was born !

At the notes of the singer
 The sun glimmer'd gay,
 And touch'd with bright finger
 The child as he stirred !
 For the snow from the mountains
 Was melting away,
 And the sound of the fountains
 Upleaping was heard ;
 And the black soil was broken
 To radiance of flowers,
 While the Bow for a token
 Gleam'd down thro' the showers ;
 Deep under the fallow
 Now sprouted the corn,
 And swift flash'd the swallow,
 For Balder was born !

Yea, again up in heaven
 Was rainbow'd the rune,
 And the colours were seven
 Most dim and divine :
 Sweet creatures work'd under
 The sun and the moon,
 Completing the wonder
 With whisper and sign.
 With eyes brightly gleaming
 The squirrel came near,
 In flocks swam the lemming
 Across the great mere,
 And the gold-speckled spider
 Found Frea that morn,
 And was busy beside her
 When Balder was born.

And with him came waking
 The leaf and the flower,
 The wind lightly shaking
 Its balm from afar,

The smile of the sunshine,
 The sob of the shower,
 The beam of the moonshine,
 The gleam of the star.
 'Mid shining of faces
 And waving of wings,
 With gifts from all places
 Came beautiful things ;
 By night-time and day-time
 No life was forlorn,
 'Twas leaf-time, 'twas May-time,
 And Balder was born.

Yet the spell had been woven
 Long ages ago,
 That the clouds should be cloven,
 The Father undone,
 When the light of the sunshine,
 The white of the snow,
 And the starshine and moonshine,
 Were mingled in one ;
 When the wind and the water,
 The star and the flower,
 Found a goddess, and brought her
 Their strength for a dower ;
 Yea, in runes it was written,
 With letters forlorn,
 That the gods should be smitten
 When Balder was born.

Then roar'd the mad thunder
 From regions afar,
 And the world darken'd under
 That wrath of the skies.
 But the new-born, upleaping
 As bright as a star,
 Awoke from his sleeping
 With love in his ears ;—
 And the dark rain ceased falling,
 With slow silvern thrills,
 And the cuckoo came, calling
 Aloud on the hills,
 And the glad Earth uplifted
 Her face to the morn,
 And past the storm drifted,
 For Balder was born.

. . . In the sedge of the river
 The swan makes its nest ;
 In the mere, with no quiver,
 Stands shadow'd the crane ;
 Earth happy and still is,
 Peace dwells in her breast,

And the lips of her lilies
 Drink balm from the rain ;
 The lamb in the meadow
 Upsprings with no care,
 Deep in the wood's shadow
 Is born the young bear ;
 The ash and the alder,
 The flowers and the corn,
 All waited for Balder, —
 And Balder is born !

II.

HIS GROWTH AND GODHEAD.

Lovely as light and blossoms are,
 And gentle as the dew,
 A white god stainless as a star,
 Deep-bidden, Balder grew.

For in the time when violets grow,
 And birds sing thro' the showers,
 Pale Frea left the child below,
 Upon a bank of flowers.

And heavenward now on weary feet
 The mighty goddess flies,
 And kneeleth at the Father's seat,
 And gazeth in his eyes.

Around her in those shadowy halls
 The great gods darkly tread.
 'Where is thy child?' each cold voice calls ;
 Calmly she answereth, 'Dead.

'The arrows of the gods are keen,
 An infant's heart is mild ;
 Buried within the forest green,
 Now slumbereth my child.

'The robin strewed him o'er with leaves,
 And closed his eyes of blue,
 And overhead the spider weaves
 Her rune of silk and dew.'

Fale at the mighty banquet board
 The Mother sat in pain ;
 The great gods smiling, with no word,
 Drank deep, and breathed again. . . .

But down within the forest dim
 The child divine lies quick !
 The slanted sunlight comes to him
 Thro' branches woven thick.

He drinks no nurture of the breast,
 No mother's kiss he knows ;
 Warm as a song bird in its nest
 He feels the light, and grows.

Around him flock all gentle things
 Which range the forest free :
 Each shape that blooms, each shape that
 sings,
 Looks on him silently.

The light is melted on his lips
 And on his eyes of blue,
 And from the shining leaves he sips
 The sweetness of the dew.

And slowly like an earthborn child
 He learns to walk and run—
 A forest form, with laughter wi'd,
 He wanders in the sun.

And now he knows the great brown bear,
 And sitteth with its young,
 And of their honey takes his share,
 Sucking with thirsty tongue.

Around him as he comes and goes
 There clings a golden mist,
 And in his bright hair blooms a rose,
 And a bird sings on his wrist !

And where'er he sets his feet
 Fair ferns and flowers spring,
 And honeysuckles scented sweet
 Grow where his fingers cling.

He calls, and wood-doves at the cry
 Come down to be caress'd ;
 Curl'd in his arms the lynx will lie,
 Its lips against his breast.

O look into his bappy eyes,
 As lustrous as the dew !
 A light like running water lies
 Within their depths of blue ;

And there the white cloud's shadow dim
 Stirs, mirror'd soft and gray,
 And far within the dream-dews swim
 With melancholy ray.

Ev'n thus in beauteous shape he grows,
 Unknown, unseen, unheard,
 And night by night he takes repose
 Like any flower or bird.

He drinks the balmy breath of Earth,
He feels the light and rain,
Till, like a thing of mortal birth,
He shares her peace or pain.

A wild white shape with wondering eyes
He walks by wood and stream,
And softly on his spirit lies
The burthen of a dream.

✓ His hair is like the midnight sun's,
All golden-red and bright ;
But radiance as of moonrise runs
Upon his limbs of white.

And now the wood without a sound
Hushes its leaves in dread :
Beauty and mystery surround
The silence of his tread.

Quietly as a moonbeam creeps
He moves from place to place ;
Soft steals the starlight, as he sleeps,
To breathe upon his face.

The ground grows green beneath his feet,
While, trembling on the stem,
The pale flowers drink again, full sweet,
The breath he draws from them.

Now brightly gleams the soft green sod,
The golden seeds are sown ;
O pale white lily of a god,
Thou standest now full blown !

II.

THE FINDING OF BALDER.

I.

FREA IN THE WOOD.

BLUE night. Along the lonely forest way
The goddess, mighty-limb'd and marble
white,

Tall in the shadow of the pines that waved
Their black arms in the moonrise overhead,
Stole silent-footed. Round her naked feet
The dews were luminous, and the breath of
flowers

Rose from the scented path of grass and
fern,
And all was stiller than a maiden's dream.

From grove to grove she went, like one that
knew

Each shadow of that silent forest old,
And ever as she went the tangled light
That trembled on her thro' the woven
boughs

Grew deeper and more dewy, until at last
She knew by chilly gleams upon the grass
That dawn was come. Still did that um-
brage deep

Remain in dimness, tho' afar away
The hills were kindling with dull blood-red
fires ;

But when the trumpet of the day was blown
From the great golden gateways of the sun,
When leaf by leaf the crimson rose o' the
east

Open'd, and leaf by leaf illumed in turn
Glitter'd the snowy lily of the north,
She left the shelter of those woods, and stood
Under the shining canopy of heaven.

Before her lay a vast and tranquil lake,
And wading in its shallows silently
Great storks of golden white and light
green cranes

Stood sentinel, while far as eye could see,
Swam the wild water-lily's oiled leaves.
Still was that place as sleep, yet evermore
A stir amid its stillness ; for behold,
At every breath of the warm summer wind
Blown on the beating bosom of the lake,
The white swarms of the new-born lily-
flowers,

A pinch of gold-dust in the heart of each,
Rose from the bubbling depths, and open'd
up,

And floated luminous with cups of snow.
Across that water came so sweet an air,
It fell upon the immortal mother's brow
Like coolest morning dew, and tho' she
stood

Beneath the open arch of heaven, the light
Stole thro' the gauze of a soft summer mist
Most gentle and subdued. Then while she
paused

Close to the rippling shallows sown with
reeds,

Those cranes and storks arose above her
head

In one vast cloud of flying green and gold ;
And from the under-heaven, innumerable
The lilies upward to the surface snow'd,

Till all the waters glitter'd gold and white ;
And lo ! the sun swept shining up the east,
And thro' the cloud of birds, and on the
lake,

Shot sudden rays of light miraculous,—
Until the goddess veil'd her dazzled eyes,
And with the heaving whiteness at her feet
Her bosom heaved, till of that tremulous
life

She seem'd a throbbing part !

Tall by the marge

The goddess tower'd, and her immortal face
Was shining as anointed ; then she cried,
' Balder ! ' and like the faint cry of a bird
That passeth overhead, the sound was borne
Between the burning ether and the earth.
Then once again she called, outstretching
arms,

' Balder ! ' Upon her face the summer
light

Trembled in benediction, while the voice
Was lifted up and echoed till it died
Far off amid the forest silences.

A space she paused, smiling and listening,
Gazing upon the lilies as they rose
Large, luminously fair, and new-baptized ;
And once again she would have call'd aloud,
When far across the waters suddenly
There shone a light as of the morning star ;
Which coming nearer seem'd as some bright
bird

Floating amid the lilies and their leaves,
And presently, approaching closer still,
Assumed the likeness of a shining shape,
Who, with white shoulders from the waters
reaching,

And sunlight burning on his golden hair,
Swam like a swan. Upon his naked arms
The amber light was melted, while they
clove

The crystal depths and softly swept aside
The glittering lilies and their clustering
leaves ;

And on the forehead of him burnt serene
A light as of a pearl more wonderful
Than ever from the crimson seas of Ind
Was snatch'd by human hand ; for pearl it
seen'd,

Tho' blood-red, and as lustrous as a star.
Him Frea breathless watch'd, for all the air
Was golden with his glory as he came ;

And o'er his head the bird-cloud hover'd
bright

With murmurs deep ; and thro' the lake he
swam

With arm-sweeps swift, till in the shallows
bright,

Still dripping from the kisses of the waves,
He rose erect in loveliness divine,

The lustre from his ivory arms and limbs
Stream'd as he stood, and from his yellow
hair

A glory rain'd upon his neck and breast,
While burning unextinguish'd on his brow
Shone that strange star.

Then as he shining rose,

And on her form the new effulgence fell,

The goddess, with her face beatified,

Yet gentle as a mortal mother's, cried

' Balder ! my Balder ! '—and while from all
the woods,

And from the waters wide, and from the air
Still rainbow'd with the flashing flight of
birds,

Innumerable echoes answer'd, ' Balder ! '—

Clad in his gentle godhead Balder stood,
Bright, beautiful, and palpably divine.

II.

THE SHADOW IN THE WOOD.

' Mother ! ' he said, and on that mother's
face

Fixing the brightness of his starry eyes,
He kiss'd her, smiling. E'en as sunlight falls
Upon the whiteness of some western cloud,
Irradiating and illuming it,

His beauty smote her sadness : silently
She trembled ; and her large immortal orbs
Were raised to heaven. For a space she
stood

O'er-master'd by that splendour, but at last,
While softly from her forehead and her
cheeks

The loving rapture ebb'd, and once again
Her face grew alabaster calm and cold,
Her soul found speech.

' O Balder ! best beloved !

God of the sunlight and the summer stars,
White Shepherd of the gentle beasts and
birds,

Benign-eyed watcher of all beauteous things,

Thou know'st me ! thou rememberest ! thou
art here,
Supreme, a god, my Son !—Within thine
eyes
Immortal innocence and mortal peace
Are blent to love and gentleness divine ;
And tho' I left thee in these woods a babe,
Fair and unconscious as a fallen flower,
And tho' I have not watch'd thy beauty grow,
I come again to seek thee, and behold
Thou know'st me—thou rememberest ! thou
art here,
Supreme, a god, my Son ! Blest be those
powers
To whose lone keeping I committed thee !
The heavens have shone upon thee, and
the boughs
Have curtain'd thee for slumber, and the
rain
Hath smooth'd thy soft limbs with its
silvern fingers,
And gently ministrant to thee have been
The starlight and the moonlight and the
dew,
And in their seasons all the forest flowers ;
And from the crimson of divine deep dawns
And from the flush of setting suns, thy
cheeks
Have gather'd such a splendour as appals
The vision, even mine. Balder ! beloved !
Speak to me ! tell me how thy soul hath
fared
Alone so long in these green solitudes.'

She ceased, and Balder smiled again, and
took
Her hand and held it as he answer'd her ;
And ne'er was sound of falling summer
showers
On boughs with lilac laden and with rose,
Or cuckoo-cries o'er emerald uplands heard,
Or musical murmurs of dark summer dawns,
More sweet than Balder's voice. 'O
Mother, Mother,'
It answer'd, 'when I saw thee from afar,
Silent, stone-still, with shadow at thy feet,
I knew thee well, for nightly evermore
I have seen thy shape in sleep.' And while
the face
Of the great goddess kindled once again
With its maternal love ineffable,
He added, 'Thou shalt read me all my
dream !

For in a dream here have I grown and
thriven,
With such dim rapture as those lilies feel
Awakening and uprising mystically
From darkness to the brightness of the air ;
And growing in a dream I have beheld
All things grow gladder with me, sun and
star,
Strange fronds, and all the wonders of the
wood ;
Till round me, with me, soul and part of
me,
This world hath kindled like an opening
rose.
And happy had I been as any bird
Singing full-throated in the summer light,
But for some dark and broken images
Which come to me in sleep—yea come
each night
When from the starlight and the silvern
moon
I fade with closèd eyes. But thou art here,
And in the love of thy celestial looks
I read the answer to the mystery
Of my dim earthly being.'

As he spake,
Across the goddess' face and thro' her frame
There pass'd the wind of an old prophecy,
Bending her downward as a storm-swept
bough.
'In sleep ! what shapes have come to thee
in sleep ?'
She cried, and Balder answer'd, 'It were
long
To tell thee all, my Mother ! but meseems
I have dream'd nightly of mysterious forms
White-brow'd like thee and very beautiful—
Strange spirits, each more bright than is a
star,
In robes of linen and of whitest wool,
And some all raimentless as leaf or flower,
And in their nakedness the more divine.'
Then Frea smiled and answer'd, 'That is
well—
These, Balder, are thy sisters and my kin,
Less beautiful than thou, yet very fair.'
And Balder said, ' Ofttimes mine eyes have
seen
Great shapes caparison'd in burning gold,
Tall as the tallest pine within these woods,
Who flash'd red brands together, or upheld
Bright cups of ruby, gazing on each other !'

And Frea smiled and said, 'That too is well—
Those, Balder, are thy brethren and thy peers,
Great gods, yet less than thou.' Then Balder's voice
Sank lower, saying, 'Three times in my sleep
I have seen my Father !'

Freá's cheek was blanch'd,
And pressing one white hand upon her heart,
'How seem'd he in thy sleep?' the goddess sigh'd,
'Frown'd he or smiled he? speak!' And Balder said,

In solemn whispers, sinking ever lower,
'My soul perceived a darkness and a sound
Of many voices wailing, and I seem'd
As one that drifts upon a sunless water,
Amid the washing of a weary rain—
Wet were my locks and dripping, and my limbs
Hung heavily as lead—while wave by wave
I floated to some vapour-shrouded shore.
At last, wash'd in upon the slippery weeds,
I saw before me on a mountain top
One brooding like a cloud; and as a cloud
At first he seem'd, yet ever as I look'd
Grew shapen to an image terrible,
With eyes eternal gazing down at mine.
And as I rose a voice came from the cloud
Like far-off muffled thunder, crying "Balder!
Come hither, my son Balder!"—when in fear
I scream'd and woke, and saw the daylight dance
Golden upon the forests and the meres.'

He ceased; and utter pity fill'd his soul
To see across his beauteous Mother's face
The scorching of unutterable pain;
Then thrice the troubled goddess raised her eyes
And gazed up northward where the rose-red shafts
Of dawn were trembling on the cloud-capt towers
Of Asgard; thrice the sorrow master'd her;
But soon her strong soul conquer'd, and she forced
A strange sad look of calm. 'If that be all,

Take courage—and I do conjure thee now,
Fear not thy Father. If that Father ever
Hath cherish'd or cad of thee, the loveliness
Of thy completed godhead shall disarm
His wrath,—yea, win his love.' Her gentle hand
Clasp'd his with more than mortal tenderness,
And in his eyes she gazed again and drank
The solace of his beauty while the dawn
Encrinson'd both and all the heavens and air,
But Balder trembled shrinking to her side,
And cried, with quick eyes glancing all around,
'Mother, that is not all!'

'O speak no more,'
The goddess said, 'if aught else terrible
Thine eyes have vision'd or thy sense hath dream'd,
Speak, speak, no more!' but Balder answer'd, 'Mother!
A weight is on my heart, and I must speak.
Last night I dream'd the strangest dream of dreams!
Methought I in the summer woodland walk'd
And pluck'd white daffodils and pansies blue,
And as I went I sang such songs as sing
The spirits of the forest and the stream;
And presently the golden light went in,
But balmy darkness follow'd, for the rain
Patter'd with diamond dew's innumerable
On the green roof of umbrage overhead.
I stood and waited, listening. Then methought
I heard a voice from far away—*thy* voice
It seem'd, my Mother—murmur three times
"Balder!"
And as it ceased, there pierced the wood's green heart
A shriek so sharp and shrill that all my blood
Turn'd cold to listen! Suddenly I felt
My brow was damp with chilly drops of rain,
And looking up I saw that every leaf
Had wither'd from the branches overhead,
Leaving them black against a sunless heaven
Of dark and dreary gray. Again I heard

Thy voice moan "Balder," and methought
the bowghs

Toss'd their wild arms above and echoed
"Balder,"

When lo, the black and miserable rain
Came slower and slower, wavering through
the dark,

Till every drop was as a flake of white
Falling upon the ground as light as wool !
And terror seized me, and I felt my heart
Cold as a stone, and from my hands the
flowers

Dropt, wither'd, with that whiteness on the
ground.

I tried to stir, and could not stir ; I sought
To shake the chilly flakes from off my neck,
But could not ; and each time I sought to
cry,

My cries were frozen in my throat. Now
mark !

O mark, my mother, for these things are
strange !

As thus I stood, mine eyes were 'ware of
ONE,

A Shape with shadowy arms outspread like
wings,

Which, hovering o'er me even as a hawk,
Fix'd on my face its fatal luminous eyes.

O Mother, that wan shape ! The forest holds,
In form of beast or bird or glittering snake,
No likeness of its awful lineaments !

For ever as its features seem'd to take
Clearness and semblance, they did fade
away

Into a swooning dimness ; and it seem'd
Now shapen and now shapeless, blowing
amid

The wonder of that wan and sunless shower.
Yet ever as I gazed it gazed again,
And ever circling nearer seem'd in act
To swoop upon me with cold claws and
clutch

The heart that flutter'd wildly in my breast.
At last that look became too much to bear :
Answering at last *thy* scream, I scream'd
aloud ;

And as I scream'd, I woke—and saw again
The sunlight on the forests and the meres.'

Now ev'n as Balder spake the goddess' face
Was like a shrouded woman's : once again
She gazed at heaven, and her eyes were
glazed

With agony and despair, for now she knew
That shape which Balder had beheld in
dream

Was he whom mortal man have christen'd
Death.

At last she spake, and all her proud soul
flash'd,

Rebuking its own terror. 'Unto all,
Yea even unto gods upon their thrones,
Such shadows come in sleep ; thy Father
even

Hath had his visions, and I too have mine ;
But be of comfort since thou art my Son,
For he who hover'd o'er thee in thy dream
Is impotent against the strength of gods.
Haunter is he of this sad nether sphere,
And on the little life of bird and beast,
And on the life of flowers and falling leaves,
His breath comes chill, but to the Shapes
divine

He is as wind that bloweth afar below
The silence of the peaks.'

Ev'n as she spake,

On her bright Balder gazed not, but with
eyes

Fix'd as in fascination, cried aloud
'Look ! look !'—and pointed.

Close to that bright spot

Whereon they stood in the full flame of
day,

The forest open'd, flashing green and gold,
Sparkling with quick and rapturous thrill of
leaves

And rainbow-flush of flowers. Upon a
bough

That reach'd its heavy-laden emerald arm
Into the summer light beyond the shade,
There clung, with panting breast and
fluttering wings,

A trembling ringdove whose soft iris'd eyes
Were fix'd like Balder's on some shape of
dread

Just visible in the shadow, lying low
Under the scented umbrage of the wood.
A Form, yet indistinct as the green sheen ;
A Face, yet featureless ; a head with eyes
Now faint as drops of dew, now strangely
bright

As lustrous gems. Crouch'd on the under-
grass,

It watch'd in serpent fashion every thrill

Of that bright bird ; while all around, the
air
Was mad and merry with the summer song
Of choirs that sat alive on leafy boughs,
Singing aloud !

Then came a hush, wherein
Every faint pulse of life in those great
woods
Was heard to beat ; and then the fated
bird
Cooing and quivering fluttered from the
bough,
And 'mid the summer sheen beyond the
shade,
With one last dying tremor of the wings,
Lay stricken still. . . . Among the darken-
ing leaves
There was a stir, as creeping thro' the
gloom,
Scarce visible, fixing eyes on that dead
dove,
Forth from his lair the form began to crawl.
And Balder sicken'd, and his sense grew
cold.

But with a queenly gesture Freya rose,
And pointed with her white imperious hand
Into the forest. Suddenly the shape
Was 'ware of that pale goddess and her
son
More beauteous and insufferably bright.
A moment in the dimness of his lair
He paused, uprearing, as in act to spring,
A head half human, with a serpent's eyes ;
Then, conscious of some presence that he
feared,
All swift and silent, like a startled snake,
He faded back into the shadowy woods.

II.

FULL GODHEAD.

O whither are they wending side by side
Thro' that green forest wide ?
Down the deep dingles, amid ferns and
flowers,
They wander hours and hours.
Bright-look'd, with limbs of alabaster white,
Now gleaming in the light,
Now 'mong the dusky umbrage of the glade
Deep'ning to amber shade,
Their eyes on one another, whither away
Do these Immortals stray ?

She murmurs, 'Thou shalt mark all things
that be ;
The rivers and the sea,
The mountains that for ever crimson'd lie
Against the arctic sky,
The meteors that across the pale pole flit,
Strangely illuming it ;
And thou shalt look on gods, thy kin and
mine,
Since *thou* too art divine.'
Divine !—The forest glimmers where he goes
To crimson and to rose !
And wheresoe'er he comes no creature fears ;
Each lingers, sees, and hears.
The boughs bend down to touch his yellow
hair ;
Around his white feet bare
The grass waves amorous ; on his shoulder
white
The singing birds alight,
Singing the sweeter ; and in spaces clear
The brown-eyed dappled deer
With tremulous ear and tail around him
stand,
Licking his outstretch'd hand
With warm rough tongues. He sings—all
things around
Are hush'd to hear the sound !
He smiles—all things are smiling—wood
and stream
With some new glory gleam,
Dark branches blossom, and the greensward
nigh
Is sunnier than the sky !

She murmurs, 'They have cherish'd thee
indeed,
In answer to thy need.
Ere thou wast born, into thy veins they
grew,
Earth, sunlight, air, and dew,
The flower, the leaf, star's glimmer and
bird's song ;
And these have made thee strong
With other strength than ours ; for ne'er
till now,
On any immortal brow
Have I beheld such living splendour shine
As lies this hour on thine.
O sunbeam of the gods ! O fairer far
Than ev'n Immortals are !
Divinest, gentlest, by the glad Earth given
To be a lamp in heaven !'

Divine!—The boughs shook down their shafts of green

And gleam'd to golden sheen ;
The silvern snake stole from the dark tree-root

And twined round Balder's foot
With happy eyes ; the tiger-moth and bee
About him hover'd free ;
With yellow aureole his head was crown'd,
And his bright body around
There swam a robe of sunshine scented sweet,
Clothing him head to feet.

She crieth, ' Could the Father see thee there,
While on thy silken hair
The soft light trembles like a shining hand!
Couldst thou before him stand,
Flowers round thy feet, a dove upon thy wrist,

Earth-blest and heaven-kist,
Would he not smile? would he not scorn full soon

The wearily woven rune
Which said that sorrow should be born when *thou*

Didst break with orient brow
The night-cloud of the Earth? O Son! my Son!

The crimson thread is spun,
The snow-white bud is blown, and now, behold!

The branch with fruit of gold
Hath grown full straight and swings i' the summer shine
Ineffably divine.'

He questions, ' Whither go we?' She replies,

' To that dim Land which lies
Ev'n as a cloud around the Father's feet!' He smiles, his pulses beat
With brighter rapture. ' Shall mine eyes then see

My Father?' crieth he ;
' Where dwells he? and my brethren, where dwell they?'

She answereth, ' Far away!' Then, her face darken'd by some dreamy dread,

She moves with sadder tread.

The shadows grow around them as they stray
From glade to glade ; their way

Winds still 'mong flowers and leaves, where day and night,

Both sleepless and both bright,
One golden and one silvern, come and go.
Nor, when dark twilights sow
Their asphodels in the broad fields of blue,
And a cold summer dew
Gleams on the grass, and moths with fiery eyes

Flit, and the night-jar cries,
Doth Balder glimmer less divine. Ah, nay!
Dim things that know not day
Find him and love him ; drinking his pure breath

The white owl hovereth ;
About his footprints in the faint moon-ray
Wild lynxes leap and play ;
The ringdoves on the branches brood ; meek hares

Creep from their grassy lairs
To look upon him. So he goeth by
Of all things that descry
Beloved, and missed ; around him like a veil

The moonbeams cluster pale,
And all the eyes of heaven with soft dews swim,
As they gaze down on him.

But now they leave the mighty woods, and pass

Thro' valleys of deep grass,
Sprinkled with saxifrage and tormentil ;
And many a mountain rill
Leaps by, them, singing. Far away, on high,

They mark against the sky
Blue-shadow'd mountains crown'd with sparkling snow ;
And thitherward they go.

Thro' lonely mountain valleys in whose breast

The white grouse makes its nest,
And where in circles wheel the goshawk keen

And fleet-wing'd peregrine ;
Past torrents gashing the dark heathery height

With gleams of hoary white,
Their shining feet now fall, and where they fare

Faint rainbows fill the air

And span the streams ; with sound of rip-
pling rain
The cataracts leap amain,
The deer cry from the heights, and all around
Is full of summer sound.

Silent, upon the topmost peak they come,
By precipices dumb
And melancholy rocks girt round ; and so
They reach the realms of snow.
Far o'er their heads a hooded eagle wings
In ever-widening rings,
Till in the blinding glory of the day
A speck he fades away.
Then Balder's eyes gaze down. Stretch'd
far beneath,
Forest and field and heath,
Netted with silvern threads of springs and
streams,
Shine in the summer beams—
And valley after valley farther on
Fades dim into the sun.

He crieth, ' Far away methinks I mark
A mighty Forest dark,
Crown'd by a crimson mist ; yonder it lies,
Stretching into the skies,
And farther than its darkness nought I see.'
And softly answereth she,
' O Balder ! 'tis the Ocean. Vast and
strange,
It changeth without change,
Washing with weary waves for evermore
The dark Earth's silent shore.'
And Balder spake not, but he gazed again
Thro' the soft mist of rain
Which curtain'd that new wonder from his
sight.

At last, when day and night
Have passed, they cross a purple cape and
stand
On shores of golden sand,
And pausing silent, see beneath the sky
The mighty Ocean lie.

IV.

THE MAN BY THE OCEAN.

Calmly it lieth, limitless and deep,
In windless summer sleep,
And from its fringe, cream-white and set
with shells,
A drowsy murmur swells,

While in its shallows, on its yellow sands,
Smiling, uplifting hands,
Moves Balder, beckoning with bright looks
and words

The snow-white ocean-birds.
He smiles—the heavens smile answer ! All
the sea
Is glistening glassily.
Far out, blue-black amid the waters dim,
Leviathan doth swim,
Spouts fountain-wise, roars loud, then sink-
ing slow,
Seeks the green depths below.
All silent. All things sleeping in the light,
And all most calmly bright !

He walks the weed-strewn strand, and
where the waves
Creep into granite caves,
Green-paven, silver-fretted, roof'd with rose,
He like a sunbeam goes,
And ocean-creatures know him. The black
sea
Out of the darkness steal
With gentle bleat, or with their lambs arise,
Their dark and dewy eyes
Uplucking into his ; the cormorants green,
Which ranged in black rows preen
Their dusky plumage, at his footstep's sound
Turn snake-like necks around,
But rise not ; o'er his head the white terns fly
With shrill unceasing cry ;
And out of caverns come the rock-doves
fleet,
Alighting at his feet !
Across the waters darts a shaft supreme
Of strange and heavenly gleam,
That doth his consecrated form enfold
Like to a robe of gold,—
While all the Ocean gladdeneth anew,
Stretch'd bright beneath the blue.

But what is this he findeth on his way,
Here, where the golden ray
Falleth on sands 'neath crimson crags that
rise
Dark 'gainst the great blue skies ?
What is this shape that, breathing soft and
deep,
Lies on its side asleep,
Here on the strand where drifted sea-weeds
cling ?
Is it some ocean thing,

Crept from the emerald darkness of the brine
 To bask i' the summer shine?
 Is it some gentle monster whose green home
 Lies far below the foam?
 Softly he sleeps, while on his closèd eyes
 The summer sunlight lies;
 Around his face, that seemeth wildly fair,
 Hang tawny locks of hair,
 On dusky shoulders falling loosely down;
 And lo, his cheeks are brown
 With kisses of the sun, and round his limbs
 A light like amber swims
 Divinely clear; and by his side is thrown
 A spear of walrus-bone,
 A bear-skin blanket, and a seal-hide thong;
 So sleeps he, brown and strong;
 And nought that lieth upon land or sea
 Seemeth more strange than he,
 Like some wild birth of ocean wash'd to
 land,
 And cast upon the sand
 With many a drifting weed and waif beside.

'O Mother!' Balder cried,
 Suddenly falling on his bended knee,
 'What shape is this I see?
 It sleeps—it breathes—it lives!' And Frea
 said,
 Scarce turning her proud head,
 'It is a mortal man not worth thy care!
 Ev'n as the birds of the air
 They are born, they gladden, and they come
 and go.'
 But Balder, stooping low,
 Passing soft fingers o'er the sleeper's side,
 And smiling sweetly, cried,
 'Awake, awake!' and gently from the
 strand
 He raised one strong brown hand.
 'Hush!' said the pallid goddess, sighing
 deep,
 'Lest he awake from sleep,
 And touch him not, lest from his mortal
 breath
 Thou know'st the taint of Death.'
 'Death!' Balder echoed with a quick sharp
 pain;
 And Frea spake again,
 'Nought on this nether sphere which foster'd
 thee,
 But drinks mortality;
 Fade not the leaf, the lily, and the rose?
 Yea, and the oak-tree knows

Only its season;—in their seasons all
 Are fashion'd, fade, and fall—
 Birds on the boughs, and beasts within the
 brake,
 Yea, ev'n the hawk and snake,
 Are born to perish; and this creature shares
 An earthly lot like theirs.'
 She panted; for suddenly in the bright
 sun-ray
 God Balder's cheeks grew gray
 And sunken—his eyes dim;—a moment's
 space
 Across his tronbled face
 Pass'd darkness. Frea quail'd. A moment
 more,
 And that strange shade pass'd o'er,
 And Balder's looks again grew beautiful.

O'erhead, as white as wool,
 The calm clouds melted in the burning
 blue;
 Beneath, the great seas grew
 Still and calmer, while the immortal one
 Stood dreamling in the sun,
 On that dark sleeper fixing eyes grown
 bright
 With heavenly love and light.

'O come!' the goddess cried, and took his
 hand.
 Along the shining strand
 They pass'd, but evermore god Balder's face
 Turn'd backward to the place
 Where he had left the weary wight asleep.

Then, as beside the Deep
 They wander'd slowly onward, Frea told
 Strange tales and legends old
 Of living men, and how they came to be,
 And how they bend the knee
 To gods they know not, till beneath the sun
 They die, and all is done.

And ever her finger pointed as she spoke
 To wreaths of light-blue smoke
 Upcurling heavenward o'er the sleeping seas
 From fishing villages.
 Love in his heart and wonder on his brow,
 Bright Balder hearken'd now
 In silence. 'Far beyond those lonely woods
 And these sea-solitudes,
 Peopling the dark Earth, living forms ilke
 these
 Gather as thick as bees:—

Shapen like gods, yet perishable ; horn
 For ever night and morn,
 And night and morn for ever vanishing.
 An old dark doom doth cling
 Around them and all kindred things that
 bloom
 Out of the green world's womb.
 Heed them not *thou!* To gods they are no
 more
 Than singing birds that soar
 A little flight, and fall. Tho' for a space,
 Rear'd in a lowly place,
 Thou hast known, as mortals know, Earth's
 shade and shine,
 Another lot is thine !—
 To sit among the gods, on heights supreme,
 Beyond Man's guess or dream !'

III.

THE HEAVENWARD
JOURNEY.

I.

THE GODDESSES.

THERE is a valley by the northern sea,
 O'ershadow'd softly by eternal hills
 And canopied by the ethereal blue.
 Above it silently for ever gleam
 Cold peaks of ice and snow, and over these
 The wind goes, and the shadows of the
 wind ;
 While far below, the hollows of the vale .
 Are strewn most deep with heather and with
 thyme,
 And weeping willows hang their silken hair
 O'er dusky tarns with summer lilies sown ;
 And from these tarns smooth tracts of
 greensward slope
 Until they blend with silvern sands that kiss
 The foam-white lips of the still sleeping sea.

Into that valley by a secret way,
 The goddess guided her immortal son.
 Long had they wander'd, o'er the realms of
 snow,
 Thro' forests vast, down desolate ravines ;
 And still, where'er they stept, before their
 feet
 A wind of brightness like a river ran,
 And rippled softly into grass and flowers,—

So that they walked on rainbows with no
 rain,
 And under heaven made heaven beneath
 their feet.
 At last their path wound upward, while
 again
 They trod the white snows of the topmost
 peaks,
 And saw beneath them, faint and far away,
 The secret valley : purple woods of pine,
 Craggs of wild umbrage lit by flashing falls,
 Smooth emerald lawns ; and beyond all,
 the sea.

And lo ! as Balder gazed, that valley fair
 Grew fairer—on its sleep his brightness fell
 As benediction—and in saffron light
 It swam below him like a sunset cloud.
 Down from the lonely heights whereon he
 stood

A snow-white cataract, like a naked god
 With plumes of silver plunging from a peak
 Into a purple ocean, headlong flash'd ;
 Then, lost among the dark green pine-tree
 tops,

Sounded unseen, mingling its far-off voice
 With the deep murmur of the wind-swept
 boughs.

From rocky shelf to shelf, with golden moss
 Enwrought and fringed with dwarf willow
 trees,

They now descended in the torrent's track,
 And plunging swiftly downward found a path
 Thro' the cool darkness of the shadowy
 woods ;

But as they went the dusky forest way
 Grew brighter, ever flash'd to softer green
 The green leaves, and the sward to sunnier
 hues,

Till from the leafy umbrage they emerged,
 And Balder saw a vision fairer far
 Than ever poet fabled in a dream.

Beside those waters, on those emerald
 lawns

Basking in one eternal summer day,
 Lay goddesses divine with half-closed eyes
 Gazing out seaward on the crimson isles
 Sown in the soft haze of the summer deep.
 And there they wove white runes to win the
 hearts

Of gods and men, while o'er their happy
 heads

Eternity hung steadfast as a star.
Some stretch'd upon the scented greensward
lay

Moveless and wonderfully robed in white ;
Some sitting silent by the dusky tarns
Look'd upward, with their faces dim as
dream ;

Some musing stood, their eyes upon the sea,
Their thoughts afar ; and many up and
down

Along the quiet greensward paced and
mused.

There was no laughter as of maiden voices,
No sound like human singing : all was
still—

Still as a heartbeat, silent as a sleep.

But when from the green shadow of the
woods

Immortal Balder in his beauty came,
And stood irresolute in light divine
Gazing upon that wonder of white life,
There was a cry of startled handmaidens
Flocking round goddesses most marble pale.
All to their feet had risen, and one supreme
Tall shape with mail'd plates upon her
breast,

A skirt blood-red, and in her hand a spear,
Stood, while pale virgins crouch'd around
her feet,

Confronting Balder with black eyes of fire.
Lithe was she as a serpent, lithe and tall,
Her dark skin glimmering bronzed in the
sun,

Her eyebrows black drawn down, and as
the beam

Of Balder's beauty struck upon her frame,
She raised her spear, and seem'd in act to
strike ;

But Frea, coming stately from the shade,
Cried, ' Hold ! ' and Rota (for 'twas she
whose soul

Delights in sowing strife 'mong weary men)
Paused frowning, and the virgins at her feet
Look'd up amazed.

' Whom bring'st thou here ? ' she cried—
' What shape is this, with pale blue human
eyes,

Yet more than human brightness, venturing
Where never foot of earthborn thing hath
fared ? '

And Frea answer'd gently, ' Harm him not !

Nor give him chilly greeting, sister mine—
Kin is he to immortal gods and thee—
'Tis Balder ! my son Balder ! ' At the word
The wind of that old prophecy arose
And for a moment like a fever'd breath
Faded across those lawns and sleeping
pools ;

And blown from group to group of white-
robed forms,

From goddess on to goddess, echoed low
The name of ' Balder, ' till it reached the
sands,

And on the far-off foam did die away
In low sad echoes of the mighty main.

Then Balder with a heavenly look advancing
Shone on the place, and Rota dropt her
spear,

Still darkening, as in wonder and in scorn
She gazed upon him, crying, ' Then he
lives !

Woe to the race of Asa since he lives !
Why comes he here ? ' And Balder, with
a voice

As sweet as fountains falling, made reply,
' I seek my sisters and my kin divine,
And *thou* art of them ! ' and he reach'd out
hands,
Smiling !

As Rota stood irresolute,
Half-angry, half-disarm'd by his sweet eyes,
Another shape most fair and wonderful
In snow-white robe array'd thro' which her
limbs

Shone with a rosy and celestial ray,
Cried ' Balder ! ' in a voice so strange and
deep

It fell upon the fountains of his heart
Like sudden light ; and two serene large
eyes

Shone clear as clearest stars before his
sight.

' Who speaketh ? ' Balder cried, and the
deep voice

Made answer, ' O thou foster-child of earth,
With eyes like tender harebells, and with
flesh

Bright as the body of a mortal man,
Dost thou not know me ?—I am Gefion,
Whose touch could make thee fruitful as a
tree

That drops ripe fruit at every kiss o' the
wind.'

And Balder would have answer'd eagerly,
But Frea now uplifting a white hand
With queenly gesture, raised her voice and
said,

'O sisters! goddesses! O lilies fair
Blown in the still pools of eternity!
Be silent for a space, and for a space
Gaze on my son whom to your bowers I
bring

For benediction; now, behold, he lives,
Immortal as yourselves and beautiful
As any star that in the heaven of heavens
Hangs luminous, a lamp for mortal eyes.
Him in the secret furrows of the Earth
I cast like seed, while far away the storm
Flash'd to a portent, and I wove my rune:
That neither wind nor snow nor any touch
Of god or goddess might disturb his growth
From season unto season, while he rose
Ev'n as a flower from the sweet-soil'd earth.
There came unto his making leaf and flower,
The soft rain and the shadow of the rain,
The sundew and the moondew, and the
gleam

Of starlight, and the glowlight on the grass.
To secret things my hauds committed him,
And strangely he hath thriven since that
hour,

Ev'n as a leaf is fashion'd, ev'n as the hair
Of the long grass is woven, wondrously!
And thus, his brow bright with the balms
of Earth,

He stands complete, his Father's child, my
son.

O look upon him! See his happy eyes!
And tell me that ye love him, and in turn
Will bless him, shielding him upon your
breasts

If ever evil hour to him should come.
Oh, that sad rune we fear'd of old is false!
For gentle is he as the gentle things
Which foster'd him, too blest and beautiful
To be a terror or a grief to gods.'

She ceased; and Gefion thro' her loosen'd
hair

Smiled, and stern Rota's look grew tenderer.
Then, stretch'd her listless length upon the
grass,

Her dark face glowing brightly in the sun,
Upon one elbow leaning, sun-tanned Eir
Raised with quick wicked laugh her root
and knife,

Saying, 'O Frea, had I found him there
Fall'n like a flower in the dark arms of
Earth,

This knife had made an end; but since he
stands

Full-grown and fair, immortal, and thy son,
I bid him welcome!'—As she spake, the
eyes

Of Balder fell upon the root and knife,
And lo, the knife gleam'd as a brand of
gold,

While the black root, moist with the dews
of earth,

Trembled, and blossom'd into light green
leaves!

Then trembling, Eir arose, and stood her
height,

While gazing full into her troubled eyes,
Bright Balder moved to embrace her
silently.

But as he gently came there interposed
A wonder of new brightness,—such a shape,
So perfect in divine white loveliness,
As never mortal yet beheld and lived.

And Balder trembled, and his bosom heaved
With an exceeding sweetness strange and
new,

While close to his there came a shining
face,

Still as a sunbeam, dimmer than a dream.
And Freya, for 'twas she whose touch is
life

To happy lovers and to loveless men
Is sickness and despair, said, breathing
warm,

While on her alabaster arms love's light
Was flushing faint as thro' a rose's leaves,
'Let all my sisters greet thee as they will,
I love thee, Balder! since of lovely things
Thou art the brightest and the loveliest!'
And lo! ere he was ware of her intent,
Unto his cheek she prest a warm red mouth
Kings of great empires would have swoon'd
to touch,

And poets heavenly-dower'd would have
died

To dream of kissing. Then thro' Balder
ran

A new miraculous rapture such as feels
The dark Earth when the scented Summer
leaps

Full-blossom'd as a bridegroom to her arms;

Such as musk-roses know when blown apart
By sunbeams in mid-June; and Balder's
sense

Swoon'd, and he seem'd strewn o'er with
fruit and flowers,

And on his lids were touches like warm
rain,

And on his nostrils and his parted lips
Delicious balm and spicy odours fell,
And all his soul was like a young maid's
frame

Bathed in the warmth of love's first virgin
dream.

Then, as he trembled thro' and thro' his
form

With the last flush of that celestial fire,
The goddesses around him flocking came,
All giving welcome. Some into his eyes
Gazed in such awe as pallid virgins feel
For some mysterious splendour masculine
They seek yet fear and shrink from as they
touch.

For Balder's loveliness in that bright place
Was as the soft sheen of the summer moon
Arising silvern in the cloudless west
Above the sunset seas of orange gold;
And there was trouble in his human eyes
Most melancholy sweet,—trouble like tears,
Of starlight, or the tremor of the dew.

II.

THE FRUIT OF LIFE.

They led him to a bank with moss inlaid,
Close to the tranquil mirror of the sea,
And thither came pale ocean handmaidens
Singing to lutes of amber and of pearl,
While 'Love him, love him,' cried the god-
desses,

'O love him, love him, he is beautiful!'
But Frea lifted up her hand, and cried,
'Love is not all—swear against all things ill
To watch him and protect him;—and they
cried,

'We swear! we swear!' Then bending
over him

With bright black eyeballs burning into his,
Pale Rota touched his forehead with her
spear,

Crying 'Live on! No touch of time shall
cause

One wrinkle on thy smooth unruffled brow!'

And Eir, low-laughing, held with tender
teeth,

Not bruising the fair skin, his naked arm,
And murmur'd, 'Strength and subtle force
be thine,

Drunk from my breath into thy deepest
veins.'

And Gefion, with her large, sad, heavenly
eyes

Upgazing in his face, and one white hand
Laid softly on his side, cried, 'As a tree
Be fruitful! Wheresoe'er thou wanderest,
Fruitage go with thee and a thousand
flowers!'

But Freya kiss'd him calmly on the brow,
And whisper'd to him lower than the rest,
'O Balder! my soul's gift is best of all—
They bring thee life, but I have given thee
love.'

And Balder sank into a dream. Much joy
Made his sense drowsy, and with happy
eyes

He saw that mist of light and loveliness
Enclose him, while he seem'd as one who
swims

Among the shallows of an orient sea.
A voice like music woke him, and he saw
Standing before him in light azure robes
A shape that 'midst those others seem'd as
dim

And unsubstantial as a summer shade.
Tall was she, and her wondrous sheen of
hair

Rain'd downward like the silvern willow's
leaves,

And on her mystic raiment blue as heaven
There glimmer'd dewy drops like shining
stars.

Pale was she, with the pallor of wan waters
That wash for evermore the cold white feet
Of spectral polar moons; and when she
spake,

'Twas low as sea-wash on the starlit sands
And strange and far-away as sounds in
sleep.

'Balder!' she sigh'd; and like a man who
hears,

Upstarting on his bed, some wondrous cry,
Balder upstarted wildly listening.

'Balder! O brother Balder, whose fair face,
Ere yet I gazed upon it shining here,
I knew thro' dark eternities of dream,

See what *I* give thee ! see what gentle gift
Thy sister Ydun brings thee ; more divine
Than life's sweet breath, or the fair flame
of love.'

So saying, from her veiled breast she drew
Mystical apples like to diamond seeds,
So small to seeming that a score might lie
In the pink hollow of an infant's hand.
Each shone complete and pure as mother-
o'-pearl

Touch'd with prismatic gleams of wondrous
light,

And unto each on the scarce visible stem
There clung two perfect little leaves of gold.
This secret fruit the gods and goddesses
For ever feed on, evermore renewed ;
And in a garden desolate and dim
Wash'd by the wild green sea of human
graves,

Pale Ydun plucks it, and none other may.
'Eat !' Ydun murmur'd — 'Balder, eat and
live—

This fruit shall slay the lingering taint of
Earth

Within thee, and preserve thee all divine.'

Then Balder reaching out his open'd
hand

Did take the fruit, and eating of the same,
Which melted on his tongue like flakes of
snow,

He felt thro' all his limbs the rapturous
thrill

Of some supreme and unfamiliar life.

So leaving all those luminous shapes behind,
He took the hand of Ydun, kissing her
As moonlight kisses dew ; and side by side
They wended down across the yellow
sands,—

And many hours they wander'd whispering
low

Close to the bright edge of that sleeping Sea.

III.

THE CITY OF THE GODS.

So Balder knew what mystical delights,
What slumberous idleness and peace su-
preme

Belong to the immortal goddesses ;
And not a goddess in those golden walks
But loved the human light in Balder's face.

At last there came a day (if day might come
Where suns sank never in the crystal sea)
When mighty Frea said, 'The time is nigh
To say farewell—much yet remains to do,
A weary path to follow, ere thy seat
Among immortal creatures is secure.'

And Balder smiled, for of those shining
groves

His soul was weary tho' he knew it not ;—
Ev'n Freya's kiss was chiller on his cheek,
And Gefion's face seem'd less serenely fair,
And only Ydun still had power to soothe
His spirit with her weirdly-woven runes.

And Balder said, 'O Mother, sweet it is
To dwell among the immortals in these
bowers,

But to fare on is better, and I seem
Ev'n as a cloud whose feet may never rest,
But still must wander, and it knows not
whither.'

And so from that fair valley silently
They pass'd, and up the mountain sides,
and down

Thro' other prospects less divinely fair.

And from the valley they had left the face
Of Balder slowly faded like a star,
Forgotten, dwindled from the drowsy dream
Of those great slumberous-lidded goddesses.

From that bright realm's serene eternity
All forms that are not present fade away
Like shadows stealing o'er a summer stream.
Yea even Freya did forget his eyes,

And gazed straight out at the unchanging
sea

Smiling all calm as if he had not been ;
And only Ydun did remember him,
Writing his name upon the yellow sands
And weaving it all round with subtle runes.

. . . But far away beyond those secret
realms,

Still northward, thro' the wastes where
nothing lives,

The goddess guided Balder, till at last
Into their faces flash'd the polar fires ;
So that the streams were purpled and the
heights

Took deeper crimson gleams, and overhead
The stars were quench'd in amethyst and
gold.

Then Frea pointed with her hand, and cried,
'Behold the CITY OF THE GODS !'

They stood
Upon the verge of a vast Sea of Ice,
So rough, so sown with berg and drift, it
seem'd

An ocean frozen in the midst of storm
Before the surge could break, the waves
could fall.

Still was it 'neath the gleaming lights of
heaven,

Silent and awful, sleeping with no stir,
In one vast gleam of crimson bright as blood
Cast on it from afar. For lo! beyond,
Rose Asgard, the great City of the Gods,
For ever burnt to ashes night by night
And dawn by dawn for evermore renew'd.
And mortals when they see from out their
caves

The City crumbling with a thousand fires
Cry, 'Lo, the Sunset!'—and when ever-
more

They mark it springing up miraculous
From its own ashes strewn beside the sea,
Cry, 'Lo, the Sunrise!' There, within its
walls

The great gods strive in thickening fumes
of fight,

Gathering together bloody ghosts of men;
And when the great towers tremble and the
spires

Shoot earthward and the fiery ashes smoke,
The gods exult a little space, and wave
Their brands for all the vales of earth to
see;

But when the ashes blacken, and the moon
Shines on the City's embers, silently
They creep into their starry tents and
sleep,—

Till like a rose unfolding leaf by leaf,
The immortal City rises!

And behold!

There, far across the silent frozen Deep,
They saw the glimmer of the topmost
towers,

Fading and changing in the lurid light
Of their own terrible consuming flame;
And shadows to and fro amid the gleam
Pass'd, smiting shadows, and from out the
heavens

There came a far-off sound as of a sea.

Still onward, walking now with wearier feet
The ice of that great Ocean, they pursued

Their solitary way, and as they went,
With shadows ever lengthening to the
south,

The City sank consuming, till its towers
Just touch'd with gold the red horizon
fringe;

And in the darkening ether over it
A star sprang like a spirit clad in mail,
And sat without a sound upon its throne,
Down-gazing; and the empty heavens and
air

Were troubled still with melancholy light,
Wherein the opening lamps of night were
swung

Pure golden, twinkling without beams.

At last,

When of that City little more remain'd
Than splendour from its ashes fading slow,
They reach'd one mighty gateway crumb-
ling down

Ev'n as a cloud that clings upon a crag,
And passing in they found the golden streets
All chill and desolate and strewn with shade;
For no quick foot of any living thing,
Mortal or god, trod there; but all around
Grew silence, and the luminous eyes of stars.

Then Frea said, 'Call now upon the
Father!'

And Balder, standing bright and beautiful
Like to a marble column wrought with gold,
All kindled with the shadows of the fire,
Rose on the ashes of the City and cried,
'Father!' when glory grew about his brow,
And on his breast and arms the light was
shed,

Staining their alabaster. So he stood,
Tall-statured, luminous, supremely fair,
Watch'd by the closing eyes of all the world.
And suddenly, in answer to his cry,
A fierce aurora of pale faces flash'd
Out of the night of the extremest north.

And Frea cried aloud, 'Almighty gods!
Behold your brother Balder! Father in
Heaven,
Behold thy Son!'

From out the north there came
A murmur, and across the skies there swept
A trouble as of wildly waving hands.

Then Frea cried to Balder, 'Call again!'

And Balder, shining still most beautiful,
And stretching out his arms to the black
north,
Cried 'Father !'

Suddenly the stars were quenched,
And heavy as a curtain fell the night.

IV.

THE VOICE OF THE FATHER.

Then Frea said, 'O Balder, best beloved,
My heart fails, and my weary spirit swoons.
Fare on alone, and enter unafraid
The presence of the Father.'

As she spake,
Her face he saw not, but he felt her hands
Clinging around him, while his own fair
face,

Amid that sudden darkness, shone serene,
Fearless and gentle, and his beauteous limbs
Gleam'd with the lustre of celestial life.
'Mother,' he answer'd, 'why is all so dark?
And where is he thou namest, that mine
eyes
May look upon him?'

From the blacken'd ground
Her voice sobbed answer, saying, 'Even
now

His shadow is upon us. Pass *thou* on,
Glide silent thro' the phantom groves of
gods,

And stand in thine immortal loveliness,
With eyes divine on his, before the throne.
Here will I linger, praying close to the
earth,
Till thou returnest.'

Shining like a star,
Spake Balder, 'All is dim, and I discern
No pathway and no bourne;' but with
clear voice

Uplifted like a swan's that flies thro' storm,
He call'd, 'Where art thou, Father? It
is I,
Balder thy Son !'

As when the great seas roar
Suck'd in thro' weedy rocks and under-
caves

With surging sorrow drearily prolong'd
In hoarse and billowy breaths of solemn
sound,
Ev'n so that darkness murmur'd and a voice

Came thund'rous out of heaven with no
words.

And Frea cried, 'Thou hearest! Hark, he
calls—

Follow that murmur out into the dark,
And it shall guide thee to the Father's feet.'

Silently, softly smiling, with no fear,
Balder pass'd on; and as one gropes his way
Oceanward guided by the ocean's voice,
He faded slowly forth into the night.

V.

BALDER'S RETURN.

There close to the earth she waited, crouch-
ing down

'Mid the cold ashes of the sunken City,
While closing round her like to prison walls
The deep impenetrable darkness grew.
And soon it shed a heavy, weary rain,
That clung upon her, chilling soul and sense,
Cold as a corpse's lips; and all the while,
As a bird listens from its folded wings,
She listen'd!

But the only sound she heard
Was the low murmur of that weary rain,
Which spread wet fingers o'er the shudder-
ing heavens,
And drearily drew down the rainy lids
Over the gentle eyes of all the stars.

Silent she lay and hearken'd, till her soul
Had lost all count of time and faded back
Into its own sad, dumb eternity. . . .

At last she stirred like one that wakes from
sleep.

The rain had ceased, the darkness to the
north

Had lifted, and her eyes heheld afar,
Beneath the glimmer of the northern night,
The brightness of the god's returning feet.

Slowly, like one whose heart is heavy;
slowly,

Like one that muses sadly as he moves;
Slowly, with darkness brooding at his back,
Came Balder, and his coming far away
Was ev'n as moonlight when the moon is
sad

On misty nights of March; and when again

He pass'd across the ashes of the City,
And she who bare him could behold his face,
'Twas spectral white, and in his heavenly
eyes

There dwelt a shadowy pain. Ev'n as a man
Who passing thro' the barrows of the slain
Hath seen the corpses sit at dead of night
Gazing in silence from their own green
graves ;

Or as a maiden who hath seen a wraith
And knoweth that her shroud is being
woven,

Came Balder out of heaven : still divine,
And beautiful, but ah ! how sorrowful ;
Still bright, but with a light as sadly fair,
Compared to that first splendour of the
dawn,

As moonshine is to sunshine ; on his brow
The shade of some new sorrow, in his eyes
The birth of some new pity ; as a god,
Yet ghost-like, with deep glamour in his
gaze,

Slowly, with faltering footsteps, Balder
came.

Then Frea rose in silence, very pale,
For on her soul beholding Balder's face
Some desolate anticipation fell,
And turn'd her eyes on his, stretching her
hands

To hold him and to embrace him, keen to
hear

His message ; but he spake not when her
arms

Were wound about him and upon his brow
Her soft kiss fell ; vacant his sad eyes
seem'd,

As if they gazed on something far away.
Then Frea sobbed in agony of heart,
'Son, hast thou seen thy brethren?' and
again,

'Son, hast thou seen thy Father?' Yet a
space

His lips were silent, and his eyes were
blank,

But when again and yet again her tongue
Had framed the same fond question, Balder
said,

In a low voice and a weary, 'I have seen
My brethren and my Father !' Like a man
Smit thro' and thro' with sudden sense of
cold,

He shiver'd.

Then the goddess, mad to see
The light of agony on that well-loved face,
Clung to him wailing, 'Balder ! my Son
Balder !

Why is thy look so sick, thy soul so weary?
What hast thou done and seen ? what sight
of heaven

Hath made thee sad?'—and Balder answer'd
low,

'O Mother ! I have dream'd another
dream—

I have seen my brethren in a dream—have
seen

My brethren and my Father ; and it seems
From that strange trance I have not waken'd
yet,

But that I still am darkling in my dream,
The breath of gods about me, and the eyes
Of gods upon me ! Patience—question
not—

The light is coming, and my soul is waking—
My dream grows clear, and I shall soon
remember

All that mine eyes have seen, mine ears
have heard.'

Then on that City's ashes side by side
Sat son and mother, two colossal shapes,
Silent, in shadow ; but the eyes of heaven
Were opening above, and to the south
They saw the white seas flash with glittering
bergs

In fitful glimmers to the windy night.
And when a little space had pass'd away
The god spake softly, saying, 'All is clear,
My sorrow and my dream ; and Mother,
now

I know those things which seem'd so sad
and dark.

Ah ! woe is me that I was ever born
To be a terror and a grief to gods !'

Then Frea cried, 'O Balder, unto whom
Can all the promise of thy beauty bring
Terror or grief? Nay, 'twas with looks
serene

To win the heart of heaven, that its wrath
Might never turn against thee, and to mock
With glory of thy human gentleness
The prophecy of that ancestral rune,
I bade thee go up beauteous and alone
Before the darkness of the Father's face.
Yet thou returnes barren of such joy

As thou a god shouldst snatch from gods
thy kin,
First in thy plenitude beholding them ;
And on thy brow is sadness, not such peace
As comes from consecration of a kiss
Given by a Father to a son beloved
In whom he is well pleased !'

Then once again
Like a man smitten to the bone with cold,
Bright Balder shiver'd, and his beautiful face
Grew gray as any mortal's fix'd in death ;
And suddenly he cried, 'O come away !
Come back to those green woods where I
was born.
The ways of heaven are dreary, and the
winds
Of heaven blow chilly, and I fain would find
A refuge and a home !'

But Frea moan'd,
Turning her fair face northward in quick
wrath,
'Ay me thy dream—I read it, from mine own
Most bitterly awaking. Woe to them !
Woe to the Father and the gods thy kin !
Out of thy mansion have they cast thee forth,
Denying thee thy birthright and thy seat
Up yonder at thy heavenly Father's side !'
But Balder, in a feeble voice and low,
Said, 'They denied me nought, those
Shapes I saw
Strangely as in a sleep ; nay, but meseem'd
They pointed at me with their spectral hands
And waved me back, some with their rai-
ment hems
Hiding their faces ; in their eyes I saw
Not love but protestation absolute ;
And when I rose and named my Father's
name,
It seem'd creation rock'd beneath my feet
And all the cloudy void above my head
Trembled ; and when I named my name, a
voice
Shriek'd " Balder !" and the naked vaults of
heaven
Prolong'd in desolation and despair
The echoes of the word till it became
As thunder ! Then meseem'd I saw a hand,
Gripping the fiery lightning suddenly,
Strike at my head as if to smite me down ;
But tho' my frame was wrapt about with fire,
I stood unscathed ; and as I paused I saw,

Confused as stormy shadows in the sea,
Thrones gleaming, faces fading, starry
shapes
Coming and going darkly ; and each time
I call'd upon my Father, that great hand
Flash'd down the fierce darts of the crimson
levin,
And from that darkness which I knew was he
A voice came, and a cry that seem'd a curse,
Until my soul was sicken'd and afraid.
Then, for my heart was heavy, yearning still
To look upon him and to feel at last
The welcome of his consecrating kiss,
I fell upon my knees, folded my bands
Together, and I blest him ;—when me-
thought
The voice wail'd, and the cry that seem'd a
curse
Re-echoed. Then came blackness more
intense ;
And for a space my sense and sight seem'd
lost,
And when I woke I stood beside thee bere,
Holding thy hand and looking in thine
eyes.'
Then Frea wail'd, ' 'Tis o'er ! my hope is
o'er !
Thy Father loves thee not, but casts thee
forth—
Where wilt thou find a place to rest thy
feet ?'
But Balder answer'd, 'Where the cushat
builds
Her nest amid green leaves, and where
wild roses
Hang lamps to light the dewy feet of dawn,
And where the starlight and the moonlight
slumber,
Ev'n there, upon the balmy lap of Earth,
Shall I not sleep again? O Mother,
Mother !
Pray to my Father that his soul may learn
To love me in due season, while again
Earthward we fare ; and Mother, bless thou
me,
Me whom my heavenly Father blesseth not,
With ministering hands before we go !'
Then Frea cried, blessing and kissing
Balder,
'Go *thou*,—the green Earth loves thee, and
thy face

Is as a lamp to all the gentle things
Which mingled in thy making—Go thou
down,

But I will journey upward till I find
The footstool of the Father. Night and day
With prayers, with intercession of deep tears,
With ministering murmurs, I will plead,
Low-lying like a cloud around his feet,
Thy cause, and the green Earth's which
foster'd thee :

That in a later season love may come
In answer, and the Father fear no more
To seat thee 'mong Immortals at his side.
Go down, my child, my sunbeam, my best-
born,

My Balder, who art still deem'd beautiful
Save only in the heavenly Father's sight !
And when all things have blest thee ; when
all forms

Have gladden'd in thy glory ; when all
voices,

The mountains and the rivers and the seas,
The white clouds and the stars upon their
thrones,

Have known thy face and syllabled thy
name ;

Come back again under the arch of heaven,
Not as a suppliant but a conqueror,
And take thy throne !'

The darkness far away
Groan'd : and the great void answer'd ;
overhead

Cluster'd the countless spheres of night,
like eyes

Downgazing ; but beneath the goddess' feet
Shot up dim gleams of dawn.

Then bright as day
Grew Balder, while his face, composed to
peace,

Turn'd earthward ; and he stretch'd out
eager arms

To that belov'd land where he was born.
'Farewell !' he said, and softly kiss'd the
mother ;

Then, while the goddess glided like a cloud
Up heavenward, down to the dim Earth he
pass'd

Slowly, with luminous feet.

. . . And when he came
To that cold realm which belts the Frozen
Sea,

Behind his back the trumpets of the light
Were faintly blown ; a sudden sheen was
thrown

Behind him and around him, wondrously ;
Bright shone the lonely waste of plain and
berg ;

And reaching that great cape of porphyry
Which points with shadowy finger at the
pole,

He turn'd his shining face once more, and
watch'd ;

While far away in the remotest north
Bright Asgard, mystic City of the Gods,
Was rising from its ashes till its spires
Burnt golden in the rose-red arch of heaven.

IV.

BALDER'S RETURN TO
EARTH.

I.

'BALDER IS HERE.'

O WHO cometh sweetly
With singing of showers?—

The wild wind runs fleetly

Before his soft tread,

The sward stirs asunder

To radiance of flowers,

While o'er him and under

A glory is spread—

A white cloud above him

Moves on thro' the blue,

And all things that love him

Are dim with its dew :

The lark is upspringing,

The merle whistles clear,

There is sunlight and singing,

For Balder is here !

He walks on the mountains,

He treads on the snows ;

He loosens the fountains

And quickens the wells ;

He is filling the chalice

Of lily and rose,

He is down in the valleys

And deep in the dells—

He smiles, and huds spring to him.

The bright and the dark ;

He speaks, and birds sing to him,

The finch and the lark,—

He is down by the river,
 He is up by the mere,
 Woods gladden, leaves quiver,
 For Balder is here.

There is some divine trouble
 On earth and in air—
 Trees tremble, brooks bubble,
 Ants loosen the sod ;
 Warm footfalls awaken
 Whatever is fair ;
 Sweet rain-dews are shaken
 To quicken each clod.
 The wild rainbows o'er him
 Are melted and fade,
 The grass runs before him
 Thro' meadow and glade ;
 Green branches close round him,
 The leaves whisper near—
 ' He is ours—we have found him—
 Bright Balder is here ! '

The forest glows golden
 Where'er he is seen,
 New flowers are unfolden,
 New voices arise ;
 Flames flash at his passing
 From boughs that grow green,
 Dark runlets gleam, glassing
 The stars of his eyes.
 The Earth wears her brightest
 Wherever he goes,
 The hawthorn its whitest,
 Its reddest the rose ;
 The days now are sunny,
 The white storks appear,
 And the bee gathers honey,
 For Balder is here.

He is here on the heather,
 And here by the brook,
 And here where together
 The lilac boughs cling ;
 He is coming and going
 With love in his look,
 His white hand is sowing
 Warm seeds, and they spring !
 He has touch'd with new silver
 The lips of the stream,
 And the eyes of the culver
 Are bright from his beam,
 He has lit the great lilies
 Like lamps on the mere ;

All happy and still is,
 For Balder is here.

Still southward with sunlight
 He wanders away—
 The true light, the one light,
 The new light, is he !
 With music and singing
 The mountains are gay,
 And the peace he is bringing
 Spreads over the sea.
 All night, while stars twinkling
 Gleam down on the glade,
 His white hands are sprinkling
 With harebells the shade ;
 And when day hath broken,
 All things that dwell near
 Will know, by that token,
 That Balder is here.

In the dark deep dominions
 Of pine and of fir,
 Where the dove with soft pinions
 Sits still on her nest,
 He sees her, and by her
 The young doves astir,
 And smiling sits nigh her,
 His hand on her breast ;
 The father-dove lingers
 With love in its eyes,
 Alights on his fingers,
 And utters soft cries,
 And the sweet colours seven
 Of the rainbow appear
 On its neck, as in heaven,
 Now Balder is here.

He sits by a fountain
 Far up near the snow,
 And high on the mountain
 The wild reindeer stand ;
 On crimson moss near to him
 They feed walking slow,
 Or come with no fear to him,
 And eat from his hand.
 He sees the ice turning
 To columns of gold,
 He sees the clouds burning
 On crags that were cold ;
 The great snows are drifting
 To cataracts clear,
 All shining and shifting,
 For Balder is here.

O who sitteth singing,
 Where sunset is red,
 And wild ducks are winging
 Against the dark gleam?
 It is he, it is Balder,
 He hangeth his head
 Where willow and alder
 Droop over the stream ;
 And the purple moths find him
 And hover around,
 And from marshes behind him
 He hears a low sound :
 The frogs croak their greeting
 From swamp and from mere,
 And their faint hearts are beating,
 For Balder is here.

The round moon is peeping
 Above the low hill ;
 Her white light, upcreeping
 Against the sun's glow,
 On the black shallow river
 Falls silvern and chill,
 Where bulrushes quiver
 And wan lilies grow.
 The black bats are flitting,
 Owls pass on soft wings,
 Yet silently sitting
 He lingers and sings—
 He sings of the Maytime,
 Its sunlight and cheer,
 And the night like the daytime
 Knows Balder is here.

He is here with the moonlight,
 With night as with day,
 The true light, the one light,
 The new light, is he ;
 The moon-bows above him
 Are melted away,
 And the things of night love him,
 And hearken and see.
 He sits and he ponders,
 He walks and he broods,
 Or singing he wanders
 'Neath star-frosted woods ;
 And the spheres from afar, light
 His face shining clear :
 Yea, the moonlight and starlight
 Feel Balder is here.

He is here, he is moving
 On mountain and dale,

And all things grow loving,
 And all things grow bright :
 Buds bloom in the meadows,
 Milk foams in the pail,
 There is scent in the shadows,
 And sound in the light :
 O listen ! he passes
 Thro' valleys of flowers,
 With springing of grasses
 And singing of showers.
 Earth wakes—he has called her,
 Whose voice she holds dear ;
 She was waiting for Balder,
 And Balder is here !

II.

'Mid mountains white by rainbows
 spanned,
 Upon his knees he sank,
 And melted in his hollow'd hand
 The stainless snows, and drank.

And far beneath in mists of heat
 Great purple valleys slept,
 And flashing bright beneath his feet
 The loosen'd cataracts leapt.

Down to those happy vales he drew
 Where men and women dwell,
 And white snow melted, green grass grew,
 Where'er his footprints fell.

Then night by night and day by day
 His deepest joy was found
 In watching happy things of clay
 And hearing human sound.

All human eyes to him were sweet,
 He loved the touch of hands,
 He kissed the print of human feet
 Upon the soft sea-sands.

Most silently he went and came,
 With mild and blissful mien,
 Bright as a beam his face would flame
 Amid the forests green.

To timid mortals passing by
 He seemed a vision fair,
 But little children oft drew nigh,
 And let him smooth their hair ;

And witless men would come to him
 With wild and eldritch cries,
 And lying in the moonbeams dim
 Would gaze into his eyes !

His voice was in the lonely wood,
 And by the nameless stream,—
 He shed in silent solitude
 The peaceful rays of dream.

From vale to vale he went, and blest
 The wild beast and the bird,—
 While deep within the glad Earth's breast
 The founts of being stirred. . . .

He sat down in a lonely land
 Of mountain, moor, and mere,
 And watch'd, with chin upon his hand,
 Dark maids that milk'd the deer.

And while the sun set in the skies,
 And stars shone in the blue,
 They sang sweet songs, till Balder's eyes
 Were sad with kindred dew.

He passed along the hamlets dim
 With twilight's breath of balm,
 And whatso'er was touch'd by him
 Grew beautiful and calm.

The old man sitting on the grass
 Look'd up 'neath hoary hair,
 And felt some heavenly presence pass
 And gladden'd unaware !

He came unto a hut forlorn
 As evening shadows fell,
 And saw the man among the corn,
 The woman at the well.

And entering the darken'd place,
 He found the cradled child ;
 Stooping he lookt into its face,
 Until it woke and smiled !

Then Balder passed into the night
 With soft and shining tread,
 The cataract called upon the height,
 The stars gleam'd overhead.

He raised his eyes to those cold skies
 Which he had left behind,—
 And saw the banners of the gods
 Blown back upon the wind.

He watch'd them as they came and fled,
 Then his divine eyes fell.
 'I love the green Earth best,' he said,
 'And I on Earth will dwell !'

III.

ALL THINGS BLEST BY BALDER.

So when his happy feet had wander'd far,
 When all the birds had brighten'd and his
 band

Had linger'd on the brows of all the beasts,
 He came among the valleys where abode
 Mortals that walk erect upon the ground.
 First, southward passing, he beheld those
 men

Who, where the snow for ever lieth, dwell
 In caverns of the ground and swathe their
 limbs

In skins of beasts : these felt his glory pass,
 But knew it not, because their eyes were dim
 With many nights of darkness. Round
 their doors

Sorrel blood-red he cast and saxifrage,
 And singing passed away ! Then roam'd
 he on,

Past porphyry and greenstone crags that
 line

Limitless oceans of unmelting ice,
 Until he enter'd valleys kindlier
 That redden'd into ruby as he came ;
 And in among the countless deer he stole,
 Marking their horns with golden moss, and
 singing

A strange soft song their souls could under-
 stand.

Then as the Earth grew fairer, presently
 He came beneath the shade of forest
 leaves,—

And deep among the emerald depths he
 found

Those mortal men who dwell in woods and
 build

Their dwellings of the scented boughs of
 trees.

And often, with his cheek upon his hand,
 Balder would sit and watch the smoke of
 fire

Upcurling thro' the branches heavenward,
 While to and fro in sunshine passed the
 shapes

Of men and women. Most he loved to
 mark

Those forms which gods made fairest, and
 to hear

Those voices gods made sweetest ; hut his
 hand,

✓

Falling unseen, was gentlest on the hair
Of children and of hoary aged men.

Then Balder said, 'The Earth is fair, and
fair,

Yea fairer than the stormy lives of gods,
The lives of gentle dwellers on the Earth ;
For shapen are they in the likenesses
Of goddesses and gods, and on their limbs
Sunlight and moonlight mingle, and they lie
Happy and calm in one another's arms
O'er-canopied with greenness ; and their
hands

Have fashion'd fire that springeth beautiful
Straight as a silvern lily from the ground,
Wondrously blowing ; and they measure
out

Glad seasons by the pulses of the s'ars.
O Spirit whom I know not, tho' I fear
Thy shadow on my soul where'er I go,
Almighty Father, tho' thou lov'st me not,
I love thy children ! I could sit all hours,
Just looking into their still heavenly eyes,
Holding their hands ! Most dear they are
to me,

Because they are my brethren ;—beautiful,
My brethren and thy children !'

O'er his head

The blue sky darken'd, and a thund'rous
voice

Murmur'd afar off,—and in great black
drops

Came out of heaven the blind and desolate
rain.

But Balder gazing upward reach'd out arms
And bless'd it as it fell ; and lo, it grew
Silvern and lovely as an old man's hair !

And scents came out of the rich-soil'd
earth,

And all the boughs were glad and jewel-
hung,

Till very softly, very silently,
The shower ceased, with kisses tremulous
On Balder's lifted hands !

Even so he turn'd

The saddest things to hearty. With his
face

Came calm and consecration ; and the
Earth

Uplifting sightless eyes in a new joy,
Answer'd the steadfast smile of the still
heavens

With one long look of peace. In those
strange days

The wild wind was his playmate,—yea, the
blast

New-loosen'd by the very hands of gods
Leapt to him like a lamb, and at his smile
Fell at his feet, and slept. Then out of
heaven

Came lightnings, from whose terror every
face

Of humankind was hidden,—meteors,
flames,

Forms of the fiery levin, such as wait
For ever at the angry beck of gods.

But Balder stood upon a promontory,
And saw them shining o'er the open sea,
And on the fields of ether crimson'd red ;
And lo, he lifted up a voice and cried,
'O beautiful wild children of the fire,
Whence come ye ? whither go ye ? Be at
peace,

Come hither !' and like soft white stingless
snakes

That crawl on grass, the fiery meteors came,
Licking his feet in silence, looking up
With luminous eyes !

Ev'n as he conquer'd these,

Heaven's fiery messengers, he tamed the
hearts

Of human things, and in the sun they sat
Weaving green boughs, or wooing in the
shade,

Or leading home the white and virgin bride.
For as the holy hunger and desire
Came quickening in the hearts of birds and
beasts,

Ev'n so woke love within the hearts of men ;
And out of love came children ; and the
Earth

Was merry with new creatures thronging
forth

Like ants that quicken on the sun-kist sod.

IV.

THE CRY FROM THE GROUND.

And Balder bends above them, glory-
crown'd,

Marking them as they creep upon the
ground,

Busy as ants that toil without a sound,
With only gods to mark.

But list! O list! what is that cry of pain,
Faint as the far-off murmur of the main?
Stoop low and hearken, Balder! List
again!

'Lo! Death makes all things dark!'

Ay me, it is the earthhorn souls that sigh,
Coming and going underneath the sky;
They move, they gather, clearer grows their
cry—

O Balder, bend, and hark!

The skies are still and calm, the seas asleep,
In happy light the mortal millions creep,
Yet listen, Balder!—still they murmur deep,

'Lo! Death makes all things dark.'

[Oh, listen! listen!] 'Blessed is the light,
We love the golden day, the silvern night,
The cataracts leap, the woods and streams
are bright,

We gladden as we mark.

'Crying we come, but soon our cheeks are
dried—

We wander for a season happy-eyed,
And we forget how our gray sires have
sigh'd,

'Lo! Death makes all things dark.'

'For is the sun not merry and full of cheer?
Is it not sweet to live and feel no fear?

To see the young lambs leaping, and to
hear

The cuckoo and the lark?

'Is toil not blest, is it not blest to be?
To climb the snows, to sail the surging sea,
To build our saeters where our flocks roam
free?

But Death makes all things dark.

'Is love not blest, is it not brave and gay
With strong right hand to hear one's bride
away,

To woo her in the night time and the day
With no strange eyes to mark?

'And blest are children, springing fair of
face

Like gentle blossoms in the dwelling-place;
We clasp them close, forgetting for a space
Death makes the world so dark.

'And yet though life is glad and love divine,
This Shape we fear is here i' the summer
shine,—

He blights the fruit we pluck, the wreath
we twine,

And soon he leaves us stark.

'He haunts us fleetly on the snowy steep,
He finds us as we sow and as we reap,
He creepeth in to slay us as we sleep,—

Ah! Death makes all things dark!

'Yea, when afar over our nets hang we,
He walks unto us even on the sea;
The wind blows in his hair, the foam flies
free

O'er many a sinking bark!

'Pity us, gods, and take this god away,
Pity us, gods, who made us out of clay,
Pity us, gods, that our sad souls may say,

"Bright is the world, which Death a space
made dark."'

V.

THE SHADOW ON THE EARTH.

Now all his peace was poison'd and he
found

No solace in the shining eyes of day,
Starlight and moonlight now seem'd sor-
rowful,

And in his soul there grew the sense of tears.
For wheresoe'er he wander'd, whatsoe'er
He gazed on, whether in the light or dark,
Was troubled by a portent.

Evermore,

Listening to nature's sad unceasing moan,
Balder remember'd that pale haunting
Shape

Which he had seen in those primæval woods
Where he was foster'd by the happy Earth;
And those sad tales the mother-goddess told
Of mortal men, and how they waste and
wane,

Came back upon his life with fearful gleams.
Yea, Balder's heart was heavy. All in vain
He wove wild runes around the flowers and
trees,

And round the necks of beasts and gentle
birds;

For evermore the cold hand found them
out,

And evermore they darkly droop'd and died.

This direful thing was on the helpless Earth,
Unprison'd, unconfined. Before his face
It faded, and before his eager touch
Melted and changed, but evermore again
It gather'd into dreadful lineaments,
And pass'd with arms outreaching on its way.

Then Balder lifted up his trembling hands
To heaven, crying, 'FATHER!' and no sound

Came from the frozen void ; and once again,
'O Mother, Mother !' but pale Frea lay
Stone-still in anguish at the Father's feet,
And dared not answer ; and he cried once more,

'Gods, gods, immortal gods !' when suddenly

He saw across the open arctic heaven
The hosts of Asgard, ev'n as sunset clouds
That drift confusedly in masses bright,
Trooping, with blood-red rays upon their heads,

To fight against the meteor snakes that flash
Far northward in the white untrodden wastes.

They pass'd, they saw not, but he heard their feet

Afar as muffled thunder, and he cried,
'O Slayers of the snake, immortal gods,
Come hither and slay the slayer, that the world
May rest in peace !'

If ever his faint cry
Reach'd to their ears, the dark gods only smiled,

With smiles like sullen lightning on the lips
Of tempest ; and he found no comfort there.
Nor from the mouths of flower, or bird, or tree,

Sea-fern, or sighing shell upon the shore,
Came any answer when he question'd low,
'What is this thing ye fear? who sent it hither,

This shape which moaning mortals christen
Death?'

But from the darkness of his own heart's pity,

And from all things in unison—the gloom
Of midnight, and the trouble of the clouds,
From sunless waters, solitary woods,

There came a murmur, 'None can answer thee,
Save him thou followest with weary feet !'

Wherefore he wander'd on, and still in vain

Sought Death the slayer. Into burial-places,
Heapen with stones and seal'd with slime
of grass,

He track'd him, found him sitting lonely there

Like one that dreams, his dreadful pitiless eyes

Fix'd on the sunset star. Or oftentimes
Beheld him running swiftly like a wolf
Who scents some stricken prey along the ground.

Or saw him into empty huts crawl slow,
And while the man and woman toiled i' the field,

Gaze down with stony orbs a little space
Upon the sickly babe, which open'd eyes,
And laugh'd, and spread its little faded hands

In elfin play. Nay, oft in Balder's sight
The form seem'd gentle, and the fatal face

Grew beautiful and very strangely fair.
Yet evermore while his swift feet pursued,
Darkling it fled away, and evermore
Most pitiful rose cries of beasts and birds,
Most desolate rose moans of stricken men,
Till Balder wept for sorrow's sake, and cried,

'Help me, my Father !'

Even as he spake,
A gray cloud wept upon the Earth, which wore

A gentle darkness ; and the wastes and woods,

The mountains trembling in their hoary hair,

The mighty continents and streams and seas,
Uplifted a low voice of mystery

And protestation. Then a wing'd wind
Caught up the sound and bore it suddenly

To the great gates of Asgard, so that all
Within the shadowy City heard ; and He

Who sitteth far beyond upon his throne,
Immortal, terrible, and desolate,

Heard, but was silent ; and no answer came,
No help or answer, from the lips of heaven.

VI.

ON THE HEIGHTS—EVENING.

MOUNTAIN GIRL.

Art thou a god? thy brow is shining so!
O thou art beautiful! What is thy name?

BALDER.

Balder.

GIRL.

Now let me look into thy face.

BALDER.

Look.

GIRL.

How I love thee!

BALDER.

And *thy* name?

GIRL.

Snow-blossom.

That is my mother standing at the door,
Shading her face and gazing up the hill.
I keep my mother's reindeer, and each night
Milk them, and drive them to their pastur-
age.

How clear thine eyes are! They are like
that star

Up yonder, twinkling on the snow!

BALDER.

Come hither!

Thou hast bright hair like mine, and starry
eyes,

Snow-blossom, and a voice like falling
water;

Thy flesh is like the red snow and the white
Mingled together softly, and thy breath

Is scented like the fragrant thyme in flower.
Mine eyes have look'd on many shapes like
thine—

Yet thou art fairest.

GIRL.

I am call'd Snow-blossom

Because I am not brown like other maids,
And when a little child I was so white!

BALDER.

Snow-lily!

GIRL.

They are calling—I must go—
Come down with me, and by our saeter's
fire

Slumber this night, and ere thou liest down
I'll sing to thee the strange old songs I know
Of Death, and of the battle-fields of gods,
And of the wondrous City where they dwell
Yonder afar away!

BALDER.

What knowest *thou*

Of Death or gods?

GIRL.

Only last winter tide

I saw my father die: he drew one breath,
Then went to sleep; but when we touch'd
his hands

They had no warmth, and his twain eyes
were glazed,

Gazing at something that we saw not. Then
We wrapt him warm in skins and in his
hands

We set his seal-spear and his seal-hide thong,
And placed him sitting in the sunless earth,
Crouch'd resting on the ground with knees
drawn up

As many a night he sat beside the fire.

And that the fierce white bear might find
him not,

We wall'd him up with earth and mighty
stones,

Seal'd tight with snow and water: then we
said

A prayer to the good gods, and left him
there

Where they might find him.

BALDER.

Hast thou seen that Death

Which smote thy father?

GIRL.

Nay!—no mortal thing

Sees him and lives. He walks about the
Earth

At his good will, and smites whate'er he
lists,

Both young and old. There is no spirit
at all

More strong than he!

BALDER.

Is he a god?

GIRL.

I know not.

BALDER.

And will thy father waken?

GIRL.

When the gods

Find out his grave, and open up the stones,
Then he will waken, and will join the hosts
Of Hermod and of Thor; for he was brave,
My father: he could keep his own, and ere
He took my mother, with his spear he slew
Her father and her brother, who were wroth
Because they hated him; and evermore
When he shed blood, he made his offering
To Hermod and the rest.

BALDER.

And thou, Snow-blossom,

Thou in thy turn wilt wed a mighty man,
And bear strong children?

GIRL.

Yes!—a man of strength,

Fair like my father. I would have him fierce
As bears are, bearded, a seal-strangler, swift,
And a great hunter with a boat and dogs.
But I would have him very cunning too,
Knowing old songs and wise at weaving
runes,

That in the season when the sun is fled
We might be merry thro' the long cold
nights

Waiting for summer!

BALDER.

Hark!

GIRL.

It is my mother

Calling again! Wilt thou not come?

BALDER.

Go thou!

I shall fare further o'er the summer hills.
Snow-blossom! Let me kiss thee ere thou
goest!

GIRL.

Yes!

BALDER.

Now farewell! . . .

How lightly down the height
She leapeth with the leaping cataract,
And now she turns and waves her little hand,
And plunging down she fades. And in the
world

Dwell countless thousands beautiful as she,
Happy and virgin, drinking with no pain
The vital air of heaven! O pink flesh
Over the warm nest of a singing heart
Heap'd soft as blossoms! O strange starry
eyes

Of mortals, beautiful as mine! O flame
Out of soft nostrils trembling, like the light
From lips of flowers! O wonder of Earth's
life,

Why is it that the great gods chase thee
down?

Why is it that thou fallest evermore
When thou art fairest? Up and down the
world

Each creature walks, and o'er each red
mouth hangs

Breath like a little cloud, faint smoke of
breath

Blown from the burning of the fire within.
Great gods, if as they say ye fashion'd them,
Why do ye suffer this wild wind of doom
To wither what ye made so wonderful?

The vale is dark, the snow-fields on the
height

Are purpled with the midnight. . . .
Steadfastly

One lamp shines in the valley, and above
The still star shines an answer. Slumber
well,

Snow-blossom! May no shadow of the gods
Come near to trouble thee in thy repose!
Sleep like immortal raiment wrap thee
round,

To charm away the rayless eyes of Death!

VII.

THE VOW OF BALDER.

Bright Balder cried, 'Curst be this thing
Which will not let man rest,
Slaying with swift and cruel sting
The very babe at breast!

'On man and beast, on flower and bird,
He creepeth evermore;
Unseen he haunts the Earth; unheard
He crawls from door to door.

'I will not pause in any land,
Nor sleep beneath the skies,
Till I have held him by the hand
And gazed into his eyes!'

V.

BALDER'S QUEST FOR
DEATH.

I.

HE sought him on the mountains bleak and bare

And on the windy moors ;

He found his secret footprints everywhere,
Yea, ev'n by human doors.

All round the deerfold on the shrouded height

The starlight glimmer'd clear ;

Therein sat Death, wrapt round with vapours white

Touching the dove-eyed deer.

And thither Balder silent-footed flew,

But found the phantom not ;

The rain-wash'd moon had risen cold and blue

Above that lonely spot.

Then as he stood and listen'd, gazing round

In the pale silvern glow,

He heard a wailing and a weeping sound
From the wild huts below.

He mark'd the sudden flashing of the lights,

He heard cry answering cry—

And lo ! he saw upon the silent heights
A shadowy form pass by.

Wan was the face, the eyehalls pale and wild,

The robes like rain wind-blown,

And as it fled it clasp'd a naked child
Unto its cold breast-bone.

And Balder clutch'd its robe with fingers weak

To stay it as it flew—

A breath of ice blew chill upon his cheek,
Blinding his eyes of blue.

'Twas Death ! 'twas gone !—All night the shepherds sped,

Searching the hills in fear ;

At dawn they found their lost one lying dead

Up by the lone black mere ;

And lo ! they saw the fatal finger-mark,
Which reacheth young and old,
Seal'd, livid still, upon its eyelids dark
And round its nipples cold.

Then Balder moan'd aloud and smote his breast,

' O drinker of sweet breath,

Curst be thy cruel lips ! I shall not rest
Until I clasp thee, Death !'

He track'd the footprints in the morning gray

From rocky haunt to haunt.

Far up the heights a wolf had crost Death's way ;

It lay there, lean and gaunt.

He reach'd the highest snows and found them strewn

With bleaching bones of deer. . . .

Night came again,—he listen'd 'neath the moon

Shining most cold and clear.

Beneath him stretch'd vast valleys green and fair,

Still in the twilight shine,

With great waste tarns and cataracts hung in air,

And woods of fir and pine ;

And on the tarns lay dim red dreams of day

The midnight sun cast there,—

Sunlight and moonlight blending in one ray
Of mother-o'-pearl most fair.

He wander'd down thro' woods that fringed the snows,

Down cliffs with ivy crown'd,

He passed by lonely tarns whence dusky rose

Great cranes, and hover'd round.

He paused upon a crimson crag, and lo !

Deep down at the crag's foot,

The Shape he sought, in shadow, far below,
With folded wings, sat mute !

Ev'n as a vulture of the east it seem'd

Brooding on something dead ;

Dark was the form on which its cold eyes gleam'd,

And still and heavy as lead.

Then Balder swung himself from tree to tree,

And reach'd the fatal place ! . . .

The phantom fled as silent wild things flee,
But a white human face

Gleam'd from the ground ; and Balder's glory shone

On a wild cowherd's hair !

Too late—his cheeks were chill—his breath was gone—

His bosom torn and bare.

The Shape unseen had cast him o'er the steep,

Down, down, the abysses dim,—

Then, as an eagle followeth a sheep,
Had flutter'd after him !

His bearskin dress was bloody ; in his grip
He clutch'd a cowherd's horn ;

His eyes were glazed, and on his stain'd lip
Death's kisses lay forlorn.

But Balder touch'd him and his face grew fair,

Shining beneath the skies,

Yea, Balder crost his hands, and smooth'd his hair,

And closed his piteous eyes. . . .

Not resting yet, the bright god wander'd soon

Down by the torrent's track ;

And lo ! a sudden glory hid the moon,
And dawn rose at his back.

II.

Dawn purple on the peaks, and pouring in floods

Into the valleys fair,

Encrimsoning the lakes and streams and woods,

Illuming heaven and air.

And every creature gladden'd, and the Earth

Turn'd on her side and woke :

There came sweet music ; sunny gleams of mirth

Across the landscape broke.

And when a thousand eyes of happy things
Had open'd all around,

And when each form that blooms, each form that sings,

Saw Balder glory-crown'd,

Standing like marble bathed in liquid flame,
Perfect of face and limb,

Infinite voices syllabled his name,
And Earth smiled up at him !

All shapes that knew him (and all shapes that be

Knew Balder's face that hour)

Grew glorified—the torrent and the tree,
The white cloud and the flower.

The mercs flash'd golden mirrors for his face ;

The forests saw and heard ;

The cataracts brighten'd ; in its secret place
The sunless runlet stirred.

A light of green grass ran before his feet,
His brow was bright with dew,

Where'er he trod there sprang a flower full sweet,

Rose, crimson, yellow, or blue.

But Balder's face was pale, altho' his frame
Its natal splendour wore ;

Altho' the green Earth gladden'd as he came,

God Balder's soul was sore.

'O happy Earth ! O happy beams of day !
O gentle things of breath !

Blest were ye, if some hand divine might slay

The slayer, even Death !'

He spake, and he was answer'd. By his side
A crimson river ran,

Out of the cloven mountains spreading wide
It water'd vales for man.

Amid its shallows flowers and sedge did twine,

But in the midst 'twas deep,

And on its sides fed flocks of goats and kine
O'er meadows soft as sleep.

Suddenly, while upon its marge he stood,
His heart grew cold as clay,—

For lo ! the phantom I sailing down the flood,

Dim in the dawn of day ! . . .

'Mid drifted foxglove-bells and leaves of
green

Uptorn and floating light,
There came, with face upturn'd, now hid,
now seen,
A maiden dark as night—

Her raven hair was loosen'd, her soft breath
Had fled and left no stir,
Her eyes were open, looking up at Death,
Who drifted down with her.

Beside her, tangled 'mid the foxglove-bells,
A shepherd's crook was cast,
While softly on the waters silvern swells
Her form was floating past.

And lo ! with eyes of feverish fatal light
Fix'd on her face in dream,
Death clung unto her 'mid the eddies bright
Upon the shining stream.

And Balder wail'd ; and wafted down that
way,
Death saw his shape and knew,—
Then, like a falcon startled from its prey,
Rose, vanishing from view !

III.

THE FIGHT OF SHIPS.

Now Balder came across the great sea-shore,
And saw far out upon the windless waves
A fight of water-dragons fierce as fire,
Wing'd and wild and wrought about with
gold.

And dragon unto dragon clash'd and clung,
And each shriek'd loud, and teeth in teeth
were set,

Until the sea was crimson'd, and one sank
in its own blood. So like to living things
They seem'd, but ships they were within
whose wombs

Throbb'd many savage hearts. And sud-
denly,

Amid that clangour of sharp steel and shriek
Of living voices, 'mid the thick o' the fight,
When in the stain'd waters all around
Men to the brain were cloven as they swam,
Balder saw dimly, hovering on wings,
Ev'n as the kestrel hovers poised and still
With glittering eyes searching the nether
ground,

The Shape he sought. As the bright
dragons rush'd

This way and that with rapid sweep of oars,
And as the tumult passed from wave to
wave,

It follow'd, as the falcon followeth
Some fearful quarry creeping on the ground.
And when the sunset came, and the great
din

Was hush'd, and torn apart from one
another

The dragons darken'd on a fiery sea,
The Shape, illumined with a crimson gleam,
Still linger'd o'er them very quietly,
Scenting the slain that drifted like to weeds
On the red waters, shoreward.

Then aloud
Cried Balder, ' FATHER ! ' uttering from his
heart

A bitter moan, and as he spake he saw,
All congregating on the brazen walls
Of sunset, with their wild eyes looking down,
Feeding upon the carnage of the fight,
The gods his kin ; and like to evening
clouds,

Crimson and golden in the sunset flame,
They would perchance have seem'd to
human eyes,

But his perceived them clearly and discern'd
The rapture in their faces as they gazed.
Yet ne'ertheless he cried, ' Come down, ye
gods,

And help me, that upon this fatal thing
I lay my hand ! ' They laugh'd reply, and
lo !

He saw their banners raised i' the wind,
their brands
Flashing and moving.

' FATHER ! '

No reply ;
But quiet as a curtain fell the night,
Solemn, without a star.

Then by the sea
Silent walk'd Balder, and all sounds were
still

Beyond him on the bosom of the deep.
And where he went along the moonless
sands

He made a brightness such as ocean shells
Keep in their iris'd ears ; and the soft sea
Came singing round his silvern feet ; and
doves

Came out of caves and lit upon his hands.
Then Balder thought, 'He answer'd, and
has sent
The darkness as a token!' and ev'n then
He *blest* his father.

. . . What is this that flames,
Lurid and awful, out upon the sea?
What dusky radiance, tho' the world is dark,
Shoots like a comet yonder upon the sky?
Seized in the fangs of fire, a dragon-ship
Consumes and shrieks, and as it burns
illumes

'The water under and the thunderous rack
Blackening above; and Balder as he stands
Pallid upon a headland, on his face
Catches the red reflection of the ray;
Ocean and sky are crimson'd, and he sees
Black shapes that hither and thither, waving
arms,

Dart 'midst the flame on the consuming
decks
And plunge with shrill scream down into
the sea.

What care to call on the Immortals now?
He looks, one hand prest hard in agony
Upon his aching heart, and he discerns,
Brooding above that brightness, poised i'
the air,

Down gazing, half illumed, half lost in
light,

The Phantom! As the ship consumes and
fades,

And as the last cry rises on the air,
The Shape sinks lower with no waft of
wing.

And when in dumb and passionate despair,
Balder looks northward once again, he sees
The cloud-rack parted, the cold north on
fire,

And all the gods, with cruel cheeks aflame
And bright eyes glittering like cluster'd
stars,

Thronging against the blacken'd bars of
Heaven.

IV.
YDUN.

Then Balder lifted up his voice and cried,
'Curst be this thing and you who sent it
hither,

Tho' ye be gods, immortal, and my kin;
For now I loathe you, deeming lovelier far

The black hawk, and the fox upon the
ground,

Who slay sweet lives not knowing what
they do;

But ye, O gods, are wise, yet Death's sick
scent

Is pleasant to your nostrils.' Loudly afar
A laugh of thunder answer'd, and the shapes
Still congregated in the glistening north
Flash'd like the pale aurora one white
gleam

Of earthward-looking eyes, and in the midst
A hoary Face like to a moonlit cloud,
Silent, and staring down with orbs of stone.
And on this last did Balder gaze, and lo!
He shiver'd cold, his cheek divine was
blanch'd,

And with no further word he turn'd away.

. . . So walk'd he by the Ocean, till that
gleam

Far out upon the crimson waters died;
Till night grew deeper and all sounds were
still'd.

And all that night his human heart was
turn'd

Against the gods his kin, against the god
His father; for he thought, 'He made this
thing,

He sent it hither to the happy Earth;
And when it slays they gladden in the halls
Of Asgard, and no pity fills their hearts
For gentle stricken men.' Long hours he
paced

The cold sands of the still black sea; and
where

His foot fell moonlight lay and live sea-
snails

Crept glimmering with pink horns; and
close to shore

He saw the legions of the herring flash,
Swift, phosphorescent, on the surface shin-
ing

Like bright sheet-lightning as they came
and went.

At intervals, from the abyss beyond,
Came the deep roar of whales.

Betimes he stood
Silent, alone, upon a promontory

And now about him like white rain there fell
The splendour of the moonlight. All around
The calm sea rolled upon the rocks or drew

Dark surges from the caverns, issuing thence
 Troubled and churn'd to boiling pools of
 foam.

Erect he stood, uplifting his white hands ;
 For round him on the slippery weed-hung
 reefs,

Outcreeping from the blackness of the sea,
 In legions came the flocks of gentle seals
 And gray sea lions with their lionesses.

And o'er the rocks they clomb till all the place
 Was blacken'd, and the rest upon the sea,
 Their liquid eyeballs in the moonlight
 burning,

Swam round and round with necks out-
 stretch'd to gaze ;

And those beneath him touch'd his shining
 feet,

And when he raised his hand and blest
 them all,

Uplifted heads like happy flocks of sheep
 Bleating their joy !

Ev'n then he heard a voice
 Cry ' Balder ! ' thrice, and turning he beheld
 Standing above him on the promontory
 A spirit he remember'd ; for her hair
 Swept downward like the silvern willow's
 leaves,

And on her mystic raiment blue as heaven
 There glimmer'd dewy drops like heavenly
 stars.

And as he turn'd unto her he perceived
 Her deathlike pallor, and he straightway
 knew

He look'd on Ydun, who had given to him
 Those mystic apples which immortal forms
 For ever feed on evermore renew'd.

And Ydun said, ' O Balder, I could hear
 Thy lone cry yonder in the silent realms
 Where, gathering golden asphodels in
 meads

Of starlight under the dark Tree, I stray'd ;
 And all my heart was troubled for thy sake,
 My brother, and I came across the worlds
 To seek thee, bringing in my veiled breast
 More fruits to heal thee and to make thee
 strong

Despite the gods who love thee not, thy kin ;
 For I who bring them love thee, knowing
 well

There stands no shape in the celestial halls
 So beautiful as thou ! '

And as she spake
 She drew the apples forth and proffer'd
 them

To Balder's lips ; but on those lips there
 lay

An ashen tinge as of mortality.
 And taking not the gift he answer'd low,
 ' O Ydun, let me give thy gift to men,
 That *they* may eat and live ! '

But Ydun said,
 While on his cheek he felt her breath come
 cold

As frosty moonlight,—' Name them not,
 but eat—

Eat *thou*, and live. O Balder, men were
 born

To gather earthly fruit a little space,
 And then, grown old with sudden lapse of
 years,

To wither up and die ; and fruit like this
 Could never light on any human lip
 The flame-like breath of immortality.
 Flesh are they, and must fall ; spirits are we,
 And fed with life diviner, we endure. '

Then Balder said, ' Dost thou not weep for
 them ?

Poor mortals with their shadows on the
 ground,

Yet kin to thee and me ! He made them
 fair

As we are, tho' they sicken and are slain ;
 Yea, by a god accurst that haunts the world
 Their hearts are set asunder, and their teeth
 Devour each other. Lo ! the beautiful
 Earth

Is desolate of children, strewn with dead,
 Sick with a ceaseless moan of stricken
 things

For ever coming and for ever going,—
 Like wild waves darkly driven on a sea
 Eternally distress'd. '

Coldly replied
 The goddess, ' Take no heed for things of
 clay,—

For 'twere as well to weep for stricken
 birds,

Or flowers that in their season fade and
 fall,

Or beasts that mortals slay for food or
 cast

Upon thy Father's shrines for sacrifice,

As mourn for that dark dust beneath thy
feet

Which thou call'st men. O Balder, take
no heed—

Be wise—such pity ill beseems a god !'

But Balder wrung his hands and wail'd aloud
In a sad human voice, 'Not pity *those* ?
Hath a bird fallen in my sight and fall'd
To win some meed of tears ? Doth a beast
die,

I would not wind in my immortal arms,
And kiss into a new and lovelier life ?
And on the dead leaves shed i' the weary
woods

Do I not strew my tears divine, like dew ?
O Ydun, listen, for thou know'st me not.
The taint of clay is on me and I lack
The large cold marble heart befitting gods.
I drank strange mercy from the dark Earth's
breast

When she my foster-mother suckled me
Close to her leafy heart ; I am not wise,
Ay me, I am not wise, if not to love
The happy forms below me, and the faces
That love my voice and gladden in my
smile,

Be wisdom ; I am of them ; I have learn'd
The pathos of the setting sun, the awe
Of moonlight and of starlight ; nay, I
dream

That shape which sets its icy hand on all
Will find me in my season like the rest.
They are my brethren, wanderers in the
world,

Yet fatherless and outcast like myself,
And exiled from their home !'

But Ydun said,
'That shape which sets its icy hand on all
Need never trouble thee, if thou wilt eat,
Eat as I bid, and live ;—nay, Death himself,
Tame as a hound some little child may lead,
Hath fed from out my hand and from my
fruits

Drank immortality ; and lo, he walks
Immortal among mortals, on Earth's ways
Shedding the sad leaves of humanity.
For this is written, they must die ; and those
Who die in battle or with bloody hands
The gods redeem and snatch to deathless
days

Of terror in Valhalla ; but the rest,

Weak maiden-hearted men and women
pale,
And children, dying bloodless, find below
A nameless and an everlasting sleep.'

'O Ydun,' Balder cried, 'I have search'd
the Earth,
And have not found him, tho' my spirit pants
To look into his face and question him,
That Death of whom you speak, that fan-
tasy,

Immortal, and a god ; but evermore
His form eludes me in the light and dark,
And evermore beneath my feet I find
Only some gentle shape that he hath slain.'

Then Ydun smiled as pallid starlight smiles
On marble, and she answer'd, 'Eat, then
eat !

And by the gods of Asgard I will swear
To lead thee to him and to read a rune
Which whisper'd in his ear shall make him
meek

And weak as any lamb to do thy will ;'
And as she spake she held the apples forth
And proffer'd them again to Balder's lips.

Then hungry for her promise Balder ate,
And in his mouth the mingled red and white
Melted as snow, and suddenly he seem'd
Grown into perfect glory like the moon
Springing all silvern from a summer cloud.

VI.

BALDER AND DEATH.

I.

THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE.

'LOOK !' Ydun said ; and pointed.

Far in the night
She had led Balder,—o'er the darken'd
dales,

And by the silence of black mountain tarns,
And thro' the slumber of primæval woods,—
Till she had come unto an open plain
Cover'd with ragged heath and strewn with
stones

As with the broken fragments of some world
Upheaven, rent by earthquake. And the
waste

All round was lonely and illimitable,
A tract of stone and heath without a tree,

Save where against the blood-red northern
sky

A mountain like the great white hand of
Earth

Pointed at highest heaven. Far out beyond
The shadow of the snowy mountain, rose
Columns gigantic of red granite rock
Scarr'd with the tempest, hung with slimy
moss,

And looming in the cold and spectral light
Like living shapes of gods; and some by
storm

Were cast upon the ground and lay full
length

Like giants slain, but most stood poised on
end,

Not tottering, with their shadows wildly cast
Southward, along the sward. High in the
midst

Stones fashion'd as an altar were upraised,
And on the altar was a coffin'd space
Wherein a man full-grown might lie his
length

And with his pleading eyes upon the stars
Make ready for the sacrificial knife.

'Look!' Ydun said; and Balder look'd;
and saw,

Crouching upon the altar, one that loom'd
Like to a living shape. And Ydun said,
'That is thy Father's altar, and thereon
Blood-offering brighter than the life of
lamb

Is scatter'd by his priests; at sunset here
A virgin died, and all the desert air
Is sweeter for her breath; and those black
birds

That hover o'er the altar moaning low
Are hungry to come near her and to feed,—
But he who lieth yonder hath not fed
His own immortal hunger. There he broods
Still as a star above her, with one hand
Placed on her lifeless breast!

Then Balder felt
His godhead shrink within him like a flame
A cold wind bloweth, and for pity's sake
His eyes divine were dim; but, creeping
close,

Within the shadow of a shatter'd column,
He gazed and gazed. And lo, the sight he
saw

Was full of sorrow only eyes divine

Could see and hear. Upon the altar-stone
Lay stretch'd naked and most marble white
That gentle virgin, with the slayer's mark
Across her throat, her red mouth open wide,
And two great sightless orbs upraised to
heaven,

And he who clung unto her, like a hawk
With wings outstretch'd, and dim dilated
eyes

Feeding upon the sorrow of her face,
Was he whom Balder o'er the world had
sought

And had not found. Ne'er yet, by sea or
shore,

Not ev'n within the silence of the woods
When his sad eyes beheld him first of old,
Had Balder to that spirit terrible

E'er crept so nigh or seen its shape so well.
Shadow it seem'd, and yet corporeal,

But thro' the filmy substance of its frame
The blood-red light of midnight penetrated;
And dreadfully with dreadful loveliness

The features changed their shining lineaments,

Now lamb-like, wolf-like now, now like a
maid's

Scarce blossom'd, now deep-wrinkled like a
man's,

Now beautiful and awful like a god's,—
But never true to each similitude
Longer than one quick heart-beat.

Thus it hung,
So fascinated by the form it watch'd,
It saw not, heard not, stirr'd not, though
the birds

Shriek'd wildly overhead. Ev'n as one cast
Into a trance mesmeric, it prolong'd
The famine of its gaze until its face
Was fix'd as a star. Then Ydun crept
Close unto Balder, whispering, 'Remember
That rune I read thee! touch him in his
trance,

And name him by his mystic human name,
And as I live his lips shall answer thee
In human speech!' So speaking, Ydun
smiled

And vanish'd, leaving Balder all alone
To look and watch and wait. . . .

. . . Then on his soul,
Beholding that great trance of Death, there
came

Most fatal fascination. For a space
 He could not stir. Upon the sacred grove
 Lay darkness ; only on the altar stone
 The naked victim glimmer'd beautiful,
 And terrible above her linger'd Death ;—
 When suddenly beyond the snow-white
 peak
 Rose round and luminous and yellow as
 gold
 The full-orb'd moon ; by slow degrees its
 beams
 Stole down the shrouded mountains, till
 they fell
 Prone on the altar, turning all things there
 To brightness :—so that Death himself was
 changed
 From purple into silvern ;—that dead maid
 To silvern too from marble ;—the great
 grove,
 With all the columns looming black therein,
 New-lit with lunar dawn. Then as the light
 Touch'd and illumed him, for a moment
 Death
 Stir'd, ev'n as one that stirreth from a sleep,
 And trembled, looking upward ; and behold !
 His face grew beautiful thro' golden hair,
 His eyes dim heavenly blue, and all his looks
 Strange and divinely young ! . . .

. . . Then, ere that trance
 Was wholly shaken from him, Balder rose,
 And crept unto the altar with no sound ;
 And ere the shape could stir or utter cry,
 He clutch'd him with one quick and eager
 hand ;
 And tho' his hand was frozen as it touch'd,
 Ere Death could fly he gazed into his eyes
 And named him by his mystic human name.
 . . . And Death gazed back with looks so
 terrible,
 They would have wither'd any living man ;
 But Balder only smiled and wove his rune,—
 And in a little space the shape was charm'd,
 Looking and listening in a nameless fear.

II.

BALDER AND DEATH.

' O Death, pale Death, thro' many a lonely
 land
 My feet have follow'd thee ;
 Sisters and brothers stricken by thy hand
 Oft have I stoop'd to see :

' To kiss the little children on their biers
 So innocent and sweet,
 To bless the old men wearied out with years
 Wrapt in thy winding-sheet.
 ' To look into thine eyes, to drink thy breath,
 I have cried with a weary cry :
 Prayers I have said to the great gods, O
 Death,
 While thou hast darken'd by.
 ' Thy mark is on the flower and on the tree,
 And on the beast and the bird,
 Thy shade is on the mountains, even the sea
 By thy sad foot is stirred.
 ' Slayer thou art of all my soul deems fair,
 Thou saddenest the sun,—
 Of all things on the earth and in the air,
 O Death, thou sparest none.
 ' And therefore have I sought with prayers
 and sighs
 To speak with thee a space !'
 Bright Balder in the hollow rayless eyes
 Look'd with a fearless face.
 The phantom darken'd 'neath the clay-cold
 moon
 And seem'd to shrink in woe,
 But Balder named his name and wove the
 rune,
 And would not let him go.
 ' O Death ! pale Death ! thou hast a
 lovelier name,
 Who gave that name to thee ?
 By the high gods, by that from which they
 came,
 Thy mouth must answer me !'
 Death answer'd not, but mystically bright,
 His shadowy features grew,
 And on his brow the chilly lamps of night
 Sprinkled their glistening dew ;
 And Balder wonder'd, for those lights above
 Seem'd shining down on him,
 And Death's pale face grew as the face of
 Love,
 Yet more divinely dim.
 ' O Death, pale Death !
 Who gave thee that sweet name,
 Yet sent thee down to slay poor things of
 breath,
 And turn men's hearts to flame ?

'Who gave thee life and cast thy lot below
With those sad slaying eyes?'
Death pointed with a hand as white as snow
Up to the moonlit skies.

'Who sent thee here where men and beasts
have birth?'

Death trembled and was still.

'What drew thee down on my beloved
Earth,
To wither up and kill?'

Death answer'd not, but pointed once again
Up thro' the starry shine;

And Balder question'd with a quick new
pain,

'My kin? the gods divine?'

Death answer'd not, but gazed on Balder
now

With strange and questioning gleam—
His eyes were soft in sorrow and his brow
Was wonderful with dream.

'Speak to me, brother, if thou art not dumb;
Speak to my soul, O Death!'

The thin lips flutter, but no answer hath
come,
No sigh, no sound, no breath.

Yet on the brow of Death there lives a light
Like starlight shed on snow,

The fatal face grows beautiful and bright
With some celestial woe.

And round the shadowy cheeks there softly
swim

Thin threads of silken hair,

And Balder sees the form world-worn and
dim

Hath once been young and fair.

And as they sit together in the night,

Hand in hand, mingling breath,

The fingers white of the cold starry light
Smooth the sad hair of Death.

III.

'O DEATH, PALE DEATH.'

'O Death! pale Death!

Thy hair is golden, not gray—

In the dark mirrors of thine eyes, O Death,
Lie glimmering dreams of day.

'O gentle Death!

Thy hand is warm, not chill,—

Thy touch is soft and living, and thy breath
Sweet, with no power to kill.

'I love thee, Death, for that great heavenly
brow

Still dark from love's eclipse—

And lo! a hundredfold I hunger now
To hear thy living lips.

'O gentle Death!

Speak, that mine ears may hear.'

Then like a fountain rose the voice of Death,
Low, sweet, and clear!

IV.

DEATH SINGS.

'I know not whence my feet have come,
Nor whither they must go—'

Lonely I wander, dark and dumb,
In summer and in snow.

'For on mine eyes there falls a gleam,
That keeps them dim and blind,

Of strange eternities of dream
Before me and behind;

And ever, ever as I pace

Along my lonely track,

The light retires before my face,
Advancing at my back;

'But ever, ever if I turn

And would my steps retrace,

Close to my back that light doth burn,
But flies before my face.

'I close mine eyes, I fain would sleep.

I rest with folded wing,

Or on my weary way I creep
Like any harmless thing.

'Yet day by day, from land to land,

From gentle fold to fold,

I pass, and lo, my cruel hand
Leaves all things calm and cold.

'Man marketh with his bitterest moan

My shadow sad and dim;

Of all things hateful, I alone
Am hatefullest to him!

'Ay me, a brand is on my brow,

A fire is in my breast,—

Ever my bitter breath doth bow
Those flowers I love the best.

'I crouch beside the cradled child,
I look into its eyes,
I love to watch its slumber mild
As quietly it lies.

'I dare not touch it with my hand,
Or creep too close to see,
Yet for a little space I stand
And mark it, silently,

'Ah, little dream pale human things,
At rest beneath the skies,
How, as they sleep, with gentle wings
I shade their cheeks and eyes!

'The maiden with her merry laugh,
The babe with its faint cry,
The old man leaning on his staff,
Are mine, and these must die.

'I touch them softly with my hand,
They turn as still as stone,
Then looking in their eyes I stand
Until their light hath flown.

'I set faint gleams around their lips,
I smooth their brows and hair,
I place within their clay-cold grips
The lilies of despair.

'And verily when they bear them forth
I follow with the rest;
But when their bones are in the earth
My gentle task is best.

'For there I sit with head bent low
For many a dreamy day,
And watch the grass and flowers grow
Out of the changing clay.

'O think of this and blame not me,
Thou with the eyes divine—
A Shadow creeps from sea to sea,
Stranger than thine or mine.

'Who made the white bear and the seal?
The eagle and the lamb?
As these am I—I live and feel—
ONE made me, and I am.'

v.

Then Balder lifted up his voice and cried,
Placing his fingers on Death's heavenly hair,
'Lo, I absolve thee!' and the Spirit crouch'd
In silence, looking up with wondering gaze
At that immortal brightness blessing him
With holy imposition of white hands.
For beautiful beyond all dream, and bright
Beyond all splendour of the summer Earth,
Divine, with aureole around his head,
God-like, yet fairer far than any god,
Stood Balder, like a thing that could not die!
Upon his face the countless eyes of heaven
Gazed, with their own exceeding lustre dim;
And moonlight hung around him like a veil
Through which his glory trembled para-
mount;
And dim sheen showering from a thousand
worlds,
Mingling with moisture of the nether-air,
Touch'd his soft body with baptismal dews.

Then far away in the remotest north,
Cloud-like and dark and scarce distinguish-
able,
The clustering faces of the gods look'd down.
And Balder cried, 'Lo, I have ranged the
Earth,
And found it good; yea, hills and vales and
streams,
Forests and seas, all good and beautiful;
And I have gazed in eyes of birds and beasts,
And in the gentle orbs of mortal men,
And seen in all the light of that dim dream
Which grew within my soul when I was born.
Only this thing is bitter, O ye gods,
Most dark and bitter: that eternal Death
Sits by his sad and silent sea of graves,
Singing a song that slays the hopes of men.
Yet lo, I gaze into the eyes of Death,
And *they* are troubled with that self-same
dream.

'O gods, on you I cry not, but I cry
On him, the Father, who has fashion'd Death
To be the sorrow of created things,
And set this ceaseless hunger in his heart
To wither up and kill. Oh, I have wept
Till all my heart is weary, and no voice
Makes answer. By thy servant Death, O
God,
By him whom I have sought and found in
pain,

Listen I—Uplift this shadow from the Earth,
And gladly will I die as sacrifice,
And all the gentle things I love shall live.

Far, far away in the remotest north
A white face in the darkness of a cloud
Gleam'd. Thither, crouching low at
Balder's feet,
Death pointed with his skeleton finger fix'd,
Silent. Then, even as a snow-white lamb
That on the altar cometh with no fear
But looks around with eager innocent eyes,
God Balder on the stone of sacrifice
Leapt, reaching arms up heavenward !

. . . And he pray'd.

VI.

THE LAST PRAYER.

'Father in heaven, my dream is over,
Father in heaven, my day is dark,—
I sat in the sun and I sang like a lover
Who sings sweet songs for a maid to mark ;
And the light was golden upon my hair,
And the heavens were blue and the Earth
was fair,

And I knew no touch of a human care,
And I bless'd thy name, my Father !
I sang, and the clarion winds blew clear,
And the lilies rose like lamps on the mere,
And all the night in the balmy light
I lifted up my hands snow-white,
And the stars began to gather I

'Father, Father, which art in heaven,
Lord of men and master of Earth.
The rune was woven of colours seven,
And out of thy being I had birth ;
As a snowdrop wakes on the naked ground,
And opens its eye without a sound
While the winds are murmuring around,
I woke on the green Earth's bosom ;
And I heard a cry, as the storks went by
Sailing northward under the sky,
And a cry from the mountains answer'd loud,
And the cataract leapt like a corpse from
its shroud,
And the sward began to blossom.

'White clouds passed over with low sweet
thunder,
Shaking downward the silvern dew,
The soft sods trembled and fell asunder,
And the emerald flame of the grass
gleam'd thro',

And the fire of the young boughs overhead
Ran green and amber, golden and red,
And the flashing lamps of the leaves were fed
At the torch of the flaming sunshine :
Beautiful, wrapt in a blissful dream,
Lay mere and mountain, meadow and
stream ;
And beautiful, when the light was low,
Creeping white through the after-glow,
The starshine and the moonshine !

'Father, Father, hearken unto me,
Then work thy will on the world and me—
I walk'd the world, and the glad world
knew me,
And my feet were kissed by thy slave the
Sea.

And ever with every happy hour,
My love grew deeper for tree and flower,
For the beast in the brake, for the bird in
the bower,
And the deer on the white high places.
But ere my golden dream was done,
I saw thy Shadow across the sun,
I saw thy Shadow that all men see,
On beast and bird, on flower and tree,
And the flower-sweet human faces !

'The flower-sweet faces of mortal races
Blossoming sadly under the sky I
I saw my dream on those fading faces,
I heard my voice in their failing cry.
Out of the soil and into the sun
Their souls were stirring as mine had done,
Their dooms were written, their threads
were spun,
By the hands of the immortals ;
They rose in a dream and they lookt around,
They saw their shadows upon the ground,
And wherever they went beneath the blue
The darker Shadow thy Spirit threw
From the great sun's shining portals.

'Thou hadst taken clay and hadst made it
human,
Blown in its nostrils and lent it breath,
Thou hadst kindled the beauty of man and
woman,
To hunt them down with thy bloodhound,
Death.
They did not crave to be born or be,
Yet thou gavest them eyes that their souls
might see,

And thou hatest them as thou hatest me
 And the Earth thy godhead bearing.
 They shrink and tremble before thy hand,
 They ask and they do not understand,
 They bid thee pity who pitiest none,
 And they name thy name, as I, thy Son,
 Now name it, still despairing.

'Father, Father, which art in heaven,
 Why hast thou fashion'd my brethren so?
 Form'd of fire, with the dust for leaven,
 As thou hast made them, they come and
 go.

Yet ever thy hand is on their hair
 To seize and to slay them unaware,
 And ever their faces are pale with prayer
 As round thy fanes they gather. . . .
 Thou askest blood and they give thee life
 With sweep of the sacrificial knife ;
 Thou seekest praise and they give thee pain,
 And their altars smoke with the crimson rain
 Thou lovest, O my Father !

'Father, Father, 'tis sad to falter
 Out of the light and into the dark,
 Like a wreath of smoke from a burning altar
 To fade and vanish where none may mark.
 But O my Father, 'tis blest to be
 A part of the joy of the land and sea,
 To upleap like a lamb, to be glad and free
 As the stream of a running river.
 Could'st thou not spare them a longer space
 With sweeter meed of a surer grace?
 Could'st thou not love the light that lies
 On happy fields and in human eyes,
 And let it shine for ever ?

'I hear thy voice from the void of heaven,
 It thunders back and it answers "Nay"—
 The rune was woven of colours seven
 For me, thy Son, and for things of clay.
 Then mark me now as I rise and swear,
 By the beasts in the brake, by the birds in
 the air,
 By Earth, by all those forces fair
 Which mingled in my making ;
 By men and women who stand supreme
 Proud and pale with mine own soul's dream,
 I will drink the cup their lips partake !
 I will share their lot, while their sad hearts
 break
 As mine, thy Son's, is breaking !

'Father in heaven, my heart is human,
 I cast a shade like a human thing,
 Grant me the doom of man and woman ;
 From the Earth I came, to the Earth I
 cling.

Behold who standeth at my side !
 Even Death, thy servant heavenly eyed—
 I will die, as the children of men have died,
 To the sound of his sad singing.
 Behold, I look in the face of Death,
 I look in his eyes and I drink his breath ;
 The chill light brightens upon his brow,
 He creepeth close and he smileth now,
 His cold arms round me flinging.

'Father, Father, bend down and hearken,
 And place thy hand upon my hair ;
 Ere yet I wither, ere yet I darken,
 Hear me murmur a last low prayer.
 As the blood of a sacrifice is shed,
 Let me die in my brethren's stead—
 Let me die ; but when I am dead,
 Call back thy Death to heaven !
 Ay me, my Father, if this may be,
 I will go with a prayer for him and thee,
 I will pass away without a cry,
 Blessing and praising thee under the sky,
 Forgiving and forgiven.

' . . . Father, Father, my dream is over—
 He folds me close, and I cannot see ;
 Yet I shall sleep like a quiet lover
 If my boon is granted and this may be.
 O sweet it is if I may rest
 Asleep on my foster-mother's breast,
 If over my grave the flowers blow best
 And happy mortals gather.
 Yet Father, tho' darkness shrouds my face,
 Remember me for a little space,
 Remember, remember, and forgive
 Thy Son who dies that men may live. . . .
 Accept me, O my Father !'

VII.

THE FIRST SNOWFLAKE—FALLING OF
THE SNOW.

He ceased ; no voice replied ; but round
 his frame
 Cold arms were woven, and his golden head
 Droop'd like a lily on the breast of
 Death. . . .
 Then suddenly a darkness like a veil

Was drawn across the silent void of Heaven,
Starlight and moonlight faded mystically,
And save for Balder's face, that as a star
Still flash'd in pallor on the face of Death,
There was no light at all. . . .

Then Balder cried,
'Lo, he hath answer'd ; I am thine, O Death ;
Now let me look into thy loving eyes,
And ere I rest, sing low to me again.'
Shivering he spake, and sank upon the
ground ;

But Death stoop'd down above him as he lay,
And took the shining head into his lap,
And smooth'd with fingers cold the silken
hair,

And murmur'd Balder's name with singing
lips

Soft as the whisper of a wind in June.
'O Death, white Death, all is so cold and
dark,

I cannot see the shining of thy face !'
Then touching Balder's lips, Death answer'd
low,

'Thy day is ended—thou wilt see no more—
Sleep, sleep !' . . .

. . . But what is this that wavers slowly
Out of that purple blackness overhead ?

Is it a blossom from the silvern boughs
O'ershadowing the azure pools of heaven ?
Or feather from the plume of some sweet star
That ever moveth magically on

From mansion unto mansion of the sky ?
Soft as a bloom from the white hawthorn
spray

It wavers earthward thro' the starless dark,
Unseen, unfelt, until it gains the light
Which Balder breathes around him as he lies.
There, as a white moth hovers in the moon,
It floats and gleams, then sinking softly
down,

Falls as a seal on Balder's shining brow
And melts away.

' . . . O Death, upon mine eyes,
And on my brow, I feel a touch like dew,
Like cold dew shaken from a morning cloud.
Look heavenward—seest thou aught of the
great gods,

Or God my Father ?' But the form replied,
'On heaven and in the air 'tis night, deep
night ;

No shape is seen, no star, nor any light.
Sleep, Balder, sleep !'

Then bending low he kissed
The lips of Balder, yea with kisses calm
He drew sweet Balder's breath, and lo ! he
shone

Brighter and brighter with the life he drank.
But Balder darken'd ever and grew cold.

'O Death, I feel thee smiling in a dream
Serene and still and very beautiful—
But ah, thy lips are chill !' and Death
moan'd low,

Winding his thin arms tight round Balder's
frame,
'Sleep, sleep !'

. . . O what are these that waver slowly
Out of the purple blackness overhead ?
Soft as that first white blossom blown from
heaven,

Faltering downward thro' the rayless dark,
They come, they gather, falling flake on flake
With silvern lapse and silent interchange,
Hovering in soft descent as if they lived.

Upon the drooping bead of Death they fall
Like lightly shaken leaves, and looking up
He sees the black air troubled into life

Of multitudinous waifs that wander down.
There is no sound—only the solemn hush
Of mystic motions and invisible wings ;
There is no lamp, no star ; but lo ! the air
Is glimmering dimly with the faint wan light
Shed from the blossoms as they melt and
fade.

'Under green boughs, under green boughs,
O Death,

Thou hast borne me, and I see not, but I hear
The tremor of the soft trees overhead,
A sound like fountains flowing, and a touch
Like cool leaves shaken on mine eyes and
hair !'

And Balder stirred his gentle head and
smiled—

Then drew one last long breath, and sank
to sleep.

'Tis over now—the gods may gaze in peace—
Balder is dead !

Ay me, the light hath passed
From that once glorious head : still as a
stone

It lies, not shining, in the lap of Death ;
The hair is white, the eyes are glazed and
dim,

There is no red upon the loving lips,
And in its cage the singing heart lies cold.
Ah, Death, pale Death, thy kisses come in
vain.

Close thou his lids, and by his side stretch
down
The cold white marble arms, and at his head
Watch like a mourner, for a little space.

Death sits and gazes on ; but lo, his looks
Are pale as Balder's. . . . All the light he
wore

Hath faded, and his orbs are rayless now.
Lifeless he looms in vigil while his eyes
Turn upward and his thin cold hand still lies
Ev'n as a frozen stone on Balder's heart.
Thicker and thicker from the folds of heaven
The floating blooms are shaken ; lo, the waste
Is with a glittering whiteness carpeted,—
While still o'erhead in ever-gathering clouds,
Drifting from out the vapours of the dark,
The white flakes fall.

O wonder of the snow !

The world's round ball is wrapt in crystal
now,

And out of heaven there comes a freezing
breath ;

And nothing stirs or lives ; and in his shroud
Woven by frost's swift fingers, Balder lies,
And that fair face which made creation glad
Is fixed as a rayless mask of ice.

Crouch at his head, O Death ! and hour by
hour

Watch the still flakes of heaven wavering
down,

Till thou, and that which lieth at thy feet,
And all the world, are clad in wondrous
white !

VII.

THE COMING OF THE OTHER.

I.

How long he lay in that strange trance of
night

Might Balder never know ;
Silently fell the waifs of stainless white,
And deeper grew the snow.

While out of heaven the falling flakes were
shed,

The dark hours grew to days ;
And round and round a red moon overhead
Went circling without rays.

There were no stars, only that cheerless thing
Treading the wintry round ;
There was no light, save snow-flowers
glimmering
Without a sound.

Darkness of doom is shed on Balder's eyes,
But whiteness shrouds the wold ;
And still at Balder's head the phantom lies
Silent and calm and cold.

And chill is Balder as some naked man
Made marble by the frost :
His veins are ice ; upon his bosom wan
His two thin hands are crost.

But as within some clammy wall of stone
The death-watch keeps its chime,—
The cold heart in that crouching skeleton
Ticks out the time.

All round, a world of snow, and snows
that fall,

Flake upon flake, so white ;
An empty heaven fluttering like a pall,
Lit by that one red light.

All round, the solemn slumber of the snow,
No sigh, no stir, no breath,—
But in the midst, scarce audible, slow, low,
The throbbing pulse of Death. . . .

The hours creep on, the dreary days are shed,
Measured by that slow beat ;
And all the while god Balder lieth dead,
Wrapt in his winding-sheet.

II.

THE LIGHT ON THE SNOW.

O Death, Death, press thy hand so lean
and bare

Upon thy beating heart !
O Death, raise up thy head and scent the air
With nostrils cold apart !

Awaken from thy trance, O Death, and rise,
And hearken with thine ears ! . . .

Death stirs, and like a snake with glistening eyes
His luminous head uprears. . . .

Awaken ! listen ! Far across the night,
And down the drifts of snow,
There stirs a lonely light,—a blood-red light
That moveth to and fro.

Small as a drop of dew, most dim to sight,
It glimmereth afar. . . .
O Death, it cometh hither,—growing bright
And luminous as a star.

O Death, pale Death,
What do thine eyes behold?
What lonely star flasheth afar
Across the wintry wold?

The world is folded in its shroud of white ;
The skies are smother'd deep ;
There is no lamp at all in heaven, to light
Dead Balder's sleep.

There is no lamp at Balder's head, no star
Outlooking from the cloud ;
White is the snow-drift woven near and far,
And white is Balder's shroud.

O death, pale Death, across the lone white
land
No heavenly rays are shed,—
Yet still thou gazest, clutching Balder's hand,
At yonder gleam blood-red. . . .

It crawleth as a snail along the ground,
Still far and faint to see,
O Death, it creepeth surely, with no sound,
Across the night, to thee.

O gentle Death,
Why dost thou crouch so low?
A star it seems, a star that travelleth
From snow to snow.

Nearer it cometh, and across the night
Its beams fall crimson red,
The drifts beneath it glimmer and grow
bright
Like cheeks lamp-lit and dead.

O gentle Death,
Hither it cometh slow ;—
A Shadow creepeth with the same, O Death
From snow to snow.

III.

THE FACE AND THE VOICE.

Nearer and nearer o'er the waste of white
It steals, and doth not fade :
A light, and in the glimmer of the light
A form that casts a shade.

Nearer and nearer, till Death's eyes behold
A semblance strange and gray,
A silent shape that stoopeth and doth hold
The lamp to light its way.

Bent is he as a weary snow-clad bough,
Gaunt as a leafless tree,
But glamour of moonlight lies upon his
brow,
Most strange to see !

And in one hand a silvern lanthorn swings
Fill'd with a crimson light,
And round his frame wind-blown and
shivering clings
A robe of starry white. . . .

O Death, pale Death,
Well may thy cold heart beat !
The form that comes hath pierc'd hands,
O Death,
And bloody pierc'd feet.

Slowly he crawleth under the cold skies,
His limbs trail heavy as lead,
Pale fix'd blue his eyes are, like the eyes
Of one that sleeps stone-dead.

Ay me, for never thro' so wan a wold
Walk'd one so sadly fair—
The wild snows drift, the wind blows shrill
and cold,
And those soft feet are bare. . . .

O who is this that walketh the wintry night,
With naked hands and feet !
O who is this that beareth a blood-red light,
And weareth a winding-sheet !

The night is still, no living thing makes
moan ;
Silent the cold skies loom ;—
But hark ! what voice is this, so faintly
blown
Across the gloom ?

'Balder! Balder!'

Hush! that cry!

The form stands white in the chilly night,
Holding its lamp on high.

'Balder! Balder!

Where art thou?'

The snow smooths still with fingers chill
Dead Balder's brow.

O gentle Death,

What voice is this that cries?

What sad shape stands with lifted hands
Alone under the skies?

'Balder! O Balder!

Answer me!'

He stands and softly sighs,
And vacant are his eyes
As if they cannot see!

Yet in the weary gloom full faint they glow,
And fix themselves at last—

He sees dead Balder sleeping in the snow,
And thither he fleeteth fast!

He comes now swifter than a bark

Which bitter tempests blow,—

Dreadful he flashes down the dark,
With black prints on the snow!

'Wake, Balder! wake!'

His voice calls now—

The shrill cry circles like a snake
Round Balder's brow!

Oh, who is this that walketh the wintry night
With naked hands and feet?

O who is this that beareth a blood-red light
And weareth a winding-sheet?

There is a gleam upon his brow and hair

Ev'n as of luminous hands,

Swiftly he comes to Balder's side, and there
He stands!

And Death crawls moaning from his snowy
seat

To grasp his raiment hem,

And toucheth with his mouth the pierced
feet,

Yea, softly kisseth them.

O Death! pale Death!

He gazeth down on thee—

His smile is like no smile of thing of breath,
Yet is it sweet to see.

He lifts the lamp—and lo! its red rays
glance

On Balder's sleeping eyes—

'Balder! O Balder! from thy trance
Arise!

Strange flash'd the wondrous ray

Aslant the silent snows;

Death wail'd—and slowly, gaunt and gray,
Dead Balder rose!

IV.

'WAKE, BALDER! WAKE!'

Silent rose Balder, ev'n as one

Who wakens from a swoon,

Turning his head from side to side
In the red wintry moon.

Wrapt in his winding-sheet of snow

He loom'd in the dim light,

And marble-pale his cold cheeks gleam'd
Under his locks of white.

'Wake, Balder! wake!' the strange voice
cried;

Dead Balder woke and heard,

And turn'd his face to his who spake,
Shiv'ring, but said no word.

'Wake, Balder! wake!' the strange voice
cried;

And Balder woke and knew,—

And lo! upon his lips and hair
A golden glimmer grew!

O who art thou with blessed voice,

Who biddest my heart beat?

And wherefore hast thou waken'd me
From sleep so heavenly sweet?'

Then answer'd back that tall still form,

In a clear voice and low,

Stretching his arms and brightening,
White-robed, and pale as snow.

'I am thine elder Brother

Come from beyond the sea;

For many a weary night and day
I have been seeking thee!'

Oh, Balder's cheeks are shining bright,

And smiles are on his face—

'I dream'd, and saw one with a lamp
Passing from place to place.

' And ever, as he wander'd on,
Softly he cried to me—
Art thou mine elder Brother?
Then shall my lips kiss thee !'

' I am thine elder Brother,
Come from beyond the sea ;
Balder, my brother Balder,
Kiss thou me !'

Death moans, and crouching on the snow
Uplooketh with eyes dim,
For Balder on his brother's breast
Hath fallen, kissing him.

' Thou art mine elder Brother,
The risen Balder cries ;
' I know thee by thy gentle voice
And by thy tearful eyes.

' Thou art mine elder Brother,
Most heavenly sad and sweet,
Yet wherefore hast thou pierc'd hands
And naked pierc'd feet ?

' O wherefore are thy cheeks so chill,
Thy lips so cold and blue,
And wherefore com'st thou in thy shroud,
As if arisen too ?'

The white Christ smiled in Balder's face,
But softly his tears ran—

' Like thee I lived, like thee I loved,
And died, like thee, for Man.'

v.

THE BIRTH AND DEATH.

The white Christ cried, and on the air
His voice like music rang,
And Balder listen'd silently
As if an angel sang.

' Out of the dark Earth was I born,
Under the shining blue,
And to a human height I rose,
And drank the light, and grew.

' The land was beautous where I dwelt,
A still and silent land,
Where little pools of heaven fall
And gleam 'mid wastes of sand.

' I loved the bright beasts of the earth,
And birds both great and small ;
I loved all God made beautiful,
But mortals most of all,

' For on their faces framed of clay,
And in their eyes divine,
I saw the shadow of the dream
Which nightly sadden'd mine.

' But when I knew their days were dark,
And all their spirits sore,
Because of this same silent Death
Creeping from door to door,

' I raised my hands to heaven and cried
On him that fashion'd me,
My Father dear who dwells in heaven,
And suffers Death to be.

' And sweet and low this answer came
Out of the quiet sky—
*All that is beautiful shall abide,
All that is base shall die !*

' *Take thou thy cross and bear it well,
And seek my servant Death :
Thou too shalt wither like a flower
Before his bitterest breath.*

' *Yea, thou shalt slumber in his arms
Three nights and days, and then,
With that cold kiss upon thy lips,
Awaken once again !*

' *And when thou wakenest at last
Thy work is yet undone,
For thou shalt roam the Earth, and seek
Thy Brethren one by one !*

' *Yea, one by one unto thy heart
Thy kin shall gather'd be,
Each pallid from the kiss of Death
And beautiful like thee !'*

' O Balder, when my dark day came,
And in despair I died,
The same sad Death sang low to me,
Who croucheth at thy side !

' And all my living breath was gone
For three long nights and days,
And by my side the phantom knelt
Like one that waits and prays.

' But when my Father's voice again
Came faint and low to me,
I rose out of my grave, and saw
Earth sleeping silently.

'He who had hush'd me in his arms
Was busy other-where. . . .
I stood and watch'd my Father's eyes
Shine down thro' azure air.

'Then softly, with a happy smile,
Along the land I crept,
And found the men that I had lov'd,
Who waited, lived, and wept.

'And lo, I blessed them one and all,
And cried with a human cry,
"All that is beautiful shall abide,
All that is base shall die."

'But when my loving task was done,
My soul took better cheer,
And wandering thro' the world unseen
I sought my Brethren dear.

'All in my robe of snowy white
From realm to realm I trod,
Seeking my Brethren who had died,
The golden Sons of God !'

VI.

THE PARACLETES.

'I wander'd east, thro' shining realms
Of bright and brazen day,
And there, by a great river's side,
I saw a Brother pray.

'For past his feet the corpses drave
Along the yellow tide,
Chased by the emerald water-snakes
And vultures crimson-eyed.

'And from the banks there rose a wail
Of women for their dead ;
They wept and tore their linen robes,
And plunged 'neath wheels of dread.

'Upon his brow he wore a crown,
But his black feet were bare,
And in his bright and brooding eyes
There dwelt a piteous care.

'From his red lips there came a sound
Like music of a psalm,
And those who listen'd ceased their tears
And grew divinely calm.

'On his own grave he sat and smiled,
A spirit dark and sweet,
And there were flowers upon his head
And fruits around his feet. . . .

'I wander'd west where eagles soar
Far o'er the realms of rains,
And there, among pale mountain peaks,
One hung in iron chains.

'His bead was hoary as the snow
Of that serene cold clime,
Yet like a child he smiled, and sang
The cradle song of Time.

'And as he sang upon his cross,
And in no human tones,
The cruel gods who placed him there
Were shaken on their thrones.

'I kiss'd him softly on the lips,
And sighing set him free—
He wanders now in the green world,
Divine, like thee and me. . . .

'Then faring on with foot of fire
I cross'd the windy main,
And reach'd a mighty continent
Wash'd green with dew and rain.

'There swift as lightning in the sun
Ran beauteous flocks and herds,
And there were forests flashing bright,
And many-colour'd birds.

'And there the red-skin'd hunters chased
The deer and wild black kine,—
And lo ! another gentle god
Was sitting in a shrine !

'His skin enwrought, as if he lived,
With mystic signs, sat he ;
Shaven his forehead, and his face
Was painted terribly.

'Yet was he gentle as the dew,
And gracious as the rain :
With healing gifts he made men glad
Upon that mighty plain. . . .

'I wander'd south, where rivers roll'd
Yellow with slime and sand,
And, black against an orange sky,
I saw another stand.

'Two cymbals held he as he stood,
And clash'd them with shrill wail :
The clash was as the thunder's voice,
Heard 'mid the drifting gale.

' Black was his skin as blackest night,
Naked as night each limb,
Yet in his eyeballs, on his cheeks,
The heavenly dew did swim. . . .

' O Balder, these thy Brethren were
Surely as they were mine.
I wander north, and thee I find
The best and most divine !

' Yea, each of these was offer'd up
As thou hast been, and I ;
Their blood was drifted ev'n as smoke
Up to the silent sky.

' All these loved Man and the green Earth
As thou hast done, and I ;
And each of these by stronger gods
Was smitten down to die.

' Yet ever when I came, and spake
The word and made the sign,
Their souls grew clothed in gentleness
And rose again with mine !

' Yea, for the love of living men
They stood renew'd in breath,
And smote the great gods from their thrones
With looks made strong thro' Death.

' With faces fair they rose and wrought
Against the gods with me,
To make the green Earth beautiful
From shining sea to sea.

' Yea, Balder, these thy Brethren were,
Surely as they were mine :
My Father's blessing on thy lips,
For *thou*, too, art divine !'

VII.

Beneath his feet the pale Death crouch'd
Ev'n as a lean white bear,
Watching with dark and dreamful eyes
That face so strangely fair.

But paler, sadder, wearier,
Stood Balder in his shroud,
While overhead a star's still hand
Parted the drifting cloud ;

And from the lattices of heaven
The star look'd down on him ;
Ere Balder saw not, and his eyes
With tearful dews were dim.

' O Brother, on my sense still lies
The burthen of my sleep,
A weight is on me like the weight
Of winter on the Deep.

' For I remember as I wake
Mine old glad life of dream—
The vision of the bridal Earth,
The glory and the gleam !

' Oh, beautiful was the bright Earth,
And round her purple bed
The torches of great rivers burnt
Amber and blue and red !

' And beautiful were living men,
Wandering to and fro,
With sun and moon and stars for lights,
And flowers and leaves below.

' But evermore this phantom Death
Was darkening the sun,
Seeking the sweetest to destroy.
Sparing and pitying none.

' And lo, I live, and at my feet
Death cold and silent lies,—
While in thine own dear Father's name
Thou biddest me arise.

' O wherefore should I rise at all
Since all is black above,
And trampled 'neath the feet of gods
Lie all the shapes I love ?

' Ay me, the dead are strewn with snows,
They sleep and cannot see,
With no soft voice to waken *them*
As thine has waken'd me !

' And wherefore should my soul forget
What cruel kin were mine,
Tho' in another Father's name
Thou greetest me divine ?'

The white Christ gazed in Balder's face,
And held his hand, and cried,
' Divine thou art and beautiful,
And therefore *must* abide !

' And in mine own dear Father's name
I greet and bid thee rise,
And we shall stand before his throne
And look into his eyes.'

But Balder moan'd, 'Who made the Earth,
And all things foul or fair?
Who made the white bear on the berg,
The eagle in the air?

'Who made the lightning's fork'd flame,
Who thunder's blacken'd brand?
Who fashion'd Death, with fatal eyes,
Chill breath, and clammy hand?'

Death stirred and clung to Balder's feet
And utter'd forth a cry—
A thousand starry hands drew back
The curtains of the sky!

And countless eyes look'd calmly down
Thro' azure clear and cold,
And lo! the round red moon became
A shining lily of gold!

Then on the wilderness of snow
A lustrous sheen was shed,
And splendour as of starlight grew
Around the white Christ's head.

And Christ cried, gazing down on Death,
Making a mystic sign,
'Now blessings on my servant Death,
For *he* too is divine.

'O Balder, he who fashion'd us,
And bade us live and move,
Shall weave for Death's sad heavenly hair
Immortal flowers of love.

'Ah! never fail'd my servant Death,
Whene'er I named his name,—
But at my bidding he hath flown
As swift as frost or flame.

'Yea, as a sleuth-hound tracks a man,
And finds his form, and springs,
So hath he hunted down the gods
As well as human things!

'Yet only thro' the strength of Death
A god shall fall or rise—
A thousand lie on the cold snows,
Stone still, with marble eyes.

'But whosoe'er shall conquer Death,
Tho' mortal man he be,
Shall in his season rise again,
And live, with thee, and me!

'And whosoe'er loves mortals most
Shall conquer Death the best,
Yea, whosoe'er grows beautiful
Shall grow divinely blest.'

The white Christ raised his shining face
To that still bright'ning sky.
'Only the beautiful shall abide,
Only the base shall die!'

VIII.

But Balder moan'd, 'O beauteous Earth
Now lying cold and dead,
Bright flash'd the lamps of flowers and
stars
Around thy golden head!

'And beautiful were beast and bird,
And lamb and speckled snake,
And beautiful were human things
Who gladden'd for my sake.

'But lo! on one and all of those
Blew the cold blighting breath,
Until I died that they might live
And bought their life with death.

'Behold, I live, and all is dark,
And wasted is my pain,
For glimmering at my feet I see
The fatal eyes again.

'Why stays he here upon the Earth?
Why lingers he below?
The empty heavens wait for him,—
'Tis ended—let him go!'

Death look'd up with a loving face,
And smiled from the white ground;—
The stars that sat upon their thrones
Seem'd singing with low sound.

The white Christ cried, 'The green Earth
lives!
She sleeps, but hath not died!
She and all fair things thou hast named
Shall quicken and abide!

'O Balder, those great gods to whom
Thy radiant life was given,
Were far too frail to keep their plight
And summon Death to heaven.

'There is no god of all thy kin
Dare name that name aloud;

When his cold hand was on thy heart,
Each crouch'd within his clond.

'Thou couldst not buy the boon of those,
They were too weak and poor ;
Fain would they buy a boon of *thee*,
Now thy strange sleep is o'er !

'Yet now for evermore fulfilled
Is thine ancestral rune,
For thou indeed hast conquer'd Death
And won thy gentle boon.

'Yea, thou hast died as fair things die
In earth, and air, and deep,
Yet hast thou risen thrice beautiful
Out of thy solemn sleep.

'For life thrice seal'd and sanctified
Is on thy lips and eyes ;
And whatsoe'er grows fair like thee
By love shall also rise.

'Lo ! out of beauty cast away
Another beauty grows :
What Death reaps in the fields of life
In fairer fields he sows.

'And thro' a thousand gates of gloom,
With tracts of life between,
The creatures that the Father made
Creep on, now hid, now seen ;

'And duly out of every doom
A sweeter issue flows,
As out of dreary dooms of gods
At last thy glory rose !

'So fairer yet, and ever fair,
Thy soul divine shall gleam,
A spirit springing from a tomb
And rainbow'd into dream !

'O kiss me, Brother, on the mouth,
Yea, kiss me thrice again ;
For when I feel thy kiss, I feel
The sun, and the wind, and the rain !

'The dead Earth wakens 'neath thy feet,
Flame kindles thro' the sod. . . .
O kiss me with thy human lips,
Thou brightest born of God !'

VIII.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE
GODS.

I.

'BALDER ! Balder !'

And Balder said,
Turning round his gentle bead,
'I hear !'

'And thou, my servant Death,
Kneeling low with husb'd breath,
While my hand is on thy hair !'

Death made answer, kneeling there,
'I bear !'

'At last the cold snows cease,
The white world is hush'd in peace,
The sky's clear, the storm has gone,
Stars are rising to light us on—
In the north the moon grows gray,—
Take my hand and come away !'

'Whither, O Whither ?'

'To the City strange wherein
Dwell the mighty gods thy kin ;—
O Balder, lead me thither !'

'Across the darkness and the day,
Long and dreary is the way—
O'er chill wastes of misery,
Past the silent Frozen Sea,
Where the white bears lean and old
Run and shiver in the cold—
Where the vast ice-mountains rise
Violet-blue against the skies,
Then across the wondrous Bow

Only gods and ghosts may tread,—
Beyond the sea, above the snow,
Where the sunfire fadeth red ;
There the night lies and no day—
Long and weary is the way—
O Brother, fare not thither !'

'Broken is the wintry night,
Rising yonder is the light ;
Half our task is yet to do—
Come ! and thou, Death, follow too—
O Balder, lead me thither !'

Far away across the gloom,
Rose-red like a rose in bloom,

Flashing, changing, ray by ray,
 Glorious as the ghost of day,
 Gleam'd in one vast aureole
 Shifting splendours of the pole.
 All across the vault of blue
 Shooting lights and colours flew,
 And the milky way shone there
 Like a bosom white and bare,
 Throbbing, trembling, softly moved
 By some heart that lived and loved.
 Night was broken, and grew bright.
 All the countless lamps of light
 Swinging, flashing, near and far,
 Cast their glittering rays below,—
 While the silvern polar star
 Throbb'd close down upon the snow. . . .

'Take my hand, and let us go!'

II.

And so those twain have passed across the
 night,

O'er frozen wilds of white,
 With eyes still fixed upon the polar star
 That burneth bright afar;
 And Death behind them, creeping like a
 hound,
 Still follows with no sound.

O wonders of the cold untravell'd Waste
 Whereon their swift feet haste!
 The night is troubled; on the black pole's
 pyres

Flash fierce electric fires,
 And shadows come and go, phantoms move
 forth

Gigantic in the north.
 Upon the snow a green light glimmereth,
 With phosphorescent breath
 Flashing and fading; and from unseen lairs
 Creep hoary ghost-like bears,
 Crawling across their path without a cry.

At last against the sky
 They see the lonely arctic mountains loom,
 Touch'd with a violet bloom
 From peak to base and wearing on their
 heights
 Strange ever-shifting lights,
 Yellow and azure and dark amethyst;
 But westward they are kissed
 By the bright beams of a great moon of gold.

Dead-white and calm and cold
 Sleeps the great waste, while ever as they go,
 With shadows on the snow.
 Their shapes grow luminous and silvern fair,
 And in the hush'd chill air
 The stars of heaven cluster with quick breath
 To gaze on them and Death.
 Now thro' the trembling sheen of the still sky
 Blue fires and emerald fly
 With wan reflections on the sheeted white
 Outspread beneath the night,
 And passing thro' them, Christ and Balder
 seem
 As spectres in a dream,
 Until at last their feet come silently
 To the great arctic sea.

Moveless and boundless, stretching blindly
 forth

Into the purple north,
 Rise mountainous waves and billows frozen
 all

As if i' the act to fall,
 And tho' they stir not, yet they seem to roll
 In silence to the pole.

So, lit by countless stars, that Ocean old
 Wrapt in the vapours cold
 Of its own breath, beneath the lamps of night
 Glams blue and shadowy white!

Then Balder crieth,—and around his brow
 New glory glimmereth now,—

'Ay me, remote from men are the abodes
 Of the immortal gods;
 Beyond the ocean of the ice; afar
 Under the sleepless star;
 And o'er the flood of the wild waters spanned,
 From lonely land to land,
 By the great bridge of the eternal Bow.'

The white Christ answereth low,
 'Tho' it were further than the furthest light
 That glimmereth this night,
 Thither our souls are bound, our feet must
 go!'

III.

THE BRIDGE OF GHOSTS.

Their feet have passed the frozen Deep
 Whose waves in silence roll,
 And now they reach that ocean black
 Which beats the inmost pole.

Before them, on the northern sky
 Rose-red and far withdrawn,

Mingled with meteors of the night,
Gleam golden dews of dawn ;

And cast across that liquid sea
Which surges black below,
They see the pathway of the gods,
A many-colour'd Bow.

[There comes from off its heights a wind
That blows for endless time,
As swift as light, as keen as frost,
It strikes down souls that climb.]

'O brother, place thy hand in mine,'
The gentle Balder said ;
The rayless waters roar'd beneath,
The Bridge flash'd overhead.

Then hand in hand against the wind
They falter'd upward slow,
On stairs of crimson and of gold
Climbing the wondrous Bow.

Like a great rainbow of the earth
It rose with faint hues seven,
And thro' the purple of the arch
Glimmer'd the lights of heaven.

When they had reach'd the midmost height,
In air they stood so high,
To one beneath they would have seem'd
As stars upon the sky.

The white Christ cried, 'What lonely light
Burns yonder ruby red ?'
'The mansion of the sun-god Fryer
Stands yonder,' Balder said.

'There ranged in rows with cold hands crost
The slain in silence lie,
The face of each ablaze like brass
Against the burning sky.'

Far under, as they linger'd there,
The dark deep waters roll'd ;
Beyond, the polar mountains flash'd
With gleams of fiery gold.

Upon the shores rose hills of ice
Hewn as in marble white,
Inlaid with opal and with pearl
And crown'd with chrysolite.

From stair to stair the brethren trod,
And Death crawl'd close behind,
And ever as they walk'd, the Bridge
Shook wavering in the wind.

And lo ! they seem'd as meteor shapes,
White-robed and shod with flame ;
And to them out of the cold north
A threatening murmur came.

Down in the sullen sea below
Now ghostly faces clomb,
Uplooking with wild eyes to theirs
And waving hands of foam !

So o'er the mighty Bow they moved
Snow-vestured and star-crown'd,
And Death behind them like a shade
Follow'd without a sound.

But as they reach'd the shores and stood,—
The bright Bridge at their back,—
The gods gazed out from the cold north
And shriek'd, and all grew black !

Deep thunders shook the darken'd heaven,
Wild lightning flash'd and fled,
The frozen shores of ice and snow
Trembled beneath their tread.

Round the ice-mountains of the pole
Dense smokes of tempest rose,
And from their lairs swift whirlwinds leapt
Wrapt round with drifting snows.

'O Brother, hold me by the hand,
For lo ! the hour is nigh ;—
I see the shadows of the gods,
Yonder upon the sky !'

IV.

'BEHOLD, I AM RISEN.'

They stood in the snow and they clung
together,—

The air was blacken'd, the snow was
driven ;

There came a tempest of wintry weather
Out of the open gates of heaven.

The darkness drifted, the dark snows shifted,
The winnowing fans of the winds were lifted,
And the realms of the ice were riven ;

The white flakes whirl'd like a wing'd cloud
Round and over and under ;

The Earth shriek'd loud from her rending
shroud,

And the black clouds echoed in thunder !

'O Balder ! Balder !'

And Balder replied,
Feeling not seeing his face who cried,
'I hear!'

'And thou other who crouchest there,
Gazing up thro' thy hoary hair,
Stir not yet till I bid thee go!'

And Death moan'd answer out of the snow,
'I hear!'

'At last the hour hath come,
The sky is troubled, the world is shaken,
The sleeping gods on their thrones awaken,
Altho' their lips are dumb,

I feel a breath from the frozen north,
For the souls of the slain are faring forth,
And their tramp is heard on the frozen ocean,
And their tread is swift in the vales of snow.

They come, and the great deep throbs
below
To the sound of their thund'rous motion.
O Balder, Balder!'

'I hearken, I hearken!'

'Thro' the flakes that fall and the ways that
darken,

Over the earth or over the sea,
North is the way that our feet must flee,
Till we find them sitting beyond the pole,
Gods without pity, gods without soul,
Fresh from the slaying of thee.

North is the way that our feet must go,
Breasting the blasts from the gates of woe,
Till we find them there in their sacred places,
Gods with their terrible bloodless faces,
Writing red-handed for mortal races
Black runes on the stainless snow!'

. . . Deeper and darker the night is growing,
Faster and faster the clouds are snowing—
Fleeter and fleeter the Brethren fly
With faces silver'd against the sky,
Till close before them, beyond the pole,
The aurora flashes its fiery scroll,
While the winds of the frozen waste are
blowing,

And the ice is riven asunder!
Lo! ghastly blue with a dreary gleam
The bergs of the pole, like ghosts in a dream,
Standing pallid against the heaven,
Flash with the forks of the fiery levin,

And to and fro in the frozen snow,
Pass manifold shapes of wonder.
Faster, faster, out of the north,
The ghosts of Asgard are hurrying forth,
And their shields of ice and their spears of
hail
Clash in the heart of the gathering gale,
As they come upon feet of thunder.

'O Balder! Balder! cling unto me!'

'Lift up thy lamp, for I cannot see—
I shiver deep to the bitter bone,—
While the chilly seeds of the sleet are sown
In my flesh, and I feel not thee!'

The lamp is lifted: a dreary light
It sheddeth out on the northern night;
It comes and goes like the lighthouse ray
Lost on the soot-black ocean way.
Nought they see and nought they feel,
Only the frost with fingers of steel
Gripping their throats, so fierce, so fast,
Only the breath of the bitter blast
Bending their hodies as trees are bent,
Rending their garments as clouds are rent,
While overhead, with a thund'rous tread,
The black heavens frown to trample them
down,
And the vials of storm are spent.

'O Balder! Balder! what shadows white
Stand in the tempest's shrieking flight?
There in the darkness I discern
Faces that fade and eyes that burn;
They loom in the flash of the thunder-cloud,
And the tramp of their feet is as surges that
roar,
Rolling around,
On some desolate rocky shore.'

Then Balder answer'd with eager cry—
'Cover thy face lest thou droop and die:
'Tis the gods my brethren! I see them plain,
Each sitteth there in a spectral pain;
They search the waste all round for us,
And the light in their eyes is tremulous
With the wrath that burns the brain!'

. . . Blacker, blacker, the night is growing,
Thicker, faster, the snow is snowing.
Silent amid those frozen peaks
Sit gods with terrible bloodless cheeks,—

Each like a statue of marble stone,
 Each alone on a lonely throne,
 With the red aurora upon their hair,
 They loom in desolate circles there,
 Silent, with folded wings ;
 They do not stir though the storm drifts by,
 They do not speak though the wild winds
 cry,

Silent they reign in a starry dream,
 While the north star flashes its fiery beam,

And the serpent lightning springs. . . .

Silent they sit,—but who is He
 Who broods in the centre awfully?
 Like a pale blue berg in the frosty light,
 Solemn, speechless, hoary white,
 Coldly wrapt from head to feet
 In a robe of snow like a winding-sheet,
 With a crown of starlight on his hair,
 He sitteth dreaming with fatal stare,

Tho' his throne is strangely shaken.
 Black is his home, and he sits thereon
 Still as a mortal whose breath is gone,
 And the waves are frozen around his feet,
 And faint, far under, the earthquakes beat,
 Yet he broods, and doth not waken.

'O Balder ! Balder ! who is he
 Who sitteth there so silently ?
 Who sitteth there so hoary and old,
 A god in the midst of gods so cold,
 And hears not at all, though the storm
 winds call,
 And the ghosts of Asgard gather ?'

Then Balder answer'd, 'The gods creep
 here,
 Weary with seasons of strife and fear—
 They come, they go—but for ever and aye
 He stirreth not, be it night or day ;
 Still as a stone, he reigneth alone !'

And Balder raising his hands, made moan,
 'BEHOLD I AM RISEN, MY FATHER !'

V.

ALFADUR.

The rune is woven, the spell is spoken,
 And lo ! the dream of the gods is broken,
 And each pale throne is shaken.
 They risè, they tremble against the sky,
 They shriek an answer to Balder's cry
 And white as death they waken !

Gods they glimmer in frozen mail,
 Their faces are flashing marble pale,
 They rise erect, and they wave their hands,
 They scatter the shifting snows as sands,
 And gaze in the face of the Father ! . . .

. . . Blacker, blacker, the night is growing,
 Faster, faster, the snow is snowing—
 Silently looking thro' the storm,
 Towers the one gigantic Form,
 And all around with a trumpet sound

The wintry winds are blowing.
 The light of doom is in his eyes, his arms
 spread wide for slaughter,
 He sits 'mid gleams of burning skies and
 wails of wind-blown water,
 Behind the outline of his cheeks the pale
 aurora flashes,
 He broods 'mid moveless mountain peaks
 and looks thro' fiery lashes :
 On heaven and earth that round him float
 in whirls of snowy wonder,
 He looks, and from his awful throat there
 comes the cry of thunder !

'BALDER ! BALDER !'

. . . 'He cries on me—
 He standeth yonder, and beckoneth !'
 'He looketh around, but he cannot see !
 Answer him back with a gentle breath,
 Now the air is still !' . . .

'I am here, I am here !'
 . . . The cry went up to the godhead drear,
 Like the cry of a lamb in the midst of the
 snow,
 When the voices of tempest have sobbed
 their fill,
 And the clouds are still
 For a little space, and the winds lie low.
 Then rose in answer a wail so loud
 It roll'd as thunder from cloud to cloud,
 And the gods arose in a wingèd crowd,
 As oft 'mid desolate mountain-peaks,
 With clangour of wings and hungry shrieks,
 Great flocks of eagles gather.
 Tearing asunder their frozen mail,
 Smiting their breasts with a woful wail,
 Looming with faces spectral pale,
 They gazed in the eyes of the Father !
 Then even as mighty eagles spread
 Their wings and soar, they arose and fled

Crossing the gleam of the fiery north,
Facing the dark drift burrying forth,
They flew on flashing pinions ;
As wild clouds scatter'd across the sky,
They wind'd their way with a thunder-
cry. . . .

But moveless there, when the rest had flown,
The Father sat on his silent throne,
Dreary, desolate, all alone,
In the midst of the white dominions.

'BALDER ! BALDER !'

'He looks on me !
He stirreth now, with a sound like the sea,
And he calleth aloud !'

'Then move no limb,
But crouch in thy place and answer him ;—
Cry once more full loud and clear,
Now he pauseth again !' . . .

'I am here, I am here !'

Again the thunder rolling near,
Again the tumult of wind and ocean ;
Around the throne with a serpent motion
The meteor snakes appear.
White in the midst He stands, the Spirit of
God the Master,
Waving his wild white bands, urging his
snows on faster ;
But ever darker yet the troubled air grows
o'er him,
And still with fierce face set he searcheth
night before him,
And then again, all blind, with black robes
blown asunder,
He gropeth down the wind, and calls aloud
in thunder,

'BALDER, BALDER.'

. . . 'I see him now,
The wrath of heaven is on his brow—
He stands in the circle of meteors white,
His white feet glimmer like cold moonlight—
I can feel his breath !'

'Now hold my hand—
Rise erect on thy feet and stand—
Make answer !'

'My Father, I am here !'

As an infant's cry, so faint, so clear,
As a young lamb's cry, so soft, so low,
Cometh the voice from the waste of snow,—
And silence deep as the sleep o' ocean,
Stillness with no stir, no motion,

Follows the sound of the cry. . . .
Terrible, desolate, the Form
Stands and broods in the midst of the storm,
Beneath him wolves of the fierce frost swarm,
But quiet and hush'd they lie.
With his robe wind-rent and his form wind-
blown

He gazeth round and round.
He seeth a snow amid the snow
And heareth a human sound.

'BALDER ! BALDER !'

'O Father dear,
Turn thine eyes and behold me here—
Ev'n Balder thy Son !'

'I see thee not—
Only a gleam on a darken'd spot,
And the ray of the light in thy hand !'

'Ay me,
No light I carry that thou mayst see.
What wouldst thou, Father ?'

'Why hast thou risen ?
We deem'd thee dead, and we slept in peace—
We deem'd thee dead with the snow for prison,
That the old sad fear might cease.
We deem'd thee dead, and our hearts were
light,
For never more would thy beauty blight
The spirit of Me thy Father !'

Then answer'd Balder, 'O Father dear,
Turn thine eyes, and behold me here—
Why hatest thou me ?'

'We hate thee all
For thy summer face, for thy soft footfall,
For thy beauty blended of star and flower,
For thine earthly love, for thine heavenly
dower ;
For the rune that was written, the rune that
was read,
We cursed thee all, but our curse was said
Deepest and best when we read that rune
By thy love for men !'

As the rising moon
Creeping up from a cloudy place,
A glory grew upon Balder's face—
Again he murmur'd, 'O Father dear,
Turn thine eyes and behold me here—
Why hatest thou me?'

'We hate thee most

By the rune that was written, the rune that
was lost,

By the doom that above thee hung sharp as
a sword,

When thy feet stood there and thy voice
implored

For pity of men; and we loved thee least
For loosing the yoke of man and beast,

For making the hearts of mortals tame,
For calming wild hawk-like men who came

To thy beck as doves; then we loathed to see
The light of thy name upon flower and tree,

The peace of thy name upon hill and vale,
The love of thy name on the faces pale

Of maidens and men; yea, for all these
things,

For all thy life and the light it brings,
We have hated and hate thee unto death.'

But Balder answereth back and saith,
'Why hatest thou me?'

'For this the most!

Because thy coming is as the ghost
Of the coming doom that shall strike us dead.

For the rune was written, the rune was read,
And we knew no rest till we bought our breath

With the gentle boon of thy willing death.
Why hast thou risen? how hast thou risen?

We gave thee the frost and the snow for
prison,

We heard thy sigh and we let thee die,
Yet thou criest again with a human cry

From the gates of life! . . . But I stoop at
last

To sweep thee hence with my bitterest blast
Out to the heavens of pitiless air,

Where nevermore with a human care
That face of thine

May trouble the eyes of the gods divine!

Out 'mong the winged stars, deep down the
dark abysses,

Beyond the black tomb's bars, far from the
green Earth's kisses.

As dust thou shalt be cast, as snow thou
shalt be drifted,
Seized by my fiercest blast thou shalt be now
uplifted.

Call on all living things that stir in sun or
shadow—

White flowers, sweet forms with wings, wild
deer, or lambs o' the meadow;

Call on the moonlight now that mingled in
thy making;

To heaven uplift thy brow, where the pale
spheres are waking;

On water, air, and fire, on snow and on
wind and on forest,

Call with a wild desire, now when thy need
is sorest!

Call now on flower or bird to fill the plight
they gave thee!

Call, let thy voice be heard, and see if Earth
can save thee!

Behind the back of the Shadow hoar,
There grew a trouble, a sullen roar,

Roar as of beasts that prepare to come,
Trouble like surges that flash to foam;

Faster and faster the drift whirl'd round,
Deeper and direr grew the sound,

And the four fierce winds are blowing!

Yet brighter, calmer grew Balder's face,

Till a light and a glory fill'd the place,
And he rose his height, like a lily white,

Like a lily white in the heart of the night,
With the flakes around him snowing!

VI.

THE BRETHERN.

'Father, Father, why hatest thou me,
Whom the green Earth loves, and the cir-
cling sea,

And the pure blue air, and the light of the
sun,

And the birds of the air, and the flowers
each one?

Hatest thou me thro' my love for these?

For the swift deep rivers, the fronded trees,
The golden meres and the mountains white,

The cataracts leaping from height to height,
And the deer that feed on the snowy steeps

Where the rainbow hangs and the white
mist creeps?

Hatest thou me the most of all

For my care of mortals whom thou hast
made,
My blessing on lovers whose soft footfall
Soundeth still in the flowery shade?
Father, Father, hatest thou me,
Because of my light on humanity?
Because of a holy anointing balm
I have heal'd their hearts and kept them
calm ;
Because I have sown in forest and grove
The roses of beauty, the lilies of love,
That men might gather, and sweeten away
The taint of the perishable clay?
Father, Father, listen to me—
I will not call upon bird or tree,
I will not call upon lamb or dove,
On the flowers below or the stars above ;
I will call aloud, and thine ears shall know,
I will call aloud in the midst of the snow,
On a mortal thing of mortal breath
Who has gazed and smiled in the eyes of
Death,
Who has loosen'd his shroud and his feet
made free
To follow and find me over the sea.
. . . . My brother Jesus, hearest thou me !'

Sweet as a star that opens its lids of silver
and amber,
Soft as a lily that rises out of a water still,
Pure as a lamp that burns in a virgin's
vestal chamber
When winds with folded wings sleep on
the scented sill,
Pale as the moving snow, yet calmer, clearer,
and whiter,
Holding the light in his hand, and flash-
ing a ray blood-red,
Robed in a silvren robe that ever grew
stranger and brighter,
Robed in a robe of the snow, with a
glory around his head,
Christ now arose ! and upstanding held the
cold hand of his Brother,
Turning his face to the storm like the
wrath of some beautiful star,—
And the sound of the storm was hush'd,
and pale grew the face of that Other,
He, Alfadur supreme, most direful of all
gods that are !

'BALDER ! BALDER !'

'O Father, I listen !'

*'What shape is this whose sad eyes glisten
Bright as the lamp he is uplifting ?
Round and o'er him snows are drifting,
Yet as a still star shineth he,
Pale and beautiful like thee.
Who is this that standeth there
Even as a mortal man,
Thin and weary and wan,
A lanthorn in his hold,
His feet bloody and bare,
And a ring of brightest gold
Round his hair ?'*

'O Father, 'tis he and none other
Who woke me from my tomb ;
The Christ it is, my Brother,
Tho' born of a woman's womb.
He has conquer'd the grave, for lo !
He died and he rose again !
He comes to the silence of snow,
From the beautiful regions of rain ;
And his hair is bright with a peaceful light
As the yellow moon's on a summer night,
And the flesh on his heart is heaven white
To cool an immortal pain !'

Blacker, blacker the night is growing,
Deeper, deeper the snow is snowing. . . .
As the rigid wave of the ocean-storm
Towereth the gigantic Form,
And he lifts his hand with a cold command,
And the shrill winds answer blowing !

A ghastly gleam is on his cheeks, his white
robes roll asunder,
He raises up his arms and shrieks in his
old voice of thunder,
'The rune was writ, the rune is read—Son,
thou hast slain thy Father,
The frames are quick that late were dead,
and from the grave they gather,
The pale One cometh heavenly eyed, as in
thy dreams, O Mother !
He wakes, he stands by Balder's side as
brother smiles by brother.
O gods, these live, and must we die ? these
bloom, and must we wither ?
Cry with a loud exceeding cry on Death and
send him hither !
Come, come, O Death ! I call on thee—come
hither, fleet, faster !
Thou hunter of humanity, thou hound of
me thy Master !

*Slay thou these twain, that we may live,
 who feed thy throat with slaughter,
 And blood to quench thee gods will give,
 shed free as torrent water !
 Come thou this night, O Death divine,
 come quickly or come never,
 And the great Earth shall all be thine for
 ever and for ever !'*

The snows are blowing, the Earth is crying,
 The eagles of storm are shrieking and flying;
 Thunder-cloud upon thunder-cloud
 Piled, and flashing and roaring aloud,
 Rill from the north, and the winds rush forth,
 And the billows of heaven are breaking.

Hand in hand the Brethren stand,
 Fair and bright in the midst of the night,
 Fair and bright and marble white,

Quiet as babes awaking. . . .
 But who is *he* that stirring slow,
 Wrapt in winding-sheet of snow,
 Riseth up from the Christ's feet ?
 His golden hair all white with sleet,
 His eyes all dim, his face snow-pale,
 He stands erect in the drifting gale !
 Tall and terrible loometh he,
 Facing the blast like a frozen tree !

'*Death, Death !*' the god shrieks now—
Death, Death, is it surely thou ?
Death, Death !' and the god laughs loud,
 Answer'd by every thunder-cloud,
 While the snows are falling faster,—
 '*Death, Death, there is thy prey !—*
Take them and tear them and rend them
away,
As flakes of snow, as drops of spray,
In the name of Me thy Master !' . . .

Like two lilies crown'd with gold,
 Very beauteous to behold,
 Blown in summer weather,
 Like two lambs with silvern feet,
 Very beauteous and sweet,
 Held together with a chain
 In some sacrificial fane,

The Brethren cling together.
 Ever fairer still they grow
 While the noise of storm sinks low,
 And the Father's snow-white hand
 Pointeth at them as they stand,
 And the silent shape of Death
 Creepeth close and shuddereth !

See, O see, the light they wear,
 On their heads and o'er their hair,
 Falleth on the Phantom now,
 Lying softly on his brow. . . .
 Death, O Death, can this be *thou* ?

VII.

FATHER AND SON.

Now hark, one crieth !

' My servant Death,
 Kneeling there with hush'd breath,
 Listen, ere I bid thee go !'
 Death makes answer out of the snow,
 'I hear !'

The Christ hath risen his height,
 Large and strange in a lonely light,
 And he lifts his hand and makes the sign
 Of the blessed cross on his breast divine,
 And the thrones of the white gods flash like
 fire,
 And sink in earthquake around the Sire,
 Shaken and rent asunder !
 Then he lifts his hand and he makes the sign
 Once again on his breast divine,
 And the mountains of ice around the throne
 Are troubled like breakers rolling on
 To the sound of their own thunder !

' Father ! Father !' Balder cries,
 With arms outstretch'd and weeping eyes,
 ' Father !'—but lo ! the white Christ stands,
 Raising yet his holy hands,
 And cries, ' O Death, speed on ! speed on !
 Conquer now and take thy throne—
 Now all the gods have taken flight,
 Reign thou there one starless night
 In the room of him, the Father !'

Slowly over the icy ground,
 Slow and low like a lean sleuth-hound,
 Without a breath, without a sound,
 The phantom form is crawling.
 He makes no shadow, he leaves no trace,
 Snow on snow he creepeth apace,
 Nearer, nearer, the fix'd Face
 Veil'd with the flakes still falling.
 ' Father ! Father !' Balder cries . . .
 Silent, terrible, under the skies,
 Sits the God on his throne, with eyes on his
 Son

Whose gentle voice is calling !
 As the cuckoo calls in the heart of the May
 Singing the flowers together,

As the fountain calls thro' its flashing spray,
As a lamb calls low 'mid a mountain-cloud,
As a spirit calls to a corpse in its shroud,
The Son cries on the Father!

VIII.

TWILIGHT.

The wind is blowing, the skies are snowing,
The ice is rent and the rocks are riven,
But morning light in the north is growing,
Crimson light of the altars of heaven.

Silent, still, amidst the storm,
Sitteth there the formless Form,
Harkening out of his hoary hair,
Waiting on in a dark despair,
While the burning heavens flame o'er
him! . . .

Suddenly, wild and wing'd and bright,
Towering to heaven in shroud of white,
A phantom upriseth against the light
And standeth vast before him. . . .

Is it a Shadow, or only the snow?
The skies are troubled, the light burns low,
But stars still gather and gather.

Is it a Shadow, or only the snow,
Uprising there in the blood-red glow,
Ever towering higher and higher,
In a robe of whiteness fringed with fire,
Outstretching wings without a cry
From verge to verge of the burning sky,
With eyes on the eyes of the Father?

Now Balder crieth, 'What shape comes
there,

Terrible, troubling the heavens and air?
Is it Norna the arctic swan,
The bright and bodiless Skeleton,
Bird-shaped, with a woman's breasts and
eyes,

Whose wings are wide as the world and skies?
Is it Norna, or only the snow,
Moving yonder against the glow,
Ever towering higher and higher,
Ever outspreading pinions dire
And looking down in a dumb desire,
With eyes on the eyes of the Father!'

It is not Norna, it is not the snow.
The skies are troubled; the light burns low;
Yet stars still gather and gather.

'Father! Father! awaken, awaken!
One bends above thee with bright hair shaken
Over thy throne like a falling flame;

One toucheth thy cheek and nameth thy
name,

In a voice I hear, in a tone I know;
It is not Norna, it is not the snow,
By the face and the voice and the tone.

Vaster than these and vaster than thou,
Touching the stars with a shining brow,
Flickering up to the twinkling shades
Where the wild aurora flashes and fades,
Spreading its wings from east to west,
As an eagle that looks on a hawk in its nest
It hungereth over thy throne!
Father! my Father!'

'He cannot hear—
Hide thy face, for the hour is near—
Hush! . . .

. . . Who shrieks in the heart of the
night? . . .

Terrible, desolate, dumb and blind,
Like a cloud snow-white
Struggling and rent in the claws o' the wind,
The Father hath risen with no sound
'Mid the wild winds wavering around,
And his stirring deepens the storm.

The ice is shaken beneath his tread,
The meteors burn around his head,
But faster, thicker, out of the skies,
Blotting his shape from Balder's eyes,
The wild flakes waver and swarm.
Now face to face in the blood-red gleam,
Like clouds in the sunset, like shapes in a
dream,

Face to face, with outstretch'd hands
Like lightning forks that illumine the lands,
Face to face, and sight to sight,
Like vulture and eagle fierce for fight,
They rise and they rise against the skies,—
Alfadur with his fiery eyes,
And the other vaster Form!

It is not Norna, but stranger and brighter,
It is not the snow, but wilder and whiter;
Ever greater yet it grows
Wrapt about with whirling snows,
Ever it dilateth on,
Till, a crimson Skeleton,
With his head against the sky
Where the pale lights flicker and die,
Strange, he stands, with orbs of fire
Looking down upon the Sire.
See, O see upon his brow
Strangest lustre liveth now,

On his neck and round his frame
Twines a snake of emerald flame. . . .
Death, O Death, can it be *thou* ?

'Father, father ! I cannot see—
The heavens are bright, but the world is
white,
The wings of the wan Form cover thee—
Around and around, with no sigh, with no
sound,
Like the mists of a cloud, like the folds of
a shroud,
They enwrap thee,—and hide thee from
me !'

IX.

'A CROSS AND A LILY.'

'It is over ! O Balder, look up and behold !'

'Not yet, for I sicken—my sense shrinketh
cold,
And I fear the strange silence that cometh
at last !
All is hush'd—all is dead—the dew now is
shed
Warm as tears on my hand, but the tempest
hath pass'd,
And the sounds of the tempest are fled !'

'Arise !'

'I am risen !'

'Behold !

'All is white,
But the darkness hath gone, and the stars
of the night,
And down from the north streams the dawn
flowing free ;
But I see not my Father !'

'Again !

'Woe is me !
His throne standeth there white and cold,
and thereon
Sits another I know, as a King on a throne,
Yea, sceptred and crown'd . . . and vaster
tenfold
He seems than the Spirit who sat there of old,
For his form 'gainst the heavens looms fiery
and fair,
And the dew of the dawn burneth bright on
his hair ;

And we twain unto *him* are as birds in the
night
That sit gazing up at a great snowy height
Where the starlight is coming and going like
breath.'

'So strange and so changed, yet 'tis he,
even Death,—
Best and least, last and first. He hath
conquer'd his own.
All gods are as sand round his feet tempest-
blown,
And lesser yet greater, more weak yet more
wise,
Are we who stand here looking up in his eyes.
All hail now to Death, since the great gods
are dead !'

'Woe is me—it was written, and lo ! it is
read !'

'Come together, and bless him !'

'My Father?'

'The same.

On his throne I will mark with a finger of
flame

A cross and a lily for thee and for me !'

They pass o'er the ice, and a sound like the
sea

Grows under their footprints ; and softly
they come

Where Death, with his eyes fix'd on heaven,
sitteth dumb ;

And they pause at his feet, while far o'er
them he looms

With his brow 'mong the stars and the
amethyst glooms,

Yea, they pause far beneath, and with finger
divine

The white Christ hath made on the snow
for a sign

The cross and the lily . . . then rising he
stands,

And looketh at Death with uplifting of hands.

Still as a star he shineth, brightly his eyes
are burning,

White as a dove he seems in the morning's
dewy breath,

Lifting again his face with a smile of loving
and yearning,

He looketh gently up at the godlike shape
of Death ;

And the hair of Death is golden, the face of
 Death is glowing,
 While softly around his form he folds his
 mighty wings,
 And vast as the vast blue heavens the fair
 faint form is growing,
 But the face that all men fear is bright
 with beautiful things.
 Ev'n so the Brethren wait where the darkest
 snows are drifted,
 Small as two doves that light in a wilder-
 ness alone,
 While bright on the blood-red skies, with
 luminous head uplifted,
 In a dream divine upgazing, Death sitteth
 upon his throne.

IX.

THE LAST BLESSING.

I.

THE WAKING OF THE SEA.

'ALL that is beautiful shall abide,
 All that is base shall die.'
 Hark! birds are singing far and wide,
 Under the summer sky. . . .

Southward across the shining Bow
 The blessed Brethren came ;
 They wore soft raiment of the snow
 And sandals shod with flame.

And golden lights and rippling rains
 Were on the frozen sea,
 The bergs were melting from their chains,
 The waters flashing free.

The white Christ lifted hands above
 The silent wakening Deep,
 And the unseen depths began to move
 With motions soft as sleep.

Then on an isle of ice he stopt,
 Leading his Brother mild,
 And blest the waters as they slept,
 And lo, they woke and smiled !

Around him on the melting sea
 The glittering icebergs stirred,
 And glimmer'd southward silently,
 Like things that lived and heard.

Then, like a ship on the still tide
 That slowly leaveth land,
 His own white isle began to glide
 At lifting of his hand.

Silently as a flock of sheep
 The bergs stirred in the sun,
 Shepherded gently down the Deep
 By that immortal one.

For as he raised his snow-white hand,
 They crept full softly by,—
 Or paused and stood, as fair flocks stand
 Under the shepherd's eye.

Far, far away into the north
 They stretch'd in legions white,
 Trembling and changing, creeping forth
 Out of a crimson light.

And all the colours of the Bow
 Down their bright sides were shed ;
 Above the sky was gold ; below,
 The sea all rippling red !

II.

FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

Bright Balder at his brother's feet
 Lay looking on the sea,
 And sea-birds hover'd white and sweet
 Around him, silently.

And white bears crawl'd out of the Deep
 To see him, and were blest ;
 And black seals with their young did creep
 Upon the berg to rest.

Brighter and fairer all around
 The kindling waters shone ;
 And softly, swiftly, with no sound,
 The white flocks glided on.

And far away on every side
 The glittering ice-blink grew,—
 Millions of bergs like ships that ride
 Upon the waters blue.

O Balder, Balder, wherefore hide
 Thy face from the blue sky !
 The voice was music, but it cried
 Like any human cry.

'O Balder, Balder,' the white Christ said,
 'Look up and answer me.'
 Bright Balder raised his golden head,
 Like sunrise on the sea.

'O Brother, I was weeping then
 For those whom Death o'erthrew.
 Shall I, whose eyes have mourn'd for men,
 Not mourn my brethren too?'

The white Christ answer'd back, and cried,
 Shining under the sky,
 'All that is beautiful shall abide,
 All that is base shall die.

'And if among thy sleeping kin
 One soul divine there be,
 That soul shall walk the world and win
 New life, with thee and me.

'Death shall not harm one holy hair,
 Nor blind one face full sweet ;
 Death shall not mar what Love made fair ;
 Nay, Death shall kiss their feet !'

Then Balder rose his heavenly height,
 And clear as day smiled he ;
 His smile was bright as noonday light
 Upon the sparkling sea.

Turning his face unto the north,
 He utter'd up a prayer,
 He saw the great Bridge stretching forth,
 But never a god walk'd there.

He pray'd for those great gods o'erthrown
 And cast in Death's eclipse,
 He named the goddesses each one,
 And blest them with his lips.

And lo ! from bright'ning far-off lands
 He saw glad spirits gleam,
 Gazing to sea, and waving hands,
 And singing in a dream ;

And far away where earth and air
 Mingled their gentle lights,
 There stood one marble form most fair
 Upon the cloudless heights.

Against the calm and stainless blue
 It stood divinely dim,
 And lo, his mother's form he knew,
 And felt her eyes on him !

Silent she paused, serene and crown'd,
 Amid a summer sheen.
 And cataracts flash'd their lights around,
 And woods grew dewy green.

Softly he sail'd beyond her sight
 Upon the summer sea,
 And once again with hands snow-white
 He blest all things that be.

And brighter, brighter, as he blest,
 The loosen'd Ocean grew,
 And all the icebergs rock'd at rest
 Upon the waters blue.

Along the melting shores of earth
 An emerald flame there ran,
 Forest and field grew bright, and mirth
 Gladden'd the flocks of Man.

Then glory grew on earth and heaven,
 Full glory of full day !
 Then the bright rainbow's colours seven
 On every iceberg lay !

In Balder's hand Christ placed his own,
 And it was golden weather,
 And on that berg as on a throne
 The Brethren stood together !

And countless voices far and wide
 Sang sweet beneath the sky—
 'All that is beautiful shall abide,
 All that is base shall die !'

Miscellaneous Poems and Ballads.

(1878-83.)

Clown. What hast here? Ballads?*Mop.* Pray now, buy some: I love a ballad in print o' life, for then we are sure they are true.*Aut.* Here's one to a very doleful tune. . . . This is a merry ballad, but a very pretty one.*The Winter's Tale.*

DEDICATION.

TO HARRIETT.

HERE at the Half-way House of Life I linger,
Worn with the way, a weary-hearted Singer,
Resting a little space;
And lo! the good God sends me, as a token
Of peace and blessing (else my heart were broken),
The sunbeam of thy face.

My fear falls from me like a garment; slowly
New strength returns upon me, calm and holy;
I kneel, and I atone. . . .
Thy hand is clasped in mine—we lean together. . .
Henceforward, through the sad or shining weather,
I shall not walk alone.

THE STRANGE COUNTRY.

I HAVE come from a mystical Land of Light
To a Strange Country;
The Land I have left is forgotten quite
In the Land I see.

The round Earth rolls beneath my feet,
And the still Stars glow,
The murmuring Waters rise and retreat,
The Winds come and go.

Sure as a heart-beat all things seem
In this Strange Country;
So sure, so still, in a dazzle of dream,
All things flow free.

'Tis life, all life, be it pleasure or pain,
In the Field and the Flood,
In the beating Heart, in the burning Brain,
In the Flesh and the Blood.

Deep as Death is the daily strife
Of this Strange Country:
All things thrill up till they blossom in Life,
And flutter and flee,

Nothing is stranger than the rest,
From the pole to the pole,
The weed by the way, the eggs in the nest,
The Flesh and the Soul.

Look in mine eyes, O Man I meet
In this Strange Country!
Lie in mine arms, O Maiden sweet,
With thy mouth kiss me!

Go by, O King, with thy crownèd brow
And thy sceptred hand—
Thou art a straggler too, I vow,
From the same strange Land.

O wondrous Faces that upstart
In this Strange Country!
O Sou's, O Shades, that become a part
Of my Soul and me!

What are ye working so fast and fleet,
O Humankind?
'We are building Cities for those whose feet
Are coming behind;

'Our stay is short, we must fly again
From this Strange Country;
But others are growing, women and men,
Eternally!'

Child, what art *thou*? and what am *I*?
But a breaking wave!
Rising and rolling on, we hie
To the shore of the grave.

I have come from a mystical Land of Light
To this Strange Country;
This dawn I came, I shall go to-night,
Ay me! ay me!

I hold my hand to my head and stand
'Neath the air's blue arc,

I try to remember the mystical Land,
But all is dark.

And all around me swim Shapes like mine
In this Strange Country ;—
They break in the glamour of gleams divine,
And they moan ' Ay me !'

Like waves in the cold Moon's silvern breath
They gather and roil,
Each crest of white is a birth or a death,
Each sound is a Soul.

Oh, whose is the Eye that gleams so bright
O'er this Strange Country ?
It draws us along with a chain of light,
As the Moon the Sea !

THE BALLAD OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.

'Twas the body of Judas Iscariot
Lay in the Field of Blood ;

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Beside the body stood.

Black was the earth by night,
And black was the sky ;
Black, black were the broken clouds,
Tho' the red Moon went by.

'Twas the body of Judas Iscariot
Strangled and dead lay there ;

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Look'd on it in despair.

The breath of the World came and went
Like a sick man's in rest ;
Drop by drop on the World's eyes
The dews fell cool and blest.

Then the soul of Judas Iscariot
Did make a gentle moan—

' I will bury underneath the ground
My flesh and blood and bone.

' I will bury deep beneath the soil,
Lest mortals look thereon,
And when the wolf and raven come
The body will be gone !

' The stones of the field are sharp as steel,
And hard and cold, God wot ;
And I must bear my body hence
Until I find a spot !'

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot,
So grim, and gaunt, and gray,
Raised the body of Judas Iscariot,
And carried it away.

And as he bare it from the field
Its touch was cold as ice,
And the ivory teeth within the jaw
Rattled aloud, like dice.

As the soul of Judas Iscariot
Carried its load with pain,
The Eye of Heaven, like a lanthorn's eye,
Open'd and shut again.

Half he walk'd, and half he seemed
Lifted on the cold wind ;
He did not turn, for chilly hands
Were pushing from behind.

The first place that he came unto
It was the open wold,
And underneath were prickly whins,
And a wind that blew so cold.

The next place that he came unto
It was a stagnant pool,
And when he threw the body in
It floated light as wool.

He drew the body on his back,
And it was dripping chill,
And the next place he came unto
Was a Cross upon a hill.

A Cross upon the windy hill,
And a Cross on either side,
Three skeletons that swing thereon,
Who had been crucified.

And on the middle cross-bar sat
A white Dove slumbering ;
Dim it sat in the dim light,
With its head beneath its wing.

And underneath the middle Cross
A grave yawn'd wide and vast,
But the soul of Judas Iscariot
Shiver'd, and glided past.

The fourth place that he came unto
It was the Brig of Dread,
And the great torrents rushing down
Were deep, and swift, and red.

He dared not fling the body in
For fear of faces dim,

And arms were waved in the wild water
To thrust it back to him.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Turned from the Brig of Dread,
And the dreadful foam of the wild water
Had splashed the body red.

For days and nights he wandered on
Upon an open plain,
And the days went by like blinding mist,
And the nights like rushing rain.

For days and nights he wandered on,
All thro' the Wood of Woe ;
And the nights went by like moaning wind,
And the days like drifting snow.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Came with a weary face—
Alone, alone, and all alone,
Alone in a lonely place !

He wandered east, he wandered west,
And heard no human sound ;
For months and years, in grief and tears,
He wandered round and round.

For months and years, in grief and tears,
He walked the silent night ;
Then the soul of Judas Iscariot
Perceived a far-off light.

A far-off light across the waste,
As dim as dim might be,
That came and went like the lighthouse
gleam
On a black night at sea.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Crawl'd to the distant gleam ;
And the rain came down, and the rain was
blown
Against him with a scream.

For days and nights he wandered on,
Push'd on by hands behind ;
And the days went by like black, black rain,
And the nights like rushing wind.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot,
Strange, and sad, and tall,
Stood all alone at dead of night
Before a lighted hall.

And the wold was white with snow,
And his foot-marks black and damp,

And the ghost of the silvern Moon arose,
Holding her yellow lamp.

And the icicles were on the eaves,
And the walls were deep with white,
And the shadows of the guests within
Pass'd on the window light.

The shadows of the wedding guests
Did strangely come and go,
And the body of Judas Iscariot
Lay stretch'd along the snow.

The body of Judas Iscariot
Lay stretched along the snow ;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Ran swiftly to and fro.

To and fro, and up and down,
He ran so swiftly there,
As round and round the frozen Pole
Glideth the lean white bear.

'Twas the Bridegroom sat at the table-head,
And the lights burnt bright and clear—
'Oh, who is that,' the Bridegroom said,
'Whose weary feet I hear ?'

'Twas one look'd from the lighted hall,
And answered soft and slow,
'It is a wolf runs up and down
With a black track in the snow.'

The Bridegroom in his robe of white
Sat at the table-head—
'Oh, who is that who moans without ?'
The blessed Bridegroom said.

'Twas one looked from the lighted hall,
And answered fierce and low,
'Tis the soul of Judas Iscariot
Gliding to and fro.'

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Did hush itself and stand,
And saw the Bridegroom at the door
With a light in his hand.

The Bridegroom stood in the open door,
And he was clad in white,
And far within the Lord's Supper
Was spread so broad and bright.

The Bridegroom shaded his eyes and look'd,
And his face was bright to see—
'What dost thou here at the Lord's Supper
With thy body's sins ?' said he.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
 Stood black, and sad, and hare—
 'I have wandered many nights and days ;
 There is no light elsewhere.'

'Twas the wedding guests cried out within,
 And their eyes were fierce and bright—
 'Scourge the soul of Judas Iscariot
 Away into the night !'

The Bridegroom stood in the open door,
 And he waved hands still and slow,
 And the third time that he waved his hands
 The air was thick with snow.

And of every flake of falling snow,
 Before it touched the ground,
 There came a dove, and a thousand doves
 Made sweet sound.

'Twas the body of Judas Iscariot
 Floated away full fleet,
 And the wings of the doves that bare it off
 Were like its winding-sheet.

'Twas the Bridegroom stood at the open
 door,
 And beckon'd, smiling sweet ;
 'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
 Stole in, and fell at his feet.

'The Holy Supper is spread within,
 And the many candles shine,
 And I have waited long for thee
 Before I poured the wine !'

The supper wine is poured at last,
 The lights burn bright and fair,
 Iscariot washes the Bridegroom's feet,
 And dries them with his hair.

THE LIGHTS OF LEITH.

I.

'THE lights o' Leith ! the lights o' Leith !'
 The skipper cried aloud—
 While the wintry gale with snow and hail
 Blew snell thro' sail and shroud.

'The lights o' Leith ! the lights o' Leith !'
 As he paced the deck cried he—
 'How merrily bright they burn this night
 Thro' the reek o' the stormy sea !'

As the ship ran in thro' the surging spray
 Afire seemed all the town ;

They saw the glare from far away,
 And, safely steer'd to the land-lock'd bay,
 They cast their anchor down.

' 'Tis sure a feast in the town o' Leith
 (To his mate the skipper spoke),
 'And yonder shadows that come and go,
 Across the quay where the bonfires glow,
 Are the merry-making folk.

'In right good time we are home once more
 From the wild seas and rough weather—
 Come, launch a boat, and we'll run ashore,
 And see the sport together.'

But the mate replied, while he shoreward
 gazed
 With sad and gentle eyes,
 While the lights of Leith beyond him blazed
 And he heard the landward cries :

' 'Tis twenty lang year since I first left here,
 In the time o' frost and snaw—
 I was only a lad, and my heart was mad
 To be up, and free, and awa' !

'My mither she prayed me no' to gang,
 For she had nae bairn but me—
 My father was droon'd, and sleeping amang
 The weeds o' the northern sea.

'I stole awa' in the mirk o' night
 And left my mither asleep,
 And ere she waken'd, at morning light,
 I was oot on the roaring deep.

'Aye, twenty lang year hae past sin' syne,
 And my heart has aft been sair
 To think o' that puir auld mither o' mine,
 Alane, in a warld o' care.

'When back I cam' frae the salt sea faem
 I was a bearded man,
 Ae simmer I dwelt in the hoose at hame,
 Then awa' to the sea I ran.

'And twice sin' syne hae I left the sea
 To seek the hameward track,
 And eye my mither had had for me—
 Tho' ne'er a gift had my hands to gie—
 A tender welcome back.

'Then, cast awa' in a soothern land,
 And taen to slaverie,
 I lang'd for the touch o' a mither's hand
 And the glint o' a mither's e'e.

' But noo that my wandering days are done,
I hae dree'd a penance sad,
I am coming hame, like the Prodigal Son,
But wi' siller to mak' her glad !

' I hae gowden rings for my mither's hand,
Bonnie and braw past dream,
And, fit for a leddy o' the land,
A shawl o' the Indian seam.

' And I lang, and lang, to seek ance mair
The cot by the side o' the sea,
And to find my gray old mither there,
Waiting and watching for me ;

' To dress her oot like a leddy grand,
While the tears o' gladness drap,
To put the rings on her wrinkled hand,
The siller intil her lap !

' And to say " O mither, I'm hame, I'm
hame !
Forgie me, O forgie !
And never mair shall ye ken a care
Until the day you dee ! "

O bright and red shone the lights of Leith
In the snowy winter-tide—
Down the cheeks of the man the salt tears
ran,
As he stood by the skipper's side.

' But noo I look on the lights o' hame
My heart sinks sick and cauld—
Lest I come owre late for her love or blame,
For oh ! my mither was auld !

' For her een were dim when I sail'd awa',
And snaw was on her heid,
And I fear—I fear—after mony a year,
To find my mither—deid !

' Sae I daurna enter the toon o' Leith,
Where the merry yule-fires flame,
Lest I hear the tidings o' dule and death,
Ere I enter the door o' hame.

' But ye'll let them row me to yonner shore
Beyond the lights o' the quay,
And I'll climb the brae to the cottage door,
A hunnerd yards frae the sea.

' If I see a light thro' the mirk o' night,
I'll ken my mither is there ;
I'll keek, maybe, through the pane, and see
Her face in its snawy hair !

' The face sae dear that for mony a year
I hae prayed to see again,—
O a mither's face has a holy grace
'Bune a' the faces o' men !

' Then I'll enter in wi' silent feet,
And saftly cry her name—
And I'll see the dim auld een grow sweet
Wi' a heavenly welcome hame !

' And I'll cry, " O mither, I'm here, I'm
here !
Forgie me, O forgie !
And never mair shall ye ken a care !
Your son shall lea' thee never mair
To sail on the stormy sea ! "

II.

They row'd him to the lonely shore
Beyond the lights of the quay,
And he climb'd the brae to the cottage door
A hundred yards from the sea.

He saw no light thro' the mirk of night,
And his heart sank down with dread,
' But 'tis late,' thought he, 'and she lies,
maybe,
Soond sleeping in her bed !'

Half-way he paused, for the blast blew keen,
And the sea roar'd loud below,
And he turn'd his face to the town-lights,
seen
Thro' the white and whirling snow.

The lights of Leith ! the lights of Leith !
How they flash'd on the night-black
bay,
White with sullen roar on the rocky shore
The waters splash'd their spray !

When close he came to the lonely cot,
He paused in deeper dread,—
For the gleam that came from the far-off
flame
Just touch'd the walls with red ;

Thro' the doorway dark did the bleak wind
blow,
The windows were black and bare,
And the house was floor'd with the cruel
snow,
And roof'd with the empty air !

' O mither, mither !' he moan'd aloud,
' And are ye deid and gane ?

- Hae I waited in tears thro' the weary years,
And a' in vain, in vain ?'
- He stood on the hearth, while the snow
swam drear
Between the roofless walls—
' O mither ! mither ! come here, come
here,—
'Tis your ain son, Robin, calls !'
- On his eager ears, as he stood in tears,
There came a faint foot-tread—
Then out of the storm crept a woman's form
With hooded face and head.
Like a black, black ghost the shape came
near
Till he heard its heavy breath—
'What man,' it sighed, 'stands sabbing
here,
In the wearifu' hoose o' death ?'
- 'Come hither, come hither, whae'er ye be,'
He answer'd loud and clear—
'I am Robin Sampson, come hame frae the
sea,
And I seek my mither dear !'
- 'O Robin, Robin,' a voice cried sobbing,
'O Robin, and is it yersel' ?
I'm Janet Wylie, lame Janet Wylie,
Your kissen, frae Marywell !'
- 'O Robin, Robin,' again she cried,
'O Robin, and can it be ?
Ah, better far had the wind and the tide
Ne'er brought ye across the sea !'
- Wailing she sank on the snow-heap'd hearth,
And rocked her body in pain—
'O Robin, Robin,' she cried to him sobbing,
Your mither—your mither—is gane !'
- The lights of Leith ! the lights of Leith !
How brightly still they glow !
The faint flame falls on the ruined walls,
On the hearthstone heap'd in snow !
- 'O Janet, Janet, kind cousin Janet,
If ever ye cared for me,
Noo let me hear o' my mither dear,
And hoo she cam' to dee !'
- Wailing she lifted her weeping face,
And answer'd in soul's despair—
'O Robin, awa' frae the wicked place—
Awa'—and ask nae mair !'
- But he grasp'd her arm with a grip of steel
And cried 'O Janet, speak !'
'O Robin dear, dinna seek to hear,
For oh ! your heart must breik !'
- But he pressed her more, and he pleaded sore
Till at last the tale was told,
And he listened on, till the tale was done,
Like a man death-struck and cold.
- III.
- 'O Robin dear, when ye sail'd awa',
That last time, on the sea,
We knew her heart was breiking in twa,
And we thought that she wad dee.
- 'But after a while she forced a smile—
"I'll greet nae mair," said she,
"But I'll wait and pray that the Lord, ae day,
May bring him again to me !
- "The Lord is guid, and Robin my son
As kind as a bairn can be—
Aye true as steel, and he loes me weel,
Tho' he's gane across the sea."
- 'O Robin, Robin, baith late and air'
She prayed and prayed for thee,
But evermair when the blast blew sair,
She was langest on her knee !'
- The lights of Leith ! the lights of Leith !
That flame o'er sea and skies !
How bright they glow !—while the salt
tears flow
From that bearded mariner's eyes.
- 'But, Robin, your mither was auld and pair,
And the season's cauld and keen ;
The white, white snaw was on her hair,
The frost film ower her een.
- 'And here in the hut beside the sea,
The pair auld wife did dwell—
Her only kin were my mither and me,
And we were as pair's hersel'.
- 'She leaved on a handfu' o' barley meal,
A drink frae the spring sae cauld—
O Robin, Robin, a heart o' steel
Might bleed for the weak and auld !
- 'In twa she was hent, on a staff she leant,
Wi' ragged duds for claize,
And wearifu' up and doon she went,
Gath'ring her sticks and straes.

- 'And the weans wad thrang as she creepit
alang,
And point, and cry sae shrill—
"There's Grannie Sampson," was ever their
sang,
"The wicked witch o' the hill!"
- 'Ah, mouny's the time up the hill she'd climb,
While the imps wad scream and craw—
At the door she'd stand, wi' her staff in hand,
And angrily screech them awa'!
- 'Then wi' feeble feet creeping hen, she'd greet
That the warld misca'd her sae,
And wi' face as white as the winding-sheet,
She'd kneel by the bed, and pray.
- 'O Robin, Robin, she prayed for him
Wha sail'd in the wild sea-rack,
And the tears wad drap frae her een sae dim,
As she prayed for her bairn to come
back!
- 'Then whiles . . . when she thought nae
folk were near . . .
(O Robin, she thought nae harm!
But stoop your heid, lest they hear, lest they
hear!)
She tried . . . an auld-farrant *charm*.
- 'A charm aft tried in the ingleside
When bairns are blythesome and free,
A charm (come near, lest they hear, lest
they hear!)
To bring her boy hame from the sea!
- 'And the auld black cat at her elbow sat,
(The cat you gied her yersel')
And the folk, keeking in thro' the pane, saw
a sin,
And thought she was weaving a spell!
- The lights of Leith! the lights of Leith!
They flame on the wintry gale!
With sore drawn breath, and a face like
death,
He hears to the gruesome tale!
- 'O Robin, Robin, I kenna hoo
The lee was faither'd first,
But (whisper again, lest they ken, lest they
ken!)
They thought the puir body accurst!
- 'They thought the spell had been wrought
in Hell,
To kill and curse and blight,
- They thought she flew, when naebody knew,
To a Sabbath o' fiends, ilk night!
- 'Then ane whose corn had wither'd ae morn,
And ane whose kye sicken'd doon,
Crept, scared and pale, wi' the leein' tale,
To the meenisters, up the toon.
- 'Noo, Robin, jest then, King Jamie the
King
Was oot at sea in his bark,
And the bark nigh sank unner, wi' fire-
flaught and thunner,
And they thought—the Deil was at
wark!
- 'The King cam' to land, and loup'd on the
strand,
Pale as a ghaist and afraid,
Wi' courtiers and clergy, a wild fearfu' band,
He ran to the kirk, and prayed.
- 'Then the clergy made oot 'twas witchcraft,
nae doot,
And searchit up and doon,
And . . . foond your auld mither (wae's
me!) and twa ither,
And dragg'd them up to the toon!
- 'O Robin, dear Robin, hearken nae mair!
'Speak on, I'll heark to the en'!
- 'O Robin, Robin, the sea oot there
Is kinder than cruel men!
- 'They took her before King Jamie the King,
Whaur he sat wi' sceptre and croon,
And the coard courtiers stood in a ring,
And the meenisters gather'd roon'.
- 'They bade her tell she had wrought the spell
That made the tempest blaw;
They strippit her bare as a naked bairn,
They tried her wi' pincers and heated airn,
Till she shriek'd and swoon'd awa'!
- 'O Robin, Robin, the King sat there,
While the cruel deed was done,
And the clergy o' Christ ne'er bade him spare
For the sake o' God's ain Son! . . .
- The lights of Leith! the lights of Leith!
Like Hell's own lights they glow
While the sailor stands, with his trembling
hands
Prest hard on his heart in woe!

' O Robin, Robin . . . they doom'd her to
burn . . .

Doon yonner upon the quay . . .
This night was the night . . . see the light !
see the light !

How it burns by the side o' the sea !'

. . . She paused with a moan. . . . He
had left her alone,
And rushing through drift and snow,
Down the side of the wintry hill he had flown,
His eyes on the lights below !

IV.

The lights of Leith ! the lights of Leith !
They flame on the eyes of the crowd,
Around, up and down, move the folk of the
town,

While the bells of the kirk peal aloud !

High up on the quay, blaze the balefires,
and see !

Three stakes are deep set in the ground,
To each stake smear'd with pitch clings the
corpse of a witch,

With the fire flaming redly around !

What madman is he who leaps in where
they gleam,

Close, close, to the centremost form ?

' O mither, O mither !' he cries, with a scream,
That rings thro' the heart of the storm !

He can see the white hair snowing down
thro' the glare,

The white face upraised to the skies—

Then the cruel red blaze blots the thing
from his gaze,

And he falls on his face,—and dies.

V.

The lights of Leith ! the lights of Leith !

See, see ! they are flaming still !

Thro' the clouds of the past their flame is cast,
While the Sabbath bells ring shrill !

The lights of Leith ! the lights of Leith !

They'll burn till the Judgment Day !

Till the Church's curse and the monarch's
shame,

And the sin that slew in the Blessed Name,
Are burned and purg'd away !

NOTE.—The foundation of this ballad is his-
torical, more particularly the part taken by the
enlightened pedant, James VI. of Scotland, who,

on his accession to the English throne, procured
the infamous statute against witchcraft, which
actually remained unrepealed till 1736, and even
then was repealed under strong protest from the
Scottish clergy ! One traveller, as late as 1664,
casually notices the fact of having seen nine
witches *burning together* at Leith, and in 1678,
nine others were condemned in a single day.—
R. B.

THE WEDDING OF SHON MACLEAN.

A BAGPIPE MELODY.

TO the wedding of Shon Maclean,

Twenty Pipers together

Came in the wind and the rain

Playing across the heather ;

Backward their ribbons flew,

Blast upon blast they blew,

Each clad in tartan new,

Bonnet, and blackcock feather :

And every Piper was fon,¹

Twenty Pipers together ! . . .

He's but a Sassenach blind and vain
Who never heard of Shon Maclean—
The Duke's own Piper, called 'Shon the Fair,'
From his freckled skin and his fiery hair.
Father and son, since the world's creation,
The Macleans had followed this occupation,
And played the pibroch to fire the Clan
Since the first Duke came and the Earth
began.

Like the whistling of birds, like the humming
of bees,

Like the song of the south-wind in the trees,
Like the singing of angels, the playing of
shawms,

Like Ocean itself with its storms and its calms,
Were the strains of Shon, when with cheeks
afame

He blew a blast thro' the pipes of fame.

At last, in the prime of his playing life,

The spirit moved him to take a wife—

A lassie with eyes of Highland blue,

Who loved the pipes and the Piper too,

And danced to the sound, with a foot and a
leg

White as a lily and smooth as an egg.

So, twenty Pipers were coming together

¹ Pronounce *foo*—*i.e.* 'half seas over,' intoxicated.

O'er the moor and across the heather,
 All in the wind and the rain :
 Twenty Pipers so brawly dressed
 Were flocking in from the east and west,
 To bless the bedding and blow their best
 At the wedding of Shon Maclean.

At the wedding of Shon Maclean
 'Twas wet and windy weather !
 Yet, thro' the wind and the rain
 Came twenty Pipers together !
 Earach and Dougal Dhu,
 Sandy of Isla too,
 Each with the bonnet o' blue,
 Tartan, and blackcock feather :
 And every Piper was fou,
 Twenty Pipers together !

The knot was tied, the blessing said,
 Shon was married, the feast was spread.
 At the head of the table sat, huge and hoar,
 Strong Sandy of Isla, age fourscore,
 Whisker'd, grey as a Haskeir seal,
 And clad in crimson from head to heel.
 Beneath and round him in their degree
 Gathered the men of minstrelsie,
 With keepers, gillies, and lads and lasses,
 Mingling voices, and jingling glasses.
 At soup and haggis, at roast and boil'd,
 Awhile the happy gathering toil'd,—
 While Shon and Jean at the table ends
 Shook hands with a hundred of their
 friends.—

Then came a hush. Thro' the open door
 A wee bright form flash'd on the floor,—
 The Duke himself, in the kilt and plaid,
 With slim soft knees, like the knees of a maid.
 And he took a glass, and he cried out plain
 ' I drink to the health of Shon Maclean !
 To Shon the Piper and Jean his wife,
 A clean fireside and a merry life !'
 Then out he slipt, and each man sprang
 To his feet, and with ' hooch ' the chamber
 rang !

' Clear the tables ! ' shriek'd out one—
 A leap, a scramble,—and it was done !
 And then the Pipers all in a row
 Tuned their pipes and began to blow,

While all to dance stood fain :
 Sandy of Isla and Earach More,
 Dougal Dhu from Kinflannan shore,
 Played up the company on the floor
 At the wedding of Shon Maclean.

At the wedding of Shon Maclean,
 Twenty Pipers together
 Stood up, while all their train
 Ceased to clatter and blether.
 Full of the mountain-dew,
 First in their pipes they blew,
 Mighty of bone and thew,
 Red-cheek'd, with lungs of leather :
 And every Piper was fou,
 Twenty Pipers together !

Who led the dance? In pomp and pride
 The Duke himself led out the Bride !
 Great was the joy of each beholder,
 For the wee Duke only reach'd her shoulder ;
 And they danced, and turned, when the reel
 began,

Like a giantess and a fairie man !
 But like an earthquake was the din
 When Shon himself led the Duchess in !
 And she took her place before him there,
 Like a white mouse dancing with a bear !
 So trim and tiny, so slim and sweet,
 Her blue eyes watching Shon's great feet,
 With a smile that could not be resisted,
 She jigged, and jumped, and twirl'd, and
 twisted !

Sandy of Isla led off the reel,
 The Duke began it with toe and heel,
 Then all join'd in amain ;
 Twenty Pipers ranged in a row,
 From squinting Shamus to lame Kilcroe,
 Their cheeks like crimson, began to blow,
 At the wedding of Shon Maclean.

At the wedding of Shon Maclean
 They blew with lungs of leather,
 And blithesome was the strain
 Those Pipers played together !
 Moist with the mountain-dew,
 Mighty of bone and thew,
 Each with the bonnet o' blue,
 Tartan, and blackcock feather :
 And every Piper was fou,
 Twenty Pipers together !

Oh for a wizard's tongue to tell
 Of all the wonders that befell !
 Of how the Duke, when the first stave died,
 Reached up on tiptoe to kiss the Bride,
 While Sandy's pipes, as their mouths were
 meeting,
 Skirl'd, and set every heart a-beating !

Then Shon took the pipes! and all was still,
 As silently he the bags did fill,
 With flaming cheeks and round bright eyes,
 Till the first faint music began to rise—
 Like a thousand laverocks singing in tune,
 Like countless corn-craiks under the moon,
 Like the smack of kisses, like sweet bells
 ringing,
 Like a mermaid's harp, or a kelpie singing,
 Blew the pipes of Shon; and the witching
 strain
 Was the gathering song of the Clan Maclean!
 Then slowly, softly, at his side,
 All the Pipers around replied,
 And swelled the solemn strain:
 The hearts of all were proud and light,
 To hear the music, to see the sight,
 And the Duke's own eyes were dim that night,
 At the wedding of Shon Maclean.

So to honour the Clan Maclean
 Straight they began to gather,
 Blowing the wild refrain,
 'Blue bonnets across the heather!'
 They stamp'd, they strutted, they blew;
 They shriek'd; like cocks they crew;
 Blowing the notes out true,
 With wonderful lungs of leather:
 And every Piper was fou,
 Twenty Pipers together!

When the Duke and Duchess went away
 The dance grew mad and the guests grew gay;
 Man and maiden, face to face,
 Leapt and footed and scream'd apace!
 Round and round the dancers whirl'd,
 Shriller, louder, the Pipers skirl'd,
 Till the soul seem'd swooning into sound,
 And all creation was whirling round!
 Then, in a pause of the dance and glee,
 The Pipers, ceasing their minstrelsie,
 Draining the glass in groups did stand,
 And passed the sneesh-box¹ from hand to
 hand.

Sandy of Isla, with locks of snow,
 Squinting Shamus, blind Kilmahoe,
 Finlay Beg, and Earach More,
 Dougal Dhu of Kilfannan shore—
 All the Pipers, black, yellow, and green,
 All the colours that ever were seen,
 All the Pipers of all the Macs,
 Gather'd together and took their cracks.²

¹ Snuff-box.

² Conversed sociably.

Then (no man knows how the thing befell,
 For none was sober enough to tell)
 These heavenly Pipers from twenty places
 Began disputing with crimson faces;
 Each asserting, like one demented,
 The claims of the Clan he represented.
 In vain grey Sandy of Isla strove
 To soothe their struggle with words of love,
 Asserting there, like a gentleman,
 The superior claims of his own great Clan;
 Then, finding to reason is despair,
 He seizes his pipes and he plays an air—
 The gathering tune of his Clan—and tries
 To drown in music the shrieks and cries!
 Heavens! Every Piper, grown mad with ire,
 Seizes *his* pipes with a fierce desire,
 And blowing madly, with skirl and squeak,
 Begins *his* particular tune to shriek!
 Up and down the gamut they go,
 Twenty Pipers, all in a row,
 Each with a different strain!
 Each tries hard to drown the first,
 Each blows louder till like to burst.
 Thus were the tunes of the Clans rehearsed
 At the wedding of Shon Maclean!

At the wedding of Shon Maclean,
 Twenty Pipers together,
 Blowing with might and main,
 Thro' wonderful lungs of leather!
 Wild was the hullabaloo!
 They stamp'd, they scream'd, they crew!
 Twenty strong blasts they blew,
 Holding the heart in tether:
 And every Piper was fou,
 Twenty Pipers together!

A storm of music! Like wild sleuth-hounds
 Contending together, were the sounds!
 At last a hevy of Eve's bright daughters
 Pour'd oil—that's whisky—upon the waters;
 And after another dram went down
 The Pipers chuckled and ceased to frown,
 Embraced like brothers and kindred spirits,
 And fully admitted each other's merits.
 All bliss must end! For now the Bride
 Was looking weary and heavy-eyed,
 And soon she stole from the drinking chorus,
 While the company settled to *deach-an-*
*dorus.*³

One hour—another—took its flight—
 The clock struck twelve—the dead of night—

³ The parting glass; lit. the *cup at the door*.

And still the Bride like a rose so red
Lay lonely up in the bridal bed.
At half-past two the Bridegroom, Shon,
Dropt on the table as heavy as stone,
But four strong Pipers across the floor
Carried him up to the bridal door,
Push'd him in at the open portal,
And left him snoring, serene and mortal !
The small stars twinkled over the heather,
As the Pipers wandered away together,
But one by one on the journey dropt,
Clutching his pipes, and there he stopt !
One by one on the dark hillside
Each faint blast of the bagpipes died,
Amid the wind and the rain !
And the twenty Pipers at break of day
In twenty different hogholes lay,
Serenely sleeping upon their way
From the wedding of Shon Maclean !

HANS VOGEL.

AN EPISODE OF THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR.

'Ein ächter Deutscher Mann mag keinen
Franzen leiden!'—BRANDER in *Faust*.

THE fight is o'er, the day is done,
And thro' the clouds o'erhead
The fingers of the setting sun
Are pointing down blood-red,—
Beneath, on the white battle-field,
Lie strewn the drifts of dead.

No breath, no stir ; but everywhere
The cold Frost crawleth slow,
And Frank and Teuton side by side
Lie stiffening in the snow,—
While piteously each marble face
Gleams in the ruby glow.

No sound ; but yonder midst the dead
There stands one steed snow-white,
And clinging to its chilly mane,
Half swooning, yet upright,
Its rider totters, breathing hard,
Barcheaded in the light !

Hans Vogel. Spectacles on nose,
He gasps and gazes round—
He shivers as his eyes survey
That wintry battle-ground—
Then, parch'd with thirst and chill with cold,
He sinks, without a sound.

Before his vision as he lies
There gleams a quaint old Town,
He sees the students in the street
Swaggering up and down,
While at a casement sits a Maid
In clean white cap and gown.

Hans Vogel thinks, ' My time hath come !
Ne'er shall these eyes of mine
Behold poor Ännchen, or the trees
Of dear old Ehrenstein !'
He smacks his lips, ' *Mein Gott!* for one
Deep draught of Rhenish wine !'

Then swift as thought his wild eyes gleam
On something at his side—
He stirs—he glares—he sits erect—
He grips it, eager-eyed :
A Flask it is, some friend or foe
Hath dropt there ere he died !

To God he mutters now a prayer,
Quaking in every limb ;
Trembling he holds it to the light !—
'Tis full unto the brim !
A flask, a brimming flask of wine !
And God hath sent it him !

Hans Vogel's heart leaps up in joy,
' *Dem Himmel sei Dank!* ' he cries—
'Then pursing out his thirsty lips
Prepares to quaff his prize,—
When lo ! a sound—he starts—and meets
A pair of burning eyes !

Propt on a bed of comrades dead,
His faint breath swiftly flying,
His breast torn open by a shell,
A Grenadier is lying :—
Grim as a wolf, with gleaming fangs,
The Frenchman glareth, dying !

White is his hair, his features worn
With many a wild campaign,
He rocks his head from side to side
Like to a beast in pain—
He groans athirst, with open mouth,
Again and yet again.

Hans Vogel, in the act to drink
And render God due praise,
Drops down his fever'd hand in doubt
And pauses in amaze,
For on the flask that Grenadier
Fixeth his thirsty gaze !

Hans Vogel smiles, ' Here lieth one
Whose need is more than mine !'
Then, crawling over to his foe,
' Look, Frenchman, here is wine !
And by the God that made us both
Shall every drop be thine !'

Hast thou beheld a dying boar,
Struck bleeding to the ground,
Spring with a last expiring throe
To rip the foremost hound ?
Terrible, fatal, pitiless,
It slays with one swift bound.

Ev'n so that grizzly wolf of war,
With eyes of hate and ire,
Stirs as he lies, and on the ground
Gropes with a dark desire,—
Then lifts a loaded carbine up,
And lo ! one flash of fire !

A flash—a crash ! Hans Vogel still
Is kneeling on his knee,
His heart is beating quick, his face
Is pale as man's can be ;
The ball just grazed his bleeding brow,—
' *Potstausend !*' murmureth he.

Hans frowns ; and raising to his lips
The flask, begins to quaff ;
Then holds it to the fading light
With sly and cynic laugh.
Deep is his drought—sweet is the wine—
And he hath drunk the half !

But now he glanceth once again
Where that grim Frenchman lies—
Gasping still waits that wolf of war
Like to a beast that dies—
He groans athirst, with open mouth,
And slowly glazing eyes.

Hans Vogel smiles ; unto his foe
Again now totters he—
So spent now is that wolf of war
He scarce can hear or see.
Hans Vogel holds his hand, and takes
His head upon his knee !

Then down the dying Frenchman's throat
He sends the liquor fine :
' *Half* yet remains, old boy,' he cries,
While pouring down the wine—
' Hadst thou not play'd me such a trick,
It might have *all* been thine !'

Hans Vogel speaketh in the tongue
Of his good Fatherland—
The Frenchman hears an alien sound
And cannot understand,
But he can taste the warm red wine
And feel the kindly hand.

See ! looking in Hans Vogel's face
He stirs his grizzly head—
Up, smiling, goes the grim moustache
O'er cheeks as grey as lead—
With one last glimmer of the eyes,
He smiles,—and he is dead.

PHIL BLOOD'S LEAP.

A TALE OF THE GOLD-SEEKERS.

' THERE's some think Injins pison . . . ' [It
was Parson Pete who spoke,
As we sat there, in the camp-fire glare, like
shadows among the smoke.
'Twas the dead of night, and in the light
our faces burn'd bright red,
And the wind all round made a screeching
sound, and the pines roared overhead.

Ay, Parson Pete was talking ; we called him
Parson Pete,
For you must learn he'd a talking turn, and
handled things so neat ;
He'd a preaching style, and a winning smile,
and, when all talk was spent,
Six-shooter had he, and a sharp howie, to
p'int his argyment.

Some one had spoke of the Injin folk, and
we had a guess, you bet,
They might be creeping, while we were
sleeping, to catch us in the net ;
And half were asleep and snoring deep,
while the others vigil kept,
But devil a one let go his gun, whether he
woke or slept.]

' There's some think Injins pison, and others
count 'em scum,
And night and day they are melting away,
clean into Kingdom Come ;
But don't you go and make mistakes, like
many dern'd fools I've known,
For dirt is dirt, and snakes is snakes, but
an Injin's flesh and bone !

We were seeking gold in the Texan hold,
and we'd had a blaze of luck,
More rich and rare the stuff ran there at
every foot we struck ;
Like men gone wild we t'iled and t'iled,
and never seemed to tire,
The hot sun beamed, and our faces streamed
with the sweat of a mad desire.

I was Captain then of the mining men, and
I had a precious life,
For a wilder set I never met at derring and
knife ;
Nigh every day there was some new fray, a
bullet in some one's brain,
And the viciousest brute to stab and to
shoot, was an Imp of Hell from Maine.

Phil Blood. Well, he was six foot three,
with a squint to make you skeer'd,
His face all scabb'd, and twisted and stabb'd,
with carrot hair and beard ;
Sour as the drink in Bitter Chink, sharp as
a grizzly's squeal,
Limp in one leg, for a leaden egg had
nick'd him in the heel.

No beauty was he, but a sight to see, all
stript to the waist and bare,
With his grim-set jaws, and his panther
paws, and his hawk's eye all aglare ;
With pick and spade in sun and shade he
labour'd like darnation,
But when his spell was over,—well! he was
fond of his recreation !

And being a crusty kind of cuss, the only
sport he had,
When work was over, seemed to *us* a bit
too rough and bad ;
For to put some lead in a comrade's head
was the greatest fun in life,
And the sharpest joke he was known to
poke was the p'int of his precious knife.

But game to the bone was Phil, I'll own,
and he always fought most fair,
With as good a will to be killed as kill,
true grit as any there :
Of honour too, like me or you, he'd a scent,
though not so keen,
Would rather be riddled thro' and thro',
than do what he thought mean.

But his eddication to his ruination had not
been over nice,
And his stupid skull was choking full of
vulgar prejudice ;
With anything white he'd drink, or he'd
fight in fair and open fray ;
But to murder and kill was his wicked will,
if an Injin came his way !

'A sarpent's hide has pison inside, and an
Injin's heart's the same,
If he seems your friend for to gain his end,
look out for the sarpent's game ;
Of the snakes that crawl, the worst of all is
the snake in a skin of red,
A spotted Snake, and no mistake !' that's
what he always said.

Well, we'd jest struck our bit of luck, and
were wild as raving men,
When who should stray to our camp one
day, but Black Panther, the Cheyenne ;
Drest like a Christian, all a-grin, the old
one joins our band,
And tho' the rest look'd black as sin, he
shakes *me* by the hand.

Now, the poor old cuss had been good to
us, and I knew that he was true,—
I'd have trusted him with life and limb as
soon as I'd trust *you* ;
For tho' his wit was gone a bit, and he
drank like any fish,
His heart was kind, he was well-inclined,
as even a white could wish.

Food had got low, for we didn't know the
run of the hunting-ground,
And our hunters were sick, when, jest in
the nick, the friend in need was found ;
For he knew the place like his mother's face
(or better, a heap, you'd say,
Since she was a squaw of the roaming race,
and himself a cast-away).

Well, I took the Panther into camp, and
the critter was well content,
And off with him, on the hunting tramp,
next day our hunters went,
And I reckon that day and the next we
didn't want for food,
And only one in the camp looked vext—that
Imp of Hell, Phil Blood.

Nothing would please his contrary ideas !
 an Injin made him rile !
 He didn't speak, but I saw on his cheek a
 kind of an ugly smile ;
 And I knew his skin was hatching sin, and
 I kept the Panther apart,
 For the Injin he was too blind to see the
 dirt in a white man's heart !

Well, one fine day, we a-resting lay at noon-
 time by the creek,
 The red sun blazed, and we felt half-dazed,
 too beat to stir or speak ;
 'Neath the alder trees we stretched at ease,
 and we couldn't see the sky,
 For the lian-flowers in bright blue showers
 hung through the branches high.

It was like the gleam of a fairy-dream, and
 I felt like earth's first Man,
 In an Eden bower with the yellow flower of
 a cactus for a fan ;
 Oranges, peaches, grapes, and figs, cluster'd,
 ripen'd, and fell,
 And the cedar scent was pleasant, blent
 with the soothing 'cacia smell.

The squirrels red ran overhead, and I saw
 the lizards creep,
 And the woodpecker bright with the chest
 so white tapt like a sound in sleep ;
 I dreamed and dozed with eyes half-closed,
 and felt like a three-year child,
 And, a plantain blade on his brow for a
 shade, even Phil Blood look'd mild.

Well, back, jest then, came our hunting
 men, with the Panther at their head,
 Full of his fun was every one, and the
 Panther's eyes were red,
 And he skipt about with grin and shout, for
 he'd had a drop that day,
 And he twisted and twirled, and squeal'd
 and skirl'd, in the foolish Injin way.

To the waist all bare Phil Blood lay there,
 with only his knife in his belt,
 And I saw his bloodshot eyeballs stare, and
 I knew how fierce he felt,—
 When the Injin dances with grinning glances
 around him as he lies,
 With his painted skin and his monkey grin,—
 and leers into his eyes !

Then before I knew what I should do Phil
 Blood was on his feet,
 And the Injin could trace the hate in his
 face, and his heart began to beat ;
 And, 'Git out o' the way,' he heard them
 say, 'for he means to hev your life !'
 But before he could fly at the warning cry,
 he saw the flash of the knife.

'Run, Panther run !' cri'd each mother's
 son, and the Panther took the track ;
 With a wicked glare, like a wounded hear,
 Phil Blood sprang at his back.
 Up the side so steep of the cañon deep the
 poor old critter sped,
 And the devil's limb ran after him, till they
 faded overhead.

Now, the spot of ground where our luck
 was found was a queerish place, you'll
 mark,
 Jest under the jags of the mountain crags
 and the precipices dark ;
 Far up on high, close to the sky, the two
 crags leant together,
 Leaving a gap, like an open trap, with a
 gleam of golden weather.

A pathway led from the beck's dark bed up
 to the crags on high,
 And along that path the Injin fled, fast as a
 man could fly.
 Some shots were fired, for I desired to keep
 the white beast back ;
 But I missed my man, and away he ran on
 the flying Injin's track.

Now all below is thick, you know, with
 'cacia, alder, and pine,
 And the bright shrubs deck the side of the
 beck, and the lian flowers so fine.
 For the forest creeps all under the steeps,
 and feathers the feet of the crags
 With boughs so thick that your path you
 pick, like a steamer among the snags.

But right above you, the crags, Lord love
 you ! are bare as this here hand,
 And your eyes you wink at the bright blue
 chin, as looking up you stand.
 If a man should pop in that trap at the top,
 he'd never rest arm or leg,
 Till neck and crop to the bottom he'd drop—
 and smash on the stones like an egg !

'Come back, you cuss! come back to us!
and let the critter be!'

I screamed out loud, while the men in a
crowd stood grinning at them and
me . . .

But up they went, and my shots were spent,
and at last they disappeared,—

One minute more, and we gave a roar, for
the Injin had leapt, and *cleared!*

A leap for a deer, not a man, to clear,—and
the bloodiest grave below!

But the critter was smart and mad with fear,
and he went like a bolt from a bow!

Close after him came the devil's limb, with
his eyes as dark as death,

But when he came to the gulch's brim, I
reckon he paused for breath!

For breath at the brink! but—a white man
shrink, when a red had passed so neat?

I knew Phil Blood too well to think he'd
turn his back dead beat!

He takes one run, leaps up in the sun, and
bounds from the slippery ledge,

And he clears the hole, but—God help his
soul! just touches the tother edge!

One scrambling fall, one shriek, one call,
from the men that stand and stare,—

Black in the blue where the sky looks thro',
he staggers, dwarf'd up there;

The edge he touches, then sinks, and
clutches the rock—our eyes grow dim—

I turn away—what's that they say?—he's a-
hanging on to the brim!

. . . On the very brink of the fatal chink a
ragged shrub there grew,

And to that he clung, and in silence swung
betwixt us and the blue,

And as soon as a man could run I ran the
way I'd seen them flee,

And I came mad-eyed to the chasm's side,
and—what do you think I see?

All up? Not quite. Still hanging? Right!
But he'd torn away the shrub;

With lolling tongue he clutch'd and swung—
to what? ay, that's the rub!

I saw him glare and dangle in air,—for the
empty hole he trode,—

Help'd by a *pair of hands* up there!—The
Injin's? Yes, by God!

Now, boys, look here! for many a year I've
roam'd in this here land—

And many a sight both day and night I've
seen that I think grand;

Over the whole wide world I've been, and
I know both things and men,

But the biggest sight I've ever seen was the
sight I saw jest then.

I held my breath—so nigh to death Phil
Blood swung hand and limb,

And it seem'd to us all that down he'd fall,
with the Panther after him,

But the Injin at length put out his strength—
and another minute past,—

—Then safe and sound to the solid ground
he drew Phil Blood, at last!!

Saved? True for you! By an Injin too!—
and the man he meant to kill!

There all alone, on the brink of stone, I see
them standing still;

Phil Blood gone white, with the struggle
and fright, like a great mad bull at bay,

And the Injin meanwhile, with a half-skeer'd
smile, ready to spring away.

What'd did Phil do? Well, I watched the two,
and I saw Phil Blood turn back,

Bend over the brink and take a blink right
down the chasm black,

Then stooping low for a moment or so, he
sheath'd his bowie bright,

Spat slowly down, and watch'd with a frown,
as the spittle sank from sight!

Hands in his pockets, eyes downcast, silent,
thoughtful, and grim,

While the Panther, grinning as he passed,
still kept his eyes on him,

Phil Blood strolled slow to his mates below,
down by the mountain track,

With his lips set tight and his face all white,
and the Panther at his back.

I reckon they stared when the two appeared!
but never a word Phil spoke,

Some of them laughed and others jeered,—
but he let them have their joke;

He seemed amazed, like a man gone dazed,
the sun in his eyes too bright,

And for many a week, in spite of their chee
he never offered to fight.

And after that day he changed his play, and
 kept a civiler tongue,
 And whenever an Injin came that way, his
 contrary head he hung ;
 But whenever he heard the lying word, ' *If's*
a LIE ! ' Phil Blood would groan ;
 ' *A Snake is a Snake, make no mistake !*
but an Injin's flesh and bone ! '

THE FAËRY REAPER.

IRELAND.

'Tis on Eilanowen,
 There's laughter nightly !
 For the Fays are sowing
 Their golden grain :
 It springs by moonlight
 So stilly and brightly,
 And it drinks no sunlight,
 Or silver rain ;—
 Tho' the shoots upcreeping
 No man may see,
 When men are reaping
 It reapt must he ;
 But to reap it rightly,
 With sickle keen,
 They must lead there nightly
 A pure colleen !

Yes, pure completely
 Must be that maiden,
 Just feeling sweetly
 Her love's first dream.
 Should one steal thither
 With evil laden,
 The crop would wither
 In the pale moon's beam !
 For midnights seven,
 While all men sleep,
 'Neath the silent heaven
 The maid must reap ;
 And the sweeter and whiter
 Of soul is she,
 The better and brighter
 Will that harvest be !

. . . In Lough Bawn's bosom
 The isle is lying,
 Like a bright green blossom
 On a maiden's breast—
 There the water-eagle ¹

¹ The osprey (*Pandion*).

O'erhead is flying,
 And beneath the sea-gull
 Doth build its nest.
 And across the water
 A farm gleams fair,
 And the farmer's daughter
 Dwelt lonely there :—
 And on Eilanowen
 She'd sit and sing,
 When the Fays were sowing
 Their seeds in spring,

She could not hear them,
 Nor see them peeping ;
 Tho' she wandered near them
 The spring-tide thro',
 When the grouse was crowing,
 The trout was leaping,
 And with hare-bells blowing
 The banks were blue.
 But not by moonlight
 She dared to stay,
 Only by sunlight
 She went that way.
 And on Eilanowen
 They walked each night,
 Her footprints sowing
 With lilies white !

When the sun above her
 Was brightly blazing,
 She'd bare (God love her !)
 Each round white limb.
 Unseen, unnoted,
 Save fay-folk gazing,
 Dark hair'd, white throated,
 She'd strip to swim !
 Out yonder blushing
 A space she'd stand,
 Then falter flushing
 Across the strand,—
 Till the bright still water
 Would sparkle sweet,
 As it kissed and caught her
 From neck to feet !

There, sparkling round her
 With fond caresses,
 It clasp'd her, crowned her,
 My maiden fair !
 Then, brighter glowing
 From its crystal kisses,
 The bright drops flowing
 From her dripping hair,

Outleaping, running
 Beneath the sky,
 The bright light sunning
 Her limbs, she'd fly,—
 And 'mid tinkling laughter
 Of elfin bowers,
 The Fays ran after
 With leaves and flowers !

Could the Fays behold her,
 Nor long to gain her ?
 From foot to shoulder
 None pure as she !
 They cried ' God keep her,
 No sorrow stain her !
 The Faëry Reaper
 In troth she'll be !' . . .
 With stalks of amber
 And silvern ears,
 From earth's dark chamber
 The grain appears.
 'Tis harvest weather !
 The moon swims high !
 And they flock together
 With elfin cry !

Now, long and truly
 I'd loved that maiden ;
 And served her duly
 With kiss and sign ;
 And that same season
 My soul love-laden
 Had found new reason
 To wish her mine.
 For ber cheek grew paler,
 Her laughter less,
 And what might ail her
 I could not guess.
 Each harvest morrow
 We kissing met,
 And with weary sorrow
 Her eyes seem'd wet.

' Oh, speak, *Mavourneen*,
 What ails ye nightly ?
 For sure each morning
 'Tis sad ye seem !'
 Her eyes not weeping
 Looked on me brightly :—
 ' Each night when sleeping
 I dream a Dream.
 'Tis on Eilanowen
 I seem to be,

And bright grain growing
 I surely see ;
 A golden sickle
 My fingers keep,
 And my slow tears trickle
 On what I reap !

' The moon is gleaming,
 The faeries gather,
 Like glow-worms gleaming,
 Their eyes flash quick ;
 I try while reaping
 To name " Our Father !"
 But round me leaping
 They pinch and prick—
 On the stalks of amber,
 On the silvern ears,
 They cling, they clamber,
 Till day appears !
 And here I'm waking
 In bed, once more,
 My bones all aching,
 My heart full sore !'

I kissed her, crying
 ' God bless your reaping !
 For sure no sighing
 Can set you free.
 They'll bless your wedding
 Who vex your sleeping ;
 So do their bidding,
Ma cushla chree !
 But oh, remember !
 Your fate is cast,
 And ere December
 Hath fairly past,
 The Faëry Reaper
 Must be a Bride,
 Or a sad cold sleeper
 On the green hill-side !'

' Sure wedding's better
 Than dying sadly !'
 She smiled, and set her
 Soft hand in mine.
 For three nights after
 She labour'd gladly,
 ' Mid fairy laughter,
 And did not pine ;
 And when the seven
 Long nights were run,
 Full well 'neath Heaven
 That work was done :

Their sheaves were slanted,
 Their harvest made,
 And no more they wanted
 A mortal's aid.

'Tis on Eilanowen
 There's laughter nightly,
 When the Fays are sowing
 Their golden grain !
 God bless that laughter ;
 That grain blow brightly !
 For luck came after
 My Mary's pain.
 And when sweet Mary
 Was wed to me,
 Sure the folk of faéry
 Were there to see :—
 The white board spreading,
 Unheard, unseen,
 They blest the wedding
 Of a pure colleen !

THE 'MIDIAN-MARA.'¹

I.

THERE'S a sad sea-maiden
 Sighs day and night ;
 For lack of Eden
 Her eyes weep sore ;
 If you come upon her
 By pale moonlight,—
 Farewell to honour
 For evermore !
 Tho' her hair is redder
 Than blood fresh spilt,
 'Tis you must wed her
 And share her guilt ;
 'Tis you, more pity !
 Must buried be
 In her shining City
 Beneath the Sea.

II.

But shouldst thou view her
 When shines the sun,
 And softly unto her
 On tiptoe creep,
 You'll find her dozing
 As I have done,
 Naked reposing
 In a sunny sleep ;

¹ *Anglicè*, 'The Mermaid.'

Then be quickly ready
 To seize her hair,
 And to name Our Lady
 As she awakens there ;
 And tho' clouds may thunder
 O'er the waters wide,
 To the walls of wonder
 She'll be your guide.

III.

In the year of hunger,²
 That's long gone by,
 When I was younger
 Who now am old,
 By the Ocean dreary
 Like a *taisich*³ went I,
 Thin, weak and weary,
 With want and cold.
 O sweetly gleaming
 Was the Sea that hour,
 And the sun was streaming
 Thro' a golden shower ;
 As I wandered sighing
 For the famished Land,
 I beheld her lying
 On the yellow strand !

IV.

Like the silver shining
 Was the Maiden's skin,
 The red locks twining
 To the breasts of white,
 Her cheeks were hueless
 And chill and thin,
 Her lips were dewless,
 But her eyes were bright.
 Behind her creeping
 I held her hair,—
 As she scream'd upleaping
 I said the prayer ;—
 'O *Midian-Mara* !
 I hold thee mine :
 Thy help I borrow,
 By the Cross's sign !'

V.

Hast thou ever noted
 A wounded seal,
 As it bleats shrill-throated
 Before it dies ?
 As a seal's eyes turning
 On them that kill,

² The year of Irish famine. ³ Ghost or spirit.

With a dying yearning,
 Were the maiden's eyes.
 With those orbs of azure
 She gazed on me :—
 'O what's thy pleasure,
Gilli ma chree ?
 And her tears fell brightly
 Upon the sands,
 As she trembled whitely
 With wringing hands.

VI.

'O take me straightway,'
 To her said I,
 'To the City's gateway
 That well ye know—
 'Tis the hunger kills me,
 And that's no lie,
 And a longing fills me
 From earth to go.'
 She ceased her crying,
 And sadly said,
 With the white gulls flying
 Above her head,
 'Is it there, *mavourneen*,
 Ye'd wish to stand,
 That were bred and born in
 A Christian land?'

VII.

I knew her nature
 Was sly and deep,
 Tho' the wicked creature
 Had a heavenly face ;
 And I looked below me
 At the waves asleep,
 As I answered, 'Show me
 That very place !
 'Tis You must charm me
 To take the track,
 And no hand shall harm me
 Till I come back.'
 As I spake, deep thunder
 Was heard that day,
 And I saw, far under,
 Where the City lay !

VIII.

'Neath the green still ocean,
 Far, far, below,
 With a mystic motion
 That can't be told,
 I saw it gleaming

On a strand of snow, -
 Its bright towers beaming
 All glass and gold !
 And a sound thrilled thro' me
 Like the sound of bells,
 Upwafed to me
 On the ocean swells ;
 And I saw far under,
 Within those same,
 White shapes of wonder
 That went and came !

IX.

'O Mary, mother,
 That savest me,
 'Tis the place, no other,
 Where I would go ;
 For 'tis sweet and pleasant,
 Set 'neath the Sea
 In the bright white crescent
 Of the strand below.
 'Tis the hunger in me
 That works its will,
 Lest the devil win me
 To steal or kill.'
 I held her tighter,
 And prayed anew :—
 As I spoke, still brighter
 That vision grew.

X.

Still glassy and shining
 Those walls of flame,
 With the sea-weeds twining
 Around their feet ;
 More large the place's
 Great towers became,
 Till I saw the faces
 In the golden street.
 I saw and knew them
 (The Lord's my guide !)
 As the water drew them
 From side to side ;
 I saw the creatures,
 And I knew them then—
 The wool-white features
 Of drowned men !

XI.

Upright they drifted,
 All wet and cold,
 By the sea-wash lifted
 Like the red sea-tang,

While in wild sad cadence,
 From the towers of gold,
 The pale sea-maidens
 Struck harps and sang
 'O *shule, shule,*
*O shule, aroon!*¹
 I tell thee truly,
 I heard them croon ;
 Then I heard that thunder
 Roll deep once more,
 And I swooned for wonder
 On the yellow shore !

XII.

When I raised in sorrow
 My fearful face,
 The *Midian-Mara*
 Was fled from me ;
 Without repining
 I left the place,
 As the Moon rose shining
 Beyond the sea.
 And my feet went faster
 To see her light,
 For I feared disaster
 If I stayed that night . . .
 When God took pity,
 And brought me bread,
 I forgot that City
 Of the drown'd dead.

O'CONNOR'S WAKE.

AN IRISH FIDDLE TUNE.

To the wake of O'Connor
 What boy wouldn't go ?
 To do him that honour
 Went lofty and low.
 Two nights was the waking,
 Till day began breaking,
 And frolics past spaking,
 To please him, were done ;
 For himself in the middle,
 With stick and with fiddle,
 Stretch'd out at his ease, was the King of
 the Fun.

With a dimity curtain overhead,
 And the corpse-lights shining round his bed,
 Holding his fiddle and stick, and drest
 Top to toe in his Sunday best,

¹ 'Come, come, my darling, come !'

For all the world he seem'd to be
 Playing on his back to the companie,
 On each of his sides was the candle-light ;
 On his legs the tobacco-pipes were piled ;
 Cleanly wash'd, in a shirt of white,
 His grey hair brush'd, his beard trimm'd
 right,
 He lay in the midst of his friends, and
 smiled.

At birth and bedding, at fair and feast,
 Welcome as light or the smile of the priest,
 Ninety winters up and down
 O'Connor had fiddled in country and town.
 Never a fiddler was clever as he
 At dance or jig or *pater-o-pee* ;
 The sound of his fiddle no word could
 paint—

'Twould fright the devil or please a saint,
 Or bring the heart, with a single skirl,
 To the very mouth of a boy or girl.
 He played—and his elbow was never done ;
 He drank—and his lips were never dry ;
 Ninety winters his life had run,
 But God's above, and we all must die.
 As she stretch'd him out, quoth Judy
 O'Roan—

'Sure life's like his music, and ended soon—
 There's dancing and crying,
 There's kissing, there's sighing,
 There's smiling and sporting,
 There's wedding and courting,—
 But the skirl of the wake is the end of the
 tune !'

'*Shin suas, O'Connor,*'²

Cried Kitty O'Bride—
 Her best gown upon her,
 Tim Bourke by her side—
 All laughed out to hear her,
 While Tim he crept near her,
 To kiss her and cheer her
 At the back o' the door ;
 But the corpse in the middle,
 With stick and with fiddle,
 All done with diversion, would never play
 more !

On the threshold, as each man entered there,
 He knelt on his knee and said a prayer,
 But first before he took his seat
 Among the company there that night,
 He lifted a pipe from O'Connor's feet,
 And lit it up by the bright corpse-light.

² 'Play up, O'Connor !'

Chattering there in the cloud of smoke,
They waked him well with song and joke ;
The gray old men and the *cauliaghs*¹ told
Of all his doings in days of old ;
The boys and girls till night was done,
Played their frolics and took their fun,
And many a kiss was stolen sure
Under the window and behind the door.
Andy Hagan and Kitty Delane

Hid in a corner and courted there,
'*Monamondioul!*' cried old Tim Blane,
Pointing them out, 'they're a purty pair !'
But when they blushed and hung the head,
'Troth, never be shamed !' the old man
said ;

'Sure love's as short as the flowers in June,
And life's like music, and ended soon—

There's wooing and wedding,
There's birth and there's bedding,
There's grief and there's pleasure
To fill up the measure,—

But the skirl of the wake is the end of the
tune !'

At the wake of O'Connor
Great matches were made,
To do him more honour

We joked and we played—
Two nights was the waking,
Till day began breaking,
The cabin was shaking

Before we were done,
And himself in the middle,
With stick and with fiddle,

As large as in life, was the King of the Fun !

'Well, I remember,' said Tony Carduff,
Drawing the pipe from his lips with a puff,
'Well, I remember at Ballyslo',—

And troth and it's thirty years ago,—
In the midst of the fair there fell a fight,

And who but O'Connor was in the middle?
Striking and crying with all his might,
And with what for weapon? the ould
black fiddle !

That day would have ended its music straight
If it hadn't been strong as an iron pot ;

Tho' the blood was on it from many a pate,
Troth, divil a bit of harm it got !'

Cried Michael na Chaulliny,² 'And troth
that's true—

¹ Old women.

² 'Michael the Ferryman ;' lit. 'belonging to
the ferry.'

Himself and the fiddle were matched by few.
They went together thro' every weather,
Full of diversion and tough as leather,—
I thought he'd never think of dying,
But Jesus keep us !—there's he's lying.'
Then the *cauliaghs* squatting round on the
floor

Began to *keenagh*³ and sob full sore ;
'God be good to the ould gossoon !
Sure life's like music, and ended soon.

There's playing and plighting,
There's frolic and fighting,
There's singing and sighing,
There's laughing and crying,—

But the skirl of the wake is the end of the
tune !'

At the wake of O'Connor,

The merry old man,

To wail in his honour

The *cauliaghs* began ;

And Rose, Donnell's daughter

From over the water,

Began (sure saints taught her !)

The sweet *drimindhu* ;⁴

All was still ;—in the middle,

With stick and with fiddle,

O'Connor, stretched silent, seem'd hearken-
ing too !

Oh, 'twas sweet as the crooning of fairies
by night,

Oh, 'twas sad,—as you listened, you smiled
in delight,

With the tears in your eyes ; it was like a
shower falling,

When the rainbow shines thro' and the
cuckoo is calling ;

You might feel through it all, as the sweet
notes were given,

The peace of the Earth and the promise of
Heaven !

In the midst of it all the sweet singer did
stand,

With a light on her hair, like the gleam of
a hand ;

She seem'd like an angel to each girl and
boy,

But most to Tim Cregan, who watch'd her
in joy,

³ To cry, as during the coronach at a funeral.

⁴ A melancholy ditty.

And when she had ended he led her away,^f
And whisper'd his love till the dawning o
day.

After that, cried Pat Rooney, the rogue of
a lad,

'I'll sing something merry—the last was
too sad !'

And he struck up the song of the Piper of
Clare.

How the bags of his pipes were beginning
to tear,

And how, when the cracks threaten'd fairly
to end them,

He cut up his own leather *breeches* to mend
them !

How we laugh'd, young and old ! 'Well,
beat *that* if you can,'

Cried fat Tony Bourke, the potheen-making
man—

'Who sings next?' Tony cried, and at
that who came in,

Dancing this way and that way in midst of
the din,

But poor Shamus the Fool ? and he gave a
great spring—

'By the cross, merry boys, 'tis mysilf that
can sing !'

Then he stood by the corpse, and he folded
his hands,

And he sang of the sea and the foam on
the sands,

Of the shining *skiddawn*¹ as it flies to and
fro,

Of the birds of the waves and their wings
like the snow.

Then he sank his voice lower and sang with
strange sound

Of the caves down beneath and the beds of
the drown'd,

Till we wept for the boys who lie where the
wave rolls,

With no kinsmen to stretch them and wake
their poor souls.

When he ceased. Shamus looked at the
corpse, and he said,

'Sure a dacenter man never died in his bed !'
And at that the old *cauliaghs* began to croon :

'Sure life's like his music, and ended as
soon—

There's dancing and sporting,
There's kissing and courting,
There's grief and there's pleasure

¹ Herring.

To fill up the measure,—
But the skirl of the wake is the end of the
tune.'

'A health to O'Connor !'

Fat Anthony said :

'We'll drink in the honour

Of him that is dead.'

A two-gallon cag, then,

Did Anthony drag then

From out his old bag then,

While all there grew keen.

'Twas sweet, strong, and filling—

His own best distilling !

Oh, well had the dead man loved Tony's
potheen !²

Then the fun brightened up ; but of all
that befell

It would take me a long day in summer to
tell—

Of the dancing and singing, the leaping
and sporting,

And sweetest of all, the sly kissing and
courting !

Two nights was the waking ; two long
winter nights

O'Connor lay smiling in midst of the lights,
In the cloud of the smoke like a cloud of
the skies,

The blessing upon him, to close his old eyes.
Oh, when the time comes for myself to
depart,

May I die full of days like the merry old
man !

I'll be willing to go with the peace on my
heart,

Contented and bappy, since life's but a
span ;

And O may I have, when my lips cease to
spake,

To help my poor soul, such an elegant wake !
The country all there, friends and kinsmen
and all,

And myself in the middle, with candle and
pall ! . . .

Came the dawn, and we put old O'Connor
to rest,

In his coffin of wood, with his hands on his
breast,

And we followed him all by the hundred
and more,—

² Whisky, illicitly distilled.

The boys all in black, and his friends sigh-
ing sore.
We left him in peace, the poor sleeping
gossoon,
Thinking, 'Life's like his music, and ended
too soon.
There's laughing and sporting,
There's kissing and courting,
There's grief and there's pleasure
To fill up the measure,—
But the wake and the grave are the end of
the tune !'

'Good-bye to O'Connor,'
Cried Barnaby Blake,
'May the saints do him honour
For the ould fiddle's sake !
If the saints love sweet playing—
It's the thruth that I'm saying—
His sowl will be straying
And fiddling an air !
He'll pass through their middle,
With stick and with fiddle,
And they'll give him the *cead mile fealta* !
up there !'

NOTE.—The preceding Poem is a literal description of a wake in the wildest and loneliest part of Connaught. Several of the characters—*e.g.* Shamus the Fool—are well known to the mountaineers and fishermen of that untrodden district, where the old Celtic tongue is still spoken in its purity and the old Celtic customs are still practised, and where the author, in almost complete seclusion, passed four happy years.

HIGHLAND LAMENT.

'O MAR tha mi ! 'tis the wind that's blowing,
O mar tha mi ! 'tis the sea that's white !
'Tis my own brave boatman was up and
going,
From Uist to Barra at dead of night ;
Body of black and wings of red
His boat went out on the stormy sea.
O mar tha mi ! can I sleep in my bed ?
O gillie dubh ! come back to me !
'O mar tha mi ! is it weed out yonder ?
Is it drifting weed or a tangled sail ?
On the shore I wait and watch and wander.
It's calm this day, after last night's gale.

' Hundred thousand welcomes.'

O this is the skiff with wings so red,
And it floats upturned on the glassy sea
O mar tha mi ! is my boatman dead ?
O gillie dubh ! come back to me !

'O mar tha mi ! 'tis a corpse that's sleeping,
Floating there on the slippery sands ;
His face is drawn and his locks are dreeping,
His arms are stiff and he's clenched his
hands.

Turn him up on his slimy bed,
Clean his face from the weed o' the sea.
O mar tha mi ! 'tis my boatman dead !
O gillie dubh ! won't you look at me ?

'O mar tha mi ! 'tis my love that's taken !
O mar tha mi ! I am left forlorn !
He'll never kiss and he'll never waken,
He'll never look on the babe unborn.
His blood is water, his heart is lead,
He's dead and slain by the cruel sea.
O mar tha mi ! I am lone in my bed,
My gillie dubh is lost to me !'

JAMES AVERY.

AT Portsmouth, in a tavern dark,
One day of windy weather,
A crew of reckless sailors sat,
And drank their grog together.

Loud was the talk, and rude the joke,
So deep the jovial din
They did not mark a lean, wild shape
Who shivering enter'd in :

A beggar wight, who hugg'd his rags,
And chatter'd with the cold ;
Lean was his shape, his eyeballs dim,
Wrinkled his cheek, and old.

In a dark corner of the room
He sat with sorry cheer,
Not list'ning, till a word, a name,
Fell on his frozen ear.

'James Avery !' and as he spake
One pointed thro' the pane
At a great playbill on the wall
Of the damp and oozy lane.

On the dead wall the letters great
Made tempting bright display :

James Avery, the Pirate King,
Was posted that night's play.

'Ay!' cried a tar, reading aloud,
'Well might they call him so!
The Pirate King—I grudge his luck!
Then, with an oath, 'I'll go.'

Another cried, 'Ah, that's the life
To suit a sailor's style!
Ben Conway saw his palace, mates,
On Madagascar Isle;

'And on a throne, in red and gold,
Jem sat like any king,
With dark-eyed donnas all around,
As fresh as flowers in spring!

'They brought him wine in cups of gold,
And each knelt on her knee—
Each mother-naked, smooth as silk—
Ah, that's the life for me!

Then spake a third, 'I sailed with Jem
On board the "Hurricane";
When he deserted I ne'er thought
To hear of him again.

'And now it's long since last I heard
His name, and p'raps he's dead.'
'Not so; he only takes a nap!
A grizzly war's-man said.

'He has a fleet of fighting ships,
Swifter than ours tenfold;
Last spring he took six Indiamen,
Laden with gems and gold.

'There's not a corner of the main
But knows the skull and bones—
Up goes the flag! and down comes Jem,
As sure as Davy Jones.

'But let him have his fling; some day
We'll catch him at his trade—
Short shrift! a rope! and up he goes,
And all his pranks are played.'

All laughed; 'But not so fast,' cried one;
'It's not too late, I vow;
His Majesty would pardon him,
If he'd surrender now.

'The pardon's in the newspapers,
In black and white it's there;
If pirate Jem will cease his games,
They'll spare his life, they swear

All laugh'd again—'Jem's wide awake—
You don't catch birds with chaff—
Come back to biscuit and salt junk?
He is too 'cute by half.

'Leave all his gold and precious stones,
His kingdom, and all that,
Bid all them dark-eyed girls farewell
For labour,—and the cat?'

Ev'n as they speak, a wretched form
Springs up before their eyes.
'Give me the paper! let me read!
The famished creature cries.

They thrust him back with jeer and laugh,
So wild and strange is he. . . .
'Why, who's this skeleton?' . . . A voice
Answers, '*James Avery!*'

Louder they laugh—'He's mad! he's mad!
They round him in a ring.
'Jem here in rags! no, he's in luck,
As grand as any king!'

But soon he proves his story true
With eager words and tones;
Then, as he ends, 'Bread, give me bread!
I'm starving, mates!' he moans.

'Nay, drink!' they cry; and his lean hands
Clutch at the fiery cup.
'Here's to the King who pardons me!
He cries, and drinks it up.

He tells them of his weary days
Since that dark hour he fled,
A hunted thing, without a home
Wherein to lay his head.

Through some mysterious freak of fate,
His name abroad was spread,
And not a wondrous deed was done
But that wild name was said;

And all the time James Avery dwelt
An outcast, gaunt and grim,
Till creeping home that day he heard
His King had pardoned him.

The wild drink mounted to his brain,
He revell'd maniac-eyed,
'Come to the playhouse—'twill be sport
To see thyself!' they cried.

Between them, down the narrow street
They led his scarecrow form—

The wind blew chill from off the sea,
Before the rising storm.

They sat and saw the mimic play,
Till late into the night :—
The happy Pirate, crown'd with gold,
And clad in raiment bright.

The actor swagger'd on the stage
And drank of glorious cheer, . . .
James Avery gazed ! his hungry laugh
Was pitiful to hear !

They parted. . . . As the chill, white dawn
Struck down a lonely lane,
It flashed upon the rainy wall
And made the play-bill plain.

James Avery, the Pirate King !
The mocking record said—
Beneath, James Avery's famish'd form
Lay ragged, cold, and dead !

THE DEVIL'S PEEPSHOW.

OLD STYLE.

As thro' the Town of Vanity I trod,
I heard one calling in the name of God,
And turning I beheld a wan-eyed wight,
Clad in a garment that had once been bright,
Who, while a few pale children gathered round,
Did plant his faded Peepshow on the ground,
Trembling the children, peep'd ; and lingering nigh,
E'en thus I heard the ragged Showman cry :—

I.

Now first your eye will here descry
How all the world begun :
The earth green-dight, the ocean bright,
The moon, the stars, the sun.
All yet is dark ; but you will mark,
While round this sphere is spun,
A Hand so bare moves here and there,
Whence rays of ruby run.
I pull a string, and everything
Is finish'd bright and new,
Tho' dim as dream all yet doth seem ;
And this, God wot, is true.

II.

Now this, you see, is Eden Tree,
In Eden's soil set deep ;
Beneath it lies with closèd eyes
Strong Adam, fast asleep.

All round, the scene is gold and green,
And silver rivers creep ;
Him on the grass the wild beasts pass,
As mild and tame as sheep.
My bell I ring ; I pull a string ;
And on the self-same spot,
From Adam's side God takes his Bride ;
And this is true, God wot.

III.

There still doth shine the Tree Divine,
Flush'd with a purple flame,
And hand in hand our parents stand,
Naked, but have no shame.
Now Adam goes to take repose
While musing sits his Dame ;
When, over her, the blest boughs stir,
To show how Satan came.
A Snake so bright, with horns of light,
Green leaves he rustles thro',
Fair Eve descries with wondering eyes ;
And this, God wot, is true.

IV.

Now pray perceive, how over Eve
The fruits forbidden grow.
With hissing sound the Snake twines round,
His eyes like rubies glow.
' Fair Eve,' he says (in those old days
Snakes spoke) and louteth low,
' This fruit you see upon the Tree
Shall make you see and know. . . .'
My bell I ring ; I pull a string ;
And on the self-same spot
Fair Eve doth eat the Fruit so sweet ;
And this is true, God wot.

V.

A CHILD.

Please, why did He who made the Tree,
Our Father in the sky,
Let it grow there, so sweet and fair,
To tempt our Parents' eye ?

SHOWMAN.

My pretty dear, it is most clear
He wish'd their strength to try ;
And therefore sent, with wise intent,
The Serpent swift and sly.
I pull a string, and there (poor thing !)
Stands Adam eating too !
And now, you mark, all groweth dark ;
And this, God wot, is true.

VI.

Now, you discern, a voice so stern
 Cries 'Adam, where art *thou*?'
 'Tis God the Lord, by all adored,
 Walks there; and all things how.
 But with his Bride doth Adam hide
 His guilty, burning brow;
 And of fig-leaves each sinner weaves
 A guilty apron now.
 My bell I ring; I pull a string;
 And from that pleasant spot
 A Sword of Flame drives man and dame;
 And this is true, God wot.

VII.

Now wipe the glass. And we will pass
 To quite another scene:
 In a strange land two Altars stand,
 One red, the other green;
 The one of blood right sweet and good,
 The other weeds, I ween!
 And there, full plain, stands frowning Cain,
 And Abel spruce and clean.
 I pull a string; and every thing
 Grows dark and sad anew,—
 There Abel lies with dying eyes!
 And this, God wot, is true.

VIII.

The wicked Cain has Abel slain
 All with a burning brand;
 And now, sad sight, an Angel bright
 Doth mark him with his hand.

A CHILD.

What specks so red are those that spread
 Behind them as they stand?

SHOWMAN.

The sparks you see the wild eyes he,
 Countless as grains of sand,
 Of all those men who have, since then,
 Shed blood in any land!
 In grief and pain they look at Cain,
 Aghast on that sad spot;
 And all around blood soaks the ground;
 And this is true, God wot.

IX.

My bell I ring; I pull a string:
 Now, Father Noah you mark—
 Sleeping he lies, with heavy eyes,
 All full of wine, and stark.

But now, behold! that good man old
 A Voice in dream doth hark;
 And the Voice cries, 'O Noah, arise!
 And build thyself an Ark.'
 Again I ring; and pull a string;
 And all is water blue,
 Where, floating free, the Ark you see;
 And this, God wot, is true.

X.

Thus God the Lord, with his great Word,
 Did bid the waters rise,
 To drown and kill all things of ill
 He made beneath the skies.
 The Lord saved none, but Noah alone,
 His kith and kin likewise;
 Two of each beast, both great and least;
 Two of each bird that flies.
 My bell I ring; I pull a string;
 And on the self-same spot,
 The water sinks, the bright Bow blinks;
 And this is true, God wot.

XI.

O day and night, unto your sight
 Such wonders shown might be,
 But to conclude this Peepshow good,
 You Heaven and Hell shall see:
 The shining things, with spangled wings,
 Who smile and sing so free;
 The crew of shame, who in hell-flame
 Complain eternally!
 My bell I ring; I pull a string;
 And you them both may view—
 The blest on high, the curst who cry:—
 And this, Got wot, is true.

XII.

A CHILD.

How can they hear, who sit up there
 In shining robes so gay,
 From Heaven to peer, without a tear,
 On those who scream and pray?

SHOWMAN.

Why, those who burn had, you must learn,
 As fair a chance as they—
 But Adam's fall doth doom them all
 Upon God's judgment day.
 I thus conclude with moral good,
 Not soon to be forgot;
 And you must own what I have shown
 Is solemn sooth, Got wot.

XIII.

A LITTLE BOY.

O look at him, that showman grim,
A frown is on his cheek ;
Come away quick, for I am sick
Whene'er I hear him speak !

A GIRL.

Along this way, last Holy Day,
In bless'd Whitsun' week,
There passed a wight, so sweet and bright
He seemed an Angel meek :
He bare, also, an old Peep-show,
But prettier far to view,
And loud cried He ' O look and see !
For all, God wot, is true !'

XIV.

CHILDREN.

And *did* you peep? and did you weep
To see the pictures wild ?

GIRL.

Ah nay, ah nay, I laughed, full gay,
I looked and laughed and smiled !
For I discern'd, with bright face turned
On mine, a little Child ;
And round him, bright burn'd many a light,
And cakes and sweets were piled ;
And scents most rare fill'd all the air
All round the heavenly spot,
While loud and wide that Showman cried—
' This is our Lord, God wot !'

XV.

FIRST CHILD.

'Twas Jesus Child ! so good and mild !
He grew on Mary's breast !

GIRL.

Sweet were his eyes, his look was wise,
And his red lips were blest ;
I longed, I wis, those lips to kiss,
And by his side to rest.
This man's Peepshow is strange, I know,
But the other was the best !
Now let us go where daisies blow,
Sweet ferns, and speedwells blue,
And Posies make for Christ His sake,
For He is bright and true !

XVI.

SHOWMAN (*solus*).

Folk, I'm afraid, are changed ; my trade
Grows worse each day, I know.
How they did throng when I was young,
To see this very Show !
My rivals pass, and lad and lass
Follow where'er they go,
While up and down, from town to town,
I creep, most sad and slow.
I too must try some novel cry,
Lest I be quite forgot :
These pictures old that I unfold
Have ceased to please, God wot !

DAYBREAK.

FRAGMENT.

BUT now the first faint flickering ray
Fell from the cold east far away,
The birds awoke and twitter'd, hover'd,
The dim leaves sparkled in the dew—
Earth slowly her dark head uncover'd
And held her blind face up the blue,
Till the fresh consecration came
In yellow beams of orient flame,
Touching her, and she breathed full blest
With lilies heaving on her breast.
Seas sparkled, dark capes glimmer'd green,
As Dawn crept on from scene to scene,
Lifting each curtain of the night
With fingers flashing starry-white.

EUPHROSYNE ; OR, THE
PROSPECT.

' FREED from its tenement of clay
(So the prophetic legend ran),
As pure as dew, as bright as day,
Shall rise the Soul of Man.'
I read ; and in the shade by me
Sat golden-haired Euphrosyne.

Above our shaded orchard seat
The boughs stirred scented in the light,
And on the grass beneath our feet
Lay blossoms pink and white ;
I held the book upon my knee,
Translating to Euphrosyne.

'Twas an old melancholy rune,
Writ by a Norseman long ago—
Sad with the sense of stars and moon,
Sea-wash, and frost, and snow—
A vision of futurity !
And wide-eyed heard Euphrosyne.

'Stately and slow the heart shall beat
To the low throb of Time's soft tide,
While, shaded from the solar heat,
The Shapes walk heavenly-eyed.'
All round us burnt the starry lea,
And warmly sighed Euphrosyne.

'All shall be innocent and fair,
Dim as a dream the days shall pass—
No weed of shame shall blossom there,
No snake crawl on the grass.'—
'How happy such a world will be !'
Sighed beautiful Euphrosyne.

'Flesh shall be fled, sense shall be still,
The old grey earth buried and dead ;
The wicked world, with all things ill—
Stone, rock, and tree—be fled.'—
'No earth, no world !' softly sighed she,
The little maid, Euphrosyne.

She clasped her hands, she cast her eyes
Over the landscape bright with May—
Scented and sweet, 'neath cloudless skies,
Smiled the green world that day—
Loud sang the thrush, low hummed the bee,
And softly sighed Euphrosyne.

'Sickness shall perish, grief and pain
Be buried with the buried life ;
The aching heart, the weary brain,
At last shall cease their strife.'—
The grey tome trembled on my knee,
But happy sat Euphrosyne.

'The luminous house wherein we dwell,
The haunted house of shame and lust,
The callow spirit's fleshy shell,
Shall crumble into dust ;
The flower shall fade, the scent fly free !'—
She trembled now, Euphrosyne.

Her warm, white bosom heaved with sighs,
I felt her light breath come and go,
She drank, with glorious lips and eyes,
The summer's golden glow ;
She felt her life, and sighed 'Ay, me !'
The flower of maids, Euphrosyne.

'And with the flower of flesh shall fade
The venom'd bloom of earthly love,
No passion-france of man and maid
Shall taint the life above ;
Flesh shall be fled, sex shall not be !'—
I paused, and watched Euphrosyne.

Her hands were folded round her knees,
Her eyes were fix'd in a half-dream ;
She shared the flame of flowers and trees,
And drank the summer gleam ;
'Kiss sweet, kiss sweet !' upon the tree
The thrush sang, to Euphrosyne.

A little maid of seventeen Mays,
A happy child with golden hair,
What should she know of Love's wild ways,
Its hope, its pain, and prayer ?
'No *love* in heaven?—how *strange* 'twill be !'
Still musing, sighed Euphrosyne.

'No thoughts of perishable mould
Shall break the rule of heavenly rest,
But larger light, more still, more cold,
More beautiful and blest.'—
Her heart was fluttering close to me,
And quickly breathed Euphrosyne.

'There shall be no more *love* !'—but here
I paused, for from my side she sprang,
And in her bird's voice, loud and clear,
Of love's young dream she sang—
'Oh, close the foolish book !' cried she,
The happy maid Euphrosyne.

I closed the book, and from my hold
She took it with her fingers white,
Then down the path of green and gold
She tripped with laughter light—
'The book, not the glad world, shall be
Deep-buried,' said Euphrosyne.

Within an elm-tree's hollow bole,
Into the darkness damp and green,
She thrust it, closing up the hole
With sprays of lilac sheen—
Then, all the radiant flush of glee
Fast faded from Euphrosyne.

Pensively in the summer shine
Her blue eyes filled with tears of bliss ;
She held her little mouth to mine
In one long heavenly kiss—
'I love the earth, and life, and *thee* !'
She whispered, my Euphrosyne.

Sleep, Book, within thy burial place,
 With flowers and fruit for epitaph !
 Kind Heaven, stoop down thy sunny face
 To hear the Earth's glad laugh !
 Smile, with your glorious eyes on me,
 O child of joy ! Euphrosyne !

STANLEY FARM.

COME, love, and while the landscape glows
 Red in the setting sun,
 Let us repair to Stanley Farm,
 Where thou wast wooed and won.

The river runs through a narrow glen,
 And shooting past the mill,
 It lingers near the burial-ground
 Where the dark dead lie still.

Then fresh and free it shooteth through
 The bridge at headlong speed ;
 But when the village bridge is past,
 It comes to marsh and mead ;

And broadening out with slacken'd pace,
 It fringes green flat land,
 Where, blanched white by frequent floods,
 Long lines of pollards stand.

And now within its shallow pools,
 The blue-winged hern doth wade,
 Still as a stone, with crooked neck
 Above his floating shade.

And water-lilies fringe the brim,
 And all is sedge and reed,
 Save one small stream within the midst,
 That winds and winds with speed.

Then down comes Thornby Beck and gains
 The river with a cry,
 And on the two together run,
 Under the English sky.

And strong and deep the stream has grown,
 As well as broad and wide,
 On reaching Stanley Farm, that sits
 Upon the water's side.

How still it is ! how bright it is,
 These happy summer weeks,
 When cattle wade, in the dark blue pools
 Broken to silvern streaks !

But, love, hast thou forgot the Yule,
 Twenty long years ago ?
 The level meads around the stream
 Were white with ice and snow.

The river was frozen white and blue,
 In its cold weedy bed ;
 A deep black fog filled all the air,
 And in the fog, o'erhead,
 Just hovering close to earth, as small
 As a school-boy's pink balloon,
 The wandering sun looked strange and cold
 As the red wintry moon.

The fog was dark, and darkest there
 Above the river's bed,
 And from the windows of the farm
 All day the lights gleamed red.

But when the sun's ball rolled from sight,
 The wind began to blow,
 The chilly fog was cleft in twain,
 And the moon lit up the snow !

A deep blue flower with a golden heart
 Hung downwards, was the sky,
 And white and cold in swathes of snow
 Did mead and hamlet lie.

And ever and anon the wind
 Blew up a cloud so pale,
 And held it o'er the yellow moon,
 Like a thin lawnny veil.

And through its folds the bright'ning morn
 Gazed, breathing soft and slow,
 Till, melted with her breath, the cloud
 Was shriven into snow.

Then ever in the bright'ning beam,
 As each soft cloud stole by,
 We saw dark figures on the stream
 Gliding with merry cry.

Men and maidens, old and young,
 The skaters frolicked there ;
 Like shapes within a dream, their forms
 Stole through the mystic air.

*ON A YOUNG POETESS'S
 GRAVE.*

UNDER her gentle seeing,
 In her delicate little hand,
 They placed the Book of Being,
 To read and understand.

The Book was mighty
 Yea, worn and eaten with age ;
 Though the letters looked great and golden,
 She could not read a page.

The letters fluttered before her,
And all looked darkly wild :
Death saw her, and bent o'er her,
As she pouted her lips and smiled.

Then, weary a little with tracing
'The Book, she look'd aside,
And lightly smiling, and placing
A Flower in its leaves, she died.

She died, but her sweetness fled not,
As fly the things of power,—
For the Book wherein she read not
Is the sweeter for the Flower.

LOVE IN WINTER.

A GENRE PICTURE.

I.

*'O Love is like the roses,
And every rose shall fall,
For sure as summer closes
They perish one and all.
Then love, while leaves are on the tree,
And birds sing in the bowers :
When winter comes, too late 'twill be
To pluck the happy flowers.'*

It is a maiden singing,
An ancient girl, in sooth ;
The dizzy room is ringing
With her shrill song of youth ;
'The white keys sob as fast she tries
Each shrill and shrieking scale :
'*O love is like the roses !*' cries
This muslin'd nightingale. . . .

In a dark corner dozing
I close my eyes and ears,
And call up, while reposing,
A glimpse from other years ;
A genre-picture, quaint and Dutch,
I see from this dark seat,—
'Tis full of human brightness, such
As makes remembrance sweet.

II.

Flat leagues of endless meadows
[In Holland lies the scene],
Where many pollard-shadows
O'er nut-brown ditches lean ;
Grey clouds above that dimly break,
Mists that pale sunbeams stripe,

With groups of steaming cattle, make
A landscape 'after Cuyp.'

A windmill, and below it
A cottage near a road,
Where some meek pastoral poet
Might make a glad abode ;
A cottage with a garden, where
Prim squares of pansies grow,
And sitting on a garden-chair,
A Dame with locks of snow.

In trim black truss'd and bodiced,
With petticoat of red,
And on her hosom modest
A kerchief white bespread.
Alas ! the breast that heaves below
Is shrivell'd now and thin,
Tho' vestal thoughts as white as snow
Still palpitate within.

Her hands are mitten'd nicely,
And folded on her knee ;
Her lips, that meet precisely,
Are moving quietly.
She listens while the dreamy bells
O'er the dark flats intone—
Now come, now gone, in dying swells
The Sabbath sounds are blown.

Her cheek a withered rose is,
'Her eye a violet dim ;
Half in her chair she doses,
And hums a happy hymn.
But soft ! what wonder makes her start
And lift her aged head,
While the faint flutterings of her heart
Just touch her cheek with red ?

The latch clicks ; thro' the gateway
An aged wight steps slow—
Then pauses, doffing straightway
His broad-brim'd gay chapeau !
Swallow-tail'd cot of blue so grand,
With buttons bright beside,
He wears, and in his trembling hand
A nosegay, ribbon-tied.

His thin old legs trip lightly
In breeches of nankeen,
His face is shining brightly,
So rosy, fresh, and clean—
Wrinkled he is and old and plain,
With locks of golden-grey,
And leaning on a tassell'd cane
He gladly comes this way.

Oh, skylark, singing over
 The silent mill hard by,
 To this so happy lover
 Sing out with summer cry !
 He hears thee, tho' his blood is cold,
 She hears, tho' deaf and weak ;
 She stands to greet him, as of old,
 A blush upon her cheek.

In spring-time they were parted
 By some sad wind of woe ;
 Forlorn and broken-hearted
 Each faltered, long ago ;
 They sunder'd,—half a century
 Each took the path of pain—
 He lived a bachelor, and she
 Was never woo'd again !

But when the summer ended,
 When autumn, too, was dead,
 When every vision splendid
 Of youth and hope was fled,
 Again these two came face to face
 As in the long ago—
 They met within a sunless place
 In the season of the snow.

*' O love is like the roses,
 Love comes and love must flee !
 Before the summer closes
 Love's rapture and love's glee !'*
 O peace ! for in the garden there
 He bows in raiment gay ;
 Doffs hat, and with a courtly air
 Presents his fond bouquet.

One day in every seven,
 While church-bells softly ring,
 The happy, silent Heaven
 Beholds the self-same thing :
 The gay old boy within the gate,
 With ribbons at his knee !—
' When winter comes, is love too late ?'
 O Cupid, look and see !

O, talk not of love's rapture,
 When youthful lovers kiss ;
 What mortal sight may capture
 A scene more sweet than this ?
 Beside her now he sits and glows,
 While prim she sits and proud,—
 Then, spectacles upon his nose,
 Reads the week's news aloud !
 Pure, with no touch of passion,
 True, with no tinge of pain !

Thus, in sweet Sabbath fashion,
 They live their loves again.
 She sees in him a happy boy—
 Swift, agile, amorous-eyed ;
 He sees in her his own heart's joy—
 Youth, Hope, Love, vivified !

Content there he sits smoking
 His long Dutch pipe of wood :
 Gossiping oft and joking,
 As a gay lover should.
 And oft, while there in company
 They smile for Love's sweet sake,
 Her snuff-box black she hands, and he
 A grave, deep pinch doth take !

There, gravely juvenescent,
 In sober Sabbath joy,
 Mingling the past and present,
 They sit, a maid and boy !
' O love is like the roses !'—No !
 Thon foolish singer, cease !
 Love finds the fireside 'mid the snow,
 And smokes the pipe of peace !

WILL O' THE WISP.

A BALLAD WRITTEN FOR CLARI, ON
 A STORMY NIGHT.

JUST an inch high
 With a body all yellow,
 A bright crimson eye
 And limbs all awry,
 Wakes the queer little fellow—
 Yes, awakes in the night,
 Rubs his eyes in a fright,
 Yawns, harks to the thunder,
 While the glowworms all set
 Round his cradle so wet,
 Stare at him in wonder.
 How it blows ! how it rains !
 How the thunder refrains !
 While the glowworms so wan,
 As they gather together,
 Hear the quaint little man
 Squeak faintly, ' What weather !'
 ' Who is his father ?
 Who is his mother ?'
 They cry as they gather,
 And puzzle, and pother—
 Such a queer little chap,
 Just new-born in a nap !

And such antics are his
 As he springs on his bed,
 Such a comical phiz,
 Such a red,
 Shining head !
 Hark again,
 'Midst the rain
 How the deep thunder crashes !
 And the lightning
 Is bright'ning
 In fitful blue flashes !
 ' Here's fun ! here's a din ! '
 Cries Will with a grin—
 ' I'll join in the play—
 It's darker than pitch
 In this hole of a ditch,
 What a place to be born in—I'm off and
 away.'

Out on the heath
 It rains with a will.
 The Wind sets his teeth
 And whistles right shrill
 All is darkness and sound,
 All is splishing and splashing ;
 The pools on the ground
 Glimmer wet in the flashing—
 Up and down, round and round,
 With a leap and a bound,
 Goes the little one dashing.
 ' Oh what fun ! ' out he screams
 At the wild blue beams
 As they flicker and pass.
 Then he squats down and seems
 With his nose's red gleams
 Like a lamp in the grass ;—
 Then 'mid rain washing down, and the
 thunder still busy,
 He flies spinning round, till he pauses, half
 dizzy.

How dark and how still,
 In the arm of the hill,
 Lies the hamlet asleep—
 While the wind is so shrill,
 And the darkness so deep !
 Down the street all is dark,
 And closed is each shutter ;
 But he pauses to mark,
 His face like a spark
 In the black polished gutter !
 But see ! what a streak
 Gleams out from the inn !

Overhead with a creak,
 And a groan and a squeak,
 Shakes the sign ; while the din
 Comes harsh from within.
 Hark !—the jingling of glasses,
 The singers' refrain !
 Will stops as he passes
 And peeps through the pane,
 Dripping, slippery with rain,
 There they sit and they joke,
 In the grey cloud of smoke,
 While the jolly old host,
 With his back to the fire,
 Stands warm as a toast,
 And doth smile and perspire.
 Grave, thin, and pedantic,
 The schoolmaster sits,
 While, in argument frantic
 With riotous wits,
 The maker of boots
 Still in apron of leather,
 Thumps the board and disputes,
 Contradicts and refutes ;
 And like sparrows collected, all birds of a
 feather,
 All smoking long pipes, and all nodding
 together,
 The Wiseacres gather, screen'd snug from
 the weather.

Great, broad, and brown,
 Stands the jug on the board,
 And the ale is poured,
 And they quaff it down.
 How it froths, fresh and strong,
 Warm, sweet, full of spice !
 Will's beginning to long
 For a sip,—'tis so nice !
 So he whispers the Wind,
 Who runs round from the lane,
 And they creep in behind,
 And the Wind tries to find
 An entrance in vain.
 Then ' The Chimney ! ' cries Will,
 While the Wind laughs out shrill,
 And he leaps at one bound
 To the roof up on high,
 While the chimneys all round
 Tremble and cry.

One moment he pauses
 Up yonder, and draws his
 Breath deep and strong,

Then dives like a snake,
 While the dwelling doth quake,
 To the room where they throng.
 Ho, ho ! with one blow
 Out the lights go,
 Dark and silent is all.
 But the fire burns low
 With its ghost on the wall.
 'What a night ! Ah, here's weather !'
 All murmur together
 With voices sunk low,
 While softly slips Will
 In the jug, drinks his fill,
 And is turning to go,
 When a hand, while none mark,
 Lifts the jug in the dark ;
 'Tis the cobbler so dry
 Seeks to drink on the sly !
 Tarala ! pirouette !
 Will springs at his nose,
 The jug is upset,
 And the liquor o'erflows.
 'What's that ?' all exclaim,
 Leaping up with a shout,
 While the cobbler in shame,
 With nose all aflame,
 Cries, 'The *Devil*, no doubt !'
 And as fresh lights are brought
 These birds of a feather
 Think it quite a new thought
 To nod gravely together,
 Crying hot and distraught,
 'Well, indeed ! this *is* weather !'

Tarala ! pirouette !
 Out again in the wet !
 Like a small dancing spark,
 With his face flashing bright
 In the black dripping dark,
 Goes the elf of the night.
 Hark ! from the church-tower,
 Slowly chimeth the hour !
 Twelve times low and deep,
 Comes the chime through the shower
 On the village asleep ;—
 And where ivies enfold
 The belfry, doth sit,
 Huddled up from the cold,
 The owl grey and old,
 With 'Toowhoo' and 'Toowhit !'
 'Heigho !'—yawns poor Will—
 'Time for bed, by the powers !'
 And he lights on a sill,

Among flower-pots and flowers,
 And just as he seems
 To slumber inclined,
 A white hand forth-gleams
 From within, and the blind
 Is drawn back, and oh dear !
 What a beautiful sight !
 Clari's face doth appear
 Looking out at the night.
 And Clari doth stand,
 With the lamp in her hand,
 In her bedgown of white—
 Her hair runs like gold on her shoulders,
 and fills
 With gleams of gold-shadow her tucks and
 her frills,
 And her face is as sweet as a star, and below
 Her toes are like rosebuds that peep among
 snow.

Breathless with wonder,
 Quiet and still,
 He crouches under
 The pots on the sill ;
 Then the blind closes slow,
 And the vision doth fade,
 But still to and fro
 On the blind moves the shade—
 There ! out goes the light !
 Will lifts up his head,
 All is darker than night,
 She is creeping to bed.
 Oh, light be her rest !
 She steals into her nest,
 Without a beholder,
 And the bed, soft and warm,
 Swells up round her form
 To receive and enfold her !

[The wind is increasing,
 But the rain is ceasing,
 And blown up from the west
 Comes the moon wan and high,
 With a cloud on her crest,
 And a tear in her eye.
 Distraught and opprest,
 She drifts wearily by !]

'Heigho !' yawns poor Will—
 Still crouch'd down on the sill—
 'How sleepy I feel !
 There's a cranny up there
 To let in the fresh air,—
 Here goes ! in I'll steal !'

So said and so done,
 And he enters the room
 Where the dainty-limb'd one, like a lily in
 bloom,
 Her face a dim brightness, her breath a
 perfume,
 Sleeps softly. With noiseless invisible tread
 The wanderer steals to the side of the bed
 Where she lies, oh how fair ! so sweet and
 so warm,
 While the white clothes sink round the soft
 mould of her form ;
 One hand props her cheek, and one unespied
 Lies rising and falling upon her soft side.
 Will floats to and fro, and the light that he
 throws
 Just lights this or that as she lies in repose,
 Leaving all the rest dark. See ! he hops
 'mong her hair
 And shines like a jewel ;—then leans down
 to stare
 In her face,—and his ray as he trembles
 and spies
 Just flashes against the white lids of her
 eyes ;—
 While her breath—oh her breath is so
 sweet and so fine,
 Will drinks and turns dizzy—his joy is
 divine,
 And his light flashing down shows the red
 lips apart,
 To free the deep fragrance that steals from
 her heart

Just an inch high,
 With a body all yellow,
 A bright crimson eye,
 And limbs all awry,
 Stands the queer little fellow !
 And Clari's sweet mouth
 Just a little asunder,
 Sweet with spice from the South,
 Fills his spirit with wonder :
 Such a warm little mouth !
 Such a red little mouth !
 The thin bud above and the plump blossom
 under !
 ' Heigho, heart's alive !
 Here's a door, here I'll rest !'
 And he takes one quick dive
 And slips into her breast !
 And there may he thrive
 Like a bird in a nest !

And Clari turns over
 And flushes and sighs,
 Pushes back the warm cover,
 Half opens her eyes,
 Then sinking again
 Warm, languid, and bright,
 With new bliss in her brain,
 Dreams—such dreams—of delight !
 She tosses and turns
 In visions divine ;
 For within her Will burns
 Like a lamp in a shrine !

. . . And now you've the reason that Clari
 is gay,
 As a bird on the bough or a brooklet at play;
 And now you've the reason why Clari is
 bright,
 Why she smiles all the day and is glad all
 the night ;
 For the light having entered her bosom
 remains,
 Darts fire to her glances and warmth thro
 her veins,
 Makes her tricky and merry, yet full of the
 power
 Of the wind and the rain, and the storm
 and the shower ;
 Half wise in the ways of the world, and
 half simple,
 As sly as a kiss is, as deep as a dimple,
 A spirit that sings like a bird on a tree,—
 ' I love my love, and my love loves me !'

GIANT DESPAIR.

I.

HIS DEATH.

SAD is the plight of Giant Despair,
 In Doubting Castle sick lies he !
 The castle is built on a headland bare,
 And looks on the wash of a whirling Sea.
 With the noise in his ears and the gleam in
 his eyes
 Of the breaking waves that beneath him
 beat,
 Propt on pillows the Giant lies,
 Pillowed, too, are his gouty feet.
 In and out the Leeches of Souls
 Run and chatter and prate and pray—

But the great wind wails and the thunder
rolls :

None may banish his gloom away.

With parchment cheek and lack-lustre eye
He looketh out on the stormy scene—
Cruel is he and bloody and sly,
Lustful and bad his life hath been.

O Priests who stand and whisper there,
While he groans and curses and shrinks
for fear,

What can ye say to Giant Despair
To comfort him now his end is near ?

Fat and oily and sweet, cries one :—
Comfort, O comfort ! for heaven is sure—
There the believer shall revel in fun,
And all delight that is plump and pure.

' Nothing delicious the Lord denies,
Rosy wine he shall drink in bliss '—
' Add, moreover,' another cries,
' Waists to encircle and lips to kiss.'

With parchment cheek and lack-lustre eye
The Giant lies and makes no sign :
Women's falsehood has made him sigh,
He is sick of the very sight of wine.

' Comfort !' another crieth loud,
' Full of music shall be thy breast,
Thou shalt sit full proud on a rosy cloud,
Happy and idle, amongst the blest—

' All shall be stainless and sweet and fair ;
All shall be merry from night to morn.'
Giant Despair stirred in his chair,
Scowled at the speaker and grunted scorn.

Then one said this and one said that,
And all were full of the world to be :
Yet duller and bitter the Giant sat
Scowling out at the sullen Sea.

And all the storm of the wind and rain,
And all the rage of the wrathful wave,
Flowed in and out of the Giant's brain
As the surge in and out of a dank sea-
cave.

Forth, at last, stept a shape so grey,
Crown'd with poppy, and shrouded deep ;
He touch'd the Giant with hand of clay.
And held a goblet—' Drink this, and sleep.

Over thy grave the grass shall grow—
Roses too, the white and the red—

The generations shall come and go,
But *thou* shalt slumber,' the spirit said

' Many a year shall blossom and fade,
Many a life be given and taken,
Ere from thy sleep in the silent shade
Thou, with a thrill of new life, shalt
waken.

The Giant smiled. Still loud and strong
Sounded the sob of the weary Sea.
' My ears are sick !—may my sleep be long !
For ever and ever, if that may be.'

II.

AFTER

Who on the Giant's tomb
Sits in the twilight gloom,
With white hands folded ?
Her breath comes fresh and warm ;
Silent she waits, a form
Divinely moulded.

Maiden she is ; with eyes
That search the dark still skies
She sits in shadow ;
Strewn scented at her feet
Are rue and lilies sweet,
And flowers o' the meadow.

And in her wild black hair
Are wild weeds passing fair,
Pluck'd from dark places—
Dumb, dead, her sweet lips are,
And fix'd as a star
Her marble face is.

Under God's starless cope,
Vestured in white sits Hope,
A musing maiden,
Under a yew sits she,
Watching most silently
The gates of Eden.

Afar away they shine !
While up those depths divine
Her eyes are turning—
And one by one on high
The strange lamps of the sky
Are dimly burning.

Such sounds as fill'd with care
The dark heart of Despair
Disturb her never,—

Tho' close to her white feet
That mighty Sea doth beat,
Moaning for ever.

She sees the foam-flash gleam,
She hears, in a half dream,
The muffled thunder.
The salt dew fills her hair ;
Her thoughts are elsewhere,
Watching in wonder.

There let her sit alone,
Ev'n as a shape of stone
In twilight gleaming ;
Despair's pale monument,
There let her sit, content,
Waiting and dreaming.

Ah ! which were sweetest, best ?
With dead Despair to rest
In sleep unbroken ;
Or with that marble Maid
To watch, to sit in the shade,
Waiting a token ?

THE MOUNTAIN WELL.

HERE, on the sultry mountain's face,
Although the heat broods bright around,
The runlet, in a mossy place,
Drips, drop by drop, without a sound,
Into a basin cool yet bright,
Half-shaded from the golden light.

All is as still as sleep ; on high
The clouds float soft and white as wool ;
Fern-fring'd crags and boulders lie
Sun-parch'd around the dewy pool ;
Beneath, the mountain pathway twines,
Above, peaks rise and sunlight shines.

How still it is ! nought moves or stirs.
Afar below, the lake of blue,
With purple islands dark with firs,
Gleams smooth as glass and dim as dew :
And mountain, isle, and woodland rest
Within the mirror of its breast.

All motionless on yonder stone
The white grouse crouches in the light ;
On high among the crags, alone,
The eagle sheathes his piercing sight,
Clutching the peak amid the heat,
His shadow black'ning at his feet.

No living thing that flies or creeps
Comes near the well this noontide hour ;
The sunlight scorches crags and steeps,
The heather shrinks its purple flower ;
The wild brook glisters in its bed,
Silent and faded to a thread.

But when the sun is in the west,
And sheds soft crimson o'er the place,
The grey-hen creeping from her nest,
Leaving her dull brown eggs a space,
Comes hither, pausing on the brink
With quick sharp eyes, and stoops to drink.

Or from the stones the fount slim
Doth hither steal at eve to cool
His bloody mouth ; or on the brim
The blue hare, shadow'd in the pool,
Sits up erect, and thro' the rocks
Springs, at the coming of the fox.

How many a strange and gentle thing
Hath seen its face reflected here !
How oft at gloaming bath the spring
Mirror'd the moist eyes of the deer,
While glen and corry, peak and height,
Were redd'ning in the rosy light !

Here stain'd with blood and foamy-lipt,
The stag of ten hath paused for breath,
His blood in the sad pool hath dript
Dark, drop by drop, before his death,
While he has watched, with looks of woe,
The hunter toiling from below.

How sweet it lies ! how dark and cool !
Half shaded by the crag on high,
A tiny place, a shallow pool,
Yet with its own dark depth of sky—
Renewed for ever with no will
By the soft trickling of the hill.

All thro' the dim and dewy night
It gathers coolness drop by drop,
While in the moon the crags gleam white,
And on the silent mountain top
The evening star of liquid dew
Gleams like a diamond in the blue.

A never-empty hand, a dim
Dark eye for dews of love to fill,
A constant cup full to the brim,
Hast thou, O fount upon the hill.
I stoop and kiss thy lips ; and so,
Refresh'd, I bless thee as I go.

THE SONG OF THE
SHEALING.¹

O WHO sits and sings the sad song of the
Shealing,

Alone on the hill-side, alone in the night !
Dead still through the shadows the moon-
light is stealing,

The dew's on the heather, the mist on the
height.

She sitteth in silence, and singeth so slowly ;
She milks the dark kine with her fingers
so fair.

White woe of the lost, may her vigil be holy !
The song of the Shealing is sad on the air.

Dark strewn on the grass are the stones of
the Shealing,

The wild leek and nettle grow black over
all ;

Here morning to gloaming the black hawk
is wheeling .

And fougart and stoat suckle young in
the wall.

It's lonely by daylight, but nightly, ah !
nightly,

She comes from her cave, with her kine,
and sits there.

Oh, hearken ! she sings, and her face gleams
so whitely :

The song of the Shealing is sad on the air.

O who would not hark to the song of the
Shealing !

I stand in the shadow, I listen and sigh ;
The day comes again, happy voices are
pealing,

The blue smoke curls up to the sweet
summer sky ;

O red in the sunset the kine gather yonder,
The maidens are milking with rosy feet
bare ;

The sheep-dog is barking,—I hear it and
ponder,—

The song of the Shealing is sad on the air.

O green was the pasture, and sweet was the
Shealing,

¹ The rude cluster of huts in the midst of the distant pasturage whither the cattle were driven in summer, and where they grazed for many weeks, attended by the women and maidens of the farm.

And kind were the maidens barefooted
and free,
And full of enchantment was Love's tender
feeling

When the moon rose so silently up from
the sea.

And on the green knolls walked the loved
and the lover,

Wrapt warm in one plaid, with one
thought and one care :

I see them ! I hear them ! my heart's run-
ning over,—

The song of the Shealing is sad on the air.

O spirit of whiteness, O Ghost of the
Shealing !

Sing on, and sing low in the shade of the
hill ;

The picture has faded your voice was re-
vealing,

The white owl looks out through the
threshold so chill.

There's a star on Ben Rannoch shines softly
above you,

It sparkles all night on the dew in your
hair :

White Soul of the Silence, we hear you and
love you,—

The song of the Shealing is sad on the air.

THE SECRET OF THE MERE.

I BUILT a hut beside the Mere,
A lowly hut of turf and stone ;
Therein I thought from year to year
To dwell in silence and alone,
Watching the lights of heaven chase
The phantoms on the water's face.

The world of men was far away ;
There was no sound, no speech, no cry ;
All desolate the dark Mere lay
Under the mountains and the sky—
A sullen Mere, where sadly brood
Dark shadows of the solitude.

'It is an evil world,' I said ;
'There is no hope, my doom is dark.'
And in despair of soul I fled
Where not another eye might mark
My silent pain, my heart's distress,
And all my spirit's weariness.

And when I came unto the Mere,
 It lay and gleam'd through days of gloom.
 The livid mountains gather'd drear
 All round, like stones upon a tomb ;
 Around its margin rusted red
 The dark earth crumbled 'neath my tread.

I said, 'It is a godless place—
 Dark, desolate, and curst, like me.
 Here, through all seasons, shall my face
 Behold its image silently.'
 And from that hour I linger'd there
 In protestation and despair.

For mark, the hills were stone and sand,
 Not strewn with scented red or green—
 All empty as a dead man's hand,
 And empty lay the Mere between.
 No flocks fed there, no shepherd's cry
 Awoke the echoes of the sky.

And through a sullen mist I came,
 And beast-like crept unto my lair ;
 And many days I crouched in shame
 Out of the sunshine and sweet air.
 I heard the passing wind and rain,
 Like weary waves within the brain.

But when I rose and glimmer'd forth,
 Ghost-wise across my threshold cold,
 The clouds had lifted west and north,
 And all the peaks were touch'd with gold.
 I smiled in scorn ; far down beneath
 The waters lay as dark as death.

I said, 'Go by, O golden light !
 Thou canst not scatter darkness *here*.
 In two sad bosoms there is night,
 In mine and in the lonely Mere ;
 Light thou thy lamps, and go thy way.'
 It went, and all the heavens grew grey.

And when the lamps of heaven were lit,
 I did not raise mine eyes to see,
 But watch'd the ghostly glimmers flit
 On the black waters silently.
 I hid my face from heaven, and kept
 Dark vigil when the bright sun slept.

And ever when the daylight grew
 I saw with joy the hills were high ;
 From dawn to dark, the live day through,
 Not lighting as the sun went by ;
 Only at noon one finger-ray
 Touch'd us, and then was drawn away.

I cried, 'God cannot find me now ;
 Done now am I with praise or pain.'
 Beside the Mere, with darken'd brow,
 I walk'd as desolate as Cain.
 I cried, 'Not even God could rear
 One seed of love or blessing here !'

'Twas Spring that day ; the air was chill ;
 Above the heights white clouds were roll'd,
 The Mere below was blue as steel,
 And all the air was chill and cold,
 When suddenly from air and sky
 I heard a solitary cry.

Ah me ! it was the same sweet sound
 That I had heard afar away ;
 Sad echoes waken'd all around
 Out of the rocks and caverns grey,
 And looking upward, weary-eyed,
 I saw the gentle bird that cried.

Upon a rock sat that sweet bird,
 As he had sat on pale or tree,
 And while the hills and waters heard,
 He named his name to them and me.
 I thought, 'God sends the Spring again,
 But here at least it comes in vain !'

From rock to rock I saw him fly,
 Silent in flight, but loud at rest ;
 And ever at his summer cry
 The mountains gladden'd and seem'd
 bless'd,
 And in the hollows of them all
 Faint flames of grass began to crawl !

Some secret hand I could not see
 Was busy where I dwelt alone ;
 It touched with tender tracery,
 Faint as a breath, the cliffs of stone ;
 Out of the earth it drew soft moss,
 And lichens shapen like the Cross.

And lo ! at every step I took
 Some faint life lived, some sweetness
 stirred,
 While loosen'd torrents leapt and shook
 Their shining hair to hear the bird,
 And white clouds ran across the blue,
 And sweet sights rose, and sweet sounds
 grew.

I hated every sight and sound ;
 I hated most that happy cry.
 I saw the mountains glory-crown'd,
 And the bright heavens drifting by ;

I felt the earth beneath my tread,
Now kindling quick, that late was dead!

Daily I stole unto the Mere,
And black as ever was its sleep.
Close to its margin all was drear ;
I heard the weary waters creep.
I laugh'd aloud, ' Though all grow light,
We twain keep dark, in God's despite !

' We will not smile nor utter praise ;
He made us dark, and dark we brood.
Sun-hating, desolate of days,
We dwell apart in solitude.
Let Him light lamps for all the land ;
We darken and elude His hand.'

Scarce had I spoken in such wise,
When as before I heard the bird,
And lo ! the Mere beneath mine eyes
Was deeply, mystically stirred ;
A sunbeam broke its gloom apart,
And Heaven trembled in its heart ;

There, clustering in that under-gloom,
Like rising stars that open dim,
Innumerable, leaf and bloom,
I saw the water-lilies swim,
Still 'neath the surface dark to sight,
But creeping upward to the light.

As countless as the lights above,
Stirring and glimmering below,
They gather'd ; and I watched them move,
Till on the surface, white as snow,
One came, grew glad, and open'd up,
A pinch of gold in its white cup !

Then suddenly within my breast
Some life of rapture open'd too,
And I forgot my bitter quest,
Watching that glory as it grew ;
For, leaf by leaf and flower by flower,
The lilies opened from that hour.

And soon the gloomy Mere was sown
With oil'd leaves and stars of white ;
The trumpet of the wind was blown
Far overhead, from height to height,
And lo ! the Mere, from day to day,
Grew starry as the Milky Way.

I could not bear to dwell apart
With so divine and bright a thing ;
I felt the dark depths of my heart
Were stirring, trembling, wakening ;

I watched the Mere, and saw it shine,
E'en as the eye of God on mine.

As one that riseth in his tomb,
I rose and wept in soul's distress ;
I had not fear'd His wrath and gloom ;
But now I fear'd His loveliness.
I craved for peace from God, and then
Crept back and made my peace with men !

MNEMOSYNE; OR, THE RETROSPECT.

STILL were the azure fields, thick strewn
With stars, and trod by luminous feet ;
In the low west the wan white Moon
Walked in her winding-sheet—
Holding her taper up, to see
Thy cold fair face, Mnemosyne.

And on that face her lustre fell,
Deepening the marble pallor there,
While by the stream, and down the dell,
Thy slow still feet did fare ;
Thy maiden thoughts were far from me,
Thy lips were dumb, Mnemosyne.

I knew thee by a simpler name,
Meet for a maid of English birth,
And though thy beauty put to shame
All beauty born of earth,
Not till that night could my soul see
Thy soul's dark depths, Mnemosyne !

At last thy voice thrilled soft and low—
' Oh, blessed be the silent night !
It brings strange life of long ago
Back to the soul's sad sight—
It trances sense, and thought is free
To tremble through eternity.

' Oh, thinkest thou this life we live,
In this strange haunted planet nurst,
So mystical, so fugitive,
Could be the *last* ? or *first* ?
Nay, I *remember* !'—Pale stood she,
Fronting the west, Mnemosyne.

The moonlight on her cheek of snow,
The star-dew on her raven hair,
Her eyes in one divine dark glow
On heaven, she waited there—
' Nay, I *remember* !' murmured she,
The earthly maid, Mnemosyne.

And as she spake, it seemed I saw
 Before me, in the mystic light,
 That old Greek woman's-shape of awe,
 Large, lustrous-eyed, and white—
 The twilight goddess, fair to see,
 With heavenly eyes—Mnemosyne !

The haunter of green moonlit tombs,
 The reader of old midnight lore,
 The glorious walker through God's glooms,
 Back-looking evermore.
 I shook, and almost bent the knee,
 Naming the name, 'Mnemosyne !' . . .

'I can remember !—all the day
 Memory is dark, the past is dead,
 But when the sunshine fades away,
 And in the void o'erhead
 Heaven's eyes flash open, I can see
 That lost life !' said Mnemosyne.

'Before this mortal sphere I trod,
 I breathed some strange and heavenly air ;
 Ay, wandered 'mid the glooms of God,
 A living soul, up there !
 The old lost life comes back to me
 With starry gleams of memory !

'I can remember !'—In a trance,
 O love, thou didst upgazing stand,
 Nor turned from heaven thy lustrous glance,
 While soft I kissed thy hand,
 Whispering that mystic name to thee,
 'Mnemosyne ; Mnemosyne !'

And all the luminous eyes above
 Concentred one still gaze on thine,
 When warm wild words of earthly love
 Poured in thine ears divine,
 Till, with thy soft lips kissing me,
 Thy soul saw mine, Mnemosyne !

A sense of that forgotten life
 Blew on our cheeks like living breath ;
 Lifted beyond the world's dark strife,
 Above the gates of Death,
 Hand linked in hand, again lived we
 That starlight life of ecstasy !

Go by, bright days of golden blooms !
 She shrinks and darkens in your gleam ;
 Come, starry nights and mystic glooms,
 And deepen that sweet dream !
 Let her remember ; let her be
 Priestess of peace—Mnemosyne !

O child of heaven, the life we live,
 In this strange haunted planet nurst,
 So mystical, so fugitive,
 Is *not* the last, or first ;
 That lost life was, new life shall be—
 So keep thy name,—'Mnemosyne !'

VANITY FAIR.

1.

HERE's a babble
 In Vanity Fair !
 Here's a rabble
 Of folk on the stare !
 Here's a crying,
 Selling and buying,
 Groaning and grumbling,
 Pushing and stumbling !
 Tootle-te-toot !
 Rum-ti-tum-tum !
 They blow the flute,
 And they beat the drum.
 And yonder in rows
 Are the painted shows,
 Where zany and clown
 With 'Walk in, walk in !'
 Stalk up and down,
 While the people grin.

Hold me tighter, my pretty one,
 We'll elbow our way and see the fun.
 In we go, where they scramble and
 scream—

What a rabble ! it's like a dream !

Trip it merrily,
 Pretty one,
 On we stray cheerily
 Full of the fun :
 Punch and Judy ;
 Fiddlestring ;
 Acrobats moody
 Making a ring ;
 Clowns cutting capers
 At every show ;
 Bucolic gapers
 Grinning below ;
 Quiet conjurers quick and sly
 Making the public halfpence fly ;
 Quacks with boluses, nostrums, and pills,
 Vending cures for the flesh and its ills ;
 Every one hawling—(O the din !)
 Every voice calling—'Walk in, walk in.'

'*Stop the thief!*'—how they carry the shout!

How the crowd eddies in and out!
Lean and thin with quivering lip
The rascal writhes in his captor's grip;
He looks all round with a hungry stare;
The mob groans round him and longs to tear—

Off to the gaol the scarecrow bear!
We're virtuous people in Vanity Fair!

All together,
Christian and Jew,
Birds of fine feather,
And ragged too,
Dukes and earls,
And ballet girls,
Philosophers,
And patterers;
The poor from the city,
The wild sea-rover,
The beggar witty
Half-seas over,
The gipsy pretty
Red from a romp in the clover.

Right foot, left foot, we trip it and toe it,
You the pretty girl, I your poet,
Rubbing sleeves with great and small,
Jostling along through the heart of them all.

Our hearts are leaping, our heads are dizzy,

The trade's so merry, the mirth so busy,
We squeeze along and we gasp for air,
In the hurry and flurry of Vanity Fair.

II.

Clari, my sweetest,
Trimmiest and neatest,
Why this alarm?
Why are you sighing,
Fluttering and crying,
And gripping my arm?
'Come away! come away!
'Tis so sad! 'Tis so loud!
My soul swoons away,
To look at the crowd!
O hark how they cry—
I am sick, let us fly!

O Clari, sweet blending of fire and of air,
Come along, come along, out of Vanity Fair,

Out yonder are fields and the sky and the trees—

And the only sounds there are the birds and the breeze,

And the water that throbs in its green woodland nest,

Like the heart that is beating so loud in your breast.

. . . Breathless, flushing,
Faint with the crushing,

Here we are—

Night is coming,

Droning and humming

Sounds Vanity Fair afar;

And its light, as the night

Cometh down, is cast bright

On the sky far away . . .

How strange feels this stillness!

Grey and more grey

Comes the night with its chillness.

Clari, where are we? Outside the Fair,
With the great black earth and the sky and the air,

All alone—Hold me tighter! The noise of the rout

Was dreadful within, but more dreadful without

Seems the silence. O God! see the pale moon arise,

And the hills black as ink in the shade, and the eyes

Of the stars fix'd on ours from the terrible skies.

What is this looming

Against the light,

Silent and glooming

In the chilly night?

And what are these clinging,

Three in a row,

Dismally, swinging

When the wind doth blow?

Three black figures against the light,
Their faces white and their legs strapt tight,

Having a swing in the wind this night!

O hold me faster, who is she

That stands at the foot of the cross-shaped tree?

Cow'd, barefooted, with hooded face,

What doth she in the ghostly place?

Silent she stands, a sad beholder!

Stop, let me touch her on the shoulder,

The moon shines cold
 On the silent place—
 O God, I behold
 The dear dead face !
 She turns unto me
 Calm and white,
 Her eyes thrill through me
 With piteous light.
 How cold yet how sweet
 In the night-wind she stands !

See, the poor wounded feet !
 See, the poor pleading hands !
 Is it she? Kneel and pray ! O my child,
 have no care,
 She is near—Hath she fled? Did we dream?
 Was she there ?
 Ah, cold is the night, and the earth lieth bare,
 And, distant and deep, a dull sound fills the
 air—
 The wash of the waters of Vanity Fair.



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